

# TONIGHT'S CONCERT

## LINDBERG & BEETHOVEN

Wednesday 24 May 2023 8.15-9.40pm

Barbican

**Magnus Lindberg** Piano Concerto No 3 (UK premiere)

**Ludwig van Beethoven** Symphony No 6, 'Pastoral'

**François-Xavier Roth** conductor

**Yuja Wang** piano

**London Symphony Orchestra**

# Welcome



**W**elcome to this evening's concert, conducted by François-Xavier Roth, LSO Principal Guest Conductor, who continues his series of Beethoven and Modernism with the LSO, tonight combining the work of Magnus Lindberg with Beethoven's much loved 'Pastoral' Symphony No 6.

We are delighted to be joined this evening by Yuja Wang, a wonderful friend of the LSO, who first appeared with the Orchestra as a protégée of Michael Tilson Thomas, and is now established worldwide as a leading pianist of our time. Tonight she gives the UK premiere of Magnus

Lindberg's flamboyant new Piano Concerto, written especially for her.

In the second half of tonight's concert we hear Beethoven's 'Pastoral' Symphony, which vividly depicts the countryside. On Friday we take this programme to the Brighton Festival, as part of a special partnership that has been evolving over the last couple of years.

I hope you enjoy this concert and that you will be able to join us again soon. This weekend, François-Xavier Roth conducts our regular LSO Futures concert, which features a world premiere by Colin Matthews and music by early-career composers previously supported through the LSO Panufnik Composers Scheme. In June, the Beethoven symphonic cycle continues with No 9 – the magnificent 'Choral' Symphony – alongside Jörg Widmann's Violin Concerto, a piece written specifically for Christian Tetzlaff, who completes his Artist Portrait with the LSO.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathryn McDowell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Kathryn McDowell** CBE DL  
Managing Director

# Coming Up

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Friday 26 May 1pm  
Jerwood Hall, LSO St Luke's

## **BBC RADIO 3 LUNCHTIME CONCERT TETZLAFF & FRIENDS: VIOLIN & PIANO**

Two impassioned masterworks, from restless energy in Beethoven to all the drama of a romantic opera in Franck.

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Friday 26 May 6pm  
Jerwood Hall, LSO St Luke's

## **BBC RADIO 3 EARLY-EVENING CONCERT TETZLAFF & FRIENDS: VIOLIN & PIANO**

The simple pairing of a violin and a piano creates new worlds, in music exploring sounds of light and shadow.

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Sunday 28 May 7pm  
Barbican

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London Business School  
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## **SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS**

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# Piano Concerto No 3 (UK premiere)

Magnus Lindberg

Yuja Wang piano

- 1 **Minim = 56**
- 2 **Minim = 56**
- 3 **Crotchet = 112**



2019–21



33 minutes

Programme note by  
**Timmy Fisher**

Composer profile by  
**Alison Bullock**



Concertos often owe their origins to the inspiration of a great performer. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was so impressed with the pioneering clarinettist Anton Stadler that he wrote a concerto – along with several other works – especially for him. A close friendship with Mstislav Rostropovich spurred both of Dmitri Shostakovich's Cello Concertos. Edvard Grieg's Piano Concerto owes a considerable debt to Robert Schumann's, which Grieg first heard performed by its dedicatee: Clara Schumann. In the case of Magnus Lindberg's Third Piano Concerto, an encounter with Yuja Wang proved the spark. In 2019 she performed both Shostakovich Piano Concertos at a concert that also featured Lindberg's 1985 breakthrough work *Kraft*. The composer was impressed: 'I thought, 'Ah! if ever there were a chance to compose something for her, that would be my goal.' An offer was soon made, accepted, and three years later the new work was premiered by Wang and the San Francisco Symphony, with Lindberg's friend and compatriot Esa-Pekka Salonen conducting.

