Welcome

It's great to have you with us - I hope we'll be welcoming you back often throughout 2023 and beyond.

Both Sir John Eliot Gardiner and Alice Coote joined us for Live from the Southbank Centre, the series of streamed concerts we created during lockdown. It's a joy to be working with them again, this time performing for a live audience.

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're the largest arts centre in the UK and one of the nation's top visitor attractions, showcasing the world's most exciting artists at our venues in the heart of London. We're here to present great cultural experiences that bring people together, and open up the arts to everyone.

The Southbank Centre is made up of the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room, Hayward Gallery, National Poetry Library and Arts Council Collection. We're one of London's favourite meeting spots, with lots of free events and places to relax, eat and shop next to the Thames.

We hope you enjoy your visit. If you need any information or help, please ask a member of staff. You can also write to us at Southbank Centre, Belvedere Road, London SE1 8XX, or email hello@southbankcentre.co.uk

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Philharmonia

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This evening's concert

The Sea and the Land: Mendelssohn, Elgar & Dvořák

Thursday 16 February 2023, 7.30pm Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall

John Eliot Gardiner – conductor Alice Coote – mezzo-soprano

MENDELSSOHN Hebrides Overture, 'Fingal's Cave' (10 mins)

ELGAR Sea Pictures (23 mins)

The lights will be dimmed to display surtitles. Surtitles provided by Jonathan Burton.

Interval (20 mins)

DVOŘÁK Symphony No. 5 (42 mins)

This performance finishes at approximately 9.15pm

The former Prince of Wales

Santtu-Matias Rouvali

Principal Conductor

Esa-Pekka Salonen KBE

Conductor Laureate

Christoph von Dohnányi Honorary Conductor for Life

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Artist in Residence Supported by an anonymous donor

Sheku Kanneh-Mason

Featured Artist

Anna Clyne

Featured Composer

This concert is being recorded for broadcast on BBC Radio 3 on 28 February, after which it will be available for the next 30 days on BBC Sounds.



Free pre-concert talk

6pm, Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall

The Philharmonia's Director of Learning & Engagement Teddy Prout in conversation with Philharmonia Players

This event finishes at approximately 6.45pm

Programme notes

Felix Mendelssohn (1809 – 1847)

Hebrides Overture, 'Fingal's Cave', Op. 26 (1830, rev. 1832) (10 mins)

"In order to make you understand how mightily the Hebrides have affected me, the following came into my head there..."

Letters document the 20-year-old Mendelssohn's visit to England and Scotland in the summer of 1829 in detail. There are vivid descriptions of the view from Arthur's Seat, the haunted melancholy of Holyrood Palace, drawings of gargoyles on Melrose Abbey, and even an encounter with Sir Walter Scott himself. But there's no mistaking the intensity of the composer's impression of the Isle of Mull, nor the clarity of the musical sketch it inspired.

It's strange, then, that he writes nothing of his visit to Fingal's Cave the following day (though we know from his companion that he was seasick). Perhaps it was this that Mendelssohn had in mind as, despite completing a version of his Overture as early as 1830, he continued to tinker with it in 1832, lamenting that it still lacked a whiff of "...whale-oil, seagulls and dead fish".

We must rely instead on his friend Karl Klingemann to paint the scene: "We were put out on boats and lifted by the hissing sea up the pillar stumps to the famous Fingal's Cave. A greener roar of waves never rushed into a stranger cavern – its many pillars making it look like the inside of an immense organ, black and resounding".

Just as the geography reflected by the work's double title is ambiguous, so the programme of

this tone poem – if indeed there is one – is lost in musical mist and sea spray. Sonata form gives us clear structural pillars, over which Mendelssohn drapes music that's more atmosphere than actual image.

A churning, six-note motif at the start in low strings and bassoons swells and transforms, becoming a stormy sea, a cathedral-like cave, the tug and surge of the tide, while a second theme – yearning, lyrical – imagines the Atlantic in rolling tranquility. After a serious squall the music eventually finds safe harbour in a gentle finish.



