

**BBC**  
**Scottish**  
**Symphony**  
**Orchestra**

**05.02.2026**  
**7.30PM**  
GLASGOW  
CITY HALLS

**08.02.2026**  
**3.00PM**  
EDINBURGH  
USHER HALL

# **RACHMANINOV**

# **PIANO CONCERTO**

# **NO.2**

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3.00pm  
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**BBC**  
**Scottish  
Symphony  
Orchestra**

# Rachmaninov's Second Piano Concerto

## **Maurice Ravel**

Le tombeau de Couperin

## **Samuel Barber**

Symphony No.1

*Interval*

## **John Adams**

Short Ride in a Fast Machine

## **Sergey Rachmaninov**

Piano Concerto No.2 in C minor

**Gemma New** conductor

**Alessio Bax** piano

This concert's duration is approximately 1hr 50mins

Thursday's concert is being broadcast live by the BBC in *Radio 3 in Concert* and will be available to stream or download for 30 days via BBC Sounds, where you can also find podcasts and music mixes.

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During the performance, please don't film or take any photographs.

Latecomers will be admitted at a suitable break in the performance.

# Welcome



Sarah Dye @beastlystudios

**My name is Merin Rhyd and today you will see me at the back of the orchestra with a trombone either in my hand or on its stand, while I sit there eagerly waiting for my next entry. I'd like to wish you a very warm welcome to today's concert.**

We have a treat in store for you today with a wide range of equally brilliant, but different, orchestral works. First up we have Ravel's virtuosic *Le tombeau de Couperin*. Next, and the highlight for me today, is Barber's Symphony No.1. It takes us through a journey of passionate emotions, maybe even anger at times, and offers the orchestra a chance to give it everything.

We would then like to invite you on a *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*. A captivating exercise in concentration for the orchestra, going in and out of time changes and metres, this will really give us a run for our money.

It's unusual to see a piano concerto as the finale of a programme. However, Rachmaninov's Second Piano Concerto deserves to be: iconic tunes, desperate tension, grand chords and lush harmony. Like many of his works, it's a masterclass in orchestral writing – he knew how to keep everyone in the orchestra happy. It's my mum's favourite piece and maybe yours too.

I really hope you enjoy today's performance as much as I will – and thank you for coming. It makes a world of difference to all of us on stage.

## **Merin Rhyd**

Principal Trombone, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra

# Le tombeau de Couperin

(1914–17, orch 1919) c.17 mins

## Maurice Ravel

(1875–1937)

- 1 Prélude
- 2 Forlane
- 3 Menuet
- 4 Rigaudon

*Le tombeau de Couperin* was originally conceived as a piano suite. Ravel was first engaged on this particular project in the summer of 1914, but the First World War interrupted his work and the piece was not completed until 1917. There were six movements – Prélude, Fugue, Forlane, Rigaudon, Menuet and Toccata – modelled on French Baroque dances and dedicated to the memory of friends killed in the war. In 1919 the composer scored four of these movements for a small orchestra (omitting the Fugue and the Toccata).

How can musical works best commemorate loved ones? Ravel's *Tombeau* is not a series of elegies. Nor does the piece evoke every aspect of any one person's essence or style; these are not accurate portraits. Instead, there is a subtle sense of the intangible human factor, of lost worlds and things ethereal. Ravel's sophisticated tributes honour the memories of people without encasing them in amber. The music is often moving in more than one sense of the word. In the Prélude, the constant flow of notes resembles a perpetual-motion device of sorts. The title of the Forlane refers to a lively and quick-paced folk dance associated with Venice; Ravel's Forlane, however, distinguishes itself with its moderate tempo, lilting rhythms and slightly slurred articulation. The Menuet is both affectionate and stately. Notwithstanding a pastoral middle section, the Rigaudon is characterised by bright sonorities and high-stepping gestures, which bring the work to a cheerful conclusion.

### Programme notes © Lucía Camacho Acevedo

Lucía Camacho Acevedo is a pianist and writer on music. Born and raised in Madrid, she gained her PhD on musical texture at Royal Holloway, University of London, and has worked as a music research Fellow at the Library of Congress, Washington DC.

