

Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra March 29 programme complementary content

There's nothing like thinking big, but even by his own epic standards, Mahler's Third Symphony is extraordinary: a whole concert, complete with distant trumpets, children's songs, glittering marches and lofty mountaintop meditations. Domingo Hindoyan conducts it tonight, and with two choruses, a colossal orchestra and Liverpool's own Jennifer Johnston joining the adventure, this should be a night and a half.

Domingo Hindoyan

[Domingo Hindoyan](#) was born in Caracas in 1980 to a violinist father and a lawyer mother. He started his musical career as a violinist in the ground-breaking Venezuelan musical education programme El Sistema. He studied conducting at [Haute Ecole de Musique in Geneva](#), where he gained his masters, and in 2012 was invited to join the Allianz International Conductor's Academy, through which he worked with the London Philharmonic and the Philharmonia Orchestra and with conductors like Esa-Pekka Salonen and Sir Andrew Davis.

He was appointed first assistant conductor to [Daniel Barenboim](#) at the Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin in 2013, and in 2019, he took up a position as principal guest conductor of the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra. In the same year, he made his debut with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and was appointed as the Orchestra's new Chief Conductor in 2020, taking up his position in September 2021. He has now extended his contract with the Orchestra to 2028.

Jennifer Johnston *mezzo-soprano*

Mezzo [Jennifer Johnston](#) started singing as a schoolgirl at Merchant Taylors' in Crosby and made her earliest appearances at Liverpool Philharmonic Hall as a teenage member of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Choir. She says of her time with the Choir: "I learned such a lot in those three years which really formed me later as a performer."

She went on to be a Cambridge choral scholar, but initially worked as a barrister in London before being encouraged to train professionally, winning a scholarship to the Royal College of Music. A former [BBC New Generation Artist](#), she has appeared at the First Night of the Proms, while other career highlights include performing Jocasta in Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* in Berlin and London, and Mrs Grose in Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* at La Scala.

Dubbed the 'Scouse Diva', Johnston's first album – *A Love Letter to Liverpool* – included a special version of the Liverpool FC anthem '[You'll Never Walk Alone](#)' which she recorded with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and Choir. She won the [Royal Philharmonic Society Singer's Award 2021](#) and is also a member of the [Liverpool City Region Music Board](#).

Engagements this season have included Mahler's Third Symphony with Cleveland Orchestra, Haydn's *Nelson Mass* with the BBC Symphony, and Mahler's '*Resurrection*' with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra of Liege. Next month she will sing in Mahler's Eighth Symphony with the London Philharmonic.

Watch Jennifer perform the [fourth movement](#) of Mahler's *Symphony No.3* with the Oslo Philharmonic.

Sopranos and Altos of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Choir

When the Liverpool Philharmonic Society was founded in 1840 it saw the birth not only of an orchestra but of a chorus too. [The Choir](#) added 'royal' to its title in 1990.

In recent years, the Choir has performed Bach's *St Matthew Passion* and *Mass in B minor*, Orff's *Carmina Burana*, Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*, Mahler's *Symphony No.2*, Rachmaninov's *Vespers*, Poulenc's *Gloria*, Karl Jenkins' *Stabat Mater*, James MacMillan's *St John Passion*, Beethoven's *Mass in C*, Britten's *War Requiem* and Handel's *Messiah*. It has also appeared in many of the UK's major concert venues and has sung on a number of foreign tours.

The Choir is led by Director of Choirs and Singing Matthew Hamilton.

During the 2024/25 season, members of the Choir have also performed in Holst's *The Planets*, Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast*, the Spirit of Christmas concert series and the popular annual performance of Handel's *Messiah*. They are also due to sing Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass* and Verdi's *Requiem*.

Liverpool Philharmonic Youth Choir

Liverpool Philharmonic Youth Choir is Youth Company's flagship choir, and performs throughout the year, not only at Liverpool Philharmonic Hall, but across the region. A mixed choir of sopranos, altos, tenors and basses, the Youth Choir regularly performs with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and Choir, including singing in the annual Spirit of Christmas concerts at Liverpool Philharmonic Hall.

Led by Artistic Director Simon Emery, the Choir performs a wide variety of musical styles – everything from classical and jazz, to folk and roots music. The group regularly performs specially composed new works and collaborates with a variety of guest musicians, ensembles and choirs.

The Youth Choir was invited to sing at the closing ceremony of the London 2012 Olympics, a performance which was broadcast live to a worldwide audience of over 900 million people. In 2008, Youth Choir performed for Queen Elizabeth II, who served as patron of Liverpool Philharmonic from 1958 until her death.

Mahler Symphony No.3

At over an hour-and-a-half and with six mighty movements, [Gustav Mahler's](#) Third is the longest symphony in the standard repertoire. Some of the only symphonies to get anywhere close to this musical behemoth are the Austrian composer's own Second, Fifth, Sixth, Eighth and Ninth, Shostakovich's *Leningrad* and Bruckner's Eighth – while you could fit 10 performances of Mozart's *Symphony No.10* and six of Prokofiev's First Symphony into the same running time.

