

# TONIGHT'S CONCERT

## **Sir Simon Rattle: The Makropulos Affair**

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Tuesday 13 & Thursday 15 January 2026 7pm  
Barbican

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**Leoš Janáček**  
The Makropulos Affair  
(concert performance, sung in  
Czech with English surtitles)

**Sir Simon Rattle** conductor  
**Marlis Petersen** Emilia Marty  
**Aleš Briscein** Albert Gregor  
**Jan Martiník** Dr Kolenatý/Strojník/Machinist  
**Peter Hoare** Vitek  
**Doubravka Novotná** Krista  
**Svatopluk Sem** Baron Jaroslav Prus  
**Vit Nosek** Janek  
**Lucie Hilscherová** Cleaning Lady/Chambermaid  
**Alan Oke** Count Hauk-Šendorf  
**London Symphony Orchestra**

Concert finishes at approximately 8.45pm.  
Please note that there will be no interval.

Generously supported by the **Jeremy and John Sacher Charitable Trust** and the **LSO Opera Giving Circle**

Recorded for future release on **LSO Live**

# Welcome



It is a pleasure to welcome you to these London Symphony Orchestra performances of Janáček's *The Makropulos Affair*, conducted by Sir Simon Rattle, LSO Conductor Emeritus. Sir Simon's deep affinity with Czech repertoire – shaped by a long and close engagement with Czech musical culture – brings a remarkable clarity and immediacy to Janáček's soundworld. We are delighted to have several artists returning from earlier operas in the cycle, among them Aleš Briscein, Jan Martiník, Peter Hoare and Doubravka Novotná, and to feature Marlis Petersen in the title role of *Emilia Marty*.

These concerts are the next instalment in the LSO's Janáček opera cycle with Sir Simon Rattle, following *Jenůfa*, *Katya Kabanova*, *The Cunning Little Vixen* and *The Excursions of Mr Brouček*, all of which have received excellent reviews. Each of these concert performances have also been recorded for our label, LSO Live, with three critically acclaimed albums released so far. We look forward to adding *The Excursions of Mr Brouček* to the catalogue in 2026, and tonight's performance will also be captured for future release.

This ambitious performance is generously supported by the Jeremy and John Sacher Charitable Trust to whom we are very grateful. Composed at the end of Janáček's life, *The Makropulos Affair* is a compelling drama, driven by the composer's incisive musical language and extraordinary psychological insight. Sharp-edged motifs, vivid orchestral colour and Janáček's distinctive use of speech rhythms combine to create a work of remarkable intensity.

Our thanks go to all those taking part in these performances, and to everyone here this evening for joining us. Later this week, violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja appears as part of her Artist Portrait series alongside mezzo-soprano Rinat Shaham, in a programme of Bartók and de Falla conducted by Sir Simon Rattle. The following week, Manfred Honeck conducts Mozart's Piano Concerto No 27 with pianist Imogen Cooper – a celebrated Mozart interpreter – and Brahms' *German Requiem* with soprano Chen Reiss, bass Gerald Finley and the London Symphony Chorus. We hope to see you there.

*Kathryn McDowell*

**Dame Kathryn McDowell** DBE DL  
Managing Director

# Coming Up

Sunday 18 January  
Barbican

7pm

## Bartók and de Falla

Bartók's passion for Hungarian folk music is showcased in two works, alongside de Falla's sun-drenched tale of love and deception. Patricia Kopatchinskaja performs Bartók's Second Violin Concerto, with mezzo-soprano Rinat Shaham in the folk-song suite. Sir Simon Rattle conducts.

Thursday 5 March  
Barbican

7pm

## Bowler, Ligeti and Richard Strauss

Barbara Hannigan is vocal soloist for Laura Bowler's new work, alongside conductor Bar Avni, and then leads the Orchestra herself in groundbreaking Ligeti and Strauss' *Also sprach Zarathustra*.

### With thanks to

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To find out more about this special group who help make our operatic ambitions possible, please contact Emma Kjellin.

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**Please switch off all phones.**

**Photography and audio/video recording are not permitted during the performance.**

Details correct at time of going to print.

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# The Makropulos Affair

Leoš Janáček

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## Marlis Petersen

Emilia Marty

## Aleš Briscein

Albert Gregor

## Jan Martiník

Dr Kolenatý/  
Strojník/Machinist

## Peter Hoare

Vitek Doubravka

## Novotná

Krista Svatopluk Sem

Baron Jaroslav Prus

## Vit Nosek

Janek Lucie Hilscherová

Cleaning Lady/

Chambermaid

## Alan Oke

Count Hauk-Šendorf

 1923–25 120 minutes

Programme note  
and synopsis by  
Nigel Simeone

## Assistant conductor

Jack Gonzalez-Harding

## Repetiteur

Kate Golla

Leoš Janáček went to see Karel Čapek's play *The Makropulos Affair* in Prague on 10 December 1922 and immediately saw its operatic potential. Despite the author's initial scepticism, by October 1923, they had a formal agreement and Janáček got to work at once, fashioning his own libretto from Čapek's play. The opera was composed between November 1923 and December 1925.

