

Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra

October 30 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.

Mariam Batsashvili

Charisma, brilliance and depth of expression are qualities with which Georgian pianist [Mariam Batsashvili](#) captivates live audiences. Her career has taken her to more than 30 countries and many of the world's most important concert halls, and she has also long secured her place among the top ranks in the recording and streaming market since signing exclusively with [Warner Classics](#) in 2019. Appearing in major music centres like London, Berlin, Paris and Vienna, Batsashvili is also a frequent guest at festivals such as the Klavier-Festival Ruhr, the Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival, Edinburgh International Festival, and the Beethovenfest Bonn.

She is among the world's most sought-after interpreters of great piano repertoire ranging from Bach to late Romanticism. Batsashvili's career has been closely linked to the name of Franz Liszt, who was the focus of her album *Chopin Liszt* in 2019. She enjoyed [acclaimed victories](#) at the Franz Liszt competitions in Weimar in 2011 and Utrecht in 2014.

Beyond Liszt's works, Batsashvili – a former ECHO Rising Star and BBC New Generation Artist – earns enthusiastic reactions from audiences and specialist press for her interpretations of the piano works of Schubert, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms. Her most recent album, *Influences*, features the work of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, as well as Liszt.

Last season Batsashvili returned to major concert venues including the Wigmore Hall, Gross Festspielhaus in Salzburg, Hamburg Elbphilharmonie and the BBC Proms – where she performed Mozart's *Piano Concerto No.20*.

Meanwhile her [Instagram](#) tutorials on technical and performance practice issues have garnered her more than 70,000 followers.

Paul Hindemith

Born in Germany in 1895, composer, conductor, teacher and violist [Paul Hindemith](#) dominated the country's music scene between the end of the First World War – in which he was conscripted into the army – and the demise of the Weimar Republic in 1933. He juggled busy

composing and performing careers, playing in a string quartet as well as being a talented solo violinist, along with serving as a professor of composition at the Berlin Academy of Music. Hindemith's early work was influenced by late-Romanticism, but as his own style developed through the 1920s, he became a disciple of the 'Neue Sachlichkeit' modern realist movement alongside Kurt Weill. In art, its chief exponents were Otto Dix and George Grosz.

In the process, Hindemith managed to [scandalise more conservative audiences](#) with works like a ragtime based on a theme by Bach and a trio of one-act operas with provocative sexual themes. Unfortunately for Hindemith, some members of the Nazi Party weren't keen on him either and by the late 1930s, his music had been declared 'degenerate' and banned. Out of favour with the regime and with a wife with part-Jewish ancestry, Hindemith quit Germany and took up a role creating a new music school in Istanbul.

In 1938 he emigrated to Switzerland, and two years later – with war by then raging in Europe – he embarked on a lecture tour to the United States and stayed, teaching at prestigious institutions including Yale and Cornell and enjoying success as an émigré composer. After the war he became an official US citizen, but in 1953 he returned to Europe, making his home in Switzerland once again. He died in Frankfurt in 1963.

Listen to Paul Hindemith's [Concert Music for Strings and Brass](#).

Franz Liszt

Long, long before Beatlemania, the music world was rocked by another extraordinary episode of collective hysteria – [Lisztomania](#). It may seem strange to us now, but 1840s audiences (particularly the female half) went wild for the dashing Hungarian composer and superstar showman, Franz Liszt. The phenomenon was so great that fans fought over his piano strings and coffee dregs, and in the 1970s Ken Russell was inspired to make a (completely mad) film about it, starring Roger Daltrey in the title role and Paul Nicholas as Richard Wagner!

The real [Liszt](#) was born in the Sopron area of Hungary in 1811, where his father was in the employ of Haydn's patron Prince Esterházy. Young Franz gave his first public concert aged nine. Going on to study in Vienna, he was taught piano by Carl Czerny, who himself had been a pupil of Beethoven, and composition by Antonio Salieri of Amadeus fame.

