
Welcome

A very warm welcome to this Philharmonia concert, the first in a series of three marking 50 years since the death of Shostakovich. His music shows us how human creativity not only survives oppression and violence but defies it – a message sadly all too relevant today.

This is also the last concert in Nemanja Radulović's year as our Featured Artist. It's been a great pleasure to hear him play Bach, Khachaturian, and folk music from France and Serbia earlier in the season, and I'm looking forward to experiencing his wonderful musicianship again this evening.

With my best wishes,



© Tommy Gaken Wan

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

Thorben Dittes
Chief Executive

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This evening's concert

Santtu conducts Prokofiev and Shostakovich

Thursday 10 April 2025, 7.30pm
Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall

Santtu-Matias Rouvali – conductor
Nemanja Radulović – violin

PROKOFIEV Classical Symphony (15 mins)

SHOSTAKOVICH Violin Concerto No. 1 (39 mins)

Interval (20 mins)

SHOSTAKOVICH Symphony No. 1 (28 mins)

This performance finishes at approximately 9.25pm

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Free pre-concert performance

Philharmonia Chamber Players: Spotlight on the Harp

6pm, Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall

Rebecca Chan – violin
Fiona Cornall – violin
Scott Dickinson – viola
Richard Birchall – cello
Sam Coles – flute
Maura Marinucci – clarinet
Heidi Krutzen – harp

MOZETICH Angels in Flight
RAVEL Introduction and Allegro

This performance finishes at
approximately 6.45pm

Programme notes

Sergei Prokofiev (1891 – 1953)

Symphony No. 1 in D, Op. 25, 'Classical' (1917)
(15 mins)

Allegro

Larghetto

Gavotte: Non troppo allegro

Molto vivace

As soon as he picked up his composition degree from the St Petersburg Conservatory, Serge Prokofiev re-enrolled as a piano student. Prokofiev was quite the pianist. But in the mid 1910s, the composer started to feel the instrument's stranglehold on his creativity. At the same time, a passion for the 18th-century music of Haydn and Mozart was awakening in him.

It wasn't just the spirit of those Classical masters that enchanted Prokofiev. It was also their musical structures and textures. 'It seemed to me that had Haydn lived in our day he would have preserved his own style while absorbing something of the new at the same time', wrote Prokofiev in his memoirs, recalling the genesis of his Symphony No 1 and his desire 'to write a symphony in the Classical style.' The work's completion (10 September 1917) and first performance (21 April 1918) straddled Russia's October Revolution.

Prokofiev conceived much of the music for the symphony while rambling in open countryside. That may have informed the work's zest, but in transparency of orchestration and simple treatment of themes it is wholly of the Classical tradition. The brilliance of those themes, and a tendency to put them through distinctive twists and harmonic scrunches, was all Prokofiev's own.

On paper, the symphony is structured like one by Haydn. The first movement launches with a dashing theme that soon gives way to a secondary melody in which staccato bassoons accompany first violins (Prokofiev considered bassoons the baroque instrument par excellence). After a Larghetto with an elusive gait comes an extrovert Gavotte - an eighteenth-century dance (Prokofiev would play this movement as an encore in piano recitals). The zippiest gear is reserved for the finale – a hurtling conversation between all the tunes already heard.



Sergei Prokofiev, circa 1918 (public domain)

Programme notes by Andrew Mellor
© Philharmonia Orchestra/Andrew Mellor

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906 – 1975)

Violin Concerto No. 1 in A minor, Op. 77 (1948)
(39 mins)

Nocturne: Moderato

Scherzo: Allegro

Passacaglia: Andante – Cadenza

Burlesque: Allegro con brio – Presto

The years immediately following the Second World War were a time of great uncertainty and dramatic reversals for Dmitri Shostakovich. The horrors and scale of the holocaust and other Nazi atrocities were gradually uncovered, only for many to deny or dismiss these revelations. The Cold War had well and truly set in. And closer to home, the Culture Minister Andrey Zhdanov implemented a series of ferocious cultural ‘decrees’ which saw Shostakovich, feted at home and abroad, suddenly ejected from his various teaching jobs and forced to ‘repent’ for his inappropriate compositions, which were blacklisted.

During these turbulent years, inspired by the virtuoso violinist David Oistrakh, Shostakovich composed his First Violin Concerto. It was begun in 1947 and finished in March the following year: Shostakovich was able to point to the exact bar he had been writing when the Zhdanov Decree was published. He knew that there was no chance of a public performance – that had to wait until 1955, several years after Stalin’s death. In the meantime he ran through the score with his friends and students, checking that the violin writing was idiomatic for the soloist. He incorporated Jewish musical inflections in the second-movement Scherzo (Shostakovich loathed anti-Semitism); and in the same

movement, his musical ‘signature’ is just audible: D – E flat – C – B natural, which in German musical notation spells ‘D. SCH.’

