TINIGHT'S CONCERT

THOMAS ADÈS & ANNE-SOPHIE MUTTER

Thursday 30 May 2024 7–9.15pm Barbican

Igor Stravinsky Orpheus Witold Lutosławski Partita (for Violin and Orchestra) Interval Thomas Adès Air – Homage to Sibelius (UK premiere) Igor Stravinsky Agon

Thomas Adès conductor Anne-Sophie Mutter violin London Symphony Orchestra

Welcome



Tonight's concert, conducted by Thomas Adès, showcases a radiant programme of two contemporary works for violin and orchestra, flanked by Igor Stravinsky's later ballets.

We are delighted to welcome violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter, with whom we have enjoyed many rewarding collaborations over the years. Tonight she performs in both halves of the concert with pieces written especially for her. First we hear Witold Lutosławski's *Partita*, and the UK premiere of Thomas Adès' *Air – Homage to Sibelius* follows after the interval. The concert opens with Stravinsky's penultimate ballet, *Orpheus*, a work that portrays the character's journey from mourning Eurydice's death to his ultimate transcendence. *Agon*, Stravinsky's final ballet, closes the concert, with its kaleidoscope of musical styles, from Baroque to jazz.

I hope that you enjoy the concert and that you will be able to join us again soon. Tomorrow evening, Thomas Adès conducts pianist Kirill Gerstein and an ensemble of LSO musicians in a chamber concert featuring music by György Ligeti and Ludwig van Beethoven, as well as his own compositions. This concert is part of Kirill Gerstein's chamber music series at LSO St Luke's, taking place in partnership with BBC Radio 3. The series draws to a close with a lunchtime recital of solo piano music by Frédéric Chopin, Robert Schumann and Franz Liszt, on 12 July. Coming up at the Barbican in June, we look forward to our annual celebratory showcase of LSO Discovery, as well as the LSO on Film concert, the first in a series that celebrates film scores recorded by the LSO over the decades. We hope to see you there.

Kannyn Mussuell

Dame Kathryn McDowell DBE DL Managing Director

Coming Up

Friday 31 May 7pm LSO St Luke's

BBC RADIO 3 EVENING CONCERT KIRILL GERSTEIN & FRIENDS

In this evening concert, Kirill Gerstein is joined by a chamber group of LSO musicians for music by Joseph Haydn, György Ligeti, Ludwig van Beethoven and Thomas Adès.

Sunday 16 June 7pm Barbican

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION - THE LSO ON FILM

The first in a new series, this concert celebrates film scores – recorded by the LSO over the decades – that showcase composers from the UK and US, with introductions and stories from LSO musicians.

Wednesday 19 June 6.30pm Barbican

HALF SIX FIX: PROKOFIEV 7

Absorb Sergei Prokofiev's wistful final symphony in the relaxed atmosphere of this hour-long concert, conducted and introduced by Gianandrea Noseda.

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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.



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SCENE 1

- 1 Lento sostenuto
- 2 Air de danse: Andante con moto
- 3 Dance of the Angel of Death: L'istesso tempo
- 4 Interlude: L'istesso tempo

SCENE 2

- 1 Pas des Furies: Agitato in piano
- 2 Air de danse (Orpheus): Grave
- 3 Interlude: L'istesso tempo
- 4 Air de danse (concluded): L'istesso tempo
 5 Pas d'action:
- Andantino leggiadro
- 6 Pas de deux: Andante sostenuto
- 7 Interlude: Moderato assai
- 8 Pas d'action: Vivace

SCENE 3

- 1 Orpheus' apotheosis: Lento sostenuto
- Le 1947

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Programme note by Wendy Thompson

Orpheus Igor Stravinsky

Igor Stravinsky's penultimate ballet Orpheus was written towards the end of his so-called 'neo-Classical' period, which lasted from the 1920s to the early 1950s. Work on Orpheus began in the autumn of 1946 in response to a commission from Lincoln Kirstein. founder of the Ballet Society (later the New York City Ballet), and the choreographer George Balanchine. Balanchine had already collaborated with Stravinsky on two previous ballets, Apollo and *Jeu de cartes*, and choreographed the New York premiere of *Orpheus* on 28 April 1948. Nearly a decade later, Agon completed a triptych of ballets on ancient Classical subjects.