# Symphony No.1, Op. 9 (1935–6) c.21 mins

**Samuel Barber**

(1910–81)

**Allegro ma non troppo –  
Allegro molto – Andante  
tranquillo – Con moto**

Barber spent the summer of 1935 in Maine, and there, aged 25, he made progress on an orchestral piece with ‘ambitious tendencies’ – his first symphony. By autumn he had crossed the Atlantic, having been awarded a prestigious fellowship to the American Academy in Rome, and in October wrote that the symphony was nearly complete, with only its conclusion unresolved: ‘I am surveying the last hundred yards with a canny eye before taking the final spurt. It’s not easy to end things.’ A trip to the French Riviera helped, and in the hilltop village of Roquebrune-Cap-Martin on 24 February 1936 the symphony was finished. Barber dedicated it to his partner, the composer Gian Carlo Menotti.

A first performance followed on 13 December, when Bernardino Molinari conducted the Augusteo Orchestra in Rome (now the Orchestra dell’Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia). Italian audiences were not much used to new music and Barber remembered being greeted by applause and hisses. After a couple of bows, he deliberated over taking another but was gently advised: ‘Better not – the hissers win!’ The work garnered a more enthusiastic reception elsewhere and quickly entered the repertory, even holding the distinction of being, in 1937, the first symphonic piece by an American performed at the Salzburg Festival – no small feat for a composer still in his mid-20s with only three other orchestral works to his name.

The symphony unfolds as a single movement, incorporating the four movements of a typical Classical symphony in succession. Compact, though bold and brooding in mood, there are models; indeed, Barber’s sketchbooks from the 1930s reveal that he studied Sibelius’s single-movement Seventh Symphony in detail. Barber’s lauded technical gift is clear in his own approach, however: themes introduced in the opening *Allegro ma non troppo* – a dotted main theme with initial octave leap, a lyrical contrasting second theme and an undulating closing theme – form the basis for

material in the subsequent three sections (corresponding to conventional symphonic movements). The main theme is transformed for the lively scherzo (Allegro molto), while the lyrical second theme is expanded for the Andante tranquillo, an extended slow section defined by long solo lines in the woodwind and radiant orchestral climaxes coloured by unsettling harmonic shifts. All three principal themes return in some iteration in the short Con moto finale, a passacaglia built on a repeated bass line first heard in lower strings. For Barber, this restatement brings the symphony – which he considered perhaps ‘too dark-toned, too Nordic and Sibelian’ for that first Roman audience – to a fitting conclusion.

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c.20 minutes

### Interval

(as Glasgow’s concert is being broadcast live on BBC Radio 3, please be sure to return to your seat in good time)

### Programme note © Sophie Redfern

Sophie Redfern is a music historian specialising in 20th-century American music and dance. She is a Visiting Fellow of King’s College London and author of the award-winning *Bernstein and Robbins: The Early Ballets* (University of Rochester Press, 2021).

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## Short Ride in a Fast Machine – fanfare for orchestra (1986) c.5 mins

**John Adams**  
(born 1947)

‘I like to think of culture as the symbols that we share to understand each other,’ says American composer John Adams. ‘When we communicate, we point to symbols that we have in common. If people want to make a point, they reach for a reference.’ Adams’s own points of reference grew out of a home in which there was no record player until he was 10 and no television; but his parents were musicians, and Adams was familiar with big-band swing and Broadway musicals. He found a very different set of cultural symbols at Harvard and sought to reconcile popular and avant-garde musical languages, resulting in a ‘Minimalist’ style of small motivic fragments that shift subtly, sometimes almost imperceptibly, as the music evolves.

## Short Ride in a Fast Machine – fanfare for orchestra

### John Adams

Adams's development of Minimalist techniques has sometimes been called 'post-Minimalist' on account of his combination of these devices with popular elements and other techniques. An early instance of this 'post-Minimalism' is his thrilling fanfare for orchestra, *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*. The work does not tell a specific story, but Adams explained its genesis with a question: 'You know how it is when someone asks you to ride in a terrific sports car, and then you wish you hadn't?'

Programme note © Joanna Wyld

Joanna Wyld regularly writes for the Edinburgh, Salzburg and Cambridge Musical Festivals, as well as for major UK venues and orchestras. She also gives pre-concert talks, and wrote the libretto to Robert Hugill's opera *The Gardeners*.

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## Piano Concerto No.2 in C minor, Op.18

(1900–01) c.35 minutes

**Sergey Rachmaninov**  
(1873–1943)

- 1 Moderato
- 2 Adagio sostenuto
- 3 Allegro scherzando

**Alessio Bax** piano

With this concerto Rachmaninov proved that he could write a large-scale work after the failure of his First Symphony. (The symphony had merely been the victim of a bad first performance, but the public humiliation was enough to make Rachmaninov withdraw it.) The concerto is the touchstone of Rachmaninov's mature style, and close to the two sets of Preludes (Opp.23 and 32) that he wrote during the following decade.

