

TONIGHT'S CONCERT

MAHLER FIFTH SYMPHONY

Sunday 15 May 2022 7-9.15pm
Barbican

Franz Liszt Piano Concerto No 1
Interval
Gustav Mahler Symphony No 5

Michael Tilson Thomas conductor
Lukáš Vondráček piano

Recorded for LSO Live and
deferred broadcast on Marquee TV

MARQUEE TV

Welcome



Kathryn McDowell CBE DL
LSO Managing Director

A warm welcome to this evening's LSO concert, for which we are delighted to be joined by Michael Tilson Thomas, LSO Conductor Laureate. The LSO is particularly grateful to MTT, as he is affectionately known, for making the transatlantic trip so soon after surgery, and the demand for tickets this evening is testimony to the place he holds in the hearts of LSO audiences.

Tonight's concert opens with Franz Liszt's Piano Concerto No 1, for which we are pleased to welcome pianist Lukáš Vondráček following his well-received debut with the LSO in February 2020. Gustav Mahler's Fifth Symphony forms the second half of the concert, a work which continues to inspire listeners as one of the composer's most deeply personal statements.

Tonight's performance is being recorded by LSO Live and for future broadcast by our media partner Marquee TV.

I hope you enjoy the concert and that you will be able to join us again soon. Later this month we celebrate African-American gospel, spiritual and classical music with André J Thomas, recently announced as an LSO Associate Artist, and the massed voices of choirs from across London. Also coming up, in June Sir Antonio Pappano conducts two vibrant programmes of Italian music across the Jubilee weekend.

DEC Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal

The London Symphony Orchestra is joining with other leading arts venues and organisations to support the Disaster Emergency Committee's (DEC's) Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal.

DEC charities, and their local partners, are working to meet the immediate needs of people and will also help people affected by the conflict to rebuild their lives in the months and years to come. Please join us in supporting the DEC's Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal.



To donate visit dec.org.uk, scan the QR code, or text ARTS to 70150 to donate £10.

Texts cost £10 plus the standard network charge. £10 goes to the DEC Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal. You must be 16 or over and please ask the bill payer's permission. For full terms and conditions visit dec.org.uk

Coming Up

Sunday 29 May 7pm
Barbican

LIFT EVERY VOICE

André J Thomas unites the voices of choirs from across London in a celebration of African-American gospel, spiritual and symphonic music to nourish the soul.

Thursday 2 & Sunday 5 June 7pm
Barbican

SIR ANTONIO PAPPANO CONDUCTS

Two concerts exploring the music of Italy, from Vivaldi and Puccini to 20th-century masters De Sabata and Dallapiccola, filled with passion, power and shattering melodies.

iso.co.uk/whats-on

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Please switch off all phones. Photography and audio/video recording are not permitted during the performance.

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TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

We always want to make sure you have a great experience, and appreciate your feedback. Visit iso.co.uk/survey or scan the QR code to fill out a short survey about the concert.



Piano Concerto No 1 in E-flat major

Franz Liszt

Lukáš Vondráček piano

- 1 **Allegro maestoso** –
- 2 **Quasi adagio** –
- 3 **Allegretto vivace** –
Allegro animato –
- 4 **Allegro marziale**
animato



1830–53 (revised 1856)



19 minutes

Programme note by
Alison Bullock

A *cadenza* is an ornate passage for the soloist in a concerto. Some are improvised or composed by the soloist, others are written out by the composer.

Franz Liszt's First Piano Concerto was more than 25 years in the making. He noted down its main themes in the early 1830s, but it was not until 1848, when he settled in Weimar, in a post with an orchestra at his disposal, that he found the opportunity to construct a substantial work from these jottings. Liszt was inexperienced as an orchestral composer, and employed assistants to help him with orchestration – though he wanted to keep control of the proceedings. This led to a slow process of suggestions, try-outs in rehearsal and then revisions until Liszt was satisfied with the result. But there is no doubting that he was a pioneer; his two surviving complete piano concertos allow us to imagine what it would be like to hear this great pianist-showman perform, as well as to savour his inventiveness in the field of musical form. The movement headings of the First Concerto look traditional enough, but the work is played continuously, without breaks between the movements.