Orpheus deals with the myth that inspired operas by Claudio Monteverdi and Christoph Willibald Gluck, but unlike these works, covers the protagonist's violent death and his apotheosis. It is divided into three scenes, beginning after the death of Eurydice. The first sees the inconsolable Orpheus mourning his lover, a harp representing his lyre, over a chorale-like theme played by strings. Orpheus' friends (represented by woodwind) arrive to offer condolences, and the Angel of Death, represented by a solo violin, appears (Air de danse). The Angel takes Orpheus to Hades to seek his dead wife; during an atmospheric Interlude, they appear in the gloom of the Underworld, their arrival heralded by trumpet calls.

Scene 2 introduces the Furies, who dance agitatedly while making veiled threats towards the intruder. Stravinsky himself said that 'the music for the Furies is soft. and constantly remains on the soft level, like most of the rest of this ballet'. Then comes a slow 'Air de danse', as Orpheus employs his lyre to move the gods of the Underworld to pity. As he dances, the tormented souls in Hades stretch out their arms to him, imploring him to continue his heart-melting song (Interlude: L'istesso tempo). He continues his 'Air de danse', and Hades calms down. The Furies surround Orpheus, bind his eyes, and return Eurydice to him (Pas d'action: Andante sostenuto). The newly reunited pair dance a 'Pas de deux', but Orpheus can no longer bear not to see his wife. He tears the bandage from his eves, and Eurvdice falls dead once more (plucked strings). In a third Interlude, Orpheus returns to Earth, and in a violent and dramatic 'Pas d'action', he meets his end at the hands of the Bacchantes, who tear him to pieces.

A dignified calm returns in 'Orpheus' apotheosis'. In the ancient legend, his severed head continued its song, and now the harp resumes its first theme, accompanied by a subdued dirge for two horns, solo violin and muted trumpet. In Stravinsky's words, 'Apollo enters. He wrests the lyre from Orpheus and raises his song heavenwards.'



CONTEMPORARIES Béla Bartók, Serge Rachmaninoff

KEY EVENTS

1913: Dramatic premiere of *The Rite of Spring* **1951:** Premiere of his neo-Classical opera *The Rake's Progress*

LISTEN TO

Complete ballets on LSO Live with Sir Simon Rattle Isolive.co.uk

WITH THE LSO

UK premiere of Suite from *The Firebird*

Composer profile by Andrew Mellor

Igor Stravinsky 1882 (Russia) to 1971 (United States)

Igor Stravinsky helped usher the art of notated music into the modern age, turbocharging many of the 20th century's biggest musical developments. He was a radical and an original, a composer who never settled on a particular style or way of working.

In St Petersburg, the young Stravinsky was forbidden from studying music by his musician parents. However, he grew friendly with a fellow law student, Vladimir Rimsky-Korsakov, whose father happened to be Russia's most distinguished composer.

Rimsky-Korsakov senior became Stravinsky's teacher and influenced his pupil's breakthrough work, the sensual ballet score *The Firebird* (1910), which also sealed the composer's relationship with the ballet impresario Serge Diaghilev. Two more ballet scores followed, including the seminal *The Rite of Spring*.

While that piece is still associated with Stravinsky more than any other, the composer would soon move away from the elemental power of its rhythms and ruthless logic of its block harmonies. Living in Switzerland, France and the United States (first Los Angeles, later New York), Stravinsky explored musical asceticism, neo-Classicism, film music and even his own take on twelve-note serialism, the strict schematic method pioneered by Arnold Schoenberg.

Stravinsky was active for six politically turbulent decades, in which time he became a world figure. In his 80th year he was entertained over dinner at the White House by John F Kennedy and invited on a tour of his native Russia by the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev.

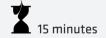
In the 1930s, Stravinsky returned to the Orthodox faith, which may have helped him through the loss of his first wife and elder daughter (one of four children) to tuberculosis, and certainly shaped his two major choral works. His last substantial work, *Requiem Canticles*, was a setting of the Catholic Mass for the Dead.