What drew Janáček to this thoroughly metropolitan comedy about a long-running legal dispute? His two previous operas had been the bucolic *The Cunning Little Vixen* and, before that, *Katya Kabanova*, in which the tragic heroine was consumed by the forces of nature. Now, he was turning his hand to something that could hardly be more different – but the lure for him was the strong female character at the centre of all three works. Janáček wrote to his muse Kamila Stösslová on 28 December 1922, three weeks after seeing Čapek's play: 'They have been giving *Makropulos* in Prague. A woman 337 years old, but at the same time still young and beautiful. Would you like to be like that too? And you know that she was unhappy? We are happy

## Czech language coach

Petra Milarová

## Surtitle operator

Damien Kennedy

because we know that our life isn't long. We need to make the most of every moment, to use it properly. It's all hurry in our lives – and longing. The latter is my lot. That woman – the 337-year-old beauty – didn't have a heart any more.'

In October 1925, Janáček described his work to Adolf Veselý as a 'modern historical opera', but in his letters to Kamila, his focus remained fixated on the central character. Just after starting the opera, he wrote: 'I'm now doing that Brrrr! But I will warm her up so that people sympathise with her. I might yet fall in love with her.' Two years later, with the opera complete, he wrote to Kamila on 5 December 1925: 'That poor 300-year-old beauty! People thought she was a thief, a liar, an unfeeling animal ... and her fault? That she lived so long. I felt sorry for her.'

The premiere of *The Makropulos Affair* was given at the Brno National Theatre on 18 December 1926, conducted by František Neumann. The day before, Janáček was worrying over details, writing to his publisher Universal Edition about the need for care over balance ('The main thing is not to drown the singers! For the theatre

here, the conductor Neumann has taken great trouble to put in dynamic markings into his full score'), but the performance was a triumph and a euphoric Janáček wrote to Kamila on 21 December 1926: 'The Icy One has unexpected success – to the extent that everyone had cold shivers down their spines. They say it's my greatest work. But it's still possible to go higher! When Karel Čapek came to see the opera, he told his sister Helena that Janáček 'did it a hundred times better than I could ever have imagined', though Čapek may have been surprised (and evidently impressed) by Janáček's change to the ending. In the play, Marty remains flippant, and her last line is sardonic: 'Ha ha! The end of immortality!' In the opera, the final scene becomes a catharsis, with Marty finally able to find release in death.

*The Makropulos Affair* is Janáček's only opera to be set entirely indoors (in a lawyer's office, an opera house and a hotel suite), and the only one to be set in a modern city (Prague). The sound of the score reflects this, with music that is sometimes brittle and claustrophobic. It is an uncompromisingly modern opera, its score marked by a brutal lack of sentimentality, and even featuring one of the first operatic telephone calls (the humming of the telephone wires imitated by a prickly violin motif in Act 1). Marty's origins as Emilia Makropulos, daughter of an

alchemist at the court of Emperor Rudolf II (1552–1612), are evoked with solemn, hard-edged fanfares. From the start of the prelude, the music has a nervous, restless drive, and Janáček's use of short motifs is even more succinct than in his previous operas.

The orchestration is gleaming and intense, coloured by some unusual instruments including children's (toy) drums, castanets and the viola d'amore, which adds an aura of strangeness to Marty's music. Offstage trumpets, horns and timpani combine with the orchestra to bind Emilia's past and present lives together, from the prelude to the final bars of the opera.

The vocal writing in *Makropulos* is predominantly conversational (it is Janáček's most 'wordy' libretto). At times, it is brittle (Dr Kolenatý, Albert Gregor), at others, threatening (Baron Prus), and, in just one case, tender (Krista), while the orchestra teems with rhythmic and motivic energy.

As for Marty herself, in the first two acts, her music – like her character – often has a quality of knowing indifference. But this makes the great final monologue all the more overwhelming. In her last moments, Marty's music acquires breadth, opulence and soaring nobility. As he suggested to Kamila Stösslová, it seems that Janáček had fallen in love with his chilly heroine.

# Cast

## **Marlis Petersen** Emilia Marty

A beautiful and mysterious opera singer, who, thanks to a magical elixir, is more than 300 years old. Originally called Elina Makropulos, she has also been known by names including Ellian MacGregor and Eugenia Montez.

