

TONIGHT'S CONCERT

Sibelius, Prokofiev and Stravinsky

Sunday 10 November 2024
Barbican

7pm

Jean Sibelius

Tapiola

Sergei Prokofiev

Violin Concerto No 2

Interval

Igor Stravinsky

The Rite of Spring

Klaus Mäkelä conductor

Andrej Power violin

London Symphony Orchestra

Concert finishes at approximately 9pm

Welcome



A special welcome to this evening's performance, conducted by Klaus Mäkelä, who makes his LSO debut with a programme that aptly reflects his Finnish heritage and his musical background.

We are delighted that Andrej Power, LSO Leader since August 2023, who has collaborated with Klaus Mäkelä in Sweden over many years, makes his concerto debut with the Orchestra tonight, playing Sergei Prokofiev's dramatic Violin Concerto No 2.

The concert opens with *Tapiola*, a tone poem by Jean Sibelius, for which the composer took inspiration from the Finnish literary epic, the *Kalevala*. After the interval, we hear Igor Stravinsky's thrilling ballet score *The Rite of Spring*, infamous for its riotous Parisian premiere in 1913, and which still sounds fresh and new to audiences today.

Thank you for joining us for this evening's performance, and we hope to see you again soon. Later this month, we look forward to composer and saxophonist Cassie Kinoshi bringing her ensemble seed. to the Barbican for a brand new piece, entitled *HEART*, part of the EFG London Jazz Festival. We continue our 'Beethoven and Modernism' series at the end of November with the thrilling Seventh Symphony paired with Helmut Lachenmann's *My Melodies*, featuring members of the LSO Horn section. We look forward to seeing you there.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathryn McDowell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Dame Kathryn McDowell DBE DL
Managing Director

Coming Up

Thursday 28 November 7pm
Barbican

Lachenmann and Beethoven 7

Two sound worlds, two centuries apart: Lachenmann's *My Melodies* meets Beethoven's Seventh Symphony. Ilan Volkov conducts.

Tuesday 10 & Thursday 12 December 7pm
Barbican

Puccini: La rondine

LSO Chief Conductor Sir Antonio Pappano conducts two concert performances of *La rondine*, Puccini's story of love thwarted by society's conventions – an opera glowing with melody and orchestral colour.

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

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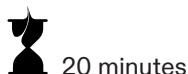
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Visit iso.co.uk/survey or scan the QR code to complete a short survey about tonight's concert.



Tapiola Op 112

Jean Sibelius



Programme note by
Stephen Johnson

Wide-spread they stand, the
Northland's dusky forests,

Ancient, mysterious,
brooding savage dreams;

Within them dwells the
Forest's mighty God,

And wood-sprites in the
gloom weave magic secrets.

Jean Sibelius sent the score of his last and greatest tone poem to his publishers in 1926. Almost immediately, a question came back: who or what was 'Tapiola'? In reply, Sibelius supplied the four-line poem quoted above, plus a word or two of explanation. Tapiola is the dwelling-place of Tapio, 'the Forest's mighty God', as evoked in the Finnish national epic, the *Kalevala*. Sibelius' verses are a useful pointer to what we are about to hear – especially that line about 'Ancient, mysterious, brooding savage dreams' – so long as it is understood that Tapio is not the 'God the Father' Sibelius sometimes referred to in his letters and diaries, but a more elemental presence: the personification of far-Northern nature at its most extreme and pitiless. The American conductor Walter Damrosch, who

commissioned *Tapiola*, seems to have grasped this at once: 'No one but a Norseman could have written this work,' he wrote to the composer. 'We were all enthralled by the dark pine forests and the shadowy gods and wood nymphs who dwell therein. The coda with its icy winds sweeping through the forest made us shiver.'