Much of the piano writing has a feline grace, or achieves sonorous richness through Rachmaninov's canny spacing of notes across the wide range of the keyboard – for instance, in a poignant 'fading sunset' sort of passage towards the end of the first movement, as it winds down before a final acceleration. Some of the middle movement has the soloist spinning a single line – whether playing solo, or supported only by slow, sustained chords in the orchestra or by a more ornamental accompaniment. The first main theme of the finale is an example

of particularly intricate piano writing, with sharply accented chords connected by a continuous stream of triplets alternating between hands: the effect is glittering.

The stealthy opening of the concerto is a unique stroke of inspiration, in which the soloist creates a mood of mysterious promise, only to retire to the role of accompanist to the first big tune, at least for the time being.

The slow movement opens off-centre, with the orchestra moving deftly through a remote key-change. This remoteness is matched by a sense of dreaminess as the main melodies float on a constant motion of triplets (three notes to a beat), cross-cut by an accent after every fourth note, to create an essential ambiguity; we are not sure where the beat really comes.

The finale begins with a brisk, slightly military feel before the soloist bursts in with a flourish. The big contrasting tune, when it arrives, has a sort of parallel character, or family likeness, to the second theme of the first movement, even though the context is quite different. This isn't a deliberate attempt to unify, but it shows how fertile – and at the same time how consistent – were Rachmaninov's sources of melodic invention.

**Programme note © Adrian Jack**

Adrian Jack is a composer, writer and broadcaster, who for 17 years was a scriptwriter for BBC Radio 3.

### Gemma New Conductor



Roy Cox

New Zealand-born Gemma New is Artistic Advisor and Principal Conductor of the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. She was Music Director of the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra in Ontario for nine seasons until 2024, and has served as Principal Guest Conductor of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Resident Conductor of the St Louis Symphony Orchestra and Associate Conductor of the New Jersey Symphony. A former Dudamel Conducting Fellow with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Conducting Fellow at Tanglewood Music Center, she was awarded Solti Foundation US Career Assistance Awards in 2017, 2019 and 2020, before receiving the 2021 Sir Georg Solti Conducting Award.

Highlights of the current season include her debuts with the City of Birmingham, Nashville, Pittsburgh, KBS (Seoul) and SWR (Stuttgart) Symphony orchestras and the Belgian National Orchestra, and with Houston Grand Opera conducting a production of Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*. Return engagements include concerts with the Munich Radio Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Spanish National Orchestra and Chorus, the Atlanta and Seattle Symphony orchestras and the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa.

In her fourth season as Artistic Advisor and Principal Conductor of the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, Gemma New conducted a string of performances last autumn in Wellington, Christchurch and Auckland, featuring the world premiere of an NZSO commission by Tabea Squire and collaborating with mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato and saxophonist Jess Gillam. Other NZSO highlights include performances of Bruckner's Symphony No.7 and Mahler's Symphony No.6.

### Alessio Bax Piano



Marco Borggreve

Alessio Bax graduated at the age of 14 from the Conservatory of Bari, his hometown in Italy, and moved to the USA in 1994, following further studies in Europe. He came to prominence after taking First Prize at both the 1997 Hamamatsu and 2000 Leeds international piano competitions, and now performs on five continents as a recitalist, chamber musician and concerto soloist.

He has collaborated with over 175 orchestras, working alongside conductors such as Marin Alsop, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Andrew Davis, Hannu Lintu, Fabio Luisi, Sir Simon Rattle, Daniele Rustioni, Yuri Temirkanov and Jaap van Zweden. As a chamber musician he performs with musicians including Lisa Batiashvili, Joshua Bell, Ian Bostridge, Lucille Chung, James Ehnes, Vilde Frang, Steven Isserlis, Daishin Kashimoto, François Leleux, Sergei Nakariakov, Emmanuel Pahud, Lawrence Power, Jean-Guihen Queyras, Paul Watkins and Tabea Zimmermann.

He has recently played Brahms's Piano Concerto No.1 with the Philharmonisches Staatsorchester Mainz under Ruth Reinhardt and with the Bilbao Symphony Orchestra under Erik Nielsen. Forthcoming engagements include concertos with the Jacksonville, Nashville and Oregon Symphony orchestras and the Gulbenkian Orchestra, and performances in New York with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center.

Alessio Bax's many recordings include Beethoven's 'Hammerklavier' and 'Moonlight' sonatas and 'Emperor' Concerto, *Bax & Chung*, a duo album with his pianist wife Lucille Chung, Mozart concertos with London's Southbank Sinfonia and the recital album *Italian Inspirations*. Since 2017 he has been Artistic Director of the Incontri in Terra di Siena Festival, a summer music festival in Tuscany.

