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# Wednesday 30 November

## Programme notes

### Anna Clyne (b. 1980)

**This Midnight Hour** (2015)  
(12 mins)

British composer Anna Clyne wrote *This Midnight Hour* during her period as Composer-in-Residence with the Orchestre national d'Île-de-France. Its premiere was in November 2015 at the Théâtre Espace Coluche in Plaisir. The piece has since been performed throughout Europe and the USA, and is notable for its dynamic and textural contrasts and intense sense of drama.

The composer's main inspirations were two poems: *La Música* by Juan Ramón Jiménez and *Harmonie du soir* by Charles Baudelaire. The former compares music to "a naked woman, running mad through the pure night". The latter describes the sensations of a warm evening when flowers exhale "perfume like a censor" and a melancholy waltz awakens a sense of "languid vertigo".

Clyne portrays Jiménez's running woman through frenetic orchestral outbursts, which dominate the work's opening section. At times she creates a stereo effect by dividing the strings into sub-groups which play *fortissimo* staggered cascading figures.

Her principal tribute to Baudelaire comes halfway through, when the violas play a melody with one half of the section at pitch and the other a quarter-tone sharp. This, in the composer's words, evokes "the sonority of an accordion playing a Parisianesque waltz". The final section – the first time the music achieves calm – contains beautiful melodies for woodwind and trumpet that highlight Clyne's long-term love of folk music.

### Frédéric Chopin (1810 – 1849)

**Piano Concerto No. 1 in E minor, Op. 11** (1830)  
(39 mins)

**Allegro maestoso**  
**Romanze: Larghetto**  
**Rondo: Vivace**

Chopin once told Liszt that he hated giving public concerts: "I am not at all fit for giving concerts, the crowd intimidates me, its breath suffocates me, I feel paralysed by its curious look". He preferred to give solo recitals in the intimacy of Paris's aristocratic salons.

However, prior to his move to the city in 1831, Chopin believed that the best way to make his name as a composer-performer was through substantial works for piano and orchestra. During 1829–30 he accordingly wrote two piano concertos. These received successful premieres in his native Warsaw in 1830. With the exception of the *Grande Polonaise brillante* (1830–1), they were the last of his handful of orchestral works.

The Piano Concerto No. 1 in E minor was in fact the second of the concertos to be completed and performed. (It is listed as No. 1 as it was the first to be published, in 1833.) Chopin dedicated it to the well-regarded pianist-composer Friedrich Kalkbrenner. The premiere, with the 20-year-old composer as soloist, took place at Warsaw's Teatr Narodowy on 11 October 1830. It was part of a grand farewell concert prior to Chopin's departure for Western Europe.

Among the concert's other participants was the young singer Konstancja Gładkowska, with whom Chopin was in love. According to the composer's biographer Alan Walker, the pair may

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have become informally engaged that evening. However, the relationship ended when political unrest kept Chopin from returning to his native land. Years later, Konstancja suggested that he might not have been a good husband, as he was “temperamental, full of fantasies, and unreliable”.

The first movement of the Piano Concerto No. 1 could be perceived as demonstrating this volatile temperament through its fluctuations between agitated, melancholy and serene moods. Other notable features include the substantial orchestral introduction presenting the movement’s three main themes, and the use of the rich timbre of wind instruments to support the ornate piano solos.

Chopin wrote to his friend Tytus Woyciechowski of the second movement that it was “a Romance, calm and melancholy, giving the impression of someone looking gently towards a spot which calls to mind a thousand happy memories. It is a kind of reverie in the moonlight on a beautiful spring evening”. Muted strings create an intimate ambience, while the piano’s long, lyrical melodies pay tribute to the bel canto arias that Konstancja sang so well.

The rhythms of the ‘Krakowiak’ – a fast, syncopated duple-time folk dance from Poland’s Kraków region – dominate in the light-hearted finale. This movement contains much witty dialogue between piano and orchestra, and closes the concerto in high spirits.

*Programme notes by Kate Hopkins ©  
Philharmonia Orchestra/Kate Hopkins*

Interval (20 mins)

## Igor Stravinsky (1882 – 1971)

**Pulcinella Suite** (1922)  
(24 mins)

**Sinfonia**  
**Serenata**  
**Scherzino – Allegro – Andantino**  
**Tarantella**  
**Toccata**  
**Gavotta con due variazioni**  
**Vivo**  
**Minuetto – Finale**

Stravinsky loved Italy passionately, so much so that he chose to be buried on the Venetian cemetery island of San Michele, close to his great collaborator Sergei Diaghilev. It was Diaghilev who came up with the idea for the ballet *Pulcinella*. One spring afternoon in 1919 the two men were strolling in the Place de la Concorde in Paris, when Diaghilev announced: “I have an idea that I think will amuse you ... I want you to look at some delightful 18th-century music with the idea of orchestrating it for a ballet”.

