

TONIGHT'S CONCERT

Barbara Hannigan: Bowler, Ligeti and Strauss

Thursday 5 March 2026
Barbican

7pm

Laura Bowler

The White Book* (LSO co-commission)

Interval

György Ligeti

Lontano

Richard Strauss

Also sprach Zarathustra

Barbara Hannigan conductor & soprano

Bar Avni conductor*

London Symphony Orchestra

Concert finishes at approximately 9.05pm

Supported by Cockayne Grants for the Arts, a Donor
Advised Fund, held at The Prism Charitable Trust

COCKAYNE

Laura Bowler's The White Book is supported by Resonate, a PRS
Foundation initiative in partnership with Association of British
Orchestras and BBC Radio 3

Welcome



A warm welcome to tonight's London Symphony Orchestra concert, with LSO Associate Artist Barbara Hannigan as soprano and conductor. The first half features *The White Book* by Laura Bowler, a new work co-commissioned by the LSO. We are also pleased to welcome Bar Avni – an artist mentored by Barbara Hannigan and winner at the 2024 La Maestra competition in Paris – to conduct *The White Book* this evening.

The White Book draws on the novel of the same name by the celebrated South Korean author and 2024 Nobel Prize in Literature winner Han Kang, which centres around poetic themes of grief and the human spirit. Laura Bowler has made her mark as a truly creative artist with a distinctive compositional voice, working across both composition and performance. After the interval, the programme continues with two orchestral works for which Barbara Hannigan also has a special affinity: Ligeti's *Lontano*, with its slowly unfolding, dreamlike textures, leads into Strauss' *Also sprach Zarathustra*, a vast philosophical tone poem.

Tonight, we are delighted to recognise the many individuals and organisations who make the LSO's work possible through annual gifts, corporate partnerships, support from trusts and foundations, gifts in wills and public funding. From performances on stage to our work in the community through LSO Discovery, their commitment plays a vital role in everything we do, and we extend our sincere thanks. If you would like to find out more about becoming part of our community of supporters, we warmly invite you to explore our website.

We are particularly grateful to Cockayne Grants for the Arts for the generous support of this concert. We are also grateful to PRS Foundation's Resonate programme for supporting Laura Bowler's *The White Book*.

Later this month, on 25 March, Anja Bihlmaier conducts a Half Six Fix performance of Dvořák's Symphony No 9, before returning the following evening for a full programme of Bernstein, Lowell Liebermann and Dvořák. This concert will feature LSO Principal Flute Gareth Davies in the UK premiere of Lowell Liebermann's Flute Concerto No 2. We hope to see you there.

Dame Kathryn McDowell DBE DL
Managing Director

Coming Up

Thursday 26 March
Barbican

7pm

Bernstein, Liebermann and Dvořák

An American dream: Dvořák's symphonic ode to the US and Bernstein's gritty portrait of New York frame a new concerto by Lowell Liebermann, with Gareth Davies, the LSO's Principal Flute, as soloist. The programme is conducted by one of today's most dynamic and engaging conductors, Anja Bihlmaier.

Thursday 16 April
Barbican

7pm

Holst, Korngold and Shostakovich

Korngold tugs at the heart in his Hollywood-flavoured Violin Concerto, while Shostakovich's Fifth unleashes big tunes and white-hot intensity. Joining the LSO and Sir Antonio Pappano is Norwegian violinist Vilde Frang, who brings a touch of magic to Korngold's gilded concerto.

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The White Book (LSO co-commission)

Laura Bowler

Barbara Hannigan

soprano

Bar Avni

conductor

Matthew

Fairclough

live electronics

Surtitle operator

Damien Kennedy

- 1 **Wave**
- 2 **Breath-cloud**
- 3 **Sand**
- 4 **Silence**
- 5 **All whiteness**



2025



36 minutes

Programme note
by **Laura Bowler**

Commissioned by
the Gothenburg
Symphony
Orchestra,
London Symphony
Orchestra and
Copenhagen
Philharmonic
Orchestra

Barbara Hannigan's
dress this evening
was created by
Yuima Nakazato,
from his Glacier
Collection

Setting text from Han Kang's
The White Book, this work is a
ritual bound by grief and love.

The book is an autobiographical
meditation on the colour white
inspired and offered in memory of
the author's sister, her mother's
firstborn child, who lived only a
few hours after a premature birth.