Partita (for Violin and Orchestra) Witold Lutosławski

Anne-Sophie Mutter violin

- 1 Allegro giusto 2 Interlude ad
- libitum -
- 3 Largo -
- 4 Interlude ad libitum -
- 5 Presto -

1984 (violin and piano version); 1988 (orchestral version, written for Anne-Sophie Mutter)



Programme note by Edward Bhesania Until the rise of Witold Lutosławski in the mid-20th century, Polish music had been largely absent on the international scene since the works of Frédéric Chopin a century earlier. (Karol Szymanowski, though a predecessor of Lutosławski, only came to prominence in the West in the 1970s.)

Lutosławski was in his seventies when he composed his Partita. It began life in 1984 as a piece for violin and piano – his first for the violin since his student days - and was premiered by Pinchas Zukerman. But after hearing tonight's soloist, Anne-Sophie Mutter, perform his Chain 2 (1986) for violin and orchestra. Lutosławski decided to create a violin-andorchestra version of Partita. Mutter gave its first performance on 31 January 1990 with the Munich Philharmonic, conducted by the composer. In 1989 Lutosławski composed an Interlude designed to link the Partita to Chain 2, forming a triptych of pieces that could be performed as a single sequence.

Partita was a key work in the development of Lutosławski's late style, in which he searched for a new simplicity of melodic expression. It is formed of five movements. The three main movements (first, third and fifth) are interspersed by two brief 'Ad libitum' interludes, which revert to the original violin-and-piano instrumentation, the orchestral falling silent; and, as their name implies, the violinist and pianist play their parts independently of each other, allowing an element of freedom. This, Mutter has said, 'gave the music a really sort of improvisatory, jazz-like quality'.

As for the three main movements. Lutosławski saw them as analogous to the Courante, Air and Gigue of the 18th-century instrumental form of the Partita, which was essentially a suite of dance movements. The first movement, Allegro giusto, is severe and robust, rhythmically driven, but partway through the violin slides around, becoming mysteriously disembodied; and at the end of the movement the musical fabric disintegrates. The third movement, Largo, is the heart of the work, a searching, yearning piece that gives the violin a darkly psychological voice. Menacing tubular bells lead from the second 'Ad libitum' interlude into the last movement, a nervous Presto that includes a brief 'Ad libitum' insertion at its climax, before the fast pace resumes for a dynamic and powerful coda ending.



CONTEMPORARIES Benjamin Britten, Andrzej Panufnik

KEY EVENTS

1955: Won two state prizes for his *Concerto for Orchestra* 1970: Premiere of his Cello Concerto, with Mstislav Rostropovich as soloist

LISTEN TO

Concerto for Orchestra, Symphonies Nos 1–4, Piano and Cello Concertos

Composer profile by **Edward Bhesania**

Witold Lutosławski 1913 to 1994 (Poland)

Born in Warsaw in 1913. Witold Lutosławski already knew by the age of nine that it was his 'fate to compose music'. After graduating in piano and composition from the Warsaw Conservatory in 1937, his hopes of continuing his studies in Paris were dashed by military service, during which he was captured by German forces, though he escaped back to Warsaw. (His brother Henryk was seized by the Red Army and died in a Siberian labour camp soon after the start of World War II.) Lutosławski's Variations on a Theme by Paganini (1941) for two pianos was written for him and his composer contemporary Andrzej Panufnik. Together, they eked out a living by playing piano duos in Warsaw's cafés while the city was under Nazi rule.

After his First Symphony (1941–47), which was banned by the Communist Party and not performed in public until the 1950s, Lutosławski looked for a way 'to begin again – to work from scratch on my sound language'. He did so by writing 'functional music' – for radio plays, theatre and films, as well as children's songs and piano music – much of it based on Polish folk songs. He turned to folk music again in the *Concerto for Orchestra* (1950–54), which established his national reputation, winning him the State Prize.

