

Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra at The Tung Auditorium June 9 programme notes

Superstar violinist Simone Lamsma is the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra's Artist in Residence this year, and we can't wait to see her lead a concert where the string section step into the spotlight.

In this concert, you'll experience a year in Argentina with Piazzolla's passionate *Four Seasons of Buenos Aires*, explore Bach's iconic *Concerto for Two Violins*, and enjoy enchanting music by Grieg, Sarasate and Arvo Pärt.

Simone Lamsma *violin*/director*

Multi award-winning Dutch violinist [Simone Lamsma](#) has won acclaim for her "polished, expressive and intense" performances and "impressive dynamic range".

Born in Leeuwarden, Lamsma started playing the [violin at five](#) and when she was 11, she moved to Britain to study at the Yehudi Menuhin School with Professor Hu Kun. She continued to work with him at the [Royal Academy of Music](#), where she was also a student of Professor Maurice Hasson, graduating at the age of 19 with first class honours and three awards including the HRH Princess Alice Prize for exemplary studentship.

In 2011 she became an associate of the Royal Academy, and in 2019 Lamsma was made a [Fellow](#) – an honour limited to just 300 alumni.

She made her solo debut aged 14 performing Paganini's *Violin Concerto No.1* with the Northern Dutch Orchestra, and over the last two decades has forged a busy and successful career in concert halls worldwide where she is in demand as both a soloist and recitalist.

Lamsma, whose extensive repertoire includes around five dozen violin concertos, plays the 1718 Mlynarski Stradivarius which is on generous loan from an anonymous benefactor.

Eva Thorarinsdottir *violin#*

Icelandic violinist [Eva Thorarinsdottir](#) is a graduate of the Yehudi Menuhin School and the Royal Northern College of Music, where she studied with Maciej Rakowski. She was awarded an International Artist Diploma in Solo Performance in 2010.

A Nordic Solo Prize finalist, she is also a prize winner in numerous competitions including third prize and audience prize in the prestigious Carl Nielsen International Violin Competition.

She has appeared as a soloist with the BBC Symphony Orchestra at the Barbican, performing Max Richter's [Memoryhouse](#), and has also performed numerous concertos with other acclaimed orchestras and ensembles including the Manchester Camerata, Iceland Symphony, Odense Symphony, Oxford Philharmonic and Sinfonia Cymru.

Thorarinsdottir, who is originally from Reykjavik, runs [Echor Music](#) in the Chilterns with her partner Nick Bootiman and violinist Jonathan Stone.

She has held the Associate Leader position with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra since April 2019, and is regularly invited to guest lead orchestras around Europe. She balances her orchestral roles with recitals and chamber music.

She plays on an 1845 Joseph Rocca violin, previously owned by the great [Alfredo Campoli](#).

Arvo Pärt *Summa*

Estonian Arvo Pärt remains one of the most widely performed contemporary classical composers, winning fans across the world with his mesmerising minimalist music.

Pärt was born in Paide (between Tallinn and Tartu) in 1935 and learned the piano, flute and oboe as a child. At the age of 19 he attended Tallinn Music College to study composition, although his studies were soon interrupted by two years of military service in the Soviet Army. After completing his time at college, he went on to spend six years at the Tallinn Conservatory.

His earliest pieces included children's music, neo-classicist works and pieces for the Estonian State Puppet Theatre which he composed while holding down a job as a sound engineer at Estonian Radio.

In 1967 Pärt quit his job and turned to **composing full-time**, and by the early 1970s he had turned his back on modern composing techniques and – while continuing to earn money composing film soundtracks – immersed himself in Gregorian chant and Renaissance polyphony, emerging in 1976 with a new style he called tintinnabuli.

Summa, for string orchestra, dates from that later period and has gone through a number of versions since it was composed as an a cappella vocal work in 1977. While it appears to be simple piece, it hides a complex circular structure and is, according to its composer, the 'most enigmatic work' created through his 'highly formalised compositional system'.

At the time it was first written, Estonia was still part of the Soviet Union where religion and religious practises were discouraged, and atheism promoted. And while the piece may have the title *Summa*, this disguised the fact it was actually based on the text of the Latin Credo.

Did you know? Tintinnabuli, inspired by chant music, is in effect a musical algorithm in which two distinct voices or lines – such as a melody and a harmonic triad (for example the A-C-E of an A minor chord) – become one. The name derives from tintinnabulum, the Latin for a wind chime or collection of bells.

Listen to Arvo Pärt's [Summa](#).

Bach *Concerto for Two Violins in D minor#**

Concerto for Two Violins in D minor dates from around 1730 when its composer was director of music for the main churches in the city of Leipzig. Bach had moved to [Leipzig](#) in 1723 to take up the post of Cantor at its Thomaskirche (St Thomas Church).

Along with composing sacred cantatas for Sunday services and special holidays, he also created large choral works. The *Magnificat* was closely followed by his sublime *St John* and *St Matthew Passions*. Later came his *Mass in B minor* and *Christmas Oratorio*.