In a dramatic opening gambit, the orchestra introduces the concerto's first main idea (and the most important in the work) – a highly memorable martial theme. It is not long before the piano launches into a breathtaking cadenza showcasing the theme's pianistic possibilities. The first movement's gentler second theme is introduced as a duet between the piano

and clarinet, before solo violins take over. Soon, however, the march-like idea makes an angry return, but the movement concludes on a wisp of an upward scale, disappearing into thin air.

A mournful theme on muted strings serves as an introduction to Liszt's poetic second movement melody, given entirely to the solo piano. There is more drama in the central section, featuring horns, bassoons and muted tremolo (trembling) strings in thrall to the soloist, before the woodwind introduce a new idea, accompanied by delicate piano trills. Just when we think that the piano's nocturne theme is going to be re-introduced, there is a pause, then a single piano chord followed by the ring of a triangle and dancing plucked strings – a jolly interlude that leads to the reiteration, medley-like, of many of the concerto's melodic ideas.

The finale, similarly, gathers together the themes from the concerto into something of a romp. Liszt wrote of this section: 'this kind of binding together and rounding off of a whole piece at its close is somewhat my own, but it is ... justified from the standpoint of musical form'; here Liszt the musical thinker comes to the fore. But it is Liszt the virtuoso who leaves us with an unforgettable impression, as a display of bravura in the extended coda ending leads to the concerto's brilliant close.

INTERVAL 20 minutes

Enjoying the concert?
Let us know.



@londonsymphony

Franz Liszt In Profile

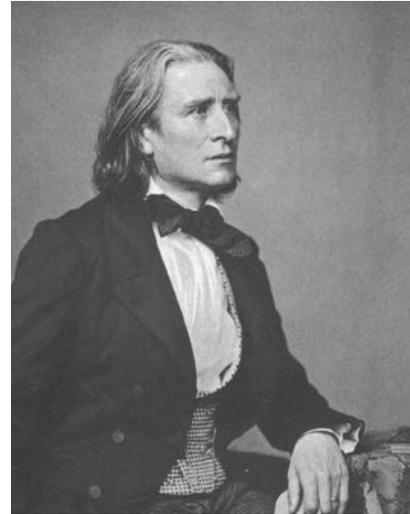
1811 (Austrian Empire) to 1886 (Germany)

Franz Liszt's father, Adam, was a cellist in the court orchestra of Joseph Haydn's employer, Prince Nikolaus Esterházy. Adam taught his son piano, and was delighted when the boy gave his first public concerts in 1820. The following year the family moved to Vienna, where Franz studied piano with the great pianist Carl Czerny and composition with Antonio Salieri, Kapellmeister at the imperial court. His debut concerts in Vienna were a critical success; Liszt later claimed that Ludwig van Beethoven, who was in the audience for his second appearance in April 1823, had kissed the prodigy's forehead.

Liszt was soon in demand as a recitalist throughout Europe and beyond; aristocrats invited him to perform at their private salons, and audiences were driven wild by his incredible command of the keyboard. He attracted and fell in love with many of his female fans and piano pupils, including Countess Marie d'Agoult, who left her husband for Liszt and bore three children before they separated in 1843. He also formed friendships with leading writers, artists and musicians, among them George Sand, Hector Berlioz and Richard Wagner, who married his younger daughter, Cosima.

In February 1848 Liszt became music director to the court of Weimar. Shortly before accepting this job, he fell in love with Princess Carolyne von Sayn Wittgenstein. During his years with Carolyne, Liszt composed many of his most ambitious works, including his 'Faust' and 'Dante' Symphonies, his symphonic poems and his Sonata in B minor – he also completed his Piano Concertos Nos 1 and 2. The couple intended to marry, but Carolyne's attempt in 1860–61 to get her first marriage annulled (which involved an appeal to the Pope) proved unsuccessful.

