

Welcome to the 2023 BBC Proms



A very warm welcome to the 2023 BBC Proms. It's thrilling to be sharing in an experience in which tradition and innovation sit side by side, and I hope these concerts continue to delight you with familiar favourites and entice you to discover new composers and artists.

Our composer celebrations reflect both sides of that coin, from the works of Sergey Rachmaninov (born 150 years ago) – whose music has featured regularly at the Proms since 1900 – to the less familiar worlds of Dora Pejačević and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor. This summer's extensive opera and choral programme brings you landmark operas by Berlioz and Poulenc alongside the UK premiere of György Kurtág's Beckett-inspired *Endgame* and the first complete performance at the Proms of Schumann's ravishing *Das Paradies und die Peri*. Opera also forms part of our family offering this year, with the *Horrible Histories* team taking an irreverent look at the art form, while a bank holiday concert delves into fantasy, myths and legends from TV, film and video games. And, following our series last year of 'Proms at' chamber music Proms around the UK, this year there are performances by leading soloists, ensembles and chamber choirs in Aberystwyth, Dewsbury, Gateshead, Perth and Truro.

The Proms celebrates genres and artists from around the world. This year we bring Portuguese fado and Northern Soul to the Proms for the first time, as well as a tribute to Bollywood playback singer Lata Mangeshkar. We also welcome four very individual artists in special orchestral collaborations – Rufus Wainwright with the BBC Concert Orchestra, Cory Henry with the Jules Buckley Orchestra, Jon Hopkins with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and – as part of our weekend at Sage Gateshead – Self Esteem with the Royal Northern Sinfonia. Visitors from further afield include orchestras from Berlin, Budapest and Boston. The Proms continues to redefine the boundaries of a classical music festival but one thing remains constant – we seek out and showcase the very best.

Every Prom here at the Royal Albert Hall and in our 'Proms at' series is broadcast live on BBC Radio 3, where the station's expert engineers and presenters bring you the live experience wherever you are – and you can listen again on BBC Sounds. You can also enjoy 24 Proms on BBC TV, all available for 12 months on BBC iPlayer.

David Pickard
Director, BBC Proms

Tonight *at the* Proms

Few orchestras are as innovative as the Budapest Festival Orchestra – who this afternoon gave us our Audience Choice Prom – and few can be as hard-working: this is Iván Fischer and his orchestra's third Prom in little over 24 hours.

Tonight's programme is characteristically ambitious, beginning with music by two leading Hungarian composers of the last century. Continuing our celebration of centenary composer György Ligeti, soprano Anna-Lena Elbert takes the role of the nonsense-spouting Chief of the Secret Political Police in excerpts arranged from the absurdist opera *Le Grand Macabre*.

Then the BFO is joined by Hungarian-born British pianist Sir András Schiff for the last completed work by Béla Bartók, perhaps Hungary's greatest composer. 'Bartók's Third Piano Concerto is an extraordinary piece of music,' says Schiff. 'It's like a swansong: after the radically dissonant First and the brilliantly virtuosic Second, this is a wise man's farewell, full of resignation.'

The concert concludes with Beethoven's epic 'Eroica' Symphony, his irresistibly stirring manifesto of musical, and human, possibility.



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Please be considerate to the performers and other audience members, while also recognising that listeners may show a variety of responses to the music.



Royal Albert Hall

If you leave the auditorium during the performance, you will only be readmitted when there is a suitable break in the music.



Please do not take photos, or record any audio or video during the performance

Prom 39

SUNDAY 13 AUGUST • 7.30pm–c9.35pm



György Ligeti *Mysteries of the Macabre* 10'

first performance at the Proms

Béla Bartók *Piano Concerto No. 3* 23'

INTERVAL: 20 minutes

Ludwig van Beethoven *Symphony No. 3 in E flat major, 'Eroica'* 47'

Anna-Lena Elbert *soprano*

Sir Andrés Schiff *piano*

Budapest Festival Orchestra *Suyoen Kim leader*

Iván Fischer *conductor*

RADIO 3 SOUNDS

This concert is broadcast live by BBC Radio 3 (repeated on Monday 28 August at 2.00pm) and available on BBC Sounds.

Budapest or Bust

As the Budapest Festival Orchestra celebrates its 40th anniversary, Richard Bratby speaks to its innovative founder-conductor Iván Fischer and discovers how he is reinventing the role of an orchestra

There must have been hundreds of encores over the past 128 years of the Proms – and, if you wanted to bottle the essence of this great music festival, there's surely nothing more potent than that instant when the applause falls silent, a conductor turns to their orchestra with a knowing smile and, after an evening of sublime music-making, they give something of themselves. It's always



Members of the Budapest Festival Orchestra on the streets of the Hungarian capital

a moment of magic. But, even so, no-one present at the second of the Budapest Festival Orchestra's 2018 Proms appearances is likely to forget what happened next. Half of the orchestra put down their instruments, and – as their colleagues coiled and caressed their way around the opening bars of Brahms's *Hungarian Dance* No. 4 – they sang. Before a breathless Royal Albert Hall audience, Brahms's folk-inspired melody was returned to its folk roots by artists willing to lay aside the tools of their trade – all that hard-won virtuosity – and make music straight from the heart.

Unexpected. Yes. Captivating. Without question. And yet, to anyone who's followed the development of this orchestra over the four decades since its foundation in 1983, it was almost business as usual. If the spontaneity and verve of that evening's Prom under the BFO's Music Director Iván Fischer hadn't already been sufficient proof, that encore demonstrated – once again – that the BFO is not like other orchestras. But then, it was never meant to be. 'The Budapest Festival Orchestra is a kind of laboratory for the orchestra of the future,' says Fischer. The orchestra of the future! Oceans of ink have been spilt in recent years over that vexed but unavoidable subject: talk of new concert formats, of a refreshed repertoire, of experiments in structure and governance. The Budapest Festival Orchestra is one of a handful of international ensembles that have actually done something about it.

'We have always been a reform orchestra,' says Fischer. 'We're reforming this art form, fundamentally, because I don't think symphony orchestras will exist in the same way in centuries to come. One aspect is the repertoire. We extend the repertoire – not only in terms of earlier or later music, but through specialised groups in the orchestra. We have a group playing Baroque music on period instruments. We have another group specialising



Transport of delight: Iván Fischer arrives by bicycle for the Echo Klassik 2011 awards ceremony at the Berlin Konzerthaus

in Hungarian instrumental folk music. We have a group specialising in improvisation, and we have jazz groups. The philosophy is that orchestral music is only a narrow segment of our musical heritage. So in our last subscription concert, for example, we started with *Scherzi musicali* ['Musical Jokes'] by Monteverdi, with half of the orchestra playing on period instruments and the other half singing. It's just an example, but we want to be much more open to experiments than other symphony orchestras.'

