## TONIGHT'S CONCERT

## Gianandrea Noseda: Beethoven and Prokofiev

Thursday 10 April 2025 Barbican 7pm

**Franz Schubert** Overture: Die Zauberharfe, 'Rosamunde' **Ludwig van Beethoven** Piano Concerto No 1

Interval

Sergei Prokofiev Symphony No 2

#### Gianandrea Noseda conductor Pierre-Laurent Aimard piano London Symphony Orchestra

Concert ends at approximately 9.15pm

Prokofiev Symphony No 2 recorded for future release on LSO Live

 $\begin{array}{c} \text{Recommended by} \\ \text{CLASSIC} \int M \end{array}$ 

## Welcome



A warm welcome to tonight's performance conducted by Gianandrea Noseda, LSO Principal Guest Conductor, as he completes his cycle of symphonies by Sergei Prokofiev. We much look forward to the release of this cycle on our recording label, LSO Live.

It is a pleasure to welcome Pierre-Laurent Aimard to the stage this evening. He last performed with the Orchestra at the Barbican in 2016, playing Olivier Messiaen's *Couleurs de la cité céleste* under the baton of Sir Simon Rattle, LSO Conductor Emeritus.

The concert opens with Franz Schubert's 'Rosamunde' Overture, a much-loved piece full of warmth and lyrical charm. Following this, Alice Sara Ott will take the spotlight with a work full of youthful exuberance and virtuosic flair, Ludwig van Beethoven's Piano Concerto No 1. Sergei Prokofiev's Symphony No 2 closes the evening, a lesser-known gem in the composer's catalogue, providing a contrast to the earlier works by Schubert and Beethoven. I would like to thank Classic FM for recommending this concert to their listeners.

This week, we were pleased to announce the LSO's 2025/26 season, taking place from September 2025 to July 2026, our second with Sir Antonio Pappano as Chief Conductor. Our LSO Patrons, Pioneers and Ambassador Friends can book now, with public booking opening on Wednesday 16 April.

We hope you enjoy this concert and that you will be able to join us again soon. Later this week, Gianandrea Noseda conducts Dmitri Shostakovich's Symphony No 2, alongside Alfred Schnittke's Violin Concerto No 1, featuring soloist Lisa Batiashvili in the first of her LSO Artist Portrait concerts at the Barbican. In May, Sir Simon Rattle conducts Leoš Janáček's hilarious satire *The Excursions of Mr Brouček*. We look forward to seeing you there.

Kannyn Milswell

Dame Kathryn McDowell DBE DL Managing Director

## **Coming Up**

Sunday 13 April Barbican 7pm

## Schnittke, Shostakovich and Brahms

Lisa Batiashvili begins her Artist Portrait series with Schnittke's Violin Concerto, plus early Shostakovich and stirring Brahms conducted by Gianandrea Noseda.

Sunday 4 & Tuesday 6 May	7pm
Barbican	

### Janáček: The Excursions of Mr Brouček

Sir Simon Rattle continues his Janáček journey with a concert performance of his hilarious operatic satire about art, lunar travel, nationalism and sausages.

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



#### Welcome to tonight's group bookers

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#### lso.co.uk/groups

## **Overture: Die Zauberharfe, 'Rosamunde' D 644**

Franz Schubert



Programme note by Alexandra Wilson Franz Schubert is not a composer we would immediately associate with opera, yet he attempted to write many during his lifetime, having been advised by his tutor. Antonio Salieri, that writing a successful opera was the route to lasting renown. Most of Schubert's operatic efforts went unperformed, and all flopped, but among those that were staged was Die Zauberharfe (The Magic Harp), a three-act melodrama that was billed as featuring spectacular supernatural effects. At its premiere at the Theater an der Wien in 1820, the machinery did not work properly, the characters did not know their parts, and one critic called it 'wretched trash'. The music was deemed a success, but the opera was dropped after eight performances.

The only part of the work that has endured is its overture. Confusingly, this was long misattributed as part of the incidental music Schubert wrote for a play. Rosamunde, Fürstin von Cypren (Rosamunde, Princess of Cyprus) by Helmina von Chézy. Although Schubert did indeed write music for Rosamunde (another fiasco, performed only twice), the overture used to precede it was from another of his operas, Alfonso und Estrella. The Zauberharfe overture became associated with Rosamunde only when it was published together with the play's incidental music at a later date.

