

Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra February 18 programme complementary content

Your carriage awaits as we embark on a musical jaunt on the Continent inspired by the Grand Tour which was a rite of passage for the 18th Century's young and wealthy.

An evening of Baroque treasures is promised in a programme which embraces Italian, French, German – and English – musical delights.

You can learn more about what to expect 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 (<https://youtu.be/osdWZrkg5Ts>).

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.

Benjamin Bayl

Sydney-born 18th Century music expert **Benjamin Bayl** (<https://www.arco.org.au/benjamin-bayl>) makes his Liverpool debut with this Grand Tour of musical delights from the 1700s.

The 43-year-old conductor was the first Australian to become an organ scholar at King's College, Cambridge, where he worked with the great **Sir Stephen Cleobury** (<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2019/nov/24/sir-stephen-cleobury-obituary>), and went on to study conducting at the Royal Academy of Music.

His early career included playing bass continuo for companies like the Monteverdi Choir and The Sixteen, and in 2006 he was appointed assistant conductor of the Budapest Festival Orchestra.

He works extensively in the early music field as well as with opera companies and houses all over the world.

Bayl is a co-founder of the **Australian Romantic & Classical Orchestra** (<https://www.arco.org.au/>) which is dedicated to performing on period instruments, and associate director of the Hanover Band.

Watch an interview with Benjamin Bayl.

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

Thelma Handy

Violinist Thelma Handy studied with Jaroslav Vanáček at the Royal College of Music where she won several prizes, and later with Franco Gulli in Indiana.

Early on in her career spent eight years with the English Chamber Orchestra, and she has played with many leading symphony orchestras along with being a member of the John Wilson Orchestra.

In addition, she has also given solo and concerto performances, including playing Mozart's *A minor Concerto* with the Queensland Philharmonic Orchestra in Brisbane.

She joined the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra as associate leader in 1995 and was made joint leader 10 years later. Since 2018 she has been leader of the Orchestra.

You can read an interview with **Thelma Handy** (<https://www.classicfm.com/artists/royal-liverpool-philharmonic-orchestra/rppo-news/back-desk-interview-thelma-handy/>) here.

Jonathan Small

Jonathan Small (<https://www.jonathansmalloboe.com/>) started playing the oboe at the age of 11 and went on to win a scholarship to study with Michael Winfield at the Royal College of Music where he received the Joy Boughton Oboe Prize.

From 1980 to 1984 he was principal oboe at the Scottish Opera, during which time he was a founding member of the Paragon Ensemble.

As well as being principal oboe at the Liverpool Philharmonic – a position he has held since 1984 – he has also appeared as a concerto soloist at home and abroad and has played as a guest with many of the UK's major orchestras.

Watch a short interview with Jonathan Small.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2sTYj6ruPes>

Arcangelo Corelli

Composer and violinist **Arcangelo Corelli** (<https://www.classicfm.com/composers/arcangelo-corelli/>) was born in Romagna in Northern Italy in 1653 and studied at Bologna before moving to Rome where he was known as Arcangelo Bolognese and established a reputation as one of the city's leading violinists.

His first patron was the exiled Queen Christina of Sweden.

As a composer, Corelli was a key figure in the development of the sonata and concerto form and his pre-eminence as a violinist helped to elevate the instrument's role. Among those who studied Corelli's works was a young Johann Sebastian Bach.

He wrote a collection of 12 **Concerti Grossi** (<https://www.classical-music.com/features/recordings/the-best-recordings-of-corellis-concerti-grossi/>) which were published in 1714, the year after his death, and of which *No 4 in D major* and *No 8 Christmas Concerto* – which was featured on the soundtrack of **Master and Commander** (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6_40pk4pcmY) - are the most famous.

Listen to the joyful and sprightly adagio and allegro from Corelli's *Concerto Grosso No 4 in D major*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RFUFWOx6760>

Johann Sebastian Bach

While it's understood that **Bach** (<https://www.biography.com/musician/johann-sebastian-bach>) did probably compose a *Concerto for Violin and Oboe* it remains something of a mystery – because **no original source manuscript exists**. (<https://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/tw.asp?w=W7469>)

However, music scholars have concluded that a later C minor concerto for two harpsichords appears to be a reworking of the missing piece, and it has been reconstructed on that basis.

The first of its three movements is a lively allegro, while the core of the central adagio is a beautiful and affecting duet between violin and oboe. The final movement is in bourrée dance style.

