

**Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra**  
**April 16 programme complementary content**

**Aurel Dawidiuk**

Described in the Hamburger Abendblatt as “a new star in the firmament of conductors”, German [Aurel Dawidiuk's](#) swift ascendance as both conductor and instrumentalist makes him one of classical music's most promising new talents. He is [General Music Director](#) designate of Bochumer Symphoniker from August 2026.

Dawidiuk is in his second season as Associate Conductor with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam, with highlights of the current season also including debut appearances with, in addition to the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, the Bamberg Symphony, Dresden Philharmonic, Hamburg Symphony, NDR Radiophilharmonie, Wiener Kammerorchester, Stuttgart Philharmonic, Dortmund Philharmonic, Bremen Philharmonic, Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony and China National Symphony.

In past seasons, the composer and organist has been featured at the Berlin Philharmonie alongside members of the Karajan Academy and in recital on both organ and piano in leading international venues including the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Berlin's Pierre Boulez Saal, Konzerthaus Dortmund, ORF Radiokulturhaus in Vienna, Konzerthaus Berlin, Dresden Kulturpalast, Brucknerhaus Linz, Opéra National de Lorraine, Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, Beethoven Festival in Bonn and Rostock Bach Festival.

Dawidiuk's numerous awards include 2024 Ritter Preis, the Neeme Järvi Prize at the 2023 Gstaad Menuhin Festival and First Prize at the 2023 International Hans von Bülow Meiningen Competition in the category Conducting from the Piano, where he also garnered their Audience Choice Award and two other special prizes. In 2022, he was the overall victor of the Deutscher Musikwettbewerb in the organ category (not awarded since 2001) and was subsequently awarded the special prize of the City of Bonn. Previous accolades include a comprehensive sweep of virtually every award at the 2019 TONALi Piano Competition in Hamburg and first prizes from the 2019 International Young Organist Competition Moscow, 2018 London Organ Competition and 2016 Schumann

Competition in Zwickau. Dawidiuk's recordings include *BA-CH; 'Hommage à...'*, a collection of organ music which garnered him two Opus Klassik Award nominations. This follows his debut release of *Liszt | BA-CH* in 2022, featuring piano selections by both composers.

Born in Hannover, [Dawidiuk](#) began his musical education at the age of six and later studied piano with Roland Krüger and organ with Martin Sander. He subsequently studied conducting with Johannes Schlaefli and Christoph-Mathias Mueller at the Zürich University of the Arts, where he also took piano lessons with Till Fellner. He has since attended master classes with Paavo Järvi, Jaap van Zweden, Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla and Joana Mallwitz, and counts among his mentors Hatto Beyerle, Gabriele Leporatti, and Ulrike Adler.

## **Till Fellner**

Austrian pianist [Till Fellner's](#) international career was launched in 1993 when he won First Prize at the renowned Clara Haskil Competition in Vevey, Switzerland.

Over a period of more than two decades, he has become a sought-after guest with many of the world's most important orchestras – including the Berlin Philharmonic, Vienna Philharmonic, Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, New York Philharmonic and NHL Symphony Orchestra - and at the major music centres of Europe, USA and Japan, as well as numerous festivals.

Fellner has collaborated with Claudio Abbado, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Herbert Blomstedt, Semyon Bychkov, Christoph von Dohnányi, Christoph Eschenbach, Bernard Haitink, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Manfred Honeck, Sir Charles Mackerras, Sir Neville Marriner, Kurt Masur, Kent Nagano, Jonathan Nott, Kirill Petrenko, Hans Zender among many others. In the field of chamber music, he regularly collaborates with violinist Viviane Hagner, British tenor Mark Padmore and the Belcea Quartet. In spring 2023 he toured Japan with German mezzo-soprano Anna Lucia Richter.

Over the past few years, he has dedicated himself to two milestones of the piano repertoire: *The Well-Tempered Clavier* of Johann Sebastian Bach and the 32 piano sonatas of Ludwig van Beethoven. He performed the Beethoven cycle from 2008-10 in New York, Washington, Tokyo, London, Paris, and Vienna. Fellner has premiered works by Kit

Armstrong, Harrison Birtwistle, Thomas Larcher, Alexander Stankovski and Hans Zender.

Fellner is an exclusive recording artist for ECM, which has released the First Book of the Well-Tempered Clavier and the Two & Three-Part Inventions of J. S. Bach, Beethoven's Piano Concertos Nos.4 & 5 with Montreal Symphony Orchestra and Kent Nagano, chamber music by Harrison Birtwistle, and in 2018, Till Fellner in Concert, with live recordings of works by Liszt and Beethoven. In 2016 Alpha Classics released the Brahms Piano Quintet with the Belcea Quartet, which received the Diapason d'Or de l'Année.

