

## **Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra June 11 programme complementary content**

International piano virtuosos Katia and Marielle Labèque return to the Liverpool stage in one of three unmissable concerts over four days. This programme marries Mozart's joyful *Concerto for Two Pianos* with a sweet but deadly symphonic poem from Dvořák and Prokofiev's raw and passionate Third Symphony.

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.

### **Karel Deseure**

Flemish conductor [Karel Deseure](#) has been described as “a magician in the pit” and now there is the chance to watch him create magic on stage in Liverpool for the first time.

Deseure started his musical career as a flautist, studying for a masters at the Royal Flemish Conservatoire in Antwerp before going on to train as a conductor at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague.

In 2012 he was awarded the prestigious Anton Kersjes Foundation Scholarship for conductors, and in 2014 he took masterclasses with Bernard Haitink at the Lucerne Festival. Four years ago he was appointed professor of conducting at the [Amsterdam University of the Arts](#).

Deseure is sought after as both a concert and opera conductor, with highlights this season including *Hansel and Gretel* with the Dutch Reisopera and *Così fan Tutti* at the Toulon Opera, as well as the world premiere of Roukens' *Dorian* at the Dutch National Opera and Ballet.

### **Katia and Marielle Labèque**

Sisters [Katia and Marielle Labèque](#) return to Liverpool Philharmonic Hall where they have become firm favourites with audiences.

The French siblings are renowned for their amazing synchronicity and energy. Born in Bayonne to a French father and Italian mother, they graduated from the Paris Conservatoire in the late 1960s and began working on four hands/two piano repertoire.

They announced themselves on the international stage in 1980 with their contemporary rendition of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* (their recording of the work selling more than half-a-million copies) and have gone on to forge a stellar career, in demand in concert halls and at festivals across the globe.

The pianists have also worked with a host of leading composers including Thomas Adès, Luciano Berio, Pierre Boulez, Michael Nyman, Bryce Dessner, [Philip Glass](#), György Ligeti and Olivier Messiaen.

They record on their own label, KML Recordings. Future engagements in a busy schedule include appearances in Athens, Copenhagen, Gstaad, Bucharest, Turin and New York.

Watch the Labèque sisters play Gershwin's [Rhapsody in Blue](#) on television in 1985.

## Antonin Dvořák

In 1895, [Antonin Dvořák](#) had recently returned from the United States when he sat down to start composing in a new genre for him – the symphonic poem.

Over the next 18 months he completed four works based on Czech folklorist [Karel Jaromir Erben's](#) collection, *Kytice*. [The Wood Dove](#) – also sometimes translated from its Czech original *Holoubek* as *The Wild Dove* – dates from the autumn of 1896 and was [the last of those symphonic poems](#) Dvořák composed.

It tells the story of a young woman who murders her husband and then remarries within a month. One day, a dove lands on her first husband's grave and sets up a piteous cooing which eventually drives the guilty woman to take her own life.

*The Wood Dove* was premiered in Brno in March 1898 under the baton of fellow composer Leoš Janáček.

Listen to a performance of Dvořák's [The Wood Dove](#).

## Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

When [Leopold Mozart](#) toured his [precociously talented son](#) around the salons of Europe in the 1760s, the young Wolfgang was not the only member of the family to perform. Alongside him at the piano you would find his elder sister Maria Anna, known affectionately as [Nannerl](#), who was herself a [fine keyboardist](#) – and, if you read letters from her younger brother, a composer to boot.

The pair, aged 11 and seven respectively, had charmed the Empress Maria Theresa at the Imperial Court in Vienna and over the next three years went on to perform in places including Germany, Brussels, Paris and London, where they stayed for more than a year. Sadly for Nannerl, their father – and society at large – looked on a woman's place not as being on stage but at home with their family, and as Mozart's star ascended with age, hers became increasingly tethered to the ground.

Mozart is believed to have composed this *Concerto in E-flat major for two pianos* in around 1779, shortly after his return to Salzburg following two years touring Europe.

**Did you know? Mozart and Nannerl were very close and as children they invented a secret language and an imaginary kingdom.**

Watch a trailer for the film [Mozart's Sister](#).

## Sergei Prokofiev

In 1919, a 28-year-old [Sergei Prokofiev](#) embarked on what became one of his most ambitious works – his opera [The Fiery Angel](#).

The demonic five-act tale of sorcery, superstition and mass exorcism, set in 16<sup>th</sup> Century Germany, went on to become a 10-year labour of love for the composer. But Prokofiev, who had a passion for writing for the stage, would never see it performed in his lifetime.

While *The Fiery Angel* remained stubbornly earthbound, Prokofiev was persuaded by a friend to take some of the themes from it and adapt them into something new.

The result was the darkly dramatic [Symphony No 3 in C minor](#), started in the summer of 1928 and – with most of the music already in his head or noted down – completed quickly.

Its premiere came in Paris on May 17 1929, where it was performed by the Orchestre Symphonique de Paris under the baton of Pierre Moteux.

Listen to the opening movement of Prokofiev's [Symphony No 3 in C minor](#).