

# TONIGHT'S CONCERT

## SIBELIUS SECOND SYMPHONY

Sunday 8 May 2022 7–9.05pm  
Barbican

Sofia Gubaidulina *Offertorium*  
*Interval*  
Jean Sibelius *Symphony No 2*

Dima Slobodeniouk conductor  
Baiba Skride violin

# Welcome



Kathryn McDowell CBE DL  
LSO Managing Director

**A** warm welcome to this evening's LSO concert conducted by Dima Slobodeniouk. Having worked together on tour in Finland in 2017, the LSO are delighted to have him join us on stage at our Barbican home for the first time, in a programme linking his native roots with the cultural influence of his current homeland Finland.

In the first half of tonight's concert, we welcome violinist Baiba Skride to perform the first violin concerto by celebrated composer Sofia Gubaidulina, who last year celebrated her 90th birthday, *Offertorium*. After the interval Dima Slobodeniouk, who was for five years Artistic Director of the Sibelius Festival, conducts the composer's Second Symphony.

I hope you enjoy tonight's performance and that you will be able to join us again soon. Later this month we look forward to welcoming back Michael Tilson Thomas, our Conductor Laureate, conducting Mahler's Fifth Symphony, and to an uplifting celebration of gospel and spiritual music with André J Thomas, who we were pleased to recently announce as LSO Associate Artist.

# 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](https://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](https://dec.org.uk)

## Coming Up

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Friday 13 May 1pm  
LSO St Luke's

### **BBC RADIO 3 ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: GARETH DAVIES**

Gareth Davies, LSO Principal Flute, shares the stage with recital partner Michael McHale in this Artist Spotlight chamber music concert, in partnership with BBC Radio 3.

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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.

[iso.co.uk/whats-on](https://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**

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# Offertorium

## Sofia Gubaidulina

**Baiba Skride** violin



1980 (revised 1986)



38 minutes

Programme note by  
**Tim Rutherford-Johnson**

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.

A **scherzo** is a short, often humorous movement, usually (though not always) in triple time. Scherzos feature as the third movement (or sometimes the second) in many symphonies, and sometimes feature in concertos too. The word 'scherzo' means 'joke' in Italian.

For Sofia Gubaidulina, freedom – especially artistic freedom – is intimately connected to the principle of sacrifice. In a 2013 interview she was asked about the challenge of working under the totalitarian regime of the Soviet Union. 'I did manage to find my own freedom', she said. 'I rejected many material benefits to preserve this freedom, but its fruits often remained hidden. This is not a normal state of affairs. But for our generation the solution was enthusiastic performers – a sacrifice, an offering.'

One such performer was violinist Gidon Kremer. In the winter of 1977/78, Gubaidulina happened to share a taxi with Kremer after a concert. Both were still in an early phase of their careers, on the cusp of international renown. 'Wouldn't you like to write a violin concerto?', Kremer teased. She began studying his performances assiduously in search of his musical signature: for her, the way in which a sound was made carried as much significance as the sound itself. She was most impressed by how Kremer seemed to focus his entire life force into the point where his finger made contact with the string. 'In this union of the tip of the finger and the resonating string lies the total surrender of the self to the tone', she once said. 'I began to understand that Kremer's theme is sacrifice – the musician's sacrifice of himself in self-surrender to the tone.'

Following a chain of symbolic connections from this point led Gubaidulina to the sacrificial offering of the Crucifixion, the Offertory of the Mass, and the topic of her work. The circle of inspirations was completed when her partner, the pianist and conductor Pyotr Meshchaninov, suggested she use the 'royal theme' from Bach's *Musical Offering* as her musical subject.

Bach became a recurring touchstone in her subsequent music, most notably in her *St John Passion* (2000), a German commission marking the 250th anniversary of the German composer's death. In *Offertorium* she pays homage, too, to another of her models, Anton Webern, drawing on his own fragmented orchestration of Bach's theme.

The theme is thus heard at the start of the concerto, distributed note by note across the orchestra. Played without its concluding D, it ends instead on a tantalising F–E semitone, which becomes the subject for development by the soloist and then orchestra. A second statement of the theme drops two more notes, one from the beginning and another from the end. With the third statement (played by octave strings) the theme is pruned again. From here on it continues to offer more and more of itself until a yelping climax introduces the cadenza and the first movement ends.

