Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra
November 27 & 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.

Sir Stephen Hough

One of the most distinctive artists of his generation, and named one of the Twenty Living Polymaths by *The Economist*, Heswell-born pianist, composer, author, poet and theologian **Sir Stephen Hough** studied at Chetham's, the Royal Northern College of Music and Juilliard. The first classical performer to be awarded a MacArthur Fellowship, his other accolades include Northwestern University's 2008 Jean Gimbel Lane Prize in piano, the Royal Philharmonic Society Instrumental Award 2010, and in 2016 he was made an honorary member of the RPS. He was **knighted** in the 2022 Queen's Birthday Honours.

Since taking first prize at the 1983 Naumberg Competition in New York, Sir Stephen has appeared with most of the major European, Asian and American orchestras, and plays recitals regularly in major halls and concert series around the world. He has been a regular guest at festivals such as Aldeburgh, Aspen, Edinburgh, Salzburg, and at the BBC Proms where he has made 29 concerto appearances.

Many of his catalogue of more than 60 albums have garnered international prizes including several Grammy nominations, eight *Gramophone Magazine* Awards – including Record of the Year in 1996 and 2003 – and the Gramophone 'Gold Disc' Award in 2008 which named his complete Saint-Saëns piano concertos album as the best recording of the past 30 years. His 2012 recording of the complete Chopin waltzes received the Diapason d'Or de l'Annee, France's most prestigious recording award.

Published by Joseph Weinberger, Sir Stephen has composed works for orchestra, choir, chamber ensemble, organ, harpsichord and solo piano. A noted writer too, he has contributed articles for the *New York Times*, *Guardian*, *The Times*, *Gramophone* and *BBC Music* magazines, and he wrote a blog for *The Telegraph* which became a popular and influential forum for cultural discussion. He has published four books including his 2023 memoir, ***Enough: Scenes from Childhood***.

In a 2021 interview for a Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra concert programme, he recalled attending performances at Philharmonic Hall as a child, saying: "It seemed so big! I was

a little boy having piano lessons on Hope Street and we'd go to concerts on Saturday nights. I said to my mother, 'do you think I'll ever get to play on that stage?'"

Watch Sir Stephen Hough **'in conversation'** at Cambridge University in 2024.

Manuel de Falla

If Italy dominated classical music in the 17th Century, Austria in the 18th, and Germany in the 19th, the composers of Spain made sure the Iberian Peninsula was not forgotten at the start of the 20th Century. And among those at the heart of what has been described as 'the great flowering of Spanish classical music' was **Manuel de Falla**. He was born into a comfortably well-off family in the ancient Andalucian port city of Cádiz in 1876, and although he moved to Madrid as a young man and would go on to spend time in Paris and finally Argentina, it was the distinctive sound of his southern Spanish roots which would flavour much of his work.

Falla's early piano lessons were with his mother, and in Madrid he studied composition with **Felipe Pedrell** who dedicated his life to the development of a singularly Spanish school of music. Pedrell also taught Isaac Albéniz and Enrique Granados, who were the other two points of the 'three-cornered hat' of early 20th Century Spanish music. In 1907, Falla moved to Paris, initially on the promise of a concert tour which failed to materialise. He ended up spending **seven years** in the French capital, where he developed his style (influenced by composers like Ravel and Debussy), only leaving with the outbreak of the First World War.

It was in the French capital that he finished and published his *Four Spanish Pieces* for piano, and started what became his first orchestral piece, *Nights in the Gardens of Spain*. Paris was invigorating, but his home was evidently in his heart. Falla had met Sergei Diaghilev in Paris and after the war, the Russian commissioned what became the ballet *The Three-Cornered Hat* which was premiered in London in 1919.

The following year, after the death of his parents, Falla moved back to Andalucia, settling in Granada. But in October 1939, after living through the brutal upheaval of the Spanish Civil War, Falla left his homeland for Argentina, initially to take part in a celebration of Spanish music in Buenos Aires. He was never to return, or to lose his longing for Spain. He died in **Alta Gracia** in the Argentinian province of (ironically) Cordoba in November 1946. After a funeral in Argentina, Falla's body was repatriated and laid to rest, with great ceremony, in Cádiz in January 1947.

Listen to a performance of ***Fantasía Baetica*** in its original piano form.

Sergei Rachmaninov

In 1932, the 59-year-old composer and piano virtuoso **Sergei Rachmaninov** was asked to define 'music'. "Music is born only in the heart, and it appeals only to the heart. It is love!" was (part of) **his reply**. And the Russian composer's music, with its luscious melodies and emotional resonance, has certainly appealed to the hearts of generations of listeners.

