

Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra November 23 programme complementary content

This season's Artist in Residence Simone Lamsma appears in the first of two unmissable concerts with Domingo Hindoyan and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. Tonight, she is joined by cellist Victor Julien-Laferrrière to perform Brahms' tender and poetic *Double Concerto*.

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 the Orchestra's new Chief Conductor in 2020, taking up this position in September 2021. In July he announced he had extended his contract until 2028.

Simone Lamsma interview

[Simone Lamsma](#) was just a toddler at home in Friesland when she saw and heard her first violin – on the television.

Despite not understanding what it was, she was captivated. And the die was cast.

More than three decades on, Lamsma is one of classical music's most sought-after young violin virtuosos with an expansive repertoire and a busy concert schedule. This season sees her criss-crossing Europe and North America, and taking to the stage in two performances in Japan, including at Tokyo's prestigious Suntory Hall.

In the midst of all that, she is also the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra's Artist in Residence, following in the recent footsteps of Roderick Williams, Pacho Flores, Jennifer Johnston, Stephen Hough and Sir Bryn Terfel.

"It's really an honour to be asked to be artist in residence," she says, "because in this case it comes from our previous collaborations. So it's a wonderful feeling. There is a great connection – not just with the Orchestra but with the whole team."

Lamsma made her debut with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra when she was barely out of her teens, playing Mendelssohn's *Violin Concerto*.

She has returned to Hope Street many times since then, with recent appearances including the Bruch Violin Concerto in 2019, Korngold in 2021, and then – in July 2022 – stepping in at short notice to play Shostakovich in a [White Nights](#) concert alongside Vasily Petrenko.

“I think that there’s really a great mutual respect and admiration for each other,” she continues on her relationship with the Orchestra. “I always feel that the atmosphere is so warm and so collegial, and I really love that. I’m very sensitive to atmosphere and to people.

“Music making is all about connecting, so it’s a very personal thing for me. And with this orchestra it’s just always felt very natural, very open, and direct, and it really feels like I’m there making chamber music with the group.

“They are of course an orchestra of amazing quality, but they’re also so communicative and so quick. You feel they’re with you, it’s like they have instant reaction.

“Through the years we’ve been able to build a trust together, and that’s really special.”

In this first of two concerts this season, Lamsma is playing Brahms’ *Double Concerto*, appearing alongside cellist Victor Julien-Laferrière. It’s a work that was written from the heart (as a peace offering from Brahms to his good friend Joseph Joachim who had fallen out with him for reasons outlined later in these notes) and, she says, one that gives her a huge feeling of joy to play.

Lamsma explains: “Somehow, for me, this piece just radiates warmth and love. The friendship was actually finally restored when Brahms gave this manuscript to Joachim, and it had the inscription ‘to him for whom it was written’.

“There is a beautiful message behind the notes and I feel that this piece is just a perfect marriage between the cello, violin and orchestra.

“All this wonderful dialogue, the singing melodies – it’s so rich and passionate, and all this in the Late Romantic tradition. I always think of the opening theme of the second movement, and I just think ah, who cannot love this piece of music? It’s so touching, so beautiful.”

Remaining within the Romantic canon, Lamsma will return to Liverpool early in the new year to play Sibelius’ Violin Concerto, written by a man who had wanted to be a virtuoso violinist himself, and which Lamsma calls “possibly the greatest Romantic violin concerto of all time”.

“This concerto has such a unique intensity to it and evokes so much feeling but also so many images and colours and layers,” she says. “You can feel in every note he put his whole heart and soul into this music.

“You hear and feel his love for the instrument, and also his knowledge – combining this together with his mastery of symphonic writing, he has created an incredible masterpiece.”

The Sibelius is one of dozens of works in Lamsma’s wide-ranging repertoire, built over a career forged after spending her formative years studying in Britain, first at the Yehudi Menuhin School and then at the Royal Academy of Music. In 2019, she was awarded the prestigious accolade of becoming a [Fellow](#) of the Academy.

She was 11 when she first arrived at the Yehudi Menuhin School, travelling home to the Netherlands every few weeks. Juggling travel to music lessons and theory classes at home had become increasingly difficult, but it must still have been a big decision to make.

Lamsma agrees: “It’s a huge decision you make as a family. For me it was somehow a relief to be among people who were like me, who had the same passion for music and were so serious about it.

“But was it difficult? Yes, for sure. I was very, very homesick. It’s a huge step to take. I was 11 and to be without my family was really difficult. The most important thing when you’re young is to have great support around you and I was lucky enough to have that.

