

Saturday 13 June 2026 / 7.30pm

Imogen Cooper and Paul Lewis play Mozart

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

La Clemenza de Tito, K. 621 – overture

If Mozart's penultimate opera was a blockbuster movie, it'd need a spoiler alert. Will the Roman Emperor Titus spare his would-be assassins? Or condemn them to a hideous death? Here's a clue: the title means "The Mercy of Titus". Absolute monarchs tended to like that sort of story, and when Mozart was commissioned to write an opera for the coronation of Emperor Leopold II in Prague in September 1791, his brief was clear. He opens with a grand, martial fanfare before racing off in peeling cascades of notes. The plot doesn't matter here (and aristocratic 18th century audiences tended to chatter and eat sorbet through the overture anyway). If this music makes you feel even a small part of the excitement and grandeur of a great royal occasion, then it's done its job.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Concerto for two pianos in E flat major, K. 365

Allegro - Andante - Rondo: Allegro

Mozart left no record of why – in Salzburg, some time during 1779 – he composed a concerto for two pianos, but perhaps he didn't need to. He'd played piano duets with his gifted older sister Maria Anna ("Nannerl") since early childhood. A double concerto like this one was altogether more respectable, and it seems likely that Wolfgang and Nannerl played it together in public in Salzburg. Two years later, in Vienna, however, it proved a wonderfully appropriate showpiece for one of Mozart's most gifted – and lucrative – pupils, Josepha Auernhammer, whom Mozart privately described (in a letter to Leopold) as "hideously ugly!".

"Her playing, however, is enchanting", he added, and on 23 November 1781, the 23 year-old Josepha performed with Mozart in a private concert at her family home. This concerto was on the bill, and with its sparkling dialogue between the two pianos, the elegant unfolding of its *Andante*, and the sweet-natured wit of the *finale*, a piece that had once embodied the affection of brother and sister now became a perfect vehicle for Josepha to display her artistry alongside her celebrated teacher. It seems likely that he added clarinet, trumpet and timpani parts for that occasion: elevating this Salzburg work to proportions calculated to impress a Viennese crowd.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 –1791)

Don Giovanni, K. 527 - overture

Mozart's opera *The Marriage of Figaro* was successful in Vienna, but that was nothing compared to its triumph in Prague. "They talk of no music but *Figaro*; no opera is seen as much as *Figaro*; again and again it's *Figaro*" wrote a delighted Mozart. A canny Prague impresario wasted no time in commissioning a follow-up, and Mozart went straight back to his *Figaro* collaborator, the Venetian poet, adventurer and de-frocked priest Lorenzo da Ponte. Da Ponte's past could politely be called "colourful". He'd been banished from Venice for his womanising, and was friendly with another Venetian exile – the Chevalier de Seingalt, known to posterity as Casanova.

So, no surprises that he suggested an opera on the legend of Don Juan, and when *Don Giovanni* opened in Prague on 29th October 1787, both men found themselves with the biggest hit of their careers. The doom-laden first chords of the *Overture* hint at what fate has in store for the unrepentant hero; and then we're straight into the action - a botched seduction, a moonlit swordfight, and the betrayed Donna Anna's father, the Commendatore, lying dead in the garden. And through it all, irrepressible and unashamed, the trumpets seem to crow with devilish laughter.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Piano Concerto No. 27 in B flat, K.595

Allegro - Larghetto - Allegro

Mozart signed off his last piano concerto on 5th January 1791. He was about to turn 35 and he'd just moved to a new and comfortable apartment in Vienna – nothing lavish, but with ample space for his billiard table. And he'd originally sketched the concerto as early as the summer of 1788. It was premiered (with Mozart, naturally, at the keyboard) on 4th March. "Herr *Kapellmeister* Mozart played a Concerto on the fortepiano" reported the *Wiener Zeitung* a week later "and everyone admired his art, in composition as well as in performance".

