

Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra November 3 programme complementary content

Sibelius got caught in fog on the boat to England, and those mists of sound swirl around the melodies of his bracing Third Symphony. Mozart wrote his Ninth Piano Concerto to showcase his own youthful talents: he can't be here, sadly, but Angela Hewitt has a hotline to his imagination. Guest conductor Matthew Halls also shares a joyous new mini masterpiece by the young British star Robin Haigh. We love it, and we think you will too.

Matthew Halls

Versatile British conductor [Matthew Halls](#) is renowned for vibrant interpretations and dynamic work with major orchestras, choirs and opera companies. Halls studied music at Oxford where he was an organ scholar and later assistant organist at New College. He spent five further years teaching at the university.

A former Artistic Director of The King's Consort, he founded the Retrospect Ensemble, and with a background in period-performance was one of the first to conduct Nikolaus Harnoncourt's *Concentus Musicus Wien*.

As an organist, harpsichordist and pianist he has given recitals all over the world and has appeared on dozens of recordings. His discography includes Bach's *Harpsichord Concertos* directed from the keyboard, the premiere recording of Handel's *Parnasso in Festa* (which won the Stanley Sadie Handel Recording Prize), Bach's *Easter* and *Ascension Oratorios* and award-winning discs of Purcell's *Sonatas in Three and Four Parts*.

Halls is the current Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the [Tampere Philharmonic](#). He made his debut at Liverpool Philharmonic Hall last October, while forthcoming engagements this season include an all-Haydn programme with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, and Sibelius and Duruflé with the Dallas Symphony.

Angela Hewitt

[Angela Hewitt](#) occupies a unique position among today's leading pianists. With a wide-ranging repertoire and frequent appearances in recital and with major orchestras throughout Europe, the Americas and Asia, she is also an award-winning recording artist whose performances of Bach have established her as one of the composer's foremost interpreters. In 2020 she received the [City of Leipzig Bach Medal](#), a huge honour that for the first time in its 17-year history was awarded to a woman.

Born in 1958 into a musical family (the daughter of the cathedral organist and choirmaster in Ottawa, Canada), Hewitt began her piano studies aged three, performed in public at four and a year later won her first scholarship. From 1963 to 1973 she studied at Toronto's Royal Conservatory of Music, then completed her Bachelor of Music in Performance at the University of Ottawa, graduating at 18.

She was a prize-winner in numerous competitions in Europe, Canada and the US, but it was winning the 1985 Toronto International Bach Piano competition which launched her international career.

In 2005 she founded the [Trasimeno Music Festival](#) in Umbria, where she has a home, and remains its artistic director. She is also dedicated to nurturing new talent and holds masterclasses both in person all over the world, and online.

Listen to Angela Hewitt perform the [third movement](#) from Mozart's *Piano Concerto No.9 in E-flat major*.

Robin Haigh – *Concerto for Orchestra*

Contemporary Irish-British composer [Robin Haigh](#) was born in London in 1993 and studied composition at Goldsmiths, University of London and the Royal Academy of Music. As a teenager he wrote for and played in a progressive heavy metal band.

Described by *What is Metamodern? Journal* as possessing an 'idiomatic and unique compositional approach, blending together styles...in a way that feels genuine, honest, real', his output includes *SLEEPTALKER* (written for the London Philharmonic and nominated for an Ivor Novello Award), the quirky and playful *Grin* for the Britten Sinfonia (which won a Novello in 2020), and the British Composer Award-winning recorder quintet *In Feyre Forest*.

His other works include the Ivor Novello-nominated *AESOP 2*, and *FILTH*, both for Hanover's Orchester im Treppenhaus, and a quadruple trombone concerto, *THE DREAMERS*, for the Aldeburgh Festival. In 2021/22 [Haigh](#) was a Britten Pears Young Artist.

Until the premiere of his trumpet concerto *LUCK* at Aldeburgh Festival 2024 with Matilda Lloyd, Jessica Cottis and the Britten Sinfonia, [Concerto for Orchestra](#) was his largest work to date. It was commissioned by Yoel Gamzou and the oneMusic Orchestra and given its world premiere at Beethovenfest in Bonn in September 2023.

Watch the world premiere of Robin Haigh's [Concerto for Orchestra](#).

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – *Piano Concerto No.9 in E-flat major*

In January 1777, [Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart](#) turned 21. No longer the wandering child prodigy who had entranced the leading courts of Europe, he was an adult in the fourth year of the employ of the [Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg](#), for whom he was required to compose masses and other works on the modest salary of 150 florins a year.

In the preceding 12 months, Mozart had started to turn his attention to the piano, and had produced a trio of concertos, including the seventh which was originally scored for three pianos and orchestra. And along with his landmark birthday, January 1777 also brought with it the birth of *Piano Concerto No.9 in E-flat major* – considered by many to be his first mature piano concerto and his first real masterpiece.

The work, which goes by the nickname '[Jeunehomme](#)', was reputedly composed for the talented pianist Victoire Jenamy who had visited Salzburg over the winter of 1776/7 and who was the daughter of the famed French choreographer Jean-Georges Noverre. As Mozart started to find his compositional maturity, he also started becoming desperate to spread his wings. And when his subsequent request to take a sabbatical was turned down by his employer, who then essentially sacked him, he packed his bags. In September 1777, Mozart and his mother left

Salzburg to embark on a round of Continental visits touting for a new patron and fresh commissions – and one of the pieces it's been reported he took with him to showcase his talents was his *Piano Concerto No.9*.

Watch a performance of Mozart's [Ninth Piano Concerto](#).