In his native Vienna, [Fellner](#) studied with Helene Sedo-Stadler before going on to study privately with Alfred Brendel, Meira Farkas, Oleg Maisenberg, and Claus-Christian Schuster. He has taught at the Zurich Hochschule der Künste, and the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz, and in 2019 was jury president at the 62nd Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition in Bolzano.

## **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**

“It seemed to me that I was hearing the voice of God,” says a marvelling (and insanely jealous) Antonio Salieri in Liverpool playwright Peter Shaffer's [Amadeus](#). Revered down the centuries as a genius who left a legacy of musical masterpieces, Mozart – this ‘voice of God’ – was essentially a jobbing composer for hire, constantly seeking out the next patronage or commission to further his career and pay his often extravagantly large bills. Of all composers, the ‘story’ of his life is perhaps the best-known. And most embroidered.

[Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart](#) was born in Salzburg in 1756, where his father Leopold was a violinist in the Prince-Bishop's court. Leopold toured the salons of Europe with the young Wolfgang and his equally talented sister Maria Anna, and the children performed at the keyboard for the great and good. In 1764 they came to London and performed for George III. It was where the precocious musical genius composed his first symphony, which included a four-note musical motif, CDFE, which popped up in subsequent pieces including, 24 years later, his longest and last symphony, nicknamed *Jupiter*.

At the advanced age of 17, Mozart followed his father and entered 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. By the time he was 21, and maturing compositionally, he was keen to fly the nest and after his request for a sabbatical was turned down, he set out on the road in search of new patronage and fresh, more lucrative commissions. He ended up in Vienna where he would live for the remainder of his days, marry his wife Constance, and compose his best-known works, particularly in the final 'golden' decade of his life. Along with his great operas *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan Tutte* and *The Magic Flute*, they included his mature symphonies, masterful *Piano Concerto No. 21* and *Mass in C Minor*. In fact, over the course of his short lifetime, the prolific Mozart composed more than 600 works in a wide range of forms.

Aged just 35, he died in Vienna in December 1791, famously leaving the [Requiem](#) commission which had filled his final autumn unfinished. His funeral service was conducted at St Stephen's Cathedral, but Mozart, the creator of some of the most remarkable music ever composed, was buried in an unmarked plot.

**Did you know?** Among the actors to have played Mozart in *Amadeus* on stage are Simon Callow, Tim Curry, Michael Sheen, Peter Firth and, during his *Star Wars* years, Mark Hamill.

## Felix Mendelssohn

[Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy](#) was born in Hamburg in February 1809 and grew up in Berlin. His grandfather Moses Mendelssohn was a famous Jewish philosopher and his father Abraham, who converted to Christianity to avoid antisemitic discrimination, was a successful and wealthy banker.

The Mendelssohn home was full of music, and Felix – who showed prodigious talent on the piano (he was taught by his mother Lea) – started composing aged 10. But he wasn't the only composer in the family. His beloved older [sister Fanny](#) was also a talented (and prolific) composer who, because she was female, did not get an equal opportunity to shine.

Mendelssohn made full use of the freedom his (male) privilege afforded him and travelled widely, including [10 separate visits to Britain](#), where he was always welcomed with open arms. The first came in 1829 when he was just 20, and the last in 1846 when his majestic oratorio *Elijah* was premiered at [Birmingham Town Hall](#).

His first visit saw him in London but also in Scotland where he embarked on a rough crossing to the [Hebrides](#) which inspired him to compose his titular *Hebrides Overture* – more commonly known as *Fingal's Cave*. One of the most celebrated figures in the early Romantic period, among Mendelssohn's other best-known and best-loved works are the *Overture to A Midsummer Night's Dream*, composed in 1826 when he was only 17 and featuring the 'wedding march' which has graced a million nuptials, his *Italian Symphony* of 1833 and the lyrical 1844 *Violin Concerto in E minor*.

His [Third 'Scottish' Symphony](#) was completed in 1842 – the year he spent a musical evening at Buckingham Palace with Queen Victoria and Prince Albert and was yet another work informed by his first, youthful visit north of the border. Despite his regular trips across the Channel, Mendelssohn never performed in Liverpool – the closest he got was in July 1829 when he played his *Fantasia in F sharp minor* on the Broadwood piano of an American ship moored in the docks. That didn't stop the Liverpool Philharmonic Society's Swiss-born conductor Jakob Zeugheer Herrmann engaging in an exchange of letters with the composer in early 1847, with the idea of a cantata to celebrate the opening of the new Philharmonic Hall, designed by architect John Cunningham and which was being built in Hope Street. Mendelssohn died before he could fulfil Zeugheer Hermann's commission brief, although his oratorio *Elijah* was eventually performed when the hall opened in August 1849.

In 1843 the composer had founded the Leipzig Conservatory, and it was in the German city that he passed away in November 1847, six months after his sister Fanny's death and following a series of strokes. He was only 38.