Fingal's Cave, Staffa, John Clevely the Younger (18th century, public domain)

Edward Elgar (1857 – 1934)

Sea Pictures, Op. 37 (1899) (23 mins)

Sea Slumber-Song In Haven (Capri) Sabbath Morning at Sea Where Corals Lie The Swimmer

Mendelssohn may have composed his sea picture while his fingers were still stiff with salt, but Elgar's *Sea Pictures* are sensations recalled in the land-locked peace of the

composer's cottage near Malvern. No wonder then that the composer takes a broader view of his subject matter in this, his only orchestral song cycle. The sea runs through the five songs by five different poets (including Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Elgar's own wife Alice), but it's less a physical entity than an idea, a symbol, a force. One emerges from an encounter as dry as one went in.

Commissioned by the Norwich Festival, the work was premiered there in October 1899 by rising star contralto Clara Butt (her vocal power so memorably captured by Thomas Beecham: "On a clear day you could have heard her across the English Channel"), with Elgar himself conducting. It was only a few months since the premiere of the *Enigma Variations*, and you can hear the same invention and precision in the shifting textural layers of the orchestral writing – sufficiently appealing that Mahler would later conduct the cycle in New York in 1910.

Sea Pictures opens ambiguously. There's no human presence or voice in Roden Noel's 'Sea Slumber-Song', just a muted, haunting lullaby sung by the sea herself. The low-lying vocal line smears rhythms across barlines, endlessly rocked by the amniotic pulse and swell of the orchestra's divided strings.

The contrast with 'In Haven (Capri)' (which started life as a "lute song" for voice and piano a few years earlier) is striking. It's as though the light shifts and we can no longer see the depths, just the glittering surface of the water, an effect created by deliberately light scoring. How are we to read this diaphanous delicacy even as the words declare so staunchly that "love alone will stay"? It's unclear.

There's no shortage of grandeur or depth, however, in 'Sabbath Morning at Sea'. Browning's verse brings a new spiritual dimension to the music. Reduced to chant-like monotone at the start, the voice soon bursts out into ecstasy – an anticipation of Gerontius's ministering Angel.

The heart of the cycle, 'Where Corals Lie', turns the music's gaze from the spiritual to the sensual. A passionate outpouring of desire for pleasure beyond reach is counterbalanced, kept from grandiosity, by a gently lilting accompaniment.

'The Swimmer' brings *Sea Pictures* to a close with a solo cantata in miniature. Gordon's long poem unfolds episodically as heroic man ("I would ride as never man has ridden") pits himself against the elements in an eternal struggle.

Interval (20 mins)

Antonín Dvořák (1841 – 1904)

Symphony No. 5 in F major, Op. 75 (1875, rev. 1887) (42 mins)

Allegro ma non troppo Andante con moto Scherzo. Allegro scherzando Finale. Allegro molto

We return to land in Dvořák's pastoral Symphony No. 5. Don't be fooled by the opus number. Composed in 1875, the Fifth Symphony is an early work – the culmination of the composer's first arc of symphonies as much as the start of a mature new era. But, unpublished until 1888,

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the symphony was rebranded as a new work by canny publishers hoping for a sales boost.

If Dvořák's Fourth Symphony is the heavy, heady atmosphere of a stormy day, the Fifth is the cool freshness that follows. Clarinets sing lyrical songs, birds chirrup in flutes, Bohemian spirit animates the dancing Scherzo (anticipating the *Slavonic Dances* just a few years ahead) before new seriousness and weight suddenly return for the mercurial finale.

Composed at a single stretch of just six summer weeks, buoyed by a prestigious competition win, the Symphony has a fluidity to it, a new sense of unity and identity – taking the Classical symphonic form and relaxing it into a more personal musical statement.

Musicologist Donald Tovey pronounced the opening of the Fifth Symphony – a sweet, artless theme introduced by the clarinet that's scarcely more than a broken chord – as "the lightest symphonic opening since Beethoven's *Pastoral* Symphony". It's a ripple of stirring life that proceeds to unfold with deceptive ease given just how far we start (A minor) from the symphony's "home" key of F major, and how far we then proceed to roam (D-flat major). Woodwind fill Dvořák's musical forest with birdsong, and are those hunting horns we can hear in the distance?

Marked "espressivo e dolente" (expressive and sorrowful), the slow movement has often been compared to Dvořák's many *dumky* – polished, classical adaptations of the traditional Slavic form characterised by a meditative melancholy. In the concert hall, *dumky* were often developed by contrasting music of wild exuberance, though we get none of that here in this autumnal, nocturne-like movement, with its shifting play of harmonic light.

