

**Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra**  
**September 18 & 21 programme complementary content**

**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.

**Pacho Flores** *trumpet*

[Pacho Flores](#) has proved a big hit with Liverpool Philharmonic audiences since he first appeared alongside his old El Sistema friend Domingo Hindoyan in January 2020. Since then, the pair have forged a new 'dream team' partnership, and the irrepressible trumpet virtuoso has returned to Liverpool on a number of occasions including two concerts in November 2021 – one of which saw the European premiere of Paquito D'Rivera's [Concerto Venezolano for Trumpet and Orchestra](#). In 2022/23 he was Liverpool Philharmonic's Artist in Residence and among his appearances, he joined the Orchestra for its annual Spirit of Christmas concerts.

Born Francisco Flores in Venezuela in 1981, he was four or five when he first picked up the trumpet, and eight when he began studying with his father Francisco Flores Diaz. As a teenager he joined Venezuela's famous El Sistema music programme, and along with being principal trumpeter of the [Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra](#), he is also a founding member of the Simón Bolívar Brass Quintet and founding director of the Latin American Trumpet Academy.

The multi award-winning Flores is also a composer and in 2021 he and the Orchestra gave the UK premiere of his own concertante, *Cantos y revueltas*. He most recently appeared with the Orchestra at the BBC Proms last month, performing Márquez's *Concierto de otoño*.

Forthcoming engagements this autumn include the London premiere of Gabriella Ortiz's trumpet concerto *Altar de Bronce* with the Philharmonia, and Antonio Santana's *Suite Fantaisiste* in a concert in Vienna marking flautist James Strauss' 50<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**Percussionists from Liverpool Philharmonic Youth Company and In Harmony  
Liverpool Philharmonic**

Today's performance features 20 young musicians from Liverpool Philharmonic Youth Company and In Harmony Liverpool Philharmonic, which reach 2,200 young people every week across Liverpool City Region.

Liverpool Philharmonic Youth Company is the largest community of young musicians and singers in the North West. Youth Company consists of ten ensembles, ranging from choral singing and symphony orchestras to a brass band and session orchestra playing a wide range of musical genres, as well as programmes for young composers and songwriters. Youth Company provides a safe and welcoming space, and the opportunity for young, aspiring artists in Liverpool to develop their talent, offering musical pathways and unrivalled experience.

In Harmony Liverpool Philharmonic provides music-making opportunities to 1,800 children every week at music hubs in Everton and Anfield. Children aged 0-18 receive high-quality tuition in instruments, singing, composition and performance, all while boosting their confidence, academic skills and social resilience. The initiative has reached over 4,000 young people, demonstrating how access to music transforms lives and strengthens entire communities.

### **Amadeo Roldán**

Though revered in Cuba, 20<sup>th</sup> Century composer and violinist [Amadeo Roldán](#) was actually born nearly 5,000 miles away in Paris in June 1900. He was introduced to music by his Cuban pianist mother Albertina Gardes and later studied at the Madrid Conservatory. He travelled to Cuba following the First World War, where after working in cafes and cabarets and earning money teaching, he was appointed concertmaster of the Orquesta Sinfónica de la Habana. The young violinist later became conductor of the Havana Philharmonic, introducing the music of Stravinsky, de Falla and Debussy to Cuba. From 1933 to 1938 he was director of the Municipal Academy of Music.

But it is as a composer that he is better known today. Roldán was a key member of the artistic and social movement Afrocubanismo, which developed during the interwar period and focused on Black-themed Cuban culture. He wrote orchestral, chamber and vocal music, from his early *Fetes Galantes* song cycles in 1923 onwards, and his work was often featured in concerts sponsored by the Pan-American Association of Composers. He also composed two ballets – the first, *La Rebambaramba*, is arguably his most famous work, although it was only actually staged [for the first time](#) in 1957.

