



ROS | ROYAL ORCHESTRAL SOCIETY

DUKE'S HALL
Royal Academy of Music
Sunday 29th March 2026

Shining Brass

There are many ways to construct a satisfying concert programme. Some revolve around a national style, some around a musical era and some around an abstract concept – landscapes, seascapes, the supernatural, the heroic, and so forth. Others, like tonight's, span widely across these but are unified by a focus on the special qualities of one class of instruments: in this case, the brass and particularly the trombone.

We begin in nineteenth-century Bohemia, where Antonín Dvořák was trying out a new form, the concert overture. *Carnival* was planned as the second of three such overtures, and was intended to represent 'Life' in all its chaotic exuberance: a quality that brass sections (if they will forgive me for saying so) bring out extraordinarily well.

Dani Howard's *Trombone Concerto* jumps forward more than a century, having been composed during the Covid pandemic lockdowns as a reflection on the resilience and quiet heroism of the British people. We are delighted to welcome, as our soloist tonight, the man for whom the concerto was written and who gave its first performance. When you get home, listen to Dani and Peter talking together about the work on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kSM9sg3pLSE>

Our concert ends with the most famous of all Sibelius's symphonies, in which the French horns and brass – the trombones in particular – are at the core of the work's structural and emotional arc, its 'pagan strength', and the 'epic ending' described in our programme notes.

Note by Jeremy Cook



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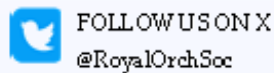
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THE Royal Orchestral Society was founded in 1872 by Queen Victoria's second son, Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, an enthusiastic amateur musician. At the time it was the only London orchestra apart from the Royal Philharmonic Society.

The first concert was conducted by Sir Arthur Sullivan in the Royal Albert Hall in 1873, and the orchestra went on to perform with Pablo Casals, Fritz Kreisler, Mischa Elman, Jacques Thibaut, Dame Clara Butt, and Sir Edward Elgar. After the war, until his death in 1992, the orchestra was directed by the internationally famous conductor Arthur Davison, followed by Anthony Hopkins, Timothy Redmond, Stuart Stratford and Orlando Jopling. In 2023, Rebecca Miller was appointed principal conductor.

Repertoire has included symphonies by Mahler, Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov, Prokofiev, Vaughan Williams and Shostakovich, Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra and Viola Concerto, Britten's Sinfonia da Requiem and Sea Interludes, Holst's Planets and Stravinsky's The Rite of Spring. Choral works have included Verdi's Requiem and Vaughan Williams' Sea Symphony, Walton's Belshazzar's Feast, Elgar's Dream of Gerontius and Hiawatha's Wedding Feast by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, all with the late Ronald Corp's excellent choir The London Chorus. In 2012, we performed Prokofiev's iconic cantata Alexander Nevsky to an edited edition of Eisenstein's film for which it was written, displayed on screens in the auditorium.

In November 2014 we performed Britten's War Requiem – our first concert in Cadogan Hall. 2017 brought our first opera – Bluebeard's Castle by Bartók – followed by Wagner's Die Walküre, Act 3 in 2019.

In 2023, as part of our 150th anniversary celebrations, we performed Mahler's gargantuan Symphony No. 3 at Cadogan Hall.



The Royal Orchestral Society
at the Queen's Hall in 1896

Sunday 29th March 2026 7pm

Duke's Hall, Royal Academy of Music

Dvořák *Carnival Overture*

Dani Howard *Trombone Concerto*

INTERVAL

Sibelius *Symphony no. 2*

Peter Moore (*Trombone*)

Royal Orchestral Society

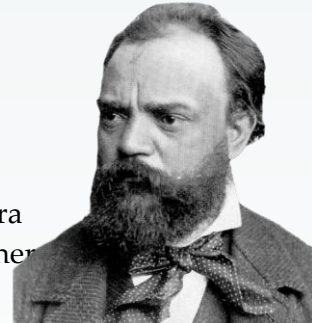
Leader Christian Halstead

Rebecca Miller (*Conductor*)