With the theme fully sacrificed, the violin essays a series of possible new subjects in a restless slow movement-cum-scherzo. Although it finds temporary allies among solo viola, cello and winds, each time momentum collapses when the full orchestra is enlisted. This is the turning point of the sacrificial ritual: a tempestuous, anxious 'Bardo' between death and rebirth.

New life comes finally when the violin lands on a slow hymn, played with support from strings and tolling harp, piano and percussion. With the growing radiance of a midwinter sunrise, aspects of the music slowly become familiar: it is Bach's theme, in retrograde, rebuilding itself note by note. As the soloist's final D stretches heavenwards to conclude the work, the offering is complete.

# Sofia Gubaidulina In Profile

## b 1931 (Soviet Union, now Tatarstan)

**S**ofia Asgatovna Gubaidulina was born on 24 October 1931 in Tschistopol, a small town on the Volga in the Tartar Republic of the USSR. Her father was Tartar, but her mother was Russian and Russian is her native language. When she was small, the family moved to Kazan. She graduated from the Kazan Conservatory in 1954, before transferring to the Moscow Conservatory, where she graduated in 1961 as a postgraduate student of Vissarion Shebalin.

In the Soviet period she earned her living writing film scores, while reserving part of every year for her own music. Early on she was attracted to the modernist enthusiasms of her contemporaries Schnittke and Denisov but emerged with a striking voice of her own with the chamber-orchestral *Concordanza* (1970). During this period she built up a close circle of performing friends with whom she would share long periods of improvisation and acoustic experiments. Out of these experiences came many works, such as the Concerto for bassoon and low instruments (1975, for the bassoonist Valery Popov), *The Hour of the Soul* (1976, rev 1988, for the percussionist Mark Pekarsky with voice and orchestra) and ground-breaking pieces for the accordionist Friedrich Lips including the frequently played *De Profundis* (1978).

From the late 1970s onwards Gubaidulina's essentially religious temperament became more and more obvious in her work. Already in Soviet times, when the public expression of religious themes was severely repressed, she was writing pieces like the piano concerto *Introitus* (1978), the violin concerto for

Gidon Kremer *Offertorium* (1980, rev 1986), and *Seven Words for cello, accordion and string orchestra* (1982, published in the USSR under the non-religious title *Partita*). With the arrival of greater freedom under Gorbachev, religious themes became her overwhelming preoccupation. Many of her religious works are on a large scale, including a cello concerto inspired by a poem about the Last Judgement, *And: The feast is in full progress* (1993), *Alleluia* (1990) for chorus and orchestra, a concerto for cello and chorus for Mstislav Rostropovich and the colossal *St John Passion* (2000), a German commission to celebrate the Millennium.

Much of Gubaidulina's more recent work also reflects her fascination with ancient principles of proportion such as the Golden Section. This is particularly clear in her chamber cantatas, *Perception* (1983) and *Now always snow* (1993) as well as in orchestral pieces like *Stimmen... verstummen...* (1986), *Pro et Contra* (1989) and *Zeitgestalten* (1994), this last composed for Simon Rattle and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Gubaidulina has lived in a small village outside Hamburg, where she delights in the peace and quiet she needs to fulfil the many commissions she has received from all round the world.

Sofia Gubaidulina is published by Boosey & Hawkes/Sikorski.



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**INTERVAL** 20 minutes

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# Symphony No 2 in D major Op 43

Jean Sibelius

- 1 Allegretto
- 2 Tempo Andante, ma rubato
- 3 Vivacissimo
- 4 Finale: Allegro moderato



1901–02



46 minutes

Programme note by  
**Andrew Huth**

*A tone poem is an orchestral work evoking the particular mood or imagery described in a literary work.*

The beginning of 1901 found Jean Sibelius in Italy, his mood tense and gloomy. The death of his 16-month-old daughter Kirsti the previous year had been a severe blow, and although his First Symphony was beginning to meet with international success, he was uncertain about his musical future. Various unfocused ideas came to him. One evening, for example, he jotted down a musical phrase and over it wrote: 'Don Juan. I sit in the twilight in my castle, a guest enters. I ask who he is – no answer. I make an effort to entertain him. Still no answer. Eventually he breaks into song and then Don Juan notices who he is: Death'. Two months later he sketched another idea which he labelled 'Christus'.

