

## Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra February 17 programme complementary content

You can expect luscious textures, shimmering harmonies and explosive rhythms in this lively programme from the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra strings.

And if that wasn't enough, the concert also features one of a number of UK premieres being staged by the Orchestra during the current season.

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.

### Rebecca Tong

Award-winning conductor **Rebecca Tong** (<https://www.askonasholt.com/artists/rebecca-tong/>) returns to the Philharmonic Hall to direct this Thursday night concert.

Tong, who triumphed at the inaugural La Maestra conducting competition in Paris, made her **Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra debut** (<https://www.artscityliverpool.com/single-post/2020/10/11/review-rebecca-tong-conducts-the-rlpo-at-philharmonic-hall>) in October 2020, and also appeared at Liverpool Philharmonic Hall last June.

Indonesian-born Tong, a former **Junior Fellow in Conducting** ([https://www.rncm.ac.uk/student\\_stories/rebecca-tong-junior-fellow-in-conducting/](https://www.rncm.ac.uk/student_stories/rebecca-tong-junior-fellow-in-conducting/)) at the Royal Northern, is currently resident conductor at the Jakarta Simfonia Orchestra and music director of the Ensemble Kontemporer.

Watch an excerpt of Rebecca Tong conducting the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Py7r0wjzhvI>

### John Adams

American composer and conductor **John Adams** (<https://www.harrisonparrott.com/artists/john-adams>) has a big birthday this week – and

the Liverpool Philharmonic is joining the celebrations with a performance of his classic *Shaker Loops*.

Adams was born in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1947 and grew up in New England where, as a youngster, he played clarinet in marching bands and community orchestras.

He was only 10 when he started composing and went on to study at Harvard where he conducted the Bach Society Orchestra and became a proponent of 20<sup>th</sup> Century modernism, although his work also encompasses wider orchestral textures and a strong lyrical voice.

He wrote *Shaker Loops* (<https://www.wisemusicclassical.com/work/23709/Shaker-Loops--John-Adams/>) in 1978, originally as a string quartet called Wavemaker in which he attempted to capture the rippling of water in oscillating musical form.

The piece, revised and renamed, later became a septet, while this four-movement version for string orchestra dates from 1983 and remains one of his most performed works.

**Did you know? While a student, John Adams queued from early in the morning to secure a copy of The Beatles' seminal Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band.**

Listen to a performance of *Shaker Loops*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7twYdU3CgGU>

## Vivian Fung

Award-winning Canadian composer **Vivian Fung** ([https://lpr.com/lpr\\_artists/vivian-fung/](https://lpr.com/lpr_artists/vivian-fung/)) was born in Alberta and studied in Paris and at the prestigious Julliard School in New York where she was a member of the faculty for eight years.

Fung's compositions blend traditional Western musical forms with Eastern musical traditions and instruments including the Javanese and Balinese gamelan – an ensemble of percussion instruments.

She won Canada's Juno Award for classical composition of the year in 2013 with her *First Violin Concerto*. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MXX4aFKvKIs>)

Her *String Sinfonietta* (<https://vivianfung.ca/music/string-sinfonietta>) dates from 2008 – although this concert at Liverpool Philharmonic Hall marks its UK premiere.

Its first movement, *animato*, is loosely based on Balinese gamelan with interlocking rhythms while the final *moto perpetuo* is described by Fung as “a virtuosic tour de force movement for strings” which has an explosive conclusion.

Watch a performance of the pizzicato third movement from *String Sinfonietta*.

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

## Arnold Schoenberg

**Arnold Schoenberg** (<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2017/feb/21/music-arnold-schoenberg-do-not-approach-with-caution-pina-napolitano>) is famous for developing the **12-tone, or dodecaphony, system** (<https://www.britannica.com/art/12-tone-music>) as a new means of musical expression to replace tonality and which came to dominate in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

But in his youth, and before he embraced serialism, the Austrian wrote what one chronicler has described as “music in a ripe and sumptuously orchestrated late Romantic style”.

***Verklärte Nacht***, (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Verklarte-Nacht>) or Transfigured Night, is a tone poem in five sections inspired by modernist poet Richard Dehmel’s verse of the same name.

It dates from 1899 when the composer was in his mid-20s and is considered Schoenberg’s earliest important work. But in some ways the piece, with its rich harmonies but very modern subject matter, also marks a musical boundary between Late Romanticism and what was to emerge in the new century.

It was originally composed for string sextet, but in 1917 Schoenberg produced an arrangement for string orchestra. The version you will hear at this concert is a 1943 revision.

**Did you know? While he embraced dodecaphony, Arnold Schoenberg had a terrible fear of the number 13 (known as triskaidekaphobia) throughout his life. And it turned out the number was, ultimately, unlucky for the composer, who died on Friday 13<sup>th</sup>.**

Listen to a performance of the *molto rallentando* from *Verklärte Nacht*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8FtTI3DvIvQ>