When Diaghilev said that the composer he had in mind was Giovanni Battista Pergolesi (1710–36), Stravinsky “thought he must be deranged”. Stravinsky knew of Pergolesi only from the *Stabat mater* and his most famous opera *La serva padrona* (which he had just seen in Barcelona), and wasn’t particularly impressed. But he promised Diaghilev that he would take a look at the pieces.

As Stravinsky later said, “I looked, and I fell in love”. The Pergolesi pieces he chose to use as a basis for the ballet included several vocal numbers – serenades, duets and trios – as well as purely instrumental pieces.

Stravinsky later said: “*Pulcinella* was my discovery of the past, the epiphany through which the whole of my late work became possible. It was a backward look, of course – the first of many love affairs in that direction – but it was a look in the mirror too. No critic understood this at the time”.

Diaghilev meanwhile had been expecting a stylish orchestration of the originals, and was shocked by the composer’s reinterpretation. But Stravinsky concluded that “the remarkable thing about *Pulcinella* is not how much but how little was added or changed”, and despite Diaghilev’s misgivings the ballet was a great success on its production at the Paris Opera on 15 May 1920, with choreography by Massine and décor and costumes by Picasso.

At the time of *Pulcinella*’s composition, little was known about Pergolesi. Of the pieces selected by Stravinsky, very few now appear to have been by Pergolesi: the other misattributed works involved include a set of 12 trio sonatas by the 18th-century Venetian composer Domenico Gallo; six *Concerti armonici* by a Dutch nobleman and amateur composer Count Unico van Wassenauer; and a set of harpsichord pieces by the Milanese composer Carlo Monza.

Of the pieces that ended up in the orchestral suite, only three turned out to be based on Pergolesi originals: the *Serenata* (No. 2), based on a tenor aria from the opera *Il Flaminio*; the ‘Vivo’ duet for trombone and double bass, from a cello sinfonia, and the following ‘Minuetto’, originally the aria ‘Pupilette fiammette d’amore’ from the Pergolesi opera *Lo Frate ’nnamorato*. The ‘Toccata’ is based on a keyboard piece by Monza, the ‘Tarantella’ on a movement from one of Wassenauer’s concertos, and the rest are from Gallo’s trio sonatas.

In 1922 Stravinsky extracted an orchestral suite, which he later revised again in 1947. All the movements feature solo instruments set against the ripieno ensemble, in the Baroque concerto grosso style. The opening ‘Sinfonia’ includes solos for violin, cello and oboe; the following ‘Serenata’ is a lyrical, lilting piece featuring a plaintive oboe solo over strings playing spiccato (bows bouncing) and pizzicato (plucked). Then comes a linked series of three short movements: a lively ‘Scherzino’, an ‘Allegro’ featuring solo flute and violin, and an ‘Andantino’ featuring a horn solo over an ostinato (recurring) bass line.

The following ‘Tarantella’ is a virtuoso piece for strings, while the ‘Toccata’ features brass, especially solo trumpet. In the graceful ‘Gavotte’, the oboe once more takes centre stage. The next number, ‘Vivo’, is a comic duet for trombone and double bass. The double bass skitters around while the trombone pompously practises its slides – it’s the bass that has the last word.

The finale is in two linked sections: the first a solemn, almost chorale-like ‘Minuetto’, more in the style of a stately procession than a dance and featuring trumpet and trombone. The volume rises towards the end, leading into the lively ‘Finale’ proper in Stravinsky’s most characteristic neoclassical style, in which themes and solos are recapitulated over driving ostinato rhythms.

*Programme notes by Wendy Thompson*  
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# Joana Carneiro

## Conductor



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Acclaimed Portuguese conductor Joana Carneiro is Principal Guest Conductor of the Real Filharmonía de Galicia. She is also Artistic Director of the Estágio Gulbenkian para Orquestra, a post she has held since 2013.