After the death of his eldest daughter in 1862, Liszt entered the oratory of the Madonna del Rosario in Rome and, in 1865, took minor orders in the Roman Catholic Church. During the 1860s and 70s he wrote the oratorios *Christus* and *St Elisabeth*. In his final years, he travelled extensively and composed a series of elegiac, often mystical piano works. According to the pianist Louis Kantner: 'Liszt was a devout Catholic: he feared God, but he loved the Devil'. He died in Bayreuth in 1886.



IN BRIEF

Born 1811, Doborján (then known as Raiding)

Died 1886, Bayreuth

Musical training

Private study with Carl Czerny, Ferdinando Paer and Antonio Salieri

Musical acquaintances

Hector Berlioz, Robert and Clara Schumann, Richard Wagner, Frédéric Chopin

Best known for

Numerous piano works including the *Années de pèlerinage*, *Études*, *Liebesträume* and B minor Sonata; the 'Faust' and 'Dante' Symphonies; symphonic poems including *Les préludes*

Composer profile by
Andrew Stewart

Symphony No 5

Gustav Mahler

PART I

1 **Trauermarsch: In gemessenem Schritt. Streng. Wie ein Kondukt**

(Funeral March: With measured tread. Strict. Like a procession)

2 **Stürmisch bewegt, mit grösster Vehemenz**
(Stormy, with utmost vehemence)

PART II

3 **Scherzo: Kräftig, nicht zu schnell**

(Vigorous, not too fast)

PART III

4 **Adagietto: Sehr langsam** (Very slow)

5 **Rondo-Finale: Allegro**



1901–02



70 minutes

Programme note by
Stephen Johnson

When Gustav Mahler started work on his Fifth Symphony in the summer of 1901, he must have felt that he had survived an emotional assault course. In February, after a near-fatal haemorrhage, he had resigned his post as conductor of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. His relationship with the musicians had been uneasy at best – not all of them appreciated his intensely demanding style of rehearsal – and some of the press (especially the city’s vocal anti-Semites) had been poisonous. Still, leaving such a prestigious and lucrative post was a wrench.

At about the same time Mahler met his future wife, Alma Schindler, and fell passionately in love. That at least was a hopeful development, but it was still emotionally challenging. Right from the start there were tensions in their relationship, which Mahler chose to ignore – to his cost, as he eventually found. Some composers seek escape from the trials of their personal life in their music, but Mahler was the kind of artist whose life and work were inextricably, often painfully, interlinked. Unsurprisingly, the Fifth Symphony bears the imprint of Mahler’s recent experiences throughout its complex five-movement structure.

At the same time, the Fifth Symphony marked a new departure for Mahler. Up until then, all his symphonies had either contained sung texts or come with detailed explanatory programmes.

The Fifth has neither. Instead we are expected to interpret the music directly, for ourselves, without any explicit help from the composer. One of the problems with programmes, he

had come to realise, was that people would take them literally, and then go on to assume that the music had been explained for them. Listening was also creative: it went beyond ‘real’ events and feelings to another, more mysterious world – a world beyond simple sequence in time and space.

FIRST MOVEMENT

Mahler does, however, give us a substantial clue to the possible meaning of the first movement. Entitled ‘Funeral March’, it opens with an ominous trumpet fanfare, then the full orchestra thunders in with an unmistakable funereal tread. Shuddering string trills and deep, rasping horn notes evoke Death in full grotesque pomp.

Then comes a more intriguing pointer: the quieter march theme that follows (strings alone) is clearly related to Mahler’s song *Der Tamboursg’sell* (The Drummer Lad), which tells of a pitiful young deserter facing execution. Here perhaps is another face of death: not grand, but pitiful and desolate.

SECOND MOVEMENT

The much faster second movement has the character of an urgent personal struggle. The shrill three-note woodwind figure near the start comes to embody the idea of striving. Several times aspiration falls back into sad rumination and echoes of the ‘Funeral March’. At last the striving culminates in a radiant brass hymn.

Is the answer to death to be found in religious consolation – faith? But the affirmation collapses under its own weight, and the movement quickly fades into darkness.