Of course, we don't have to think of Nordic forests to enjoy such a magnificently argued, brilliantly scored masterpiece as *Tapiola*. The process by which Sibelius manages to draw so much from the fragment of melody heard at the beginning (strings) is compelling enough on its own terms. But once you know the work's inspiration, it's hard to avoid picturing those vast, dimly lit, intensely lonely forests that stretch for hundreds of miles across the Northlands. Near the end comes the terrifying vision that so impressed Damrosch: tremolando strings build an awe-inspiring crescendo – like the sound of storm winds shrieking through frozen foliage. But then comes a strange calm, and finally a warm, consoling chord for strings. Perhaps by enduring the terror and loneliness of the Northern forests, the human spectator has ultimately found a new inner strength.

Jean Sibelius

1865 to 1957 (Finland)



Contemporaries

Richard Strauss,
Claude Debussy

Key events

1889–91: Studied in
Berlin and Vienna

1902: Hugely
successful premiere
of the Second
Symphony

1917: Finland
declares its
independence
from Russia

1924: Premiere of
his Seventh (and
final) Symphony

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Complete
Symphonies,
Kullervo, *The
Oceanides* and
Pohjola's Daughter,
conducted by
Sir Colin Davis
Isolive.co.uk

Composer profile
by **Andrew Mellor**

The landscape, language and culture of Finland continue to set the country apart from prevailing European norms. The same is true of music by Jean Sibelius.

In the faraway Finland of the late 1800s, it was possible to learn the basics of musical composition without having Austro-German methods baked in to your psyche. That suited Sibelius, who reimagined the structure of orchestral music by imitating the hypnotic, circular repetitions of Finland's storytelling tradition, rune singing. In so doing, Sibelius moved orchestral music away from the Germanic tradition of thematic argument and gave the Nordic region a voice of its own.

Sibelius was born to a middle-class family outside Helsinki but quickly forced his way into the city's cultural elite. He studied at the city's Music Institute and became a competent violinist, rounding off his self-directed education in Berlin and Vienna.

Sibelius' orchestral scores sound as unusual to the ear as they look to the eye. Tunes emerge

from streams of identical notes. Motifs are molded gradually through repetition. Foreground and background are merged. Rhythmic shifts at the bottom of the orchestra tease out transformations above. The music can appear beyond human control.

Sibelius perfected those techniques in his symphonies while his tone poems formed testing grounds for them. He anticipated minimalism from the United States and French spectralism, while his role in creating an independent Finland put orchestral music at the centre of the country's legislative agenda.

Finland took Sibelius to its heart, but the precious and pugnacious composer had an ambivalent relationship with his homeland and his place in the world. Alcoholism didn't help. Nevertheless, he completed a considerable body of work: alongside seven symphonies, his oeuvre includes more than a dozen symphonic (tone) poems, much incidental music for the theatre, a string quartet and many ravishing songs.

Violin Concerto No 2 in G minor Op 63

Sergei Prokofiev

Andrej Power
violin

- 1 Allegro moderato**
- 2 Andante assai**
- 3 Allegro ben marcato**



1935



26 minutes

Programme note
by **David Gutman**

After almost 20 years of self-imposed exile in the West, Sergei Prokofiev was arranging for a permanent return to Russia when he accepted a commission to write a violin concerto expressly for the French violinist Robert Soetens. Significantly, the composer chose not to depart from the approachable idiom of his massive work-in-progress, the Soviet-sponsored ballet *Romeo and Juliet*. Despite his stated desire to produce something 'altogether different from No 1', this second Concerto has the same generous lyricism, the same unforced variety of mood, and it maintains the same exquisite balance between violin and orchestra. Only the formal plan, totally assured as it is, seems relatively conventional. For all its fine pointing, this G minor Concerto is deliberately less audacious than its predecessor.

