TONIGHT'S CONCERT

Thomas Adès: Nørgård, Adès and Sibelius

Thursday 5 November 2026 7pm
Barbican

Per Nørgård
Dream Play
Thomas Adès
In Seven Days for piano and orchestra

Interval

Jean Sibelius
Symphony No 5

Thomas Adès conductor
Bertrand Chamayou piano
London Symphony Orchestra

Concert finishes at approximately 8.50pm

Generously supported by The Huo Family Foundation

the HUO FAMILY FOUNDATION

Welcome



Welcome to tonight's concert, conducted by Thomas Adès, featuring pianist Bertrand Chamayou as soloist in Adès' *In Seven Days*. We're delighted to present Sibelius' Symphony No 5, alongside works by Nørgård and Adès himself. This concert is generously supported by The Huo Family Foundation.

We also remember Christopher Follett and celebrate his life and contribution to the LSO. You can read more about Christopher in the tribute on the following page.

On Sunday 8 November, Adès returns with the soprano Anna Dennis and the London Symphony Chorus to conduct a programme of Sibelius' Symphony No 7 and *The Oceanides*, Saariaho's *Oltra mar* and his own *America: A Prophecy*. On Wednesday 11 November, Susanna Mälkki conducts Steve Reich's *Three Movements* and *Music for Ensemble & Orchestra* in a Half Six Fix performance.



John Harte
Managing Director

Christopher Follett: In Memory (1941–2025)



Christopher read French and Portuguese at King's College London and went on to be Reuters' correspondent in Copenhagen for many years. Music was a passion of Christopher's; he was a valued member of the Committee of the Berlioz Society; a portrait of the composer hung wherever he lived.

Following his retirement to England in 2007, Thursday evening concerts at Radiohuset in Copenhagen were replaced by performances by the London Symphony Orchestra at the Barbican. Christopher was a valued supporter of the LSO, and we are deeply grateful for the legacy he has left to the Orchestra through his generous bequest. We were always delighted to welcome Christopher to our concerts, and he will be greatly missed.

Tonight, we celebrate Christopher's life with gratitude and affection.

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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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Dream Play

Per Nørgård

1975, rev 1980

10 minutes

Programme note by **Andrew Mellor**

Thomas Adès made his conducting debut leading a performance of *Tributes – Album for Strings* by Per Nørgård. Adès has long admired the music of the late Danish composer and has returned to it countless times since. In a 2015 interview with the Danish magazine *Klassisk*, Adès likened Nørgård to Sibelius in the way 'you hear the working-out, the strain, the noise of the forge' in both composers' music.

Nørgård, in fact, long admired Sibelius and the two composers corresponded about the nature of Nordic music and its elemental qualities. It was precisely this that Nørgård set out to capture when he developed his architectural formula for writing music, known as the 'Infinity Series'. This quasi-algorithmic device produced music resembling a forest of complex rhythmic activity, spinning as if by its own momentum while generating its own continuous melody.

Drømmespil (Dream Play) was written in 1975 and revised five years later. After Nørgård had presented the Infinity Series in its purest form in works such as his Symphony No 2, he started to experiment with the formula, intervening in its fixed patterns to create overlapping textures, weaving melodies and distinct episodes.

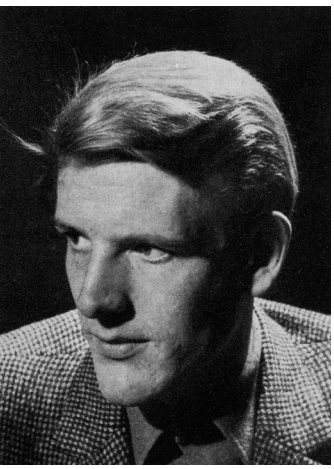
That is the musical process behind *Dream Play*, even if Nørgård wouldn't necessarily have expected the listener to sense it. To paraphrase a comment he once made, as a listener you can follow whichever part of activity in the orchestra you like – or simply allow the sound of the whole to drift over you.

Dream Play resembles the elegant, neo-Classical works of Ravel and Sibelius in his later years, heard as if through a shaken snow dome. You may sense the presence of discernable musical figures, which present themselves and then intertwine. Nørgård described these as 'participants'. He wrote of the work as describing 'a tournament of a dream in which the participants may stand up to each other, but do so in order to take pleasure in their differences' (in musical parlance, we might describe that as a set of variations). There is a clear dance element to the piece, and Nørgård also wrote that his participants may 'indulge in the most loving embraces'.

