TØNIGHT'S Concert

LSO ARTIST PORTRAIT: BERTRAND CHAMAYOU RAKSIN, RAVEL AND VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

Thursday 18 April 2024 7–8.50pm Barbican

David Raksin The Bad and the Beautiful – Suite Maurice Ravel Piano Concerto in G major Interval Ralph Vaughan Williams Symphony No 5

Sir Antonio Pappano conductor Bertrand Chamayou piano London Symphony Orchestra

Vaughan Williams' Symphony No 5 recorded for future release on LSO Live

Recorded for future broadcast by BBC Radio 3 on 8 May



Recorded for future broadcast on Marquee TV on 9 May

MARQUEE TV

RECOMMENDED BY

Welcome



Tonight's concert, conducted by Sir Antonio Pappano, Chief Conductor Designate, pairs jazzinflected works with Ralph Vaughan Williams' poignant Fifth Symphony.

We are delighted to be joined by pianist Bertrand Chamayou for the final concert of his Artist Portrait series with the Orchestra. Tonight he performs Maurice Ravel's Piano Concerto in G major, a piece inspired by jazz, which brings an apt conclusion to a series that has showcased his musical curiosity across a wide range of repertoire.

The concert opens with David Raksin's glistening orchestral suite from the film score for *The Bad and the Beautiful*. After the interval, Sir Antonio Pappano continues his cycle of Vaughan Williams' symphonies, which we began with a poignant and memorable performance of the Fourth and Sixth in March 2020. Tonight the LSO performs the Fifth Symphony, a moving work for peace written during World War II. This performance of Vaughan Williams is being recorded for future release on our record label, LSO Live.

Tonight's concert is also being recorded for future broadcast by our partners BBC Radio 3 and Marquee TV, on 8 and 9 May respectively. Thank you to Classic FM for recommending this concert to their listeners.

Last week we were pleased to announce the LSO's 2024/25 season, taking place from September 2024 to July 2025, Sir Antonio Pappano's first as Chief Conductor. You can browse the full season at **Iso.co.uk/2425**.

I hope you enjoy the concert, and that you will be able to join us again soon. In May, Michael Tilson Thomas, Conductor Laureate, conducts two performances of Gustav Mahler's Third Symphony, for which we welcome the Sopranos and Altos of the London Symphony Chorus, the Tiffin Boys' Choir and mezzo-soprano Alice Coote. We hope to see you there.

Kannya Multuell

Dame Kathryn McDowell DBE DL Managing Director

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

Details correct at time of going to print.

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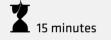
Visit **Iso.co.uk/survey** or scan the QR code to complete a short survey about tonight's concert.



The Bad and the Beautiful – Suite David Raksin

- 1 Love Is for the Very Young
- 2 The Acting Lesson
- 3 The Quickies and the Sneak Preview
- 4 Nocturne and Theme

L 1952, arr 1975



Programme note by **Edward Bhesania**

It was common during the Golden Age of movies from the 1930s to the 1950s for Hollywood to turn the camera on itself. Whether this revealed the industry as one flush with its own self-importance, or as one willing to pull down its own façade, this subgenre included hits from A Star Is Born (1937) to Sunset Boulevard (1950) and Singin' in the Rain (1952). Also in 1952 came The Bad and the Beautiful, directed by Vincente Minnelli.

Billed as a window onto the 'private lives of the famous and the notorious', the film tells the story, in flashbacks, of how three industry professionals – a director, an actress and a writer – have come to hate Jonathan Shields (played by Kirk Douglas), an unscrupulous producer who has used and deceived all three on his own journey to the top. The film's score was by David Raksin, whose theme for the 1944 film *Laura* had already been recorded by Dave Brubeck, Charlie Parker and Nat King Cole, among others.

Raksin's suite elaborates on themes from his score. The first movement, 'Love Is for the Very Young', is the title under which the main theme became a hit. Director Minnelli nearly rejected it before being finally convinced of its quality. After a glitzy opening fanfare, the theme sweeps in on plush strings. The use of the saxophone is perhaps an allusion to sexual allure or to murky reality. 'The Acting Lesson' was for a sequence cut from the film where Shields prepares the actress Georgia Lorrison (played by Lana Turner) for her first major role. A radiant introduction slowly unfurls, leading to a gorgeous, poignant theme. There are surely touches of Gustav Mahler here, but Raksin claimed to have been inspired by the composer Anton Arensky. 'It's not his notes at all,' he explained, 'but that kind of Russian style.'