**Ryan Wigglesworth**  
Chief Conductor

**Delyana Lazarova**  
Principal Guest Conductor

**Ilan Volkov**  
Creative Partner

**Lucy Drever**  
Associate Artist

**Hans Abrahamsen**  
Composer-in-Association

**Sir Donald Runnicles**  
Conductor Emeritus

## BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra



Across the 2025/26 season, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra celebrates 90 years as Scotland's national broadcasting orchestra. From Oban to Osaka, it has performed across Scotland and around the world, with concerts often featured on BBC Radio 3, Radio Scotland, BBC Sounds, and BBC TV and iPlayer. Scotland's leading champion of new music has, across nine decades, commissioned orchestral music by the most original voices and presents its annual Tectonics Festival of new and experimental music alongside its Creative Partner Ilan Volkov.

With Associate Artist Lucy Drever the orchestra runs projects across Scotland for families, schools and communities. And through a close association with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, the orchestra mentors the next generation of conductors, composers and instrumentalists. It also supports young musical talent in BBC Radio Scotland's Young Classical Musician competition.

Ryan Wigglesworth began his tenure as Chief Conductor in 2022. He has directed a wide range of repertoire including the ballets of Stravinsky, major works of Elgar and UK premieres of works by György Kurtág and Hans Abrahamsen. Following her BBC Proms debut last year, Delyana Lazarova took up the role of Principal Guest Conductor.

The orchestra has received a Royal Philharmonic Society Award and four *Gramophone* Awards, and this year was named one of the UK's 10 Greatest Orchestras by *The Telegraph*.

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Kitbi Lee *guest leader*  
Kanako Ito *associate leader*  
David Routledge\*  
Iona McDonald †  
Jane Mackenzie  
Elita Poulter  
Alastair Savage  
Gent Koço  
Emily Ward  
Mireia Ferrer Yabar  
Amy Cardigan  
Katrina Lee  
Jane Lemoine  
Julia Lungu

## **Second Violins**

Jamie Campbell †  
Liza Johnson ‡  
Brigid Leman  
Tom Hankey  
Julia Norton  
Alex Gascoine  
Julia Carpenter  
Barbara Downie  
Alice Rickards  
Ben Norris  
Ana do Vale  
Fiona Stephen

## **Violas**

Carol Ella ¥  
Morag Robertson ‡  
Mabon Llyr Rhyd  
Rik Evans  
Mary Ward  
Martin Wiggins  
Rhoslyn Lawton  
Liam Brolly  
Emma Connell Smith  
Yvette Berridge

## **Cellos**

Rudi De Groot\*  
Siân Bell †  
Nick Byrne ‡  
Sarah Oliver  
Gill De Groot  
Anne Brincourt  
Feargus Egan  
Rosalie Curlett

## **Double Basses**

Gyunam Kim\*  
Iain Crawford †  
Genna Spinks ‡  
Tom Berry  
Lynette Eaton  
Olaya Garcia Alvarez

## **Flutes**

Matthew Higham\*  
Brontë Hudnott †  
Siobhan Grealy  
Luke Russell †  
Adam Richardson

## **Oboes**

Emily Pailthorpe ¥  
Katherine Bryer  
James Horan †

## **Clarinets**

Yann Ghiro\*  
Jean Johnson  
Jenny Stephenson  
Aaron Hartnell Booth

## **Bassoons**

Georgina Powell ¥  
Graeme Brown †  
Peter Wesley †  
Rhiannon Carmichael

## **Horns**

Chris Gough\*  
Stephanie Jones  
Lauren Reeve-Rawlings †  
Jamie Shield  
Alec Ross

## **Trumpets**

Adam Wood ¥  
Mark Calder  
Hedley Benson  
Brian McGinley

## **Trombones**

Merin Rhyd †  
Emma Close

## **Bass Trombone**

Alexander Kelly †

## **Tuba**

Craig Anderson ¥

## **Timpani**

Gordon Rigby\*

## **Percussion**

Joe Richards\*  
David Lyons  
Patrick Nolan  
Alasdair Kelly

## **Harp**

Helen Thomson

\* *section principal*

† *principal*

‡ *string sub-principal*

¥ *guest principal*

*orchestra list correct at  
time of going to print*

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**BBC**  
**Scottish  
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**26.03.2026**  
**7.30PM**  
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**29.03.2026**  
**3.00PM**  
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**KAREN CARGILL**  
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**ALASTAIR MILES**  
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