
Welcome

A very warm welcome to this Philharmonia concert.

As we heard in his first concert with us earlier this month, pianist Mao Fujita has an extraordinary affinity with Mozart's music. I'm delighted that he's back with another of Mozart's great concertos, and that we're taking this evening's programme to our audiences in Basingstoke and Bedford too.

We are dedicating this concert to Murray Goulstone – over twenty years, the heart and soul of our box office – who passed away last month all too soon. Murray will be enormously missed by all his colleagues, on stage and off, and many members of the audience. We know he would have particularly loved this programme, so I hope you will enjoy it, too.

With my best wishes,



© Tommy Gucken-Win

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thorben".

Thorben Dittes
Chief Executive

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This evening's concert

Mao Fujita plays Mozart Part 2

Thursday 20 March 2025, 7.30pm

Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall

Osmo Vänskä – conductor

Mao Fujita – piano

MAZZOLI *These Worlds In Us* (9 mins)

MOZART *Piano Concerto No. 25 K. 503* (31 mins)

Interval (20 mins)

MENDELSSOHN *Symphony No. 5 'Reformation'* (39mins)

This performance finishes at approximately 9.15pm.

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The concert at a glance

DID YOU KNOW? – The original score of Mendelssohn's 'Reformation' Symphony calls for a serpent, a large wooden instrument from the 17th century that was carved in a winding, serpentine shape. Nowadays, the part is played on a contrabassoon.

WHO'S CONDUCTING? – Osmo Vänskä, Finnish conductor renowned for his dynamic interpretations and deep musical insight, began his career as a clarinetist in the Helsinki Philharmonic.

ABOUT THE MUSIC – Although Mozart did not invent the piano concerto, he is often regarded as having shaped the form. Over his lifetime, Mozart wrote 21 original concertos for solo piano and orchestra, a concerto for two pianos and three pians, and four numbered arrangements of sonatas by other composers.

LISTEN OUT FOR – Martin Luther's hymn *Ein Feste Burg* (A Mighty Fortress) isn't just a religious tune - it's a musical time machine. Mendelssohn references this historic melody in his 'Reformation' Symphony, connecting the past and present through sound.

COME BACK FOR – Join our Principal Conductor Santtu-Matias Rouvali and violinist Arabella Steinbacher on Sunday 13 April for Rossini's iconic William Tell Overture, Mendelssohn's heartfelt Violin Concerto, and Shostakovich's extraordinary final Symphony.

Programme notes

Missy Mazzoli (b. 1980)

These Worlds In Us (2006)
(9 mins)

Missy Mazzoli – born in Pennsylvania and trained at Yale and The Hague – is an artist for whom the personal is political, and in whose hands the intimate stories of modern America take on an epic scale and a global significance. “With each work, I endeavour to provide a new language for thoughts and feelings we suppress in everyday life” she says – “to provide space in which we can process the overwhelming nature of the world”. Her orchestral work *These Worlds in Us* was premiered by the Yale Philharmonia in March 2006. In her own words:

The title These Worlds In Us comes from James Tate’s poem The Lost Pilot, a meditation on his father’s death in World War II:

(excerpt)

*My head cocked towards the sky,
I cannot get off the ground,
and you, passing over again,*

*fast, perfect and unwilling
to tell me that you are doing
well, or that it was a mistake*

*that placed you in that world,
and me in this; or that misfortune
placed these worlds in us.*

This piece is dedicated to my father, who was a soldier during the Vietnam War. In talking to him it occurred to me that, as we grow older, we accumulate worlds of intense memory within us, and that grief is often not far from joy. I like the idea that music can reflect painful and blissful sentiments in a single note or gesture, and sought

to create a sound palette that I hope is at once completely new and strangely familiar to the listener.

The theme of this work, a mournful line first played by the violins, collapses into glissandos almost immediately after it appears, giving the impression that the piece has been submerged under water or played on a turntable that is grinding to a halt. Melodicas (mouth organs) mimic the wheeze of a broken accordion, lending a particular vulnerability to the bookends of the work. The rhythms and structure of the piece are inspired by Balinese music, and the march-like figures in the percussion bring to mind the militaristic inspiration for the work as well as the relentless energy of electronica drum beats.

