

TONIGHT'S CONCERT

Sir Antonio Pappano: Britten and Shostakovich

Sunday 21 September 2025
Barbican

7pm

Benjamin Britten

Violin Concerto

Interval

Dmitri Shostakovich

Symphony No 10

Sir Antonio Pappano conductor

Janine Jansen violin

London Symphony Orchestra

Concert finishes at approximately 9pm

Welcome



Tonight's London Symphony Orchestra concert is conducted by Sir Antonio Pappano, LSO Chief Conductor, and features violinist Janine Jansen, returning to the Barbican after her tour performances with the LSO earlier this year. The programme brings together two composers who knew and respected each other: Benjamin Britten and Dmitri Shostakovich.

Britten's Violin Concerto is a demanding work, both intense and expansive, which Janine Jansen has made very much her own, performing it with real insight. After the interval comes Shostakovich's Symphony No 10. Shostakovich remained in Russia throughout his life, treading a very careful path in his relationship with the politics of the day. The enigmatic appeal of his music has lost none of its power to communicate in ever-changing times.

We are delighted to welcome all those attending our Annual City Livery Concert and Reception, marking a special occasion to celebrate the wealth of arts and culture taking place in the Square Mile and an opportunity for the LSO to express gratitude to the companies, clubs and guilds of the City that support the

world-class music-making taking place on their doorstep. We are especially grateful to Alderman Sir Andrew Parmley – in his capacity as both an Honorary Member of the LSO and Lord Mayor *Locum Tenens* – and Graham Barker, Past Master of the Worshipful Company of Arts Scholars, for their work in promoting the LSO with the Livery companies.

We hope you enjoy this concert and that you will be able to join us again soon. After a period on tour in Europe, the LSO returns to the Barbican in October for two concerts centred on Nordic music. Thomas Adès conducts both programmes, beginning with Sibelius' Symphony No 3 alongside his own *Aquifer*, with guitarist Sean Shibe in Ruders' *Paganini Variations for Guitar and Orchestra*. The following week, Sibelius' Symphonies Nos 4 and 6 are conducted by Thomas Adès, who is joined by violinist Johan Dalene in Rautavaara's *Deux Sérénades*. We hope to see you there.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathryn McDowell". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dame Kathryn McDowell DBE DL
Managing Director

Coming Up

Sunday 19 October
Barbican

7pm

Sibelius, Ruders, Paxton and Adès

Kaleidoscopic music by Adès and Ruders meets Sibelius' evocative landscapes, and the promise of vibrant new music by Alex Paxton. Thomas Adès conducts, with guitarist Sean Shibe as the soloist in Danish composer Poul Ruders' *Paganini Variations for Guitar and Orchestra*.

Thursday 23 October
Barbican

7pm

Music from the North: Sibelius, Adès & Rautavaara

Thomas Adès leads us through Sibelius' Finland and conjures magical images in his own evocation of a Celtic legend. The programme also includes Einojuhani Rautavaara's *Deux Sérénades* with violinist Johan Dalene.

Welcome to tonight's group bookers
Ms Adele Friedland and friends

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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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Violin Concerto Op 15

Benjamin Britten

Janine Jansen violin

- 1 **Moderato con moto**
- 2 **Vivace**
- 3 **Passacaglia: Andante lento (un poco meno mosso)**



1938–39



31 minutes

Programme note
by **Philip Reed**

▷ A passacaglia is a series of variations on a short musical theme, often introduced in the bass line.

Benjamin Britten began work on his Violin Concerto in November 1938, a few months after the premiere of his Piano Concerto, and probably influenced by his passion for Alban Berg's Violin Concerto. At first, progress was satisfactory: 'It's going fine so far and it's the best so far I'm sure,' he wrote to Wulff Scherchen. But after a few weeks, other more pressing projects intervened and Britten was forced to place the Concerto to one side. He did not return to the piece until he arrived in Canada in May 1939. On 1 June, Britten told his publisher, Ralph Hawkes, that the second movement was finished (most probably the first had been substantially written in the autumn of 1938) and that the finale would be ready in only a week's time. By mid-June, the composition draft was complete; the piano score followed two months later, and the full score in September.

Britten had written the solo part for the Spanish violinist Antonio Brosa, a member of Frank Bridge's circle with whom he had performed in recital programmes on a number of occasions. Brosa had been sent the piano score in order that he could learn the work and play it through to prospective conductors and concert promoters.