'The Quickies and the Sneak Preview' is a buoyant, fleetfooted movement, expanded from underscoring first heard as Shields and Fred Amiel start out producing fast-turnaround ('quickie') Westerns; the music returns ahead of the preview for their title *The Doom of the Cat Men*.

'Nocturne and Theme' mainly features a troubled theme describing the pressure felt by Georgia the night before her first day of filming, which drives her to seek refuge in alcohol. This settles into a reflective clarinet soliloquy that accompanies a night-time visit to the abandoned home of Georgia's deceased father, who himself had been a revered actor. Strings bring back the bluesy theme of the opening, but the end hangs intriguingly unresolved.



CONTEMPORARIES Max Steiner Miklós Rózsa Dimitri Tiomkin

KEY EVENTS

1936: Assisted Charlie Chaplin with the score for *Modern Times* 1956: Writes the score for *Laura*, his most popular hit

Composer profile by **Edward Bhesania**

David Raksin 1912 to 2004 (United States)

'He never presents you with a postcard photograph, but rather an artist's painting.' Elmer Bernstein remarked this of David Raksin, who, over a six-decade-long career, scored over 100 films and 300 TV shows. Like all composers working in the studio hothouses, he worked at speed. But he also paid attention to his craft and drew on his knowledge of a wide range of music. 'There is no substitute for education and self-discipline,' he said.

Raksin was born in Philadelphia in 1912. His father led a cinema orchestra and also played clarinet and saxophone occasionally in the Philadelphia Orchestra. Raksin junior played in dance bands through high school and, after graduating from the University of Pennsylvania, he began to eke out a living in New York City - a 'harrowing' time that saw 'plenty of supperless evenings'. George Gershwin was so impressed with Raksin's arrangement of I Got *Rhythm* that he recommended the voung arranger to his own publisher, Chappell-Harms. Raksin had just turned 23 when he received the offer from Hollywood to assist Charlie Chaplin with the score for Modern Times (1936). Idealistic and frank with Chaplin, he was fired but then rehired, later citing his months with the great film-maker and comic actor as 'some of the best days of my life'.

In Hollywood, Raksin became one of the first American composers to modernise the sound of a profession dominated by European émigrés such as Max Steiner, Franz Waxman and Erich Korngold, and drew liberally on jazz and the Great American Songbook. His most popular scores include *Laura* (1944), *Forever Amber* (1947) and *The Bad and the Beautiful* (1952).

Raksin wrote and presented a three-year series of radio programmes on film music, served eight terms as President of the Society of Composers and Lyricists and, from 1956, taught film composition at the University of Southern California – where one of his students was Tommy Newman, the son of Raksin's colleague, champion and idol, Alfred Newman.

He died in 2004 at the age of 92 in California. He firmly believed music could convey what the camera or script couldn't, concluding, 'People who are sceptical about the value of film music should be condemned to watch films without it.'

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Piano Concerto in G major

Maurice Ravel

Bertrand Chamayou piano

- 1 Allegramente 2 Adagio assai
- 3 Presto



Programme note by Andrew Clements

A moto perpetuo
is a piece of music
made up of multiple
fast passages, often
containing notes
of equal length.
The term literally
means 'perpetual
motion'. Nikolai
Rimsky-Korsakov's
The Flight of the
Bumblebee is a
famous example.

The two concertos for piano, this one in G maior and the Concerto in D major for the Left Hand, were Maurice Ravel's last major scores and evolved in parallel between 1929 and 1931. The work for left hand was prompted by a commission from the Austrian pianist Paul Wittgenstein, who had been injured in World War I, but Ravel appears to have begun the Concerto in G major simply because he wanted to write a work for Marguerite Long, who had championed his solo pieces. And perhaps it was in meeting the special technical challenges of the lefthand concerto with a dark, slightly forbidding piece, that he had felt the need to provide it with a lighthearted neo-Classical counterpart.

Certainly the G major Concerto conveys nothing if not a brilliant *jeu d'esprit*, a beautifully crafted piece, thoroughly pianistic and immaculately written for the soloist, which nevertheless acquires the character of a *divertissement*. Ravel revealed something of his intentions in an interview given at the time of its composition: it was to be, he said: 'A concerto in the true sense of the word. I mean it is written very much in the same spirit as those of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Camille Saint-Saëns. The music of a concerto, in my opinion, should be light-hearted and brilliant, and not aim at profundity or at dramatic effects.'