“My family saw that I had a passion and was serious about it and they just really tried to find what was out there, and what was the best for all of us – for the whole family.

“They always told me that if it didn’t work out, if it was not for me, that that was fine too. I could just come back and we’d find another way.”

She has never, she says, mapped out a career path with specific goals and ambitions to appear in certain venues or work with certain people, concentrating instead on playing works that speak to her and on her own performance.

She smiles: “I’m really grateful to be in a position that I can now work pretty much only with people and orchestras that I love working with and to play in beautiful concert halls.

“But I am always searching to deepen my interpretations and I’m always striving to get the best out of the music. For me, hard work remains my top priority so that I can really do the music justice. That’s always the most important – and this is a never-ending journey. It’s a wonderful and rewarding one but it’s also challenging and 24/7 so it’s very intense.

“But for me it’s the only way I can do this. I feel that’s a responsibility I have towards the music.

“And of course, the repertoire is endless. That’s a wonderful thing – there will always be things that I’d love to learn, and that will never end.”

Enjoy watching Simone Lamsma play Sibelius’ [*Violin Concerto in D minor*](#).

Victor Julien-Laferrière

Multi-award-winning French cellist [**Victor Julien-Laferrière**](#) is one of the most exciting young talents playing today. He is in demand on major concert stages worldwide and his recitals and chamber concerts have seen him perform at venues including the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Konzerthaus Wien and Théâtre des Champs-Élysées.

Born in Paris in 1990, he studied with cellist René Benedetti then with Roland Pidoux at Paris CNSM Conservatoire, Heinrich Schiff at Vienna University and Clemens Hagen at Salzburg Mozarteum. He won the first prize and two other awards at the 2012 Prague Spring International Competition, was first prize winner at the Queen Elisabeth Competition in 2017 (the first year dedicated to the cello) and in 2018 he was awarded the Victoire de la Musique in France as Instrumental Soloist of the Year.

Along with his busy performing career, [**Julien-Laferrière**](#) is also developing his skills as a conductor, working with orchestras including the Wiener Kammerorchester, Orchestre de l’Opera de Rouen and Orchestre de Chambre de Paris.

He founded his own ensemble, Consuelo, and has also recorded numerous albums.

He plays a cello by [**Domenico Montagnana**](#) and with bow by Dominique Peccatte.

Georges Bizet

[Georges Bizet](#) composed his *Jeux d'enfants* – or Children's Games – in 1871 as 12 miniatures for piano four hands, with each section describing different children's toys and games including a merry-go-round and leapfrog.

At that time, Bizet and his wife [Geneviève Halévy](#) were still childless. But in 1872 she gave birth to their only child, a son Jacques, who would go on to become a successful doctor and businessman in the burgeoning French car industry, and a friend of novelist [Marcel Proust](#) whom he first met at school.

It was also in 1872 that the composer took five of the 12 delightful miniatures and turned them into an orchestral suite which was premiered at Paris' Théâtre de l'Odéon the following year.

Sadly, Bizet never saw either his own success or his son grow up – he died when Jacques was just three.

Listen to Bizet's [Jeux d'enfants](#).

Johannes Brahms

During the final ten years of Brahms' life, the German composer completed just one new orchestral piece – his *Double Concerto in A minor*. It was [Robert Hausmann](#) who approached the composer with a request for a new cello concerto. [Brahms](#) had recently completed his *Cello Sonata No 2* for Hausmann, who had helped popularise the first sonata 20 years earlier, and the cellist premiered the new work in Vienna in November 1886.

Hausmann and Brahms had a mutual friend in Hungarian violinist [Joseph Joachim](#), but in 1887 Joachim wasn't talking to the composer having had a massive falling out some years earlier after Brahms had written what was supposed to be a [private letter of support](#) to the violinist's wife Amalie who had instigated divorce proceedings.

It's believed Brahms decided to try and offer an olive branch to the man who had been such a close friend throughout his adult life (it was Joachim who introduced Brahms to the Schumanns), the result being his new *Double Concerto*.

Joachim accepted the peace offering, and he and Hausmann premiered the piece in Cologne on [October 18 1887](#) with Brahms conducting.

Watch Victor Julien-Laferrrière perform Brahms' [Double Concerto](#) with violinist Lia Petrova and the Orchestre National de Lyon.