The premiere took place on 28 March 1940, given by the New York Philharmonic under John Barbirolli. It was Brosa himself who had proposed the idea of the first performance of Britten's Concerto in New York. On the 31st, Britten thanked Brosa: 'The work will never be better played

or more completely understood than it was by you ... and I am more than grateful to you for having spent so much time and energy in learning it. I hope it wasn't altogether a thankless task, but certainly judging by the rapturous notices you had from all the critics, people realised what a task you had and how marvellously you overcame all the difficulties'.

The opening Moderato con moto starts with a tiny motif for the timpani, answered by the cymbal, which forms the accompaniment to the long, first melodic idea announced by the solo violin. In 1980, Brosa recalled that the rhythmic motif first heard on percussion was Spanish in origin, and suggested that the sober and rather intense nature of the work as a whole was, in some ways, a response from Britten to the horrific events of the recently ended Spanish Civil War, a conflict very much at the heart of politics and culture in the 1930s.

Although there is no evidence in Britten's letters to suggest Brosa's interpretation is correct, the lyricism of the first subject and its expressive chromaticism might be thought of as a lament for Spain's dead. The angular and vigorous second theme is also introduced by the soloist. The central E minor scherzo is incisive, but with a more relaxed A minor trio. A cadenza links the Vivace to the **Passacaglia** ▷ (Britten's first), with the ground bass announced on the trombones.

Benjamin Britten

1913 to 1976 (United Kingdom)



Contemporaries

Dmitri Shostakovich,
Michael Tippett

Key events

1937: Meets the
tenor Peter Pears

1945: Premiere of his
opera *Peter Grimes*

1948: Co-founds the
Aldeburgh Festival
with Peter Pears
and Eric Crozier

1962: Premiere of
his *War Requiem*

Listen to

Spring Symphony and
Sinfonia da Requiem

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With the LSO

1946: World
premiere of *The
Young Person's
Guide to the
Orchestra*

Composer profile
by **Philip Reed**

Benjamin Britten received his first piano lessons from his mother, who encouraged her son's earliest efforts at composition. In 1924, he heard Frank Bridge's tone poem *The Sea*, and three years later began to study composition with Bridge. In 1930, he gained a scholarship to the Royal College of Music, where he studied composition with John Ireland and piano with Arthur Benjamin.

In 1934, Britten attracted wide attention when he conducted the premiere of his *Simple Symphony*. He worked for the innovative GPO Film Unit and various progressive theatre companies, collaborating with such writers as W H Auden and Christopher Isherwood. His lifelong relationship and working partnership with the tenor Peter Pears developed in the late 1930s. At the beginning of World War II, Britten and Pears remained in the US, but on their eventual return, they registered as conscientious objectors and were exempted from military service.

The first performance of the opera *Peter Grimes* in 1945 opened the way for a series of magnificent stage works mainly conceived for the English Opera Group. In June 1948, Britten founded the Aldeburgh Festival of Music and the Arts, for which he subsequently wrote many new works. By the mid-1950s, he was generally regarded as the leading British composer, helped by the international success of operas such as *Albert Herring*, *Billy Budd* and *The Turn of the Screw*. One of his greatest masterpieces, the *War Requiem*, was first performed on 30 May 1962 for the festival of consecration of St Michael's Cathedral, Coventry, its anti-war message reflecting the composer's pacifist beliefs.

A remarkably prolific composer, Britten completed works in almost every genre and for a wide range of musical abilities, from those of schoolchildren and amateur singers to such artists as Mstislav Rostropovich, Julian Bream and Peter Pears.



Interval – 20 minutes

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Symphony No 10 in E minor Op 93

Dmitri Shostakovich

- 1 **Moderato**
- 2 **Allegro**
- 3 **Allegretto –
Largo – Più
mosso**
- 4 **Andante
– Allegro –
L'istesso tempo**



1953



50 minutes

Programme note by
Stephen Johnson

The symphony many regard as one of Shostakovich's greatest appeared at a low point of his rollercoaster career. Publicly condemned in 1936, he had then been triumphantly rehabilitated with the premiere of his Fifth Symphony (1937), subsequently elevated to national hero status after the international success of the wartime 'Leningrad' Symphony (1941), and still feted after the much darker Eighth appeared two years later. But then, as World War II had drawn to its close, he had disgraced himself again with his half-lightweight, half-pungently satirical Ninth Symphony in 1945 – not by any stretch the heroic, choral Ninth the Soviet press had led everyone to expect.