While he remains renowned for his piano concertos, Rachmaninov also composed for orchestra, chamber ensemble and choir, as well as completing three operas, and works for voice. His earliest surviving piece for orchestra, his *Scherzo in D*, dates from 1887 when he was 14 and studying at the Moscow Conservatory. He produced three symphonies over the course of 40 years, although after the **famously disastrous premiere** of his *Symphony No.1* in 1897, he could have been forgiven for never approaching the musical form again.

In fact, Rachmaninov was so deeply scarred by the whole experience he fell into a depression and practically stopped all composing, reporting feeling pains in his hands and legs just thinking about it. He underwent therapy, and coming out the other side, in 1901 he produced his most beloved work, the *Second Piano Concerto* (dedicated to the hypnotherapist who had helped him), the response to which galvanised him back into action.

Rachmaninov's most productive composing years came while he was still living in his native Russia. But in the wake of the October 1917 revolution, he and his family left everything, including their beloved summer estate Ivanovka, and headed west from Petrograd by train and sledge, eventually reaching Stockholm. From there, they travelled to Copenhagen and then on to New York, where the Rachmaninovs settled on the **Upper West Side**.

He lived the rest of his life in exile, and predominantly worked as a pianist, embarking on a series of concert tours in Europe and the US. His final work, *Symphonic Dances*, was composed on Long Island in 1940. Two years later, and in declining health, Rachmaninov moved to the **West Coast** and died in March 1943 at home in Beverly Hills, just a few days shy of his 70th birthday.

Did you know? Rachmaninov was a friend and musical collaborator of Viennese violin virtuoso Fritz Kreisler, and they gave several recitals together in America. At one, Kreisler had a blank moment and, desperate to re-locate his place in the score, whispered to Rachmaninov at the piano "where are we?" – "Carnegie Hall" was Rachmaninov's unhelpful reply.

Listen to Rachmaninov play the **first movement** of his own *Piano Concerto No.1*

Sergei Prokofiev

Like many of his fellow composers, **Sergei Prokofiev** could be included in the category of child prodigy. Born in modern day Ukraine in 1891, his keen amateur pianist mother spotted the young Sergei's early promise, which included playing the piano, and at five, starting to compose. At eight he produced his first opera, *The Giant*. In 1904, aged 13, Prokofiev was accepted into the St Petersburg Conservatory, the youngest student ever to be admitted. He studied piano, composition and conducting, his tutors including Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov and Anatoly Liadov.

A decade later, the young avant-garde composer met the great Sergei Diaghilev. In the same year he also started working on what became his first full-length opera, *The Gambler*, based on a novella by Dostoyevsky. It had taken six years of writing and heavy revision, but in 1921 his first completed ballet *Chout* was staged by the Ballet Russes in Paris with the composer conducting.

In the meantime, revolution at home had turned the world upside down. Prokofiev had been initially enthusiastic – he was a member of the Council Workers in the Arts. However, in 1918 he decided (with an official nod) to seek opportunities abroad. While he retained his connection with the new Soviet Union, he spent more than 15 years living and working in Europe and the United States. In the late 20s, he started to make trips back to Russia and **in 1936** he decided to come home for good. In America he had resisted the lure of Hollywood, but in the Soviet Union he composed the score for Sergei Einstein's 1938 film *Alexander Nevsky*, and in 1945 for *Ivan the Terrible*. His later work also included the much-loved 'symphonic tale for children' *Peter and the Wolf* and the ballet *Romeo and Juliet* which was performed by the Kirov in 1940.

While he was a flagbearer for the Modernist music movement of the early 20th Century, Prokofiev's work across ballet, orchestral suites, concertos and symphonies also embraced lyrical melodies and vivid storytelling as well as being noted for its dramatic shifts in dynamics, dissonance, chromaticism and rhythmic propulsion.

The composer suffered a brain haemorrhage and died in Moscow on March 5, 1953, at the age of 61. He wasn't the only major Soviet figure to die that day. Eight miles away, Joseph Stalin – who had been all but comatose since a stroke several days earlier – also drew his last breath.

Listen to the **Dance of the Knights** from the *Romeo and Juliet Suite* by Prokofiev.