Jean Sibelius – *Symphony No.3 in C major*

While his Second Symphony came relatively quickly, it took [Jean Sibelius](#) more than three years to bring its successor to the concert hall. The 39-year-old Finn made early mentions of plans for the work in letters in 1904 – the year he moved his family from Helsinki to Järvenpää, 23 miles to the north, where they settled in their new villa named [Ainola](#) after Sibelius' wife Aino.

It proved the perfect secluded and peaceful location for him to compose, and it was there he juggled work on several pieces at once, with the bulk of the composition for the three-movement [Third Symphony](#) completed between late 1906 and the summer of 1907. It was dedicated to British composer [Granville Bantock](#), an early supporter of Sibelius' work (as well as being musical director of the New Brighton Tower Orchestra and conductor of the Liverpool Orchestral Society), and premiered by the Helsinki Philharmonic Society in September 1907, with its composer conducting.

Listen to a performance of Sibelius' [Symphony No.3 in C major](#).

Did you know? On December 2, 1905, Sibelius made his UK debut at Liverpool Philharmonic Hall where he conducted *Finlandia* and his First Symphony. He described it as 'a great success', while the *Daily Post* reported an ovation which was 'a token of real admiration for the virility and originality of his genius'.

About the Music

Robin Haigh: Concerto for Orchestra (UK premiere)

Composed: 2023

First Performed: 15 September 2023, Bonn, Beethovenfest, oneMusic Orchestra, cond. Yoel Gamzou

Ever since Bèla Bartòk astonished the musical world with his brilliant but also deeply serious Concerto for Orchestra in 1944, concertos for orchestra have tended to be big pieces, lavish in their use of instrumental colour and virtuosic, for the conductor as well as the players. But Robin Haigh's new Concerto for Orchestra is modest in scale and in its orchestral forces – unless you count the four tuned glasses of water! But the range of colours and character he achieves in its three short movements is impressive, and it's very modern in the way it embraces Hollywood sentimentality, high melodrama and grotesque clowning one moment only to swing into something much more serious and modernistic the next. Whenever you think you know where you are with this music, prepare to be surprised!

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-91): Piano Concerto No. 9 in E-flat major, K271 ('Jeunehomme')

1. Allegro
2. Andantino
3. Rondo: Presto – Menuetto: Cantabile - Presto

Composed: 1777

First Performed: 4 October 1777, Salzburg, soloist Mozart (?)

The real Mozart miracle is not that he was so phenomenally proficient as a child, it's that – unlike most child prodigies – he carried on getting deeper and more original. The so-called 'Jeunehomme' Piano Concerto, composed when Mozart was 21, was a major step forward – his first fully mature masterpiece in piano concerto form, and an advance even on the two fine symphonies he'd written while still in his teens: the 'Little' G minor Symphony (No 25) and the A major (No 29). It begins with a stroke of daring – though to appreciate we need to put on eighteenth century ears for a moment. In Mozart's day, it was customary for concertos to begin with an introduction, presenting the main themes. The soloist might strum along discreetly, but his/her grand entry would follow, rock-star-like, only when the audience was suitably keyed up. Here Mozart has the piano respond to the orchestra immediately, only seizing the reins completely later on. Beethoven got a lot of credit for doing this in his Fourth and Fifth Concertos, but Mozart was there first.

Mozart used the minor key less than any other great composer, but when he did, the results were usually pretty special. The Adagio of this concerto is a superb example: sombre, gravely expressive, with some wonderful plaintive, quasi-operatic writing for the piano. It reaches its climax in an intensely expressive solo piano cadenza. But the energetic finale seems determined to forget all that. Unusually, this finale contains at its heart a slower, elegant dance section marked 'Minuet', but the piano writing becomes more florid and elaborate until it breaks up, again cadenza-like, and the Presto finale relaunches, to lead to a deliciously teasing ending.

Jean Sibelius (1865-1957): Symphony No 3 in C major, op 52

1. Allegro moderato
2. Andantino con moto, quasi allegretto
3. Moderato - Allegro (ma non tanto)

Composed: 1904-7

First Performed: 25 September 1907, Helsinki, cond. Robert Kajanus

Sibelius' richly expressive, ultimately heroic Second Symphony (1902) soon acquired the nickname 'Symphony of Liberation' from his fellow Finns, then still yearning for freedom from Russian domination. If they were expecting something similar from his Third Symphony, they were to be disappointed. The new symphony was much more concentrated, employing a smaller orchestra, its manner less emotive – on some levels you could say it's more 'classical' than the Second. But it's also more innovative. None of the three (or is it four?) movements is entirely self-contained. The first has tremendous energy, everything deriving organically from its opening cello and bass theme. But instead of building to an impressive final climax, at the end it broadens out reflectively into new, more solemn territory. Sibelius the magician is much more in evidence in the next two movements. The second is a slow, lilting nocturnal dance, painted in muted colours. Dance music alternates with passages of thoughtful stillness, with occasional flickers of light, like the glimmering of the Aurora borealis in a winter's sky.

The finale is really two movements in one. It begins as a scherzo, but falteringly, with glances back at the previous movement. Like the slow movement it's prevailingly quiet, with its own moments of mystery, as when nasal muted horns recall the eerie forest-scapes of Sibelius' tone poem *Nightride and Sunrise* (composed the same year). Gradually the horn figure is transformed into something brighter and more confident – a hymn-like tune on violas and cellos – and we are now in the finale. Gradually the energy increases and the hymn sounds in triumph above vigorously pulsating strings. Then a curt, three-note gesture on brass brings the symphony to a sudden but satisfying close.