I first read Han Kang's text whilst
sitting by my mother's hospital
bed, as she lay barely conscious
in recovery from a stem cell
transplant as treatment for acute
myeloid leukaemia. Han Kang's
words brought me comfort, in that
they articulated so many of the
feelings I was experiencing but
didn't have the words to express.
I felt less alone when reading her
words. A few years later my mother
made a full recovery, but then died
in an accident two months later. I
never got to say goodbye to her.
I carry the pain of this grief with
me every day, as do so many
others who have experienced loss.

It is hard to articulate what this
music means to me, making it
almost impossible to write a
programme note. What I can say
is that this music came from me

sitting with Han Kang's words and
allowing the grief and love that I
feel to overwhelm me. It is both an
expression of the desperate longing
and the acceptance of death. It
carries boundless love and pain.

The vocal material is at times
deeply restricted, internal and
desperately holding oneself
steady, and at other times is
endlessly reaching for the one
thing that cannot be found.
The orchestra exists both as a
magnification of the soloist's
language but at other times a
colossal oppression and violent
invasion of the soloist's space.
The music is an expression of the
internal emotional turmoil of grief.

Knowing that I was writing this
work for Barbara Hannigan, a
musician and performer I have
long admired, freed me to
compose in a way that enabled
uninhibited expression. Throughout
the process, her voice and its
possibilities were ever present
in the lines that I wrote. I will be
forever grateful to both Han Kang
and Barbara Hannigan for trusting
me in the creation of this work.



Interval – 20 minutes

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@londonsymphonyorchestra

Laura Bowler

b 1986 (United Kingdom)



Contemporaries

Helen Grime,
Emily Howard

Key events

2018: Travels to Antarctica to write multimedia work about climate change

2021: Wins Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Chamber-Scale Composition

2022: Premiere of opera *The Blue Woman* at the Royal Opera House

2024: Premiere of opera *The Girl with the Hurricane Brain* at Copenhagen Opera Festival

2025: Premiere of *Things Are Against Us* with Basel Sinfonietta

Laura Bowler, described as 'a triple threat composer-performer provocatrice' (*The Art Desk*), is a composer and vocalist specialising in multidisciplinary works and music theatre. Bowler has been commissioned by leading ensembles, orchestras and festivals across the globe, including the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Copenhagen Philharmonic, Royal Opera House, Opera Holland Park, The Opera Group, Manchester Camerata, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Ensemble Phace (Austria), Ensemble Linea (France), Omega Ensemble (Australia), Donaueschinger Musiktage, MaerzMusik and Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, among others.

Her recent oeuvre includes *The Blue Woman*, a chamber opera commissioned by the Royal Opera House for its Engender Festival at the Linbury Theatre; *Wicked Problems*, an award-winning chamber work for voice and bass flute created in collaboration with flautist Ruth Morley, which received the Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Chamber-Scale Composition; and *ADVERT*, a music-theatre piece commissioned by Huddersfield

Contemporary Music Festival, New Music Dublin, Musica Estranha, Ultima, Time in Music, Music on Main and November Music.

Other notable works include *FFF*, a multimedia music theatre work for ensemble and voice commissioned by Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival and BBC Radio 3; *Damned Mob of Scribbling Women*, a music-theatre song cycle for mezzo-soprano Lucy Goddard, nominated for a British Composer Award; *Houses Slide*, an off-grid performance powered by bicycles for London Sinfonietta and vocalist Jessica Aszodi; *distance*, a work jointly commissioned by sound, Spitalfields, and Cheltenham Music Festivals; and *Antarctica*, a 50-minute multimedia composition for orchestra and voice, co-commissioned by Manchester Camerata and BBC Radio 3.

As a vocal soloist, Bowler has premiered works internationally by such composers as Louis Aguirre and Jennifer Walshe. She also serves as vocalist for the Danish Ensemble Lydenskab.

She is currently Deputy Head of Composition at Royal Northern College of Music.

