

Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra

March 3 programme complementary content

Liverpool Philharmonic is committed to commissioning new work and this Thursday night concert opens with a special world premiere.

Pair it with Mozart's romantic piano concerto, played by a fellow former child prodigy, and the drama of Nielsen's Fourth Symphony and you've got all the elements for a memorable evening.

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

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.

Domingo Hindoyan

Domingo Hindoyan (<https://domingohindoyan.com/biography/>) was born and raised in Venezuela where his father Domingo Garcia is a violinist with and former president of the Orquesta Sinfónica de Venezuela and a professor at the Universidad Central de Venezuela.

He first studied the violin, through the El Sistema programme, and played in both the Simón Bolívar and **West-Eastern Divan Orchestra** (<https://www.rpo.co.uk/news-and-press/80-news/400-domingo-hindoyan-a-global-ambassador-for-music>), before studying conducting at the Haute Ecole de Musique de Genève where he gained a high distinction.

Along with his performances in Liverpool, this season he is also conducting Puccini's Tosca in Dresden, Umberto Giordano's Siberia in Madrid and Bellini's Norma in Barcelona as well as the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra at the Cadogan Hall.

Speaking about this March 3 concert he says: "Nielsen is a composer that I like very much – I first 'met' him as a violin player, and this symphony is very special for me."

And on the new Finnis piece he adds: "I think it's fantastic that the Orchestra has this tradition of commissioning and playing new pieces from British composers, and also composers from around the world."

Kit Armstrong

The gifted American pianist and composer **Kit Armstrong** (<https://www.deutschegrammophon.com/en/artists/kit-armstrong/biography>) takes centre stage in this concert which opens the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra's March programme.

Armstrong, one of Pianist Magazine's **four pianists to look out for in 2022** (<https://www.pianistmagazine.com/blogs/4-pianists-to-look-out-for-in-2022/>), was a child prodigy who made his performing debut with the Long Beach Bach Festival Orchestra at just eight and attended university at nine, studying biology, physics and maths alongside music.

He moved to London aged 12 and at the grand old age of 16 he received a first at the Royal Academy of Music – while concurrently studying maths across the road at Imperial College!

A teenage Armstrong also came under the wing of the great **Alfred Brendel** (<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2011/jun/02/alfred-brendel-kit-armstrong>) after approaching him at a concert.

As a soloist, the soon to turn 30-year-old (he celebrates his big birthday between concerts right here in Liverpool) has appeared with many of the world's leading orchestras as well as being in demand as a recitalist.

He is also an award-winning composer; works include a symphony, five concertos, six quintets, seven quartets and more than 20 solo pieces.

Enjoy Kit Armstrong playing Mozart's *Fantasia and Fugue KV 394*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gGEZWPn2vTQ>

Edmund Finnis

British composer **Edmund Finnis** (<https://edmundfinnis.com/biography/>) was born in Oxford where he was a boy treble at New College before going on to study composition.

He won the Leonard Bernstein Fellowship to study at Tanglewood in Massachusetts and did his doctorate at the Guildhall. He is currently a professor of composition at the **Royal Academy of Music**. (<https://www.ram.ac.uk/people/edmund-finnis>)

From 2013-16, Finnis was composer-in-association with the **London Contemporary Orchestra** (<https://www.lcorchestra.co.uk/>) which premiered works including *Between Rain* for string orchestra and *Colour Field Painting*, an electronic piece. London Sinfonietta has also commissioned and performed several of his works.

Acts of Waves – a co-commission with the **Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra** (<https://www.mso.org/>) – is the second Finnis composition played at Liverpool

Philharmonic Hall this season, following his elegiac *Shades Lengthen* (<https://edmundfinnis.com/testimonial/shades-lengthen/>) for violin and ensemble which Ensemble 10/10 performed in a concert last autumn.

Expect a delicate and glowing soundscape.

Elsewhere, this year Manchester Collective and soprano Ruby Hughes will present another new work by Finnis, a setting of five poems by Alice Oswald, in a UK tour titled *This Savage Parade* (<https://manchestercollective.co.uk/parade/>).