Elsewhere, he admitted that jazz had been a primary influence, appearing most strikingly in the Concerto's outer movements, with their blues-inflected sideslips and syncopations. Both these movements, though, are strongly anchored in Classical forms. The opening Allegramente is built upon a pair of themes, the first announced by a solo piccolo after an initial whipcrack and some bitonal murmurings for the piano, the second given to the horn and punctuated by wood block, while the piano constantly tries to subvert the music to its own improvisational ends. Finally, however, the soloist launches a cadenza based upon part of the second theme, and the movement careers to its close in a kind of brassy unity.

The finale is even more concise and more brilliant, grounded in a **moto perpetuo** ⊳ for the piano which might have been derived from Saint-Saëns, but serves here as the platform for a sequence of almost surreal musical images, while the orchestra's opening staccato chords function throughout as a kind of returning figure.

The second movement, though, is the heart of the Concerto. Its opening rapt solo for the piano was based, 'bar by bar', Ravel said, upon the Larghetto of Mozart's Clarinet Quintet; but here the effect is more akin to an enchanted nocturne, which gradually draws the instruments of the orchestra into its spell, reaches a climax, and then restates its opening material, this time with the cor anglais taking the melody and the piano supplying a relaxed accompaniment.



Find us on Instagram @londonsymphonyorchestra or X @londonsymphony **Maurice Ravel** 1875 to 1937 (France)

Maurice Ravel himself knew that he was not the most prolific of composers. 'I did my work slowly, drop by drop. I tore it out of me by pieces,' he said. There are no symphonies in Ravel's oeuvre, and only two operas, and he conceived most of his music on the smallest of scales. Even his orchestral works often grew out of pieces for piano.

But from these small kernels Ravel had the ability to create colour and texture like no other. He was a master of orchestration, with a fastidious eye for detail and a keen awareness of both the capabilities and the limitations of each instrument. Though he is often categorised as an 'impressionist' (a label he disputed), thanks to the sweeping colours and textures of his scores, and their shifting, ambiguous harmonies, there is nothing vague or imprecise about his music. Ravel drew his inspiration from the likes of Rameau, Couperin, Mozart and Haydn, and considered himself first and foremost a Classicist, a master of precision and invention. He held melody in the highest regard, and whether composing his grand orchestral masterpieces like Daphnis and Chloé and Boléro, the fiendishly difficult solo piano works such as *Gaspard de la nuit*, or the deceptively simply Pavane pour une infante défunte, this unswerving commitment to

melody shines through.



CONTEMPORARIES

Serge Rachmaninoff, Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette

KEY EVENTS

1905: First major success with the premiere of his orchestral song cycle *Shéhérazade* 1929-31: Composes two piano concertos (one for left hand only), his final orchestral works

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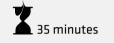
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Composer profile by **Jo Kirkbride**

Symphony No 5 in D major Ralph Vaughan Williams

1 Preludio 2 Scherzo

- 3 Romanza
- 4 Passacaglia
- **E** 1938-43



Programme note by Michael White

When Ralph Vaughan Williams' Fifth Symphony received its premiere in June 1943 at the Albert Hall, Britain was engaged in a war that had lasted nearly five years and that had established a rhythm of life poised between anxiety and acceptance. Living in semi-rural Dorking, VW (as he was known) had settled into his wartime routines. He volunteered as a firewatcher and dug for victory, growing horribly disfigured carrots that (according to his second-wifeto-be Ursula) he felt obliged to cut into 'presentable shapes' lest they 'demoralise the cook'.

But other aspects of his life were less routine. He campaigned to keep music going in the midst of war. In the very week his latest symphony premiered, he testified for Michael Tippett, who was on trial as a pacifist refusing war work, saying that, although no pacifist himself, he respected Tippett's views and reckoned him a 'national asset'. It did no good: Tippett went to prison. But it served as an example of Vaughan Williams' strong sense of principle combined with generous humanity. So too, in its way, did the Fifth Symphony.

Given the timing, listeners expected something warlike, blistering with conflict and emotional upheaval. But instead, the work was contemplative, mysterious. It looked beyond the war, in ways that some who heard the piece were quick to recognise – such as conductor Adrian Boult who wrote to the composer that its 'serene loveliness ... shows, as only music can, what we must work for when this madness is over'.