It's hard to overstate just how liberating those ideas can feel in an orchestral world that is still dominated by the cult of specialism – of excellence in a rich but necessarily circumscribed field. For any professional orchestral musician, the idea of anything less than technical perfection goes against the grain. The notion of symphony orchestra players swapping their instruments and adjusting their technique to play period instruments would, until recently, have raised eyebrows (and lowered expectations). But the BFO has been



Iván Fischer conducting the Budapest Festival Orchestra on their visit to the BBC Proms in 2018

demonstrating that – with the right players and the right philosophy – excellence and experimentation needn't be mutually exclusive. Rather the opposite: in 2008 the BFO was named by *Gramophone* as one of the 20 greatest orchestras in the world.

'One thing which we don't do is auditions,' says Fischer. 'We don't believe in auditions: we believe in inviting people and talking to them, testing them in all kinds of musical activities. We are not only interested in, say, their horn playing. We are interested in the individual – in their creativity, in the human aspects.' Fischer has said that he has little interest in being a conductor purely for its own sake.

'I absolutely think the conductor must lead. I'm a terrible tyrant when I conduct, but I do it because I want to encourage the musicians' creativity. What I really don't like is the jaded, bored attitude which usually comes because people have had to follow instructions all their life. I give them a lot of freedom. I'm interested

in a symphony orchestra that plays with the creativity, risk-taking and emotional impact of a chamber group: an orchestra should be like a magnified string quartet. For example, the last time we performed a Schubert symphony, I seated the strings as a number of string quintets, so the sections were not sitting together. It was so much more musical, because people heard the structure of the music better. I don't understand why people don't think about these things!

The Budapest Festival Orchestra has a long history of experimentation, and the folk bands and the singing aren't the half of it. There have been major successes: 'Cocoa Concerts' for the 5–10 age group – 'I don't know if the children come to hear the music because of the cocoa,' says Fischer, 'or they drink the cocoa because of the music, but the concerts are hugely popular' – and midnight gigs aimed at a student crowd. 'The audience mixes with the orchestra members,' he explains, 'so you can sit in between two cellos, for example. You sit on a beanbag, and you can carry your beanbag anywhere. If you prefer to be in the middle of the horn section, then you're free to sit there. It's a clear message to the young generation that it's their concert – and they love it.'

There have been occasional misfires, too: the BFO's concert performances of operas – in which Fischer also acts as stage director – have sometimes drawn mixed reviews. But that doesn't matter. Experimentation is, by its nature, a learning process. What matters is that something new has been tried – that the art is moving forwards. It's hard to imagine any orchestra taking a gamble as daring as the BFO's Prom tomorrow afternoon, in which the audience will vote for the programme from a 'menu' of some 250 orchestral works. How can an orchestra – any orchestra – have 250 pieces up its sleeve, ready to play? The answer is that it can't. The BFO is going to wing it, and the players are not even slightly

fazed at the prospect. ‘This type of music-making – which is basically sight-reading in front of the audience – is one example of our innovations,’ says Fischer, cool as you like.

And yet you just know with absolute certainty that it’s going to be amazing. That’s one advantage of an orchestra that consistently thinks and plays differently: doing the impossible comes as standard. ‘I’m actually amazed that most orchestras don’t do these things,’ says Fischer. ‘I don’t know why they prefer to be so incredibly conservative, I really don’t.’ Fischer’s only regret, after four decades with the BFO, is that he hasn’t gone far enough.

“I must say, I love the Proms because – finally! – we’re playing to an unconventional audience. This appeals to me very much ...”

‘I think, if I started again, I would be more radical. For example, the idea of having principal players and *tutti* players is one I kept from the conventional system, but I think in my next life I would abandon it, because in this orchestra there simply isn’t a more important cellist and a less important cellist.’ He wouldn’t stop there, either. ‘Playing from sheet music and playing seated are two conventions that unfortunately I wasn’t radical enough to abolish. Sheet music is a compromise. An actor learns their part by heart; so does an opera chorus member. So it’s not impossible. If the musician takes the job as seriously as an actor plays a part in a play, then this wouldn’t be a problem.’

So watch this space. And, in the meantime, experience the sound of the orchestra of the future. Or, equally, just enjoy the music in the knowledge that, when the Budapest Festival Orchestra takes the stage – and whether they’re playing Mozart, Ligeti or something entirely unexpected – there isn’t a musician present who takes your reaction for granted. Fischer, for one, can’t wait. ‘I must say, I love the Proms because – finally! – we’re playing to an unconventional audience,’ he says. ‘This appeals to me very much. There is an incredible harmony between the mentality of the Promenaders and the Budapest Festival Orchestra. They always surprise us. And I think, this year, that the Promenaders can expect a few surprises too!’

Introduction © Richard Bratby

Richard Bratby writes on music and culture for *The Spectator*, *Gramophone*, *The Arts Desk* and *The Birmingham Post*. His book *Forward: 100 Years of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra* was published in 2019.

Revised version of an article that first appeared in the BBC Proms Festival Guide 2023

GYÖRGY LIGETI (1923–2006),
arr. Elgar Howarth (born 1935)

Mysteries of the Macabre (1974–6, arr. 1991)

first performance at the Proms

Anna-Lena Elbert *soprano*

For text, see page 11

This clip from Ligeti's opera *Le Grand Macabre* presents one character, the Chief of the Secret Political Police, in the three-part aria with which she bursts in to dazzle and amaze. She comes to warn the ruling prince of a fearsome visitor but delivers her message in a crazy jumble of clichés mixed up with code, all with musical acrobatics that make her all the more unintelligible.

Ligeti being Ligeti, the scene is not only absurd but also tightly formed and full of fascinating, surprising and often funny detail, from the instrumentalists as well as from the singer-actress. As with the Queen of the



Elliott Franks/ArenaPAL

Night's arias in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, we are taken into a world that is dazzling, a little disturbing, a touch humorous and at the same time exquisitely beautiful. Way over the top is a good place to be.

“Ligeti being Ligeti, the scene is not only absurd but also tightly formed and full of fascinating, surprising and often funny detail.”

The first part of the aria features vocal lightning bolts: bursts of even note-values, often four at a time, making jagged outlines. For much of the time, the kaleidoscopic orchestra keeps time with the singer, giving her line a setting in tumbling colour, but the players are also capable of responding to her differently, and even challenging her. A percussion ostinato begins the second part, which includes a passage of Ligetian orchestral tremulation and a syncopated dance before ending with a lopsided chorale. The last two minutes of the piece take its previous extremes yet further.

Programme note © Paul Griffiths

A critic for over 30 years for publications including *The Times* and *The New Yorker*, Paul Griffiths is an authority on 20th- and 21st-century music. Among his books are studies of Boulez, Cage and Stravinsky, as well as *Modern Music and After* and *A Concise History of Western Music*. His novels *let me tell you* and *let me go on* were published last month.