Much of this Concerto is brooding and introspective, the violin and orchestra in constant dialogue in slowly unfurling melodies in the mournful first movement. The Scherzo provides some relief – but there is a sense of something much darker and more desperate beneath the bouncing surface. The third movement is a Passacaglia, an endlessly repeating bassline over which we hear funereal figurations from the winds. The violin leads us ever onwards, eventually taking over in a lengthy cadenza. (Oistrakh persuaded Shostakovich to give the opening theme of the finale to the orchestra, rather than leave it to the violin, so that he had time to ‘at least wipe the sweat off my brow’ after his big moment!) The brief final movement is strident, energetic, and ultimately hopeful. There is light in the darkness after all. The Concerto was finally premiered in October 1955 in Leningrad, with its dedicatee David Oistrakh as the soloist, and was a resounding success.

Programme notes by Katy Hamilton
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Interval (20 mins)

Dmitri Shostakovich

Symphony No. 1 in F minor, Op. 10 (1925)
(28 mins)

Allegretto – Allegro non troppo

Allegro – Meno mosso

Lento – Largo

Allegro molto – Lento

A little over twenty years before the fraught composition of the First Violin Concerto, the teenaged Shostakovich completed his First Symphony as his graduation project from the Petrograd (later Leningrad) Conservatory. He had been getting bored of his studies, feeling as if his tutors weren't providing him with the free rein he so desperately wanted – and he was particularly entertained that his composition professor, Maximilian Steinberg (who was Rimsky-Korsakov's son-in-law), described much of his music as 'grotesque' for its witty, angular lines. He started work on the Symphony in October 1924, the month after his eighteenth birthday, and by the following May he was able to perform the whole piece in an arrangement for two pianos to pass his final exam. He finished orchestrating it on 1 July 1925.

But now there was the question of getting the piece performed, and Shostakovich was still very young and unknown – he was paying his bills, in fact, by working as a cinema pianist (and this backfired rather spectacularly when he was forced to take one of his employers to court for failing to cough up his fees on time!). Thankfully, and despite his not always seeing eye to eye with his teachers, he had many enthusiastic supporters in both Petrograd and Moscow. His old teacher Steinberg recommended the symphony for a public performance and Shostakovich's Conservatory covered the costs

of copying orchestral parts for the players. The premiere, on 12 May 1926, was a great success and even those critics who pointed to the youth and inexperience of the symphony's young composer could see clearly that this marked the emergence of a brilliant and original talent.

There's a huge sense of play in the opening of this Symphony, with many of the instruments given solos, like a series of brief conversations, and a lot of changes of tempo. Shostakovich's experiences as a cinema pianist seem to have contributed to this striking blend of vaudeville-type gestures (no doubt too 'grotesque' for Steinberg!) with the more 'serious' model of Rimsky-Korsakov. The driving rhythms and frantic passagework of the second movement has a sense of uncertainty and anticipation at its heart, and Shostakovich uses solo piano to great effect within the orchestral mix. A heart-twisting Lento follows, the throbbing string chords suggesting Tchaikovsky as a probable influence. A drum roll leads us directly into the finale, which pitches us through a kaleidoscope of colours and moods from funeral march to vaudeville, before ending in a blaze of brass and percussion.

Programme notes by Katy Hamilton

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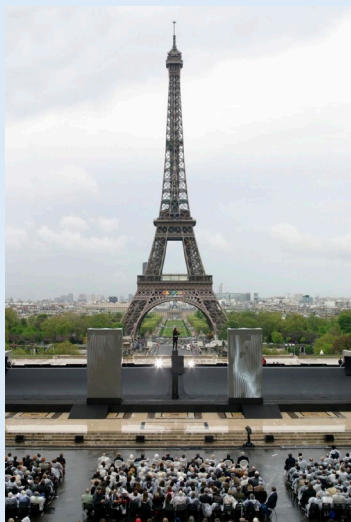
Katy Hamilton is a writer and broadcaster.

She is much in demand as a speaker, appearing at concerts and festivals across the UK and on BBC Radio 3.

Get to know Nemanja Radulović

City of Light

Nemanja Radulović grew up in Belgrade, in Serbia. After the war in 1999, he left with his family, planning to move to Germany. But Germany was no longer taking in migrants from Serbia, so they settled in Paris. Nemanja got a place at the Paris Conservatoire to study with Patrice Fontanarosa. He describes Patrice and his wife, harpist Marielle Nordmann, as his ‘French family’, and Paris is still his home today.



Double Sens

In 2008 Nemanja created the ensemble Double Sens, made up of friends and family (his two sisters are both cellists). He explains: “I wanted to gather my Serbian and French musician friends and didn’t have to think about it for too long, as I personally knew each musician, and was certain that everyone’s different personality would work well with the others... the most

important thing is the happiness of sharing the music and stage together.”

A Serbian star

Nemanja has won a host of violin competitions, the first when he had been playing the violin for just four years. In 2017 he was made both a Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres, in recognition of his contribution to French cultural life, and a Commander of the Order of Karadorđe Star for ‘special merit and success in representing Serbia’ – an honour he shares with tennis player Novak Djoković.