## **Aleš Briscein** Albert Gregor

A young man who, it turns out, has a strange connection with Emilia Marty. During the opera, he begins to fall in love with her.

## **Jan Martiník** Dr Kolenatý/

Strojník/Machinist

A lawyer investigating the case of Gregor vs Prus/a stagehand/a mechanic.

## **Peter Hoare** Vitek

A clerk working for Dr Kolenatý. He is the father of Krista, Janek's girlfriend.

## **Doubravka Novotná** Krista

Vitek's daughter, an aspiring singer and the girlfriend of Janek. She breaks off their relationship to focus on her singing career.

## **Svatopluk Sem**

Baron Jaroslav Prus

A wealthy aristocrat, and a plaintiff in the case of Gregor vs Prus. One of his ancestors turns out to have been associated with Emilia Marty, with whom Prus himself – like most of the men in the opera – becomes infatuated.

## **Vit Nosek** Janek

Baron Prus' son. He is initially the boyfriend of Krista, but during the opera falls for Emilia Marty – with tragic consequences.

## **Lucie Hilscherová**

Cleaning Lady/Chambermaid

A cleaner at the theatre where Emilia Marty is performing/a chambermaid at Marty's hotel.

## **Alan Oke** Count Hauk-Šendorf

An elderly aristocrat who was once the lover of Emilia Marty – in one of her past incarnations.



## Discover more

Five Reasons to Love  
*The Makropulos Affair*  
by Timmy Fisher

# Synopsis

## Act 1

### The clerk's room at Dr Kolenatý's office in Prague

Vítek is filing papers connected to the long-running lawsuit of Albert Gregor vs Baron Jaroslav Prus. Gregor, the plaintiff, enters to ask about progress, followed by Vítek's daughter Kristina (Krista), an aspiring singer who enthuses about the great prima donna Emilia Marty. Dr Kolenatý arrives with Marty herself, who reveals a startlingly thorough knowledge of the same case. Marty claims that Baron 'Pepi' Prus (thought to have died childless in 1827) was the father of Ferdinand Gregor, son of the opera singer Ellian MacGregor – and that the current Baron Prus has documents to prove it. Kolenatý is incredulous, but Gregor asks him to investigate. Left alone, Gregor offers Marty a reward, and she asks for a sealed envelope among Prus' papers, with no further explanation. Kolenatý returns with the Baron. A bundle of documents includes Pepi's will and love letters from Ellian, but Prus insists that more evidence is needed to support Gregor's claim. Marty calmly tells an astonished Kolenatý that she will have it by the morning.

## Act 2

### The stage of a large theatre, empty after the night's performance

A stagehand and a cleaner discuss Marty's performance. Prus comes to congratulate Marty, as does his son Janek (with his sweetheart, Krista), but Marty is indifferent until the eccentric Hauk-Šendorf arrives and says how she reminds him of his old flame, the Spanish dancer Eugenia Montez. Marty greets him in Spanish and tells him Eugenia is still very much alive. After the others have left, Prus questions her about other documents and letters he has found. The love letters to Pepi were only signed 'E M', so couldn't prove that Ellian MacGregor was Ferdinand's mother. Prus also points out

that at Ferdinand's baptism, his mother's name was given as Elina Makropulos. Marty asks Prus to name his price for the sealed envelope, but he leaves. Gregor declares his love for Marty, but she falls asleep, bored. She wakes up to find Janek staring, and asks him to steal the envelope for her. Prus overhears this, orders Janek out, and agrees to hand over the document if she will spend the night with him.

## Act 3

### Emilia's hotel room

Marty and Prus are in her hotel room. She demands the envelope and he hands it over. A messenger brings Prus the devastating news that Janek has killed himself because of his unrequited love for Marty. Coldly, Marty says plenty of people do that, and Prus storms out. Hauk-Šendorf comes to whisk Marty off to Spain and she starts to pack, but is interrupted by the arrival of Kolenatý, Gregor, Krista, Prus and Vítek. Kolenatý suspects Marty is a fraud, having discovered that letters ostensibly from Ellian MacGregor are in Marty's handwriting. Marty leaves to dress and the others search her belongings. They find letters to several women, all with the initials 'E M': Emilia Marty, Ellian MacGregor, Eugenia Montez, Elsa Mueller, Ekaterina Myshkin and Elina Makropulos.