Sadly, Roldán didn't live to see it. In the early 1930s he developed cancer and died in Havana in March 1939, aged only 38. But his influence in Cuba lives on – the Municipal Academy of Music is now the Amadeo Roldán Conservatory and Havana's striking Amadeo Roldán Theatre (opened in 1929 and renamed in his honour 30 years later) was a leading venue until it was destroyed in an arson attack in 1977. Despite attempts at restoration, today it sits neglected.

**Did you know? Roldán wasn't the only musical sibling in his family. His sister Maria Teresa was a mezzo-soprano and his brother Alberto a cellist.**

Listen to Amadeo Roldán's [La Rebambaramba](#).

### **Jennifer Higdon**

Born in Brooklyn in 1962, the soundtrack to composer [Jennifer Higdon's](#) childhood was Lennon & McCartney, Simon & Garfunkel, bluegrass and country. Yet as a musician, Higdon was a relatively late starter. She only picked up an instrument at the age of 15, teaching herself to play the flute, before starting formal music studies at 18. Her first compositions came at 21 years old.

But over the last four decades she has made up for that, becoming a major figure in contemporary classical music. One of the most-performed living American composers with an extensive range of commissions, her works have been recorded on more than 70 CDs and feature in more than 200 performances globally every year. Just one – *blue cathedral* – has been performed over 600 times in the last quarter-of-a-century. Her work covers a wide range of genres, from chamber to orchestral and choral, and her second opera, *Woman With Eyes Closed*, was premiered in Pittsburgh in May 2025. Her musical style is recognised for its melodic accessibility and often unusual rhythmic structures.

Higdon was Professor of Composition at the prestigious Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia from 1994 to 2021, and one of her many notable pieces is her *Violin Concerto*, commissioned by former Curtis Institute pupil Hilary Hahn, which won a [2010 Pulitzer Prize](#). The committee described the piece as combining “flowing lyricism with dazzling virtuosity”. She has also won three Grammy Awards for ‘best contemporary classical composition’, most recently with her 2020 *Harp Concerto*.

Listen to Jennifer Higdon’s [blue cathedral](#).

### Arturo Márquez

Widely considered one of the most important Mexican composers of his generation, [Arturo Márquez](#) was born in the Sonora desert town of Álamos in 1950, the eldest of nine children. His father and grandfather were both musicians – the former a mariachi player and the latter a folk musician – and the young Arturo started his musical training in California where the Márquez family moved when he was 12.

Enjoying an eclectic range of music (he recalls listening to, variously, mariachi, Chopin and The Beatles), on returning to Mexico in his late teens he enrolled at the Mexican Music Conservatory where he studied piano and music theory and started composing. From there, scholarships took him on to Paris and back to the United States.

Márquez’s music incorporates forms and styles from his home country and is inspired by the rhythms and movements of Latin dances. While he still lives in Mexico City, where he works at the National University of Mexico’s Superior School of Music, since the 1990s his international profile has risen. This is thanks, in part, to his series of *danzónes* being performed by conductor Gustavo Dudamel and the Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra during a 2007 tour of Europe and the US. These works have also become a favourite of ballet companies.

His *Danzón No.2*, composed in 1994, has been dubbed [Mexico’s “second national anthem”](#). But he has also composed a substantial body of works for solo instruments and orchestra, and a rich repertoire of chamber music.

Watch Pacho Flores perform Arturo Márquez’s [Concierto de otoño](#).

### Antonin Dvořák

Born in 1841 in the small Bohemian village of Nelahozeve, where his zither-playing butcher father ran an inn, [Antonin Dvořák](#) showed an early aptitude for music. At the age of 12, the young Antonin – the eldest of 14 children – was sent 10 miles away [to Zlonice](#) where he lived with an aunt and uncle while he undertook musical studies (and learned the rudiments of the butchery trade). But in the end, it was melody that won the day for the teenage butcher’s apprentice when he enrolled at the Institute for Church Music in Prague.

Dvořák's earliest foray into the professional music world was as a viola player, and in 1866 he played in two premieres of Smetana operas – *The Brandenburgers* and *The Bartered Bride* – under the baton of the composer himself. Little did anyone around him know that at home he had a growing number of manuscripts of his own tucked away, including two symphonies and an opera. It wasn't until 1873 that he had his first major success as a composer with *The Heirs of White Mountain*. In fact, it turned out to be a propitious year for Dvořák who also married – his wife Anna, a talented pianist and singer, had been a pupil of his.