A towering performance

In 2019 Nemanja was chosen to perform at an event commemorating all victims of concentration camps during World War Two. He played a movement from Ysaÿe’s Violin Sonata No. 4, on top of a narrow pillar in front of the Eiffel Tower. He was attached by a harness, but nonetheless had to take care to keep his balance.

*Read the full article on our blog:
philharmonia.co.uk*

Santtu-Matias Rouvali

Conductor



© Marco Borggreve

Santtu-Matias Rouvali took up the baton as Principal Conductor of the Philharmonia Orchestra in September 2021. He is just the sixth person to hold that title since the Philharmonia was founded in 1945.

Santtu has conducted a wide range of music with the Philharmonia, from blockbusters by Strauss and Rachmaninov to works by living composers including Magnus Lindberg and Anna Clyne. He has performed with the Philharmonia in all their residency venues – at the Southbank Centre in London, and in Bedford, Leicester, Canterbury and Basingstoke – at the BBC Proms, and Edinburgh International Festival. And annual visits to the Mikkeli Festival in Finland have fast become a highlight of the Philharmonia players' calendars.

In autumn 2024 Santtu led the Philharmonia's series *Nordic Soundscapes*, conducting music by Sibelius, Grieg, Nielsen, María Sigfúsdóttir, Miho Hazama and Mats Larsson Gothe. In the 2024/25 season, he takes the Orchestra on tour to Finland, Estonia, Spain and Japan.

In the Philharmonia's 2023 series *Let Freedom Ring: Celebrating the Sounds of America*, he conducted music by George Gershwin, Duke Ellington and Wynton Marsalis, and had the audience dancing in the aisles when he played drum kit in the first ever performance of the Philharmonia Big Band. Originally a percussionist, he played with the Philharmonia's percussion section in Steve Reich's *Music for Pieces of Wood* in a streamed performance during the Covid pandemic.

Santtu conducts Strauss, the first release on the Philharmonia Records label, features his recordings of four Strauss tone poems, two of them recorded live at the Royal Festival Hall in his first concert as Principal Conductor. His second Philharmonia Records release is a live recording of Mahler's Symphony No. 2, 'Resurrection'. The third, *Santtu conducts Shostakovich*, was released in November 2024. He has also released Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* and Prokofiev's Symphony No. 5 with the Philharmonia on Signum Records.

Santtu is Chief Conductor of Gothenburg Symphony, with whom he is recording an award-winning Sibelius cycle. He is Honorary Conductor of Tampere Philharmonic Orchestra, and also performs regularly with top orchestras around Europe and the US.

When he's not conducting, Santtu loves to spend time meditating, foraging and hunting in the forest around his home in Finland, and cooking the food he brings home.

Nemanja Radulović

Violin



© Sever Zolák

Serbian-French violinist Nemanja Radulović champions the power of music to bring people together with his unique energy and candour, thrilling virtuosity, depth of expression, and adventurous programming. His hotly-anticipated BBC Proms debut in 2019 with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and Kirill Karabits featured a Barber Violin Concerto played with “lyric delicacy and last-movement super-virtuosity” (*The Times*).

Signed exclusively to Warner Classics in 2021, Mr Radulović’s debut album on the label – *ROOTS* – represents a beguiling sonic journey evoked by his many influences and inspirations to date. His previous album, *Baika*, one of a string of nine successful recordings made with Deutsche Grammophon and the Universal Music Group labels, was declared “a fiery whirlwind of an album” by BBC Music Magazine, which awarded it 5 stars and the coveted Critics’ Choice Award.

Winner of the 2015 Echo Klassik Award for Newcomer of the Year, Mr Radulović is an artist who seeks to broaden the boundaries of classical music. He has amassed a legion of loyal fans around the world who have enjoyed his performances with many of the world’s leading orchestras, including the Philharmonia, Munich

Philharmonic, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Staatskapelle Dresden, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Tokyo Symphony, Yomiuri Nippon Symphony in Tokyo, Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, Orquesta Nacional de España, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, and the NDR Radiophilharmonie in Hanover among others.

Mr Radulović’s recent and forthcoming highlights include engagements with the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Gothenburg Symphony, Sydney Symphony, Dusseldorf Symphony, RTE National Symphony in Dublin, and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg; an extensive UK tour with the Gavle Symphony Orchestra and Jaime Martin; sold-out performances with his ensemble Double Sens at such celebrated festivals as the Folle Journée de Nantes and the Chorégies d’Orange and in venues such as the Paris Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and Berlin Philharmonie; and the opening concert on the Jeunesse Musicale series at the Vienna Konzerthaus.

Mr Radulović’s recognition for his work in classical music includes International Revelation of the Year by the Victoires de la musique classique in 2005, an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Arts in Niš, Serbia, and an ELLE Style Award for Musician of the Year in 2015.

Born in Serbia in 1985, Nemanja Radulović studied at the Faculty of Arts and Music in Belgrade, the Saarlandes Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Saarbrücken, the Stauffer Academy in Cremona with Salvatore Accardo, and the Conservatoire de Paris with Patrice Fontanarosa.

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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