On 12 June 2020, *Dream Play* became the first piece of music played live in front of an audience in Copenhagen's main concert hall following a three-month cessation of live music due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Many commented at the time that the experience of hearing it was akin to that of waking up after a strange, deep dream.

Per Nørgård

1932 to 2025 (Denmark)



Contemporaries
Arvo Pärt,
Steve Reich

Key events
1959: Devises his musical formula the Infinity Series
1968: Premiere of *Voyage into the Golden Screen*
1975: Acclaimed premiere of Symphony No 3
1987: Writes score for *Babette's Feast*
1996: Awarded Léonie Sonning Music Prize
2016: Awarded Ernst von Siemens Music Prize

Listen to
Symphony No 3

Composer profile
by **Andrew Mellor**

At the time of his death in 2025, Per Nørgård was the most admired and influential contemporary composer from the Nordic countries. He was a musician of colossal imagination and a generous, ever-smiling human being whom many counted as friend and mentor – from experimental composers to the chart-topping Danish pop singer Jada (his granddaughter).

Nørgård himself was profoundly influenced by the music of Jean Sibelius. As a 22-year-old in 1954, he wrote from his home in Copenhagen to his counterpart in Helsinki, observing that the Finnish composer's work was 'in touch with the elementary, innermost and quite timeless forces of existence' (Sibelius, famously grumpy, wrote back in delight).

Early works like *Voyage into the Golden Screen* use the Infinity Series in its purest, most blissed-out form. After his Symphony No 2, the device became less the be-all-and-end-all, more a chassis for experimentation and variation. The principle of designing music to a fixed sequence or formula would lead the Aarhus School, a group of composers named after the city in which Nørgård was a professor.

Nørgård wrote more than 100 hours of music over seven decades. His work ranges from symphonies (eight in total) and sinfonietta works to solo instrumental and chamber music, film music, theatre music, cross-genre music and opera. He never stopped listening to the world around him – from its myriad natural noises to popular genres, avant-garde developments and the music of Eastern cultures including the Javanese gamelan tradition. Nor did he ever stop supporting younger generations of composers and musicians.

London Symphony Orchestra

MODERN

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In Seven Days for piano and orchestra

Thomas Adès

Bertrand Chamayou
piano

1 **Chaos – Light – Dark –**
2 **Separation of the waters into sea and sky –**
3 **Land – Grass – Trees –**
4 **Stars, Sun, Moon –**
5 **Creatures of sea and sky –**
6 **Creatures of the land –**
7 **Contemplation**

 2008

 30 minutes

Programme note
by **Paul Griffiths**

In Seven Days tells the Biblical story of Creation by focussing on creation – on how tiny particles of sound can combine, and recombine, and jostle against one another, to produce a half-hour span. It is, in that respect, a fractal composition: music in which certain simple elements – as simple as the rising scale step that kicks the whole thing off – are repeated again and again in contexts that are in a constant state of change thanks to the composer's virtuoso control of rhythm and, especially, harmony. His twisted tonality emerges, totally fresh, from decades of popular music as well as from the classical tradition.

Adès does not attempt to evoke the objects of Creation so much as the processes, and the energies. Often the result of a creative act is not one thing but two. On the first day, for instance, God creates heaven and earth, and light and darkness. Accordingly, Adès works with musical oppositions – of orchestra and piano, of course, but also of different groups within the orchestra, or of extremities of pitch, or rival harmonic forces. His music for this first day is led off as a perpetuum mobile by the strings, whose larger cycles bring in other orchestral families. These, having been installed, set out on their own courses, the woodwinds spiralling down, the brass moving towards a chorale that heralds the piano. Racing at double speed, the soloist soon moves into a melodious complexity that engages the orchestra and winds down into the bass, from which a rise leads into the second day.

Tuned percussion enter here, in what develops from note repetitions into an infinite simultaneity of ascending and descending lines, perhaps suggesting Escher's perpetual staircases. The plant life of the third day burgeons as growing variation (but then, everything here is growing variation), from the extreme bass to a majestic climax.

Divine astronomy in the fourth day is figured as glittering starscapes and the beneficent harmony, perhaps, of the sun. Days five (aquatic life) and six (terrestrial) are represented by a fugue in two sections – one without the piano, the other with the piano to the fore – telling us that everything is gentle, calming benediction. But then, at the end of the following contemplation, the whole process seems about to start over again. Creation is neverending.