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

Carnival Overture

Dvořák is revered as one of the great symphonists, but what is most remarkable about his legacy is his versatility during an era of taking sides. Composers were expected to be on the side either of “absolute” music, with its conservative preference for the established genres and forms, or of the “progressives,” who advocated such pioneering concepts as the symphonic poem



After returning from his years in the United States (where he wrote some of the best-loved works in the repertoire), Dvořák focused his attention on the symphonic poem pioneered by Liszt as well as on opera. But a triptych of concert overtures was a precursor to this development. Dvořák introduced the set in April 1892 on his last concert before leaving for his post to head the fledgling National Academy of Music in New York City. *Nature, Life, and Love* was Dvořák’s working title for the trio of overtures, a multi-movement cycle intended to illustrate the basic trajectory of the human experience. These took shape as the compositions *In Nature’s Realm*, *Carnival*, and *Othello* and were composed in that order, corresponding to the three aspects of their original titles (*Nature*, *Life*, and *Love*, respectively).

Dvořák linked all three overtures through the use of shared thematic material, although they are nowadays usually encountered as stand-alone pieces rather than as a single larger work.

For *Carnival*, the second and most frequently performed part of the trilogy, Dvořák suggested a program involving “a lonely wanderer” who arrives by twilight at the outskirts of a city where “a carnival is in full swing”.

Dani Howard (b.1993-)

Trombone Concerto

Dani Howard is a British composer and orchestrator who is quickly gaining international recognition with regular performances across Europe, the US and Asia. The Trombone Concerto is a three-movement work commissioned by the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and premiered in June 2021, with Peter Moore as the soloist. The concerto was composed during the 2020 lockdowns and reflects on the resilience and quiet heroism of everyday people during the pandemic.



Movement I: Realisation – The solo trombone begins with the instruction to *“play as if you are totally oblivious to your surroundings”*, symbolizing the routine rhythm of daily life. This sense of detachment evolves into a moment of awakening, where the individual begins to contemplate their potential impact in a time of crisis.

⊙ **Movement II: Ruminati**on – The trombonist reflects in solitude over a repeating harmonic cycle. Gradually, sections of the orchestra join in, mirroring the growing sense of connection and collective strength. The movement is described as *“Bartókian Night Music”* in spirit—restrained, beautiful, and subtly eerie—highlighting inner contemplation and emotional depth.

⊙ **Movement III: Illumination** – A vibrant and technically demanding finale, this movement bursts with celebratory energy. It represents the triumph of the human spirit, where personal resolve is transformed into a beacon of hope and positive change. The soloist’s virtuosity is on full display, culminating in a radiant, joyous conclusion.

The work has been praised as a *“much-needed new masterpiece for the trombone”* and an *“instant classic”*, with the Financial Times noting Howard’s *“brilliant command of the orchestra”*. It was recorded for her debut album, released in March 2024 on Rubicon Classics, featuring the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and conductor Pablo Urbina.

Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)

SYMPHONY no. 2

Sibelius' Symphony no. 2 displays the same elemental pagan strength in that is apparent in all of Sibelius' writing, and since his own nation was often struggling against opposition, his depiction of Finnish legends and sagas, and of the raw natural landscapes of his homeland, allowed him to become the undisputed Finnish musical representative as the nation became independent around the time of the collapse of Russia's empire in 1917.



Despite the fact that most of this Symphony was written in a comparatively balmy Italian climate in 1902, it displays well all of the aforementioned characteristics. The first movement is in relatively conventional sonata form, but the presentation of the material is unorthodox. Particularly noteworthy is the principal theme of the second subject group which has three "*Sibelian*" fingerprints: first the long, sustained opening note, then the slow trill, and finally the descending interval of a fifth, which is to prove to be a germinal motive throughout the symphony. There is no coda, but the movement ends as it began with the introductory figure which acted as a prelude to the first main theme.