Driving this idea of looking beyond turmoil was Vaughan Williams' long-term fascination with a book: John Bunyan's 17th-century Christian allegory *The Pilgrim's Progress*, which had stalked his musical imagination over decades as he intermittently worked on a sprawling operatic treatment. But with passing time, the opera seemed increasingly unfeasible. Frustration escalated into crisis around 1937–38, when he suffered an across-the-board creative block.

Retiring to a Wiltshire cottage, he took a break from composition and spent it studying the music of Jean Sibelius – which claimed no specific influence on Vaughan Williams' style but proved useful enough for him to decide that his next symphony, No 5, would be dedicated to the Finnish master as an 'example ... worthy of imitation'. When he started work on the Symphony in 1938, another decision was that it should absorb material from the *Pilgrim's Progress* opera, which by now he had effectively abandoned as a lost cause, never likely to be finished.

As events transpired, the opera did get finished, and the amount of its music diverted into the Symphony was limited – mostly confined to the third movement which, in the original manuscript, came prefaced by a quote from the author John Bunyan that has Pilgrim reflect on the journey of faith, saying, 'He hath given me strength by his sorrow and life by his death.' When the score came to be printed, those words were removed, and Vaughan Williams was keen to stress that the Symphony as a whole had 'no dramatic connection with Bunyan's allegory', preferring it to be heard as an abstract work. But undeniably it does share something of the temper of the Pilgrim's Progress opera as a work of visionary longing, in pursuit of an ideal. And the pursuit begins immediately in the distant horn-calls that announce the first movement Preludio.

Mysterious but beckoning, they question the Symphony's declared tonality of D major by hovering above a sustained C in the cellos and basses within a key signature that looks like G major. We're edging through the mists of an uncertain sound-world, and although the mists eventually clear into triumphant cadences suggestive of the Alleluias in Vaughan Williams' celebrated hymn-tune 'Sine Nomine' ('For All the Saints'), the triumph passes and the distant horns return. The quest runs on.

The second movement Scherzo is a thing of spritely busyness that grows out of material heard like whispers, as though through closed doors, never completely caught or comprehended. But they clear a path to the slow, third-movement Romanza, whose passionate intensity – with a sublime melody for cor anglais above sustained string chords - forms the heart of the Symphony. The fourth movement Passacaglia carries it, ecstatically, to its apparent goal: the return of the horn calls heard at the outset, this time with a stronger sense of D major and heralding a stately coda that says: 'Yes, the journey is completed.

Many listeners in 1943 assumed that it was also the completion of Vaughan Williams' symphonic output; by the standards of the time, he was an old man. But far from it. He was only halfway, with another four symphonies to come in an impressive flowering of late creative genius.

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Ralph Vaughan Williams 1872 to 1958 (United Kingdom)



CONTEMPORARIES Maurice Ravel, Frank Bridge

KEY EVENTS

1910: Has first big success with Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis 1914–18: Serves as an ambulance driver in World War I

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Composer profile by Stephen Connock

Born in Gloucestershire on 12 October 1872, Ralph Vaughan Williams moved to Dorking in Surrey at the age of two, on the death of his father. Here, his maternal grandparents, Josiah Wedgwood (of the pottery family) and his wife Caroline (who was the sister of Charles Darwin), encouraged a musical upbringing. Vaughan Williams attended Charterhouse School, and in 1890 he enrolled at the Royal College of Music, becoming a pupil of Sir Hubert Parry. Weekly lessons at the RCM continued when he entered Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1892.

Vaughan Williams' first composition to make any public impact, the song 'Linden Lea', was published in 1902. His 'discovery' of folk song in 1903 was a major influence on the development of his style. A period of study with Maurice Ravel in 1908 was also very successful, with Vaughan Williams learning, as he put it, 'how to orchestrate in points of colour rather than in lines'. The immediate outcome was the song cycle *On Wenlock Edge*. The *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*, using a tune Vaughan Williams had studied while editing the *English Hymnal*, was first performed in Gloucester Cathedral in 1910. With these works, he established a reputation which subsequent compositions, such as the 'Pastoral' Symphony, *Flos Campi* and the Mass in G minor, served to consolidate.

In 1921 he became conductor of the Bach Choir, alongside his professorship at the RCM. Over his long life, he contributed notably to all musical forms, including film music. It is in his nine symphonies however, spanning a period of almost 50 years, that the greatest range of musical expression is evident. Vaughan Williams died on 26 August 1958, just a few months after the premiere of his Ninth Symphony.