Interval – 20 minutes
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COMING IN 2026

Season Highlights

Sibelius Symphony No 7
plus Saariaho and Adès
with Thomas Adès
Sunday 8 November 7pm

Soweto Kinch: Trilogy
with Tom Richards
Thursday 19 November 7.30pm

Vaughan Williams, Sibelius and Dubugnon
with Sir Antonio Pappano
and Janine Jansen
Sunday 29 November 7pm
Thursday 3 December 7pm

Shostakovich Violin Concerto No 2
plus Prokofiev
with Gianandrea Noseda
and Leonidas Kavakos
Thursday 10 December 7pm

Explore the full season
lso.co.uk/2627


UP

Symphony No 5 in E-flat major Op 82

Jean Sibelius

1 **Tempo molto moderato – Allegro moderato (ma poco a poco stretto) – Presto – Più presto**
2 **Andante mosso, quasi allegretto**
3 **Allegro molto**

 1914–19

 33 minutes

Programme note by **Stephen Johnson**

Few composers have responded so vividly to the sounds of nature as Jean Sibelius. Birdcalls (particularly those of swans and cranes), the buzzing of insects, the sounds of wind and water all fascinated him; at times he seems to have heard something mystical in them. The sight and sound of swans inspired the most famous theme in Sibelius' Fifth Symphony, as he recorded in his diaries, not long after he began sketching the symphony:

> 'Today at ten to eleven I saw 16 swans. One of my greatest experiences! Lord God, what beauty! They circled over me for a long time. Disappeared into the solar haze like a gleaming solar ribbon. Their call the same woodwind type as that of cranes. The swan-call closer to the trumpet ... Nature mysticism and life's Angst! The Fifth Symphony's finale-theme: Legato in the trumpets!!'

In fact, the finale theme doesn't appear on the trumpets until near the end of the symphony, where it is marked 'nobile' (noble). It inaugurates the long final crescendo that clearly evokes 'life's Angst' in grinding dissonances and abrasive orchestration. This isn't the only passage in the Fifth Symphony where shadows fall across the music: the long plaintive bassoon solo, heard through weird whispering string figurations in the first movement is another unsettling inspiration. Certainly it isn't all solar glory. But that only makes the final triumphant emergence of what Sibelius persisted in calling his 'Swan Hymn' all the more convincing: the symphony has had to struggle to achieve it.

In another diary entry from around this time, Sibelius tries to understand the composing process as he experiences it: 'Arrangement of the themes. This important task, which fascinates me in a mysterious way. It's as if God the Father had thrown down the tiles of a mosaic from heaven's floor and asked me to determine what kind of picture it was.' To those who admire the organic continuity of Sibelius' symphonies, this may come as a surprise. A symphony like the Fifth seems to grow inexorably from its musical seed (a distinctive motif that appears to set the process in motion) to the final triumphant flowering; and yet here is Sibelius telling us that he only discovers that ideal organic logic by moving the parts around. However, if you compare the familiar final version of the Fifth Symphony with its original 1915 version, you can hear that this is exactly what he did. The way a piece of

music appears to 'think' should not be confused with the way its composer himself thought as he wrote it down. The two processes can be strikingly different.

The Fifth Symphony begins with a splendid example of a Sibelian musical 'seed': a motif led by horns rises, then falls expectantly. Two huge crescendos grow organically from this, each one culminating in a thrilling two-note trumpet call. Then shadows begin to fall, and we hear the plaintive bassoon solo and eerily rustling strings mentioned above. In the symphony's first version (1915), the first movement came to a strangely premature ending not long after this, to be followed by a faster scherzo. But then Sibelius was struck by a magnificent idea – why not make the scherzo emerge from the Tempo molto moderato, as though it were a continuation of the first movement rather than a separate entity? So another elemental crescendo begins; the original horn motif (the 'seed') returns brilliantly on trumpets, then – almost imperceptibly at first – the music starts to accelerate. By the time we reach the final Più presto, the energy and pace are hair-raising. And yet the whole process is seamless – like a sped-up film of a plant growing from seed to full flower. It's hard to believe that this could have been achieved by the moving around of musical 'tiles'. On the surface, the Andante mosso, quasi allegretto is more relaxed. Broadly speaking, it is a set of variations on the folk-like theme heard at the beginning (pizzicato string and flutes). But there are tensions below that surface, momentarily emerging in troubled string tremolandos or in the menacing brass writing towards the end. There are also subtle hints of themes to come in the finale – again added in the later, revised version of the symphony.