Joana Carneiro was Principal Conductor of the Orquestra Sinfonica Portuguesa at Teatro Sao Carlos in Lisbon from 2014 until January 2022. From 2009 to 2018 she was Music Director of Berkeley Symphony, succeeding Kent Nagano as only the third music director in the 40-year history of the orchestra. She was also official guest conductor of the Gulbenkian Orchestra from 2006 to 2018.

Recent and future guest conducting highlights include engagements with the Philharmonia Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Royal Northern Sinfonia, Orquesta Sinfónica de Castilla y León, Gothenburg Symphony, Norrköping Symphony, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic (whom she conducted at the Nobel Prize Ceremony in December 2017), Swedish Radio Symphony, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra.

In opera, recent projects include *The Handmaid's Tale* (English National Opera), *Nixon in China* (Scottish Opera), *The Rake's Progress* (Lisbon), *Carmen* (Royal Stockholm Opera), *Wonderful Town* (Royal Danish Opera), *The Gospel According to the Other Mary* (ENO), *La Passion de Simone* (Ojai Festival), *Oedipus Rex* (Sydney) and *A Flowering Tree* (Vienna, Paris, Chicago, Cincinnati, Gothenburg, Lisbon).

From 2002 to 2005, she served as Assistant Conductor of the LA Chamber Orchestra and as Music Director of the Young Musicians Foundation Debut Orchestra of Los Angeles. From 2005 to 2008, she was an American Symphony Orchestra League Conducting Fellow at the Los Angeles Philharmonic, where she worked closely with Esa-Pekka Salonen and led several performances at the Walt Disney Concert Hall and the Hollywood Bowl.

A native of Lisbon, she began her musical studies as a violist before receiving her conducting degree from the Academia Nacional Superior de Orquestra in Lisbon, followed by her Masters degree in orchestral conducting from Northwestern University.

Carneiro is the 2010 recipient of the Helen M. Thompson Award, conferred by the League of American Orchestras to recognise and honour music directors of exceptional promise.

In 2004, Carneiro was decorated by the President of the Portuguese Republic, Jorge Sampaio, with the Commendation of the Order of the Infante Dom Henrique.

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# Benjamin Grosvenor

## Piano



British pianist Benjamin Grosvenor is internationally recognised for his sonorous lyricism and understated brilliance at the keyboard. His virtuosic interpretations are underpinned by a unique balance of technical mastery and intense musicality. Benjamin has been heralded one of the most important pianists to emerge from the UK in several decades.

Benjamin works with such esteemed conductors as Eun Sun Kim, Semyon Bychkov, Riccardo Chailly, Sir Mark Elder, Kent Nagano, Alan Gilbert, Manfred Honeck, Vladimir Jurowski, François-Xavier Roth and Esa-Pekka Salonen.

His 2022/23 season begins with Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 3 with the Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by Marin Alsop at the BBC Proms. He is 'Artist in Focus' at The Sage Gateshead, and performs three projects across the season with the Philharmonia Orchestra, including both Chopin Piano Concertos and Beethoven's Triple Concerto with Sheku Kanneh-Mason and Nicola Benedetti.

Other concerto highlights of the 2022/23 season include engagements with the KBS Symphony Orchestra and Mo Chung (Chopin's Piano

Concerto No. 1), touring with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and their Chief Conductor Edward Gardner, Orchestra of St Luke's at Carnegie Hall (Mendelssohn's Piano Concerto No. 1), Auckland Philharmonia, Prague Radio, Bern, San Diego and City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestras, Hallé Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra and Orchestre de Lyon with Leonard Slatkin.

In recital, Grosvenor makes his debut at the Luxembourg Philharmonie in Mainz as part of the SWR2 Internationale Pianisten series and Oldenburg. He also returns to the Théâtre des Champs Elysées, Wigmore Hall, Sage Gateshead, The Kennedy Center, and embarks on a tour of Latin America including returns to São Paulo and Montevideo.

A keen chamber musician, regular collaborators include Hyeyoon Park, Timothy Ridout, Kian Soltani – with whom he appears at the Cologne Philharmonie, and the Doric String Quartet with whom he tours the USA in spring 2023.

In 2011 Benjamin signed to Decca Classics, becoming the youngest British musician ever, and the first British pianist in almost 60 years, to sign to the label.

During his sensational career to date, Benjamin has received *Gramophone* magazine's Young Artist of the Year and Instrumental Awards, a Classic Brits Critics' Award, UK Critics' Circle Award for Exceptional Young Talent and a Diapason d'Or Jeune Talent Award.