SEP 2022 TO JAN 2023

THIRD MOVEMENT

Now comes a surprise. The third movement bursts onto the scene with a wildly elated horn fanfare. The character is unmistakably Viennese – a kind of manic waltz. Perhaps some of Mahler's feelings about his adopted Viennese home went into this movement. Certainly there are parts where the gaiety sounds forced. Mahler himself wondered what people would say 'to this primeval music, this foaming, roaring, raging sea of sound, to these dancing stars, to these breath-taking iridescent and flashing breakers?'

FOURTH MOVEMENT

Now comes the famous Adagietto, for strings and harp alone, and another profound change of mood. Mahler, the great Lieder composer, clearly intended this movement as a love song without words to his future wife, Alma. There is another significant clue here. At the movement's final climax, Mahler invokes one of his greatest songs, *Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen* (I am lost to the world) from his *Rückert Lieder*. The poem ends with the words 'I live alone in my heaven, in my love, in my song'; Mahler quotes the violin phrase that accompanies 'in my love, in my song' at the very end of the Adagietto.

FINAL MOVEMENT

So human rather than divine love provides the true turning point in the Fifth Symphony – just as Mahler believed it had done for him in 1901. The finale is a vigorous, joyous display – genuine joy this time, it seems, not the manic elation of the third movement. Even motifs from the Adagietto are drawn into the bustling textures.

Finally, after a long and exciting build-up, the second movement's brass chorale returns in full splendour, now firmly anchored in D major, the symphony's ultimate home key: the triumph of faith, hope and, above all, of love? Not everyone finds this ending convincing; significantly Alma Mahler had her doubts from the start. But one can hear it either way – as a ringing affirmation or as forced triumphalism – and it still stirs. For all his apparent late-Romanticism, Mahler was also a very modern composer: even in his most positive statements there is room for doubt.

NEW SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

Sir Simon Rattle conducts
Elgar, Sibelius, Bruckner, Brahms,
Schumann with Mitsuko Uchida
& Rachmaninoff with Evgeny Kissin

André J Thomas returns
with *Symphonic Gospel*
& a UK premiere by Wynton Marsalis
30 October & 6 November

Jess Gillam performs John Adams
& Alice Sara Ott performs Ravel
conducted by Gianandrea Noseda
17 & 24 November
(17 Nov part of EFG London Jazz Festival)

LSO Principals as soloists:
Peter Moore performs Takemitsu,
Roman Simovic performs Bartók
& Ben Thomson performs Marsalis
15 September, 27 October & 6 November

Janáček's *Katya Kabanova* with
Sir Simon Rattle, Katarina Dalayman,
Andrew Staples, Amanda Majeski,
Sir John Tomlinson, Simon O'Neill,
Ladislav Elgr & Magdalena Kožená
11 & 13 January

Gustav Mahler In Profile

1860 to 1911 (Austria)



IN BRIEF

Born 1860, Kaliště, Bohemia (now Czech Republic)

Died 1911, Vienna

Training

Vienna Conservatory, University of Vienna

Musical acquaintances

Anton Bruckner, Richard Strauss, Arnold Schoenberg, Alban Berg, Alexander von Zemlinsky

Best known for

Nine symphonies, *Das Lied von der Erde*, orchestral songs including *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* and settings from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*