Tension is released as action in the final movement, which begins as a fleet-footed airborne dance for high strings and continues into the 'Swan Hymn' (swaying horn figures and a chant-like theme for high woodwind). After a short development and a hushed return of both themes, the tempo broadens and the mood darkens. But then the Swan Hymn returns, in a slower tempo, on trumpets, initiating a long, slow crescendo. For a moment, 'life's Angst' seems to prevail; but it's only for a moment. Finally we hear a series of sledgehammer chords punctuated by long silences – the music seems to hold its breath, then a brusque two-note cadence brings the symphony to an abrupt close.

Jean Sibelius

1865 to 1957 (Finland)



Contemporaries
Richard Strauss, Claude Debussy

Key events
1889–91: Studies in Berlin and Vienna
1902: Hugely successful premiere of the Second Symphony
1917: Finland declares its independence
1924: Premiere of his Seventh (and final) Symphony

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

Composer profile by **Andrew Mellor**

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

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

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

Sibelius' orchestral scores sound as unusual to the ear as they look unusual to the eye. Tunes emerge from streams of identical notes. Motifs are molded gradually through repetition. Foreground and background are merged. Rhythmic shifts at the bottom of the orchestra tease out transformations above. The music can appear beyond human control.

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

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



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Thomas Adès

conductor & composer



Next on stage with the LSO
Sunday 8 November 7pm, Barbican
Sibelius, Saariaho and Adès

Thomas Adès was born in London in 1971. His works include three operas – *The Exterminating Angel* (2016), *The Tempest* (2004) and *Powder Her Face* (1995) – and orchestral compositions including *Asyla* (1997); *Tevot* (2007); *Polaris* (2010); the violin concerto *Concentric Paths* (2005); *In Seven Days* for piano and orchestra (2008); *Totentanz* for mezzo-soprano, baritone and orchestra (2013); and Concerto for Piano and Orchestra (2019). Recent works include *Shanty – Over the Sea* for strings (2020); *Märchentänze* for solo violin and piano with a separate version with orchestra (2021), *Air – Homage to Sibelius* for violin and orchestra, a Roche commission for Anne-Sophie Mutter (2022) and *Aquifer*, commissioned by the Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, with support from Carnegie Hall and the Gesellschaft der Musikfreundein Wien (2024).

This season, Adès becomes Principal Guest Conductor of the Hallé. He conducts three programmes in the Hallé's Manchester season, and performs in its chamber music series at Hallé St Peter's. Further guest conducting engagements include his debut at the Liceu, Barcelona for the Spanish premiere of *The Exterminating Angel*, and returns to the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Czech Philharmonic and the Los Angeles Philharmonic. During the 2026/27 season, Adès will also be an Associate Artist at Wigmore Hall and the Celebrated Composer of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. Adès regularly conducts the BBC Symphony, City of Birmingham Symphony, Boston Symphony, Cleveland, Finnish Radio, Royal Concertgebouw, Santa Cecilia, Toronto Symphony, Chicago Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Czech Philharmonic, Vienna Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, Berlin Philharmonic and London Philharmonic orchestras. In opera, he has conducted Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* at the Royal Opera House and Zurich Opera House, and the premieres of three operas by Gerald Barry, including the Los Angeles world premieres of *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *Alice's Adventures Under Ground*. He has recently toured with the Vienna Philharmonic and the Orchestre de l'Opéra de Paris and conducted concerts with Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen and Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin.

Gustavo Dudamel and the Los Angeles Philharmonic's recording of Adès' ballet score *Dante* won a Grammy Award (Best Orchestral Performance) in 2024. Adès' recordings of *The Tempest* for CD (EMI) and DVD won a 2010 Gramophone Award and the Diapason d'Or de l'année (2013) respectively. Other recordings include an album of Janáček's solo piano music (for which he won the 2018 Janáček Medal) and *Winterreise* with Ian Bostridge. In 2023, Adès was awarded the BBVA Foundation 'Frontiers of Knowledge' prize.

Bertrand Chamayou

piano



French pianist Bertrand Chamayou combines a deep affinity with the French repertoire with a fascination for the great landmarks of piano literature and an enduring commitment to the music of our time. From Ravel's complete solo piano works and Liszt's *Études* and *Années de pèlerinage* to Messiaen's monumental *Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus*, Chamayou has made ambitious, immersive projects a defining feature of his career, alongside a constant dialogue with living composers.