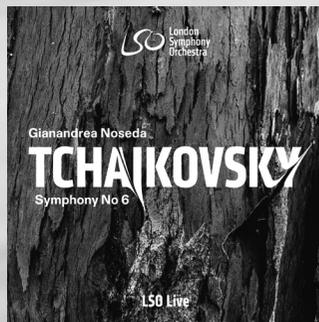
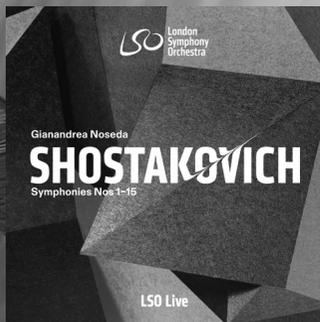
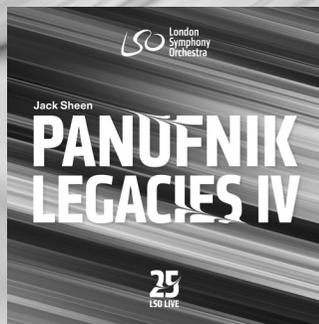
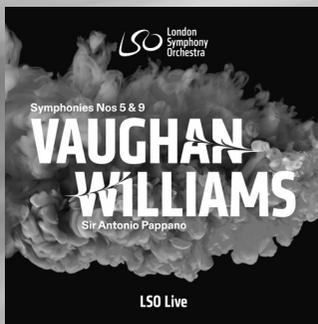
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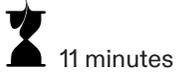
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Lontano

György Ligeti



Programme note
by **Timmy Fisher**

When György Ligeti was a child, he had a recurring dream. In it, a vast network of tangled fibres hung around his bed; even the smallest movement would cause the whole structure to shudder and pulsate. Related many years later, this core memory has become a popular analogy for what the composer called ‘micropolyphony’ – music made up of many individual lines, each moving at different speeds and by varying degrees, combining to create a shimmering cluster of sound.

Micropolyphony sits at the heart of Ligeti’s output from the 1960s and *Lontano* is a masterful study, building on the success of his breakthrough orchestral work, *Atmosphères* (1961). The piece opens with a series of individual entries, each player holding a single note. Then, only very slightly at first, they begin to move. The sound smudges, and lines cross and combine to give the rise-and-fall impression of melody, like the half-perceptible shapes of a starling murmuration. This process evolves across three distinct phases, though within these are many subtler climaxes and changes of perspective, as well as moments of stillness.

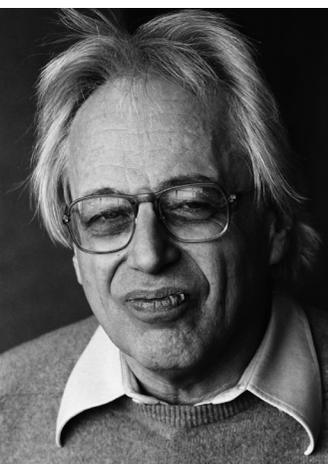
To those unfamiliar with late 1960s avant-garde music, *Lontano* might sound typical of the era: atonal, amorphous, unrelatable to anything in the traditional orchestral

repertoire. But when the piece first appeared, it ruffled more than a few feathers among Ligeti’s colleagues. ‘[It] must be played with great expression,’ he wrote on the score; ‘Fluctuations in tempo are permissible.’ For hard-line modernists such as Pierre Boulez, who rejected such Romantic affectations and scored with micro-precision, this was unthinkable. The use of recognisable intervals such as fifths, and subtle quotations from past masters Bruckner and Josquin, were equally troubling. Even scoring for a large orchestra – one without any percussion – raised eyebrows.

For these reasons, *Lontano* is seen as the beginning of a journey that led to a more direct engagement with music from the past, with Ligeti – a composer who had always been suspicious of schools and orthodoxy – as its figurehead. The ‘little strait between Sicily and Calabria’ was how he described the line he trod between expression and atonality. He became that rare thing: an avant-gardist with a foothold in popular culture. The soundtracks to Stanley Kubrick’s *The Shining* (1980) and Martin Scorsese’s *Shutter Island* (2010) both feature *Lontano*, which perfectly encapsulates those films’ psychological ambiguities, the unbearable tensions, and the deep, violent emotions experienced *da lontano* – ‘from afar’.

György Ligeti

1923 (Romania) to 2006 (Austria)



Contemporaries

György Kurtág,
Luciano Berio

Key events

1956: Escapes Hungary after Hungarian Uprising; settles in Vienna

1968: Several works (including *Atmosphères*) feature on soundtrack for *2001: A Space Odyssey*

1978: Premiere of his opera *Le grand macabre*

Listen to

Mysteries of the Macabre
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With the LSO

2017: Semi-staged *Le grand macabre*

Programme note by
Jessica Duchén

György Ligeti was born in Diciosânmartin, Transylvania, Romania, to Hungarian Jewish parents in 1923. The family had some strong intellectual and artistic connections; Ligeti was the great-nephew of the violinist Leopold Auer, who had taught Jascha Heifetz, among others. He received his early training in Kolozsvár (Cluj) and dreamed of studying with Béla Bartók, crossing Hungary to Budapest in the hope of meeting him, only to find that the composer had departed for the US.

