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# Welcome

A warm welcome to this afternoon's concert.

Whether you're experiencing the exhilarating sound of a live orchestra for the first time today, or you've been a Philharmonia fan for many years, I hope you have a wonderful time.

It's a joy for our musicians to be playing to a capacity audience – I hope we'll see you all again soon. Our Principal Conductor Santtu-Matias Rouvali returns regularly throughout the year, in music from Beethoven to Shostakovich. And you can hear from more fantastic pianists too – there's Chopin with Benjamin Grosvenor in February, and Beethoven with Stephen Hough in May.

A great way to get to know the Orchestra even better is to become a Friend. Our Friends help us to make thrilling musical experiences available to all, and enjoy benefits including access to open rehearsals and priority booking. We'd love to welcome you to the Philharmonia family.

With my best wishes,



Thorben Dittes
Chief Executive

## Welcome to the Southbank Centre

We hope you enjoy your visit. We have a Duty Manager available at all times. If you need any information or help, please ask a member of staff.

Eating, drinking and shopping? Take in the views over food and drinks at the Riverside Terrace Cafe, Level 2, Royal Festival Hall. Visit our shops for products inspired by our great cultural experiences, iconic buildings and central London location.

Explore across the site with Beany Green, Côte Brasserie, Foyles, Giraffe, Honest Burgers, Las Iguanas, Le Pain Quotidien, Ping Pong, Pret, Strada, Skylon, Spiritland, Topolski, wagamama and Wahaca.

If you would like to get in touch with us following your visit, please write to the Visitor Contact Team at Southbank Centre, Belvedere Road, London SE1 8XX, or email hello@southbankcentre.co.uk

We look forward to seeing you again soon.













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SOUTHBANK CENTRE RESIDENT

# This afternoon's concert

# Santtu and Yuja Wang

Sunday 11 December 2022, 3pm Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall

Santtu-Matias Rouvali – conductor Yuja Wang – piano

TCHAIKOVSKY Capriccio Italien (15 mins)

RACHMANINOV Piano Concerto No. 1 (26 mins)

Interval (20 mins)

TCHAIKOVSKY Symphony No. 4 (44 mins)

This performance finishes at approximately 5pm

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Anna Clyne

Featured Composer

# Insights talk

1.30pm, Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall

Katy Hamilton in conversation with Philharmonia members James Buckle, Robin O'Neill and Carol Hultmark

# Free chamber concert Philharmonia Cellos

5.30pm, The Clore Ballroom, Level 2, Royal Festival Hall

GRUBER Silent Night (arr. Birchall)
TCHAIKOVSKY Nutcracker excerpts (arr. Rolton)
MENDELSSOHN Ave Maria (arr. Birchall)
ROLTON Christmas Medlev

This performance finishes at approximately 6.20pm

# **Programme notes**

# Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840 – 1893)

Capriccio Italien, Op. 45 (1880) (15 mins)

It was during a trip to Rome in the winter of 1879 that Tchaikovsky wrote his *Capriccio Italien*. It was a dark time for the Russian composer, who had been travelling across Europe alone, following the disintegration of his marriage to his former pupil, Antonina Miliukova. Yet he seemed to enjoy the spectacle of the Eternal City at the height of carnival season, writing to his friend and patron, Nadezhda von Meck: "When you carefully look at the public raging along the [Via del] Corso, you are convinced that no matter how strangely the joy of the local crowd manifests itself, it is nevertheless sincere and unconstrained."



A similarly generous spirit pervades this *Capriccio* – a term denoting a free-form musical composition – which unfolds in episodic fashion, a pageant of contrasting melodies, some of which (in the composer's words), "were chosen

from collections, and some of which I heard myself on the streets".

Capriccio Italien opens with a grandiose brass fanfare – inspired by a bugle call that the composer overheard from his hotel room near a Roman cavalry barracks. It is followed by a sombre funeral procession: grimly plodding brass triplets punctuate a lilting, mournful string lament, which is ornamented by appoggiatura (crushed-note) embellishments, creating a folksong-like atmosphere. (Fans of Verdi's opera, La traviata, may discern an echo of the heroine's tragic demise in the soaring melody and the earthbound trudge of its doom-laden accompaniment.)

Yet somehow, out of the gloom, comes light, and even – could it be – comedy? With what must be three of the most shameless, elbow-nudging notes ever composed, the cellos and basses tug us from a funeral into the realm of a merry waltz so catchy it may haunt you for days.

With another handbrake-turn of a transition, we spin into a galloping, skittish dance to set toes tapping – before a reprisal of the funeral march (look and listen out for the added bite of repeated down-bows in the strings).

