

Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra

December 4 programme complementary content

Lawrence Foster

Award-winning conductor [Lawrence Foster](#) is known for his exhilarating and expressive performances in a wide range of music, and enjoys a career spanning the US, Europe and Asia. A long standing and iconic personality of the music world, he was born in Los Angeles in 1941 to Romanian parents, and studied conducting with Fritz Zweig and piano with Joanna Grauden, becoming conductor of the San Francisco Ballet at 18. In 1966, he won the prestigious Koussevitzky conducting prize at Tanglewood.

He was later appointed Assistant Conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic and guest conductor of the Royal Philharmonic, and over the course of more than six decades he has forged a busy and successful international career working with world-class orchestras and musicians. He has been music director of the Houston Symphony, Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte-Carlo, Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne, Orquestra Simfònica de Barcelona i Nacional de Catalunya, Orchestre Philharmonique de Montpellier and Aspen Music Festival and School among many other positions. He was also Music Director of Opera de Marseille for nine years, and Artistic and Chief Conductor of the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra for four.

Foster was the artistic director of the [George Enescu Festival](#) in Bucharest from 1998 to 2001, and as a champion of the music of [George Enescu](#), his interpretations are known for their faithfulness to the Romanian composer's score. In 2003 he was decorated by the Romanian president for services to Romanian music. Meanwhile among an extensive recording career, his recording of Enescu's *Oedipe* (EMI) was awarded the Grand Prix du Disque from the Académie Charles Cros in France.

Daniel Lozakovich

[Daniel Lozakovich](#) has become one of today's most sought-after violinists, his music-making leaving both audiences and critics spellbound. He regularly performs with eminent conductors and leading orchestras all around the globe. He is also an acclaimed recitalist, and has appeared at leading venues such as Carnegie Hall, Amsterdam Concertgebouw and the Mariinsky Theatre, and is a regular at international music festivals including Verbier and Tanglewood.

Lozakovich was signed by Deutsche Grammophon at just 15. His recording of Bach's two Violin Concertos reached number one in the all-music category of the French Amazon charts, and topped the classical album charts in Germany. His live recording of *None but the Lonely Heart* was named a Top Choice by *Gramophone*, ranking among the best recordings of Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in the past 70 years. His latest album, *Spirits* (2023), pays tribute to seven of the most iconic violinists of the 20th century.

He has been awarded many prizes including first prize at Vladimir Spivakov International Violin Competition (2016), Young Artist of the Year at Festival of Nations (2017), Premio Batuta Award in Mexico, and the Excelentia Prize under the honorary presidency of Queen Sofia of Spain.

Born in [Stockholm in 2001](#), he began playing the violin at the age of seven, making his solo debut two years later with Vladimir Spivakov. He studied at the Hochschule für Musik Karlsruhe with Professor Josef Rissin from 2012, and graduated with a Master's degree in 2021.

Since 2015 he has been mentored by Eduard Wulfson in Geneva. He plays the ex-Sancy 1713 Stradivari generously loaned by LVMH/Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton.

Listen to Daniel Lozakovich play Bruch's [First Violin Concerto](#).

Franz Liszt

Long, long before Beatlemania, the music world was rocked by another extraordinary episode of collective hysteria – [Lisztomania](#). It may seem strange to us now, but 1840s audiences (particularly the female half) went wild for the dashing Hungarian composer and superstar showman, Franz Liszt. The phenomenon was so great that fans fought over his piano strings and coffee dregs, and in the 1970s Ken Russell was inspired to make a (completely mad) film about it, starring Roger Daltry in the title role and Paul Nicholas as Richard Wagner!

The real [Liszt](#) was born in the Sopron area of Hungary in 1811, where his father was in the employ of Haydn's patron Prince Esterházy. Young Franz gave his first public concert aged nine. Going on to study in Vienna, he was taught piano by Carl Czerny, who himself had been a pupil of Beethoven, and composition by Antonio Salieri of Amadeus fame.

Liszt the pianist toured Europe, garnering fans and, particularly after he scaled back his touring schedule from the 1850s onwards, he also found time to compose – so prolific was he that over the course of a 60-year career he wrote around 700 pieces of music. Predominately known for his piano compositions, his extensive catalogue of innovative work also included chamber pieces, symphonic poems (a musical form he himself invented), choral works – both sacred and secular – and, from his early teenage years, a single foray into opera, *Don Sanche or the Castle of Love*.