Uniformly nonsense: Susanna Andersson as Gepopo, the Chief of the Secret Political Police in English National Opera's 2009 production of Ligeti's *Le Grand Macabre* at the London Coliseum

PREVIOUSLY AT THE PROMS

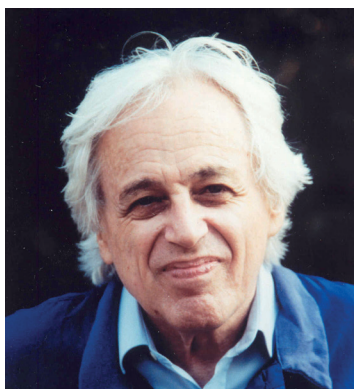
This is the first time anything from Ligeti's magnum opus has been sampled at these concerts but he is no stranger to the Proms. His work arrived in 1971, when Pierre Boulez directed *Aventures* and *Nouvelles aventures* during a groundbreaking new music event at the Roundhouse. Since then Ligeti's scores have demonstrated a staying power rarely achieved at the cutting edge of cultural production. *Atmosphères*, heard here for the fourth time in 2018 courtesy of Joshua Weilerstein and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, will be overtaken later this week by a fifth outing for *Lontano*.

© David Gutman

David Gutman is a writer and critic who since 1996 has contributed extensively to the BBC Proms programmes. His books cover subjects as wide-ranging as Prokofiev and David Bowie, and he reviews for *Gramophone* and *Classical Source*.

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GYÖRGY LIGETI



György Ligeti was one of those great pioneering spirits of the post-war era who created whole new ways of devising and perceiving music. Yet, unlike Stockhausen, Boulez and Nono, he had no taste for strident manifestos, disliked ideologies of any kind and preferred to remain

unattached to schools or movements. That quality of being an outsider was instilled very young. Ligeti was born in 1923 into a small Jewish community in a part of Transylvania whose culture was partly Hungarian and partly Romanian. Isolated by anti-Semitism, he took refuge in a rich inner world. He enrolled at the conservatory at Cluj-Napoca, where he discovered Bartók's quartets, which influenced him profoundly.

During the war Ligeti was put into a Jewish forced-labour unit, which narrowly avoided being liquidated; his father and brother both perished in concentration camps. After the war he enrolled at the Liszt Academy in Budapest, and later taught there. Ligeti responded to the repressive nature of the Communist regime by going into 'internal exile'. For public consumption he composed in the official populist style; privately he was groping his way towards a new musical language. When the Soviets invaded in 1956, Ligeti fled to Austria. From there he went to Cologne, spent six weeks with Stockhausen, and soon established a reputation as a brilliant theorist of new music and the composer of a handful of witty pieces in a medium not noted for its wit: electronics.

What really put him on the map were the orchestral pieces *Apparitions* (1958–9) and *Atmosphères* (1961), which first revealed that beguiling Ligeti world of murmuring textures and sudden, sinister-comic shocks. He produced a whole series of works with a Dadaist flavour, including *Aventures* (1962, rev. 1963) and *Nouvelles aventures* (1962–5). During the 1960s and 1970s he elaborated his idea of 'micropolyphony' in works of ever-increasing aural refinement and emotional amplitude, including the Cello Concerto (1966), the Chamber Concerto (1969–70) and *San Francisco Polyphony* (1973–4). His opera *Le Grand Macabre* (1974–7, rev. 1996) transformed and satirised numerous other musics, from Monteverdi to Wagner.

After a creative hiatus, the Horn Trio (1982) announced a new direction, with complex polyrhythms, experiments in non-tempered tuning and a new, overt expressivity. The key works of this period are the Piano Concerto and Violin Concerto (1985–8 and 1989–93), the *Hamburg Concerto* (1998–2002) and the dazzling series of 18 piano *Études*. The charming yet profound set of Hungarian songs *Síppal, dobbal, nádihegedűvel* ('With Pipes, Drums, Fiddles') – written in 2000 – was the last work Ligeti composed before illness silenced him.

Profile by Ivan Hewett © BBC

Ivan Hewett is a critic and broadcaster who for nine years presented BBC Radio 3's *Music Matters*. He writes for *The Daily Telegraph* and teaches at the Royal College of Music.

MORE LIGETI AT THE PROMS

TUESDAY 15 AUGUST, 7.30pm • PROM 41
Lontano

SUNDAY 20 AUGUST, 7.30pm • PROM 47
Concert Românesc; Violin Concerto

For full Proms listings, and to book tickets, visit bbc.co.uk/proms.

GYÖRGY LIGETI

Mysteries of the Macabre

Psst! Ps-psst! Ps-ps-psst! Schscht!
 Ko! Koko! Koko-koko! Ko-koko! Ko-kode zero.
 O! Ko-kode Zero: höchste Geheimnistufe!
 Kommen Störche! Dabel ju Si! Krokodil gross!
 Menge, Menge, Menge! Masse, Masse!
 Volksmenge! Menschenmasse! Masse!
 Unruhe! Panik! Panik! Pa-aaaapa-apa-papa-panik
 Grundlos! Grundlos! Phobie! Unmotiviert!
 undefiniert! Hypo-po-po-Hypo-oooo-po-oooo-
 popopopopata-Hypochondrie!
 Rrsch! Rrsch! Marsch! Marsch-r! Marsch route!
 Marschrichtung! – Richtung – Marschrichtung! Fürst!
 Palast! Marschrichtung Papalast! Fürst! Palast!
 Tarnwort: Go-go-go-go-lasch! Demonstration!
 Protestaktion! Provokation! Pst! Pst!
 Diskretion! Observation! Sanktion! Ende!
 Pst! Pst! Kienen Pieps! Bankgeheimnis! Was ich noch:
 Sagen wollt': Schweigen ist Gold!

Was ist den schon wieder?

Geheimmeldung! Ziffer: Blaue Ente! Roter
 Komet! Planet! Magnet! Pst! Diskret! Diskret!
 Ja! Nein! Nein! Ja! Nein! Nein! Ja! Ja! Nein! Ohne zweifel!
 Satellit! Asteroid! Planetoid! Polaroid! Am Zenit!
 Morbid! Perfid! Bedrohlich! Gefährlich! Tödlich!
 Massnahmen! Massnahmen! Massnahmen!
 Massnahmen!

Ku-ku-ri-ku! Ki-ke-ri-ki! Er kommt! Er kommt! Er kommt!
 Er kommt! Er kommt! Ke-ke-ri-ke-ke! Ko-ko-ri-ko-ko!
 Ku-ku-ri-ku-ku! Ka-ka-ri-ka-ka-ka! Makarikaka
 Makabrikaka! Makabrika! Kabrikama! Brikamaka!