A succession of dramatic minorkey chords gives way to an elegant, gentle Andante section, with the quality of a courtly dance, in which gentle, yearning melodic lines are passed between strings and winds. Periodically, the sense of serenity and optimism that Schubert has created is punctuated by the insistent recurrence of ominous minor chords.

However, we then move into a new section in which all cares are seemingly banished. Here, Schubert presents us with a succession of vivacious, impish major-key melodies, which seem to recall the effervescent style Gioachino Rossini uses in the overtures to his comic operas. Schubert would have known and admired Rossini's works by this time, and learnt a lot from him in terms of compositional wit. Eventually the music settles into gentle, introspective mode once more, before the sprightly mood of the middle section regains the upper hand.

Elegant and colourfully orchestrated, with a succession of brilliant themes and a jubilant, fully scored ending, the work is immensely appealing. Perhaps the association with *Die Zauberharfe*, let alone Von Chézy's play, might today be considered incidental, Schubert's short overture living on as an attractive concert work in its own right.

## Franz Schubert

1797 to 1828 (Austria)



**Contemporaries** Gioachino Rossini, Giacomo Meyerbeer

#### Key events

1815: Prolific composing year, including
145 songs
1823: Writes his first song cycle, *Die* schöne Müllerin
1826: Completes his Ninth and final Symphony
1827-28: Writes some of his greatest compositions, including the song cycle Winterreise.

Listen to Symphony No 9 youtube.com/lso

Composer profile by Andrew Stewart In childhood, Franz Schubert was taught violin by his schoolmaster father and piano by his eldest brother. He rapidly became more proficient than his teachers, and showed considerable musical talent, so much so that in 1808. he became a member of Vienna's famous Imperial Court chapel choir. He was educated at the Imperial City College, where he received lessons from the composer Antonio Salieri. His father, eager that Franz should qualify as a teacher and work in the family's schoolhouse, encouraged the boy to return home in 1814. Compositions soon began to flow, although teaching duties interrupted progress. Despite his daily classroom routine, Schubert managed to compose 145 songs in 1815, together with four stage works, two symphonies, two masses and a large number of chamber pieces.

Though the quantity of Schubert's output is astonishing enough, it is the quality of his melodic invention

and the richness of his harmonic conception that are the most remarkable features of his work. He was able to convey dramatic images and deal with powerful emotions within the space of a few bars, as he so often did in his songs and chamber works.

The public failure of his stage works and the reactionary attitudes to his music of conservative Viennese critics did not restrict his creativity, nor his enjoyment of composition; however, illness did affect his work and outlook. In 1824, Schubert was admitted to Vienna's General Hospital for treatment for syphilis. Although his condition improved, he suffered side effects from his medication. including severe depression. During the final four years of his life, Schubert's health declined; meanwhile, he created some of his finest compositions, chief among which are the song cycles Winterreise and Schwanengesang, the String Quintet and his last three piano sonatas.

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## Piano Concerto No 1 in C major Op 15

#### Ludwig van Beethoven

Pierre-Laurent Aimard piano

- 1 Allegro con brio
- 2 Largo
- 3 Rondo: Allegro

L 1795, rev 1801

35 minutes

Programme note by **Lindsay Kemp** 

Ludwig's van Beethoven's Piano Concerto No 1 was actually composed several years after his Second Piano Concerto, but published a few months before in 1801 (becoming his 'first' in the genre). As such, when Beethoven made his public debut in Vienna, performing one of his own concertos at the Burgtheater in 1795, we do not know for sure which concerto it was that made such a hit. What is clear is that both works were in his repertory over the next few years; he played them in Prague in 1798, and the numerous revisions he made to both concertos are sure signs of an ongoing performance history. Indeed, the states of both concertos evidently remained fluid for quite a while. A friend's account of the preparations for the Burgtheater concert describes how he left it almost to the last moment to finish the finale of the Concerto he played there: 'Not

until the afternoon of the second day before the concert did he write the Rondo, and then while suffering from a pretty severe colic which often afflicted him. In the ante-room sat copyists to whom he handed sheet after sheet as soon as it was finished.'

Despite his studies with Joseph Haydn, it is to Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart that Beethoven owes the greatest debt in his early piano concertos. It was Mozart who had provided the genre with its formal and expressive model during the 1780s, and whom Beethoven revered above all others, and the earlier composer's influence is readily apparent in the formal and textural clarity of Concerto No 2. No 1 has also often been likened to Mozart, but as a more frequently performed work, it has usually been viewed in the context of Beethoven's other concertos. Compared to No 2, or

indeed to any Mozart concerto, it shows its author's hand in countless ways. For this is a piece which, with the brightness and confidence of youth, takes the congenially militaristic trumpetand-drum world of Mozart's C-major concertos, and with brash dynamism and exuberantly robust piano writing admits the air of a new and more assertive age.