**Did you know? In addition to being a composer, Mendelssohn the polymath was a talented artist, writer, philosopher and a linguist who was fluent in English, French, and Italian.**

Enjoy the first movement of Mendelssohn's [Scottish Symphony](#).

## About the Music

### **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-91): Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro*, K492**

Composed: 1786

First Performed: 1 May 1786, Vienna, Burgtheater, cond. Mozart

The opera *The Marriage of Figaro* is one of the richest of all Mozart's expressions of his new-found freedom and independence in the Austrian capital. The characters are wonderfully alive, and the interactions between them in the vibrant and complex ensemble numbers are without parallel in any opera up to this date. At the same time, the fact that the opera makes heroes of servants, at the expense of their supposedly 'noble' aristocratic employer (in reality, he's lustful, arrogant and tricky), was profoundly challenging in late 18<sup>th</sup> century imperial Vienna. The orchestral overture is brief, but it sets the scene brilliantly. We hear the hustle and bustle of the servants Figaro and Susanna's activity 'below stairs', but we also sense something of their quick-wittedness and their glee in outsmarting their master, the Count. It's both a perfect curtain-raiser, and a delight in itself.

### **Mozart: Piano Concerto No.22 in E-flat K482**

1. Allegro
2. Andante
3. Allegro – Andantino – Allegro

Composed: 1785

First Performed: 16 December 1785, Vienna, soloist and director, Mozart

There are points in Mozart's career at which he suddenly seems to take a big step forward, and these usually occur soon after some life-changing event. The wonderful riches of his last decade in Vienna followed his game-changing defiance of both his father, Leopold, and his suffocating employer, the Archbishop of Salzburg in 1781, which led to him being dismissed from the archbishop's service with (as Mozart trenchantly put it) 'a kick in the backside'. Keen on promoting his talents both as soloist and composer, he composed a sequence of no less than 14 magnificent piano concertos between 1782 and 1786. For many, the high point of this astonishing outpouring was the 'great trilogy' of concertos, Nos.22-24 (all featuring Mozart's beloved clarinets) that he wrote in just over a month around Lent – all the more astonishing when

you consider that at the same time he was struggling to finish *The Marriage of Figaro*.

The first movement of K482 is rich in contrast, from courtly grandeur to echoes of *Figaro*'s more heartfelt, intimate moments, the dialogue between the soloist and the orchestra exploited with great imagination and subtlety. But the centerpiece of this concerto is the magnificent slow movement, in a C minor which manages to be dark, melancholic and opulent all at the same time. This movement was encored at its first performance, very much to Leopold Mozart's surprise – normally it was brilliant virtuosic finales that got audiences calling out for more. The finale brings us back to the sunlight, with echoes of folk dance and of hunting tunes, but at its heart comes a slower, more wistful episode, recalling the neglected Countess's touching arias in *Figaro*. But it's dancing joy that wins out in the end.

### **Felix Mendelssohn (1809-47): Symphony No.3 in A minor, Op 56 ('Scottish')**

1. Andante con moto – Allegro un poco agitato
2. Vivace non troppo
3. Adagio
4. Allegro vivacissimo – Allegro maestoso assai

Composed: 1829-31, 1841-42

First Performance: Leipzig Gewandhaus, 3 March 1842

The young German romantics were fascinated by Scotland. Remote even from most of England, and very difficult to get to from the continent, it acquired a magical allure through poetry and the then hugely popular novels of Walter Scott – a land of wild and misty mountains, swashbuckling adventure and dark passions. Most artists were content to just to enjoy Scotland as a dream, but on his first visit to England the 20-year-old Mendelssohn set off to explore it for himself. Edinburgh delighted him, and as he was standing amongst the ruins of Holyrood Chapel (beloved of the glamorously tragic Mary Queen of Scots), a sombre, hymn-like theme occurred to him. This became the opening of his Symphony in A minor, published as No.3 though actually the last of his five to be finished.

At first this new 'Scottish' Symphony seems to have given Mendelssohn problems, and he put it on one side for most of the 1830s, returning to it a decade later. And yet the music sounds as though it was conceived in

a single flood of inspiration, and even after that ten year pause the impressions of that formative Scottish trip were evidently still fresh. From the melancholy 'Holyrood' beginning a turbulent, impassioned but essentially dance-like Allegro emerges. A wildly exuberant scherzo with a decidedly Scottish-folk-sounding clarinet theme (with a characteristic rhythmic 'snap') leads to a pensive slow movement – more memories of Mary and her tragic fate? Then the finale is a rapid dance movement with some fancy rhythmic footwork (echoes, no doubt, of the famous Highland Sword Dance) leading to a broad coda which for Mendelssohn evoked the sound of a male chorus. As well as being a beautifully conceived symphonic structure, it's music to set the imagination roaming widely and richly.