As with Lindberg's other piano concertos, the piece was tailored specifically to the soloist, and Wang's imprint can be felt throughout. The solo part is richly virtuosic, with little rest given between interchanging passages

of dense chord clusters and filigree pattern work. Two solo cadenzas – at the end of the first movement and in the middle of the second – showcase both technical brilliance and endurance (the first is almost four minutes long). But the Concerto is not just about bravura. Subtle shifts in dynamics highlight the kaleidoscopic quality in Wang's tone, while snatches of syrupy melody provide an outlet for the lyricism that makes her performances of Serge Rachmaninoff's concertos so compelling. Lindberg was also careful not to write anything obviously uncomfortable, such as intervals of over an octave that would stretch one hand.

Wang's musical personality may have shaped the ideas, but Lindberg's maximalist style – urgent rhythms, a strong feel for harmony, vivid orchestral colours – feeds and propels the music. As does a reverence for the past: Béla Bartók's Third Piano Concerto was an important initial influence, and its opening – 'so beautiful and simple' – can be traced in that of Lindberg's. Other homages abound, in mood more than in direct quotation. The swelling, off-beat chords at the start of the first cadenza are surely a nod to the opening of Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto, while certain passages bear a resemblance to the glittering textures found in Ravel's piano music.

# Magnus Lindberg In Profile

## b 1958 (Finland)

This assimilation is key to Lindberg's more recent compositional approach, particularly in works for piano. In his previous concerto, for instance, rather than inventing a 'new universe for the instrument', he tried to absorb the piano's complex history into his own 'personal language ... not through post-modern style-hopping, but rather through a structure that creates a tension between different modes of expression'. A similar idea applies here. Though the movements are distinct (and, unusually for Lindberg, broken by pauses), they are based on the same material – a set of eight different sound realms or 'characters' with their own harmony and tempo. Lindberg presents and develops these characters in new colours and contexts, providing tension and release in their rapid exchange and combination.

In this way, each movement can be heard as a concerto itself – springing from the same source but unfurling through different dimensions. The combined effect is positively operatic, as Lindberg admits: 'It's so rich in its storytelling. It's huge. In a way, it's the biggest piece I've written.' Indeed, the Finnish composer spent nearly two years on it – and another waiting to hear it performed (the Covid-delayed premiere was originally to be given in China). Tonight's performance marks its UK premiere.

**M**agnus Lindberg was born in Helsinki in 1958. No one in his family was involved in music, but he was given an accordion for his sixth birthday and thus found his way into the world of composing. He started writing music at the age of seven and later immersed himself in music theory. His classmate at the Sibelius Academy, conductor and composer Esa-Pekka Salonen, recalls '[a] boy who coped with all these intricate and thorny matters, such as figured bass, just like that'. But it was not just music theory that Lindberg studied – his father worked at IBM and he spent much of his childhood 'playing around with broken computers'. As a result, his first serious compositions were extremely theoretical electronic music.

Lindberg studied in Helsinki, Paris and Siena with Einojuhani Rautavaara, Gérard Grisey and Franco Donatoni (among others). His compositional breakthrough came with two large-scale works, *Action-Situation-Signification* (1982) and *Kraft* (1983–85). Since then, his music has drawn on inspirations from punk to cartoon animations, and much else besides. Lindberg is now highly regarded for his writing for orchestra and large-scale ensembles; recent works include: *Serenades* (2020), a co-commission from the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra; the Piano Concerto No 3 for Yuja Wang (2019–21, premiered by the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra and Wang in 2022); and *Absence* (2020), premiered by the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra. Lindberg was the New York Philharmonic's Composer-in-Residence from 2009 to 2011. He is one of the most significant composers in the world today, and many would agree with Sir Simon Rattle's description of him as 'one-man living proof that the orchestra is not dead'.

