

Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra
March 5 programme complementary content

Ariane Matiakh

The daughter of two opera singers, Grammy Award nominated French conductor [Ariane Matiakh](#) grew up in an exceptionally musical environment and learned how to play the piano at an early age. Later, she studied orchestral conducting in Vienna where she also sang in the renowned Arnold Schoenberg Choir. Particularly formative experiences during her comprehensive training included the time she spent studying with Leopold Hager, Yuji Yuasa and Seiji Ozawa. Her trademark features are versatility, musicality and technical precision – and above all a natural and passionate approach.

Matiakh has been Chief Conductor of the [Württemberg Philharmonic Reutlingen](#) since the 2022/23 season. Recent debuts include appearances with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Gürzenich Orchestra Cologne, Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, and returns to the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, the Orchestre du Capitole de Toulouse, and the Stavanger Symphony Orchestra, among others.

As a guest conductor, she regularly works with leading orchestras such as the Bamberg Symphony, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Vienna Symphony, Orchestre de Paris, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Dresden Philharmonic, WDR, Frankfurt and Finnish Radio Orchestras, Basel Symphony Orchestra and the Orchestre Métropolitain.

In the operatic field, in recent seasons she had conducted *Carmen* at the Royal Opera House and Deutsche Oper Berlin and a new opera by Mikael Karlsson (*Fanny and Alexander*) at La Monnaie in Brussels as well as performing in Stuttgart, at the Hamburg State Opera, Norwegian Opera and Ballet, Komische Oper Berlin, Göteborg Opera, Opéra de Nice, Halle Opera and Opéra du Rhin Strasbourg.

In recent seasons, she has conducted three world premieres: a violin concerto by Bryce Dessner with Pekka Kuusisto and the Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra, the world premiere of Philippe Hersant's *Les Eclairs* at the Opéra Comique in Paris, and the world premiere of Sally Beamish's harp concerto at the BBC Proms with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and Catrin Finch.

Matiakh's discography includes a [Grammy nomination](#) for her Capriccio recording of Zara Levina's two piano concertos with the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra. For the Capriccio label, she has also recorded the works of Johanna Doderer and a CD with music by Francis Poulenc and Jean Françaix. In further collaborations with the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, she has recorded works by Harald Genzmer, Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari, and Richard Strauss. A Berlin Classics recording of piano concertos by Clara Schumann and Ludwig van Beethoven, performed by Ragna Schirmer and the Staatskapelle Halle, has been released.

In recognition of her achievements in French musical life and as a representative of French culture abroad, Matiakh was appointed Officier de l'Ordre des Arts des Lettres in 2022.

Diana Tischenko

Ukrainian violinist [Diana Tishchenko](#) returns to Liverpool Philharmonic Hall where she made her Merseyside debut in October 2021. Born in Crimea in 1990, Tishchenko began to play at the age of six and studied at the Lysenko Special Music School in Kyiv and Berlin's HfM Hanns Eisler. The in-demand virtuoso's early roles included the youngest ever concertmaster in the Gustav Mahler Youth Orchestra where she worked in partnership with Sir Colin Davis and Antonio Pappano among others.

She was first prize winner at the prestigious 2018 Long-Thibaud-Crespin International Competition in Paris and was named an ECHO (European Concert Hall Organisation) rising star

in 2022/23. She has appeared in many of the world's leading concert halls including the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Philharmonie de Paris, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Konzerthaus Vienna, London Barbican, Gulbenkian Foundation Lisbon, Konserthuset Stockholm, Porto's Casa de Musica and Birmingham Symphony Hall, and has collaborated with conductors including Ivan Fischer, Francois-Xavier Roth, Andrew Litton and Fabien Gabel.

She is also an enthusiastic chamber musician. In 2019 she released her debut album [Strangers in Paradise](#) which features sonatas by Ravel, Enescu, Ysaÿe and Prokofiev. Her longstanding collaborations with Albrecht Mayer, principal oboe of the Berlin Philharmonic since 1992, culminated in a Christmas project with recording label Deutsche Grammophon where they performed Bach's aria *Erbarme Dich*. Tishchenko performs on both a 1685 Antonio Stradivari on private loan and an 1867 Giuseppe Rocca from Ingles & Hayday of London.

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.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

When Tchaikovsky died suddenly in November 1893, supposedly from cholera, he was at the height of his musical powers. Nine days earlier his *Symphony No.6 – the Pathétique* – had been premiered at the Russian Musical Society in St Petersburg with its composer conducting. The Christmas before, *The Nutcracker* had been showcased at the city's Imperial Mariinsky Theatre in a double bill with his opera *Iolanta*. And if he had lived, he had new cello and flute concertos in his sights. Still, despite being struck down so early – allegedly thanks to a [glass of unboiled water](#) – he left a huge legacy of innovative work, and memories of a tortured personal life that was a drama all of its own.

[Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky](#) was born at Votkinsk in 1840 where his father was the manager of a local ironworks. Young Pyotr was earmarked for the civil service, and studied at the St Petersburg School of Jurisprudence before, aged 19, becoming a clerk in the Ministry of Justice. But his real love was music, and in 1862 he was among the first cohort of students to enrol in the city's new

Conservatory where he studied composition with Anton Rubinstein. After graduation, Tchaikovsky himself taught musical theory, albeit at the Moscow Conservatory. In his early years he produced works that have been described as 'robustly' Russian in spirit. He retained a particular fondness for his First Symphony, which dated from just after he graduated from the St Petersburg Conservatory. Throughout his career he was given long-distance support – both financial and emotional – from his patroness [Nadezhda von Meck](#) whom, famously, he never met in person. Even when her son married his niece Anna in 1884! Among a wide-ranging output, his most famous or best-loved works include his three ballets (*Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty* and *The Nutcracker*), his *1812 Overture*, the opera *Eugene Onegin*, the *Pathétique*, his First Piano Concerto, *Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture* and his only Violin Concerto.

Ludwig van Beethoven

A musical Janus – and genius - who bestrode both the Classical period of Mozart and Haydn and the dawn of the 19th Century Romantic era, [Ludwig van Beethoven](#) remains a titan of classical music. He was born in Bonn in December 1770. Beethoven's father Johann was a singer who taught keyboard and violin - but he was also a heavy drinker who tried to turn the young Ludwig into another Mozart-style child prodigy through a draconian regime that involved plenty of stick and no carrot. The youngster was forced to leave school at 11 to earn money to support the family. Composition lessons led to his earliest works when he was still only 13 (*Nine Variations on a March by Dresler*), and as a teenager he was appointed court organist. He also started playing viola in the court orchestra.

In 1792, he finally escaped Bonn, and his father, and moved permanently to [Vienna](#) to study with Joseph Haydn, quickly gaining a reputation as the finest piano virtuoso in the city. A month after he left for his new life, Johann Beethoven died. Along with his prowess at the keyboard, Beethoven began to make a name for himself as a composer. His earliest works included piano, cello and violin sonatas and trios.

The early years in Vienna also saw the first signs of hearing trouble which would become increasingly debilitating to the point that by around 1815 the composer was [completely deaf](#). Then in 1800 came his First Symphony, and from there to the 'Emperor' Piano Concerto in 1809, and despite ever shifting employment and the disruption of the Napoleonic Wars, [the decade](#) saw the composer change the face of classical music. Beethoven's purple patch included six symphonies – among them the mighty Fifth and the '*Pastoral*' *Symphony No.6*, numerous sonatas – including the *Moonlight Sonata*, his *Violin Concerto* and his only opera, *Fidelio*, produced in 1805.

In 1814 his deafness forced him to give up performing, but he continued to compose and conduct, despite not being able to hear what was being played for him. Ill health also dogged the revolutionary composer, but as he entered the final decade of his life, and after a few years of little meaningful output, he also rallied creatively, returning to the keyboard to compose his first piano sonatas in many years. He also wrote two mighty works for massed voices – his *Missa Solemnis* and *Ninth Symphony*.

Beethoven died of cirrhosis of the liver in Vienna on March 26, 1827, at the age of 56. Thousands of people lined the route of his [funeral cortege](#), and his pallbearers included fellow composers Hummel, Carl Czerny and a young Franz Schubert.

Did you know? When Beethoven started to wear spectacles like one of his friends, the talented amateur cellist Baron Nikolaus Zmeskall, he wrote '*Obbligato for Two Pairs of Spectacles*' in E flat for them to play together – the Baron on cello and Beethoven on viola.

Listen to the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic playing the second movement of Beethoven's [Symphony No.6 in F major](#).

About the Music

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904): *The Water Goblin*

Composed: 1896

First Performed: 14 November 1896, London, Queen's Hall, Queen's Hall Orchestra, cond. Henry Wood

1896 found Dvořák back in his homeland, Bohemia (now Czechia), after three years working as Director of New York's new National Conservatory of Music. It had been an exhilarating time: controversial when Dvořák had argued that truly American classical music should be based on the music of the Black and Native American peoples, but ultimately a triumph. On his home soil again, Dvořák was keen to re-engage more deeply with his own culture. He began to turn his back on the 'classical-romanticism' of his mentor, friend and champion Johannes Brahms (no more abstract symphonies, concertos and chamber works), and turned increasingly to opera in Czech, and to the arch-romantic form of the illustrative orchestral tone poem.