But despite a busy schedule, he also found time to take on the role of director of the Collegium Musicum, and to produce a range of secular pieces. It was as part of a concert series for the Collegium that the *Double Concerto* (believed to have been inspired by Vivaldi's own earlier work) was composed.

The concerto's three movements are all in fugue form, where the subject is introduced by one part and then taken up and developed by the other.

The opening vivace starts with the melody heard first in the second violin, then the first, and then taken up by the accompanying basso continuo (instruments playing the base line).

The middle movement, a largo, sees the first and second violins intertwining against an accompaniment of chords, while the final movement is an energetic allegro in which the soloists pursue each other in playful fashion.

Watch a performance of Bach's [*Concerto for Two Violins in D minor*](#).

Grieg *Holberg Suite*

While he's considered one of the foremost composers of the Romantic era which dominated the 19th Century, when it came to his popular *Holberg Suite*, Norwegian [Edvard Grieg](#) drew his inspiration from an earlier time.

The 1884 work, whose full title is *From Holberg's Time – Suite in the Olden Style*, took its name from celebrated Norwegian writer, philosopher and playwright Ludvig Holberg. Considered the founder of modern Norwegian literature, Holberg, like Grieg, hailed from Bergen where he was born in December 1684 – the suite was commissioned to mark the writer's bicentenary. Holberg was a contemporary of Bach, and Grieg looked to the Baroque era when he came to compose [the piece](#), which was originally written for piano.

It is comprised of five movements, four of them based on classic Baroque dances – although with distinct echoes of Norwegian folk tunes.

The first movement is an energetic, toccata-like Praeludium, or prelude, which is notable for its contrasting dynamics and melody, and is followed by a Sarabande (traditionally a Spanish dance in triple metre) and then a buoyant Gavotte.

The fourth movement is in the form of a stately Air, while the work concludes with a Rigaudon – a lively French Baroque dance which became popular during the reign of Louis XIV.

If the *Piano Concerto* and *Peer Gynt Suite* remain his best-known works, the *Holberg Suite* – adapted for string orchestra in 1885 – also showcases Grieg's musical mastery.

Listen to a performance of Grieg's [Holberg Suite](#).

Piazzolla *Four Seasons of Buenos Aires**

Described as a 'genius composer' and 'the King of the Tango', [Astor Piazzolla](#) was also a virtuoso on the concertina-like bandoneon which plays a key role in authentic tango music.

Born in Argentina in 1921 to Italian immigrant parents, from the ages of three to 15 the young Astor lived in New York where he heard the jazz music which was filling the city's clubs and airwaves and was introduced to the music of classical composers like Bach and Rachmaninov.

He later won a grant to study in Paris with the acclaimed French teacher, composer and conductor Nadia Boulanger whose other students over the years included Philip Glass, Aaron Copland and Quincy Jones. She encouraged the young Piazzolla to embrace those early jazz and classical influences in his composing, leading him to create of a fresh type of tango, dubbed nuevo tango.

What became the [Four Seasons of Buenos Aires](#) (or *Estaciones Porteñas* in Spanish) was originally written not as one suite, but as separate works for cabaret band, and over a five-year period starting in 1965. They were taken and arranged into an orchestral suite by fellow composer Leonid Desyatnikov. And rather than start in springtime as Vivaldi did with his own *Four Seasons* 250 years earlier, Piazzolla's tango-infused seasonal odyssey starts in autumn.

Enjoy [Summer](#) from Piazzolla's *Four Seasons of Buenos Aires*.

Sarasate *Introduction and Tarantella**

Born in the northern Spanish city of Pamplona in March 1844, the son of a military bandleader, Pablo Martin Melton Sarasate y Navascuez (known as Pablo de Sarasate) revealed his musical gift at an early age.

The young Pablo started violin lessons at the age of five and made his concert debut at eight – later moving to Madrid where he was a hit in the court of Isabella II. As a teenager, he studied at the Paris Conservatoire where he won its annual first prize.

[Sarasate](#) embarked on a stellar international performing career, although on his first visit to Britain in 1861 he reportedly received a somewhat ambivalent response.

He became recognised as one of the greatest violin virtuosos of the 19th Century, famed for his purity of tone and distinctive technique.

But Sarasate not only inspired contemporary composers (Liverpool Philharmonic's conductor Max Bruch dedicated his *Scottish Fantasy* to him), he also composed around 50 works himself, either for violin and piano or violin and orchestra.

Introduction and Tarantella for violin and orchestra dates from 1900 and is a rousing showpiece for the instrument.

Did you know? When he was 12, Sarasate was taken to Paris by his mother to support his growing virtuosity on the violin. But they had only got as far as Bayonne on the Spanish-French border when disaster struck. His mother had a heart attack and died on the train, and Sarasate himself went down with cholera.

Listen to Sarasate's [Introduction and Tarantella](#).