His fondness of aleatoric, or chance, principles – allowing performers a degree of individual choice – first presented itself in *Jeux vénitiens* (*Venetian Games*, 1961), and during the 1960s he also began conducting his own works. After his Symphony No 2 (1965–67) and Cello Concerto (1969–70) came more consciously melodic material in the Double Concerto for oboe and harp (1980) and the Symphony No 3 (1981–83), which won the Grawemeyer Award in 1985.

In the 1980s, after martial law was declared, Lutosławski boycotted the government and would not conduct in Poland, reversing his stance only in 1989 after free elections had brought in a coalition government led by the Solidarity labour movement. He died a year after the 1993 premiere in Los Angeles of his Symphony No 4, having been awarded the Order of the White Eagle, Poland's highest decoration.



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Air – Homage to Sibelius (UK premiere) Thomas Adès

Anne-Sophie Mutter violin



16 minutes

Programme note by **Timmy Fisher**

Anyone familiar with Thomas Adès' music will recall the mood swings. rhythmic intricacies and savage wit of his breakthrough works Asvla and Powder Her Face. Air -Homage to Sibelius, for solo violin and orchestra, is a very different beast. Written during the Covid-19 lockdowns when, as Adès says, 'deadlines ... had simply vanished' and 'one could think about the music in the most liberated way', its mood is serene - sentimental even. The steady background pulse underpins just one melodic idea, and its harmonic language is unabashedly tonal.

The piece was written for tonight's soloist, Anne-Sophie Mutter, who had previously expressed great admiration for Adès' 2005 Violin Concerto, Concentric Paths. But while that work employed many of the trappings of a traditional concerto, such as a three-movement. fast-slow-fast structure, Air comprises a single musical statement or 'extended aria' that, Adès hoped, would give Mutter more freedom as a performer. It builds outwards from a simple, stepwise melody, first played by glassy violins and handbells and then taken up throughout the orchestra, with each imitation adding new harmonic colour to the shifting, shimmering

whole. Percussive combinations – tuned gongs, marimba and harp, for example – punctuate the texture like ripples on the surface of a lake, and throughout, the soloist courses and strains within the confines of the melodic framework, only finding resolution at the closing cadence.

As Adès acknowledges, *Air* is essentially a large-scale canon – a well-trodden compositional technique based on melodic imitation. But where, say, Pachelbel's *Canon* is built bottom-up from a repeated bass line, in *Air*, the idea is turned on its head, 'so that the whole thing hangs down from the high treble'. (Though, before long, Adès flips it again, letting the theme spiral upwards instead.)

Adès has always enjoyed playful dialogues with tradition and, as the subtitle shows, in Air there is a specific interlocutor: Jean Sibelius. The Finnish composer had a gift for diaphanous string writing. He would often sustain a single mood over long stretches (as in The Swan of Tuonela, serene and austere). And, in later works, he built large-scale structures from the smallest of musical blocks (see the finale of the Fifth Symphony, with its anthemic 'Swan' theme). All these hallmarks can be found in Air. borrowed in 'homage' to a composer vitally important to Adès.

Agon Igor Stravinsky

1 Pas de quatre – Double Pas de quatre – Triple Pas de quatre

- 2 Prelude First Pas de trois: Saraband-Step – Gailliarde – Coda
- 3 Interlude Second Pas de trois: Bransle simple

Bransle gay –
Bransle double
Interlude – Pas de deux – Four Duos – Four



Trios

23 minutes

Programme note by **Edward Bhesania**

Igor Stravinsky may not have realised it, but *Agon* (1953–57) was to be his final ballet. In hindsight, it is easy to see the piece as the endpoint of a distillation across his eleven ballet scores. It shows the distance he had travelled from those three dense, rhythmically complex early ballets of 40 years earlier: *The Firebird, Petrushka* and *The Rite of Spring*.

As early as Pulcinella (1920), Stravinsky had turned to a leaner, more crystalline style inspired by 18th-century musical Classicism. He developed this in his ballets Apollo (1928) and Orpheus (1947), inspired by Greek myth. Agon moves still further into abstraction. There is no story or narrative arc. For the premiere production given by New York City Ballet in 1957, there were no sets, and the dancers wore rehearsal clothes. Musically, Stravinsky began to explore the Viennese composer Arnold Schoenberg's idea of 'serialism', in which the twelve semitones of the standard Western scale are arranged in a predetermined sequence, thereby exploding the note-relationships of conventional melody and harmony. Agon is testament to Stravinsky's ability to absorb new ideas and reinvent himself. even in his seventies.