*Programme notes by Missy Mazzoli
© Missy Mazzoli*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 – 1791)

Piano Concerto No. 25 in C, K. 503 (1786)
(31 mins)

Allegro maestoso
Andante
Allegretto

Mozart wrote some of the liveliest letters of any creative artist – brimming with wit, philosophy and gossip. But he almost never discussed the process of writing music, and there are whole periods of his creative life about which we know almost nothing. These gaps wouldn’t seem quite so dark if the masterpieces that emerged from

them didn't shine quite so brilliantly. And for a textbook demonstration of musical brilliance, as understood in the late 18th century, listen to the majestic opening of this Piano Concerto No. 25, completed in Vienna in early December 1786.

The key is C major, in which 18th century brass instruments sound particularly dazzling, and Mozart deploys trumpets (coupled with their traditional partner, timpani) as well as oboes and a flute to give the ceremonial rhythms of the opening bars the brightest possible colouring. This is a concerto designed to make a big impression, and it's generally assumed that it was created for one of a series of concerts that he proposed to give at the Trattnerhof Casino, though whether or not these concerts ever happened remains a subject of debate.

But what's certain is that with this work, the series of keyboard concertos that Mozart had written at regular intervals since 1782 for his own use in Vienna comes to an end. He would write only two more piano concertos. The manuscript shows that he'd begun the first movement some time earlier, maybe as early as late 1784. Mozart might have played the finished concerto at the Leipzig Gewandhaus on 12 May 1789; his nine-year old pupil Johann Nepomuk Hummel is thought to have performed it in Dresden on 16 April that year, and the virtuoso Walburga Willmann definitely performed it in Vienna on 7 March 1787.

Beyond that it's probably easiest to let the music speak for itself: the conversational woodwind asides that begin to undercut the grandeur of that opening; the way the wind instruments gently take the reins of the melody in the Andante, and the smiling, civilised unfolding of the finale, where Mozart uses the

full ceremonial brilliance of his orchestra only as punctuation. This is Mozart playing with his audience's expectations – teasing them, amusing them, and letting them enjoy his genius at its untrammelled, irresistible height. For the mature Mozart, piano concertos were always a conversation.

Interval (20 mins)

Felix Mendelssohn (1809 – 1847)

**Symphony No. 5 in D minor, Op. 107,
'Reformation'** (1830)
(29 mins)

Andante – Allegro con fuoco
Allegro vivace
Andante
Andante con moto – Allegro vivace

Although born into a long line of Jewish intellectuals, Felix Mendelssohn was baptised a Christian. He knew that the summer of 1830 would see celebrations across Germany to mark the tercentenary of the Augsburg Confession (a summary of Lutheran beliefs, one of the most important documents of the protestant Reformation) in 1530, and as an ambitious young composer, he felt that a symphony to mark the occasion might make quite a splash. His imagination started to bubble during a trip to Britain in the summer of 1829. Back in Berlin, he battled an attack of measles and completed the symphony on 12 May 1830. He asked his sister Fanny to suggest titles:

'Reformation' symphony, 'Confessional' symphony, Symphony for a Church Festival, 'Juvenile' symphony, whatever you like. Send me at least one sensible idea – but make sure to include all the silly ones too.

Felix called it his 'Church Symphony' but in the end, 'Reformation' symphony was the title that stuck (though not during his lifetime). He'd left it too late for the symphony to be included in the official celebrations, and its Berlin premiere, in 1832, left the critics nonplussed and Mendelssohn disappointed. He withdrew the symphony and considered burning the score. It would lie unheard until 1868, 21 years after his death – when, since there were already four published Mendelssohn symphonies, it was described (again, the number has stuck) as his Fifth.

Yet the 'Reformation' symphony is one of the most original works of its time. The musical drama is easy to follow, and is played out principally in the first and last movements. A slow introduction (like day emerging from night) leads to a tumultuous struggle, heralded by solemn and martial trumpets. The age of Luther, after all, had not been peaceful. The finale completes and resolves the conflict.

In between come two movements that provide relief and reflection: a dancing scherzo and a melancholy, meditative Andante. And along the way, two pieces of sacred music help Mendelssohn tell his story. Martin Luther's famous hymn *Ein feste Burg* enters softly in the slow introduction to the finale. Like his hero Bach, Mendelssohn uses it as a sort of foundation throughout the fourth movement, and it's destined to crown the whole symphony.