Marty returns drunk. She admits that she is Elina Makropulos, born in Crete in 1575, and tells how her father – alchemist to Rudolf II – experimented on her with his potion for eternal life. After more than 300 years, she feels her strength fading, and needs the formula – in the sealed envelope – to rejuvenate herself. She collapses, and the others realise she has been telling the truth. Marty is a shadow of her former self, but she recognises that she no longer needs the formula, having nothing more to live for. She hands the paper to Krista, who burns it. Marty utters the start of the Greek Lord's Prayer before willingly embracing death.

# Leoš Janáček

1854 to 1928 (Czech Republic, formerly Moravia)



## Contemporaries

Giacomo Puccini,  
Zdeněk Fibich

## Key events

**1904:** Brno premiere of his opera *Jenůfa*, his first major success

**1917:** Meets Kamila Stösslová, who inspires many of his greatest compositions

**1918:** Founding of Czechoslovakia as an independent country

## Listen to

*The Cunning Little Vixen*/Sinfonietta  
[isolive.co.uk](http://isolive.co.uk)

## With the LSO

Cycle of concert performances of operas begun in 2019

Composer profile by **Andrew Mellor**

Leoš Janáček was one of music's great one-offs, a composer who tore up the aesthetic rulebook of his time. Unlike his Czech counterparts (notably Antonín Dvořák), Janáček was born into an ordinary family far from any major metropolis.

Specifically, Janáček was born in Hukvaldy in Moravia – a district of what is now the Czech Republic (then part of the Austrian Empire) and an area that would literally shape the tunes and rhythms that characterise his distinctive music. From his limited means, Janáček found his way to studies in Brno, the Moravian capital, and later Prague and Leipzig, before eventually returning to Brno to lead the organ school he had attended.

Back in Brno, Janáček immersed himself in the Moravian peasant songs and dances that had surrounded him since childhood. As he began to trust the unusual contours of this earthy music, Janáček consciously rejected Western music's accepted norms. From about 1890, a new, uncompromising and rampantly

communicative musical style started to form in him, based on the principle that the rhythms of speech enshrine the truest expression of the human soul.

Success came late to Janáček. His name was only widely known from 1916, when his most celebrated creation, an opera telling of family secrets and tragedies in small-town Moravia, was first performed in Prague. *Jenůfa* is now a mainstay of the opera repertoire worldwide.

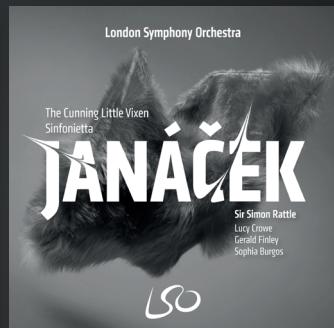
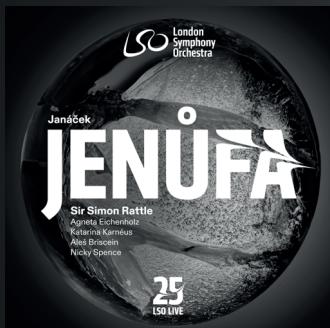
From then on, Janáček's creativity burned with an intensity bordering on the destructive. His later years were dominated by an obsession with a married woman, Kamila Stösslová, who became his muse but never his lover (the composer was married too). For the Janáček expert John Tyrrell, Stösslová embodied the sense of longing that is a constant theme in Janáček's life and music. She inspired works including the opera *Katya Kabanova*, the song cycle *The Diary of One Who Disappeared* and the string quartet *Intimate Letters*.



# JANÁČEK



Explore the London Symphony Orchestra's critically acclaimed cycle of Janáček opera recordings, conducted by Sir Simon Rattle.



## Jenůfa

The newest release in the LSO's ongoing cycle, *Jenůfa* explores a woman's limited options in a suffocating small town. The searing, magnificent opera brings together a remarkable cast, including Agneta Eichenholz's heartbreakingly vulnerable young woman and Katarina Karnéus' achingly powerful Kostelníčka.

## Katya Kabanova

*Katya Kabanova* tells a story of love, entrapment and, ultimately, tragedy. The album's cast includes the superb tenor Simon O'Neill and, appearing in one of her signature roles as seen at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Amanda Majeski as Katya.

## The Cunning Little Vixen

Melodious and charming, *The Cunning Little Vixen* is a work rooted in Czech history and folk music; a sentimental journey through the cycles of life. For Sir Simon Rattle, it's a deeply personal and emotional work – 'it's the piece that made me want to become an opera conductor ... and still one of the pieces that reduces me to tears more easily than any other'.

'When we first played *The Cunning Little Vixen*, I realised that the music suited the LSO so perfectly with their virtuosity, with their passion, and with their sense of humour and their refinement. We decided almost immediately that we should just simply do all of them.'