These two themes later formed the basis of the Second Symphony's second movement. But Sibelius was not then thinking of a new symphony, rather of a series of four tone poems on the Don Juan legend, or perhaps something related to Dante's *The Divine Comedy*. 'Several of my projects will not be ready for many years', he wrote to a friend; but after his return to Finland that summer the Second Symphony took shape. 'I have been in the throes of a bitter struggle with this symphony', he complained. It was nearly finished in November, but further revisions caused two postponements of the planned premiere. It was at last completed in January 1902, and Sibelius conducted four performances that March in Helsinki.

When Finnish audiences heard Sibelius' Symphony No 1 in 1899, they expected it to reflect the world of the heroes of the *Kalevala* depicted in his earlier tone poems. In fact, Sibelius' main concern was not to illustrate anything at all, but to explore a personal approach to purely symphonic momentum. The Second Symphony marks a big further step in this direction. Nevertheless, it still looks both forward and backwards, perhaps more so than any other work by Sibelius, giving rise to some curious contradictions in the relation and balance between the four movements.

The first movement is a very original structure, pointing toward the new Classicism Sibelius aimed for in later works. The cool Nordic atmosphere is unmistakable, and so is the personal character of the themes, with such Sibelius fingerprints as swelling dynamics and long held notes ending in a flourish. The freshness of the colouring is achieved by the use, initially, of unmixed strings, woodwind and brass. Ideas are presented in turn, then in different combinations and changing perspectives. The movement ends modestly, with a neat sense of completion.

The Andante second movement, on the other hand, is more sectional, with a fluid tempo moving from the slow, bleak opening towards passages of dissonant anguish that are almost expressionistic. At a time

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when Finland was an oppressed province of the Russian Empire, the Second Symphony was often regarded from a nationalistic viewpoint. Thus Sibelius' staunch champion, the conductor Robert Kajanus, could write:

'The Andante strikes one as the most heartbroken protest against all the injustices that threaten at the present time to deprive the sun of its light and our flowers of their scent ... The Scherzo gives a picture of frenetic preparation ... the Finale develops towards a triumphant conclusion intended to arouse in the listener a picture of lighter and confident prospects for the future.'

Sibelius either kept a sensible silence about such associations or denied them outright. The various poetic ideas that filled his mind before composing the work – Don Juan, Christ, Dante, or whatever else – may not be very significant in themselves, but they certainly have nothing to do with Finnish mythology or nationalism.

Taking a stylistic position somewhere between the cool Classicism of the first movement and the unbridled Romanticism of the second, are the last two movements. The build-up of tension towards the end of the Finale shows Sibelius as a master

of symphonic momentum, as the chorale theme first announced softly by the woodwind is subjected to repetition with suppressed dynamics and a rigidly controlled tempo before the final resolution.

Among the many tributes that the symphony earned him, Sibelius was especially pleased with comments from two fellow composers. After conducting it in Berlin in 1905 he wrote to his wife: '[Ferruccio] Busoni is totally enamoured of my symphony and understands its chaste concentration. In particular he thinks the second movement the best music in existence'. Unreserved praise came after the Stockholm premiere in October 1902 from the Swedish composer Wilhelm Stenhammar:

'You have reached into the deepest depths of the unconscious and the ineffable and brought forth something of a miracle. What I suspected has been proved true: for me you emerge as the foremost, indeed the only major figure at this moment!'