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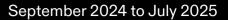
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Sir Antonio Pappano Chief Conductor Designate



One of today's most sought-after conductors, acclaimed for his charismatic leadership and inspirational performances in both symphonic and operatic repertoire, Sir Antonio Pappano has been Music Director of the Royal Opera House Covent Garden since 2002. He was Music Director of the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome from 2005 to 2023, and was previously Music Director of Norwegian Opera and Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie, Brussels, and Principal Guest Conductor of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. In 2023 he became Chief Conductor Designate of the London Symphony Orchestra; he will take the full Chief Conductor title from September 2024.

Pappano appears as a guest conductor with many of the world's most prestigious orchestras, festivals and opera houses, including the Berlin and New York Philharmonic Orchestras, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Chicago and Boston Symphony Orchestras, Philadelphia and Cleveland Orchestras, Vienna State Opera, Metropolitan Opera, New York and Teatro alla Scala Milan, the Salzburg and Verbier Festivals, and the BBC Proms.

Pappano has been an exclusive recording artist for Warner Classics (formerly EMI Classics) since 1995. His awards and honours include *Gramophone*'s Artist of the Year in 2000, a 2003 Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in Opera, the 2004 Royal Philharmonic Society Music Award, and the Bruno Walter Prize from the Académie du Disque Lyrique in Paris. In 2012 he was made a Cavaliere di Gran Croce of the Republic of Italy, and a Knight of the British Empire for his services to music, and in 2015 he was named the 100th recipient of the Royal Philharmonic Society's Gold Medal.

Pappano was born in London to Italian parents and moved with his family to the United States at the age of 13. He studied piano with Norma Verrilli, composition with Arnold Franchetti and conducting with Gustav Meier. He has also developed a notable career as a speaker and presenter, and has fronted several critically acclaimed BBC Television documentaries including Opera Italia, Pappano's Essential Ring Cycle and Pappano's Classical Voices.

Bertrand Chamayou piano



Bertrand Chamayou performs regularly at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées, Lincoln Center, the Herkulessaal Munich and London's Wigmore Hall. He has appeared at festivals including New York's Mostly Mozart Festival, the Lucerne Festival, Salzburg Festival, Edinburgh International Festival, Rheingau Musik Festival and Beethovenfest Bonn.

Engagements during 2024 include recitals both solo and with cellist Sol Gabetta, flautist Emmanuel Pahud and soprano Barbara Hannigan; Grieg's Piano Concerto with the Orchestre National Bordeaux Aquitaine under Emmanuel Villaume; Ravel's Piano Concerto for the Left Hand with the Filarmonica della Scala under Philippe Jordan; Dvořák's Piano Concerto with the Czech Philharmonic under Semyon Bychkov; Michael Jarrell's Piano Concerto with the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande and Scriabin's Piano Concerto with the Sinfonieorchester Köln under Andris Poga in Cologne.

Chamayou has worked with orchestras including the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, Seattle Symphony Orchestra, Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra, The Cleveland Orchestra, Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia and Danish National Symphony Orchestra. He has recently made acclaimed debuts with the New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Budapest Festival Orchestra, Bamberger Symphoniker and Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra. Chamayou has collaborated with conductors such as Pierre Boulez, Leonard Slatkin, Stéphane Denève and Andris Nelsons.

As a chamber musician, he has recently worked with Renaud and Gautier Capuçon, Quatuor Ébène, Antoine Tamestit and Sol Gabetta, and appeared in Lincoln Center's Great Performers Series and at Salzburg Easter Festival, Schleswig Holstein Musik Festival, the Berlin Philharmonie and the Hong Kong Arts Festival.

Chamayou's many successful recordings include a disc of music by César Franck (*Naïve*), which was awarded several accolades. For his recording of Camille Saint-Saëns' Piano Concertos Nos 2 and 5, he was awarded the *Gramophone* Recording of the Year Award 2019. The only artist to win France's prestigious Victoires de la Musique on five occasions, he has an exclusive recording contract with Warner/Erato and was awarded the 2016 ECHO Klassik for his recording of Ravel's complete works for solo piano.

Chamayou was born in Toulouse and studied at the Paris Conservatoire with Jean-François Heisser. He completed his training with Maria Curcio in London.

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