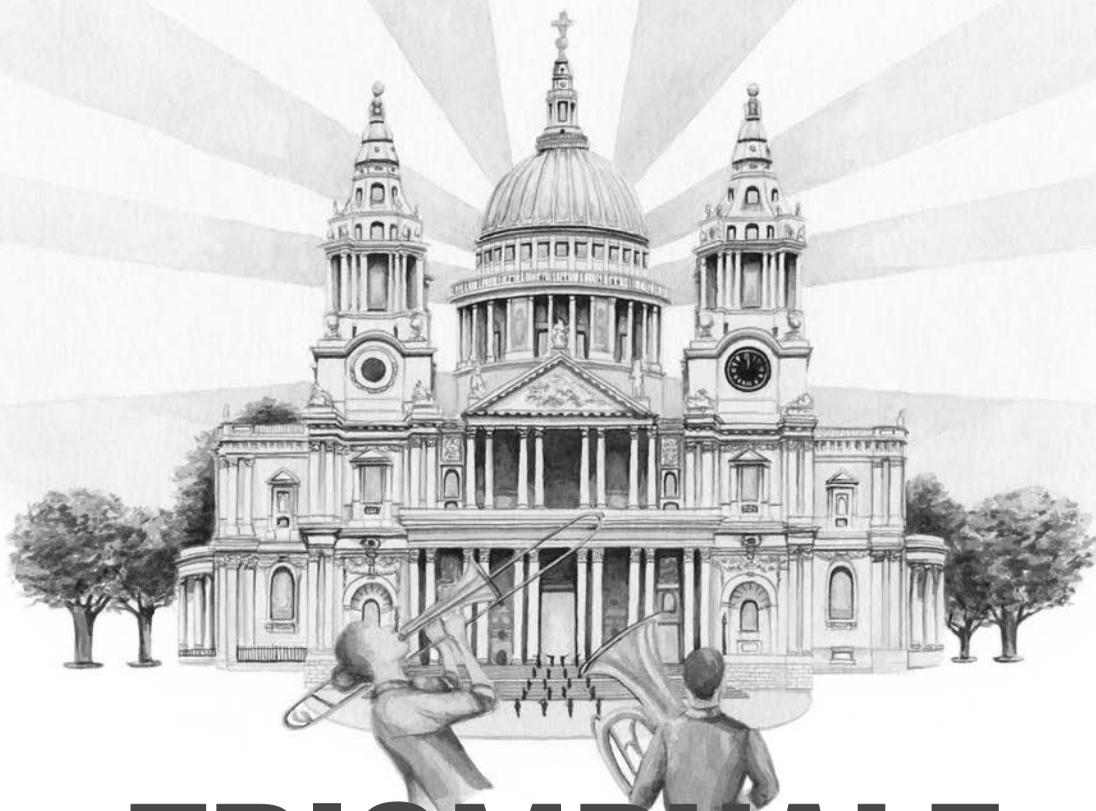
Composer profile by **Andrew Stewart**

Gustav Mahler's early musical influences included the military bands and folk singers who passed by his father's inn in the small town of Iglau. Besides learning many of their tunes, he also received formal piano lessons from local musicians. He gave his first recital in 1870. Five years later, he applied for a place at the Vienna Conservatory where he studied piano, harmony and composition.

After graduation, Mahler supported himself by teaching music and also completed his first important composition, *Das klagende Lied*. He accepted a succession of conducting posts in Kassel, Prague, Leipzig and Budapest; and at the Hamburg State Theatre, where he served as First Conductor from 1891 to 1897. For the next ten years, Mahler was Resident Conductor and then Director of the prestigious Vienna Hofoper (Court Opera).

The demands of both opera conducting and administration meant that Mahler could only devote the summer months to composition. Working in the Austrian countryside he completed nine symphonies, richly Romantic in idiom, often monumental in scale and extraordinarily eclectic in their range of musical references and styles. He also composed a series of eloquent, often poignant and sometimes witty songs, many themes from which he reworked in his symphonic scores.

An anti-Semitic campaign against Mahler in the Viennese press threatened his position at the Hofoper, and in 1907 he accepted an invitation to become Principal Conductor of the Metropolitan Opera and later the New York Philharmonic. In 1911 he contracted a bacterial infection and returned to Vienna. When he died, a few months before his 51st birthday, Mahler had just completed part of his Tenth Symphony and was still working on sketches for other movements.



TRIOMPHALE

**Thursday 23 June 2022 7pm
Gala Concert at St Paul's Cathedral**

Sir Simon Rattle directs a spectacular, site-specific performance of **Berlioz's** colossal *Grande symphonie funèbre et triomphale*, starting with an atmospheric procession of over 80 musicians into the Cathedral. Plus three of **Messiaen's** most personal masterpieces, including organ solos by **Simon Johnson**.

The evening raises funds to support the LSO's Always Playing Appeal, and also includes a special gala dinner event. Visit [Iso.co.uk/gala](https://www.iso.co.uk/gala) for more information.