# Jean Sibelius In Profile

## 1865 to 1957 (Finland)



### IN BRIEF

**Born** 1865, Hämeenlinna

**Died** 1957, Ainola, Järvenpää

#### **Musical training**

Helsinki Conservatory (now the Sibelius Academy)

#### **Musical acquaintances**

Ferruccio Busoni, Gustav Mahler, Claude Debussy, Richard Strauss

#### **Best known for**

Seven symphonies, tone-poems including *En Saga*, *The Swan of Tuonela*, *Tapiola* and *Lemminkäinen's Return*, Violin Concerto

Composer profile by  
**Andrew Stewart**

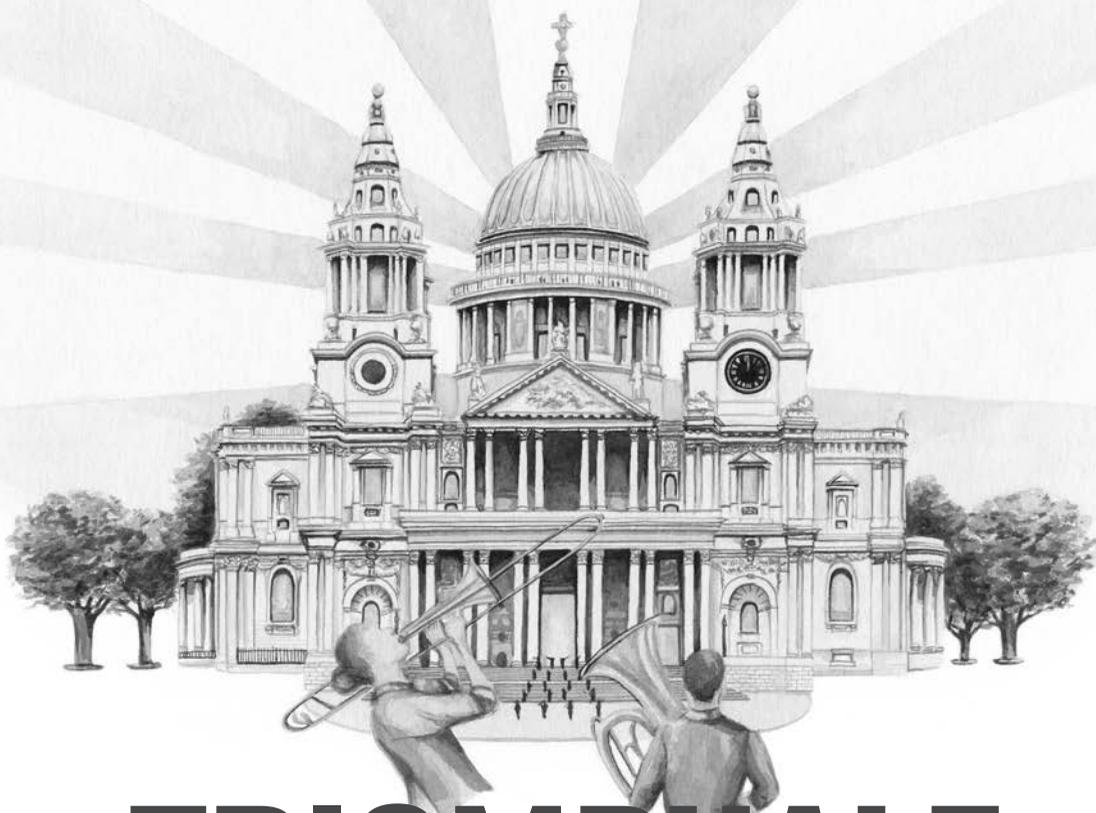
**A**s a young boy, Jean Sibelius made rapid progress as a violinist and composer. In 1886, he abandoned his law studies at Helsinki University, enrolling at the Helsinki Conservatory and later taking lessons in Berlin and Vienna. The young composer drew inspiration from the Finnish ancient epic, the *Kalevala*, a rich source of Finnish cultural identity. These sagas of the remote Karelia region greatly appealed to Sibelius, especially those concerned with the dashing youth Lemminkäinen and the bleak landscape of Tuonela, the kingdom of the dead. The *Kalevala* provided the literary background for his early tone poems, beginning with the mighty choral symphony *Kullervo* in 1892.

The Finns swiftly adopted Sibelius and his works as symbols of national pride, particularly following the premiere of the overtly patriotic *Finlandia* – composed a few months after Finland's legislative rights had been taken away by Russia – in 1900. The public in Finland recognised the idealistic young composer as a champion of national freedom.

'Well, we shall see now what the new century brings with it for Finland and us Finns.'