If Russian artists had hoped that victory in war might lead to relaxing of official restraints, they were soon disappointed. In 1948, Shostakovich found himself at the head of a list of composers accused of 'bourgeois individualism' and 'anti-people formalism' (serious crimes in Stalin's Soviet Union). His Ninth Symphony was subjected to crude vivisection, but it was the Eighth which came in for the worst public mauling: Shostakovich was guilty of 'unhealthy individualism' and 'pessimism', and the Symphony was 'a 'composition' which has absolutely no connection with the art of music'.

By the time Shostakovich began work on his next symphony (1953), he had learned to segregate his work into three different categories: party-placating propaganda vehicles like the cantata *The Sun Shines over Our Motherland* (1952), film music (providing much-needed income) and music for the desk drawer – serious works that might one day come into their own, but which for now must remain silent. Listening to the Tenth Symphony (1953), it is not hard to see why he thought it wise to hold the score back. For much of its length, the Symphony is sombre in character. The first three movements, and the finale's substantial introduction, are all prevailingly in dark minor keys. Grief and rage well up unmistakably in the first movement's powerful central climax and throughout the torrential second, while the third is full of the kind of tart, enigmatic humour which had recently earned him stinging rebuke.

But when the Tenth Symphony was heard for the first time, nine months after the death of Stalin in March 1953, what struck many critics was how magnificently sustained it was as a musical argument. For all its brooding, sometimes harrowing intensity, the first movement is structured with colossal skill, unfolding with a remarkable and grand sense of inevitability.

Poignant lyricism is fused with intricate, almost Bachian counterpoint unparalleled in Shostakovich's earlier symphonic works. Most of the time, the orchestral palate is used sparingly, which means that highlighted sonorities stand out: solo clarinet intoning the first main theme after the dark strings-only introduction, low flute in the second theme, and the unforgettable sound of two softly intertwining piccolos in the coda.

The volcanic but remarkably compact *Allegro* second movement is an outpouring of molten fury, but it is also tremendously exciting – perhaps it's the thrill of cathartic release. According to *Testimony*, the book which claims (controversially) to be Shostakovich's memoirs, this movement is 'a musical portrait of Stalin, more or less', but in our troubled age, there are plenty of dictators and would-be despots who would fit the bill equally well. There is no evidence that Shostakovich meant his message to apply only to his own time.

After the lucid formal clarity of the first two movements, the shadowy, dance-like *Allegretto* is more enigmatic, riddling. We hear two motifs of particular cryptic significance. The four-note motif introduced by high woodwind with

percussion spells out the notes D-E flat-C-B – in German notation D-Ess-C-H, ie, Shostakovich's own Cyrillic initials (D Sch). The striking solo horn figure that interrupts the dance ingeniously spells out the name of one of Shostakovich's students, Elmira Nazirova, with whom he was in love at that time – the feeling, apparently, was not reciprocated. But does that 'explain' this fascinating music? There are times when Shostakovich appears to be enjoying teasing his listeners, and his ghostly dance movement is a prime example.

Initially, the finale's slow introduction brings us back to wintry introspection. But then, suddenly, a trailing flute figure is transformed into a perky *Allegro* dance, all high-kicking major-key energy, with D-S-C-H returning in massive unison at the climax, like the spectre at the feast. D-S-C-H persists towards the mysterious hushed passage that follows (low trumpet and trombone) and grows more desperate in the dance crescendo that follows (high horns, then pounding timpani). By this stage, Shostakovich knew that Stalin had died, but whether this represents personal triumph or something much darker and more equivocal is an open question, probably best left to the listener to judge.

Dmitri Shostakovich

1906 to 1975 (Russia)



Contemporaries

Benjamin Britten,
Sergei Prokofiev

Key events

1917: Russian
Revolution

1936–37: Receives
damning review of
opera *Lady Macbeth
of the Mtsensk
District*; writes
Symphony No 5

1941: Russia enters
Second World War

1953: Symphony No
10 widely acclaimed

Listen to

Symphony No 13,
'Babi Yar'

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With the LSO

1971: London
premiere of Symphony
No 13, 'Babi Yar'

Composer profile by
Andrew Stewart

After early piano lessons with his mother, Dmitri Shostakovich enrolled at the Petrograd Conservatoire in 1919. Over the following decades, he established himself as one of the Soviet Union's leading composers. Shostakovich announced his Fifth Symphony of 1937 as 'a Soviet artist's practical creative reply to just criticism'. A year before its premiere, he had drawn a stinging attack from the official Soviet mouthpiece *Pravda*, in which Shostakovich's initially successful opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* was condemned for its 'leftist bedlam' and extreme modernism. With the Fifth Symphony came acclaim not only from the Russian audience, but also from musicians and critics overseas.