During World War II, Ligeti's father and brother died in Nazi concentration camps; he himself was incarcerated by Hungary's Horthy regime in a forced labour camp. After the war, he became a student at the Franz Liszt Academy, Budapest. Shortly after the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, he and his wife escaped to Vienna, hiding under mailbags in trucks travelling between railway stations.

In Germany thereafter, Ligeti hooked up with the mid-century electronic music avant-garde, working with Karlheinz Stockhausen and Gottfried Michael Koenig in Cologne. Nevertheless, alienated by both internal politicking and the twelve-note serialist system, which he found uninteresting, he soon sought a different path, avoiding dogmatism of all kinds.

His reputation grew with the orchestral works *Apparitions* (1958–59) and *Atmosphères* (1961), which incorporate an approach to building texture that he termed 'micropolyphony'. He absorbed eclectic influences from around the world, from Indonesian gamelan to jazz, and developed a focus on timbre (sound or tone) as a driving force, termed 'sonorism'. His 1962 *Poème symphonique* was a work for 100 mechanical metronomes.

Ligeti never stopped exploring and experimenting. His sole opera (or, as he termed it, 'anti-anti-opera'), *Le grand macabre* (1974–77), used quotations and pastiche, among other techniques. He created a dazzling set of piano études that today is considered the most important since Claude Debussy's, and his several concertos for different instruments sit within the genre's traditions while being filled with his virtuoso imagination. He also reached a whole different audience, if inadvertently, when his music was used in celebrated films including *2001: A Space Odyssey* and *The Shining*.

Whatever the context, Ligeti's continual self-reinvention is underpinned by a peerless personal voice that fits no pigeonhole, holds no pomposity and takes no prisoners.

Also sprach Zarathustra

Richard Strauss

- 1 **Sonnenaufgang (Sunrise)**
- 2 **Von den Hinterweltlern (Of the Backworldsmen)**
- 3 **Von der großen Sehnsucht (Of the Great Longing)**
- 4 **Von den Freuden und Leidenschaften (Of Joys and Passions)**
- 5 **Das Grablied (The Song of the Grave)**
- 6 **Von der Wissenschaft (Of Science and Learning)**
- 7 **Der Genesende (The Convalescent)**
- 8 **Das Tanzlied (The Dance-Song)**
- 9 **Das Nachtwandlerlied (Song of the Night Wanderer)**

 1896

 34 minutes

Programme note by
Stephen Johnson

At the time that Richard Strauss was making his name as a brilliant young modernist, the challenging new intellectual discovery of the German-speaking world was the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche, and particularly his philosophical book *Also sprach Zarathustra* (Thus spake Zarathustra). Nietzsche had taken the historical Persian prophet Zoroaster and transformed him into the mouthpiece for his own radical brand of romantic individualism. Zarathustra rejects religion, which he feels crows the intellect, heaps shame on the erotic and imprisons the human spirit. He teaches iconoclasm, defiance of moral codes, contempt for the weak and the comforting self-delusions of the masses. Central to his philosophy is the notion of the *Übermensch*, the ‘Superman’ – not defined, as is sometimes stated, according to racial type (Nietzsche grew increasingly to despise his own people), but a vision of what humanity might yet become if it can break its spiritual bonds: ‘I teach you the Superman. Man is a thing to be overcome ... What is the ape to man? A jest or a thing of shame. So shall man be to the Superman – a rope over the abyss.’

It was this above all that attracted the young Strauss to Nietzsche’s *Also sprach Zarathustra*, and made him determined to express his response in music. In devising a programmatic scheme for his new orchestral work, Strauss

took phrases and images from Nietzsche’s work and used them as subtitles for the various sections. But it seems unlikely that Strauss wanted his audiences to relate his tone poem *Also sprach Zarathustra* point by point to Nietzsche.