As Dvořák's star rose he formed friendships with several other composers including Janáček and Brahms, who championed the young Bohemian, while the older Smetana became something of a mentor. While much of his music, including his early *Slavonic Dances*, referenced the folk melodies of his home country, his career as a composer and educator also took him far from his homeland. And absence certainly made the heart grow fonder.

In 1892 he was enticed to take up a position as director at the National Conservatory of Music in New York, a role he held for three years. And it was during that [time in the States](#), where he discovered spirituals and the music of indigenous peoples, that he was inspired to produce a number of compositions including what remains his best-known piece – his *Symphony No.9, 'From the New World'*. Homesickness (and financial changes) eventually saw Dvořák return to Europe where, looking for a new project, he produced his hugely successful opera *Rusalka*. He [died in Prague](#) on May 1, 1904 at the age of 62. Thousands of people attended his funeral.

**Did you know? Dvořák suffered from agoraphobia. His anxiety about open spaces and large crowds worsened as he aged and actually stopped him from attending the premiere of his *Symphony No.9, From the New World*.**

Listen to the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra perform the [fourth movement](#) of *Symphony No.9* under the baton of Libor Pešek.

## About the Music

### Amadeo Roldán (1900-39): *La Rebambaramba*

Composed: 1928

First Performed: 12 August 1928, Havana, National Theatre, Havana Philharmonic Orchestra, cond. Amadeo Roldán

Amadeo Roldán is a key figure in the story of the emergence of a Cuban national voice in classical music, both as composer and as concertmaster and conductor of the Havana Philharmonic Orchestra. A driven, inspiring figure, he achieved a phenomenal amount in his short life, and who knows what he might have gone on to if his compulsive smoking hadn't led to his death from cancer at just 38. It was his 'ballet colonial' *La Rebambaramba*, initially performed as an orchestral suite, that first drew attention abroad, when it was performed with great success in Paris in 1931. *La Rebambaramba* is a spectacularly colourful, vibrantly rhythmic depiction of an Afro-Cuban fiesta (Roldán had Spanish and African roots), featuring a splendid range of native percussion instruments – the score even calls for the jawbone of an ass! (Don't worry: no donkeys were harmed in preparation for this performance.) 'It was an attempt', said Alejo Carpentier, who devised the ballet's story, 'to evoke... the seething, effervescent life of ordinary Havana in 1830, on Three Kings Day'. It's an 'attempt' that succeeds brilliantly.

### Jennifer Higdon (b. 1962): *blue cathedral*

Composed: 2000

First Performed: 2000, Pennsylvania, Curtis Institute, Curtis Institute Symphony Orchestra

Jennifer Higdon's introduction to classical music came surprisingly late. Her painter father was keen to introduce his children to the visual arts, and she soon became fascinated by photography. It was the rock and folk music of the 1960s that first set her thinking in musical terms, and it was only at college that she first began to study music theory and explore the traditional and modern classics. She worked hard and learned quickly, and before long she'd begun to find her path as a composer. Something of her early visual education always remained however, and that can be felt in her remarkable and moving *blue cathedral*. As she wrote it, Higdon imagined a journey through a glass cathedral in the sky, at first impressed by the otherworldly architecture, the spellbound as the figures in the stained-glass windows begin to sing. 'I wanted to create the sensation of contemplation and quiet peace at the beginning', she tells us, 'moving towards the feeling of celebration and ecstatic expansion of the soul, all the while singing along with that heavenly music.'

But there's also a deeply personal note. Not long before Higdon wrote *blue cathedral*, her younger brother, Andrew, died. At first, it is Higdon's own instrument, the flute, that leads melodically, but gradually Andrew's own instrument, the clarinet, takes over. It is, says Higdon, 'a story that commemorates living and passing through places of knowledge and sharing and of that song called life.'