The Scherzo follows almost straight on after only a "very brief pause". A short introduction blurs the join, allowing the contemplative spirit of the slow movement to wind itself down before a bold, swirling first theme sets us off at a dance. There's brief respite in a gentler middle section, but soon the dance returns (led by an athletic clarinet) and insists the listener join once more.

A brusque opening gambit from cellos announces from the offset of the Finale that we're in a different – and darker – world. One critic at the 1888 London premiere praised the movement's "masterful form" and "grand inspiration", signalling not only its scope, but also the driving energy and single-minded development of its themes.

The tempestuous mood emerges (once again) from a tussle over key. The drift towards A minor hinted at at the start of the symphony becomes a relentless pull here, and the conflict we sense is the battle of music that knows it must somehow get back to F major but cannot achieve it until the very final bars.

Programme notes by Alexandra Coghlan
© Philharmonia Orchestra/Alexandra Coghlan

Alexandra Coghlan is a music journalist and critic, and has written for publications including *The Sunday Times, Prospect, The Spectator, The New Statesman, Opera* magazine and *The Independent.* She also appears regularly on BBC Radio 3, and as a speaker at festivals and concerts. Her book *Carols From King's* was published by Ebury in 2016.

Meet Sir John Eliot Gardiner



Have you ever been to Fingal's Cave in the Hebrides, the place that inspired Mendelssohn's Overture?

Well, very close to it - the island of Mull and over the water, Iona. Both magical.

... Or the Czech countryside where Dvořák grew up?

Sadly I've not been to Nelahozeves, his home town, but I once made the road trip through magnificent country from Salzburg to Prague to conduct the Czech Philharmonic in Janáček's Jenůfa in 2002.

Which, if any, of Elgar's Sea Pictures is your favourite?

No. 4, 'Where Corals Lie'. Exquisite.

Which other pieces of music - classical or not evoke the sea for you?

Two pieces: Frank Bridge's tone poem *The Sea* – unjustly neglected, and of course Debussy's La mer – a mesmerising masterpiece.

Is there another place you've visited that has made you feel a particular affinity with a composer or a piece of music?

There are many examples. Perhaps most poignantly for me it's the landscape around Berlioz's hometown. La Côte-Saint-André in the Dauphiné in south-east France. I find his Damnation of Faust gains enormously from the insights and familiarity with the views one gets of the Préalpes - the Vercors and the Chartreuse Mountains and the powers of nature at work, which inspired Berlioz.

Which concerts coming up in the Philharmonia's London season are you most looking forward to?

Two in particular: Santtu's wonderful programme on 30 March which includes three of my favourite pieces: the Brahms *Academic* Festival Overture, the Schumann Konzertstück for four horns and Sibelius's Fifth Symphony. Mouthwatering.

And the programme with Stephen Hough on 4 May – magnificent pianist, polymath and lovely guy with whom I've just been collaborating with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in Brahms's two monumental piano concertos. He will be playing Beethoven's Third Piano Concerto.

Sir John Eliot Gardiner Conductor



Sir John Eliot Gardiner stands as an international leader in today's musical life, respected as one of the world's most innovative and dynamic musicians. His work as Artistic Director of his Monteverdi Choir, English Baroque Soloists and Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique has marked him out as a central figure in the early music revival and a pioneer of historically informed performance. As a regular guest of the world's leading symphony orchestras, Gardiner conducts repertoire from the 17th to the 20th centuries.

The extent of Gardiner's repertoire is illustrated in the extensive catalogue of award-winning recordings, as wide-ranging as Mozart, Schumann, Berlioz, Elgar and Kurt Weill, in addition to works by Renaissance and Baroque composers.

Since 2005 the Monteverdi Choir & Orchestras have recorded on their independent label, Soli Deo Gloria, established to release live recordings made during Gardiner's Bach Cantata Pilgrimage, for which he received *Gramophone*'s 2011 Special Achievement Award and a Diapason d'Or de l'Année 2012. His recording accolades include two GRAMMY awards; he has received more Gramophone Awards than any other living artist.

Gardiner's long relationship with the LSO has led to complete symphony cycles and numerous recordings on LSO Live, most recently of Mendelssohn and Schumann; in June 2022, he conducted the LSO with soloist Maria João Pires at the Barbican and LSO St Luke's and on tour to Granada Festival.

