

**Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra**  
**July 12 programme complementary content**

Judgement Day: drums thunder, trumpets blast, and a massed choir cries out in terror. Verdi's *Requiem* might not be what you expect from religious music. But it's exactly what you'd expect from the grand master of Italian opera. And with the full Choir joined by four world-class soloists, hold on to your seats and prepare to be overwhelmed as Domingo Hindoyan ends our season of song by taking you to the end of the world – and back again.

**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 musical 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 his position in September 2021. He has now extended his contract with the Orchestra to 2028.

**Rachel Willis-Sørensen** *soprano*

American soprano [Rachel Willis-Sørensen](#) is known for her diverse repertoire ranging from Mozart to Wagner. A regular guest at the leading opera houses around the world, *Le Monde* enthused, "...the American soprano has without a doubt one of the most impressive voices in the opera world. The timbre, of marmoreal beauty, is striking, the projection telluric".

In recent seasons, she has performed at leading opera houses in Europe and the US, and is a regular guest at the Bayerische Staatsoper, Metropolitan Opera, and Wiener Staatsoper. A Sony recording artist, she has released two solo albums and regularly performs in concert and in recitals in addition to her operatic engagements.

Highlights from her 2024/25 season include Leonora (*Il Trovatore*) at the Met and Royal Ballet and Opera House, her debut as Norma at the Staatsoper Berlin, and Elisabetta (*Don Carlo*) at Teatro di San Carlo and the Bayerische Staatsoper.

Listen to **Rachel Willis- Sørensen** singing [D'amor sull'ali rosee](#) from Verdi's *Il Trovatore*.

**Aude Extrémo** *mezzo-soprano*

Noted for her dark, opulent timbre and magnetic stage presence, [Aude Extrémo](#) has recently made a series of impressive debuts including as Fricke in [Die Walküre](#). In the current season she adds two new roles to her repertoire, debuting Acuzena in a new production of *Il Trovatore* for Opera Marseille, and Judith in a new production of *Bluebeard's Castle* at Opera de Dijon. She

also returns to the Paris Opera as Maddalena in Claus Guth's *Rigoletto* conducted by Domingo Hindoyan, and Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* under Speranza Scapucci.

A laureate of the Atelier Lyrique at Opera National de Paris, Extrémo excels in French repertoire and was hailed 'the Carmen of her generation' after performances in Bordeaux under Marc Minkowski. An engaging concert performer, the distinguished mezzo-soprano's recent performances include Verdi's *Requiem* in Paris and Toulouse, Chausson's *Poeme de l'amour et de la mer* at Opera de Lyon, Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* with Athens State Symphony Orchestra and appearances at the Festival de Musiques Interdites and Festival d'Aix en Provence.

Listen to Aude Extrémo perform in Verdi's [\*Requiem\*](#).

### **AJ Glueckert** *tenor*

American tenor [AJ Glueckert](#) has made a name for himself internationally, particularly for his interpretation of demanding roles in works by Strauss, Szymanowski, Orff, Stravinsky, Dvořák and others.

This season he has performed as Alwa in Berg's *Lulu*, Heurtal in Magnard's *Guercoeur* and Skuratov in Janáček's *From a House of the Dead* for Oper Frankfurt. This summer he is performing in *The Flying Dutchman* at [Opera in the Quarry](#) at St Margarethen, Austria.

Previous roles have included Guido Bardi in Zemlinsky's *Florentine Tragedy* with Deutsche Oper Berlin, and the Emperor in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* at Opera Cologne. He has also performed Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* with the Hamburg Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Domingo Hindoyan.

A graduate of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, he has twice won regional Metropolitan Opera National Auditions competitions. He is a former Adler Fellow at the San Francisco Opera and alumnus of the Merola Opera Programme.

Enjoy watching AJ Glueckert perform the [Flower Song](#) from *Carmen*.

### **Marko Mimica** *bass*

Award-winning Croatian bass-baritone [Marko Mimica](#) studied voice at the Academy of Music in Zagreb. He participated in the Salzburger Festspiele's Young Singers Project in 2011 and was a finalist in the [BBC Cardiff Singer of the World in 2013](#). From 2011 to 2016 he was a member of the Deutsche Oper in Berlin where his many roles included Figaro, Don Basilio in *The Barber of Seville* and Escamillo in *Carmen*.

Over recent seasons he has appeared in productions at opera houses and other venues worldwide including Bilbao, Barcelona, Oman, Florence, Amsterdam, New York and at the Edinburgh Festival. Performances this spring have included Jacopo in Verdi's *Simon Boccanegra* at the Staatsoper Unter den Linden and the Ghost of Hamlet's father in *Hamlet* in Turin.

He is also in demand as a concert artist and recitalist, most recently performing Mussorgsky's *Songs and Dances of Death* in Granada, and Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* with the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington DC.

Listen to Marko Mimica sing [La Calunnia](#) from *The Barber of Seville*.

## Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Choir

When the Liverpool Philharmonic Society was founded in 1840 it saw the birth not only of an orchestra but of a chorus too. [The Choir](#) added 'royal' to its title in 1990 and is led by Director of Choirs and Singing Matthew Hamilton.