Despite the fame, flamboyance and frenzy, Liszt's life wasn't all wine and roses. Two of his children died in quick succession, his love life was messy and complicated, and despite their pairing in Cockney rhyming slang, he had a [frosty relationship](#) with fellow composer Brahms who, as a young man, had managed to fall asleep during a Liszt recital. Liszt spent his last years moving between Budapest, Weimar and Rome, composing (particularly more sacred works) and teaching, and occasionally still playing concerts across Europe. His final performance was in Luxembourg on July 19, 1886, before he headed to Bayreuth where his daughter Cosima (who was married to Wagner) was director of the festival. It was there, on July 31, and suffering from pneumonia, that Liszt died, aged 74.

Max Bruch

In 1880, the 42-year-old [Max Bruch](#) was invited to become director at Liverpool Philharmonic Hall. On paper it was quite the signing. And yet the three years he spent on the banks of the Mersey were ultimately unsatisfactory [for Bruch](#) who – despite enjoying life with his new wife Clara and young daughter in a house near Sefton Park – felt frustrated by his lack of control over programmes and performers. Plus, he had a less than cordial relationship with critics.

Twelve months into his job, he wrote to [Ferdinand Hiller](#) (his childhood mentor and friend) suggesting that "I am too much a German, and my whole being and feelings are too deeply rooted in German soil for me ever to consider myself to be at home among the driest, most boring, most unmusical race on earth." If he said that in Liverpool itself, it could account for the fact he and the city weren't the best of friends. Contemporaries meanwhile described him as [humourless and arrogant](#) and certainly when he quit the position after three years, there were few column inches mourning his departure.

Born in Cologne in 1838, the composer, conductor, violinist and teacher was a precocious talent who had written a symphony aged 14. The adult Bruch held musical posts across Germany, including at Mannheim, Koblenz, Berlin and Bonn. In 1864 he had already had success with choral works and his opera *Die Loreley* when he sat down to start on what would become his [First Violin Concerto](#). It was the first of an eventual three violin concertos which sit within the 200 works he composed over his long career in the German Romantic musical tradition. Among them are his *Scottish Fantasy* and *Kol Nidrei* – a piece for cello and orchestra – which he completed in Liverpool and dedicated to Robert Hausmann.

After quitting Hope Street, he took up a post in Breslau and later spent 20 years teaching at Berlin's Hochschule für Musik, where his pupils included Ottorino Respighi. Bruch died in Berlin in 1920. On his grave, his daughter Margaretha inscribed: 'Music is the language of God.'

Listen to the [finale](#) of Bruch's *Violin Concerto No.1*.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

When Tchaikovsky died suddenly in November 1893, supposedly from cholera, he was at the height of his musical powers. Nine days earlier his *Symphony No.6* – the *Pathétique* – had been premiered at the Russian Musical Society in St Petersburg with its composer conducting. The Christmas before, *The Nutcracker* had been showcased at the city's Imperial Mariinsky Theatre in a double bill with his opera *Iolanta*. And if he had lived, he had new cello and flute concertos in his sights. Still, despite being struck down so early – allegedly thanks to a [glass of unboiled water](#) – he left a huge legacy of innovative work, and memories of a tortured personal life that was a drama all of its own.

[Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky](#) was born at Votkinsk in 1840 where his father was the manager of a local ironworks. Young Pyotr was earmarked for the civil service, and studied at the St Petersburg School of Jurisprudence before, aged 19, becoming a clerk in the Ministry of Justice. But his real love was music, and in 1862 he was among the first cohort of students to enrol in the city's new Conservatory where he studied composition with Anton Rubinstein. After graduation, Tchaikovsky himself taught musical theory, albeit at the Moscow Conservatory.

In his early years he produced works that have been described as 'robustly' Russian in spirit. He retained a particular fondness for his First Symphony, which dated from just after he graduated from the St Petersburg Conservatory.

Throughout his career he was given long-distance support – both financial and emotional – from his patroness [Nadezhda von Meck](#) whom, famously, he never met in person. Even when her son married his niece Anna in 1884! Among a wide-ranging output, his most famous or best-loved works include his three ballets (*Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty* and *The Nutcracker*), his *1812 Overture*, the opera *Eugene Onegin*, the *Pathétique*, his First Piano Concerto, *Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture* and his only Violin Concerto.

Listen to the [finale](#) of Tchaikovsky's First Symphony.