Gardiner and the Monteverdi Choir & Orchestras perform regularly at the world's major venues and festivals. In 2022, Gardiner made his 61st appearance at the BBC Proms conducting Beethoven's supreme spiritual testament, *Missa Solemnis*. 2023 marks Gardiner's 80th birthday year, which the MCO celebrates with performances of Bach's Mass in B minor on tour around Europe.

Gardiner's book, *Music in the Castle of Heaven: A Portrait of Johann Sebastian Bach*, was published in 2013 by Allen Lane, leading to the Prix des Muses award (Singer-Polignac).

Gardiner holds honorary doctorates from the Royal College of Music, New England Conservatory of Music, the universities of Lyon, Cremona, St Andrews and King's College, Cambridge, where he studied and is now an Honorary Fellow; he is an Honorary Fellow of King's College, London and the British Academy, and an Honorary Member of the Royal Academy of Music. He became the inaugural Christoph Wolff Distinguished Visiting Scholar at Harvard University in 2014/15 and was awarded the Concertgebouw Prize in January 2016. Gardiner was made Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur in 2011 and was given the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany in 2005. In the UK, he was made a Commander of the British Empire in 1990 and awarded a knighthood for his services to music in the 1998 Queen's Birthday Honours List.

Alice Coote Mezzo-soprano



Mezzo-soprano Alice Coote is regarded as one of the great artists of our day. Equally famed on operatic stages as in concert and recital, she has been named the "superlative British Mezzo" (San Francisco Chronicle).

She gives recitals throughout the UK, Europe and the USA; at Wigmore Hall (where she has been a Resident Artist), BBC Proms, The Concertgebouw, Vienna Konzerthaus, Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall, among others. She is acclaimed for performances with orchestras such as the Philharmonia, London Symphony Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and the Hallé.

In her operatic engagements, Coote interprets both male and female roles at venues such as Opera North, Welsh National Opera, Scottish Opera, English National Opera, Glyndebourne and the Royal Opera House. In Europe, she has appeared at the Opéra de Paris, Théâtre des Champs-Elysées, Dutch National Opera, Grand Théâtre de Genève, Bayerische Staatsoper, Oper Frankfurt and Salzburg Festival. USA and Canadian opera houses include Seattle Opera, LA Opera, San Francisco Opera, Canadian Opera Company and the Metropolitan Opera, New York. Her many recordings and DVD appearances include on CD: Mahler Song Cycles (Pentatone); The Power of Love: An English Songbook (Hyperion); Songs by Robert Schumann and Gustav Mahler (EMI); Handel's Messiah and Mahler 2 (EMI); Elgar's Dream of Gerontius and The Apostles (Hallé); Brahms's Alto Rhapsody (Tudor); Schubert's Winterreise (Wigmore Hall Live); Mahler's Das Lied von der Erde (Pentatone); and on DVD: Handel's Messiah (EMI); Hansel in Hänsel und Gretel (EMI); Nerone in L'incoronazione di Poppea (Decca); and Ruggiero in Alcina (Arte).

Recent engagements include Gluck's Orfeo ed Euridice at English National Opera; Berlioz's Roméo et Juliette with the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas; and Mahler's Symphony No. 8 with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO) conducted by Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla. Coote was a Hallé Associate Artist for the 2019/20 season.

In the 2022/23 season, Coote performs Orfeo in a concert performance of Orfeo ed Euridice at Opera North and Madame de Croissy in Poulenc's Dialogues des Carmélites at the Metropolitan Opera. In concert, she performs Elgar's Sea Pictures with the Philharmonia and Sir John Eliot Gardiner; Verdi's *Requiem* with the Hallé and Sir Mark Elder: Ravel's Shéhérazade with the Sinfonia of London and John Wilson: Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* with the CBSO and Sir Andrew Davis: Mahler's Das Lied von der Erde with the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, and Elgar's The Apostles and The Dream of Gerontius with the Hallé and Sir Mark Elder.

In 2018, she was awarded an OBE for services to music.

About the Philharmonia



The Philharmonia Orchestra was founded in 1945, and has worked with a who's who of 20th-and 21st-century music. Finnish conductor Santtu-Matias Rouvali took up the baton as Principal Conductor in September 2021.