At the heart of his 2026/27 season is the release on Warner/Erato of his complete recording of Mendelssohn's *Songs without Words*, which Chamayou takes beyond the recording studio into a recital programme exploring the idea of music as song without text, from Mendelssohn to Takemitsu's transcriptions of Paul McCartney. Following its launch at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, the programme travels to venues including Wigmore Hall, Harpa Reykjavík, Rudolfinum Prague, the Ruhr Piano Festival and La Roque d'Anthéron.

On the orchestral stage, Chamayou makes debuts with the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra and George Benjamin, Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra and Nicholas Collon, and Munich Philharmonic with Barbara Hannigan. He returns to the Orchestre de Paris with Esa-Pekka Salonen to perform both Ravel concertos, and reunites with the Oslo Philharmonic and Vasily Petrenko, the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia and Tarmo Peltokoski, the NDR Elbphilharmonie and Hannigan, and Ensemble intercontemporain and Pierre Bleuse. He is Artist in Residence at Wigmore Hall and with the Iceland Symphony Orchestra throughout the season. Other projects include *Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus* at the Berlin Philharmonie, tours with Sol Gabetta and Barbara Hannigan, and performances in Asia with the Orchestre National de France, and the Shanghai and Guangzhou Symphony orchestras.

Chamayou has also performed with orchestras including the Vienna Philharmonic, the New York Philharmonic, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, and collaborated with conductors including Pierre Boulez, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Herbert Blomstedt, Semyon Bychkov, Thomas Adès, Philippe Jordan, Andris Nelsons, Sir Antonio Pappano, Tugan Sokhiev, Gianandrea Noseda and Mikko Franck. He is an exclusive Warner/Erato artist, and the only artist to have won France's prestigious Victoire de la Musique on five occasions. He is Artistic Director of Festival Ravel in the French Basque Country.

Born in Toulouse, Bertrand Chamayou studied with Jean-François Heisser at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris and with Maria Curcio in London.

London Symphony Orchestra

On Stage

Guest Leader
Kana Ohashi

First Violins
Stefano Mengoli
Ginette Decuyper
William Melvin
Elizabeth Pigram
Laurent Quénelle
Harriet Rayfield
Iona Allan
Eleanor Fagg
Caroline Frenkel
Grace Lee
Polina Makhina
Helen Paterson
Charlotte Reid
Julia Rumley
Lena Segal

Second Violins
Thomas Mathias
Thomas Norris
Sarah Quinn
Miya Väisänen
Helena Buckie
Matthew Gardner
Naoko Keatley
Alix Lagasse
Belinda McFarlane
Iwona Muszynska
Csilla Pogány
Elif Cansever
George Lawson

Violas
Natalie Loughran
Gillianne Haddow
Malcolm Johnston
Anna Bastow
Germán Clavijo
Julia O'Riordan
Robert Turner
Errika Collins
Fiona Dalgliesh
May Dolan
Carol Ella
Jenny Lewisohn

Cellos
David Cohen
Laure Le Dantec
Alastair Blayden
Salvador Bolón
Young In Na
Judith Fleet
Henry Hargreaves
Orlando Jopling
Morwenna Del Mar
Angus McCall

Double Basses
Ander Perrino
Mehdi Nejjoum-Barthélémy
Thomas Goodman
Joe Melvin
Jani Pensola
Noah Daniel
Simon Oliver

Flutes
Amy Yule
Imogen Royce

Piccolo
Patricia Moynihan

Oboes
Juliana Koch
Rosie Jenkins
Maxwell Spiers

Clarinets
Emile Souvagie
Ferran Garcerà Perelló
Sonia Sielaff

Bassoons
Rachel Gough
Joost Bosdijk

Contrabassoon
Martin Field

Horns
Diego Incertis Sánchez
Jonathan Maloney
Timothy Jones
Casey Rippon
Isabella Ward Ackland

Trumpets
Sérgio Pacheco
Adam Wright
Katie Smith

Trombones
Jackson Howard
Jonathan Hollick

Bass Trombone
Paul Milner

Tuba
Ben Thomson

Timpani
Nigel Thomas

Percussion
Sam Walton
David Jackson
Patrick King
Mark McDonald
Andrew Barclay
Matthew Farthing

Piano
Elizabeth Burley

Celeste
Caroline Jaya-Ratnam