# Symphony No 6 in F major Op 68, 'Pastoral'

Ludwig van Beethoven

- 1 **Pleasant, cheerful feelings awakened on arrival in the countryside: Allegro ma non troppo**
- 2 **Scene by the brook: Andante molto mosso**
- 3 **Merry gathering of country folk: Allegro -**
- 4 **Thunderstorm: Allegro -**
- 5 **Shepherd's song: benevolent feelings, combined with thanks to the deity, after the storm: Allegretto**



1807-08



40 minutes

Programme note by  
**Lindsay Kemp**

Ludwig van Beethoven loved nature and the open air. He spent most of his summers away from Vienna in the country retreats of Heiligenstadt, Mödling and Baden, where he would walk the woods and fields, notebook in hand. Even back in the city, short strolls were a regular part of his work routine. 'No one can love the countryside as much as I do,' he once said, 'for surely woods, trees and rocks produce the echo which man desires to hear.'

But nature was not just a balm for the senses; for Beethoven it was evidence of the Creator's hand. Raised on the tolerant attitudes of the Enlightenment, he had little interest in conventional formal religion, and it was in the outdoors, amid the wonders of the natural world, that he found himself closest to God. He was hardly alone in that – such feelings were part of the spirit of the early Romantic age – but it was perhaps his unique placing at the threshold of the Classical and Romantic eras in music that allowed such a work as the 'Pastoral' Symphony to achieve greatness.

'More an expression of feeling than painting', said Beethoven, and it is true that, while the atmosphere of the countryside pervades every bar, the Sixth Symphony can be fully enjoyed without resorting to pictures of shepherds, peasants and cuckoos. Even so, members of the audience at the work's premiere in a freezing cold Theater an der Wien in December 1808 would have had little difficulty recognising the scene Beethoven was laying out before them. Musical evocations of natural phenomena such as running water, storms and birdsong were familiar from the opera house, as were representations of the countryside's human population by means of rustic tunes and bagpipe-style drones. There had been pastoral symphonies before, while Haydn's two great late oratorios, *The Creation* and *The Seasons*, with their own evocations of the natural world, were regular fixtures in the Viennese concert calendar. What may have struck the first listeners of Beethoven's 'Pastoral' Symphony as more radical than was its effortlessly laid-back character, and the air of repose with which,

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uniquely in a Beethoven symphony, it both begins and ends.

The first movement introduces us to two other important characteristics of the work: themes which seem to want to circle back on themselves in leisurely self-perpetuation, and a general contentedness with simple and slow-moving harmonies. When taking a walk in the country there is no need to hurry, as Beethoven proves in the central development section, where a five-note descending figure borrowed from the opening theme is repeated many times over slowly changing chords, its effect like that of turning one's gaze to admire different vistas within the same landscape.

The second movement is one of Beethoven's most gorgeous inspirations, and one which he had been harbouring for some time. The watery accompaniment figure had its origin in an idea noted down in a sketchbook from 1802–03, where it carried the heading: 'murmur of the brook ... the deeper the brook, the deeper the sound'. 'Deep' is the word; the richness and subtlety of Beethoven's creation give it an unparalleled power to gladden the heart, and so dreamily do we fall under its spell that it hardly seems out of place when the music twice stops sleepily near the end to allow flute, oboe and clarinet to give us birdsong imitations identified by Beethoven as nightingale, quail and cuckoo.

The last three movements are run together to make an uninterrupted sequence. The third movement is a robust depiction of bucolic merrymaking. Twice Beethoven pokes fun at the village band (the oboist not sure where to come in, the bassoonist only knowing three notes), and twice the music tips over into an earthier dance in which we can almost hear feet stamping.

Eventually, the revelries are halted by the menacing rumble of approaching thunder, before the fourth movement storm hits. When it has run its brief but brutal course, and the departing lightning has flashed for the last time, gentle calls given out on clarinet and horn signal the arrival of the finale, before going on to form the basis of the movement's recurring main theme. This hymn of praise is no exultant shout, however, but a joyful and dignified thanksgiving, not just for the brook and the 'pleasant feelings' but, we realise, for everything we have witnessed, the storm and the three-note bassoonist included. With a final, majestic, swelling peroration, Beethoven ennobles them all.

