

## RLPO January 27 programme complementary content

The Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and chief conductor Domingo Hindoyan bring Anton Bruckner's magnificent musical vision to visceral life in this unmissable Thursday night concert.

Bruckner poured everything into his Eighth Symphony - a piece which is moving and thrilling in equal measure.

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

Watch Stephen Johnson talking about the concert programme here ((LINK)).

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.

### Anton Bruckner

Composer, organist, teacher...and embodiment of the romantic symphonic tradition.

#### Josef Anton Bruckner

((<https://www.classicfm.com/composers/bruckner/guides/discovering-great-composers-anton-bruckner/>)) was born at Ansfelden near Linz in September 1824, the eldest child of the village schoolmaster Anton Bruckner.

His father died of TB when the young Bruckner was 13, and the same year the teenager – who had showed an early aptitude for music - began studies as a chorister at the monastery of St Florian.

At 21 he was appointed the monastery's organist and schoolmaster, a position he held for 10 years before becoming the organist at Linz cathedral.

Bruckner only started composing seriously when he was in his late 30s. Between 1865 and 1868, he wrote three masses and three symphonies while becoming court organist in Vienna and professor of organ at the city's Conservatory.

As an organist he was in demand, giving a number of recitals on the new Willis instrument at the **Royal Albert Hall**. ((<https://www.royalalberthall.com/about-the-hall/our-history/explore-our-history/building/henry-willis-organ/>))

But while the devout Bruckner's church music was well-received – Liszt was one fan - and he's now regarded as one of the all-time great symphonists, his early symphonic works met with little success.

And it's down as much to his tenacity as his talent that he persevered in the face of a sometimes-hostile reception.

At the **premiere of his third symphony in 1877**

((<https://thelistenersclub.com/2020/09/16/bruckners-third-symphony-vindicated-by-time/>)), conducted by Bruckner himself, not only did a number of the audience leave but the orchestra was openly derisive too! One of the few listeners who did stay to the end was a teenage Gustav Mahler.

The turning point came in 1884 with the successful premiere of his *Symphony No. 7 in E major*, opening the door for his masterpiece *Symphony No.8* as well as a reappraisal of some of the works that had gone before.

It wasn't all plain sailing however. Bruckner was crushed when, sending his work to Hermann Levi – so often his champion - for feedback, the German conductor replied the 'orchestration is impossible' and he should rethink the piece.

If not going back to the drawing board, Bruckner certainly made many revisions, and it ended up taking eight years from the symphony's inception to its first performance.

**Did you know? Both Johannes Brahms and Johann Strauss were at the premiere of the Eighth Symphony in Vienna in December 1892.**

## **Domingo Hindoyan on Symphony No 8**

In 1985, the newly inaugurated **World Philharmonic Orchestra** (([https://www.world-orchestral.com/world\\_ph.html](https://www.world-orchestral.com/world_ph.html))) performed Bruckner's *Eighth Symphony* at the Konserthus in Stockholm.

Among its multi-national ranks was a Venezuelan violinist called Domingo Garcia.

And the performance, **captured on film**, ((<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C7L-WJfU6Ro>)) would have a lasting impact on his son five thousand miles away at home in Caracas.

"I had the VHS video of it, and I used to watch it all the time, just to look for my father playing somewhere in the second violins," Domingo Hindoyan recalls of the concert.

"The harmony and the power of the symphony, with the mysterious beginning and the brass section, the scherzo – I listened to the scherzo a hundred times. Or the last movement, the big finale, it felt like a movie.

"That was my first love and I used to put it on in my room at high volume. Instead of listening to rock and roll, I would listen to Bruckner Eight. Walking around my room I enjoyed letting my imagination fly."

Five years ago, he finally had the chance to conduct the symphony, working with the Orquesta Sinfonica Simón Bolívar at the Sala Simón Bolívar in the Venezuelan capital.

And now he's preparing to return to the score for this concert at Liverpool Philharmonic Hall.

"It's just a fantastic piece," he enthuses. "It's a unique piece in dimension, in colour, in orchestration.

**"It's a monument.** ((<https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/finding-awesome-bruckners-eighth>)) It's like a big cathedral where every time you come you discover something new – a new sculpture, a new piece of art, a new sound, a new corner of the cathedral which is special."

So special that when he was asked to name his five favourite symphonies of all time, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra's new chief conductor had no hesitation in naming Bruckner's work.

### The C minor masterpiece

((<https://www.theguardian.com/music/tomserviceblog/2013/dec/03/symphony-guide-bruckner-eighth-tom-service>)) is not without its challenges however – and success is, Domingo reveals, all in the preparation.

He explains: "The big challenge in this symphony for the orchestra and conductor is while you play you need a long-term plan, because every note you're playing at this moment has a consequence sometime later."

So a bit like playing a game of chess then?

"Exactly," he says. "It's a big strategy, for the conductor and the players. In terms of harmony, in terms of dynamics, and also in terms simply of physical strength. The physical strength of the player.

"Because you can't give everything at the beginning because then you'll be tired later and will lose energy, will lose concentration.

"So it's really 80 to 90 minutes of strategy. You need to build it from the first note to the end. And then you just build from short structures to big structures, and I think that's exactly like **building a cathedral**. ((<https://www.wrti.org/arts-desk/2019-04-29/listening-to-bruckners-eighth-symphony-is-like-entering-a-majestic-church>))

"First you have the architect with a plan. And you know at the start that a column here will sustain another one and another one and another one, and then this beautiful structure. And it's exactly that – and that's for me why it's one of my favourites."

It's undoubtedly one of the conductor's favourites – but why should everyone else drop everything to come and hear the symphony at the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall this month?

He smiles: "it's a great opportunity to nourish the imagination and let it be alive. And enjoy all the feeling music can give to a person.

"It's a piece where for 80 minutes you can just let your imagination fly anywhere you want. I think it's what's great about music - and about this."

Watch Domingo Hindoyan conducting the Orquesta Sinfonica Simón Bolívar in the finale of *Symphony No. 8 in C minor*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Y4ia7i24qQ>