The first movement begins quietly but soon gets into a vigorous stride, so that by the time the piano enters, the best way for it to make an impression is by momentarily occupying itself with a totally new theme. A formal nicety occurs in the opening orchestral section, when the strings' lovingly shaped second theme is three times curtailed, allowing the woodwind to cloud the music and lead it away to a new key. This is typical Beethoven, surprising or even shocking his audiences, but how much more pleasing the effect then becomes when this same theme later reappears in the woodwind, this time in its full, untroubled form.

The central Largo is a broadly expressive and formally unambitious construction, whose warmth and sense of well-being, as in many of Beethoven's early slow movements, comes as much from its harmonies and resourcefully varied textures (there is a telling role for solo clarinet) as from its melodic distinction The Concerto then ends with a sparkling rondo which mixes high-spirited diversions and a few 'Turkish' intrusions with a witty main theme which delights in trickery; every time you think it has finished, there is a little bit more.



Interval – 20 minutes Find us on Instagram @londonsymphonyorchestra

## Ludwig van Beethoven

1770 (Germany) to 1827 (Austria)



**Contemporaries** Gioachino Rossini, Luigi Cherubini

#### **Key events**

1792: Moved to Vienna 1803–15: Napoleonic Wars 1824: Premiere of the Ninth Symphony

#### Listen to

Symphonies Nos 2 & 6 with Bernard Haitink Isolive.co.uk

#### With the LSO

Performance and recording of his rarely heard oratorio *Christ on the Mount of Olives* for *Beethoven 250* celebrations in 2020

Composer profile by **Andrew Mellor** 

When Ludwig van Beethoven was a young man, France overthrew its monarchy and rebellion spread through Europe. Riding the crest of a wave of social change, Beethoven changed not just the sound of music but also the standing of the artist in society. He introduced the concept of the 'artist-hero', paving the way for Romanticism and even for popular culture.

Beethoven was born in a faraway corner of what is now Germany to an alcoholic and abusive father, and a mother who died young. He chanced his way to Europe's cultural capital, Vienna, where he studied with Joseph Haydn and probably (during his first visit to the city) 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 could hear almost nothing. That made him irritable, sensitive and withdrawn. But Beethoven remained ever sure of himself, and consistently creative.

## Symphony No 2 in D minor Op 40

#### Sergei Prokofiev

 Allegro ben articulo
 Theme and Variations



38 minutes

Programme note by **Stephen Johnson** 

As a young composer, Sergei Prokofiev courted, and revelled in, artistic scandal. But with his Second Symphony (1924-25), he achieved something unprecedented: he actually managed to shock himself. When he set out to write the symphony, he clearly saw it as an attempt to engage with the kind of 'radical chic' then fashionable in his adopted home city. Paris. The previous year had seen the sensational success of Arthur Honegger's vividly illustrative, bracingly dissonant evocation of a steam engine, Pacific 231. Now, Prokofiev set out to write his own 'symphony of iron and steel'.

Teasingly, perhaps, Prokofiev announced that the new symphony's structure would be based on that of Beethoven's last piano sonata, Op 111: a turbulent, strife-ridden first movement followed by a set of increasingly complex variations on a slow, simply lyrical theme. No doubt he prepared himself gleefully for the consternation it would cause among traditionalist Beethoven worshippers. But the premiere, in Paris in June 1925, conducted by the symphony's dedicatee, Serge Koussevitzky, wasn't so much a succès de scandale as a baffling flop.

This time, Prokofiev blamed himself. 'I have made the music so complex,' he wrote, 'that when I hear it I can't fathom its essence, so what can I expect of others?' For the first time in his life, he confessed, he had real doubts about his abilities as a composer. Years later, Prokofiev began to make plans for a wholesale revision of the score, but at his death, he hadn't even started it.

So, is the Second Symphony a failure? It's very difficult to bring off in performance, especially the long, dense, dissonant tutti passages. But given the right kind of directorial steer, it can be weirdly compelling. The harsh opening trumpet call - rather like a car horn going past at high speed – sets the scene for a movement in which everything seems to be in a constant. violent state of ferment. There are occasional echoes of Pacific 231 and of Stravinsky's Rite of Spring, but the sense of convulsive cathartic outpouring is unique.

