

## **Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra** **April 27 and 30 programme complementary content**

It may not cause a riot today, but Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* still packs a powerful musical punch. Diaghilev also commissioned Falla to write the *Three-Cornered Hat* for his famous Ballet Russes. Between the two, we welcome back Liverpool Philharmonic's young artist in residence Isata Kanneh-Mason to perform Prokofiev's dazzling Third Piano Concerto.

Watch Stephen Johnson talking about the concert programme [here](#).

In addition, 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 Ecole 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.

### **Isata Kanneh-Mason**

[Isata Kanneh-Mason](#), the eldest of the celebrated [family of exceptional young musicians](#), continues her second season as the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra's Young Artist in Residence.

In demand internationally as a soloist and chamber musician, she enjoys an eclectic and interesting repertoire from Mozart to Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn, and Brahms to Gershwin.

Her debut CD, recorded with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, celebrated the work of [Clara Schumann](#) and drew popular and critical acclaim.

The Orchestra also collaborated on her second album [Summertime](#), a collection of pieces by American composers from Barber and Gershwin to Earl Wild and Amy Beach, along with work by the African-British composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor.

Kanneh-Mason is the recipient of the 2021 Leonard Bernstein Award, a 2020 Opus Klassik award for best young artist and, as a member of the Kanneh-Mason family, the 2021 best classical artist at the Global Awards. In 2021/22 she was an [ECHO Rising Star](#).

Prokofiev's *Piano Concerto No 3* is a favourite of the pianist, who first came across it when she was studying at the Royal Academy of Music.

There is another, final chance to catch Kanneh-Mason this season, when she plays a [recital](#) with members of the Orchestra in St George's Hall Concert Room in May.

Watch Isata Kanneh-Mason join brother Braimah to perform Prokofiev's [Violin Sonata No 2 in D](#) at the family home during lockdown.

## Manuel de Falla

[Manuel de Falla](#) initially trained as a pianist before studying composition. His teacher [Felipe Pedrell](#), who was one of the great influences on his early career, believed that Spanish composers should write Spanish music "with a view of Europe".

A second, later, influence came in the shape of Igor Stravinsky. In 1907 Falla moved to Paris where he spent seven years and immersed himself in the world not only of French composers like Debussy, Dukas and Ravel, but also of the young Russian who took Paris by storm when Sergei Diaghilev commissioned him to create three game-changing ballet scores.

Back in Spain, and in the midst of the First World War, Stravinsky introduced him to the great [ballet impresario](#), and the idea for what became the *Three-Cornered Hat* was born.

An adaptation of 19<sup>th</sup> Century writer Pedro Antonio de Alarcón y Ariza's novella of the same name, the story concerns a jealous miller, his beautiful and faithful young wife and an amorous old magistrate.

The ballet was choreographed by Leonid Messine, with sets by Pablo Picasso, and premiered at London's Alhambra Theatre in July 1919, where one reviewer described the score as "illustratively melodious" and "characterised throughout by a delightful sense of humour".

Listen to Falla's [Three Cornered Hat Suite No 2](#).

## Sergei Prokofiev

[Sergei Prokofiev's](#) earliest musical influence was his mother, who would play piano in the evenings at home.

He was five when he started composing, and at nine had written his first opera. The young Prokofiev was encouraged by his mother, who arranged trips to the opera in Moscow.

In 1904, at the age of 13, he entered the [St Petersburg Conservatory](#) (after being urged to apply by future conservatory director Alexander Glazunov) where he would spend a total of 10 years – and it was during his time as a student that he composed his First Piano Concerto.

His [Piano Concerto No 3 in C major](#) took four years to complete, with Prokofiev starting work on it in 1917 – a year both of revolution at home and of great productivity by the composer – and finishing it in France in 1921. It was based on sketches dating back to before the First World War.

The concerto received its premiere in December 1921, not in France but in Chicago, where its composer performed his own work with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

**Did you know? Prokofiev recorded his *Piano Concerto No 3* with the London Symphony Orchestra at Abbey Road Studios in the summer of 1932, where they had to pause for a visit by the future Duke of Kent. The composer reportedly had to quickly throw on his waistcoat and jacket which he had taken off in the hot studio.**

Listen to Prokofiev playing his own [Piano Concerto No 3](#) in a recording made at Abbey Road Studios.

## Igor Stravinsky

It was two short but striking orchestral works – *Feu d'artifice*, written for the wedding of teacher Rimsky-Korsakov's daughter, and *Scherzo fantastique* – which first brought a young [Igor Stravinsky](#) to the attention of Sergei Diaghilev.

The impresario had founded the [Ballet Russes](#) in 1909 and was busy preparing its second season on the Paris stage.

He asked Stravinsky to orchestrate some of Chopin's music, and then to compose a new ballet score. The result was *The Firebird*, premiered at the Opera de Paris in June 1910 to widespread acclaim.

A year later almost to the day, Stravinsky's follow up, *Petrushka*, set in a Russian fairground, was performed at the Chatelet theatre with [Nijinsky](#) in the title role.