The work begins with a movement of traditional sonata design, yet how typical of Prokofiev's subtle and unassuming originality that the solo violin should start the proceedings on its own! Whether or not this sombre opening truly evokes 'the image of the snow-covered plains of Russia', as discerned by Israel Nestyev, Prokofiev's official Soviet biographer, the seductive second theme is indeed 'one of the mature Prokofiev's most felicitous melodic revelations'. This idea, not a million miles away from some of the love music in *Romeo and*

Juliet, is a perfect demonstration of the way Prokofiev's tunes can set out in routine fashion only to 'slip' to a quite unexpected pitch. Whether negotiating the pitfalls of sentimentality or simply avoiding the obvious, the composer will often stretch his melodic line into a harmonic frame that seems arbitrary or disconnected on the page, but actually produces, as here, the feeling that his theme has been 'refreshed'.

The lyricism is
balanced by the
tingling excitement
of the finale ...

Another typical device is the pulsating, arpeggiated accompaniment with which Prokofiev underpins the radiant arioso-like melody of the slow movement; the treatment is vaguely reminiscent of the corresponding movement of Serge Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto. While this Andante assai is more tranquil and sustained than the younger Prokofiev would have allowed himself, it nevertheless embodies a scherzo element with will-o'-the-wisp figurations fluttering through the texture. The lyricism is balanced by the tingling excitement of the finale, a spikier, rhythmically irregular version of the familiar 19th-century peasant rondo.

Here the composer, himself an expert pianist, takes particular care to ensure that his soloist is never swamped. He also goes out of his way to flatter his original audience: the premiere took place in Madrid on 1 December 1935, and there's more than a hint of Spanishness in the deployment of castanets.

With the arrival of his wife and children in Moscow the following May, Prokofiev had turned himself into a bona fide Soviet artist. The 'romantic' new Concerto could even be taken to mark an appropriate volte-face in the creative life of a renegade modernist, the return of the prodigal. As with Dmitri Shostakovich, so with Prokofiev: there has lately been some attempt to portray the composer as a musical pamphleteer encoding messages of dissent. Those in thrall to this 'revisionist' view have detected a parody of the Stalinist demand for accessibility in the 'simplified' accompaniment of the slow movement and an atmosphere of threat in the finale's cadenza-like duet for soloist and bass drum. Need such ideological point scoring detain us tonight? The choice is yours.

The Second Violin Concerto has a secure place in the repertoire, and, on purely musical grounds, may even be regarded as superior to the five concertos Prokofiev composed for his own instrument.



Interval – 20 minutes

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Sergei Prokofiev

1891 (Ukraine) to 1953 (Russia)



Contemporaries

Lili Boulanger,
Bohuslav Martinů

Key events

1917: Left Russia for the US

1922: Moved to Paris

1936: Returned to Russia permanently

1938: Premiere of his popular ballet *Romeo and Juliet*

1948: Blacklisted for composing 'modernist' music

Coming up next

Symphony No 2 with Gianandrea Noseda
10 April 2025
Barbican

With the LSO

1922: UK premiere of the Third Piano Concerto with Prokofiev as soloist

Composer profile by **Andrew Mellor**

Sergei Prokofiev was born in Imperial Russia, now Ukraine, and died in Soviet Russia. He was raised by doting parents who took their son to operas and ballets in Moscow and St Petersburg. Aged nine, the young Prokofiev wrote text and music for his own opera, *The Giant*. He would soon be studying composition with Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov at the St Petersburg Conservatory, from where he graduated, as a pianist and conductor, playing his own spiky Piano Concerto No 1.

The young Prokofiev kicked against the nationalistic conservatism at home and ventured west to Germany, France and America. There, he honed an acerbic and distinctive musical voice. But the Soviet regime knew it could lure the politically naive composer back, and eventually succeeded. In 1936, he settled permanently back in Russia, having all but abandoned his Spanish wife and their two sons.

To some extent, the return suited Prokofiev's musical objectives to be clear, useful and evocative. He wrote music for children (most famously *Peter and the Wolf*), for aggrandising political events and for Soviet films – none of which forced him to fundamentally change his direct and muscular musical style, nor to move away from symphonies and operas.