**Jean Sibelius, New Year's Day 1900**

Although Sibelius lived to the age of 91, he effectively abandoned composition almost 30 years earlier. Heavy drinking, illness, relentless self-criticism and financial problems were among the conditions that influenced his early retirement. He was, however, honoured as a great Finnish hero long after he ceased composing, while his principal orchestral works – including his seven symphonies, the Violin Concerto and a number of tone poems – became established as an essential part of the orchestral repertoire.



# 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://iso.co.uk/gala) for more information.

**[Iso.co.uk/triompnale](https://iso.co.uk/triompnale)**

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.

# Dima Slobodeniouk

## conductor



**D**ima Slobodeniouk has been Music Director of the Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia since 2013. Together they have built up an extensive and highly regarded media library of live concert recordings in recent years.

In previous seasons, he has worked with renowned orchestras such as the Berlin Philharmonic, Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, Bayrische Staatsorchester, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Concertgebouworkest and the NHK Symphony Orchestra. Slobodeniouk has worked with soloists including Barbara Hannigan, Baiba Skride, Isabelle Faust, Patricia Kopatchinskaja, Leif Ove Andsnes, Khatia Buniatishvili, Vilde Frang, Yuja Wang and Frank Peter Zimmermann.

Highlights of the current season include re-invitations to the London Symphony Orchestra, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, hr-Sinfonieorchester Frankfurt, SWR Symphonieorchester, Dresdner Philharmonie, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra and Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra. He also makes his debuts with the Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg and the Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse. In March 2022 he led the Junge Deutsche Philharmonie on tour for the first time, with concerts in Hamburg, Berlin and Dresden, among other cities.

Slobodeniouk's discography was recently extended by a recording of Kalevi Aho's *Sieidi* and Fifth Symphony, the concert suites from Sergei Prokofiev's opera *The Gambler* and the ballet *The Tale of the Stone Flower* with the Lahti Symphony Orchestra on BIS, released to enthusiastic reviews. Also previously released by BIS were works by Stravinsky with the Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia and Ilya Gringolts, plus another recording of works by Kalevi Aho with the Lahti Symphony Orchestra, which won the 2018 *BBC Music Magazine Award*. For the Ondine label, Slobodeniouk has recorded works by Perttu Haapanen and Lotta Wennäkoski with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra.

Slobodeniouk studied violin at the Central Moscow School of Music with Zinaida Gilels and Jevgenia Chugajev. He continued his violin studies at the Middle Finland Conservatory and the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki. Following this he took up conducting lessons with Atso Almila, and furthered these under the guidance of Leif Segerstam, Jorma Panula, Ilya Musin and Esa-Pekka Salonen. With a passion to inspire young musicians of the future, Slobodeniouk began a conducting initiative with the Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia, providing opportunities for students to work on the podium with a professional orchestra.

From 2016 to 2021 Slobodeniouk was Principal Conductor of the Lahti Symphony Orchestra, as well as Artistic Director of the Sibelius Festival.

# Baiba Skride

## violin



**B**aiba Skride's natural approach to her music-making has endeared her to conductors and orchestras worldwide. She is consistently invited for her refreshing interpretations, her sensitivity and delight in the music. She has worked with orchestras, including the London Symphony Orchestra, Berlin Philharmonic, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, Boston and Chicago Symphony Orchestras, New York Philharmonic, Concertgebouworkest, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, Oslo Philharmonic, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Shanghai Symphony Orchestra and NHK Symphony Orchestra. She collaborates with conductors such as Marin Alsop, Christoph Eschenbach, Ed Gardner, Susanna Mälkki, Andris Nelsons, Andrés Orozco-Estrada, Santtu-Matias Rouvali, Andris Poga, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Tugan Sokhiev, John Storgårds, Juraj Valcuha and Kazuki Yamada.