But how to follow that? The answer came two years later when the composer returned to an idea he had first had during his writing of *The Firebird*, one concerning a pagan ritual, in which a sacrificial virgin dances herself to death.

[The Rite of Spring](#) sprang from Stravinsky's mind in a rented house in Clarens, Switzerland, and burst onto the stage in Paris in 1913. And [what happened next](#) has gone down in music history.

Enjoy watching the opening of Stravinsky's [The Rite of Spring](#) choreographed here by Pina Bausch.

## About the Music

### Manuel de Falla (1876-1946): Suites 1 and 2 from *The Three-Cornered Hat*

Composed 1919

22 July 1919, London, Alhambra Theatre, cond. Ernest Ansermet

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, classical music in Spain experienced a resurrection. A great deal of gorgeous, captivatingly atmospheric music emerged at this time, full of the raw body-heat of Spanish folk music, with its synthesis of Mediterranean, Arabic, Gypsy and Jewish song and dance, utterly unique in European culture. The outstanding name here was that of Manuel de Falla, who distilled the rich, earthy, magical essence of his country's music in splendid stage and orchestral works. Falla himself however was a reserved bachelor, who led a regulated, almost monk-like existence. The wildness, the sense of adventure and alluring sensuality was all in his mind.

It was Stravinsky who introduced Falla to Sergei Diaghilev, impresario and creator of the Ballets Russes. Diaghilev soon came up with an idea for a new kind of ballet, based not on classical techniques but on the dance styles of Spanish music. The result was *The Three-Cornered Hat*. The hat itself is just one element in a tale of intrigue, disguise, mistaken identity and a whole series of comically doomed attempts at seduction. An Andalusian magistrate has designs on the miller's wife, but she is too faithful and too clever for him, and it all ends up going splendidly wrong for the would-be Don Juan. Attempting to follow the turns and twists of the farcical plot is probably hopeless; much better just to enjoy the wonderfully colourful, zestful dance music and the way Falla assembles it into a glorious sequence – enjoyment made easier in the two suites extracted from the ballet soon after its hugely successful premiere.

### **Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953): Piano Concerto No.3**

1. Andante – Allegro
2. Tema con variazioni
3. Allegro, ma non troppo

Composed: 1921

First Performed: 16 December 1921, Chicago, Chicago Symphony Orchestra cond, Frederick Stock, soloist Prokofiev

The first sketches for the Third Piano Concerto date from 1913, but although Prokofiev began to play around with them, he didn't complete the score till 1921, by which time the world he knew had changed out of all recognition. Tsarism had been replaced by Bolshevism, and Prokofiev had fled abroad, settling at first in the USA, where he tried (in the end, unsuccessfully) to make a living as a composer-pianist. But Russia continued to tug at his heart, as can be heard in the music of this concerto. In the first movement, for instance, the pianist nicknamed 'the man with the steel fingers' and the devilish, pungent ironist compete with the profoundly homesick Russian, most evident in the wistful, folksong-like clarinet melody heard at the very beginning.

In the second movement, Prokofiev seems to take wicked pleasure in subjecting his innocent-sounding woodwind theme to all manner of extreme transformations, from violent distortion to magical, fairytale transformation. A more good-natured grotesquerie seems to emerge in the finale, then the tempo drops and a luscious melody, introduced by cellos, is treated to some fabulous decorative work by the piano. But then the dancing, pounding main theme returns, and the concerto ends in a thrilling whirl of steely sound.

### **Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971): *The Rite of Spring***

Composed: 1913

First Performed: 29 May 1913, Paris, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, cond. Pierre Monteux

Spring comes late to the far north, and when it does it tends to be quick and even tumultuous. When asked, years later, what he most loved about his former Russian homeland, Stravinsky replied, 'the violent Russian spring that seemed to begin in an hour and was like the whole earth cracking. That was the most wonderful event of every year of my childhood.' It's not surprising that the 'pagan' rites Stravinsky half-invented to evoke and celebrate that arrival of that spring should be violent too. In collaboration with Ballets Russes supremo Sergei Diaghilev and choreographer Vatslav Nijinsky, Stravinsky came up with a scenario that depicts the first stirring of life in the cold earth, the half-wild, half-austere ceremonies that welcome it, and finally the sacrifice, in which a girl dances herself to death. The music is highly dissonant, even by Stravinsky's standards, and it uses complex, irregular rhythms to create a dizzying, intoxicating effect. In the background are echoes of what sound like ancient Russian chants. It's powerful, primal stuff.

Although 'primitive' Russian art had become rather *chic* in Paris in the 1910s, *The Rite of Spring* was too much for some tastes, and the first performance seems to have provoked a near-riot. But others were enthralled. More performances followed across the western world and before long, *Rite of Spring* was on its way to becoming a concert favourite. It's use in the Disney animated film *Fantasia* set the seal. It is one of the few modernist classics to be hugely influential on generations of avant-garde composers and to be a hit with audiences. It can still challenge today, but surrender to the elemental pull of Stravinsky's rhythms and the motoric power of those chant-themes, and let the dissonances thrill rather than repel and it remains an experience like nothing else in music.