In 1948, however, Prokofiev was denounced by Stalin's government for writing 'formalist' music that failed to reflect the experience of the working classes. The composer took the charge seriously, admitting that the task of 'finding a melody instantly understandable even to the uninitiated listener' had led him unwittingly into unnecessary complication. Prokofiev pressed on, but the condemnation had damaged him. And Stalin had one last rebuke in store. The two men died on the same day, meaning Prokofiev's passing was all but ignored.

London Symphony Orchestra

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COMING IN 2025

Season Highlights



UP



Thursday 9 January 2025 7pm

Brahms Symphony No 4

Boulez and Benjamin

Sir Simon Rattle

Sunday 9 February 2025 7pm

Walton Cello Concerto

Maconchy and Vaughan Williams

Sir Antonio Pappano and Rebecca Gilliver

Thursday 20 March 2025 7pm

Haydn Symphony No 39

Debussy, Sibelius and Bartók

Barbara Hannigan

Thursday 10 April 2025 7pm

Beethoven Piano Concerto No 1

Schubert and Prokofiev

Gianandrea Noseda and Alice Sara Ott

Sunday 25 May 2025 7pm

Mozart Violin Concerto No 5

Strauss Ein Heldenleben

Sir Antonio Pappano and Lisa Batiashvili

The Rite of Spring

Igor Stravinsky

Part One: The Adoration of the Earth

- 1 Introduction
- 2 The Augurs of Spring
- 3 Dances of the Adolescents
- 4 Game of Abduction
- 5 Spring Rounds
- 6 Games of the Rival Tribes
- 7 Procession of the Sage
- 8 The Sage
- 9 Dance of the Earth

Part Two: The Sacrifice

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Mystical Circles of the Young Girls
- 3 Glorification of the Chosen One
- 4 Evocation of the Ancestors
- 5 Ritual of the Ancestors
- 6 Sacrificial Dance



1913



36 minutes

Programme note by
Stephen Walsh

The origin of *The Rite of Spring* is almost as famous as the riot which, just over three years after Igor Stravinsky first conceived the piece, greeted its world premiere. Stravinsky relates in his autobiography how, while working on the final pages of *The Firebird* in the spring of 1910, he had a 'fleeting vision' of 'a solemn pagan rite: sage elders, seated in a circle, watching a young girl dance herself to death. They were sacrificing her to propitiate the god of spring'.

The vision seems not to have been accompanied by musical ideas, but if it had been, they would hardly have been much like the music as we know it. In fact, the change in style over these three years probably took the composer as much by surprise as anyone. After all, the first sketches already date from September 1911, less than 18 months after the completion of his first ballet, and the following March, he wrote to his teacher Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's son Andrey that 'it's as if 20 years, not two, have passed since the composition of *Firebird*'.

After the ballet's noisy premiere, by Diaghilev's Ballets Russes in the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées on 29 May 1913, Stravinsky spent much of the rest of his life denying the reality and creating a mythology. Above all, he came to play down the work's purely Russian character. He denied the presence in the music of authentic folk materials; he even tried to disclaim the actual scenario, asserting in a Paris newspaper interview in 1920 that the 'scenic realisation' (by the

Russian painter and ethnographer Nicholas Roerich) had been a mere convenience for a work 'of purely musical construction'. Finally, he denounced Nijinsky's choreography, for which he had expressed huge admiration at the time. None of these disavowals hold much water.

That the score is based on folk music was conclusively proved by the publication of the sketchbook (1969), which includes specific notations of such material. The music itself rapidly became world-famous for two things: crashing dissonance and violent rhythm. At its heart, though, lies simple folksong, but layered in complex ways. This can immediately be heard at the very start, where the plangent high bassoon melody is contradicted by a still simpler tune on cor anglais, but set on C-sharp against the bassoon's C naturals an octave above. Stravinsky found these colours at the piano (right hand white notes, left hand black).