**Sir Simon Rattle**  
LSO Conductor Emeritus



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# Sir Simon Rattle

## Conductor Emeritus



Sir Simon Rattle was born in Liverpool and studied at the Royal Academy of Music. From 1980 to 1998, he was Principal Conductor and Artistic Adviser of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and was appointed Music Director in 1990. In 2002, he took up the position of Artistic Director and Chief Conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic, where he remained until the end of the 2017/18 season. Sir Simon was appointed Music Director of the London Symphony Orchestra in September 2017, a position he remained in until the 2023/24 season, when he became Conductor Emeritus. That same season, Sir Simon took up the position of Chief Conductor with the Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks in Munich. He is a Principal Artist of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Founding Patron of Birmingham Contemporary Music Group. In 2024, he was announced as the Principal Guest Conductor, Rafael Kubelik Chair, of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra.

Sir Simon has made over 70 recordings for EMI (now Warner Classics) and has received numerous prestigious international awards for his recordings on various labels. His most recent recordings include Berlioz's *The Damnation of Faust*, Helen Grime's *Woven Space*, Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Turnage's *Remembering* and Beethoven's *Christ on the Mount of Olives*, which were all released

by the LSO's own record label, LSO Live. Sir Simon regularly tours within Europe, the United States and Asia, and has long-standing relationships with world-leading orchestras. He regularly conducts the Staatskapelle Berlin, Berlin Philharmonic, Chamber Orchestra of Europe and the Czech Philharmonic. He has conducted opera productions at the Metropolitan Opera, Vienna State Opera, Berlin State Opera and at the Festival d'Aix en Provence.

Music education is of supreme importance to Sir Simon, and his partnership with the Berlin Philharmonic broke new ground with the education programme Zukunfts@Bphil. He and the Berlin Philharmonic were appointed International UNICEF Ambassadors in 2004, the first time this honour has been conferred on an artistic ensemble. In 2019, Sir Simon announced the creation of the LSO East London Academy, developed by the LSO in partnership with ten East London boroughs. This free programme aims to identify and develop the potential of young East Londoners between the ages of 11 and 18 who show exceptional musical talent.

Sir Simon was awarded a knighthood by Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 1994 and received the Order of Merit in 2014. He received the Order of Merit in Berlin in 2018. In 2019, he was given the Freedom of the City of London.



### Next on stage with the LSO

Sunday 18 January 7pm

Barbican

Bartók and de Falla

# Marlis Petersen

Emilia Marty



The German soprano Marlis Petersen specialises in full lyric and contemporary soprano roles. Since her acclaimed debut at the Vienna State Opera in the title role of Berg's *Lulu*, she has appeared at many leading opera houses, including the Opéra de Paris, La Monnaie, Brussels, the State Operas of Berlin, Hamburg, Munich and Vienna, the Theater an der Wien, the Metropolitan Opera in New York, the Los Angeles Opera and Lyric Opera of Chicago, and at the Salzburg and Aix-en-Provence Festivals.

Her current repertoire includes Marietta (Korngold's *Die tote Stadt*), Elettra (Mozart's *Idomeneo*), Violetta (Verdi's *La traviata*) and the Richard Strauss roles of Salome and the Marschallin (*Der Rosenkavalier*), the latter of which she recently performed to acclaim at the Bavarian State Opera. As a concert singer, her appearances include performing at the opening of the Hamburg Elbphilharmonie, and being Artist in Residence of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra in 2019/20. In 2020, she was named Singer of the Year for the fourth time by *Opernwelt*, and in 2021, she was awarded the title Kammersängerin by the Bavarian State Opera. Recent appearances include Emilia Marty at the Berlin State Opera and Hanna Glawari (Lehár's *The Merry Widow*) for Zurich Opera House. This season, she sings Emilia Marty and Marie (Berg's *Wozzeck*) for Vienna State Opera and appears in *Frauenliebe und -sterben* at Hamburg State Opera.

# Aleš Briscein

Albert Gregor



Czech tenor Aleš Briscein made his LSO debut in the 2023/24 season as Laca (Janáček's *Jenůfa*), returning in 2025 in Janáček's *The Excursions of Mr Brouček*. Engagements in the 2025/26 season include Bacchus (Richard Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos*) at the Prague National Theatre, Alfredo Germont (Verdi's *La traviata*) at the Slovak National Theatre, concerts with the Slovak Sinfonietta and Pilsen Philharmonic and Eisenstein (Johann Strauss' *Die Fledermaus*) in Brno.