The second movement begins in a more sombre manner, with a rising/falling passage on pizzicato basses, the mood becoming more tense and excited as strings and horns join in. After a climax followed by a silent pause a broad melody is given to the strings, which are richly divided into ten parts, in which the alternating natural and augmented fourth provides another Sibelius fingerprint. There is a brief and highly dramatic coda, in which sombre thematic fragments are interspersed by savage trills in the woodwind and a rushing passage for the strings.

The Scherzo, a moto perpetuo, is followed by a contrasting Trio, which opens with a lyrical tune on the oboe. Scherzo and Trio are heard again, and a gradually mounting climax foreshadows the broad, triumphant melody that dominates the finale. This magnificent melodic paean covers a span of forty-four measures, during half of which there is a remarkable pedal bass of D – C sharp.

Towards the end of the development section, the opening half-notes of the principal theme build to a climax, heralding the recapitulation, in which the principal theme is announced against a quarter note figure in the woodwind. The second subject appears in the tonic minor, but soon blazes into the major to introduce the short coda which supplies a magnificent ending to the whole symphony.

Sibelius was capable of providing an epic ending with nothing of self-consciousness or bravado in its grandiose strength; the Finns themselves regard this movement as symbolizing the triumph of their national aspirations. Certainly, the wide expressive range of this symphony, from its pastoral opening to its thrilling conclusion, ranks as one of Sibelius's greatest achievements.

The image shows a musical score for five string instruments: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The tempo is marked **Allegretto**. The key signature is two sharps (D major) and the time signature is 6/4. The score is divided into three measures. In the first measure, all instruments play a half-note chord (D4, F#4, A4, C5) with a dynamic marking of *mf*. In the second measure, the instruments play a half-note chord (D4, F#4, A4, C5) with a dynamic marking of *mf*. In the third measure, the instruments play a half-note chord (D4, F#4, A4, C5) with a dynamic marking of *mp*. The Viola part has a *div.* marking below the first measure. The Double Bass part has a *mf* marking below the first measure.

Born in Belfast and brought up in Greater Manchester, **Peter Moore** was part of the world-renowned Brass Band culture in the North of England - experiences which proved crucial to his rapid development as a very young player. He came to international attention in 2008 when, aged 12, he became the youngest ever winner of BBC Young Musician, kickstarting a solo career that continues to go from strength to strength. A busy schedule has since seen him perform with some of the Europe's leading orchestras. From 2015 to 2017 he was a BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artist.



Moore's repertoire stretches from the early Baroque via Romantic lieder transcriptions to contemporary works. A proud exponent of new music, he has premiered trombone works written for him by Francisco Coll (*Chanson et Bagatelle*), Roxanna Panufnik (*When You Appear*) and Dani Howard (*Trombone Concerto*) and many others. He also gave the UK premiere of Sir James MacMillan's *Trombone Concerto* with the London Symphony Orchestra, and the European premiere of Joe Chindamo's *Ligeia* with the National Symphony Orchestra in Dublin.

Concerto highlights include performances in Suntory Hall, Tokyo with Sir Simon Rattle and the BBC Proms with Vasili Petrenko - the first trombone soloist at the festival for nearly 20 years. The performance was widely praised: *'There are very few players with the charismatic presence and variety in their sound ... who can hold interest through long phrases as Moore always does,'* wrote The Arts Desk. The Times noted Moore's *'hot lyricism'*, while the Telegraph admired how he *'married the elegance of a ballroom dancer with the lyrical tenderness of a violinist'*.

Moore's debut album *Life Force* was released in June 2018. Accompanied by James Baillieu, the record features a selection of lieder arranged for trombone and piano as well as works originally written for trombone. The album earned a five- star review from BBC Music Magazine, while Gramophone praised Moore's *'genuine sympathy'* and *'long, carefully phrased lines'*.