Claude Debussy

[Claude Debussy](#) conjured up the heat and colour of Spain in his music – and yet, by all accounts, the Frenchman only ever visited the country once, popping over the border to attend a bullfight in San Sebastian. His first nod towards the country came in 1883 when the 21-year-old composed the duet [Chanson Espagnole](#) to words by Alfred de Musset.

The Spanish influence was more apparent in 1901 with his *Lindaraja* for two pianos, and two years later Debussy followed it with *La soirée dans Grenade* (An Evening in Granada), part of a collection of piano pieces called Estampes.

[Ibéria](#) is the second of the three sections which make up *Images pour Orchestre* which Debussy composed between 1905 and 1912. Debussy may have mostly scented Spain from afar, but his

musical love affair with the country certainly impressed fellow composer Manuel de Falla who was full of praise for the Frenchman's work.

Enjoy a performance of Debussy's [Ibéria](#).

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov

Tchaikovsky called it “[a colossal masterpiece of instrumentation](#)”, but its composer preferred to describe it as “a brilliant composition for the orchestra” – and in fact dedicated it to the Imperial Orchestra which premiered it in St Petersburg in October 1887.

And [Capriccio Espagnol](#) certainly gives each section the chance to flex its musical muscles and shine. [Rimsky-Korsakov](#) composed the five-movement orchestral suite not under Spain's sunny skies but in Russia.

In fact, unlike Debussy, Rimsky-Korsakov never even set foot on the Iberian Peninsula, but that didn't stop him being attracted to Spanish melodies and rhythms, in particular the country's folk songs which he collected.

The capriccio began life as a work for violin and orchestra. But after the composer had started sketching out its themes, he decided to change direction and make it purely an orchestral work.

It was written in a productive time for Rimsky-Korsakov in which he also composed his *Russian Easter Festival Overture* and *Scheherazade*.

Did you know? Rimsky-Korsakov had synaesthesia – experiencing his compositions in terms of colours. He saw the key of D as yellow, E as sapphire blue and F major - the key of *Capriccio Espagnol* - as green.

Listen to *Alborada* from Rimsky-Korsakov's [Capriccio Espagnol](#).

About the Music

Georges Bizet (1838-75): *Jeux d'enfants*, Op 22

1. *L'escarpolette* – reverie (The swing) // 2. *La toupie* – impromptu (The [spinning top](#)) // 3. *La poupée* – berceuse (The doll) // 4. *Les chevaux de bois* – scherzo (Wooden horses) // 5. *Le volant* – fantasia ([Battledore and shuttlecock](#)) // 6. *Trompette et tambour* – marche (Trumpet and drum) // 7. *Les bulles de savon* – rondino (Soap bubbles) // 8. *Les quatre coins* – esquisse ([Puss in the corner](#)) // 9. *Colin-maillard* – nocturne ([Blind man's buff](#)) // 10. *Saute-mouton* – caprice (Leap-frog) // 11. *Petit mari, petite femme* – duo (Little husband, little wife) // 12. *Le bal* – galop (The ball)

Composed: 1871

Nos 2, 3, 6, 8, 11 & 12 orchestrated by Bizet, the rest by Roy Douglas and Hershy Kay

Jeux d'enfants ('Children's Games') is a little masterpiece of simplicity and charm, viewed, not with the melancholic nostalgia of Robert Schumann in his famous *Kinderszenen* ('Scenes from Childhood'), but with the more objective eye of an affectionate adult – the kind of adult, one can imagine, who enjoys the company of children but feels no urge to sentimentalise them. These twelve short character pieces were originally composed for piano duet and designed to be playable by competent amateurs. But Bizet soon began to realise that their character and colour palette might be enhanced by adapting them for small orchestra. Unfortunately, he'd only orchestrated six of them by the time of his death (he was only 37), but the job was completed for

him, very convincingly, by the English arranger Roy Douglas and the American Hershy Kay. It's been a concert favourite ever since.

Johannes Brahms (1833-97): Double Concerto in A minor, Op 102

1. Allegro
2. Andante
3. Vivace non troppo

Composed: 1887

First Performed: 18 October 1887, Gürzenich Concert Hall, Cologne, Joseph Joachim (violin), Robert Hausmann (cello), cond. Brahms

Johannes Brahms, lifelong bachelor and lonely misfit, was at twenty briefly adopted and championed by the exciting but dangerously unstable Robert Schumann. His relationship with Robert's soon-to-be widow Clara Schumann was intense and lifelong, but mysterious – was she mother, lover, confidante, muse? The star virtuoso violinist Joseph Joachim, dedicatee of Brahms' magnificent Violin Concerto, became a kind of brother, until the two men had a serious falling out in 1884, after Brahms sided with Joachim's wife in a marital dispute.

