

Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra January 19 programme complementary content

The two pieces in this January concert programme were premiered within the same week in 1881. Bruckner's Fourth Symphony was performed in Vienna on February 20 and then two days later, Max Bruch – Principal Conductor of Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra – led the first performance of his own *Scottish Fantasy for violin and orchestra* here in Hope Street.

Now both can be heard together without the need to make a 1,000-mile dash between the two cities.

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

Domingo Hindoyan

Domingo Hindoyan was born in Caracas in 1980 to a violinist father and a lawyer mother. He started his musical career as a violinist in the ground-breaking Venezuelan music education programme, El Sistema.

He studied conducting at Haute école de musique in Geneva, where he gained his masters, and in 2012 was invited to join the Allianz International Conductor's Academy, through which he worked with the London Philharmonic and the Philharmonia Orchestra, and with conductors like Esa-Pekka Salonen and Sir Andrew Davis.

He was appointed first assistant conductor to Daniel Barenboim at the Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin in 2013 and in 2019, he took up a position as principal guest conductor of the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra.

In the same year, he made his debut with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and was appointed as successor to Vasily Petrenko in 2020, taking up this position in September 2021.

Timothy Chooi

Canadian violinist Timothy Chooi makes his Liverpool debut in this melodic Thursday night programme.

The award-winning 29-year-old was born on Vancouver Island, where he started playing the violin at the age of three. He made his orchestral debut at the age of seven with the Victoria Symphony Orchestra, along with his older brother Nikki Chooi who is also a professional violinist.

He later moved to Florida with his family and went on to study at the Curtis Institute of Music, the Juilliard in New York and the Kronberg Academy in Germany.

In 2010, in the wake of winning the Grand Prize Award at the Montreal ManuLife Competition, he made his concerto debut with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra.

His other awards and accolades include first prize at the 2018 International Joseph Joachim Violin Competition, the Prix Yves-Paternot at the Verbier Festival and prizes from the International Yehudi Menuhin Violin Competition and the Queen Elisabeth Competition.

He is also a founding member of The VISION Collective and in 2021, he was made Professor of Violin at the University of Ottawa.

Chooi, who has appeared with many of the world's leading orchestras, is praised for his powerful and finely nuanced interpretations and a compelling stage presence.

He performs on the 1717 Windsor-Weinstein Stradivarius.

Max Bruch

On Tuesday 22 February 1881, Max Bruch stepped up on stage in the original Philharmonic Hall to conduct the premiere of his new *Scottish Fantasy for violin and orchestra*.

The Cologne-born Bruch had taken up the principal conductor post at Liverpool Philharmonic in 1880 and would spend three years in the city, during which time his daughter Margaretha was born in Toxteth.

He handed in his notice to the Philharmonic Society on New Year's Day 1883 after accepting a new role in Breslau, the capital of Silesia, and was replaced by fellow German Sir Charles Hallé.

However, that was still two years off when his tuneful new fantasy, built on Scottish folk melodies, was put before an audience for the first time.

The soloist on that February evening was the legendary Joseph Joachim, to whom Bruch had dedicated his famous *Violin Concerto* 15 years before.

On this occasion however, the critical Bruch was unhappy with Joachim's performance and claimed the 49-year-old violinist had "ruined" the work.

Did you know? Although Bruch took over official conducting duties in 1880, his first performance with the Liverpool Philharmonic Society was in October 1877, when he led a performance of his own oratorio *Odysseus*.

Anton Bruckner

"Bruckner was a little bit of an experiment for me," explains chief conductor Domingo Hindoyan. "I thought let's see how the audience will react, how the orchestra would react. And the reaction was so successful that he's coming back."

Audiences who experienced the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra's performance of the epic and seldom-heard Eighth Symphony last season – or those who might have missed it – now have a fresh chance to enjoy another great work from the Austrian composer.

In early 1881, Anton Bruckner was 57 but was still better known as Austria's best organist and a teacher at the Vienna Conservatory than as a composer.

So it may have been that there was relatively little expectation around the programming of a new symphony to be performed by the Vienna Philharmonic on a late Sunday in February.

Bruckner had completed a first draft of what became his Fourth Symphony seven years earlier, revising it at least twice in the intervening years.