Shostakovich lived through the first months of the German siege of Leningrad, serving as a member of the auxiliary fire service. In July, he began work on the first three movements of his Seventh Symphony, completing the defiant finale after his evacuation in October, and dedicating the score to the city. A micro-filmed copy was despatched by way of Tehran and an American warship to the US, where it was broadcast by the NBC Symphony Orchestra and Arturo Toscanini.

In 1943, Shostakovich completed his emotionally shattering Eighth Symphony. And in 1948, he and other leading composers, Prokofiev

among them, were forced by the Soviet Cultural Commissar, Andrei Zhdanov, to concede that their work represented 'most strikingly the formalistic perversions and anti-democratic tendencies in music', a crippling blow to Shostakovich's artistic freedom that was healed only after the death of Stalin in 1953. Shostakovich answered his critics later that year with the powerful Tenth Symphony, in which he portrays 'human emotions and passions', rather than the collective dogma of Communism.

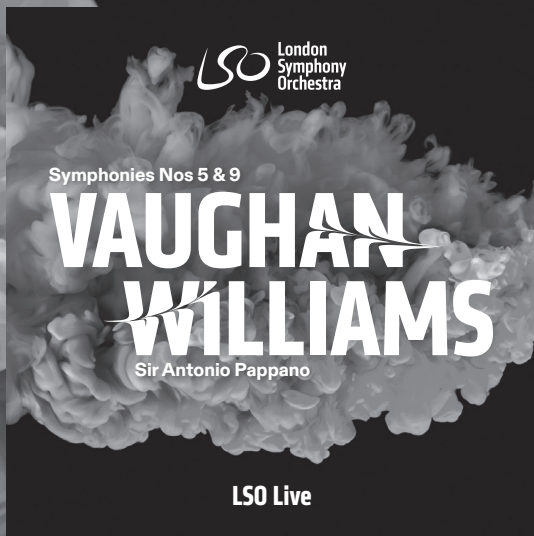
In his later years, Shostakovich suffered from increasingly poor health. Nevertheless, he continued to produce a string of masterpieces throughout the late 1950s and the 60s, including his Symphonies Nos 11–14, two cello concertos, the Piano Concerto No 2 and the Violin Concerto No 2, String Quartets Nos 6–12, and various songs, including the *Seven Romances on Poems by Alexander Blok* for soprano and piano trio. His compositions in the 1970s were much preoccupied with mortality and included his Symphony No 15, his final three string quartets and the *Suite on Verses of Michelangelo Buonarroti* for bass and piano (which he later arranged for bass and orchestra). His final work, the Viola Sonata, was completed just weeks before his death.

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

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Sir Antonio Pappano

Chief Conductor



One of today's most sought-after conductors, Sir Antonio Pappano is renowned for his charismatic leadership and inspiring performances across both symphonic and operatic repertoires. He is Chief Conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra, Conductor Laureate of the Royal Opera and Ballet Covent Garden and Music Director Emeritus of the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome, having held the position of Music Director at both institutions from 2002–2024 and 2005–2023, respectively. He was previously Music Director of Norwegian Opera and Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie, Brussels, and Principal Guest Conductor of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.

Pappano is in demand as an opera conductor at the highest international level, including with the Metropolitan Opera, New York, the State Operas of Vienna and Berlin, the Bayreuth and Salzburg Festivals, Lyric Opera of Chicago and the Teatro alla Scala. He has appeared as a guest conductor with many of the world's most prestigious

orchestras, including the Berlin and Vienna Philharmonic Orchestras, the Staatskapelle Dresden, the Leipzig Gewandhaus, Bavarian Radio Symphony and Czech Philharmonic Orchestras, the Orchestre de Paris and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, as well as with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, Chicago and Boston Symphonies and the Philadelphia and Cleveland Orchestras. He maintains a particularly strong relationship with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe.

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 created 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.

Sir Antonio 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*.