Significantly, this was the first of his tone poems to dispense completely with traditional formal schemes – sonata form, rondo, variations, etc. – and, like Schoenberg in his nearly contemporary *Verklärte Nacht*, Strauss was clearly looking to literary ideas and images to provide a new kind of formal framework. He made a point of describing his own *Also sprach Zarathustra* as ‘freely after Nietzsche’, and, in a note for the Berlin premiere in December 1896, he went further: ‘I did not intend to write philosophical music or portray Nietzsche’s great work musically. I meant rather to convey in music an idea of the evolution of the human race from its origin, through various phases of development, religious as well as scientific, up to Nietzsche’s idea of the Superman.’

That idea of evolution, of striving ever upwards – mankind as ‘a rope over the abyss’ – is crucial to Strauss’ *Also sprach Zarathustra*. It begins with a stupendous musical sunrise and signifies the dawning of human consciousness with all its tremendous potential. But then comes a step back: muted horns sound the plainchant phrase ‘Credo

in unum deum' (I believe in one God) and the organ joins richly divided strings for a portrayal of the false consolations of religion.

'I meant [...] to convey in music an idea of the evolution of the human race from its origin, through various phases of development, religious as well as scientific, up to Nietzsche's idea of the Superman.'

Human 'Joys and Passions', suppressed by the church, burst out in a downward-sweeping harp glissando, silencing the organ and releasing turbulent orchestral figures. Then comes a search for a counterbalancing stability in 'Of Science' – but this dryly methodical fugue, beginning deep in the orchestral bass, only provokes more turbulence, culminating in a terrifying full-orchestral reminder of the work's opening theme.

The tempo increases, with cockcrows on high trumpets (promise of a new dawn?), but this leads – rather surprisingly – to a sumptuous waltz, 'The

Dance-Song'. For Nietzsche, the most exalted, liberating thought expressed itself in a kind of mental dance – the very opposite of the sombre gravity of the earlier 'Of Science' section. Twelve bell-strokes sound midnight, the point of the ultimate revelation in Nietzsche's book.

But, significantly, Strauss here implies criticism of Nietzsche's vision. The book culminates in triumph, with a celebration of the joy that is deeper and more enduring than the world's grief; but Strauss ends with an eerie question mark – two harmonies quietly but irreconcilably clashing. Is the arrival of the Superman a certainty after all? Is joy really eternal and stronger than the world's woe? Strauss leaves room for doubt.

Richard Strauss

1864 to 1949 (Germany)



Richard Strauss was born in Munich in 1864, the son of Franz Strauss, a brilliant horn player in the Munich court orchestra. It is therefore perhaps not surprising that some of the composer's most striking writing is for the French horn. Strauss had his first piano lessons when he was four, and he produced his first composition two years later, but surprisingly, he did not attend a music academy; rather, his formal education ended at Munich University, where he studied philosophy and aesthetics, continuing with his musical training at the same time.

Following the first public performances of his work, he received a commission from Hans von Bülow in 1882 and two years later was appointed Bülow's Assistant Musical Director at the Meiningen Court Orchestra, the beginning of a career in which Strauss was to conduct many of the world's great orchestras, in addition to holding positions at opera houses in Munich, Weimar, Berlin and Vienna. While at Munich, he married the singer Pauline de Ahna, for whom he wrote many of his greatest songs.

Strauss' greatest achievements were his operas, songs and magnificent symphonic poems.

Scores such as *Till Eulenspiegel*, *Also sprach Zarathustra*, *Don Juan* and *Ein Heldenleben* demonstrate his supreme mastery of orchestration. The thoroughly modern operas *Salome* and *Elektra*, with their Freudian themes and atonal scoring, are landmarks in the development of 20th-century music, and his fifth opera, *Der Rosenkavalier* (1911), has become one of the most popular operas of the century. His later operatic masterpieces include *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, *Arabella* and the 'conversation piece in music' *Capriccio*, his final opera.

From the final years of the war until 1948, Strauss experienced a remarkable late flowering, during which he composed works including *Metamorphosen* for strings, the Oboe Concerto and the much-loved *Four Last Songs*. From late 1945 until summer 1948, he and his wife lived in self-imposed exile in Switzerland, waiting to be officially cleared of complicity in the Nazi regime. In June 1948, they returned to their home in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, where Strauss died in 1949, shortly after his widely celebrated 85th birthday.