# Ludwig van Beethoven In Profile

## 1770 (Germany) to 1827 (Austria)



Composer profile by  
**Andrew Mellor**

### KEEP LISTENING



Listen to Beethoven's Symphonies Nos 1 to 9, conducted by the late Bernard Haitink and recorded live in concert for LSO Live, on Apple Music Classical.



**L**udwig van Beethoven was born in a faraway corner of what is now Germany. His father was alcoholic and abusive. Beethoven chanced his way to Europe's cultural capital, Vienna, where he studied with Joseph Haydn and probably associated with Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

From musical foundations steadied by those two figures, Beethoven led music into the first-person passions of Romanticism. He wrote in every genre, and with the possible exception of opera, transformed each of them. He reimagined the scale and scope of the symphony and invested the string quartet with a level of psychological depth that dumbfounded his peers. Beethoven used rhythm like no composer before him and pushed harmony to the boundaries of tangibility. He exploited the piano's technological transformation to mine entirely new expressions from the instrument.

Writing for himself and not to deadlines, Beethoven was able to be more deliberate and considered in his compositions. But the story of his career is one of the constant overcoming of colossal

obstacles. From the age of 26, the composer knew he had serious problems with his hearing and for the last seven years of his life he was almost completely deaf. That made him irritable, sensitive and withdrawn. But Beethoven always remained ever sure of himself, and consistently creative.

### MORE BEETHOVEN COMING UP

Sunday 4 June 2023 7pm

**Symphony No 9, 'Choral'**  
with François-Xavier Roth and the London Symphony Chorus

Thursday 12 October 2023 7pm

**Symphony No 7**  
with Sir Antonio Pappano

Sunday 4 February 2024 7pm

**Piano Concerto No 5, 'Emperor'**  
with Leif Ove Andsnes

Thursday 14 March 2024 7pm

**Symphonies Nos 2 & 8**  
with François-Xavier Roth



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# François Xavier Roth

## LSO Principal Guest Conductor



**F**rançois-Xavier Roth is General Music Director of the City of Cologne and founder of Les Siècles, and regularly works with leading orchestras such as the London Symphony Orchestra, of which he is Principal Guest Conductor.

In Cologne, where he has directed both the Gürzenich Orchestra and the Opera since 2015, his programming includes new commissions alongside Baroque and Romantic music. For Cologne Opera he has led new productions of *Benvenuto Cellini*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, *Tannhäuser*, *Hänsel und Gretel*, *Tristan und Isolde*, *Salome*, *Faust* and *Béatrice et Bénédict*.

His sense of musical exploration led him in 2003 to found Les Siècles, which performs contrasting programmes on modern and period instruments, often within the same concert. Together, they have toured Europe, China and Japan, appearing at the Berlin Musikfest, BBC Proms and Enescu festivals. Projects have included recreating the original sound of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, in collaboration with the Pina Bausch and Dominique Brun dance companies, and performing the cycle of Beethoven's symphonies

at the Palais de Versailles and around France for the composer's anniversary year, a project curtailed by the pandemic. In 2019 Les Siècles became resident orchestra of Atelier Lyrique de Tourcoing, where Roth is also Artistic Director. In 2022 they embarked upon their new residency at Théâtre des Champs-Élysées.

Roth has premiered works by Georg Friedrich Haas and Hèctor Parra, and collaborated with composers such as Pierre Boulez, Wolfgang Rihm, Jörg Widmann, Helmut Lachenmann and Philippe Manoury. Roth was joint winner of the Donatella Flick LSO Conducting Competition in 2000, becoming Assistant Conductor with the LSO and working with the Orchestra every year since. He has a leading role in the LSO Panufnik Composers Scheme.

Engagement with new audiences is an essential part of Roth's work. With the Festival Berlioz and Les Siècles, he founded the Jeune Orchestre Européen Hector Berlioz, which last year performed *Les Troyens à Carthage* in Berlioz's birthplace. In Cologne he has initiated a community orchestra and his *Ohrenauf!* youth programme was recipient of a Junge Ohren Produktion Award. His television series *Presto!* attracted weekly audiences of over three million in France.