But the rhythms also descend from folksong and specifically from a Russian tradition of word-setting. The principle is cellular. You think of a tune as a compilation of tiny phrases, then build them up additively – the reverse of a classical composer with their four-beat bars and four-bar phrases. Stravinsky later explored these techniques in a refined, intricate way. But whatever he subsequently wrote, he never shook off the image of the wild man of modern music. And listening to *The Rite of Spring*, it is not hard to hear why.

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. But he grew friendly with a fellow law student, Vladimir Rimsky-Korsakov, whose father Nikolai 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 US (first Los Angeles, later New York), Stravinsky explored musical asceticism, neo-Classicism, movie 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 wife and daughter (one of four children) to tuberculosis and certainly shaped his two major choral works, the *Symphony of Psalms* and the Mass.

Contemporaries

Arnold Schoenberg,
Béla Bartók

Key events

1910: Premiere of his first score for the Ballets Russes, *The Firebird*

1913: Premiere of *The Rite of Spring*

1917: Russian Revolution

1920: Settles in Paris

1939: Moves to the US

Listen to

Stravinsky Ballets
with Sir Simon Rattle
solive.co.uk

With the LSO

1931: UK premiere of Suite from 'The Firebird', conducted by Stravinsky

Composer profile
by **Andrew Mellor**

Klaus Mäkelä

conductor



Finnish conductor Klaus Mäkelä has held the positions of Chief Conductor of the Oslo Philharmonic since 2020 and Music Director of the Orchestre de Paris since September 2021. He assumes the title of Chief Conductor of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in September 2027 and, in the same season, commences as Music Director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. An exclusive Decca Classics artist, he has recorded Ballets Russes scores by Igor Stravinsky and Claude Debussy with the Orchestre de Paris. With the Oslo Philharmonic, he has released the complete Sibelius Symphonies along with his Violin Concerto, and Sergei Prokofiev's First Violin Concerto with Janine Jansen.

Coinciding with performances at the Salzburg Festival and Musikfest Berlin, Decca Classics released Mäkelä and the Oslo Philharmonic's new recording of Shostakovich Symphonies Nos 4, 5 and 6 in August 2024. Dmitri Shostakovich continues as a main composer focus in Mäkelä's fifth season in Oslo, with performances of Symphonies Nos 1, 11 and 15, while the music of Béla Bartók threads through the autumn, with *Divertimento* and *Concerto for Orchestra*, works they also perform at the Vienna Musikverein and Hamburg Elbphilharmonie. Additional programme highlights include Andrew Norman's *Play*, Anders Hillborg's new Piano Concerto *MAX* with soloist Emanuel

Ax, and Sibelius' *Lemminkäinen Suite*. With a focus on French composers and new works, Mäkelä's fourth season with the Orchestre de Paris pays tribute to the anniversaries of both Maurice Ravel and Pierre Boulez and features music by Hector Berlioz, Gabriel Fauré, Debussy, Francis Poulenc and Olivier Messiaen. New commissions see the premieres of Thierry Escaich's *Lux Aeterna* and Charlotte Bray's *A Sky Too Small*. In addition to the tenth anniversary celebrations at home in the Paris Philharmonie, Mäkelä and the Orchestre de Paris tour extensively, with summer performances at the BBC Proms and Lucerne Festivals, and guest performances across Europe. They complete the season by returning to Asia in June 2025.

Guest conducting engagements in the 2024/25 season include performances with the Cleveland Orchestra and Berliner Philharmoniker. Mäkelä also makes his first appearance with the Wiener Philharmoniker in Vienna and on tour. This season, he is a focus artist at the Vienna Musikverein, and Portrait Artist at the Essen Philharmonie and Bozar in Brussels.

As a cellist, Mäkelä partners with members of the Oslo Philharmonic and Orchestre de Paris for occasional programmes, and performs each summer at the Verbier Festival.