Watch Edmund Finnis explain his process of writing for strings.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5NClykU6yz0>

Mozart

Every year was a prolific one for **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** (<https://www.classicfm.com/composers/mozart/>), but 1785 was the start of **two remarkable and creative years** (<https://interlude.hk/mozart-diaries-12-march-1785-violin-sonata-32-k-454/>) for the ebullient Austrian.

Mozart once described Vienna in a letter to his father Leopold as “**the land of the piano**” (<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Wolfgang-Amadeus-Mozart/The-central-Viennese-period>), and it was certainly a fruitful place for him when it came to both performing and composing some of his greatest masterpieces on the instrument.

He had already completed five piano concertos in 1784, and he followed them in 1785 in three piano concertos, a *Fantasia for Piano in C minor* and a *Quartet in G minor for piano and strings* as well as two string quartets.

In the next 12 months meanwhile, Mozart would produce three more piano concertos along with his *Prague Symphony*...oh, and a little opera buffa called *The Marriage of Figaro*.

The *Piano Concerto No 20 in D minor*

(<https://www.classicfm.com/composers/mozart/music/piano-concerto-no-20-d-min/>) was given its premiere at a subscribers concert in February 1785 with the composer as soloist. In true Mozart fashion, the ink was barely dry – literally - on the orchestral score.

It's notable as being one of only two piano concertos he wrote in a minor key, the other being his *Concerto No 24 in C minor*.

The stormy and romantic D minor work's opening allegro has a long orchestral section with syncopated rhythms and an unsettling, restless air before the piano arrives to take up the theme.

The 'romanze' second movement includes a lovely lyrical and tender melody in B flat major with virtuoso passages for the soloist which is interrupted by an abrupt burst of turbulence in G minor before the romantic melody returns, while the final allegro assai (meaning very fast) opens with a dramatic rippling piano arpeggio and develops a menacing air before ending with a coda in unexpected but sunny and optimistic D major.

Did you know? The concerto's second movement was used beneath the closing titles of the Oscar-winning 1984 film Amadeus.

Watch a performance of the opening allegro from the *Piano Concerto No 20 in D minor*.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D8AaEE7hkLQ&list=RDD8AaEE7hkLQ&start_radio=1&r v=D8AaEE7hkLQ&t=126

Nielsen

Carl Nielson's (<http://www.carlnielsen.dk/gb/bio/#biography/art-and-consciousness.php>) father, a housepainter, was well known locally as a folk fiddle player on the Danish island of Funen where the young Carl was born into a large but poor family in June 1865.

And after some time in a military band, **Nielsen** (<https://www.gramophone.co.uk/other/article/a-celebration-of-carl-nielsen-at-150>) studied the violin and for some years made his living as an orchestral violinist and then as a conductor.

His six symphonies, composed between 1892 and 1925 (when he had a serious heart attack), are among his best-known works outside his native Denmark – and of all of them, his *Fourth Symphony* is perhaps the most widely performed.

Nielsen famously wrote at the start of his score: "music is life and like it, inextinguishable", and he wanted this symphony to clearly articulate the role of music as a **fundamental life-force**. (<https://www.theguardian.com/music/tomserviceblog/2014/mar/04/symphony-guide-nielsen-fourth-tom-service>)

Composed over the first two years of the First World War, the work which Nielsen himself named 'the Inextinguishable' has four movements which are played in one continuous arc.

There is tonal instability throughout the work which opens with the sound of chaos created by brass and percussion, subsiding to be replaced by a lyrical melody introduced in the clarinets.

Woodwind dominates the intermezzo-like second movement, while the third, a poco adagio, is signalled by a burst of strings and timpani and builds to a climax before a lone oboe plays a line over high strings.

And the symphony concludes in cataclysmic fashion, with duelling timpani positioned on either side of the stage, before the work finally bursts into radiant, life-affirming E major.

Read the thoughts of Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra's principal oboe **Jonathan Small** (<https://www.jonathansmalloboe.com/writings/2018/1/2/nielsens-4th-symphony-the-inextinguishable>) on the symphony.

Listen to an excerpt of the final movement of *Symphony No 4* performed by the Berlin Philharmoniker under Liverpool's Sir Simon Rattle.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nZ5FmMp9aZk>