About the Music

Franz Liszt (1811-86): Symphonic Poem, Orpheus

Composed: 1853-4

First Performed: 16 February 1854, Weimar Court Theatre Orchestra, cond. Liszt

For Liszt, as for his future son-in-law Richard Wagner, the days of the classical-romantic symphony were over. The triumphant fusion of philosophy, politics, literature and music in Beethoven's 'Choral' Ninth Symphony had pointed the true way ahead – music working together with the other arts to create a vibrant, spiritually uplifting synthesis. Instead of symphonies Liszt wrote 'symphonic poems', orchestral works that tell stories, paint pictures, the content usually indicated by titles or literary allusions. *Orpheus* is inspired by the classical Greek legend. Liszt had been deeply impressed by a beautiful Etruscan vase depicting Orpheus playing his lyre, while exquisitely painted birds pay close attention. There are hints of birdsong in Liszt's writing, and the two harps (unusual for the time) unmistakably portray Orpheus himself – one harp clearly wouldn't have been enough to represent his supernatural skill. In contrast to most of Liszt's other symphonic poems, there's no swashbuckling drama, only serene contemplative beauty, with gorgeous, sensuous harmonies – a feature that made it one of Wagner's firmest favourites.

Max Bruch (1838-1920): Violin Concerto No 1 in G minor, Op. 26

1. Vorspiel [Prelude]. Allegro Moderato -

2. Adagio -

3. Finale. Allegro energico

Composed: 1866

First performed: 7 January 1868, Bremen, Joseph Joachim (soloist), cond. Karl Martin Rheinthal

It would be nice to think that Max Bruch profited from the huge popularity of his First Violin Concerto. But although the premiere of the fully-revised score brought Bruch his first big success, unwisely he then sold it to a publisher for a one-off payment, which meant that for years he had to endure seeing the work appear on concert billings all over the world, while the money went elsewhere. At the end of the First World War, the impoverished Bruch tried to raise some cash by offering the manuscript for sale in America, but he died without receiving a penny.

Like Brahms, Bruch remained a 'classical-romantic', committed to traditional forms, setting his face against the progressives like Wagner and Liszt. But formally speaking Bruch's First Violin Concerto is quite exploratory. In most 19th century concertos, the first movement is the most substantial and dramatic, but the dark, turbulent 'Prelude' is relatively short, eventually settling into the Adagio, the violin now entering with a long-breathed, exquisite melody, played on the instrument's darkly sonorous lowest string. The Finale follows on very effectively from the Adagio's serene ending, bringing the full explosion of virtuosity anticipated, but never fully delivered, in that 'Prelude' first movement – well, it's often a good idea to save the fireworks to the end!

Piotr Ilych Tchaikovsky (1840-93): Symphony No 1 in G minor, 'Winter Daydreams'

1. 'Reveries of a Winter Journey': Allegro tranquillo

2. 'Land of Desolation, Land of Mists': Adagio cantabile ma non tanto

3. Scherzo: Allegro scherzando giocoso

4. Finale: Andante lugubre – Allegro maestoso

Composed: 1866

First Performed: 15 February 1868, St Petersburg, Russian Music Society Orchestra cond. Anton Rubinstein

Listening to Tchaikovsky's endearing, seductively atmospheric 'Winter Daydreams' symphony, you'd probably imagine it was a joy to write. Instead it was a nightmare. His confidence crushed by a recent hostile review, he soldiered on with increasing desperation, until his determination to keep working through the nights (inevitably resulting in insomnia) led to a frightening breakdown. But Tchaikovsky always maintained a special affection for his First Symphony. 'For all its glaring deficiencies', he wrote in 1883, 'I have a soft spot for it. Although it is immature in many respects it is essentially better and richer in content than many other more mature works.' He was being typically harsh. There are no 'glaring' deficiencies, and the imaginative and melodic freshness more than carry the day.

The opening theme (flute and bassoon above shimmering violins) is a lovely inspiration, with a compelling forward-gliding momentum like the light movement of a sleigh across smooth snow. The slow movement is still more effective. An eloquent theme for muted strings leads to a long oboe tune, with answering birdcalls on flute, unmistakably Russian in so many of its melodic twists and turns. Then comes an agile, lightly dancing Scherzo, with wonderful use of woodwind colours (a very mature Tchaikovskian touch), at its heart a warm suave waltz – not even Johann Strauss II could beat Tchaikovsky when it came to waltz tunes. After a sombre slow introduction, the Finale soon sets off at a more determined pace in the major key, with trombones, tuba, cymbals and bass drum adding their weight to the orchestra for the first time. The ending is a fully justified over-the-top celebration.