Liszt the pianist toured Europe, garnering fans and, particularly after he scaled back his touring schedule from the 1850s onwards, he also found time to compose – so prolific was he that over the course of a 60-year career he wrote around 700 pieces of music. Predominately known for his piano compositions, his extensive catalogue of innovative work also included chamber pieces, symphonic poems (a musical form he himself invented), choral works – both sacred and secular – and, from his early teenage years, a single foray into opera, *Don Sanche or the Castle of Love*.

Despite the fame, flamboyance and frenzy, Liszt's life wasn't all wine and roses. Two of his children died in quick succession, his love life was messy and complicated, and despite their pairing in Cockney rhyming slang, he had a [frosty relationship](#) with fellow composer Brahms who, as a young man, had managed to fall asleep during a Liszt recital. Liszt spent his last years moving between Budapest, Weimar and Rome, composing (particularly more sacred works) and teaching, and occasionally still playing concerts across Europe. His final performance was in Luxembourg on July 19, 1886, before he headed to Bayreuth where his daughter Cosima (who was married to Wagner) was director of the festival. It was there, on July 31, and suffering from pneumonia, that Liszt died, aged 74.

Did you know? On December 1, 1840, Franz Liszt performed at the Theatre Royal in Williamson Square. Earlier the same year the 29-year-old had introduced the idea of the ‘piano recital’ to British audiences in London. A plaque commemorating his visit to Liverpool can be found on the front of the Playhouse theatre.

Enjoy the [first movement](#) of Liszt’s *Piano Concerto No.2 in A major*

Richard Strauss

[Richard Strauss](#) was a young composer in a hurry – by the time he was 18 he already had 100 works to his name. Over the course of a seven-decade career, he produced more than 200 major compositions, among them the operas and tone poems for which he is best known.

The first child of horn player Franz Joseph Strauss and his wife Josepha, Strauss was born in Munich in 1864 and showed an early aptitude for music. He started piano lessons at four, violin at eight and also learned from sitting in on rehearsals of the Munich Court Orchestra, whose assistant conductor gave him tuition in theory and orchestration. At the age of 21 he was appointed assistant conductor to Hans von Bülow at the Meiningen Orchestra. One of the other candidates he beat to the post was Gustav Mahler.

Described as a Post-Romantic, Strauss’ breakthrough as a composer came with *Don Juan* in 1888, and by the turn of the 20th Century he had consolidated his international standing as both composer and conductor. His opera *Salome* was so successful he could then afford to build a home in the Bavarian alpine resort of Garmisch-Partenkirchen (a favourite spot for conductors, composers, singers and authors), where he lived until his death in September 1949.

While early works were influenced by the Romantics, including Wagner, Strauss developed his own musical style over time, one which has been described as encompassing rich, textured orchestration and dramatic, expressive power, and utilising dissonance and extended tonality. Towards the end of his life his work became more conservative. In 1920, Strauss co-founded the [Salzburg Festival](#). He received many honours over the years, including the French Croix de Chevalier and the Royal Philharmonic Society’s Gold Medal.

Enjoy [images](#) from Kubrick’s *2001: A Space Odyssey* set to Strauss’ *Also sprach Zarathustra*.

About the Music

Paul Hindemith (1895-1963): Concert Music for Strings and Brass

1. Mässig schnell, mit Kraft (Moderately fast, with force)

2. Lebhaft (Lively)

Composed: 1930

First Performed: 3 April 1931, Boston, Symphony Hall, Boston Symphony Orchestra, cond. Serge Koussevitzky

When the young Paul Hindemith came to international attention in the years following the end of the First World War, it was as an iconoclast, a zestful prankster, and as the only half-serious champion of *Gebrauchsmusik* (‘Utility Music’) – in other words, definitely not an old-world romantic in any shape or form. But as the cultural climate worsened in Germany in the 1930s, a new warmth of expression began to emerge in his music. The abstract-sounding title ‘Concert Music’ is still the old Hindemith, and the division of the orchestra into two contrasting groups echoes the Baroque Concerto grosso, as do its clear formal outlines and the concentration on

muscular repeated driving or dancing rhythms. But there's an element of steely defiance in the opening section, and more than a hint of the elegiac in the slow music that emerges from it. Light, playful, rapid music dominates the second movement, but at its heart is something much slower, and darker. Hindemith was no Nazi sympathiser, and he would soon be enmeshed in controversy. Did he sense what was coming?