When commissioning the ballet, Lincoln Kirstein (who had also commissioned *Orpheus*) had suggested a third Greek piece. Stravinsky instead turned to a suggestion by the choreographer George Balanchine for 'a competition before the gods'. The title *Agon* is from the Greek for 'contest' or 'struggle'.

Agon runs in four sections, its twelve dances arranged in groups of three, separated by a Prelude and two Interludes (which are musically interrelated). The dances themselves are drawn from classical ballet (Pas de deux, Pas de trois etc) and from 17th-century French courtly dances (Sarabande, Gailliarde, Bransle). Abstract and compressed as the music is, it is designed to provoke physical movement. And there is a fund of sonic invention and variety, including the opening trumpet fanfares (which return in the concluding Coda), the hectic, tightly wound 'Double pas de quatre', the use of the mandolin (especially, alongside the harp, in the dreamlike mechanical music box of the Gailliarde), the castanets and leaping bassoons of the 'Bransle gay'; and, overall. an ear for the tart and the pointillistic, as well as for a mood of austerity and ritual.

'Sounds like this had not been heard before,' recalled Balanchine. He called *Agon* his 'IBM ballet' (a reference to the US computer company), 'all precise, like a machine, but a machine that thinks'.

30 May 2024

Thomas Adès conductor



Thomas Adès was born in London in 1971. His compositions include three operas; the most recent, *The Exterminating Angel*, received a new production at the Paris Opera in 2024. Adès conducted the premiere of this work at the Salzburg Festival in 2016, and that of his second opera, *The Tempest*, at the Royal Opera House in 2004. He also conducted a new production of *The Tempest* in Quebec (2012), at the Metropolitan Opera in New York (2014), the Wiener Staatsoper in Vienna (2012, 2024) and La Scala, Milan (2022). He conducted the world premiere of his full-length ballet *Dante* at the Royal Opera House in 2021, and in 2023 at the Palais Garnier, with Ballet de Paris.

Adès' CD and DVD recordings have won multiple awards, including the Grammy for Best Opera recording for *The Tempest* in 2012. His orchestral works include *Asyla* (1997), *Polaris* (2010), the Violin Concerto *Concentric Paths* (2005), *In Seven Days* for piano and orchestra (2008), *Totentanz* for mezzo-soprano, baritone and orchestra (2013), the Concerto for Piano and Orchestra (2019) and *Aquifer* (2024). Thomas has also written many celebrated solo and chamber works. September 2023 saw Adès conduct the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra as part of his two-season residency with the ensemble. Last autumn, he also began a two-season residency with the Hallé Orchestra. For his first appearance on 28 October, he conducted the UK premiere of *Tower*, his brass ensemble work, as well as the first UK concert performance of his ballet *Purgatorio*, alongside his *Märchentänze* for violin and orchestra with Anthony Marwood.

As a conductor, Adès appears regularly with the Los Angeles and London Philharmonic orchestras, the Cleveland, London, BBC, Finnish Radio and City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestras, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra and the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome. He has recently made debuts with the Vienna Philharmonic and Berlin Philharmonic, and conducted the world premiere of *Air – Homage to Sibelius* with Anne-Sophie Mutter and the Lucerne Festival Contemporary Orchestra at the Lucerne Festival. He has been the Artistic Partner of the Boston Symphony Orchestra since 2016.

His piano engagements have included solo recitals at Carnegie Hall and Wigmore Hall in London, and concerto appearances with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra and Boston Symphony Orchestra. He has recorded an album of Janáček's solo piano works and in 2018 he was awarded the Janáček medal.

Adès was made CBE in Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth's 2018 Birthday Honours.

Anne-Sophie Mutter violin



A four-time Grammy Award winner, Anne-Sophie Mutter is as equally committed to the performance of traditional composers as to the future of music. Thomas Adès, Unsuk Chin, Sebastian Currier, Henri Dutilleux, Sofia Gubaidulina, Witold Lutosławski, Norbert Moret, Krzysztof Penderecki, Sir André Previn, Wolfgang Rihm, Jörg Widmann and John Williams have all composed works for her.