Contemporaries

Gustav Mahler,
Claude Debussy

Key events

1889: Triumphant premiere of *Don Juan*

1905: First operatic success with *Salome*

1911: Premiere of his opera *Der Rosenkavalier*

1945–48: 'Indian Summer', during which he produces several masterpieces

Listen to

Eine Alpensinfonie
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With the LSO

1953: UK premiere of *The Legend of Joseph*

Composer profile by
Andrew Stewart

COMING UP IN 2026

Season Highlights

Elgar The Dream of Gerontius

with Sir Antonio Pappano

Sunday 19 April 7pm

Tuesday 21 April 7pm

**Beethoven Piano Concerto No 3
plus Wagner and Strauss**

with Nathalie Stutzmann

and Leif Ove Andsnes

Thursday 14 May 7pm

LSO on Film: Blockbusters

with Dirk Brossé

Sunday 7 June 7pm

Wagner Tristan and Isolde

with Sir Antonio Pappano

Concert performance with surtitles

Wednesday 1 July 5pm

Sunday 12 July 5pm

Explore the full season

lso.co.uk/2526

Barbara Hannigan

conductor and soprano



Embodying music with an unparalleled dramatic sensibility, soprano and conductor Barbara Hannigan is an artist at the forefront of creation. Over more than three decades, she has forged extraordinary artistic partnerships with the world's foremost musicians, directors and choreographers, including Bertrand Chamayou, John Zorn, Romeo Castellucci, Simon Rattle, Sasha Waltz, Claus Guth, Kent Nagano, Christoph Marthaler, Katie Mitchell, Vladimir Jurowski, Andris Nelsons, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Kirill Petrenko, Krzysztof Warlikowski and Andreas Kriegenburg. The late conductor and pianist Reinbert de Leeuw has been an extraordinary influence and inspiration on her development as a musician.

The Grammy Award-winning Canadian musician has shown a profound commitment to the music of our time and has given the world premiere performances of nearly 100 new creations, with extensive collaborations with composers including Pierre Boulez, John Zorn, Henri Dutilleux, György Ligeti, Zosha di Castri, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Golfam Khayam, Salvatore Sciarrino, Gerald Barry, Pascal Dusapin, Brett Dean, George Benjamin and Hans Abrahamsen. Hannigan also combines new and older repertory in a highly dramatic and authentic manner, and was recently music director and soloist for Romeo Castellucci's highly acclaimed *Stabat Mater*, which combined works by Scelsi and Pergolesi in sold-out

performances at Geneva's Cathédrale St Pierre. In recent years, she has conducted world-class orchestras including the Royal Concertgebouw and Cleveland Orchestras, Rome's Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, and had starring soprano roles on opera stages including Covent Garden, Teatro San Carlo in Naples, Paris Opéra's Palais Garnier and the opera houses of Berlin, Hamburg and Munich.

In the 2025/26 season, Hannigan returns to the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra (as Principal Guest Conductor), l'Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne (as Principal Guest Conductor) and Iceland Symphony (where her position as Chief Conductor and Artistic Director will begin in the 2026/27 season). She also returns to the Munich Philharmonic, Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, the Montreal Symphony Orchestra and the Juilliard School (as Creative Associate) and makes her New York Philharmonic conducting debut, performing her unique version of Poulenc's opera *La voix humaine*, in which she both sings the role of Elle and conducts the orchestra. This production will also tour to La Scala, Milan, Istanbul and the Prague Spring Festival. She also gives a European recital tour with Bertrand Chamayou of works by Messiaen, Scriabin and Zorn, and performs the soprano solo in Schubert's String Quartet No 2 with the Belcea Quartet.

Hannigan has made many acclaimed recordings, including six discs for Alpha Classics, and two live recordings of works by John Zorn for Tzadik. She is the founder of the mentoring initiatives Equilibrium Young Artists (2017), and Momentum: Our Future, Now (2020), both offering guidance and performing opportunities to young professional artists, is Reinbert de Leeuw Professor of Music at the Royal Academy of Music in London and Creative Associate at the Juilliard School. Her many awards and honours include, most recently, being the 2025 Polar Music Prize Laureate.

Bar Avni

conductor



Praised by *Diapason* for her dynamic presence and refined musicality, Israeli conductor Bar Avni thrives on collaborations with mentors such as Yoav Talmi, Barbara Hannigan and Ayelet Geva. A key element of her artistry is programming: making bold choices and shaping concerts as complete experiences, much like designing a menu. A striking example is her debut album with the Orchestre National Bordeaux Aquitaine, released by Alpha Classics in February 2026, which comprises works by Charlotte Sohy, Darius Milhaud, C P E Bach and Igor Stravinsky.