[Iso.co.uk/triomphe](https://www.iso.co.uk/triomphe)

This event is made possible by the support of **Sir Joseph Hotung Charitable Settlement**.
In aid of the London Symphony Orchestra Registered Charity No 232391. Illustration by Ink Between The Lines 2022.

Michael Tilson Thomas

LSO Conductor Laureate



Michael Tilson Thomas is Co-Founder and Artistic Director of the New World Symphony, Music Director Laureate of the San Francisco Symphony and Conductor Laureate of the London Symphony Orchestra. Born in Los Angeles, he is the third generation of his family to follow an artistic career. His grandparents Boris and Bessie Thomashefsky were founding members of the Yiddish Theater in America. His father, Ted, was a producer in the Mercury Theater Company in New York before moving to Los Angeles where he worked in films and television. His mother, Roberta, was the head of research for Columbia Pictures.

Tilson Thomas began his formal studies at the University of Southern California where he studied piano with John Crown, and conducting and composition with Ingolf Dahl. At age 19 he was named Music Director of the Young Musicians

Foundation Debut Orchestra. As a young musician he was the pianist in masterclasses of Gregor Piatigorsky and Jascha Heifetz. He worked with Stravinsky, Boulez, Stockhausen and Copland on premieres of their compositions at Los Angeles' Monday Evening Concerts.

He was Principal Guest Conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Music Director of the Buffalo Philharmonic, and Principal Guest Conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. He was Principal Conductor of the LSO from 1988 to 1995, and, as Conductor Laureate, continues a regular relationship with the Orchestra. He also regularly appears with the major orchestras of Europe and the US.

His recorded repertoire of more than 125 discs includes works by composers such as Bach, Beethoven, Mahler, Prokofiev, Stravinsky, Ives, Ruggles, Cage, Dahl, Feldman, Gershwin, John McLaughlin, Steve Reich and Elvis Costello. Among his recordings on SFS Media with the San Francisco Symphony are the complete orchestral works of Mahler, *West Side Story*, orchestral works by Debussy and Berg and the Grammy award-winning recording of his own compositions *From the Diary of Anne Frank* and *Meditations on Rilke*. He is a twelve-time Grammy winner.

Tilson Thomas's television work includes a series with the LSO for the BBC, the broadcasts of the New York Philharmonic Young People's Concerts from 1971 to 1977 and numerous productions on PBS'

Great Performances. He and the San Francisco Symphony produced a multi-tiered media project, *Keeping Score*.

In February 1988 he inaugurated the New World Symphony, an orchestral academy in Miami Beach dedicated to preparing young musicians of diverse backgrounds for leadership roles in classical music. Since then, more than 1,100 musicians have come through the programme, many of whom have gone on to major musical careers. NWS' campus is the state-of-the-art, Frank Gehry-designed New World Center, which opened in 2011.

He became Music Director of the San Francisco Symphony in 1995, and his tenure was a period of significant growth and heightened international recognition for the orchestra. He led the SFS in championing contemporary American composers alongside classical masters, and as Music Director Laureate, he continues to lead the orchestra in four weeks of concerts annually.

Tilson Thomas is an Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres of France, was Musical America's Musician of the Year and Conductor of the Year and has been profiled on CBS' 60 Minutes. In 2008 he received the Peabody Award for his radio series for SFS Media, *The MTT Files*. In 2010, he was awarded the National Medal of Arts. He is in the California Hall of Fame, the American Academy of Arts and Letters and was a 2019 Kennedy Center Honoree. His profile on PBS' American Masters, *Where NOW Is*, premiered in October of 2020.

Lukáš Vondráček

piano



Following debuts in recent years with the Chicago, Pittsburgh and London Symphony Orchestras, further debuts for Lukáš Vondráček in the 2021/22 season include appearances with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra at Hollywood Bowl as well as with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and returns to renowned orchestras such as Baltimore and Chicago Symphony Orchestras, both under the baton of Marin Alsop. Elsewhere Vondráček appears with the Orchestre National de Lille conducted by Lionel Bringuier, Czech and Warsaw Philharmonic as well as the Turku and Malmö Symphony Orchestras. Recital projects take him to the Rudolf Firkusny Piano Festival at Prague's Rudolfinum and the Kissinger Summer Festival. He takes his residency with the Janáček Philharmonic into the next season and continues his recording cycle of all Rachmaninoff Piano Concertos with Prague Symphony Orchestra.

