

RLPO December 2 programme complementary content

New world and old world co-exist in this American-led programme of music which marries Mozart with 20th and 21st Century melodies from two of the States' most interesting composers – all under the baton of an American conductor and with a US-based soloist.

You can learn more about it in our programme notes which this year are being presented in a new and accessible way.

And in addition, this companion page draws together a range of complementary content which we hope will help shine additional light on the pieces, the people who composed them and the performers bringing them to life here in Hope Street.

Joshua Weilerstein

It's a warm welcome back for audience favourite **Joshua Weilerstein**.

The American conductor's most recent performances in Liverpool were a trio of 'on demand' concerts last autumn when he joined Wirral piano virtuoso – and polymath – Stephen Hough and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra in a performance of **Beethoven and Bartok** (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrMzLBtrOR4>), a second keyboard genius, Boris Giltburg, who played Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto, and not forgetting the brilliant British violinist **Tasmin Little**. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=opxChTDXQ_U)

Watch Joshua Weilerstein speaking in a concert preview in the Music Room ahead of lockdown last year.

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=798348083981026>

Inon Barnatan

Israeli/American pianist **Inon Barnatan** makes his Liverpool Philharmonic debut in this concert, playing Mozart's Piano Concerto No 24.

Barnatan was born in Tel Aviv in 1979 and started learning piano at three when his parents discovered he had perfect pitch. He made his orchestral debut aged 11 and later studied at the Royal Academy of Music where his teachers included Christopher Elton and the late Maria Curcio.

His career has encompassed playing with many of the world's leading orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic where he was the inaugural **artist-in-association** for three seasons, and promoting, commissioning and playing the work of contemporary composers including Thomas Adès, Sebastian Currier, Avner Dorman and Andrew Norman.

This year he was also **on the judging panel** of the Leeds International Piano Competition.

Watch Inon Barnatan play Schubert's Impromptu in G flat major.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AeOvAfwTMi8>

Mozart Piano Concerto No.24

A precocious, prodigious and prolific musical talent, **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** composed more than 600 works in his 35-year-life.

Among the 49 symphonies, 36 violin sonatas, 23 string quartets, dozens of dances and sacred pieces and 21 operas – plus hundreds of other works – he wrote **27 piano concertos**.

Concerto No 24 in C minor was composed over the winter of 1785-6 during his fourth season in Vienna, and Mozart premiered it himself at the city's Burgtheater (then the K K Theater an der Burg) in early April 1786 – a month before the premiere of *The Marriage of Figaro* in the same venue.

Did you know? On January 27, 2006, all the church bells in Salzburg were rung simultaneously at the exact hour of Mozart's birth in the city 250 years before.

Learn more about Mozart's Piano Concerto No 24.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00cmov9>

Dvořák's Symphony No 7

His *Ninth Symphony* may be more famous – thanks in part to THAT bread advertisement - but Antonin Dvořák's dramatic **Seventh Symphony** is regarded by many musical experts as his masterpiece.

The **Bohemia butcher's son** was commissioned by the London Philharmonic Society to write the work in 1884 – the same year he had conducted his Stabat Mater in the capital, following it with a visit to the **Three Choirs Festival** in Worcester where a certain young violinist called Edward Elgar played under his baton in the festival orchestra.

Despite the English origins of the commission, the inspiration for the symphony struck Dvořák at home in Prague when he heard the sound of a train coming into a station.

He premiered it at St James's Hall in London on April 22, 1885, when one reviewer noted it was “full of original inspiration, abounding in melody, splendidly orchestrated and replete with the piquant rhythms peculiarly characteristic of the composer.”

Did you know? When Neil Armstrong stepped on board Apollo 11 in 1969, he took with him a tape of Dvořák's Ninth Symphony.

Listen to an excerpt of the Seventh Symphony performed by the Berlin Philharmonic.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kteXRQGF7kk>

Caroline Shaw

Composer, producer, violinist and singer **Caroline Shaw** was the youngest recipient of the Pulitzer Prize for Music when she won the award in 2013 aged just 30.

Shaw was born in North Carolina and started playing the violin at two, initially learning through the Suzuki method, and composing when she was 10. She has an MA in violin from Yale and was studying for a PhD at Princeton when she won the Pulitzer for her work *Partita for 8 Voices*.

Entr'acte for strings was written in 2011 after Shaw heard the Brentano Quartet play the minuet of **Haydn's Op77 No 2 String Quartet**, and is structured like a minuet and trio.

Did you know? Caroline Shaw has collaborated extensively with rapper Kanye West, contributing vocals to several tracks, and co-producing a remix of his number *Say You Will*.

Watch an artist's profile on Caroline Shaw and her work.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LDsTA52tefk>

William Grant Still

Prolific 20th Century composer **William Grant Still** was a trailblazer during his long career.

He became the first African American to conduct a major American symphony orchestra (the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl) and the first to have his works performed by a leading symphony orchestra (his *Afro-American Symphony* by the Rochester Philharmonic) and opera company (New York City Opera).

Still was born in Mississippi in 1895 and was raised by his teacher mother and his grandmother – who sang him spirituals - in Little Rock, Arkansas. His stepfather also fostered a love of music in the young boy.

He initially studied medicine before turning to music, and after serving in the US Navy in the First World War, in the 1920s he played in pit orchestras for legendary names like Sophie Tucker and Artie Shaw and worked as an arranger for popular band leader Paul Whiteman.