From 2021 to 2024, Avni served as Chief Conductor of the Bayer Philharmoniker, during her Bayer Kultur residency. In 2024, she won the La Maestra competition in Paris, sweeping four additional prizes. This success led to a fruitful collaboration and further concerts with the Paris Mozart Orchestra and Claire Gibault.

Avni is known for her outreach work; she brings workshops to schools, hospitals and corporate events, and views conducting as a powerful tool for communication –

enhancing body awareness, non-verbal expression and self-confidence. Together with her fellow musicians, she shapes inclusive experiences that invite everyone to participate, without the need for prior knowledge.

In the 2025/26 season, Avni returns to the Orchestre de Paris and the Orchestre National Bordeaux Aquitaine, and make debuts with the WDR Symphony, Warsaw Philharmonic, Netherlands Radio, Stuttgart Radio, Lausanne Chamber and Gulbenkian Symphony orchestras. Future collaborations include performances with leading soloists such as Benjamin Bernheim, Isata Kanneh-Mason, Alon Sariel, Ava Bahari, Joshua Redman, Ofra Yitzhaki, Nadav Lev and Marie-Ange Nguci. Avni has been named Villa Albertine Artist in Residence for 2026.

Born in Israel and trained as a percussionist, Avni studied conducting with Yoav Talmi, Martin Sieghart and Ulrich Windfuhr. She has also gained experience assisting conductors such as Gustavo Dudamel, Klaus Mäkelä, Myung-whun Chung and Matthias Pintscher.

London Symphony Orchestra

On Stage

Leader

Benjamin Marquise
Gilmore

First Violins

Sylvia Huang
Ginette Decuyper
Laura Dixon
Olatz Ruiz de
Gordejuela
Maxine Kwok
William Melvin
Stefano Mengoli
Elizabeth Pigram
Laurent Quénelle
Harriet Rayfield
Sylvain Vasseur
Richard Blayden
Richard Blayden
Morane Cohen-
Lamberger
Dániel Mészöly
Julia Rumley
Ugnė Liepa Žuklytė*

Second Violins

Thomas Norris
Julián Gil Rodríguez
Sarah Quinn
Miya Väisänen
Helena Buckie
Naoko Keatley
Alix Lagasse
Belinda McFarlane
Iwona Muszynska
Csilla Pogány
Paul Robson
Ingrid Button
Juan Gonzalez
Hernandez
Djumash Poulsen
Erzsebet Racz

Violas

David Gaillard
Gillianne Haddow
Malcolm Johnston
Anna Bastow
Germán Clavijo
Steve Doman
Sofia Silva Sousa
Mizuho Ueyama
Sally Belcher
Lukas Bowen
Cynthia Perrin
Anna Dorothea Vogel

Cellos

Stephanie Huang
Laure Le Dantec
Alastair Blayden
Daniel Gardner
Victoria Harrild
Hamish Jamieson*
Orlando Jopling
Kosta Popovic
Victoria Simonsen
Yaroslava Trofymchuk
Amanda Truelove

Double Basses

Graham Mitchell
Patrick Laurence
Thomas Goodman
Joe Melvin
Jani Pensola
Josie Ellis
Evangeline Tang
Adam Wynter

Flutes

Gareth Davies
Imogen Royce

Piccolo

Sharon Moynihan
Claire Childs

Oboes

Olivier Stankiewicz
Rosie Jenkins
Poppy Webb-Taylor

Cor Anglais

Maxwell Spiers

Clarinets

Chris Richards
Chi-Yu Mo
Bethany Crouch

Bass Clarinet

Ferran Garcerà Perelló
Andrew Harper

Soprano Saxophone

Simon Haram

Bassoons

Daniel Jemison
Joost Bosdijk
Lois Au

Contrabassoon

Martin Field

Horns

Timothy Jones
Angela Barnes
Daniel Curzon
Jonathan Maloney
Lene Skomedal
Andrew Sutton
Stefan Grant

Trumpets

James Fountain
Adam Wright
Katie Smith
Aaron Akugbo

Trombones

Rupert Whitehead
Jonathan Hollick

Bass Trombone

Paul Milner

Tuba

Ben Thomson
Matt Lait

Timpani

Nigel Thomas

Percussion

Neil Percy
David Jackson
Sam Walton

Harps

Susan Blair
Anneke Hodnett

Celeste

Elizabeth Burley

Organ

Richard Gowers

* 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.