



LSO

HALF SIX FIX

Wednesday 30 October 2024

London Symphony Orchestra

barbican
Resident Orchestra

Tonight's Half Six Fix

Ludwig van Beethoven
Symphony No 1

Thomas Adès
conductor and presenter
London Symphony Orchestra

Tell us what you think

After tonight's concert, visit
iso.co.uk/survey to tell us
what you thought.

Your next Half Six Fix

Wednesday 27 November 6.30pm
Barbican

Wednesday 8 January 6.30pm
Barbican

Lachenmann and Beethoven 7
with **Ilan Volkov**

Brahms 4
with **Sir Simon Rattle**

iso.co.uk/fix

Networking for Young Professionals

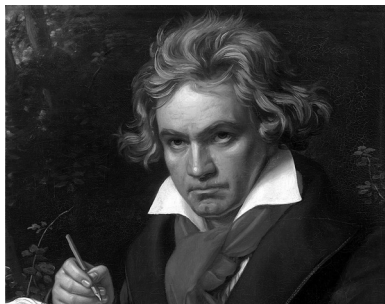
At selected Half Six Fixes we host our LSO Pioneers' networking events, aimed at professionals under 45 with a passion for music and culture. Join like-minded individuals and LSO Pioneers' members for drinks and connections. Visit **iso.co.uk/pioneers** to find out more and book.

Programme Notes Edward Bhesania.

Edward Bhesania is a music journalist and editor who writes for *The Stage*, *The Strad* and the Guildhall School of Music & Drama.

LSO Visual Identity & Concept Design Bridge & Partners

Details correct at time of going to press



Ludwig van Beethoven

Born: Bonn, Germany, 1770

Died: Vienna, Austria, 1827

‘Music is like a dream.
One that I cannot hear.’
Ludwig van Beethoven

Ludwig van Beethoven radically expanded the expressive bounds of music – especially in his symphonies, piano sonatas and string quartets – and if that meant adapting and developing conventional forms, so be it. He inherited the Classical-period style of Joseph Haydn and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart but moved into Romantic territory, engaging in his music with literary, political and philosophical ideas and ideals.

In his early 20s, he left his native Bonn for Vienna, where he became established as a composer, piano virtuoso and improviser of great ability. Largely following the Classical models of Haydn and Mozart in his ‘early’ period, he recognised signs of his impending deafness as early as 1796. In 1802, he revealed

his suffering, alienation and his creative determination in a moving letter of despair, the *Heiligenstadt Testament*.

His ‘middle’ period was characterised by a broadening of form and an extension of harmony to suit his proto-Romantic expression, spawning the Symphonies Nos 2 to 8, notable piano sonatas, several string quartets and his only opera, *Fidelio*. He produced less music in his ‘late’ period (from 1813) but his last years saw his mould-breaking ‘Choral’ Symphony – featuring the famous setting of the poet Friedrich Schiller’s *Ode to Joy* – as well as an exploration of increasing profundity in the more intimate mediums of the piano sonata and string quartet.

Symphony No 1 in C major Op 2 (1799–1800)

What's the story?

Beethoven began his symphonic journey at the turn of a new century, and it's easy to hear his spirit of adventure in his First Symphony. Having moved to Vienna in 1792 he was now entering the arena of the great symphonists Haydn and Mozart, aiming to make his mark in this large-scale, 'public' form: increasingly the one in which a composer's reputation would rest. His First Symphony was premiered on 2 April 1800 at Vienna's Burgtheater. 'There is considerable art, novelty and a wealth of ideas,' declared one review.

What is the music like?

The sheer energy and the many comic touches in this Symphony give it an air of youthful exuberance. We also hear features that will become hallmarks of his later orchestral music. The sudden contrasts between loud and soft, the sharp accents, the emphasised offbeats (syncopation). This is music of great dynamism, delivering multiple bursts of adrenaline. Though there are touches of drama and even a suggestion of military pomp, the outlook is overwhelmingly sunny and high-spirited.

'This one is delightful in its freshness, nimbleness and charm.'
Composer Hector Berlioz (1803–69) on the Scherzo movement of Beethoven's First Symphony

What makes this piece special?