A whirling, diabolical violin melody careers out of control, peppered by ricochets of steely brass triplets, before a triumphant return of the waltz, now adorned with cymbal crashes, tambourine flourishes, and enough *fortissimo* markings to fill several concert halls. No wonder the audience response at the *Capriccio Italien*'s Moscow premiere the following year was so positive: who could resist the allure of this Roman holiday?

Interval (20 mins)

# Sergei Rachmaninov (1873 – 1943)

Piano Concerto No. 1 in F sharp minor, Op. 1 (1891, rev. 1917) (26 mins)

Vivace – Moderato Andante Allegro vivace

Even before he entered the Moscow Conservatory, Rachmaninov was already gaining a name for himself as a formidable virtuoso performer. His gigantic hand span remains legendary: from thumb to pinkie, each hand could stretch to a whopping 13 notes on the keyboard – creating huge challenges for generations of subsequent pianists bold enough to grapple with the physical demands of his compositions.

His First Piano Concerto – the second two movements of which were composed in 1891, when Rachmaninov was just 17 – exemplify the particular thrills of his musical style, even at such an early age. An imposing brass fanfare introduces the soloist, who then proceeds to hurl out great handfuls of triplets, rippling arpeggios and earth-shattering chords from the keyboard, before a languid string melody unfurls across the orchestra. It is passionate stuff, filled with all the ardour of youth.

When revising the work some 21 years later in 1917, the composer wrote: "I have rewritten my First Concerto... All the youthful freshness is there, and yet it plays itself so much more easily." Most listeners (and players) would dispute how "easy" such a colossal work could ever be to perform, but despite its relative obscurity

(at least, in comparison to the ever-popular Piano Concerto No. 2), the work possesses considerable charm.

A nocturnal mood pervades the second movement, with a melancholic horn melody ushering in a languid, dreamlike interlude whose smoky harmonic language seems to pre-empt the experimental sonorities of jazz.

The explosive final movement is lively and restless, a martial, brass-heavy opening giving way to a jaw-dropping showcase for the soloist, peppered with mischievous flourishes. With one last outpouring of melody from the strings and a high-Romantic piano cadenza, the soloist embarks on a galloping coda that sees both hands – whatever their span – scurrying up and down the keyboard in a show of pure exuberance.



ia Wang © Jul

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# **Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky**

**Symphony No. 4 in F minor, Op. 36** (1878) (44 mins)

Andante sostenuto – Moderato con anima Andantino in modo di Canzona Scherzo: Pizzicato ostinato – Allegro Finale: Allegro con fuoco

"Fate, that inexorable force which prevents our aspirations to happiness from reaching their goal, which jealously ensures that our wellbeing and peace are not complete and unclouded, which hangs over our heads like the sword of Damocles, which with steadfast persistence poisons our souls."

This was Tchaikovsky's own account of the doom-laden brass fanfare with which the first movement of his Fourth Symphony begins (note the parallels with the fanfares of the Rachmaninov piano concerto we have just heard: Tchaikovsky was a mentor and teacher to the young Sergei, and his influence is undeniable). The 'Fate' motif is a constant, malevolent presence throughout the Symphony - assailing the feverish waltzes of the opening movement and interrupting the folksong festivities of the finale. But there is consolation to be found here too, even if it lies, as Tchaikovsky wrote, in bittersweet "memories of the past" (in the second, slow movement) or the "whimsical arabesques" of pizzicato (plucked) strings in the third movement.

The sea of turbulent emotions evoked within the orchestra mirrors the composer's own personal anguish around the time of the Symphony's composition: in 1877, he married a former conservatoire student, Antonina Miliukova – an ill-advised union which Tchaikovsky hoped would put an end to speculation over

his homosexuality. Predictably, the marriage brought only misery to both parties, and they became estranged after just a few months. Despite the composer's suffering, he found some solace in his relationship with his patron, Nadezhda von Meck. They never met, but instead exchanged letters, and it was in one such epistle that Tchaikovsky revealed the Symphony's 'programme' – including the 'Fate' motif. He went on to explain that he was inspired by the battle of fate and sensibility in Beethoven's Symphony No. 5, continuing, on the subject of his own symphony: "Would it not be better to retire from reality and devote oneself to dreams? The second group of themes, introduced by delicate woodwind runs and a light melody for strings, expresses this dream world."