The other sacred motif is the serene, prayer-like rising cadence known as the "Dresden Amen", originally composed by Johann Naumann (1749-1801) but beloved across Germany (opera buffs will recognise it from Wagner's *Parsifal*). Mendelssohn quotes it in both the first and the third movements: a symbol of reconciliation and faith, gently lighting the way forward. The real triumph in the 'Reformation' symphony is that of tolerance. As Mendelssohn wrote to his fellow composer Julius Rietz, in 1841, the symphony embodies 'the contrast between Jesuit churches with their thousand glittering ornaments, and the Calvinists with their bare white walls'. 'True piety may exist in both', he observed – 'but the best path lies between the two'.

Programme notes by Richard Bratby
© Philharmonia Orchestra/Richard Bratby

Richard Bratby is a critic and cultural historian who writes about music and opera for *The Spectator*, *Gramophone* magazine, *The Birmingham Post* and *The Critic*.

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Our dear friend and colleague Murray, Ticketing and Customer Relations Manager, passed away last month.

Over the last twenty years, many of you will have spoken to Murray when you booked over the phone, or collected your tickets before our concerts. All of us who had the pleasure of working with Murray will miss his good humour and charm, his dedication to his work, his generous friendship and his deep love of music.

Osmo Vänskä Conductor



©Joel Larson

Conductor Laureate of Minnesota Orchestra, where he held the Music Directorship for 19 years, and Music Director of Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra from 2020-2023, Osmo Vänskä is recognised for his compelling interpretations of repertoire of all ages and an energetic presence on the podium. His democratic and inclusive style of work has been key in forging long-standing relationships with many orchestras worldwide.

Performances of Mahler's Symphony No. 8 with Minnesota Orchestra in June 2022 provided a fitting culmination for Vänskä's tenure as Music Director. Together they undertook five major European tours, as well as an historic trip to Cuba in 2015 – the first visit by an American orchestra since the two countries re-established diplomatic relations. They also made a ground-breaking tour to South Africa in 2018 as part of worldwide celebrations of Nelson Mandela's Centenary – furthermore the first visit by an American orchestra – drawing together South African and American performers in musical expressions of peace, freedom, and reconciliation on a five-city tour. Vänskä and Minnesota Orchestra also made an acclaimed return to the BBC Proms in Summer 2018.

Vänskä continues to develop a visiting and touring relationship with Curtis Institute of Music Symphony Orchestra, leading conducting seminars as well as tours in Europe, the US and Asia. Last season they toured the West Coast of the US with soloist Yefim Bronfman.

A distinguished recording artist for the BIS label, Vänskä has recorded all of Mahler's symphonies with Minnesota Orchestra. The Fifth Symphony received a Grammy nomination in 2017 for Best Orchestral Performance. Vänskä and Minnesota Orchestra have also recorded the complete symphonies of Beethoven and Sibelius to critical acclaim, winning a Grammy Award for Best Orchestral Performance in 2014 as well as being nominated on several occasions. In 2021 they were voted Gramophone's 'Orchestra of the Year'.

Vänskä studied conducting at Finland's Sibelius Academy and was awarded first prize in the 1982 Besançon Competition. He began his career as a clarinetist, occupying the co-principal chair of Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra. He regularly performs chamber music, having been invited to La Jolla Summerfest, Seattle Chamber Music Festival, Naantali Summer Festival, Sysmä Summer Sounds and Music in Ruovesi, amongst many others. He has recorded Bernhard Henrik Crusell's three Clarinet Quartets and Kalevi Aho's Clarinet Quintet for the BIS label and is in the process of recording several duos for clarinet and violin which he has commissioned with his wife, violinist Erin Keefe.

Mao Fujita

Piano



© Dovi Sermokas

With an innate musical sensitivity and naturalness to his artistry, 25-year old pianist Mao Fujita has already impressed many leading musicians as one of those special talents which come along only rarely, equally at home in Mozart as the major romantic repertoire. The New York Times wrote, “As soon as his fingers touched the keys, waves of airy filigree, beautifully shaped and accomplished, emerged in almost continuous streams” on the occasion of his US debut at Carnegie Hall in January 2023.

Born in Tokyo, Fujita was still studying at the Tokyo College of Music in 2017 when he took First Prize at the prestigious Concours International de Piano Clara Haskil in Switzerland, along with the Audience Award, Prix Modern Times, and the Prix Coup de Coeur, which first brought him to the attention of the international music community. He was also the Silver Medallist at the 2019 Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, where his special musical qualities received exceptional attention from a jury of leading musicians.