An eerie calm descends for the Theme and Variations, beginning with a folk-like oboe theme - a reminder of what a wonderful melodist Prokofiev could be, though in context its apparent innocence can be faintly uncomfortable. This strange mixture of magic and unease increases as the six variations unfold, eventually building to the rawest and densest sustained outpouring in the entire symphony. By now, it's clear that there's much more to this than a simple love of provocation: 'In my heart I cherish the hope that it is a worthy piece of work,' said Prokofiev, some years later. But as to what the 'essence' of this music may be, that remains enigmatic. At the end, the theme returns. almost as if nothing had happened, and the symphony ends on a glacial, ambiguous string chord.

## Sergei Prokofiev

1891 (Ukraine) to 1953 (Russia)



#### **Contemporaries** Igor Stravinsky, Paul Hindemith

#### Key events

**1917:** Premiere of his first symphony, the 'Classical' **1936:** Return to live permanently in Russia

#### Listen to

Symphony No 5 with Gianandrea Noseda on LSO Live Isolive.co.uk

With the LSO 1922: UK premiere and 1932 recording of Third Piano Concerto

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 Prokofiev 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 that Prokofiev's passing was all but ignored.



Immerse yourself in Gianandrea Noseda's Prokofiev recordings with the LSO to date, including the newly released **Symphony No 6**.

# FROKOFIEN

'Prokofiev was one of the most gifted composers at writing melodies, and that makes his music approachable for anyone. As a young composer, he started in a very aggressive style to establish himself, but later in his career he found a language that connected with the audience. It's very refined, his way of composing, without losing a moment of melody – and there's also an element of bitterness, an ironic sense of humour.'

Gianandrea Noseda



LSO LIVE



Symphony No 6 out now Available at Isolive.Iso.co.uk



## Gianandrea Noseda

Principal Guest Conductor



Gianandrea Noseda is one of the world's most sought-after conductors, equally recognised for his artistry in the concert hall and the opera house. The 2024/25 season marks his ninth season as Principal Guest Conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra, and eighth season as Music Director of the National Symphony Orchestra.

In addition to his performances at the Barbican and LSO St Luke's, Noseda has toured with the LSO to the US, China, Europe and Edinburgh. His recordings on LSO Live include Britten's *War Requiem*, Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*, Verdi's Requiem, and ongoing multi-year recording projects of the complete symphonic cycles of Prokofiev, Shostakovich and Tchaikovsky.

Noseda's leadership at the NSO has reinvigorated the orchestra, which makes its home at the Kennedy Center in Washington DC. The renewed recognition has garnered invitations to Carnegie Hall and international concert halls, and led to streaming projects and a record label distributed by LSO Live.

The NSO's recent recordings include the complete Sinfonias by Pulitzer Prize-winning Washington DC native George Walker and a Beethoven symphony cycle. Noseda has made over 80 recordings for various labels, including Deutsche Grammophon and Chandos where his recordings included works of neglected Italian composers in his *Musica Italiana* series. Noseda became General Music Director of the Zurich Opera House in September 2021. A recent milestone there was his first performances of Wagner's *Ring* cycle in May 2024. In February 2023, he was recognised as 'Best Conductor' by the German OPER! AWARDS.

From 2007 to 2018, Noseda served as Music Director of the Teatro Regio Torino, where his leadership marked a golden era. He has conducted leading international orchestras, and at leading opera houses and festivals, and had significant roles with the BBC Philharmonic (Chief Conductor), Israel Philharmonic Orchestra (Principal Guest Conductor), Mariinsky Theatre (Principal Guest Conductor), Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI (Principal Guest Conductor), Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra (Victor de Sabata Chair), Rotterdam Philharmonic (Principal Guest Conductor) and Stresa Festival (Artistic Director).

Noseda has a strong commitment to working with young artists. In 2019, he was appointed the founding Music Director of the Tsinandali Festival and Pan-Caucasian Youth Orchestra in the village of Tsinandali, Georgia.

A native of Milan, Noseda is Commendatore al Merito della Repubblica Italiana, marking his contribution to the artistic life of Italy. He has been honoured as Conductor of the Year by both *Musical America* (2015) and the International Opera Awards (2016). In 2023, he received the Puccini Award.