Highlights of the 2021/22 season include the season opening of the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, in which she performed Sofia Gubaidulina's Triple Concerto with cellist Harriet Krijgh and bayan-player Martynas Levickis under the baton of Andris Nelsons. In celebration of the composer's 90th birthday she returned to the orchestra for a performance of Gubaidulina's *Offertorium*, which she plays with the LSO tonight, as well as with the Hallé Orchestra and Sir Mark Elder this season. Additionally, she returns to the hr-Sinfonieorchester with Alain Altinoglu to perform Gubaidulina's *Dialog: Ich und Du*. Skride looks forward to her return to orchestras such as the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Orchester der Komischen Oper Berlin, Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg, RTÉ National Symphony

Orchestra, Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, Residentie Orchestra, Antwerp Symphony Orchestra, Singapore Symphony Orchestra and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, amongst others.

Skride is a sought-after chamber musician internationally and commits to the long-established duo with her sister Lauma. She is one of the founding members of the Skride Quartet, with which she has performed at venues such as Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Musikverein Vienna, Wigmore Hall London and Louvre Paris, and has toured in North America and Australia in previous seasons. In 2021/22 Skride also performs in trio with her sister Lauma Skride and Harriet Krijgh as well as in different chamber music projects with Alban Gerhardt and Brett Dean and others.

Skride's debut solo recording will be released this month. Her other discography includes a Mozart recording with the Swedish Chamber Orchestra, and a recording of works by Bartók with the WDR Sinfonieorchester, both under Eivind Aadland; a disc featuring works by Bernstein, Korngold and Rózsa with the Gothenburg Symphony and Tampere Philharmonic Orchestras under the baton of Santtu-Matias Rouvali; and the debut recording of the Skride Quartet, all for the Orfeo label.

Skride was born into a musical Latvian family in Riga where she began her studies, transferring in 1995 to the Conservatory of Music and Theatre in Rostock. In 2001 she won first prize in the Queen Elisabeth Competition. She plays the Yfrah Neaman Stradivarius kindly loaned to her by the Neaman family through the Beare's International Violin Society.

# London Symphony Orchestra

## On Stage

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### Leader

Roman Simovic

### First Violins

Julia Ungureanu  
Clare Duckworth  
Ginette Decuyper  
Gerald Gregory  
Maxine Kwok  
William Melvin  
Claire Parfitt  
Harriet Rayfield  
Sylvain Vasseur  
Caroline Frenkel  
Lulu Fuller  
Bridget O'Donnell

### Second Violins

Julián Gil Rodríguez  
Thomas Norris  
Sarah Quinn  
Miya Väisänen  
David Ballesteros  
Matthew Gardner  
Naoko Keatley  
Alix Lagasse  
Iwona Muszynska  
Csilla Pogany  
Andrew Pollock  
Paul Robson

### Violas

Rebecca Jones  
Malcolm Johnston  
Germán Clavijo  
Stephen Doman  
Sofia Silva Sousa  
Robert Turner  
Luca Casciato  
Alistair Scahill  
Elisabeth Varlow  
Anna Dorothea Vogel

### Cellos

Rebecca Gilliver  
Alastair Blayden  
Eve-Marie Caravassilis  
Daniel Gardner  
Laure Le Dantec  
Victoria Harrild  
Leo Melvin  
Desmond Neysmith

### Double Basses

Dominik Wagner  
Patrick Laurence  
Matthew Gibson  
Joe Melvin  
José Moreira  
Simo Väisänen

### Flutes

Charlotte Ashton  
Rebecca Larsen

### Piccolo

Sharon Williams

### Oboes

Olivier Stankiewicz  
Polly Bartlett

### Clarinets

Alessandro Beverari  
Chi-Yu Mo  
Thomas Lessels

### E-flat Clarinet

Chi-Yu Mo

### Bassoons

Daniel Jemison  
Joost Bosdijk

### Horns

Timothy Jones  
Angela Barnes  
Daniel Curzon  
Flora Bain

### Trumpets

James Fountain  
Kaitlin Wild  
Christopher Evans

### Trombones

Rebecca Smith  
Andrew Cole

### Bass Trombone

Paul Milner

### Tuba

Ben Thomson

### Timpani

Nigel Thomas

### Percussion

Neil Percy  
David Jackson  
Sam Walton  
Oliver Yates

### Harps

Bryn Lewis  
Anneke Hodnett

### Piano

Elizabeth Burley

### 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:

Joonas Pekonen

Pingping Zhang