

YEAR  
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Ben Wright

23|24 SEASON

 UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

presents

**ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA**  
**VASILY PETRENKO**, music director  
**ISATA KANNEH-MASON**, piano

MON, JAN 29, 7:30 pm

Hodgson Concert Hall

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Performance  
Today

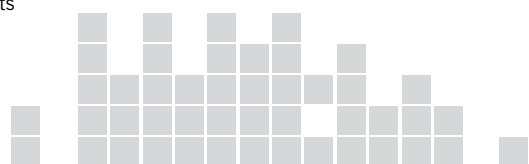
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Please silence all mobile phones and electronic devices. Photography, video and audio recording, and texting are prohibited during the performance.

#ugapresents



## PROGRAM

### **FELIX MENDELSSOHN** (1809-1847)

Hebrides Overture (Fingal's Cave), Op. 26 [11:00]

### **CLARA SCHUMANN** (1819-1896)

Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 7 [22:00]

- I. Allegro maestoso
- II. Romanze: Andante non troppo con grazia
- III. Allegro non troppo

## INTERMISSION

### **NIKOLAI RIMSKY-KORSAKOV** (1844-1908)

Scheherazade, Op.35 [44:00]

- I. The Sea and Sinbad's Ship
- II. The Story of the Kalendar Prince
- III. The Young Prince and Princess
- IV. The Festival at Baghdad – The Sea – Shipwreck on the Rock Surmounted by a Bronze Warrior

Program is subject to change.

## PROGRAM NOTES

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### **Hebrides Overture (Fingal's Cave), Op. 26**

**Felix Mendelssohn** (1809-1847)

Felix Mendelssohn was born in Hamburg and began to study the piano when he was 6 years old. He was a child prodigy, commencing a series of string symphonies at the age of twelve and only five years later composed one of his most popular and brilliant works, the Overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. He travelled extensively as a composer, conductor, and pianist, and established an enormous following in England and Germany. In addition to five orchestral symphonies and a series of concert overtures, he wrote a large amount of chamber music, the hugely successful *Songs Without Words* for solo piano, church music, and the oratorios *St. Paul* and *Elijah*.

In 1829, during one of his professional visits to England, he undertook a walking tour of Scotland with his friend the poet Carl Klingemann. They were much impressed by Holyrood Castle, the atmosphere of which inspired Mendelssohn's Third Symphony, known as the "Scottish," and by the dramatic Hebridean setting of Fingal's Cave. Klingemann's description is eloquent: "A greener roar of waves surely never rushed into a stranger cavern — its many pillars made it look like the inside of an immense organ, black and resounding, and absolutely without purpose, and quite alone, the wide grey sea within and without." Mendelssohn took a boat out to the mouth of the cave, and was similarly affected. By the time he had been rowed back to land, the opening theme of a new overture

was already in his head, and he hastily scribbled it down and put it in a letter to his beloved sister Fanny. In the letter, he wrote: "In order to make you understand how extraordinarily the Hebrides affected me, I am sending you the following which came into my head there."

Tentatively entitled *The Lonely Island*, the work was completed the following year, revised soon after, and eventually performed as the *Hebrides Overture* in London in May 1832. Of all Mendelssohn's overtures, this atmospheric evocation of Fingal's Cave remains the most popular, the music at once superbly crafted and retaining all of the power and spontaneity of that first overwhelming impression of a sea-cave on the island of Staffa.

### **Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 7 Clara Schumann** (1819-1896)

Clara Wieck was a child prodigy who was destined to become the most celebrated female pianist of her time. Her teenage diary reveals that she began work on this Piano Concerto aged just thirteen. Those years were hardly plain sailing though; she fell deeply in love with the composer Robert Schumann and her father did everything he could to stop the marriage. He was completely set against the idea of a penniless pupil taking his teenage daughter away and ruining her career prospects. Clara and Robert decided to take the matter to court and there were protracted hearings, during which Clara's father attempted to demonstrate that the young composer-pianist was unstable, unreliable, and entirely unsuitable for his daughter. He accused Schumann of being an alcoholic and tried to bring in several witnesses who would attest to his

general unbalanced state. In the event, love won through and the pair were married the day before Clara's twenty-first birthday, although Wieck's concerns about Schumann's mental stability eventually proved to be correct.