And so the Symphony proceeds, flitting between the realm of dreams and the shadow of Fate. The final movement erupts with a flourish of footstamping, folkloric revelry: "If you can find no joy in yourself," wrote Tchaikovsky, "look around you and mingle with the people. See how they enjoy themselves and devote themselves entirely to festivity". But the happy mood is short-lived, and soon the whirling celebrations are overtaken by the Fate motif, which crashes in at the climax of the celebrations. The writer Taneyev criticised this gesture as mere "ballet music", but Tchaikovsky saw no reproach in his words - and as the Symphony thunders to its close, it is impossible not to be swept along by the sheer force of its passion and drama.

Programme notes by Sophie Rashbrook
© Philharmonia Orchestra/Sophie Rashbrook

Sophie Rashbrook is a writer, librettist and opera dramaturg based in London. Formerly the Nicholas John Dramaturg at Welsh National Opera, she now edits the opera programmes at the Royal Opera House.

# Meet Yuja Wang



# There are recordings of Rachmaninov playing his own compositions – are they an inspiration for your interpretations? Who else has inspired you?

Absolutely! I love Rachmaninov's pure, noble and classy style. He had such incredible technique of course, too. He makes his concertos sound so simple, yet still incredibly sensitive. I've also listened to the Benno Moiseiwitsch performances of Rachmaninov and, although he didn't play an awful lot of Rachmaninov, Glenn Gould has been a great influence on me generally.

# There's so much emotion in Rachmaninov's music – do you find your own emotions on a particular day affect how you approach it?

Performances do end up being an expression of my mood in some ways, and it often enhances the emotion written in the music. This is so clear to me when I tour, performing the same piece of music with the same conductor and orchestra in different cities; I prepare differently each day as a result of many factors. Unlike most performers, the instrument I play is different in each venue and I like to spend some time working with it on stage to be sure that I find a way for it to capture the emotion and character of the music.

# You have limited rehearsal time with each orchestra and conductor – how do you quickly establish a rapport with them?

It certainly helps if my intentions and understanding of the music are convincing and clear, both artistically and in terms of where the composer was in the particular time or place they were writing the work. When I first join a new orchestra and conductor, the musicians intuitively pick up on that very quickly and it's reflected in the performance as a result.

# You travel all over the world to perform – what do you enjoy most about coming to London?

I love to spend time walking around the cities I visit when I have time, and London is an amazing place for this. There are lots of parks (Hyde Park is probably my favourite), lots of culture and so many interesting things to see in every corner of the city.

# What catches your eye in the rest of the Philharmonia's London season?

February is a great month! I would be so excited to attend *Music of Today: Bryce Dessner* in February next year – he's a great and forward-thinking composer! Also *The Sea and the Land: Mendelssohn, Elgar and Dvořák*, which Sir John Eliot Gardiner will conduct – I worked with him recently for the first time and the collaboration was a great experience. Pekka Kuusisto's concert on 23 March caught my eye too, especially as it includes the UK premiere of Anna Clyne's Clarinet Concerto.

# Santtu-Matias Rouvali Principal Conductor



Santtu-Matias Rouvali first conducted the Philharmonia in 2013, aged 27. He was instantly recognised by the players as "an inspiring individual... a musician with spirit and passion akin to our own" (Cheremie Hamilton-Miller, Vice-President of the Philharmonia Orchestra and member of the Viola section).

He took up the baton as Principal Conductor in September 2021. He is just the sixth person to hold that title since the Orchestra was founded in 1945. On his appointment, he said: "This is the start of a great adventure. The players of the Philharmonia can do anything: they are enormously talented and show an incredible hunger to create great performances. There is huge possibility with this orchestra, and we will do great things together."

He has already conducted a wide range of music with the Philharmonia, from blockbusters by Strauss and Rachmaninov to lesser-known works by his compatriots Sibelius and Lindberg. In 2020 his first Philharmonia CD, a live recording of excerpts from Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*, was released by Signum Records, followed by Prokofiev's Symphony No. 5. During the pandemic he conducted music by Aaron Copland and Florence Price in one of our

Live from the Southbank Centre streamed concerts, and played with our percussion section in Steve Reich's Music for Pieces of Wood. He made his BBC Proms debut with the Philharmonia in summer 2022, conducting ballet music by Tchaikovsky and Prokofiev and the European premiere of Missy Mazzoli's Violin Concerto with soloist Jennifer Koh.

This season Santtu conducts the Philharmonia in all our UK residency venues – London, Bedford, Leicester, Basingstoke and Canterbury – and takes the Orchestra on tour to Italy, Germany, Switzerland and Spain.