Next on stage with the LSO

Sunday 7 December 7pm, Barbican
Tchaikovsky 4 and Vaughan Williams
with Antoine Tamestit

Janine Jansen

violin



Violinist Janine Jansen has long-standing relationships with the world's most eminent orchestras and conductors. During the 2025/26 season, she is an 'Artist-in-Residence' with the Berlin Philharmonic as well as a 'Featured Artist' with the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra. Both residencies include a number of orchestral and chamber music projects throughout the season.

Extensive tours are planned with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and Klaus Mäkelä, the London Symphony Orchestra and Sir Antonio Pappano, and the Tonhalle Orchestra and Paavo Järvi. She continues her Artistic Partnership with Camerata Salzburg, culminating in tours across Asia and Europe. Further orchestral engagements are planned with the Orchestre de Paris and Mäkelä, and the Filarmonica della Scala and Fabio Luisi. She continues her musical partnership with Martha Argerich and Mischa Maisky in a number of concerts, including in Vienna, Lucerne and Tokyo. Alongside her regular duo partner

Denis Kozhukhin, she will present a Brahms Sonata programme on tour in South Korea and Japan. Janine Jansen records exclusively for Decca Classics. Her latest recording, released in June 2024, which features Sibelius' Violin Concerto and Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No 1 together with Klaus Mäkelä and the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra was met with universally high critical acclaim.

She is the Founder and Artistic Director of the International Chamber Music Festival Utrecht as well as the Co-Artistic Director of the Sion Festival. Since November 2023, she has been Professor of Violin Studies at the Kronberg Academy.

Janine Jansen studied with Coosje Wijzenbeek, Philippe Hirschhorn and Boris Belkin. She plays the Shumsky-Rode Stradivarius from 1715, on generous loan from a European benefactor. She is a PIRASTRO artist playing Evah Pirazzi Neo strings.

London Symphony Orchestra

On Stage

Leader

Benjamin Marquise
Gilmore

First Violins

Choha Kim
Savva Zverev
Clare Duckworth
Ginette Decuyper
Laura Dixon
Maxine Kwok
William Melvin
Stefano Mengoli
Harriet Rayfield
Sylvain Vasseur
Richard Blayden
Izzy Howard
Dániel Mészöly
Hilary Jane Parker
Shoshanah Sievers

Second Violins

Thomas Norris
Miya Väisänen
David Ballesteros
Matthew Gardner
Helena Buckie
Naoko Keatley
Alix Lagasse
Belinda McFarlane
Iwona Muszynska
Csilla Pogány
Andrew Pollock
Paul Robson
Polina Makhina
Djumash Poulsen

Violas

Eivind Ringstad
Gillianne Haddow
Malcolm Johnston
Germán Clavijo
Thomas Beer
Steve Doman
Julia O'Riordan
Sofia Silva Sousa
Robert Turner
Mizuho Ueyama
Nancy Johnson
Annie-May Page

Cellos

David Cohen
Laure Le Dantec
Alastair Blayden
Salvador Bolón
Daniel Gardner
Amanda Truelove
Anna Beryl
Judith Fleet
Henry Hargreaves
Joanna Twaddle

Double Basses

Rodrigo Moro Martín
Ville Väättäin
Patrick Laurence
Thomas Goodman
Charles
Campbell-Peek
Hugh Sparrow
Jim Vanderspar
Adam Wynter

Flutes

Gareth Davies
Imogen Royce

Piccolo

Patricia Moynihan

Oboes

Juliana Koch
Olivier Stankiewicz
Rosie Jenkins

Cor Anglais

Sarah Harper

Clarinets

Sérgio Pires
Chris Richards

E-flat Clarinet

Chi-Yu Mo

Bass Clarinet

Ferran Garcerà Perelló

Bassoons

Rachel Gough
Daniel Jemison
Joost Bosdijk

Contrabassoon

Martin Field

Horns

Diego Incertis
Sánchez
Timothy Jones
Angela Barnes
Daniel Curzon
Jonathan Maloney

Trumpets

James Fountain
Imogen Whitehead
Adam Wright
Holly Clark

Trombones

Simon Johnson
Rebecca Smith
Jonathan Hollick

Bass Trombone

Paul Milner

Tuba

Ben Thomson

Timpani

Patrick King
Nigel Thomas

Percussion

Neil Percy
David Jackson
Sam Walton
Patrick King

Harp

Bryn Lewis