Clara did develop into one of the leading pianists of her day with what would eventually be a sixty-one-year concert career, although it was somewhat compromised by the needs of her children and an ailing husband. She gave the first performance of her Piano Concerto in A minor in 1835 with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra conducted by Felix Mendelssohn. As may be expected, the piano writing throughout is skillful and confident, the whole Concerto constructed as three continuous movements. The dramatic opening figure of the first movement generates much of the ensuing material, the orchestral writing confident and musically appropriate. The central *Andante* is a *Romanze* cast in the highly unusual key (relatively) of A-flat major. Its main theme is a variant of the first movement's opening figure, the orchestra remaining silent until the entrance of an expressive solo cello. Timpani rolls signal the impending arrival of the finale, an extended polonaise that invites comparison with the *Rondo alla Polacca* finale of Beethoven's Triple Concerto of 1803-04. Once again much use is made of the melodic figure used in the preceding movements, its outline forming the main opening theme.

## Scheherazade, Op. 35

**Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov** (1844-1908)

### I. The Sea and Sinbad's Ship

### II. The Story of the Kalendar Prince

### III. The Young Prince and Princess

### IV. The Festival at Baghdad – The Sea –

### Shipwreck on the Rock Surmounted by a Bronze Warrior

One of the most fascinating collections of stories in the world is the book known as *The Arabian Nights*, some of whose tales date back to the first millennium, and which includes such popular stories as *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*, *Aladdin*, and the *Seven Voyages of Sinbad the Sailor*. The various tales are linked by the invention of a storyteller—Scheherazade herself—who is the wife of the sultan Schahriar. The sultan has developed the unpleasant habit of having all his wives strangled after the first night of their marriage, to prevent them from going off to find new lovers, and the wily Scheherazade saves herself by recounting a different story each night. Each tale ends with a cliffhanger that leaves her husband wanting more, and the sultan becomes so interested in these stories that he puts off her execution each day, eventually deciding to accept her as his true and loving wife.

In 1888–9, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov composed a set of orchestral pieces based on various unconnected episodes from the collection. Rather than recreate the narratives in his music, he set out to give an impression of certain characters and events, leaving his listeners to recreate the details of the stories for themselves. Each of the four movements originally carried a descriptive title, which the composer subsequently suppressed, explaining his decision as follows:

*I meant these hints to direct only slightly the hearer's fancy on the path which my own fancy had travelled, and to leave more minute and particular conceptions to the will and mood of each. All I had desired was that the hearer, if he liked my piece as*



*symphonic music, should carry away the impression that it is beyond doubt an oriental narrative of some numerous and varied fairy tale wonders and not merely four pieces played one after the other and composed on the basis of themes common to all the four movements. Why then, if that be the case, does my suite bear the name, precisely, of Scheherazade? Because this name and the title The Arabian Nights connote in everybody's mind the East and fairy-tale wonders; besides, certain details of the musical exposition hint at the fact that all of these are various tales told by one person (who happens to be Scheherazade) entertaining therewith her stern husband.*

The four separate movements of the symphonic suite are as follows:

### I. The Sea and Sinbad's Ship

A heavy brass theme introduces the character of the sultan, followed by Scheherazade's solo violin theme. These two ideas are then built up into a powerful movement suggesting the epic voyages of Sinbad.

### II. The Story of the Kalendar Prince

Scheherazade's violin theme is heard as an introduction to this faster movement, depicting the adventures of a Prince who dresses up as a wandering dervish (Kalendar) and endures great hardships in search of wisdom. The bassoon introduces the Kalendar theme, which is subsequently taken up by a succession of solo instruments and full orchestra.

### III. The Young Prince and Princess

One of the loveliest stories in *The Arabian Nights* is the tale of the young prince and princess, who live in different kingdoms and who both refuse ever to marry. Two interfering genies decide to put them in the same bed for one night, and then whisk them away before they have even been introduced! The two teenagers instantly fall in love, but are unable to find each other again and fall ill. Eventually, as in all good fairy stories, they meet and marry, and everyone lives happily ever after. In Rimsky-Korsakov's version, the theme of the young prince is announced by the violins and the princess by a dance-like melody on the solo clarinet.