Franz Liszt (1811-86): Piano Concerto No 2 in A major

Composed: 1839 – Revised 1849-61

First Performed: 7 January 1857, Weimar Court Orchestra, Hans von Bronsart (piano), cond. Liszt

Like his great pianist-composer precursor Chopin, Liszt composed two concertos for piano and orchestra. But their histories are very different. Chopin had completed both his concertos by the age of twenty. Liszt however spent a huge amount of time and effort getting his two concertos right. Finishing the Second took two decades. What was it that caused him such problems? Staggeringly precocious though he was in many ways, Liszt wasn't a born master of the orchestra. He was helped greatly by collaborating with the then-famous composer Joachim Raff, but even more valuable was his experience as a conductor at the Ducal Court of Weimar, where he became Kapellmeister in 1848.

But there's another possible reason why it took Liszt so long to finish the Second Concerto. This is a subtler piece than the First, less barnstorming and more poetic in character, with the relationship between soloist and orchestra less confrontational, more inclined to playful give-and-take or gentle intimacy. At times it has an almost dreamlike quality – more a romantic tone poem for piano and orchestra than a concerto in the classical sense. The Second Concerto is in one continuous movement, but it breaks down into six linked sections (the experience of orchestrating Schubert's four-movements-in-one solo piano *Wanderer Fantasy* was clearly influential), all developing motifs in the opening adagio. After that pensive opening comes a faster scherzo-like section, an Allegro moderato with a prominent cello solo, a section marked Allegro deciso, a vigorous march, and finally a suitably brilliant Allegro animato.

Richard Strauss (1864-1949): Also sprach Zarathustra ('Thus spake Zarathustra')

Composed: 1895-6

First Performed: 27 November 1896, Frankfurt, Frankfurt Opera and Museum Orchestra, cond. Strauss

Richard Strauss was one of many young Germans who were enthralled by Friedrich Nietzsche's epic philosophical poem 'Thus Spake Zarathustra' (1883), with its message of radical individualism and ecstatic prophecy of a new, transformed humanity – the 'Superman'. Soon Strauss was thinking of giving form to his feelings in music. He took phrases and images from Nietzsche and used them as subtitles for his audacious new orchestral tone poem, which he completed in 1896. But it's unlikely that Strauss ever wanted his audiences to relate his music point by point to Nietzsche's ideas. His 'Thus Spake Zarathustra' was, he said, composed 'freely after Nietzsche'. 'I did not intend to write philosophical music or portray Nietzsche's great work musically', he wrote. 'I meant rather to convey in music an idea of the evolution of the human race from its origin, through various phases of development, religious as well as scientific, up to Nietzsche's idea of the Superman.'

Strauss' *Also sprach Zarathustra* begins with a stupendous musical sunrise – made famous by Stanley Kubrick's film *2001: A Space Odyssey*. In Strauss' scheme it signifies the dawning of

human consciousness. But then comes a step backwards, as the organ joins richly divided strings for a portrayal of the 'false' consolations of religion. Human 'Joys and Passions', burst out in a downward sweeping harp glissando, then comes a search for a new stability in 'Of Science' - a dryly methodical fugue, beginning deep in cellos and basses. More turbulence follows, culminating in a terrifying reminder of the work's opening theme. The tempo increases, with cockcrows on high trumpets (promise of a new dawn), leading to a luxuriously elegant waltz, 'The Dance-Song' - the absolute opposite of the sombre, rigid gravity of the 'Of Science' section. Twelve bell strokes sound midnight, the moment of ultimate revelation in Nietzsche's poem. But from this point onwards, Strauss seems to question Nietzsche's vision (as Nietzsche himself did in his darker moments). *Also sprach Zarathustra* ends with an eerie question mark: high woodwind, violins and harp harmonies clashing quietly but irreconcilably with deep pizzicato cellos and basses. Can humanity really 'overcome' itself? Can joy really be stronger than suffering, as Nietzsche had proclaimed? Strauss leaves room for doubt.