His prolific discography includes the complete tone poems of Richard Strauss, Stravinsky ballets, Ravel and Berlioz cycles, Bruckner, Mahler and Schumann symphonies, and albums commemorating Debussy's centenary. He was awarded the German Record Critics' Honorary Prize in 2020, the youngest conductor ever to receive it. He is a Chevalier of the Légion d'honneur.

# Yuja Wang

piano



Pianist Yuja Wang is celebrated for her charismatic artistry, emotional honesty and captivating stage presence. She has performed with the world's most venerated conductors, musicians and ensembles, and is renowned not only for her virtuosity, but also for her spontaneous and lively performances. She famously told the *New York Times*: 'I firmly believe every programme should have its own life, and be a representation of how I feel at the moment.' Her skill and charisma were recently demonstrated in a marathon Rachmaninoff performance at Carnegie Hall alongside conductor Yannick Nézet-Séguin and the Philadelphia Orchestra. This historic event, celebrating 150 years since the birth of Rachmaninoff, included performances of all four of his concertos plus the *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* in one afternoon, and saw queues around the block for tickets on the day. This season has also seen

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Yuja perform the world premiere of Magnus Lindberg's Piano Concerto No 3 in San Francisco, with further performances of the work scheduled elsewhere in North America and Europe.

Yuja was born into a musical family in Beijing. After childhood piano studies in China, she received advanced training in Canada and at the Curtis Institute of Music under Gary Graffman. Her international breakthrough came in 2007, when she replaced Martha Argerich as soloist with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Two years later, she signed an exclusive contract with Deutsche Grammophon, and has since established her place among the world's leading artists, with a succession of critically acclaimed performances and recordings. She was named *Musical America's* Artist of the Year in 2017, and in 2021 received an Opus Klassik Award for her world-premiere recording of John Adams' *Must the Devil Have All the Good Tunes?* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic under the baton of Gustavo Dudamel.

Last season, she embarked on a highly anticipated international recital tour, performing in world-class venues across North America and Europe, astounding audiences once more with her flair, technical ability and exceptional artistry in a wide-ranging programme including Ludwig van Beethoven, György Ligeti and Arnold Schoenberg.

# London Symphony Orchestra On Stage

## **Guest Leader**

Benjamin Gilmore

## **First Violins**

Clare Duckworth

Ginette Decuyper

Laura Dixon

Maxine Kwok

William Melvin

Claire Parfitt

Laurent Quénelle

Harriet Rayfield

Sylvain Vasseur

Bridget O'Donnell

## **Second Violins**

Saskia Otto

Sarah Quinn

Miya Väisänen

Matthew Gardner

Alix Lagasse

Iwona Muszynska

Csilla Pogany

Andrew Pollock

Paul Robson

José Nuno Matias

## **Violas**

Eivind Ringstad

Gillianne Haddow

Anna Bastow

Germán Clavijo

Julia O'Riordan

Robert Turner

Thomas Beer

MK Sung

## **Cellos**

Eve-Marie Caravassilis

David Cohen

Alastair Blayden

Daniel Gardner

Laure Le Dantec

Amanda Truelove

## **Double Basses**

Ivan Zavgorodniy

Patrick Laurence

Thomas Goodman

Joe Melvin

Jani Pensola

## **Flutes**

Gareth Davies

Daniel Shao

## **Piccolo**

Sharon Williams

## **Oboes**

Juliana Koch

Rosie Jenkins

## **Clarinets**

Chris Richards

Chi-Yu Mo

## **Bassoons**

Rachel Gough

Joost Bosdijk

## **Horns**

Timothy Jones

Angela Barnes

John Davy

Kira Doherty

## **Trumpets**

Chris Avison

Will O'Sullivan

## **Trombones**

Peter Moore

Andrew Cole

## **Bass Trombone**

Paul Milner

## **Tuba**

Ben Thomson

## **Timpani**

Nigel Thomas

## **Percussion**

Sam Walton

David Jackson