Psst! Ps-psst! Ps-ps-psst! Shsst!
 Co! Coco! Coco-coco! Co-coco! Co-coding zero.
 O! Co-coding Zero: highest security grade! Birds on
 the wing! Double you see! Snakes in the grass!
 Rabble, rabble, rabble! Riot, Riot! Unlawful assemblies!
 Communal insurrection! Mutinous masses!
 Turbulence! Panic! Panic! Pa-aaaapa-apa-papa-panic!
 Groundless! Groundless! Phobia! Wide of the mark!
 Right off the track! Hypo-po-po-Hypo-oooo-po-oooo-
 popopopopata-Hypochondria!
 Rrsh! Rrsh! March! March-t! March target!
 Direction! – rection – Direction! Prince!
 Your Palace! March target royal palace! Palace!
 Password: Go-go-go-go-lash! Demonstrations, ha!
 Protestations, ha! Provocations, ha! Pst, Pst!
 Much discretion! Close observation! Take precautions!
 That's all! Pst! Pst! Not a squeak! Confidential! One
 more thing: Bear in mind: Silence is golden!

'What is it now?'

Secret cypher! Code name: Loch Ness Monster! Comet
 in sight! Red glow! Burns bright! Pst! Sit tight! No fright!
 Yes! No! No! Yes! No! No! Yes! Yes! No! Beyond all
 doubt! Satellite! Asteroid! Planetoid! Polaroid! Coming
 fast! Hostile! Perfidious! Menacing! Momentous! Fatal!
 Stern measures! Stern measures! Stern measures!
 Stern measures!

Ku-ku-ri-ku! Ki-ke-ri-ki! He's coming! Coming! Coming!
 Coming! Coming! Ke-ke-ri-ke-ke! Ko-ko-ri-ko-ko!
 Ku-ku-ri-ku-ku! Ka-ka-ri-ka-ka-ka! Makarikaka
 Makabrikaka! Makabrika! Kabrikama! Brikamaka!

TEXT

Kamakabri! Makbri! Makrabi! Marrabe! Makrabe!
Makrabe! Makrabe! Makrabe! Makrabe! Makrabe!
Makrabe! Makrabe! Er kommt! Er kommt! Er kommt!
Er! Er! Er! Er ist shon da! Er ist shon da! Er ist shon da!
Schon da! Ist shon da! Ist shon da! Shon da! Shon da!
Ist shon da! Ist shon da! Ist shon da! Ist shon da! Ist
shon da! Ist shon da! Ist shon da! Ist shon da! Ist shon
da! Is' shon da! Is' shon da! Is' shon da! Is' shon da! I' sho'
da! I' sho' da! I' sho' da! I' sho' da! I' sho' da! I' sho'
da! Ist shon da! Da! Da! Da! Da! Da! Da! Da! Is' da! Is' da! Is'
da! Is' da! Is' da! Is' da!, etc.

Da!! Da!! Da!! Da!! ... Psst! Da.

*German text by Michael Meschke and György Ligeti, freely adapted
from Michel de Ghelderode's 'La ballade du Grand Macabre'*

Kamakabri! Makbri! Makrabi! Marrabey! Makrabey!
Makrabey! Makrabey! Makrabey! Makrabey! Makrabey!
Makrabey! Makrabey! Coming! Coming! Look there! There!
There! There! He's getting in! He's getting in! He's getting
in! He's in! Where's the guard! Where's the guard! The
guard! The guard! Call the guard! Call the guard! Call the
guard! Call the guard! Call the guard! Call the guard! Call
the guard! Call the guard! Call the guard! Call the gua'! Call
the gua'! Call the gua'! Call the gua'! Call 'e gua! Call 'e gua!
Call 'e gua! Call 'e gua! Call 'e gua! Call 'e gua! Call 'e gua!
Call guarda! Da! Da! Da! Da! Da! Da! Da! A-da! A-da! A-da!
A-da! A-da! A-da!, etc.

Da!! Da!! Da!! Da!! ... Psst! Da.

English translation by Geoffrey Skelton

BÉLA BARTÓK (1881–1945)

Piano Concerto No. 3 (1945)

- 1 **Allegretto**
- 2 **Adagio religioso** –
- 3 **Allegro vivace**

Sir András Schiff *piano*

The Third Piano Concerto is the last work Bartók managed to complete. The score was almost fully written out when he was rushed to hospital in New York. A few days later, on 26 September 1945, he died of leukaemia.

Bartók's last years had been difficult. Apart from his precarious health, he had failed to make much of a mark in his adopted American homeland. He was desperately short of money and exile was a source of great emotional pain to him. (He had at least lived to see his native Hungary liberated from German domination.) But, despite all of this, he was still full of plans. There was talk of his writing symphonies – a form he hadn't tackled since his student days – and he had already jotted down ideas for a seventh string quartet.

When the Third Concerto had its premiere in Philadelphia the following year, it came as a surprise to some. Insofar as Bartók had a reputation in musical America, it was as an aggressive modernist: a composer who used weird scales and quarter-tones, who devised grotesque new effects in his string quartets and who treated that noble Romantic instrument, the grand piano, as just another member of the percussion family. But the new concerto

was much simpler, more amiable, almost Classical at times and highly lyrical – as if Bartók were attempting some kind of rapprochement with Brahms.

Granted, some of Bartók's other American-period works show a similar simplification, as if he had decided that survival in his new homeland demanded he adopt a more populist approach. But there may have been a more urgent, practical reason in the case of the Third Piano Concerto. Bartók was concerned about what his wife would do for money after he died. She was a fine pianist: why not write her something that might prove popular enough to bring her a small income?

...

Viewed in that light, the character of the first movement makes a great deal of sense. It's a Classically laid-out sonata form, with clearly defined first and second themes, a climactic development section and a more or less orderly recapitulation. The long opening melody is securely tonal, though with a little piquant Balkan folk-colouring here and there. The syncopated second theme lives up to its *scherzando* marking, though the humour is on the whole gentle. Only at the very end of the movement does a note of unease surface – the final flicker of the *scherzando* second theme on piano (*pianissimo*) is a little too dissonant to be entirely comfortable.

The slow second movement contained a surprise for those who knew Bartók well. Uniquely for him, it's marked *religioso*. Bartók had been a self-declared atheist since his student days, but here he was employing hymn-like piano themes and later on imitating Bachian counterpoint. More than that, in the alternation of the piano's hymn and the strings' answering phrases, there was a clear invocation of the slow movement of Beethoven's String Quartet in A minor, Op. 132 – the



Upper Saranac Lake in the Adirondack Mountains in north-eastern New York State, whose tranquillity perhaps left its mark on Bartók's Third Piano Concerto

movement Beethoven had subtitled 'Sacred song of thanks to the deity from a convalescent'. Had Bartók found God?

Well, like Beethoven, Bartók was convalescing from serious illness when he wrote the Third Piano Concerto. He had found the peace he needed at Saranac Lake, some way from New York. Bartók hated city life. He felt cut off from nature, the source of so much of his inspiration. So perhaps, like Beethoven, he felt the urge to express his

gratitude to the force that had helped him work again – not, in his case, a personal god, but certainly something beyond everyday human understanding.