Past career highlights include Mazal in Janáček's *The Excursions of Mr Brouček* with the Berlin State Opera; Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass* with the Czech Philharmonic at Carnegie Hall; Anatole in Prokofiev's *War and Peace* and Boris in Janáček's *Katya Kabanova* in Geneva; King's Son in Humperdinck's *Königskinder* and the title role in Smetana's *Dalibor* in Frankfurt; Paul in Korngold's *Die tote Stadt* for the Komische Oper Berlin and the Semperoper Dresden; Steva in Janáček's *Jenůfa* and Filka Morozov in Janáček's *From the House of the Dead* for the Bavarian State Opera; and Wagner's *Lohengrin* at the Tyrolean Festival in Erl. Aleš Briscein's concert repertoire includes works such as Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass*, Dvořák's *Stabat Mater*, Mahler's Symphony No 8, Beethoven's Symphony No 9 and *Missa solemnis*, Stravinsky's *Les noces* and Weill's *The Seven Deadly Sins*.

# Jan Martiník

Dr Kolenatý/Strojník/Machinist



Czech bass Jan Martiník has won several awards during his career, including the 2009 BBC Cardiff Singer of the Year Song Prize. He has been a member of the Berlin State Opera for more than a decade and made his debut with the LSO in 2024 as Starek (Janáček's *Jenůfa*).

His roles in Berlin have included Colline (Puccini's *La bohème*), Daland (Wagner's *Der fliegende Holländer*), Brander (Berlioz's *La damnation de Faust*), Sarastro (Mozart's *The Magic Flute*) and, in 2024, Fritz Kothner (Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*). He has also collaborated with the Komische Oper Berlin, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Vienna Volksoper and the National Theatre in Prague, among others.

Martiník regularly performs with orchestras including the Czech Philharmonic, Bamberger Symphoniker, BBC Symphony Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra and Staatskapelle Dresden. He has sung under leading conductors including Daniel Barenboim, Jiří Bělohlávek, Semyon Bychkov, Manfred Honeck, Jakub Hruša, Fabio Luisi, Zubin Mehta and Sir Simon Rattle. His recordings include an award-winning disc of Schubert's *Winterreise*, Dvořák's *Biblical Songs* under Jiří Bělohlávek, Martinů's *The Epic of Gilgamesh* with the Czech Philharmonic and Donizetti's *Requiem*.

# Peter Hoare

Vitek



Tenor Peter Hoare trained as a percussionist before making his debut as a singer at Welsh National Opera. Renowned for his versatility and musicianship, he has since carved his name internationally with spectacular performances of 20th-century and contemporary opera, making his Metropolitan Opera debut as Captain (Berg's *Wozzeck*) followed by Shapkin (Janáček's *From the House of the Dead*). His repertoire extends to Desportes (Zimmermann's *Die Soldaten*), Larry King (Turnage's *Anna Nicole*) and Sharikov (Raskatov's *The Dog's Heart*), with recent roles at the Royal Ballet and Opera, Covent Garden including Vitek, Brouček (Janáček's *The Excursions of Mr Brouček*), Captain, Mortimer (Benjamin's *Lessons in Love and Violence*), Fatty (Weill's *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*) and Dr Caius (Verdi's *Falstaff*).

Selected concert appearances include Weill's *The Seven Deadly Sins* and *Berliner Requiem* with Esa-Pekka Salonen and the Los Angeles Philharmonic; John Adams' *The Gospel According to the Other Mary* with Sir Simon Rattle and the Berlin Philharmonic; Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder* and the role of Mime in Wagner's *Siegfried* with Rattle and the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra; and *Das Lied von der Erde* with Daniel Harding and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra. Engagements in the 2025/26 season include Mime at Covent Garden and Howard in Zappa's *200 Motels* at the Grand Théâtre de Genève.

# Doubravka Novotná

Krista



The Czech soprano Doubravka Novotná studied at the Brno Conservatory and the Janáček Academy of Performing Arts in Brno. She has received awards in competitions including the Antonín Dvořák International Singing Competition and has been nominated three times for the Thalia Award. She has appeared at the internationally renowned Janáček Brno Festival as the Vixen (*The Cunning Little Vixen*) and Málinka (*The Excursions of Mr Brouček*, which won an International Opera Award 2025).

In 2024, she became a permanent member of the opera ensemble at the National Theatre Brno, where her roles have included Musetta (Puccini's *La bohème*), Morgana (Handel's *Alcina*), Málinka, Nannetta (Verdi's *Falstaff*), Valencienne (Lehár's *The Merry Widow*) and Susanna (Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*). She also performs at other Czech theatres in roles including Ophélie (Thomas' *Hamlet*), Ilia (Mozart's *Idomeneo*), Micaëla (Bizet's *Carmen*), Elena (Boito's *Mefistofele*), Nannetta, Terinka (Dvořák's *The Jacobin*), the title role in Martinů's *Julietta* and the role of Cunegonde in Bernstein's *Candide*. She has sung Ophélie as a guest artist in Krefeld, Germany. Novotná has sung early music with ensembles including Musica Florea, Czech Ensemble Baroque and Collegium 1704, and has worked with leading orchestras including the Prague Symphony Orchestra, the Czech Radio Symphony Orchestra and the Janáček Philharmonic Orchestra.