In recent years, the Choir has performed Bach's *St Matthew Passion* and *Mass in B minor*, Orff's *Carmina Burana*, Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*, Mahler's *Symphony No.2*, Rachmaninov's *Vespers*, Poulenc's *Gloria*, Karl Jenkins' *Stabat Mater*, James MacMillan's *St John Passion*, Beethoven's *Mass in C*, Britten's *War Requiem* and Handel's *Messiah*. It has also appeared in many of the UK's major concert venues and has sung on a number of foreign tours.

During the 2024/25 season, members of the Choir have also performed in Holst's *The Planets Suite*, Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast*, the Spirit of Christmas concert series, Handel's *Messiah*, Mahler's *Symphony No.3* and Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass*.

## Giuseppe Verdi Requiem

Some people are keen on decluttering, and some are hoarders – you never know when something might come in useful. [Giuseppe Verdi](#) certainly discovered this when, in 1873, he felt impelled to mark the passing of Italian poet, novelist and philosopher [Alessandro Manzoni](#), whose 1827 work *The Betrothed* (*I Promessi sposi*) he and many of his fellow Italians venerated. Manzoni would get a state funeral in his homeland, but Verdi also determined that he would write a requiem mass in his honour.

This wasn't Verdi's first requiem rodeo, however. Five years before, he had suggested a collaborative mass to mark the passing of [Rossini](#), with he and a dozen fellow composers each providing a movement. Verdi himself composed the *Libera Me*, and the mass was set to be performed on the first anniversary of Rossini's death in November 1869. It never happened though. Disagreements over venues and the provision of orchestra and voices meant the planned premiere was cancelled and it would be more than a century before the *Messa per Rossini* was finally performed.

But Verdi did still have his *Libera Me* tucked away somewhere safe, and now in 1873 he took it out, dusted it off and – in Paris in June – he started work on a requiem of his own, incorporating the movement into the wider work.

With Verdi's operatic background it's perhaps no surprise his Requiem would become a monumental and dramatic masterpiece. It had its premiere on May 22, 1874, the first anniversary of Manzoni's death, in the Church of St Mark in Milan with Verdi conducting, followed by a performance at La Scala three days later.

Listen to the [Dies Irae e Tuba Mirum](#) from Verdi's *Requiem* performed at the *BBC Proms*.

**Did you know? The British premiere of the *Requiem* was held at the Royal Albert Hall on May 15, 1875, under the baton of its composer. The first full Liverpool performance came at Liverpool Philharmonic Hall on March 12, 1878, with Julius Benedict conducting and William T Best 'presiding' at the organ.**

## About the Music

### Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901): Requiem

1. Requiem ('Grant them rest')
2. Dies irae ('Day of Wrath')
3. Offertory – Domine Jesu ('Lord Jesus, King of Glory!')
4. Sanctus ('Holy, Holy, Holy')
5. Angus Dei ('Lamb of God')
6. Lux aeterna ('Eternal Light')
7. Libera me ('Deliver me, O Lord')

Composed: 1873

First Performed: 22 May 1874, Church of San Marco, Milan, cond. Verdi

Giuseppe Verdi was a humanist, definitely not an orthodox believer – according to one report he even declared himself an atheist. But the theatricality of Roman Catholic worship in his native Italy stirred all his dramatic instincts, and he found expressions of simple faith from ordinary people profoundly moving. There was something important here, even if it wasn't quite 'what it says on the tin'.

It was when he heard of the death of one of his artistic heroes, the humanist writer Alessandro Manzoni, that Verdi decided to compose a work in his memory. Soon it was clear that it had to be a setting of the requiem mass – many non-religious composers have been moved by the beauty of its language, the power of its imagery, and above all the way it struggles to come to terms with the two inescapable grim realities of human existence: the fact of death and the agony of loss. But how 'religious' is the Requiem? Although it was first heard in a church, it was when it was performed soon afterwards in the La Scala Opera House that it made a real hit. That has to be significant. Despite the strong emotions it aroused, one critic grumbled that Verdi's Requiem was really 'an opera in ecclesiastical robes', another that it was religious music in 'dubious musical costume'.

Fortunately, modern audiences and critics seem disposed not to bother about that too much, rather just to enjoy Verdi's Requiem as the gripping, deeply moving music drama it is. The opening 'Requiem' conveys the sense of grief – of a congregation stunned by the shock of grief – with a realism rare in 'pure' religious music. Then comes the long, vividly contrasted evocation of the terrors of the Day of Judgement, 'Dies irae'. Earthquake, wind and fire, dissonant trumpets summoning the dead to the Divine throne, the graves emptying, terror-stricken pleas for mercy, the evil cast into Hell, prayers for peace for the departed – it's all there, painted with the vividness, brilliance and pathos of a master opera composer.

Urgent supplication alternates with praise (traditionally the best way to approach absolute power) in the 'Offertory', 'Sanctus' and 'Agnus Dei', then comes a vision of pure light and peace in 'Lux Aeterna'. But the final 'Libera me' takes us back to grief, terror and cries for mercy, until at the end the soprano intones the words of the prayer on one awe-struck note, like a lone figure kneeling before a candlelit altar, framed in darkness. 'Deliver me from death' – most of us, believers or not, will find words like this come to mind at some stage in our lives. Verdi, the compassionate humanist, understood that very well.