Santtu is also Chief Conductor of Gothenburg Symphony, and retains his longstanding Chief Conductor position with Tampere Philharmonic Orchestra close to his home in Finland. With Gothenburg Symphony he is recording an ambitious Sibelius cycle – the first two volumes both received the Choc de Classica, and the first was also named *Gramophone* magazine Editor's Choice and Diapason D'Or 'Decouverte'.

Throughout the season Santtu continues his relationships with orchestras including the Berlin Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw and New York Philharmonic as well as the Munich Philharmonic and Vienna Symphony.

When he's not conducting, Santtu loves to spend time meditating, foraging and hunting in the forests around his home near Tampere.

"It's a rare thing to have such an instant rapport with a conductor and we are all extremely lucky." (Victoria Irish, member of the First Violin section.)

# Yuja Wang **Piano**



Pianist Yuja Wang is celebrated for her charismatic artistry, emotional honesty and captivating stage presence. She has performed with the world's most venerated conductors. musicians and ensembles, and is renowned not only for her virtuosity, but her spontaneous and lively performances, famously telling *The New* York Times: "I firmly believe every programme should have its own life, and be a representation of how I feel at the moment". This skill and charisma was demonstrated in her performance of Shostakovich's Piano Concerto No. 2 at Carnegie Hall's Opening Night Gala in October 2021, following its historic 572 days of closure.

Yuja was born into a musical family in Beijing. After childhood piano studies in China, she received advanced training in Canada and at the Curtis Institute of Music under Gary Graffman.

Her international breakthrough came in 2007, when she replaced Martha Argerich as soloist with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Two years later, she signed an exclusive contract with Deutsche Grammophon, and has since established her place among the world's leading artists, with a succession of critically acclaimed performances and recordings.

She was named Musical America's Artist of the Year in 2017, and in 2021 received an Opus Klassik Award for her world-premiere recording of John Adams's Must the Devil Have All the Good *Tunes?* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic under the baton of Gustavo Dudamel.

As a chamber musician, Yuja has developed long-lasting partnerships with several leading artists, notably violinist Leonidas Kavakos, with whom she has recorded the complete Brahms violin sonatas and will be performing duo recitals in Europe in the autumn.

Earlier this year, Yuja embarked on a highlyanticipated international recital tour, which saw her perform in world-class venues across North America, Europe and Asia, astounding audiences once more with her flair, technical ability and exceptional artistry in a wide-ranging programme including Beethoven, Ligeti and Schoenberg.

# **About the Philharmonia**



The Philharmonia Orchestra creates thrilling performances for a global audience.

Finnish conductor Santtu-Matias Rouvali is the Philharmonia's Principal Conductor. He is only the sixth person to hold that title in the Orchestra's 77-year history, following in the footsteps of great artists including Otto Klemperer, Riccardo Muti and Esa-Pekka Salonen. Santtu is known for his expressive conducting and irrepressible energy. He launched his tenure in autumn 2021 with *Human / Nature: Music for a Precious Planet*, a series focussing on music inspired by our relationship with the natural world.

The Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall in London has been our home since 1995. We also have residencies at Bedford Corn Exchange, De Montfort Hall in Leicester, The Marlowe in Canterbury, The Anvil in Basingstoke, the Three Choirs Festival in the West of England, and Garsington Opera. Central to all our residencies is a Learning & Engagement programme that empowers people to engage with, and participate in, orchestral music.

The Philharmonia is a registered charity. We are proud to be supported by Arts Council England, and grateful for the generosity of the many

individuals who make up our supporter family, as well as the Trusts and Foundations who underpin our work. In the US, the Orchestra's American Patrons generously support the Philharmonia Foundation, a US-registered 501(c) (3) non-profit organisation.

In the 2022/23 season, cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason is the Orchestra's Featured Artist. Anna Clyne is Featured Composer. Our Artist in Residence is songwriter, producer and environmental campaigner Love Ssega.

The Philharmonia was founded in 1945, originally as a recording orchestra. We have premiered works by Richard Strauss, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Errollyn Wallen, Kaija Saariaho and many others. We have always pioneered the use of technology to reach broader audiences for orchestral music. During the Covid-19 pandemic, we created outstanding online performances, enjoyed by listeners in Brazil, Sudan, Indonesia, India, and above the Arctic Circle in Norway.

Our extraordinary recording legacy has been built on for the last decade by our pioneering work with digital technology. Our audio-visual installations have introduced hundreds of thousands of people to the orchestra. Our VR experiences, placing the viewer at the heart of the orchestra, have travelled around the world. We have won four Royal Philharmonic Society awards for our digital projects and audience engagement work.