### IV. The Festival at Baghdad – The Sea – Shipwreck on the Rock Surmounted by a Bronze Warrior

The last movement of the suite is a colorful portrayal of the three episodes listed above. The composer never lets us forget, even in the midst of all the excitement, that Scheherazade is still telling stories to her murderous husband, so that both her theme and the sultan's angry tune are often present, and we hear clear reminiscences of themes from the first three musical tales. By the end of the movement, however, the sultan has clearly decided to spare his wife, and a tender version of his theme brings the suite to a close.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

### ISATA KANNEH-MASON

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Pianist Isata Kanneh-Mason is in great demand internationally as a soloist and chamber musician. She offers eclectic and interesting repertoire with recital programs encompassing music from Haydn and Mozart via Fanny Mendelssohn and Clara Schumann, Chopin and Brahms to Gershwin and beyond. In concerto, she is equally at home in Felix Mendelssohn and Clara Schumann (whose piano concerto featured on Isata's chart-topping debut recording) as in Prokofiev and Dohnányi.

Highlights of the '23/'24 season include performances with the Philadelphia Orchestra, National Arts Centre Orchestra Ottawa, London Mozart Players, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra on tour in the USA and Germany, Royal Northern Sinfonia, Cleveland Orchestra, Toronto Symphony,

and Stockholm Philharmonic. With her cellist brother Sheku, she appears in recital in Japan, Singapore, and South Korea in addition to an extensive European recital tour. Isata also gives a series of solo recitals on tour in the USA and Canada as well as at London's Wigmore Hall, the Lucerne Festival, and across Germany.

In 2022/23 Isata made successful debuts at the Barbican, Queen Elizabeth and Wigmore halls in London, the Philharmonie Berlin, National Concert Hall Dublin, Perth Concert Hall and Prinzregententheater Munich. As concerto soloist, she appeared with orchestras such as the New World Symphony Miami, City of Birmingham Symphony, Barcelona Symphony, Geneva Chamber Orchestra and Los Angeles Philharmonic and was the Artist in Residence with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

Isata is a Decca Classics recording artist. Her 2019 album, *Romance: the Piano Music of Clara Schumann*, entered the UK classical charts at No. 1, *Gramophone* magazine extolling the recording as "one of the most charming and engaging debuts". This was followed by 2021's *Summertime*, featuring 20th-century American repertoire including a world premiere recording of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's Impromptu in B minor and 2023's endearingly titled album *Childhood Tales* is a tour-de-force showcase of music inspired by a nostalgia for youth.

2021 also saw the release of Isata's first duo album, *Muse*, with Sheku, demonstrating the siblings' musical empathy and rapport borne from years of playing and performing together. Isata and Sheku were selected to perform in recital during the 2020 BBC Proms, which was a vastly reduced festival due to the Covid-19 pandemic and they performed for cameras to an empty auditorium. 2023 saw her BBC Proms solo debut, this time to a fully open Royal Albert Hall, alongside Ryan Bancroft and the BBC National Orchestra of Wales.

Isata was an ECHO Rising Star in '21/'22 performing in many of Europe's finest halls and she is also the recipient of the coveted Leonard Bernstein Award, an Opus Klassik award for best young artist and is one of the Konzerthaus Dortmund's Junge Wilde artists.

### VASILY PETRENKO

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Vasily Petrenko is Music Director of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (RPO), a position he commenced in 2021. He is conductor laureate of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, following his hugely acclaimed fifteen-year tenure as their chief conductor from 2006-2021. He is chief conductor of the European Union Youth Orchestra (since 2015), Associate Conductor of the Orquesta Sinfónica de Castilla y León, and has also served as chief conductor of the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra (2013-2020) and principal conductor of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain (2009-2013). He stood down as artistic director of the State Academic Symphony Orchestra of Russia "Evgeny Svetlanov" in 2021 having been their principal guest conductor from 2016 and artistic director from 2020.

Vasily was born in 1976 and started his music education at the St. Petersburg Capella Boys Music School – Russia's oldest music school. He then studied at the St. Petersburg Conservatoire where he participated in masterclasses with such luminary figures as Ilya Musin, Mariss Jansons and Yuri Temirkanov.

He has worked with many of the world's most prestigious orchestras including the Berlin Philharmonic, Bavarian Radio Symphony, Leipzig Gewandhaus, London Symphony, London Philharmonic, Philharmonia, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia (Rome), St. Petersburg Philharmonic, Orchestre National de France, Czech Philharmonic, NHK Symphony, Hong Kong Philharmonic, and Sydney Symphony orchestras, and in North America has led the Philadelphia Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, and the San Francisco, Boston, Chicago, and Montreal Symphony orchestras. He has appeared at the Edinburgh Festival, Grafenegg Festival and made frequent appearances at the BBC Proms. Equally at home in the opera house, and with more than thirty operas in his repertoire, Vasily has conducted widely on the operatic stage, including at Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Opéra National de Paris, Opernhaus Zürich, the Bayerische Staatsoper, Bavarian State Opera, and Metropolitan Opera.