# Svatopluk Sem

Baron Jaroslav Prus



Baritone Svatopluk Sem is a soloist of the National Theatre in Prague, where he made his debut in 2008 as Marcello (Puccini's *La bohème*). Recent and forthcoming engagements include Kalina (Smetana's *The Secret*), Peter (Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*), Figaro (Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*) and Escamillo (Bizet's *Carmen*) at the National Theatre in Prague, and Giorgio Germont (Verdi's *La traviata*) at the National Theatre in Brno.

Other recent roles at the Prague National Theatre have included Ossian in Ostrčil's *The Legend of Erin*, Prince Přemysl in Fibich's *Šárka*, Ismen in Dvořák's *Armida*, Wolfram in Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, Sharpless in Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, Count Anckarström in Verdi's *Un ballo in maschera*, Gianni Schicchi in the world premiere of Jan Kučera's *Don Buoso*, the title role in Weinberger's *Švanda dudák*, Escamillo in Bizet's *Carmen* and Přemysl in Smetana's *Libuše*. Sem's concert appearances in recent seasons have included Dvořák's *Te Deum* and Honegger's *Christmas Cantata* with the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra and Schnittke's *Faust Cantata* at the Prague Spring Festival. He sang Jaroslav Prus at the BBC Proms, and he has recorded Smetana's *The Bartered Bride* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra. Last year, he was honoured to appear in the Houston Philharmonic Orchestra's opening concert of the season, performing Martinů's *Czech Rhapsody*, conducted by the Slovak conductor Juraj Valčuha.

# Vit Nosek

Janek



The Czech tenor Vit Nosek is a member of the National Theatre in Brno, where his engagements in the 2025/26 season include Váňa Kudrjáš (Janáček's *Katya Kabanova*), Dr Blind (Johann Strauss' *Die Fledermaus*), Messenger (Verdi's *Aida*), Michálek (Smetana's *The Devil's Wall*), Edmondo (Puccini's *Manon Lescaut*), Leader of the Siamese Hunters (Trojahn's *Carousel*) and Doubek (Janáček's *Osud*).

His other appearances in Brno include Edrisi (Szymanowski's *King Roger*), Raoul de St-Brioche (Lehár's *The Merry Widow*), Vašek (Smetana's *The Bartered Bride*), Narraboth (Richard Strauss' *Salomé*), Monsieur Triquet (Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*), Andonis (Martinů's *The Greek Passion*), the Greek Captain (Janáček's *The Passion According to St Mark*), Roderigo (Verdi's *Otello*), Bardolfo (Verdi's *Falstaff*), Monostatos (Mozart's *The Magic Flute*), and a staged performance of Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass*.

Nosek has also appeared for the National Moravian-Silesian Theatre, the National Theatre in Prague and the International Janáček Festival in Brno, where he recently performed in *The Adventures of Mr Brouček*.

# Lucie Hilscherová

Cleaning Lady/Chambermaid

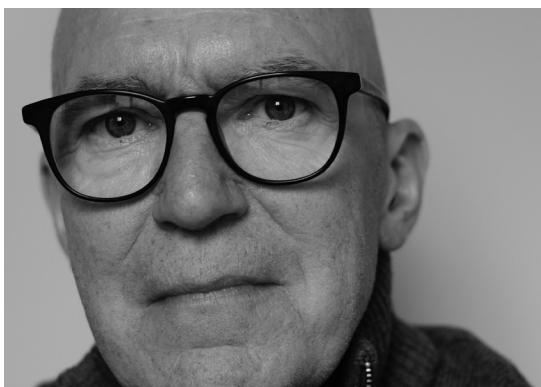


The Czech mezzo-soprano Lucie Hilscherová performs as a guest soloist at theatres including the National Theatre in Prague, the National Moravian-Silesian Theatre in Ostrava, the State Theatre in Košice and the Mannheim National Theatre. Her engagements in the 2025/26 season include Ježibaba in Dvořák's *Rusalka*, Panna Róza in Smetana's *Tajemství* and Mère Jeanne in Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites* for the National Theatre in Prague.