Our two most recent albums with Santtu-Matias Rouvali, along with the quality and breadth of our work during the pandemic, led to a Gramophone Award nomination for Orchestra of the Year. We are the go-to orchestra for many film and videogame composers in the UK and Hollywood, and our music-making has

been experienced by millions of cinema-goers and gamers. We have recorded around 150 soundtracks, with film credits stretching back to 1947.

The Philharmonia has over 1m listeners each month on Spotify, and a vibrant YouTube channel with over 130,000 subscribers. Our channel features free performances; films introducing the instruments of the orchestra; interviews with artists; and in-depth documentaries accompanying landmark series. The Philharmonia is Classic FM's Orchestra on Tour and broadcasts extensively on BBC Radio 3.

Throughout its history, the Philharmonia has toured across Europe, Asia and America. In January 2020 we had a residency at Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre, featuring concerts that

were voted the 'Best of 2020' by Japanese music magazine *Ongaku No Tomo*, the Orchestra's VR Sound Stage open for free to the Tokyo public, and another Philharmonia VR installation outside the venue.

Our Emerging Artists programme aims to increase diversity within the classical music industry; develop the next generation of instrumentalists, composers and conductors; and help build the classical canon of tomorrow.

The Philharmonia is a team of 80 world-class musicians from 16 countries. We look forward to bringing music into your life, through great concerts and ground-breaking projects, for the next 77 years and beyond.

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The Principal Flute Chair is

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This list comprises the players performing in this concert. It was correct at the time of going to print but is subject to alteration. For the full list of Philharmonia members, please visit philharmonia.co.uk/orchestra/

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Mark A

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# THE KLEMPERER SOCIETY We are grateful to our

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# Support us



The Philharmonia is a registered charity, relying on income from a wide range of sources to deliver our programme. The Philharmonia is proud to be supported by Arts Council England and grateful for the generosity of our supporter family who enable us to:

- bring great music to audiences in our UK residencies and around the world
- · develop and support our players as the arts industry recovers from the pandemic
- connect with a broad audience to share the joy of music-making through our Learning and Engagement programme

# Individual support

Whether giving a little or a lot, your support makes a difference. Join the **Conductors Circle** or **endow a chair** to get closer to the orchestra, enjoy exclusive events, meet our musicians and more. Support from £1,350 per year

**Make a donation** to keep the Philharmonia playing as we return to the concert platform and rebuild for the future. We need your help to be an orchestra for everyone.

All donations welcome: philharmonia.co.uk/donate

Make your mark on the orchestra with a **legacy** gift in your will. Become part of our future and pass the music on.

# Corporate support

A corporate partnership with the Philharmonia is a powerful investment in the quality and ambition of our work. It provides companies with a unique opportunity to engage your clients and staff with our work whilst building a reputation as a champion of the UK's rich arts and culture sector.

Get in touch for a conversation about how you can make a difference on

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# Governance and administration

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Assistant Stage Manager

Stage Manager

Tiago Carvalho

Orchestra Production

Manager

Toni Abell

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Teddy Prout

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#### ARCHIVE

Michael Hurwitz Archivist

## **ORCHESTRA DOCTOR**

Dr Peter Newman Honorary Doctor

Philharmonia Limited Registered Charity No. 250277

6 Chancel Street London SE1 OUX

philharmonia.co.uk

Tickets: 0800 652 6717 Admin: 020 7921 3900

# **Coming up**



# Sheku Kanneh-Mason plays Bloch

Sunday 26 February 2023, 3pm Royal Festival Hall

Featured Artist Sheku Kanneh-Mason returns to perform Bloch's *Schelomo*, followed by Sibelius's First Symphony.



# Santtu conducts Stravinsky I: The Firebird

Thursday 18 May 2023, 7.30pm Royal Festival Hall

Santtu opens a two-concert focus on Stravinsky and Prokofiev, with music from Stravinsky's *The Firebird* and Prokofiev's fiendish Piano Concerto No. 2 with Behzod Abduraimov as soloist.



# Romeo & Juliet Forever: Pekka Kuusisto conducts

Thursday 23 March 2023, 7.30pm Royal Festival Hall

Pekka Kuusisto returns to conduct the Philharmonia, and Martin Fröst gives the UK premiere of Anna Clyne's Clarinet Concerto.



# **Santtu conducts Beethoven and Strauss**

Thursday 8 June 2023, 7.30pm Royal Festival Hall

Three superstars join Santtu and the Philharmonia for our season finale, featuring Beethoven's Triple Concerto and Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben*.