The middle section of the slow movement bears this out in a different way. Bartók once revealed that the experience of night on the Great Hungarian Plain inspired in him something close to religious feeling. He loved the sounds of the night birds and the chirps, clicks and rustles of nocturnal insects, and he evoked them again and again

in what he called 'night music'. So perhaps we shouldn't be surprised to find sounds like these in the central section of this 'religious' Adagio.

If nature was one source of Bartók's modernist invention, the other was folk music. Pounding, muscular Hungarian dance rhythms set the finale in motion – the constant stress on the first note is typically Hungarian, reflecting the way the language stresses the initial syllable of every word. Just occasionally there are reminders of the bitter humour and introspection of the recent Sixth Quartet; but they are only fleeting. In the end, the dance of life must go on.

Programme note © Stephen Johnson

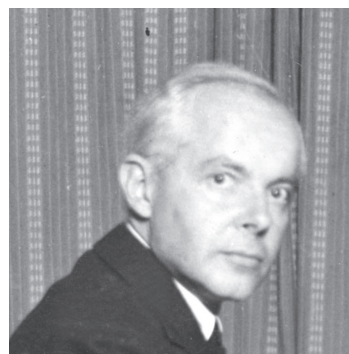
Stephen Johnson is the author of books on Bruckner, Wagner, Mahler and Shostakovich, and a regular contributor to *BBC Music Magazine*. For 14 years he was a presenter of BBC Radio 3's *Discovering Music*. He now works both as a freelance writer and as a composer.

PREVIOUSLY AT THE PROMS

Proms founder-conductor Henry Wood, a staunch supporter of contemporary music of all kinds, gave the first British performances of four scores by Bartók as well as accompanying the composer-pianist in his First and Second Piano Concertos. Having played the latter during a fortnight of Winter Proms in 1935–6, Bartók was also required to demonstrate his pianistic prowess with a solo spot after the interval, as was the custom in those days. The Third has been the most popular of his concertos (excluding the *Concerto for Orchestra*) here as elsewhere, with 18 outings to date. Louis Kentner, who had given the European premiere, introduced the piece in 1947 with Adrian Boult's BBC Symphony Orchestra. Three pianists have since performed it twice: Monique Haas (1948, 1949), Sir Stephen Hough (1993, 1997) and now Sir András Schiff, partnered (in 2011) by Sir Mark Elder's Hallé. Iván Fischer and the Budapest Festival Orchestra were Schiff's collaborators when he presented Bartók's First Piano Concerto and a clutch of shorter pieces in 1997.

© David Gutman

BÉLA BARTÓK



Béla Bartók was born on 25 March 1881 in Nagyszentmiklós, Hungary, now known as Sânnicolau Mare, Romania, near the border between the two countries (the name of the town translates as 'Great Saint Nicholas').

Having lost their father at an early age, the young Bartók and his younger sister lived with their mother, a schoolteacher, in a succession of provincial towns before settling in the city of Pozsony (now Bratislava, Slovakia). At the age of 18, Bartók moved to Budapest to attend the Conservatory as a composer and pianist.

Like any young musician growing up under the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, Bartók was steeped in the music of Beethoven and Brahms. He first discovered the ancient layers of Hungarian folk music through a chance encounter and then through his friendship and collaboration with Zoltán Kodály. Folk music made it possible for Bartók to create an original musical idiom that was authentically Hungarian and, at the same time, at the forefront of international modernism.

The young composer began his ethnomusicological fieldwork in 1906 and eventually became one of the leading exponents of the budding discipline of folk music research. He authored numerous books and articles on Hungarian, Romanian and Slovak folk music, occasionally venturing even further afield, with research trips to Biskra, Algeria (1913) and Turkey (1936). His work

in folk music had an immediate and fundamental effect on his musical style; turning away from the Romantic nationalism of such early works as *Kossuth* (1903) or the Suite No. 1 (1905, later revised), he achieved an artistic breakthrough with his *14 Bagatelles* for piano (1908), his String Quartet No. 1 (1908–9) and the opera *Duke Bluebeard's Castle* (1911, later revised), all of which, in different ways, reflect the new discoveries and synthesise them with Western influences, especially that of Claude Debussy. Two more stage works followed: the ballet *The Wooden Prince* (completed in 1917) and the pantomime *The Miraculous Mandarin* (completed in 1924, later revised), the latter being Bartók's most modernistic score.

Bartók largely stopped collecting folk music after the First World War. The 1920s and early 1930s were a time of extensive analytical work on the previously gathered material. A major stylistic renewal resulted in such masterworks as the Piano Concertos Nos. 1 and 2, the String Quartets Nos. 3 and 4 and the deeply moving *Cantata profana*. Later in the 1930s, Bartók composed *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta*, the Violin Concerto No. 2 and the Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion, widely regarded as the summits of his output. Through all these years, Bartók also maintained a busy schedule as a concert pianist and a professor of piano at the Budapest Academy of Music.

Although he was not personally threatened by Nazism, he found he could not live under its shadow and, in 1940, he emigrated to the USA with his former pupil and second wife, Ditta Pásztor. During the American years, he composed what became one of his most popular works, the *Concerto for Orchestra* (1943, rev. 1945), as well as the Sonata for Unaccompanied Violin and the Piano Concerto No. 3. He died of leukaemia in New York City on 26 September 1945.

Profile © Peter Laki

Programme annotator of the Cleveland Orchestra from 1990 to 2007, Peter Laki has written numerous articles and is editor of *Bartók and His World*. He is Visiting Associate Professor of Music History at Bard College, New York State.

INTERVAL: 20 MINUTES

Now playing on BBC Radio 3 ...

Musicologist Nigel Simeone joins Radio 3's Petroc Trelawny for a look ahead to Proms highlights in the coming week.

Available on BBC Sounds



LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)

Symphony No. 3 in E flat major, Op. 55, 'Eroica' (1803)

- 1 **Allegro con brio**
- 2 **Marcia funebre: Adagio assai**
- 3 **Scherzo: Allegro vivace – Trio**
- 4 **Finale: Allegro molto – Poco andante – Presto**

In October 1803 Beethoven's student Ferdinand Ries reported to the publisher Simrock that his teacher had just composed a new symphony: 'In his own opinion it is the greatest work he has yet written. Beethoven played it for me recently, and I believe that heaven and earth will tremble when it is performed.'

The new symphony was given its first run-through in the palace of Beethoven's patron Prince Lobkowitz in 1804 before the first public performances the following year. The title *Sinfonia Eroica* ('Heroic Symphony') first appeared in the 1806 publication of the orchestral parts, along with the additional description in Italian: 'Composed to celebrate the memory of a great man.' Although Beethoven did not identify the 'great man' in the published title, he had originally intended to title the work 'Bonaparte' after the First Consul of the French Republic. He apparently retracted this title shortly before the first performance in 1804, upon learning from Ries that Napoleon Bonaparte had just declared himself Emperor of France. Ries recounted that this news caused Beethoven to snatch up the title page of his manuscript score and tear it in two, crying out in a rage that Napoleon

would now 'trample on the rights of man and indulge only his ambition'. Beethoven's autograph score of the symphony is now lost but the title page of the surviving manuscript copy that was prepared for publication shows that the words 'Intitolata Bonaparte' (titled Bonaparte) were violently scratched out to leave a hole in the paper.