Andrej Power

violin



Andrej Power became Leader of the London Symphony Orchestra in 2023. He is also principal concertmaster of the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, and is frequently invited to guest lead orchestras including the Swedish Radio Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris and the Mahler Chamber Orchestra.

Power has appeared as a soloist with most orchestras in Sweden, and his solo performances, many of which have been broadcast on radio and television, have taken him to the US, China and across Europe with orchestras such as the Moscow Philharmonic

Orchestra, Beijing National Opera Orchestra and the Utah Symphony. Chamber music is a big part of his musical life: he regularly performs in different groups, and also has his own quartet.

Inspired by his grandfather Naoum Power, he began playing the violin at the age of three. He subsequently studied at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm with Professor Henryk Kowalski and at the Zurich University of the Arts in Switzerland with Professor Zakhar Bron.

Power plays the 1708 Regent Stradivarius violin, on generous loan from Tarisio.

London Symphony Orchestra

On Stage

Leader

Benjamin Gilmore

First Violins

Seohee Min
Jérôme Benhaim
Clare Duckworth
Stefano Mengoli
Ginette Decuyper
Laura Dixon
Maxine Kwok
William Melvin
Claire Parfitt
Elizabeth Pigram
Harriet Rayfield
Sylvain Vasseur
Grace Lee
Djumash Poulsen
Savva Zverev

Second Violins

Thomas Norris
Sarah Quinn
Miya Väisänen
David Ballesteros
Matthew Gardner
Naoko Keatley
Alix Lagasse
Belinda McFarlane
Iwona Muszynska
Csilla Pogány
Andrew Pollock
Paul Robson
Louise Shackelton
Helena Buckie

Violas

Nimrod Guez
Gillianne Haddow
Malcolm Johnston
Anna Bastow
Thomas Beer
Germán Clavijo
Steve Doman
Julia O'Riordan
Robert Turner
Mizuho Ueyama
Philip Hall
Alistair Scahill

Cellos

Rebecca Gilliver
Laure Le Dantec
Alastair Blayden
Salvador Bolón
Ève-Marie Caravassilis
Anna Beryl
Judith Fleet
Henry Hargreaves
Silvestrs Kalnins
Peteris Sokolovskis

Double Basses

David Stark
Patrick Laurence
Chaemun Im
Thomas Goodman
Joe Melvin
Adam Wynter
Evangeline Tang
James Trowbridge

Flutes

Gareth Davies
Imogen Royce

Piccolos

Sharon Williams
Patricia Moynihan

Alto Flute

Chloé Dufosse

Oboes

Juliana Koch
Rosie Jenkins
Kara Battley

Cor anglais

Drake Gritton
Henrietta Cooke

Clarinets

Sérgio Pires
Chi-Yu Mo
Sonia Sielaff

E-flat Clarinet

Chi-Yu Mo

Bass Clarinet

Ferran Garcerà Perelló
Kenny Keppel

Bassoons

Daniel Jemison
Joost Bosdijk
Patrick Kearney

Contra Bassoons

Martin Field
Amrei Liebold

Horns

Diego Incertis
Sánchez
Timothy Jones
Angela Barnes
Eleanor Blakeney
Jonathan Maloney
Finlay Bain
Jake Parker
Max Garrard
Amadea Dazeley-Gaist

Wagner Tubas

Timothy Jones
Jonathan Maloney

Trumpets

James Fountain
Adam Wright
Holly Clark
David Geoghegan

D Trumpet

Matthew Williams

Bass Trumpet

Jonathan Hollick

Trombones

Mark Templeton
Jonathan Hollick
Andrew Cole

Bass Trombone

Paul Milner

Tubas

Ben Thomson
Matthew Lait

Timpani

Nigel Thomas
Patrick King

Percussion

Neil Percy
Sam Walton
Mark McDonald
Calum Crosbie