Still, there's no question that the concerto has a distinctive character – and Mozart's luminous woodwind writing and poignant sighing phrases give it a certain philosophical mood right from the off. The slow movement's opening melody is reminiscent of Mozart's older friend Haydn, who'd left for London three weeks previously. (As they parted, Mozart was reported to have been in tears). As for the final *rondo* – well, its main theme is just like Mozart's children's song *Komm, lieber Mai* ("Come, dearest May /And make the trees green again"), though since that was completed on 14th January 1791, the influence was probably the other way around. But Mozart never needed a pretext to mix the entertaining with the sublime.

Dinis Sousa conductor

Dinis Sousa is Music Director of Royal Northern Sinfonia, and Founder and Artistic Director of Orquestra XXI, an award-winning orchestra that brings together some of the finest young Portuguese musicians from around the world. He is the winner of the Critics' Circle Young Talent (Conductor) Award for 2023.

With Royal Northern Sinfonia he led a complete Schumann symphony cycle in 2023/4, in addition to a performance of Schumann's *Das Paradies und die Peri* which received a 5-star review from *The Times*. Other highlights with RNS have included a world premiere by Cassandra Miller, a UK tour, a return visit to the BBC Proms, and collaborations with soloists including Christian Tetzlaff, Steven Isserlis, Elisabeth Leonskaja, Víkingur Ólafsson, Stephen Hough and Kristian Bezuidenhout.

Sousa's work with the Monteverdi Choirs and Orchestras has earned him the highest critical acclaim, most recently for a complete Beethoven symphony cycle in London and at the Philharmonie de Paris in May 2024. Among many 5* reviews, Hugh Canning (*Operalogue*) described the cycle as "an unforgettable performance". In 2023, he won widespread praise (and further 5* reviews) for Berlioz's *Les Troyens* at the Salzburg Festival, Berlin Musikfest and the BBC Proms, with *The Guardian* noting that "Sousa was electrifying in moments of grandeur, high drama, and emotional intensity." In the autumn of 2023, he also made his Carnegie Hall debut conducting the Monteverdi Choir and English Baroque Soloists in two programs of Bach and Handel.

As a guest conductor, Sousa made debuts in 2023/4 with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra (Brahms' *German Requiem* with Christian Gerhaher, Lenneke Ruiten and the Monteverdi Choir) and Swedish Radio Symphony. In the 2024/25 season he makes debuts with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, Bergen Philharmonic, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre Symphonique de Québec, National Symphony Orchestra (Dublin) and Royal Danish Opera Orchestra; and makes return visits to the Euskadiko (Basque National) Orchestra and the Ulster Orchestra.

His operatic experience includes Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*, and in 2025 he leads a new production of Mozart's *Così fan tutte* for Graz Opera.

With Orquestra XXI, recent highlights have included opening the Gulbenkian Foundation's season, and a critically acclaimed tour of Mahler's Symphony No 5 to celebrate the orchestra's 10th anniversary. In recognition of his work with Orquestra XXI, he was awarded the title of Knight of the Order of Prince Henry in Portugal.

Imogen Cooper piano

Regarded as one of the finest interpreters of Classical and Romantic repertoire, Imogen Cooper is internationally renowned for her virtuosity and lyricism. Recent and future concerto performances include the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra with Sir Simon Rattle, London Symphony Orchestra with Manfred Honeck, Hallé Orchestra with Sir Mark Elder and The Cleveland and Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestras with Dame Jane Glover. This season her solo recitals include London, Vienna, Amsterdam, Philadelphia and the Klavierfest Ruhr in Germany. In Spring 2026 she will perform in China for the first time, playing solo recitals and Schubert's *Winterreise* with Mark Padmore.

Imogen's international career has included the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony, Berliner Philharmoniker, Vienna Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw, Leipzig Gewandhaus, Dresden Staatskapelle, Budapest Festival and NHK Symphony Orchestras. She has played at the BBC Proms and with all the major British orchestras, including particularly close relationships with the Royal Northern Sinfonia and Britten Sinfonia. Her recital appearances have included Tokyo, Hong Kong, Prague, Paris and the Schubertiade in Schwarzenberg.