In autumn 1997 she founded the Friends of the Anne-Sophie Mutter Foundation, followed by the Anne-Sophie Mutter Foundation in 2008. These two charitable institutions offer scholarships for performers, with support tailored to their individual needs. Since 2011, Anne-Sophie Mutter has regularly shared the spotlight on stage with her ensemble of fellows, Mutter's Virtuosi.

Mutter began 2024 with the British premiere of John Williams' Violin Concerto No 2, dedicated to her. She went on to give concerts in Los Angeles at the end of January, performing the Brahms Double Concerto alongside cellist Pablo Ferrández, and appeared at the Salzburg Mozartwoche performing Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante* with violist Michael Barenboim and the Vienna Philharmonic under Lahav Shani, and the composer's four piano trios with pianist Lauma Skride and cellist Maximilian Hornung. In March she toured Asia, celebrating the 36th year of her collaboration with pianist Lambert Orkis with a programme of works by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ottorino Respighi, Franz Schubert and Clara Schumann. This programme also tours to Europe during the second half of the year.

Mutter's other 2024 performances include the orchestral version of Lutosławski's Partita (dedicated to her) and his Chain 2 and Interlude with the Warsaw Philharmonic in a concert commemorating the 30th anniversary of the composer's death; a performance of *Partita* in Leipzig; and the German premiere of Thomas Adès' Air - Homage to Sibelius (dedicated to her) in Leipzig under Andris Nelsons. In June she will perform John Williams' Violin Concerto No 2 with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, and film themes by Williams during the Klassik am Odeonsplatz event in Munich, with the Munich Philharmonic. Later in the year she tours Europe performing Brahms' Violin Concerto with the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, and will perform the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto on a second European tour with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra under Manfred Honeck. She will end 2024 by performing John Williams' Violin Concerto No 2 with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under the baton of the composer.

Mutter has won numerous awards, most recently the Ruhr Piano Festival Prize (2023), the Gold Medal of the Royal Philharmonic Society (2023), an honorary doctorate from the Krzysztof Penderecki Academy of Music in Kraków (2022) and, in 2019, the Praemium Imperiale in the music category and the Polar Music Prize.

London Symphony Orchestra On Stage

Leader Benjamin Gilmore

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Choha Kim Clare Duckworth Ginette Decuyper William Melvin Claire Parfitt Elizabeth Pigram Laurent Quénelle Harriet Rayfield Richard Blayden Caroline Frenkel Dániel Mészöly Aleem Kandour

Second Violins

Thomas Norris Sarah Quinn Miya Väisänen Matthew Gardner Alix Lagasse Belinda McFarlane Iwona Muszynska Csilla Pogány Andrew Pollock Paul Robson Helena Buckie Lyrit Milgram Olatz Ruiz de Gordejuela

Violas

Jano Lisboa Mizuho Ueyama Gillianne Haddow Malcolm Johnston Germán Clavijo Sofia Silva Sousa Robert Turner Philip Hall Shiry Rashkovsky

Cellos

Rebecca Gilliver Alastair Blayden Daniel Gardner Ghislaine McMullin Henry Hargreaves Victoria Simonsen Peteris Sokolovskis Joanna Twaddle

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Piccolo Sharon Williams

Oboes Juliana Koch Rosie Jenkins

Cor Anglais Thomas Davey

Clarinets Nicholas Rodwell Sarah Thurlow

Bass Clarinet Elliot Gresty

Bassoons Daniel Jemison Joost Bosdijk

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Horns

Diego Incertis Sánchez Angela Barnes Olivia Gandee Jonathan Maloney

Trumpets James Fountain Adam Wright Toby Street David Geoghegan

Trombones William Foster Jonathan Hollick

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Timpani Patrick King

Percussion Neil Percy Tom Edwards

Harp Bryn Lewis

Piano Elizabeth Burley

Celeste Catherine Edwards

Mandolin Huw Davies

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