Mahler had started sketching ideas back in 1893, but the bulk of the monumental piece was composed over the summer of 1895 while the 35-year-old Hamburg kapellmeister was staying with his sister Justine and close friend and confidante, the Viennese violist [Natalie Bauer-Lechner](#) at Steinbach am Attersee in the Salzkammergut. It was here in his specially constructed 'music pavilion' (or composing cottage) that Mahler had realised the idea for the final movement of his Second Symphony the previous summer.

In the Third, Mahler strove to reflect what he described as ‘the forces and creations of nature’ and the natural world that surrounded him. He worked on the opening – at one point titled ‘Pan Awakes’ – in the summer of 1896, completing the score at the start of August. And as early as November that year, its second movement was performed in a concert in Berlin. But it wasn’t until the new century that the complete symphony was premiered, at Krefeld in the Rhineland on **June 9 1902**. It was a triumph, with Mahler called back to the podium a dozen times. Over the course of the next five years, he was to go on to conduct the work a total of 15 times.

Listen to [the finale](#) of Mahler’s *Symphony No.3*.

Did you know? Mahler’s music has found its way into more than 100 films, including the Leonard Bernstein biopic *Maestro* (Second Symphony) and psychological drama *Tár* (Fifth Symphony). The fourth movement of Mahler’s *Symphony No.3* was most famously used in Visconti’s *Death in Venice*.

About the Music

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911): Symphony No.3 in D minor

Part One

Kräftig Entschieden [Powerful. Resolute]

Part Two

Tempo di Menuetto. Sehr mässig [At a very moderate pace]

Comodo. Scherzando. Ohne Hast [Unhurried]

Sehr langsam [Very slow]. Misterioso. Durchaus ppp [As quiet as possible]

Lustig im Tempo und keck im Ausdruck [At jaunty tempo with bold expression]

Langsam. Ruhevoll. Empfundnen [Slow. Peaceful. With Feeling]

Composed: 1896

First Performed: 9 June 1902, Krefeld (Germany), Orchester des Allgemeinen Deutschen Musikvereins, cond. Mahler

According to Mahler, the symphony ‘must be like the world. It must embrace everything’. That would make the colossal, almost crazily variegated Third his most ‘symphonic’ work. At first Mahler thought of calling the symphony *Pan*, after the Greek god of nature, or *The Joyful Science*, after one of Nietzsche’s philosophical works, but both of these were soon dropped.

Later, Mahler described the symphony’s six movements as follows:

- ‘1. Summer marches in.
2. What the flowers of the meadow tell me.
3. What the animals of the forest tell me.
4. What night tells me (mankind).
5. What the morning bells tell me (the angels).
6. What love tells me.’

A plan emerges, in which each movement seems to aspire higher than the one before it: the awakening of nature leads ultimately to transcendent love. But around the time he was writing the Third Symphony, Mahler began to lose faith in titles and literary programmes – let the music speak for itself!

But it helps to keep these ideas in mind – especially when coming to the Third Symphony for the first time. Not only is it huge, its proportions are highly unusual. The first movement is vast (normally around 35-40 minutes) – longer than the next four movements put together. In essence it alternates three kinds of music: the dark, awe-inspiring primordial sounds of the

opening, then pastoral vistas, followed by gaudy military march. Eventually it is the latter music which dominates – ‘Summer marches in’ in a wild collage of sounds.

The ‘flowers of the meadow’ minuet that follows is on a much more intimate scale, with hints of folk music, exquisitely scored. The naïve exuberance of the ‘animals of the forest’ third movement is twice interrupted by solos from a distant post-horn, perhaps a dreamlike evocation of primal innocence. But near the end of this movement comes a ferocious fortissimo outburst for almost the whole orchestra: Pan is revealed, in all his elemental splendour.

Mankind’s struggle to make sense of the world, its joy and its pain, is the subject of the Nietzsche setting, almost all of it delivered in an awe-struck pianissimo. Then the sound of bells (literally and imitated by the children’s voices) introduces the angels’ song of joy at God’s forgiveness of the apostle Peter. This is the symphony’s turning point: Nietzsche scorned compassion, but this seemingly naïve, childlike movement holds it aloft as a redeeming ideal. Then, in the finale, an intense hymn-like theme for strings alternates with music that seems more troubled, searching, until the hymn finally builds to a radiant major-key climax. Mahler revealed to the soprano Anna von Mildenburg that he had a motto in mind for this movement: ‘Father, see these wounds of mine! Let no creature of yours be lost!’ He goes on, ‘I could almost call it “What God tells me”. And truly, in the sense that God can only be understood as love.’