About the Music

Manuel da Falla (1876-1946), orch. Francisco Coll: *Fantasía Baetica* (UK premiere)
Composed: 1919
First Performed (piano version): 20 February 1920, New York, Artur Rubinstein (piano)

As a man, Manuel da Falla was contained, reserved, almost monastic in his habits, and quite possibly celibate. But in his music, he celebrated the wildness, luxurious beauty, and dark, earthy passion of his native culture with a brilliance and intensity unmatched by any other Spanish composer. All of this can be felt in his *Fantasía Baetica* – 'Baetica' was the Roman name for Falla's beloved province of Andalusia. Falla composed it for solo piano, and it makes a gripping, vivid virtuoso display piece, full of dazzling evocations of the movements and sounds of Spanish folk dance. But it's still somewhat neglected, partly because its dedicatee, the pianist Artur Rubinstein, never really took it up – years later he told Falla that it was 'too long', but no one else who knows it has agreed. Was Rubinstein being evasive? Did that famously elegant, refined pianist find it too brazen, too extrovert? Though it's beautifully conceived for piano, there's something orchestral about the scope and colour range of *Fantasía Baetica*, and Spanish composer Francisco Coll's orchestral transcription promises to be a thriller!

Sergei Rachmaninov (1873-1943): Piano Concerto No 1 in F sharp minor, Op 1
1. Vivace
2. Andante
3. Allegro vivace

Composed: 1891 (rev. 1917)
First Performance (complete): 29 January 1919, New York, Russian State Symphony Society Orchestra, Rachmaninov (piano), cond. Modest Altschuler

Rachmaninov's First Piano Concerto was his official 'Opus 1', composed just as he was turning 18. Bear that in mind and it seems a pretty prodigious achievement. But the version heard today is a thorough reworking, made 26 years later, in 1917, and it shows how much Rachmaninov had learned about the craft of composing by then. Rachmaninov kept all his original themes – and very fine they are too – but he polished them and introduced subtleties beyond what his 18-year-old self could have imagined. He also changed some of the development, and musicians and critics generally agree that he got it right. But his youthful love of Grieg's famous Piano Concerto is still evident, for those who want to make comparisons – nowhere more so than in the concerto's dramatic opening. The vision is still that of Rachmaninov the student. It's the way he expresses it that has been significantly improved.

The concerto's overall fast-slow-fast pattern is broadly conventional, but the expert balance between impulsive forward movement and gorgeous, languorous dreaminess is pure Rachmaninov. There's something else that's deeply personal. Like his hero Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov loved dark minor keys, but there's something almost luxurious about the way he explores his melancholic lyrical and dramatic sides, so it's no surprise when the finale ends in

brilliant major key fireworks. The triumph is not so much a matter of defeating melancholy, as of learning to enjoy it.

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953): *Romeo and Juliet*, Suite (compiled by Domingo Hindoyan)

1. Montagues and Capulets
2. Juliet as a Young Girl
3. Masks
4. Romeo at the Fountain
5. Friar Laurence
6. Dance (Dance of the Five Couples)
7. Dance of the Antilles Girls
8. Death of Tybalt
9. Romeo and Juliet Before Parting
10. Aubade (Morning Serenade)
11. Romeo at Juliet's Tomb
12. The Death of Juliet

Composed: 1935 (rev. 1940)
First Performed: 30 November 1938, Brno, Mahen Theatre, Ballet of the National Theatre, Brno (now Czech Republic)

There's passion and tenderness, joy and pain abound in Sergei Prokofiev's ballet score *Romeo and Juliet*. Ardent lyricism alternates with exquisite scene-setting and touches of delicious satire, but above all there's a sense of profound, humane empathy with Shakespeare's characters. When the revised ballet was heard in Moscow in 1940 it was a major success, and it has never ceased to be hugely popular. That music lauded by Soviet Communists (it won a Stalin Prize, no less!) could become famous as the theme for a TV show celebrating capitalist enterprise (*The Apprentice*) would no doubt have appealed to Prokofiev's sharply ironic sense of humour.

Three orchestral suites from the ballet were extracted during Prokofiev's lifetime, in which the ordering of the movements had more to do with musical balance than with the development of Shakespeare's plot. But tonight we hear a selection of movements from these suites arranged so they reflect the unfolding of the tragedy. The enmity of the two rival families is presented with grim force in 'Montagues and Capulets'. After being introduced to Juliet, we are spectators at the ball ('Masks') where the lovers meet for the first time. The famous Balcony Scene is portrayed gorgeously, then we meet the ambiguous Friar Lawrence – wise counsellor or agent of the lovers' downfall? After more brilliantly colourful dances, maximum contrast ensues as we watch the lightning swordplay of Mercutio and Tybalt, witness Tybalt's death agonies, then follow his funeral cortège. Now comes a steady build up to the full-on emotional catharsis of the last two movements, in which Romeo, believing Juliet dead, kills himself, and the revived Juliet then discovers her lover's body and follows him into the arms of death. Prokofiev's wonderful musical response, in which his gift for long-breathed, viscerally stirring melody is displayed to the full, leads to an ending that's touching in its simplicity.