Brahms' Double Concerto was composed, partly at Clara's prompting, as a gesture of reconciliation. 'Joachim and Brahms have spoken to one another again after years of silence', she noted proudly in her diary. But it's striking that Brahms' offering should have been, not another solo concerto, but a work in which the violin must share the spotlight with another instrument. Concertos for two or more instruments were quite common in the baroque era and classical eras, but Romanticism laid new emphasis on the individual, forging his or her own destiny, and concertos for a single star soloist became more or less the norm. In writing a double concerto for Joachim, Brahms put the idea of intimate relationship back at the heart of the music, and after the concerto's dramatic beginning, in which the two soloists announce themselves rather like rival contenders in a sporting event, dialogue between them becomes increasingly close and rich. There's an extraordinary moment of dramatic exchange between the two soloists at the heart of the Andante (Brahms and Joachim arguing?), but the end is once again 'two minds but with a single thought', especially in the dancing finale.

Claude Debussy (1862-1918): *Ibéria*

1. *Par les rues et par les chemins* (Along the streets and along the paths)
2. *Les parfums de la nuit* (The scents of the night) -
3. *Le matin d'un jour de fête* (The morning of a festive day)

Composed: 1905-8

First Performed: 20 February 1910, Paris, Théâtre du Châtelet, Colonne Orchestra cond. Gabriel Pierné

Officially *Ibéria* ('Spain') is the second of a set of three pieces collectively entitled *Images pour orchestra* ('Images' or 'Impressions for Orchestra'), along with *Gigues* ('Jigs') and *Rondes de printemps* ('Round Dances of Spring'), but it's rarely performed alongside its two neighbours. Fine as these three pieces are, in mood and content they're an odd fit, and the three-movement *Ibéria* is so marvellously complete in itself, that it has established itself independently in the concert hall. Debussy originally conceived all three pieces as music for piano duet, but as he worked on them it became clear that they would really blossom in full orchestral garb. And when it came to *Ibéria* he really went to town, employing a large, colour-enhanced percussion section (naturally including castanets) thrillingly in the finale, but with remarkable subtlety in the dreamlike central movement.

Debussy was fascinated by Spanish music and culture, even though he only ever spent a couple of hours in the country – perhaps some things are best enjoyed in the world of the imagination. *Ibéria* sounds like a response to the sounds, sights and scents of Spain as transformed by an astonishingly rich and sensitive (but possibly rather solitary) imagination. One can imagine the spectator succumbing to the intoxication of life in ancient backstreets in *Par les rues et par les chemins*, entering a lush nocturnal dreamscape in *Les parfums de la nuit*, then awakening gradually to the vivid realities of Spanish festivities in *Le matin d'un jour de fête* – Debussy was particularly proud of the way this movement emerges from its seductive precursor. The ending however is pure, riotous delight.

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908): *Capriccio espagnol*

1. Alborada
2. Variazioni
3. Alborada
4. Scena e canto gitana (Scene and Gypsy Song)
5. Fandango asturiano

Composed: 1887

First Performed: 31 October 1887, St Petersburg, Imperial Court Orchestra, cond. Rimsky-Korsakov

These days, Rimsky-Korsakov tends to be labelled as a Russian nationalist: a prominent member of the so called 'Russian Five', or 'Mighty Handful', as the hugely influential critic Vladimir Stasov famously dubbed them. But in the late 1880s he began to look to other cultures for inspiration – to the dismay of some of his friends (wasn't Russian music interesting enough?). An encounter with Wagner's operas also left a deep impression, and one important result was the *Capriccio espagnol* ('Spanish Caprice') soon followed by perhaps his most famous work, the symphonic suite for orchestra *Scheherazade* (1888).

For most educated Europeans and Russians in the 19th Century, Spain was almost as 'exotic' and alluring as the medieval Persian world opened up in *Scheherazade*. Almost completely cut off by high mountains, it had grown culturally insular, retaining a strong Arabic influence from the days of the Moorish occupation. This gave its folk song and dance a sharply distinctive character, particularly when it came to tangy harmonies and complex, muscular rhythms. Rimsky-Korsakov celebrates both in this dazzlingly orchestrated suite. Rimsky wasn't given to self-praise, but his verdict - 'undoubtedly a purely external piece, but vividly brilliant for all that' – is perfect.