If the origin of his *Concerto for Violin and Oboe in C minor* is uncertain, then there's no such enigma about Bach's famous **Brandenburg Concertos**.

(<https://www.classicfm.com/composers/bach/music/johann-sebastian-bach-brandenburg-concertos/>)

The six concertos were written for Christian Ludwig, Margrave of Brandenburg, and date from between 1708 and 1721 – although they weren't known by their current name until the middle of the 18th Century.

The third concerto is the shortest of the six and is particularly notable for its unusual form and instrumentation. It was written for three violins, three violas, three cellos and continuo.

Its first and third movements are in 'ritornello' form, while the slower second movement in E minor uses what is called a Phrygian half cadence which was a survivor from earlier Renaissance harmony.

Did you know? Crown Prince Frederik of Sweden was so impressed with Bach's organ playing that in 1714 he presented him with a diamond ring in appreciation.

Watch a performance of Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto No.3 in G major*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pdsyNwUoON0>

Jean-Philippe Rameau

Jean-Philippe Rameau (<https://www.classicfm.com/composers/jean-philippe-rameau/guides/great-composers-jean-philippe-rameau/>) was born in 1683 in Dijon and went on to become one of the most distinguished composers of the late Baroque period.

The young Rameau was taught to play the harpsichord before he could even read or write, and reportedly never became fluent in his speech.

Turning from the law to music, he held a number of organist posts throughout France, and also played with a troupe of wandering violin players before settling down to composing at the age of 40.

This concert features music from three of his operatic works – *Zoroastre*, *Les Boréades* and *Platée*.

Zoroastre, composed in 1749 and revised seven years later, was the fourth of Rameau's tragedies in music and concerns a struggle between good (in the form of Zoroastre) and evil, led by the sorcerer Abramane.

Les Boréades dates from around 1763 and was composed as a lyrical tragedy in five acts, with a libretto by Louis de Cahusac. And *Platée* was a comic opera in prologue and three acts which told the story of an ugly water nymph who believed Jupiter was in love with her.

Listen to the overture from Rameau's *Zoroastre*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQzFjwl4y7w>

Henry Purcell

Known as the most distinguished English composer of the 17th Century, **Henry Purcell** (<https://www.classicfm.com/composers/purcell/guides/purcell-facts/>) was six when he was made a Child of the Chapel Royal in 1665, following his father's death.

At 11 he composed an ode for the birthday of Charles II, and he was 18 when he was appointed 'composer ordinary with fee for the violin to His Majesty'.

His earliest anthem, *Lord, who can tell*, dates from 1678 – the year before he was appointed organist at Westminster Abbey where he would later be laid to rest.

Purcell composed his delightful masque *The Fairy Queen* (<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2012/jul/17/glyndebourne-fairy-queen-musical-guide-tim-ashley>) – a loose adaptation of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* - in 1692, and it was premiered at the Queen's Theatre on the banks of the Thames.

But after his premature death from consumption three years later, the score became lost and was only rediscovered at the start of the 20th Century.

It contains some of Purcell's finest theatre music, originally scored mainly for strings and continuo with occasional trumpet, oboe and timpani.

Enjoy a performance of Purcell's *Suite from the Fairy Queen*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8pStkjZbxkk>

George Frideric Handel

When King George I decided to hold a grand party on the Royal barge on the Thames, he turned to his kapellmeister **George Handel**

((<https://www.britannica.com/biography/George-Frideric-Handel>)) to provide the musical accompaniment.

Handel of course obliged, and what the German-born, London-based composer produced was **Water Music** ((<https://handelhendrix.org/learn/learning-resources/handels-event-music/water-music/>)), played by a 50-strong floating orchestra as the king and his aristocratic friends sailed up the river from Whitehall to Chelsea and back.

George I was so delighted by the music he reportedly demanded **at least two full encores**. ((<https://www.bbc.co.uk/music/articles/1ba1e404-2b3e-48cc-a3e1-d12269b8346b>))

The piece is packed with memorable tunes and comprised of three orchestral suites based largely on dance forms. Two of them are being performed in this concert.

The first, in F major, opens with a French-style overture and includes hornpipes, a passepied (a French dance) and a bourrée among its movements, while the second suite, in D major, also features a minuet.

Did you know? In 1704 a 19-year-old Handel fell out with his friend, the composer-singer Johann Mattheson, and the pair fought a duel with swords outside a theatre. Handel was saved from serious injury when Mattheson's sword glanced off a large coat button.

Listen to the second suite from Handel's *Water Music*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=664QhBOhBgc>