Recent highlights with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra have included wide-ranging touring across major European capitals, Japan, and the USA, including an acclaimed performance at New York's Carnegie Hall. In London, he led an impressive survey of Mahler's choral symphonies at the Royal Albert Hall. In the 2023-24 season, Vasily and the RPO will tour the USA and Europe, whilst in

London their *Icons Rediscovered* series will explore the music of Elgar and Rachmaninov at the Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall and embrace grand works by Tchaikovsky, Wagner, and Verdi in the Royal Albert Hall.

Vasily has established a strongly defined profile as a recording artist. Amongst a wide discography, his Shostakovich, Rachmaninov, and Elgar symphony cycles with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra have garnered worldwide acclaim. With the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, he has released cycles of Scriabin's symphonies and Strauss' tone poems, and works by Prokofiev and Myaskovsky.

In September 2017, Vasily was honoured with the Artist of the Year Award at the prestigious annual Gramophone Awards, one decade on from receiving their Young Artist of the Year Award in October 2007. In 2010, he won the Male Artist of the Year at the Classical BRIT Awards and is only the second person to have been awarded Honorary Doctorates by both the University of Liverpool and Liverpool Hope University (in 2009), and an Honorary Fellowship of the Liverpool John Moores University (in 2012), awards which recognise the immense impact he has had on the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and the city's cultural scene.

[vasilypetrenkomusic.com](http://vasilypetrenkomusic.com)

## ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra's (RPO) mission to enrich lives through orchestral experiences that are uncompromising in their excellence and inclusive in their appeal, places it at the forefront of music-making in the UK and internationally. Typically performing approximately 200 concerts a year and with a worldwide live and online audience of more than 60 million people, the orchestra is proud to embrace a broad repertoire and reach a diverse audience. Whilst artistic integrity remains paramount, the RPO is unafraid to push boundaries and is equally at home recording video game, film and television soundtracks and working with pop stars, as it is touring the world performing the great symphonic repertoire.

Throughout its history, the RPO has attracted and collaborated with the most inspiring artists and in August 2021, the Orchestra was thrilled to welcome Vasily Petrenko as its new Music Director. A landmark appointment in the RPO's history, Vasily's opening two seasons with the RPO have been lauded by audiences and



critics alike. Highlights included a star-studded gala concert to mark the RPO's 75th Anniversary (with soloists Sheku Kanneh-Mason MBE and Sir Bryn Terfel), all three of Mahler's epic Choral Symphonies at the Royal Albert Hall, performances at the BBC Proms and Edinburgh International Festival, and major tours to the USA, Japan, Germany, Spain, and a host of prestigious European festivals.

The RPO is recognised as the UK's most in-demand orchestra, an accolade that would have pleased Sir Thomas Beecham, who founded the Orchestra in 1946. As well as a busy schedule of national and international performances, the Orchestra enjoys an annual season of concerts in London's Royal Albert Hall (where the RPO is Associate Orchestra), the Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall and Cadogan Hall, where it is celebrating its 20th Season as Resident Orchestra. In the 2023-24 Season, Vasily Petrenko and the Orchestra take a fresh look at the works of five major composers in *Icons Rediscovered*. The series explores the burning inspiration, the living emotion and the human personality behind some of the most iconic masterpieces, including Rachmaninov's *The Bells*, Elgar's *Falstaff*, Verdi's Requiem, music from Wagner's greatest operas and a semi-staged production of Tchaikovsky's *Iolanta*. The Season will also feature an autumn residency in Florida, followed by tours to the UAE and Germany, a twelve-concert tour of the USA, a series of relaxed performances across the UK, and collaborations with guest artists including Principal Associate Conductor Alexander Shelley, Yunchan Lim, Sheku-Kanneh-Mason MBE, Miah Persson, Nikolai Lugansky, John Rutter, Jennifer Johnston, and Artist-in-Residence Zlatomir Fung, amongst others.

