

Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra February 13 programme complementary content

Maxim Emelyanychev and Aylen Pritchin are two of the most exciting talents to emerge from Russia in recent years so expect sparks when they appear together at Liverpool Philharmonic Hall.

This afternoon concert marries Russian Orthodox liturgy and French lyricism with one of Beethoven's most ebullient symphonies.

You can learn more about what to expect in our programme notes which this year are being presented in a new and accessible way.

Watch Stephen Johnson talking about the concert programme here ((LINK)).

And in addition, this companion page draws together a range of complementary content which we hope will help shine additional light on the pieces, the people who composed them and the performers bringing them to life here in Hope Street.

Maxim Emelyanychev

Dynamic young Russian conductor **Maxim Emelyanychev** (<https://www.warnerclassics.com/artist/maxim-emelyanychev>) returns to Liverpool Philharmonic Hall where he made such an impression during the 2018/19 season when he conducted Haydn's London Symphony and Mozart's Requiem.

The award winning Emelyanychev was born into a family of musicians near the city of Nizhny Novgorod in 1988 and made his conducting debut when he was just 12. He also plays the piano, harpsichord and cornet.

Aged 25 he was appointed principal conductor of both Il Pomo d'Oro – an ensemble specialising in historically informed performances of music from the Baroque and classical periods - and the Nizhny Novgorod Soloists Chamber Orchestra.

He is currently principal conductor of the **Scottish Chamber Orchestra** (<https://www.sco.org.uk/profile/maxim-emelyanychev>), a role he took on in 2019 after stepping in to guest conduct the orchestra in Robin Ticciati's absence.

Watch Maxim Emelyanychev playing live from his living room with wife, the violinist Julia Igonina, during the first Covid lockdown.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TtWVE3AxKyQ>

Aylen Pritchin

Aylen Pritchin (<https://aylenpritchin.com/en/biography>) is described as one of the most vivid and versatile violinists of his generation.

Pritchin, who is paying his first visit to Liverpool to perform in this pair of February concerts, was born in Leningrad in 1987 and started to learn the violin at six.

He went on to study at the Rimsky-Korsakov St Petersburg State Conservatory and the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow.

Pritchin is much in demand as a soloist, with a busy season of performances planned across the world including Saint-Saëns' *Violin Concerto No 3* – on this afternoon programme – which he played with the Omsk Philharmonic Orchestra just before Christmas.

He also regularly appears with pianist **Lukas Geniušas**.

(<https://www.prestomusic.com/classical/products/8129586--pritchin-geniusas-play-works-by-stravinsky-desyatnikov-tchaikovsky>)

And the multi award-winning violinist is also a regular collaborator with Maxim Emelyanychev; together they recently recorded and released an album of Brahms sonatas for piano and violin performed on period instruments.

Watch Aylen Pritchin and Maxim Emelyanychev perform the scherzo from Brahms' *F-A-E Sonata*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7jKFO-8ik>

Rimsky-Korsakov

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (<https://www.allmusic.com/artist/nikolai-rimsky-korsakov-mn0000250057/biography>) composed his *Russian Easter Festival Overture* in 1888 – the same year as he produced *Scheherazade*.

And more than a century after his death, both remain two of his most popular works.

In the Eastern Orthodox church, Easter is traditionally known as the 'bright' holiday – with Easter week is called Bright Week, and you can hear this idea in the overture which marries Russian Orthodox liturgical themes with a paganistic celebration of the end of winter.

The piece, premiered not at Easter but at Christmas by the Russian Symphony Orchestra of St Petersburg, was dedicated to the memory of **Alexander Borodin**

(<https://www.classicfm.com/composers/borodin/guides/discovering-great-composers-alexander-borodin/>) and **Modest Mussorgsky**.

(<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Modest-Mussorgsky>)

They were two members of ‘**The Five**’ (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Five>) group of Russian composers which also included Mily Balakirev, César Cui and Rimsky-Korsakov himself.

Rimsky-Korsakov had joined the group of young composers, dubbed the ‘moguchaya kuchka’ or ‘mighty handful’ by critic Vladimir Stasov, as a 17-year-old while he was being mentored by **Balakirev**. (<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Mily-Balakirev>)

The Five, as they were known in English, were dedicated to creating a national school of Russian music free of the influence of European musical forms like Italian opera and German lieder.

Rimsky-Korsakov himself would go on to influence a number of composers, including Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Ravel and Debussy.

Listen to a recording of the *Russian Easter Festival Overture*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i4CX4qxnA98>

Saint-Saëns

During his long and prolific career, **Camille Saint-Saëns** (<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2021/aug/02/saint-saens-proms-unfashionable-underrated-and-overdue-for-reappraisal>) composed 10 concertos – five for the piano, two for the cello and three for the violin.

As you might expect from such a master craftsman, all of them were bursting with juicy melodies and elegant, lyrical, harmonious lines.

And this *Violin Concerto No 3*, composed in 1880 and which remains his most popular, is no exception. Added to which, it demands technical brilliance.

The opening allegro is a riot of arpeggios, speedy scales and double-stopping, while there’s a haunting andantino – the violin harmonics doubled by clarinet, and the chorale in the final movement has hints of the composer’s *Fourth Piano Concerto*.

Saint-Saëns dedicated the piece to composer, conductor and virtuoso violinist **Pablo de Sarasate** (<https://www.allmusic.com/artist/pablo-de-sarasate-mn0002176046/biography>) who had also premiered his *First Violin Concerto* and performed the third in a premiere in Hamburg in October 1880.

Did you know? Not only was Saint-Saëns a composer and ‘the greatest organist in the world’ (according to Liszt) but he also had an extensive knowledge of botany, butterflies and geology, and wrote academic papers on acoustics.

Watch Joshua Bell play Saint-Saëns' *Violin Concerto No 3 in B minor*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DZxwiABbock>

Ludwig van Beethoven

Beethoven (<https://www.classicfm.com/composers/beethoven/>) was taking the restorative waters in the Bohemian town of Teplitz when he started to compose his **new symphony** (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Symphony-No-7-in-A-Major-Opus-92>) in 1811.

Despite the onset of the deafness which would blight his final years, *Symphony No 7 in A major* with its lively rhythms and fiery finale is considered a notable example of the **more ebullient side of his compositional personality**. (<https://www.classical-music.com/features/works/guide-beethovens-symphony-no-7/>)

Interestingly it was the symphony's sombre and profound allegretto second movement which proved an instant hit, with the audience at its 1813 premiere (a charity concert for wounded soldiers in Vienna) demanding an immediate encore.

And the allegretto has remained hugely popular – not only with concert audiences but also with filmmakers with appearances in films including *The King's Speech*, *X Men Apocalypse* and **Mr Holland's Opus**. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fOQMxN-bsj4>)

Did you know? Beethoven was once arrested as a tramp by a policeman who didn't recognise him.

Watch a performance of Beethoven's *Seventh Symphony* at the Proms.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ahvrHrPGi1k>