### **Arturo Márquez (B. 1950): Trumpet Concerto (*Concierto de Otoño*)**

1. Son de luz (Son of Light)
2. Balada de floripondios (Ballad of the Angel's Trumpet)
3. Conga de Flores (Flores' Conga)

Composed: 2018

First Performed: 7 September 2018, Mexico City, Palacio des Bellas Artes, National Symphony Orchestra of Mexico, Pacho Flores (trumpet), cond. Carlos Miguel Prieto

Arturo Márquez was steeped in the music of his native Mexico from earliest childhood. His father was a mariachi player, and his grandfather was a Mexican folk musician. Through them he was also introduced to the tangy sensuousness of Mexican salon music, whose unique atmosphere permeates his orchestral *Danzón No. 2* (1994), which brought him international fame when it was taken up by the Gustavo Dudamel and the Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra of Venezuela during their 2007 tour of Europe and the USA.

*Concierto de Otoño* (Autumn Concerto) was composed specially for Pacho Flores, and in a tribute to Flores' mastery, not just of the trumpet, but also of its near-relatives in the brass family. It uses four different instruments: the standard trumpet in C in the first movement, flugelhorn and cornet in the second, and the higher-pitched trumpet in D in the finale. 'The trumpet is the queen in the heart of Mexico' Márquez writes. 'We find it in practically every form of popular musical expression; it is the Mexican cry of joy and of sorrow. It is also foundational in Latin American concert music, and my *Concierto de Otoño* is a compilation of all those feelings, colours, and consolations.' The 'Son' in the first movement is an Afro-Cuban dance, here focussed in a dark-hued dialogue between trumpet and orchestra. The 'Angel's Trumpet' of the second movement is an amazing flared flower, which inspires some gorgeously 'flowery' instrumental song for the

flugelhorn and cornet. The 'Conga de Flores' is actually a traditional dance, again from Cuba, but Márquez transforms it into a dazzlingly virtuosic tribute to Pachó Flores himself.

**Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904): Symphony No.9 in E minor, Op 95, From the New World**

1. Adagio – Allegro molto
2. Largo
3. Scherzo: Molto Vivace
4. Allegro con fuoco

Composed: 1893

First Performed: 16 December 1893, Carnegie Hall, New York, New York Philharmonic, cond. Anton Seidl

Having shown his fellow Czechs how to write truly 'national' classical music in his Slavonic Dances, Dvořák set out to do the same for the much younger nation of the United States in his Ninth Symphony, composed while he was director of the newly-formed New York Conservatory. As in his native country, Dvořák hoped to show how turning to indigenous folk music could provide the roots of a national American style, and in a newspaper article he argued that it was the music of Black and Native Americans that provided the most vibrant and fertile examples. Dvořák wasn't prepared for the indignation this provoked, much of it unashamedly racist in character. But he soldiered on: if white Americans wouldn't accept his thesis expressed in words, would it be different if he expressed it in music?

It turns out he was right. The premiere of the New World Symphony was a sensational success, and it has been hugely popular – and influential – ever since, and not just with classical musicians. Steeped in folk music from boyhood, it's not surprising that Dvořák could create 'Czech' melodies of his own at will. What is really surprising is how much he was able to do the same with North American music, particularly Black American spirituals. The beautiful cor anglais melody in the Largo sounds so 'authentic' that for years it was taken to be a genuine spiritual – one that Dvořák had perhaps heard sung by his Black pupil Harry Burleigh. The debt to Native American music is less obvious, but apparently the pounding rhythms of the Scherzo were inspired by seeing and hearing native dancers at the Czech community in Spillville, Iowa. What is most remarkable though is the way Dvořák draws all these elements together into a panoramic symphonic statement – there's so much more to this than a collection of musical postcards.

But finally, a question: what about the ending? The symphony seems to be powering to a loudly affirmative conclusion, but the final chord dies away slowly, on winds. Not so affirmative after all? Is doubt mixed in with the hope? Given the way race relations developed (or failed to develop) in the 20th Century, this could be genuine foresight.