**Next on stage with the LSO** Sunday 13 April 7pm, Barbican Schnittke, Shostakovich and Brahms

## **Pierre-Laurent Aimard**

#### piano



Pierre-Laurent Aimard is widely acclaimed as an authority on the music of our time while also being recognised for shedding fresh light on music of the past.

In the 2024/25 season, Aimard celebrates the 150th anniversary of Maurice Ravel with ensembles such as Bern Symphony Orchestra, Teatro alla Scala Orchestra, SWR Symphonieorchester, Philadelphia Orchestra and at the Kissinger Sommer and Litomysyl festivals with the Czech Philharmonic. He also marks the centenary of his late teacher and close friend Pierre Boulez, appearing as a soloist alongside Frankfurt Radio Symphony, Ensemble Intercontemporain, Los Angeles Philharmonic and in recital at New York's Carnegie Hall, Wiener Musikverein, Auditorium National de Lyon, Centro Nacional de Difusión Musical in Madrid and Festspielhaus Baden-Baden.

Aimard has had close collaborations with leading composers including Helmut Lachenmann, Elliott Carter, Harrison Birtwistle, György Kurtág, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Marco Stroppa and Olivier Messiaen, and given many notable premieres, most recently Clara lannotta's Piano Concerto for the Acht Brucken Festival in Cologne. He also continues his associations with chamber music partners both old and new, notably Tamara Stefanovich at the Leipzig Gewandhaus and Zürich's Fraumünster, and actor Mathieu Amalric at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées. In early 2024 Aimard released Schubert: Ländler. Awarded five stars by BBC Music Magazine, this record is the latest in a series of critically acclaimed collaborations with Pentatone, following Bartók: Piano Concertos with Esa-Pekka Salonen and the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra (2023), Visions de l'Amen (2022) recorded with Tamara Stefanovich, Beethoven: Hammerklavier Sonata & Eroica Variations (2021) and Messiaen's magnum opus Catalogue d'oiseaux (2018) which garnered multiple awards including the prestigious German Record Critics' Award.

An innovative curator and uniquely significant interpreter of piano repertoire from every age, Aimard has been invited to direct and perform in numerous residencies, including for Musikkollegium Winterthur where, over the season, he celebrated different composers and opened with the complete cycle of Beethoven Piano Concertos. Elsewhere, he has performed ground-breaking projects at Porto's Casa da Musica, New York's Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, Konzerthaus Vienna, Alte Oper Frankfurt, Lucerne Festival, Mozarteum Salzburg, Cité de la Musique in Paris, Tanglewood Festival, the Edinburgh Festival, and as Artistic Director of the Aldeburgh Festival from 2009 to 2016.

Aimard is the recipient of many prizes, including the prestigious International Ernst von Siemens Music Prize in 2017, in recognition of a life devoted to the service of music, and the Leonie Sonning Music Prize, Denmark's most prominent music award in 2022.

A member of the Bayerische Akademie der Schönen Künste, Aimard has held professorships at the Hochschule Köln and was previously an Associate Professor at the College de France, Paris. In spring 2020, he re-launched a major online resource, *Explore the Score*, in collaboration with the Klavier-Festival Ruhr, which centres on the performance and teaching of György Ligeti's piano music.

## London Symphony Orchestra

#### On Stage

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Roman Simovic

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#### Violas

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**Piccolo** Patricia Moynihan

**Oboes** Olivier Stankiewicz Henrietta Cooke

**Cor Anglais** Aurélien Laizé

**Clarinets** Chris Richards Chi-Yu Mo

**Bass Clarinet** Ferran Garcerà Perelló

**Bassoons** Rachel Gough Joost Bosdijk

**Contra Bassoon** Martin Field

#### Trumpets James Fou

Horns

**Diego** Incertis

Angela Barnes

Sánchez

James Fountain Christian Barraclough Adam Wright Holly Clark

Amadea Dazeley-Gaist

Jonathan Maloney

**Trombones** Mark Templeton Jonathan Hollick Gemma Riley

Bass Trombone Paul Milner

**Tuba** Ben Thomson

**Timpani** Patrick King

**Percussion** Neil Percy David Jackson

**Piano** Catherine Edwards

\* Members of the LSO String Experience Scheme

Established in 1992, the Scheme enables young string players at the start of their professional careers to gain work experience by playing in rehearsals and concerts with the LSO. The musicians are treated as professional 'extras', and receive fees in line with LSO section players. Kindly supported by the Barbara Whatmore Charitable Trust, the Idlewild Trust and The Thriplow Charitable Trust.