Fujita has debuted with conductors including Riccardo Chailly, Marek Janowski, Andris Nelsons, Lahav Shani, Christoph Eschenbach, Vasily Petrenko, and Ryan

Bancroft, with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Lucerne Festival Orchestra, Gewandhausorchester, Münchner Philharmoniker, Konzerthausorchester Berlin, DSO Berlin, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Filarmonica della Scala, Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra and Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra. He appears regularly in solo and chamber music recitals at major piano festivals and halls in Europe and Asia, performing with Renaud Capuçon, Antoine Tamestit, Kian Soltani, Zlatomir Fung, Marc Bouchkov, and Makoto Ozone, among others.

Fujita is an exclusive Sony Classical International artist. In October 2022, his eagerly-anticipated debut album on the Sony Classical label, a studio recording of Mozart’s complete piano sonatas, was released to unanimous acclaim for its transparent sound worlds and vividly-detailed interpretation. He has performed the full sonata cycle at the Verbier Festival, the Wigmore Hall, and across Japan’s major concert halls.

Starting piano lessons at the age of three, Fujita won his first international prize in 2010 at the World Classic in Taiwan, and became a laureate of numerous national and international competitions such as the Rosario Marciano International Piano Competition in Vienna (2013), Zhuhai International Mozart Competition for Young Musicians (2015), and the Gina Bachauer International Young Artists Piano Competition (2016).

Fujita moved to Berlin in 2022 for further studies with Kirill Gerstein.

About the Philharmonia



© Luca Migliore

Founded in 1945, the Philharmonia Orchestra is one of the world's leading symphony orchestras. Finnish conductor Santtu-Matias Rouvali took up the baton as Principal Conductor in 2021, and Marin Alsop joined him as Principal Guest Conductor in 2023. They follow in illustrious footsteps: Herbert von Karajan, Otto Klemperer, Ricardo Muti, Giuseppe Sinopoli, Christoph von Dohnányi, Vladimir Ashkenazy and Esa-Pekka Salonen are some of the key figures who have honed the renowned Philharmonia sound over eight decades.

The Orchestra is made up of 80 outstanding musicians. It has premiered works by Richard Strauss, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Errollyn Wallen, Laufey and many others, and performs with many of the world's most admired soloists.

The Philharmonia thrives on creative collaborations: in the 2024/25 season, violinist Nemanja Radulović is Featured Artist, and dance artist Vidya Patel is Artist in Residence. Previous Featured Artists have included violinist and Nicola Benedetti, cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason and singer Julia Bullock. Multidisciplinary collective House of Absolute, Clean Bandit founder Love Ssega, and sarod virtuoso Soumik Datta, have all been Artists in Residence.

The Philharmonia is resident at the Southbank Centre in the heart of London and also holds residencies in Basingstoke, Bedford, Canterbury and Leicester, at Garsington Opera and at the Three Choirs Festival. In each of these residencies, the Orchestra is deeply embedded in the community, empowering people to engage with and participate in orchestral music. Projects with primary and secondary schools, children in foster care, people living with dementia and their carers, young people learning instruments, and adults who face barriers to experiencing the arts, all testify to the many ways music enriches our lives.

The Orchestra tours extensively throughout Europe and has performed in China, Colombia, Japan, Mauritius and the USA. In the 2024/25 season, Santtu-Matias Rouvali takes the Orchestra to Estonia, Finland and Spain. Marin Alsop has also led a tour across mainland Spain and the Canary Islands.

The Philharmonia is known for embracing innovative technology. The Orchestra's recordings include benchmark LPs, more than 150 film and videogame soundtracks and streamed performances. Its recording of Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 is travelling through interstellar space on board the Voyager spacecraft, and its immersive installations and virtual reality (VR) experiences have introduced many thousands of people to orchestral music.

The Philharmonia Records label was established in 2023. The Orchestra has released live recordings of major works by Strauss, Mahler, Stravinsky and Shostakovich, with Santtu at the helm.

The Philharmonia's Emerging Artists Programme nurtures and develops the next generation of instrumentalists and composers, with a focus on increasing diversity within the classical music industry.

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Thursday 10 April, 7.30pm

Santtu and violinist Nemanja Radulović reunite

Belshazzar's Feast with The Bach Choir

Thursday 8 May, 7.30pm

An evening of British music: Delius, Blackford and Walton

Santtu conducts French masterpieces

Sunday 30 March, 3pm

Debussy, Saint-Saëns and Franck with Javier Perianes

Santtu conducts Shostakovich

Sunday 13 April, 3pm

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