The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra's mission is to place orchestral music at the heart of contemporary society and, through collaboration with creative partners, foster deeper engagement with communities to ensure that live orchestral music is accessible to as inclusive and diverse an audience as possible. To help achieve this goal, in 1993 the Orchestra launched RPO Resound, which has grown to become the most innovative and respected orchestral community and education program in the UK and internationally. Early in 2025, the Orchestra will move its headquarters to Wembley Park in the London Borough of Brent; this will be the realization of its long-held ambition to embed the Orchestra in a community, in line with its mission to be a truly inclusive and contemporary international orchestra for the modern age.

The Orchestra has always been entrepreneurial; in 1986 it was the first UK orchestra to launch its own record label and it has gone on to embrace advances in digital technology, achieving well over 50 million streams of its recorded music each year. The RPO's global online audience engages with it through the website and social media channels, where the Orchestra shares streamed performances, artist interviews, behind the scenes insights and more.

Passion, versatility, and uncompromising artistic standards are the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra's hallmarks; as it looks forward to an exciting future with the patronage of HRH The former Prince of Wales and Vasily Petrenko as Music Director, the RPO will continue to be recognized as one of the world's most open-minded, forward-thinking, and accessible symphony orchestras.

Discover more online at [rpo.co.uk](http://rpo.co.uk).

## ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

### FIRST VIOLINS

**Duncan Riddell**  
Tamás András  
Janice Graham  
Shana Douglas  
Esther Kim  
Andrew Klee  
Kay Chappell  
Anthony Protheroe  
Erik Chapman  
Adriana Iacovache-Pana  
Imogen East  
Judith Choi-Castro  
Emma Lisney  
Caroline Frenkel  
Maya Bickel  
Aysen Ulucan

### SECOND VIOLINS

**Ana Baida**  
Angelica Blackman-Kiem  
Donna Carter-Wood  
Marcia Chandler  
Katherine Fisher  
Alyssa Harris  
Unita Harris  
Kathleen Kelly George  
Virginia Little  
Katherine Mackenzie  
Linda Morgan  
Kathleen Poe Ross  
Laura Rappold

### SECOND VIOLINS

**Andrew Storey**  
David O'Leary  
Jennifer Christie  
Charlotte Ansbergs  
Peter Graham  
Stephen Payne  
Manuel Porta  
Sali-Wyn Ryan  
Charles Nolan  
Clare Wheeler  
Sophie Phillips  
Susie Watson  
Nicola Hutchings  
Emanuela Buta

### VIOLAS

**Abigail Fenna**  
Liz Varlow  
Joseph Fisher  
Ugne Tiškutė  
Jonathan Hallett  
Gemma Dunne  
Rebecca Gould  
Christine Anderson  
Lisa Bucknell  
Raquel Lopez Bolivar  
Raymond Lester  
Anna Growsn

### CELLOS

**Richard Harwood**  
Jonathan Ayling  
Chantal Webster  
Roberto Sorrentino  
Jean-Baptiste Toselli  
William Heggart  
Rachel van der Tang  
Naomi Watts  
Anna Stuart  
George Hoult

### DOUBLE BASSES

**Benjamin Cunningham**  
David Gordon  
David FC Johnson  
Martin Lüdenbach  
Mark O'Leary  
Lewis Reid  
Marianne Schofield  
Owen Nicolaou

### FLUTES

**Charlotte Ashton**  
Joanna Marsh

### PICCOLO

**Diomedes Demetriades**  
Joanna Marsh

### OBOES

**Steven Hudson**  
Timothy Watts

### COR ANGLAIS

**Patrick Flanagan**

### CLARINETS

**Sonia Sielaff**  
Massimo Di Trolio

### BASSOONS

**Roberto Giaccaglia**  
Fraser Gordon

### HORNS

**Alexander Edmundson**  
Ben Hulme  
Finlay Bain  
Jake Parker  
Flora Bain

### TRUMPETS

**Matthew Williams**  
Adam Wright  
Mike Allen

### TROMBONES

**Matthew Gee**  
Rupert Whitehead

### BASS TROMBONE

**Josh Cirtina**

### TUBA

**Kevin Morgan**

### TIMPANI

**Christopher Ridley**

### PERCUSSION

**Stephen Quigley**  
Martin Owens  
Gerald Kirby  
Richard Horne  
Oliver Yates

### HARP

**Bryn Lewis**

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James Williams

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