The first audiences did not know about the symphony's connection with Napoleon but they would have recognised a reference in the music to another heroic figure, namely Prometheus, the creator of mankind in Greek mythology. The main theme of the finale of the 'Eroica' is a *contredanse* melody that Beethoven had first used in his music for the ballet *The Creatures of Prometheus*, which had created a stir in Vienna during its successful first run in 1801. Beethoven had subsequently recycled the melody in a set of orchestral *contredanses* for ballroom dancing (WoO 14) and again as the basis of a set of Piano Variations, Op. 35 (1802), so most Viennese listeners would have been well acquainted with the theme before hearing it in the 'Eroica'.

While the *Prometheus* reference would have been obvious to the symphony's first listeners, its significance in the work's overall design was more difficult to grasp, and indeed continues to be a matter of debate among academics. Various commentators have posited that Beethoven had a particular hero in mind as the subject of the symphony, and the candidates have included not only Napoleon and Prometheus but also contemporary figures including Admiral Nelson and Prince Louis Ferdinand of Prussia. Whether or not Beethoven intended to allude to a specific individual in the 'Eroica' Symphony, he was evidently drawn to the idea of heroism and self-made greatness, as exemplified by Napoleon as First Consul. The notion of struggle in the face of adversity also had personal importance for Beethoven around this time as he came to terms with the progressive loss of his hearing, which he now realised would be irreversible.



An early 19th-century coloured etching depicting the Lobkowitz Palace in Vienna, where Beethoven's 'Eroica' Symphony was first privately performed in 1804

The 'Eroica' is on a much grander scale than Beethoven's two previous symphonies. Its heroic aspect is perhaps most obvious in the first movement, whose originality lies in its epic dimensions and dramatic trajectory. The movement launches straight into an Allegro con brio ('with energy') with two full-voiced chords, but tension is introduced almost immediately into the opening theme, when the cellos temporarily veer off

course towards an unexpected dissonant note. The tension reaches its peak in the central development section, particularly in a passage that culminates in a sustained, shattering dissonant chord hammered out by the full orchestra. Ries may have had this portion of the symphony in mind when he wrote to Beethoven's publisher Simrock that 'heaven and earth will tremble when it is performed'.

The second movement is a funeral march of enormous gravity. The opening theme begins *sotto voce* (in an undertone) in the violins, accompanied by muffled drum-beat figures in the lower strings. A contrasting middle section turns to the major key, but the tragic tone returns with a majestic double fugue that rises to a climax punctuated by solemn cries from the brass. At the close of the movement the main theme fragments and dissipates in the same hushed tones as at the opening.

The Scherzo is full of boisterous energy, which is initially kept under the surface as the whole orchestra plays *pianissimo* and the solo oboe plays only snatches of melody. The main theme has the rustic character of a folk song, and the Trio section features hunting calls from a trio of horns.

The Finale follows a similar structure to the one Beethoven had used in the 'Eroica' Piano Variations. Rather than introducing the theme straight away, he first presents its bass line, which is elaborated through a series of variations until the theme finally appears in the oboe. After further variations the melody is gradually transformed, eventually taking the form of a spiritualised hymn. The transcendent mood is shattered by the return of the violently energetic passage first heard at the movement's opening, and an affirmative coda leads to a triumphant conclusion.

Programme note © Erica Buurman

Erica Buurman is Director of the Ira F. Brilliant Center for Beethoven Studies and Assistant Professor in the School of Music and Dance at San José State University, California. She is the author of *The Viennese Ballroom in the Age of Beethoven* (CUP, 2022) and has appeared on BBC Radios 3 and 4. She is editor of *The Beethoven Journal* and *The Beethoven Newsletter*.

PREVIOUSLY AT THE PROMS

The 'Eroica' was much loved by Proms founder-conductor Henry Wood, who notched up a total of 51 performances with his final account of July 1942, the first given as long ago as September 1896. Until 1986 the work featured every year. More recently we have had historically informed rethinks from Roy Goodman's Hanover Band (1992) and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment under Heinrich Schiff (1998). The symphony's most ardent latter-day champion was nevertheless a traditionalist: Colin Davis directed as many as nine renditions between 1966 and 2005. On 11 September 2001, the day of the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, Christoph Eschenbach and the Orchestre de Paris abandoned the overture to *Prometheus* originally scheduled to open their concert in favour of the funeral march from the 'Eroica'. In 2003 and 2012 Daniel Barenboim and his West-Eastern Divan Orchestra offered old-world splendour and selective repeats. The smooth amiability of Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony (2015) was challenged by the leaner perspective of Nicholas Collon's Aurora Orchestra two years later. They were the first to play the score from memory and (mostly) from a standing position. In 2020 the 'Eroica' brought down the curtain on a First Night like no other. Sakari Oramo elicited life-affirming sounds from a slimmed-down, socially distanced BBC Symphony Orchestra playing to an empty hall but to many over the airwaves. In 2021 it was the turn of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain conducted by Jonathon Heyward. The work was scheduled again last year by Yannick Nézet-Séguin and the Philadelphia Orchestra but the concert was abandoned following the announcement of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. After a minute's silence only the National Anthem and Elgar's 'Nimrod' were played.

© David Gutman

“Musical connoisseurs and amateurs were divided into several parties. One group, Beethoven’s very special friends, maintains that precisely this symphony is a masterpiece. The other group utterly denies this work any artistic value. To the public the symphony was too difficult, too long. Beethoven, on the other hand, did not find the applause to be sufficiently outstanding.”

Reaction to the first performance of the ‘Eroica’ in the Vienna daily *Der Freymüthige*

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN



Ludwig van Beethoven was at the forefront of the major developments that took place in the musical world during his lifetime. He began his career in the employment of the Archbishop-Elector of Cologne in Bonn at a time when professional music-making was primarily cultivated within the courts of the European aristocracy. By the end of his life Beethoven had achieved great public success with works that posed unprecedented challenges for both performers and listeners, and lived as an independent artist – a status that was unimaginable for previous generations of musicians.

Beethoven moved from Bonn to Vienna at the age of almost 22, initially to study composition with Joseph Haydn (Mozart having died the previous year), and soon made his name as a virtuoso pianist and composer in all the major instrumental genres. A high point in his career was the public concert organised for his own benefit in December 1808, which included the premieres of his Fifth and Sixth Symphonies and his Fourth Piano Concerto with himself as soloist.