There are plenty of signs in the First Symphony that Beethoven was willing to tear up the rule book. The first movement's opening may not yet match the body blow that would come with the Fifth Symphony (that famous 'da da da DAH' motif), but it was clearly designed to befuddle the audience. Rather than starting, as usual, in the symphony's 'tonic' or 'home' key, the two pairs of chords at the start are set, with disorienting effect, in two other keys, before seeming to settle in the dominant – kind of the 'opposite' of the tonic.

Beethoven also parted with tradition in placing extra emphasis on the wind instruments, placing them sometimes on a more equal footing with the strings, sometimes even as the main focus. The second movement

of a symphony would normally be a slow movement. But this one is much more easy-going. In fact it sounds more like a minuet – a graceful three-time dance (a little like a waltz); and then the third movement – which would normally be a Minuet – itself sounds more like a Scherzo – a lighter, brisker, more jovial movement. The Finale, like the first movement, opens with a musical prank: the first violins – in a will-they-won't-they fashion – teasingly feel their way up a simple major scale before eventually shooting off at top speed. Maybe it was because of this Symphony that the evening of its premiere was described as 'the most interesting public concert for a long time'.



Keep Listening

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



Thomas Adès conductor

Thomas Adès belongs to that paradoxical, breed of composers who can also conduct – the equivalent to an architect who can actually construct buildings. Such rare musicians – Leonard Bernstein, Pierre Boulez and Oliver Knussen are the most famous examples – yo-yo between these conflicting practices, one of which demands deep introspection, and the other that requires heightened social skills in order to communicate with large groups (whether that's orchestras or audiences). Adès has conducted some of the world's greatest orchestras, each time bringing his composer's ear – viewing the music from the 'inside' – and he designs programmes around his particular passions and fascinations.

The London Symphony Orchestra



At the London Symphony Orchestra, we strive to inspire hearts and minds through world-leading music-making. We were established in 1904 as one of the first orchestras shaped by its musicians, and today we're ranked among the world's top orchestras. As Resident Orchestra at the Barbican since the Centre opened in 1982, we perform some 70 concerts here every year. We also perform over 50 concerts a year to audiences throughout the UK and worldwide, and deliver a far-reaching programme of recordings, live-streams and on-demand broadcasts. Through our world-leading learning and community programme, LSO Discovery, we're connecting people from all walks of life to the power of great music. Our musicians are at the heart of this unique programme. In 1999 we formed our own recording label, LSO Live, which has become one of the world's most talked-about classical labels. As a leading orchestra for film, we've entertained millions with classic scores for *Star Wars*, *Indiana Jones* and many more.



On Stage

Leader

Carmine Lauri

First Violins

Clare Duckworth

Ginette Decuyper

Laura Dixon

William Melvin

Claire Parfitt

Elizabeth Pigram

Sylvain Vasseur

Caroline Frenkel

Aleem Kandour

Dmitry Khakhamov

Preston Yeo

Second Violins

Thomas Norris

Miya Väisänen

David Ballesteros

Matthew Gardner

Naoko Keatley

Belinda McFarlane

Iwona Muszynska

Csilla Pogány

Andrew Pollock

Shoshanah Sievers

Violas

Eivind Ringstad

Gillianne Haddow

Anna Bastow

Mizuho Ueyama

Thomas Beer

Sofia Silva Sousa

Robert Turner

Annie-May Page

Cellos

Rebecca Gilliver

Alastair Blayden

Salvador Bolón

Daniel Gardner

Amanda Truelove

Henry Hargreaves

Double Basses

Rodrigo Moro

Martín

Patrick Laurence

Thomas Goodman

Joe Melvin

Jani Pensola

Flutes

Gareth Davies

Imogen Royce

Oboes

Juliana Koch

Rosie Jenkins

Clarinets

Chris Richards

Chi-Yu Mo

Bassoons

Daniel Jemison

Joost Bosdijk

Horns

Diego Incertis

Sánchez

Angela Barnes

Trumpets

James Fountain

Adam Wright

Timpani

Nigel Thomas



The LSO is funded by Arts Council England in partnership with the City of London Corporation, which also provides the Orchestra's permanent home at the Barbican



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