Moore is the former Principal Trombone of the London Symphony Orchestra, joining in 2014 as the youngest ever player. After 10 years, he resigned in order to focus on his career as a soloist. He is currently a professor at the Royal Academy of Music, London and has given masterclasses all over the world in institutions including the Juilliard School, Paris Conservatoire, and New England Conservatory.

Peter Moore is a Getzen International Artist and performs on the Getzen 4147IB.



Our principal conductor, California-born **Rebecca Miller**, has earned international acclaim for her compelling, insightful, and energetic presence on the podium and for her ability to communicate with audiences of all ages. She spreads her work between professional, amateur and youth orchestras and choirs, and is passionate about music's relevance to our society, artistic citizenship, and championing unduly-neglected female composers. She is currently Director of Orchestras at Royal Holloway University, Principal Conductor of Royal Orchestral Society,

Principal Conductor of Bishop's Stortford Sinfonia, and Principal Guest Conductor of Orchestra of the Swan. She most recently served as Chief Conductor of the Uppsala Chamber Orchestra in Sweden from 2019-2023.

Her guest conducting includes the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Gävle Symphony, Västerås Symphony, Dalasinfoniettan, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, London Mozart Players, and London Philharmonic Orchestra. Rebecca is passionate about her work with young musicians – she works regularly with the National Children's Orchestra and LSO Discovery and has also guest conducted the National Youth Orchestras of Scotland, Wales, and Great Britain.

Previously, Rebecca served as Resident Conductor of the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra and American Conducting Fellow of The Houston Symphony, and Assistant Conductor of the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra. She holds a B.Mus. in Piano Performance from Oberlin Conservatory, an M.Mus in Orchestral Conducting from Northwestern University, and for two years was the Paul Woodhouse Junior Fellow in Orchestral Conducting at London's Royal College of Music.

"It is not possible to see the sparks, but you can certainly hear them" - The Financial Times

THE ORCHESTRA

Violin 1

Christian Halstead
Nicola Bedwin
Caroline Cox
Jackie Burwell
Marc Wood
Farh Harfoush
Mike Malone
Teresa Coakley
Georgia Allison
Danielle Dawson
David Coltman

Violin 2

Katie Lander
Philip Burwell
Jeannie Okikiolu
Jen Tillier
Jeremy Cook
Adrienne Freeman
Katie Kinnear
Ange Levesque
Peter Steele

Violas

Rosemary Cook
Matthew Newton
Karen Mason
Louise Kamill
Mark Denza
Julian Marshall
Anne-Marie Norman

Cellos

Antoine Kaiserman
Hugh Larsen
Francis Cardell-Oliver
Dan Ivens
Francis Norton
Brian Coffey
Dirk Wong

Double Basses

Olive Chan
Susan Moss
Brooke Simpson
Tom Amigoni

Flutes

Jo Felton
Fran Hall
Leonie Stevenson

Oboes/Cor anglais

Paul Blaker
Julia Philpott
Christina East

Clarinets

Ian Pay
Georgia Hughes

Bassoons

Fiona Cairney
Jeremy Crump

Horns

Phil Maguire
Richard Slater
Derek Holland
Owen Mortimer

Trumpets

Kieran Booker
Sam Thackray
Anna Smith

Trombones

Stuart Cannon
Freddie Onslow
Sam Howells

Tuba

Martin Oxenham

Harp

Llywelyn Ifan Jones

Timpani

Sana Abu-Jabir

Percussion

Shesh Abu-Jabiri
Jack Izard
QiZhen Chow

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Bartók's Bluebeard's Castle
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ROS | ROYAL ORCHESTRAL SOCIETY

Debussy

prelude à l'après midi d'un faune

Tailleferre

harp concertino

Mahler

symphony no.4

Llywelyn Ifan Jones (harp)

Rebecca Miller (conductor)

Saturday 13 June 2026 7.00pm

Smith Square Hall SW1P 3HA

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