He found inspiration in the poems of Karel Jaromír Erben, a Czech folklorist fêted by the nationalists. For his first tone poem, Dvořák selected the eerie, ultimately gruesome tale of the Water Goblin (in Czech, Vodník). The Goblin is a malicious sprite who lures unwary souls to deep waters and drags them down. Warned by a dream, a mother tells her daughter not to go near the lake. But she finds she can't resist, and she's caught and married to the Goblin by force, to whom she bears a child. Somehow, she manages to half-provoke, half-charm the Goblin into letting her visit her mother. Eventually the Goblin appears, demanding she return. A clash of wills between mother and Goblin ends in the latter promising to bring the child to her. But when the mother opens the door, she finds the child dead and – horribly – decapitated.

Dvořák's musical imagination works at full stretch in his *Water Goblin*. The atmosphere is heavy with foreboding, and the orchestral colouring is full of dark magic – listen out for the telling use of cor anglais, bass clarinet, gong, bass drum and tuba – Dvořák recommends the use of two tubas, an unusual sinister luxury even in late 19th century music. You can't miss the Goblin's signature theme: a chillingly perky little tune first heard on flutes and clarinets, beginning with three repeated notes. For the rest, the music tells the story vividly and hauntingly.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-93): *Violin Concerto in D major, Op.35*

1. Allegro moderato - Moderato assai

2. Canzonetta. Andante

3. Finale. Allegro vivacissimo

Composed: 1878

First Performed: 4 December 1881, Vienna, Adolph Brodsky (violin), cond. Hans Richter

Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto is one of the most joyous things he ever created. It's hard to believe that it followed probably the deepest and most painful crisis of its composer's life. In 1877, the year before he composed the Concerto, the not-quite openly gay Tchaikovsky startled his friends by announcing that he was getting married to one of his students. But his bride to be, the 29-year-old Antonina Miliukova, clearly either misunderstood or refused to accept the terms and conditions of their marriage, and a distraught Tchaikovsky fled the marital home, and then the country. As he later confessed, 'for some months on end I was a bit *insane*'.

Then in 1878, at a Swiss lakeside resort, Tchaikovsky found the peace and stimulation he needed. When the young violinist Iosif Kotek, with whom Tchaikovsky had once been in love, turned up with a pile of music, Tchaikovsky was soon working on a Violin Concerto, in which the sense of relief and *joie de vivre* returning speaks on almost every page. The long first movement balances lyrical and virtuosic elements beautifully: the violin dazzles one moment, sings the next. But it's brilliance and vitality that triumphs at the end. The *Canzonetta* that follows is a long outpouring of sweetly melancholic melody, led by violin, unusually, muted throughout. Then a brief solo cadenza leads expertly into the scintillating Finale, full of the flavour of Russian folk-dance music – a heady aromatic cocktail of vodka fumes, fried onions and creaking, high-kicking leather boots. Even in voluntary exile, Tchaikovsky hadn't forgotten his motherland.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827): Symphony No.6 in F major, op 68, 'Pastoral'

1. Allegro ma non troppo ('Awakening of cheerful feelings on arriving in the country')
2. Andante molto mosso ('Scene by a brook')
3. Allegro ('Peasants' merrymaking')
4. Allegro ('Thunderstorm')
5. Allegretto ('Shepherds' Hymn - happy, thankful feelings after the storm')

Composed: 1807-8

First Performed: 22 December 1808, Theater an der Wien, Vienna, cond. Beethoven

'More the expression of feeling than tone-painting', was how Beethoven summed up his *Pastoral* Symphony (1807-8). There are moments of wonderful tone-painting: the thunder in the fourth movement for instance, or the birdcalls in the closing pages of the second. But Beethoven believed that truth lay more in feeling than in fact, and that is what counts in the end. The first movement has a relaxed, open, song-like quality quite unlike the taut, muscular thematic springboards that set the *Eroica* and the Fifth symphonies in motion - not an explosion of emotion, but a gradual 'awakening of cheerful feelings.' 'Scene by a brook' begins with flowing harmonies for lower strings, while first violins sing heart-easing melodies. Near the end we hear the calls of nightingale, quail and cuckoo before the movement ebbs gently to its close.

A lightly dancing scherzo, with a stomping trio section in two-time suggestive of earthy country dances is suddenly and dramatically cut off. Hushed bass tremolos and pattering violin figures evoke distant thunder and the first raindrops. Before long the storm is fully upon us, with terrific thunderclaps on brass, timpani and growling cellos and basses. A quiet hymn-like figure is heard on woodwind and upper strings (famously compared to a rainbow), then a rising solo flute heralds the beginning of the finale. A solo clarinet imitates a shepherd's pipe, echoed by a solo horn. Violins transform these fragments of themes into a long, fully-fledged melody. At length the finale builds to an ecstatic climax, again very hymn-like, then muted horn – the shepherd now distant perhaps – pronounces a benediction. As an 'Ode to Joy' it's every bit as convincing as the Ninth Symphony's famous finale. It's worth remembering though the man who created these vivid sound-pictures had been deaf for the best part of a decade: the memories were clearly still fresh as ever.