Over the last decade Vondráček has travelled the world working with orchestras such as the Philadelphia, Tasmanian and Sydney

Symphony Orchestras, Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, Antwerp Symphony Orchestra, Oslo Philharmonic and Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestras. Recitals have taken him to Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie, the Flagey in Brussels, Leipzig's Gewandhaus, Wiener Konzerthaus, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam and to renowned festivals such as the Menuhin Festival Gstaad, PianoEspoo in Finland, Prague Spring Festival and the Lille Piano Festival.

At the age of four Vondráček made his first public appearance. He has achieved worldwide recognition by receiving many international awards, foremost the Grand Prix at the 2016 Concours Reine Elisabeth in Brussels alongside first prizes at the Hilton Head and San Marino International Piano Competitions, and Unisa International Piano Competition in Pretoria, South Africa, as well as the Raymond E Buck Jury Discretionary Award at the 2009 International Van Cliburn Piano Competition.

London Symphony Orchestra

On Stage

Guest Leader

Jerome Benhaim

First Violins

Clare Duckworth
Ginette Decuyper
Laura Dixon
Maxine Kwok
William Melvin
Claire Parfitt
Elizabeth Pigram
Laurent Quénelle
Harriet Rayfield
Richard Blayden
Takane Funatsu
Victoria Irish
Bridget O'Donnell
Hilary Jane Parker
Julia Rumley

Second Violins

David Alberman
Thomas Norris
Miya Väisänen
Matthew Gardner
Naoko Keatley
Iwona Muszynska
Andrew Pollock
Paul Robson
Eleanor Fagg
Raja Halder
Dmitry Khakhamov
Gordon MacKay
Madeleine Pickering
Erzsebet Racz

Violas

Rebecca Jones
Gillianne Haddow
Malcolm Johnston
Germán Clavijo
Julia O'Riordan
Robert Turner
Michelle Bruil
May Dolan
Anna Growns
Nancy Johnson
Claire Maynard
Martin Schaefer

Cellos

Rebecca Gilliver
Daniel Gardner
Laure Le Dantec
Amanda Truelove
Victoria Harrild
Silvestrs Kalnins
Leo Melvin
Jessie Ann Richardson
Peteris Sokolovskis
Simon Thompson

Double Basses

Dominik Wagner
Patrick Laurence
Matthew Gibson
Thomas Goodman
Joe Melvin
Simon Oliver
Adam Wynter
Simo Väisänen

Flutes

Gareth Davies
Patricia Moynihan

Piccolos

Sharon Williams
Clare Childs

Oboes

Juliana Koch
Rosie Jenkins

Cor Anglais

Christine Pendrill

Clarinets

Chris Richards
Chi-Yu Mo

Bass Clarinet

Andrew Harper

Bassoons

Rachel Gough
Joost Bosdijk

Contra Bassoon

Simon Davies

Horns

Tim Jones
Alexander Edmundson
Angela Barnes
Alex Wide
Fabian van de Geest
Meilyr Hughes
Jonathan Maloney

Trumpets

James Fountain
Matthew Williams
Niall Keatley
Simon Cox

Trombones

Simon Johnson
Tom Berry

Bass Trombone

Dan West

Tuba

Ben Thomson

Timpani

Paul Stoneman

Percussion

Neil Percy
David Jackson
Sam Walton
Tom Edwards

Harp

Bryn Lewis

LSO String

Experience Scheme

Established in 1992, the Scheme enables young string players at the start of their professional careers to gain work experience by playing in rehearsals and concerts with the LSO. The musicians are treated as professional 'extras', and receive fees in line with LSO section players.

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Performing tonight are:

Mitzi Gardiner
Silvestrs Kalniņš
Yat Hei Lee