Beethoven’s performing career was cut short by the onset of deafness, which began when he was in his late twenties and grew increasingly severe until the end of his life, leading him to focus his creative energies on composition. His seriousness of purpose with regard to his art is demonstrated by his laborious process of composing: he could devote upwards of six months

to a single symphony, whereas Haydn sometimes produced six such works for a single season. His only opera, *Fidelio*, underwent two major revisions before achieving its final form in 1814, and his monumental *Missa solemnis* (completed in 1823) was the product of several years' work.

Much of Beethoven's music has remained in the core performing repertoire since the 19th century, particularly the 32 piano sonatas and the nine symphonies. Among his most influential and celebrated works are those in his so-called 'heroic' style, characterised by their expanded scale, an emphasis on thematic development and dramatic overall trajectory leading to a triumphant conclusion. Such works are mostly concentrated in Beethoven's middle period, exemplified by the odd-numbered symphonies from No. 3 (the 'Eroica', 1803) onwards, the *Egmont* overture and the Fifth Piano Concerto. Nevertheless, an immense variety of expression is found across Beethoven's works, from the lyrical and introspective, notably the 1816 song-cycle *An die ferne Geliebte* ('To the Distant Beloved'), to the comical and bombastic (as in the Symphony No. 8 of 1812). His late style grew increasingly esoteric, and works such as the five late string quartets (1824–6) appealed mainly to musical connoisseurs, being considered incomprehensible by some early listeners.

Profile © Erica Buurman

MORE BEETHOVEN AT THE PROMS

TUESDAY 15 AUGUST, 7.30pm • PROM 41

Piano Concerto No. 4 in G major

WEDNESDAY 30 AUGUST, 7.30pm • PROM 59

Overture 'The Consecration of the House'

FRIDAY 1 SEPTEMBER, 7.30pm • PROM 61

Symphony No. 4 in B flat major

For full Proms listings, and to book tickets, visit bbc.co.uk/proms.



The Proms Listening Service

As Radio 3's *The Listening Service* revisits earlier episodes reflecting some of this summer's Proms programming, presenter **Tom Service** takes a wide-angle view of the common themes in this weekly feature

Week 5 Why Are Classical Audiences So Quiet?

There's a common illusion: that, as you leaf through this week's Proms listings in your Proms Festival Guide, online or elsewhere, you read the choice of repertoire on offer and you imagine that you know what to expect. And yes, I know there are major exceptions this week in the Audience Choice programme that the Budapest Festival Orchestra will play, because there it's up to us, the Proms-goers and Radio listeners, to decide what we hear; there are new sounds too that we haven't yet heard in the European premiere of Samy Moussa's Second Symphony, and the first performance in this country of György Kurtág's opera *Endgame* based on Samuel Beckett's play.

That's admittedly three exceptions, but bear with me! Because it's not only in those concerts where the unexpected falls upon us – the unknown and the unpredictable is *always* there, even in concerts in which you could hear every note of the music before you turn up to the Royal Albert Hall, from Mahler's Third Symphony with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Chorus to Steve Reich's *Double Sextet* from the Manchester Collective (on Saturday in Proms 45 and 46).

That unpredictability is because of us, the Proms-goers. The audience aren't only the third point of the triangle of musical experience, as Benjamin Britten put it (the other geometrical essentials being, of course, the composers and performers) – we're more essential than that. Like the question of whether a tree makes a sound when it falls in the deep forest if there

are no witnesses, what does Mahler's Third Symphony really mean if only its performers hear it? If the Proms were only about the repertoire and not the realisations, then you could reduce the essence of every season to the list of concerts in the brochure. And, while the brochure is a handsome thing, it isn't the substance of the Proms. The map is not the territory, to coin a Jorge Luis Borges-ism; and a concert is an empty noise without its audience.

In the Royal Albert Hall, it's the unpredictable energy of attention we give to the performers that counts. We know from the historical record that symphonies, string quartets and operas by Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven and Rossini – and by every composer of the late 18th and 19th centuries – were not designed to be received in reverential silence and were, in fact, composed in order to hear us reacting in real time, applauding and shushing as part of the performance. I wish we had the confidence to do that again, but I know I'm currently in a Promming minority. What I know for sure is that the silence at the end of Mahler's Third Symphony – that we all make together, just before the applause – is the secret destination of the whole piece, a paradoxically loud soundlessness that's one of the proofs of how we as an audience participate in musical creation. Even when we're being quiet, we're not being silent: the quickening spark of our listening is the vital energy of every Prom this season!

→ Next week: **All the King's Men (Masters of the King's Music)**

Join Tom Service on his Proms-themed musical odysseys in *The Listening Service* on BBC Radio 3 during the season (Sundays at 5.00pm, repeated Fridays at 4.30pm). You can hear all 220-plus editions of the series on BBC Sounds. Tom's book based on the series was published last year (Faber).



Iván Fischer *conductor*

Hungarian conductor Iván Fischer studied piano, violin and cello in Budapest before joining the conducting class of Hans Swarowsky in Vienna. He spent two years as assistant to Nikolaus Harnoncourt before launching his international career as winner of

the Rupert Foundation conducting competition in London.

He is the co-founder and Music Director of the Budapest Festival Orchestra and has held principal conductorships with the National Symphony Orchestra, Washington DC, Opéra National de Lyon and the Berlin Konzerthaus Orchestra, of which he is now Conductor Laureate. The Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra named him Honorary Guest Conductor following decades of working together. He is a frequent guest conductor with the Berlin Philharmonic, Bavarian Radio Symphony and New York Philharmonic orchestras.

He has been active as a composer since 2004, writing mostly vocal music with instrumental ensembles. His opera *The Red Heifer* was premiered in 2013 and his children's opera *The Gruffalo* has enjoyed numerous revivals in Berlin. His most frequently performed work, *Eine Deutsch-Jiddische Kantate*, has been performed and recorded in several countries.

Iván Fischer is an honorary citizen of Budapest, founder of the Hungarian Mahler Society and patron of the British Kodály Academy. The president of Hungary awarded him the Gold Medal and the French government appointed him Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres. In 2013 he was named an honorary member of the Royal Academy of Music in London.



Anna-Lena Elbert *soprano*

PROMS DEBUT ARTIST

Munich-based soprano Anna-Lena Elbert completed her vocal studies at the city's University of Music and Performing Arts, where she studied with Fritz Schwinghammer, Julian Prégardien, Rudi Spring and Tanja d'Althann. During her studies she

chose to specialise in early and new music, in which she was guided by Christine Schornsheim, Kristin von der Goltz, Friederike Heumann, Konstantia Gourzi and Jan Müller-Wieland.

She held a MozartLabor scholarship at the Würzburg Mozartfest and has performed at the Schleswig-Holstein, Rheingau and Munich's Musica Viva festivals. In 2019 she was a prize-winner, with pianist Kota Sakaguchi, at the Richard Strauss Lied Competition and the Helmut Deutsch Lied Competition, and she gives recitals at events such as the Schubertiada in Spain.