Expectation or not, the 'Romantic' symphony was a hit with its Viennese audience, and finally helped put its composer firmly on the map.

Did you know? In total, the Vienna Philharmonic premiered four of Bruckner's nine symphonies – the Second in 1873, the Fourth in 1881, the Eighth in 1892, and the Sixth in 1899 (with Mahler conducting).

About the Music

Max Bruch (1838-1920): Scottish Fantasy, op. 46

Introduction: Grave - 1. Adagio Cantabile - 2. Allegro - 3. Andante sostenuto - 4. Finale: Allegro guerriero

Composed: 1880

First Performed: 22 February 1881, Liverpool Philharmonic Society, cond. Bruch, soloist Joseph Joachim

The 19th century German Romantics were fascinated by Scotland. Remote, cut off by enthrallingly dangerous seas, famous for its dramatic weather and enveloping, secretive mists, Scotland was a treasure chest of captivating legends. There's still a widespread belief today that Bruch wrote his *Scottish Fantasy* after visiting the country; in fact, he didn't go there till 1882. The folk songs he incorporated in the *Fantasy* were real enough, but Bruch found them in a collection of Scottish music at Munich Library. The score carries a dedication to the legendary virtuoso Pablo de Sarasate, however the premiere, in Liverpool, was given by another international star violinist, Joseph Joachim.

The *Scottish Fantasy* falls into four movements, preceded by a slow and sombre Introduction, with strummed harp chords enhancing the 'bardic' atmosphere. The first movement is based on a tune best known as 'Auld Rob Morris' or 'Through the Wood Laddie'. After a change to a lively Allegro, the violin introduces the second folk song, 'The Dusty Miller', while horns and strings impersonate bagpipe drones. Eventually this leads to the *Fantasy's* lyrical heart, based on the melancholic melody 'I'm a doun for lack o' Johnnie'. Finally comes the 'warlike' Finale, based on the song 'Hey Tuttie Tatie' (also known as 'Scots Wha Hae') replete with rhythmic 'Scotch snaps' and plenty of virtuoso fireworks, but at the end, soloist and orchestra combine for a last brief hurrah.

Anton Bruckner (1824-96): Symphony No. 4 in E-flat major, 'Romantic'

1. Bewegt, nicht zu schnell [Lively, not too fast]
2. Andante, quasi Allegretto
3. Scherzo: Bewegt [Lively] - Trio: Nicht zu schnell. Keinesfalls schleppend [Not too fast. But not dragging] - Scherzo
4. Finale: Bewegt, doch nicht zu schnell [Lively, but not too fast]

Composed: 1875, revised 1878-86

First Performed: 20 February 1881, Vienna Philharmonic, cond. Hans Richter

All Bruckner's symphonies are products of the 'Romantic' era, whatever they owe to Bach or the Renaissance master Palestrina, or to the architecture of cathedrals in which Bruckner (a brilliant organist and a devout Roman Catholic) worked and found sanctuary. But for many, the Fourth Symphony does have a special power to evoke mysterious moods or vivid mental pictures.

The magical opening – solo horn calling softly through quietly shimmering string tremolandos – is clearly woodland music. From this, the first movement flows forward like a great river, until the horn theme returns thrillingly on massed horns. The second movement is a slow, nocturnal procession with moments of mesmerising stillness, in which woodwinds and horns call to each other like birds in a vast forest. Eventually it builds to a magnificent climax, but the splendour fades, leaving the bare march rhythm on timpani, with lamenting horn, viola and clarinet.

The Scherzo is sometimes nicknamed 'The Hunt', but there's something cosmic about this music, as though the horses were careering across the skies rather than pounding the earth. The central Trio section is a delicious contrast: a cosy, slow *Ländler* (country cousin of the sophisticated Viennese waltz). Then begins the longest and most exploratory of the four movements, the Finale. Arriving at its final form caused Bruckner a lot of trouble, but then he was attempting something radically new here: not a fast classical finale, but a huge summing up that contrasts activity with moments of uncertainty or meditative calm. The final long *crescendo*, beginning with the first theme sounding darkly through shimmering strings, is one of Bruckner's most thrilling symphonic summations, ending in a blaze of major-key glory.