Herbert von Karajan, Otto Klemperer, Wilhelm Furtwängler, Arturo Toscanini, Riccardo Muti and Esa-Pekka Salonen are just a few of the great artists to be associated with the Philharmonia, and we have premiered works by Richard Strauss, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Errollyn Wallen, Kaija Saariaho and many others. Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, in the heart of London, has been our home since 1995. We also have residencies at venues and festivals across England, each embracing a Learning & Engagement programme that empowers people to engage with, and participate in, orchestral music.

In the 2022/23 season, cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason is our Featured Artist, performing in all our residency venues. Anna Clyne is our Featured Composer, and musician and climate campaigner Love Ssega is our Artist in Residence.

Our international reputation is built in part on our extraordinary 76-year recording legacy, which in the last ten years has been built on by pioneering work with digital technology. The Orchestra's installations and VR experiences have introduced hundreds of thousands of people to the symphony orchestra.

The Philharmonia is the go-to orchestra for many film and videogame composers in the UK and Hollywood, and its 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.

We have over 1m listeners each month on Spotify, and a vibrant YouTube channel with over 126,000 subscribers. The channel features free performances; instrument guides; interviews with artists; and in-depth documentaries. The Philharmonia is Classic FM's Orchestra on Tour and we broadcast extensively on BBC Radio 3. Throughout our history, the Orchestra has toured across Europe, Asia and America. In the 2022/23 season we perform in Denmark, Finland, Italy, Spain, Germany and Switzerland.

Our Emerging Artists Programme aims to increase diversity within the classical music industry, and develop the next generation of instrumentalists, composers and conductors. The Philharmonia is a registered charity, proud to be supported by Arts Council England, many generous individuals, corporate supporters and Trusts and Foundations.

A team of 80 outstanding musicians from 16 countries, the Orchestra looks forward to bringing music into your life, through great concerts and ground-breaking projects, for many years to come.

Meet Sylvain Séailles

No. 4 Viola



What is your favourite way to spend time in or near the sea?

Onboard a fishing boat at summer sunrise on a calm sea, ideally with breakfast (bread, butter and a gentle white wine) handy... Or watching the tide endlessly shape the rocky shore near Paimpol in north Brittany.

Have you ever visited Fingal's Cave, the place that inspired Mendelssohn's Overture?

It's on my list!

Which aspect of Mendelssohn's piece best reflects your experience of the sea – the peaceful opening or the storm?

The quietly shimmering harmonies in the strings starting the middle section. It reminds me of the subtle nuances in sky light playing with the surface of the water.

"Deep beneath the rolling waves, in labyrinths of coral caves, the echo of a distant tide comes willowing across the sand..."

Which other pieces of music – classical or not – evoke the sea for you?

Echoes by Pink Floyd (from *Meddle*), my alltime favourite. Psychedelic rock with the scale of a late Schubert sonata movement (plus the seagulls' and whales' songs coming out of the lead guitar).

"Deep beneath the rolling waves, in labyrinths of coral caves, the echo of a distant tide comes willowing across the sand..." (lyrics by Mason, Gilmour, Waters, Wright).

Which concerts coming up in the Philharmonia's London season are you most looking forward to?

Bruckner's String Quintet at 6pm on 30 March with the Philharmonia Chamber Players. I've been dreaming of playing this absolute masterpiece for so many years!

Robert Schumann's *Konzertstück* at 7.30pm on the same evening. This four-horn concerto is a striking example of the epic and poetic inspiration that only Schumann could have come up with. And it features our very own glorious horn section!



astline near Paimpol © Sylvain Séailles

Our players

FIRST VIOLINS Zsolt-Tihamér Visontay

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- ‡ Professor at the Royal College of Music
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- § Musical Director, De Montfort University
- ++ MMSF Fellow 2022-23

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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Coming up



Sheku Kanneh-Mason plays Bloch

Sunday 26 February 2023, 3pm Royal Festival Hall

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



Santtu conducts Brahms, Schumann & Sibelius

Thursday 30 March 2023, 7.30pm Royal Festival Hall

Our Principal Conductor pairs Sibelius with a feast for horn fans: Schumann's joyous *Konzertstück* featuring our renowned horn section.

Thank you

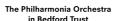
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