Her repertoire now ranges from Renaissance to modern music and includes the vocal works of Bach, Handel, Mozart, Mendelssohn and others. Her operatic repertoire includes Adele (*Die Fledermaus*), Adina (*L'elisir d'amore*), Norina (*Don Pasquale*), and Pamina and Queen of the Night (*The Magic Flute*).

Anna-Lena Elbert has performed with the Budapest, Düsseldorf, Munich and Porto Symphony and Stuttgart Philharmonic orchestras, Hofkapelle Stuttgart and Berlin Baroque Soloists, and is a regular guest at the Heidenheim Opera Festival. She made debuts at the Bavarian State Opera in 2020 and the Salzburg Festival in 2022.



Sir András Schiff *piano*

Born in Budapest in 1953, Sir András Schiff studied at the Franz Liszt Academy with Pál Kadosa, György Kurtág and Ferenc Rados and in London with George Malcolm. Having collaborated with the world's leading orchestras and conductors, he now focuses

primarily on solo recitals, play-directing and conducting.

Since 2004 he has performed the complete Beethoven piano sonatas in over 20 cities; the cycle was recorded live for CD in Zurich. Other recordings include solo recitals of Schubert, Schumann and Janáček, alongside Bach's Partitas, Goldberg Variations and *The Well-Tempered Clavier*.

In recent years at the Proms he has performed recitals of Bach and Beethoven. Elsewhere, he regularly appears at the Verbier, Salzburg and Baden-Baden festivals, Wigmore Hall, Vienna Musikverein and Philharmonie de Paris, on tour in North America and Asia, and in Vicenza, where he curates a festival at the Teatro Olimpico.

Vicenza is also home to Cappella Andrea Barca, a chamber orchestra he founded in 1999. Together they have appeared at Carnegie Hall, the Lucerne Festival and Salzburg Mozartwoche; forthcoming projects include a tour of Asia and a cycle of Bach's keyboard concertos in Europe. He also enjoys close relationships with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Budapest Festival Orchestra and Orchestra of the Age Enlightenment; he was appointed Associate Artist of the OAE in 2018.

Sir András Schiff is the recipient of many honours and awards, and was knighted in 2014.

Coming up at the Proms



Roy Cox

GEMMA NEW

FRIDAY 18 AUGUST

PROM 44 SAMY MOUSSA, SHOSTAKOVICH & STRAVINSKY
7.30pm–c9.40pm • Royal Albert Hall
Conductor Gemma New makes her Proms debut with the BBC Scottish SO. Together they give the European premiere of Samy Moussa's BBC commissioned Symphony No. 2, followed by Shostakovich's Piano Concerto No. 2 – featuring Pavel Kolesnikov as soloist – and Stravinsky's ballet *The Firebird*.



Victoria Caidisch

LUCY CROWE

TUESDAY 22 AUGUST

PROM 49 SCHUMANN'S DAS PARADIES UND DIE PERI
7.30pm–c9.45pm • Royal Albert Hall
Sir Simon Rattle and the London Symphony Orchestra and Chorus present the first ever complete performance at the Proms of Schumann's *Das Paradies und die Peri*. Lucy Crowe leads an exciting international cast in this part oratorio, part opera.



Felix Broede

ISABELLE FAUST

SUNDAY 20 AUGUST

PROM 47 LIGETI & MOZART
7.30pm–c10.00pm • Royal Albert Hall
François-Xavier Roth's award-winning orchestra Les Siècles presents Ligeti's *Concert Românesc* and Violin Concerto with soloist Isabelle Faust. Also featured are two late works by Mozart: the Piano Concerto No. 23, with pianist Alexander Melnikov, and his final symphony, the 'Jupiter'.



E. Caren

JEAN-YVES THIBAUDET

SATURDAY 26 AUGUST

PROM 55 CARLOS SIMON, STRAVINSKY, GERSHWIN & RAVEL
7.30pm–c9.45pm • Royal Albert Hall
Andris Nelsons and the Boston Symphony Orchestra give the European premiere of Carlos Simon's *Four Black American Dances*. Jean-Yves Thibaudet is the soloist in Gershwin's Piano Concerto, with Stravinsky's *Petrushka* and Ravel's *La valse* completing the programme.

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Budapest Festival Orchestra

The Budapest Festival Orchestra was founded in 1983 by conductor Iván Fischer and pianist Zoltán Kocsis. It can be heard at the world's leading venues and on major streaming platforms.

It has won two *Gramophone* Awards (Orchestral in 1998 for Bartók's *The Miraculous Mandarin* and Editor's Choice in 2007 for Mahler's Second Symphony) and was named Orchestra of the Year at last year's Awards.

The BFO has developed a reputation for its unique concert formats, including autism-friendly Cocoa Concerts, Surprise Concerts, Audience Choice concerts, marathons, Midnight Music performances and Community Weeks. Its members regularly form a choir at their concerts.

The Budapest Festival Orchestra stages an opera production each year, directed and conducted by Iván Fischer. These productions have been invited to events such as the Mostly Mozart Festival in New York and the Edinburgh Festival. In 2013 *The Marriage of Figaro* was named best classical music event in *New York Magazine*. The BFO is now the resident orchestra at the annual Vicenza Opera Festival, launched by Iván Fischer at the Teatro Olimpico in 2018..

Music Director

Iván Fischer

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Suyoen Kim

leader

Tamás Major

Violetta Eckhardt

Ágnes Biró

Balázs Bujtor

Csaba Czenke

Mária Gál-Tamási

Emese Gulyás

Erika Illési

István Kádár

Péter Kostyál

Eszter Lesták

Bedő

Gyöngyvér Oláh

János Pílz

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Flutes

Anett Jóföldi

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Zoltán Szőke

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András Szabó
Zsombor Nagy

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Gergely Csikota
Tamás Póti

Trombones
Balázs Szakszon
Attila Sztán
Mariann Krasznai
Yuval Wolfson

Tuba
József Bazsinka

Timpani
Roland Dénes

Percussion
László Herboly
István Kurcsák
Ulf Breuer

Harp
Ágnes Polónyi

Pianos
Emese Mali
László Adrián
Nagy

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In line with the BBC's sustainability strategy, the BBC Proms is actively working with partners and suppliers towards being a more sustainable festival



London Philharmonic Orchestra



Beethoven

30 Sep 2023: Edward Gardner conducts the Egmont Overture

28 Oct 2023: Karina Canellakis conducts Piano Concerto No. 2 with Jonathan Biss

29 Nov 2023: Kristiina Poska conducts Symphony No. 5

6 Dec 2023: Tianyi Lu conducts Piano Concerto No. 5 with Tom Borrow

27 Jan 2024: Anja Bihlmaier conducts Symphony No. 7

10 Apr 2024: Edward Gardner conducts Piano Concerto No. 4 with Seong-Jin Cho

Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall
Tickets from £14

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