Recent engagements have included Sister Klemenzia in Hindemith's *Sancta Susanna* for the National Theatre in Prague, Martinka in Smetana's *The Kiss* for the F. X. Šalda Theatre in Liberec and Brigitte in Korngold's *Die tote Stadt*. Concert appearances have included Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky* with the FOK Prague Symphony Orchestra; Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass* with the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra at Carnegie Hall and on a European tour under Semyon Bychkov; Beethoven's Symphony No 9 with the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra in Prague under Christoph Eschenbach; Dvořák's *Stabat Mater* in Prague with the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra; Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Dvořák's *King and Charcoal Burner* with the Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra; and Dvořák's *Requiem* with the Tonkünstler Orchestra of Lower Austria in Grafenegg and Vienna. Her recordings include Smetana's *The Bartered Bride* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra.

# Alan Oke

## Count Hauk-Šendorf



The British tenor Alan Oke originally trained and performed as a baritone, switching to tenor in 1992. This season, he has also sung Count Hauk-Šendorf for Royal Ballet and Opera. Recent engagements have included Prologue in Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*, Doctor in Ruders' *The Handmaid's Tale* and Schoolmaster/Mosquito in Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* for English National Opera, Fatty in Weill's *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* for Dutch National Opera and Count Hauk-Šendorf, again, for Welsh National Opera.

Notable past appearances have included Loge in Wagner's *Das Rheingold*, Tinca in Puccini's *Il tabarro*, Gherardo in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*, the Shepherd in Enescu's *Oedipe* and the Father Confessor in Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites* for the Royal Ballet and Opera. For the Metropolitan Opera, New York, his roles have included Prince, Manservant and Marquis in Berg's *Lulu*, Valzacchi in Richard Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier*, Caliban in Adès' *The Tempest* and Don Basilio in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*. He has sung Captain Vere in Britten's *Billy Budd* for Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa, Opera North and Aldeburgh; the title role in Britten's *Peter Grimes* and Gustav von Aschenbach in Britten's *Death in Venice* for the Aldeburgh Festival; Chairman Mao in Adams' *Nixon in China* for the BBC Proms; and Gandhi in Glass' *Satyagraha* for English National Opera.

# London Symphony Orchestra

## On Stage

### Leader

Roman Simovic

### First Violins

Benjamin Marquise  
Gilmore  
Soh-Yon Kim  
Clare Duckworth  
Ginette Decuyper  
Laura Dixon  
Olatz Ruiz de  
Gordejuela  
Maxine Kwok  
William Melvin  
Stefano Mengoli  
Claire Parfitt  
Laurent Quénéelle  
Harriet Rayfield  
Sylvain Vasseur

### Second Violins

Julián Gil Rodríguez  
Thomas Norris  
Sarah Quinn  
Helena Buckie  
Matthew Gardner  
Naoko Keatley  
Alix Lagasse  
Belinda McFarlane  
Iwona Muszynska  
Csilla Pogány  
Paul Robson  
Eleanor Fagg

### Violas

Eivind Ringstad  
Gillianne Haddow  
Malcolm Johnston  
Anna Bastow  
Germán Clavijo  
Steve Doman  
Julia O'Riordan  
Sofia Silva Sousa  
Robert Turner  
Stephanie Edmundson

### Cellos

David Cohen  
Laure Le Dantec  
Alastair Blayden  
Salvador Bolón  
Daniel Gardner  
Amanda Truelove  
Henry Hargreaves  
Peteris Sokolovskis

### Double Basses

Burak Marlali  
Patrick Laurence  
Thomas Goodman  
Joe Melvin  
Jani Pensola  
Simon Oliver  
Lars Radloff

### Flutes

Gareth Davies  
Imogen Royce

### Piccolo

Patricia Moynihan  
Clare Childs

### Oboes

Olivier Stankiewicz  
Rosie Jenkins

### Cor Anglais

Maxwell Spiers

### Clarinets

Chris Richards  
Chi-Yu Mo

### Bass Clarinet

Ferran Garcerà Perelló

### Bassoons

Rachel Gough  
Joost Bosdijk

### Contrabassoon

Martin Field

### Horns

Timothy Jones  
Angela Barnes  
Daniel Curzon  
Kathryn Saunders

### Off Stage Horns

James Pillai  
Jonathan Maloney

### Trumpets

James Fountain  
Adam Wright  
Katie Smith

### Off Stage Trumpets

Paul Beniston  
Richard Blake

### Trombones

Simon Johnson  
Jonathan Hollick

### Bass Trombone

Paul Milner

### Tuba

Ben Thomson

### Timpani

Nigel Thomas

### Off Stage Timpani

Patrick King

### Percussion

Neil Percy  
David Jackson

### Harp

Bryn Lewis

### Celeste

Elizabeth Burley