As a committed chamber musician Imogen performs regularly with Henning Kraggerud and Adrian Brendel. Following a long collaboration with Wolfgang Holzmair in both concert and recording, her current Lieder partners include Ian Bostridge, Dame Sarah Connolly and Mark Padmore. Imogen's most recent recording for Chandos Records is of Beethoven's last three sonatas. Her discography also includes Mozart Concertos with Royal Northern Sinfonia and a cycle of Schubert's solo works recorded live in concert.

Imogen received a DBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2021. Her many awards and accolades, including the Queen's Medal for Music (2019), Royal Philharmonic Society Performers Award (2008) and Doctor of Music at Exeter University (1999). In 2015 she founded the Imogen Cooper Music Trust to support young pianists and give them time in an environment of peace and beauty. Imogen was the Chair of the Jury at the Leeds International Piano Competition in 2021 and 2024.

Paul Lewis piano

Paul Lewis is one of the foremost interpreters of the Central European piano repertoire, his performances and recordings of Beethoven and Schubert receiving universal critical acclaim. He was awarded CBE for his services to music, and the sincerity and depth of his musical approach have won him fans around the world.

This global popularity is reflected in the world-class orchestras with whom he works, including the Berlin Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, London Symphony, Philharmonia, Bavarian Radio Symphony, NHK Symphony, New York Philharmonic, LA Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw and Leipzig Gewandhaus orchestras. His close relationship with Boston Symphony Orchestra led to his selection as the 2020 Koussevitzky Artist at Tanglewood.

Lewis often focuses on specific composers in projects that allow him to take audiences deep inside the works. In 2026 and 2027, he will tour his Mozart+ series around the world, juxtaposing Mozart's lesser-known piano repertoire with works by composers such as Poulenc, Chopin and Weber, illuminating Mozart's influences over subsequent generations, as well as shining a light on works that are often overshadowed by his concertos. Previously, between 2022 and 2025, Lewis embarked on a Schubert Piano Sonata Series, presenting four programmes of the completed sonatas at over 40 venues around the world.

With a natural affinity for Beethoven, Lewis has performed the composer's complete piano concerto cycle all over the world and was the first pianist to present it in a single BBC Proms season, in 2010. He has subsequently performed it in Tanglewood in 2022, Boston in 2023 with Andris Nelsons and Boston Symphony Orchestra, and in 2025 with Eivind Aadland and Oslo Philharmonic. He took part in the BBC's three-part documentary *Being Beethoven*.

Beyond many award-winning Beethoven and Schubert recordings, his discography with Harmonia Mundi also demonstrates his characteristic depth of approach in Romantic repertoire such as Schumann, Mussorgsky, Brahms and Liszt. In March 2025 he gave the world premiere of Thomas Larcher's Piano

Sonata in Oviedo, Italy, and he continues to perform it around the world. In chamber music, Lewis works closely with tenor Mark Padmore in lied recitals around the world – they have recorded three Schubert song cycles together – and he is co-Artistic Director of Midsummer Music, an annual chamber music festival held in Buckinghamshire, UK. In May 2025 he was the first non-American pianist to chair the jury of the The Cliburn Piano Competition.

Royal Northern Sinfonia

Internationally renowned, calling Gateshead home.

37 musicians at the top of their game. Electrifying music, old and new. All the talent, determination, and creativity of the North East on a worldwide stage. From their home at The Glasshouse International Centre for Music, Royal Northern Sinfonia share the joy and wonder of orchestral music with thousands of people across the North of England - and beyond - every year.

From symphonies to string quartets, film soundtracks to choral masses, and original performances with awesome artists from Sheku Kanneh-Mason to Self Esteem, the orchestra's members have got one of the most varied jobs there is. They're always looking for fresh new sounds from up-and-coming composers, inviting local communities to share a stage, and doing everything they can to inspire and prepare the musicians of tomorrow to one day take their place.

They're also working hard to smash the barriers that can stop brilliant people getting into classical music. They've teamed up with national partners to support women conductors to develop their careers, to help global majority musicians get vital experience in the orchestra world, and to celebrate disabled and non-disabled musicians breaking new ground together in inclusive ensemble RNS Moves. And they bring new musical opportunities to the region, headlining the first-ever BBC Proms weekend outside London.

Because they whole-heartedly believe orchestral music is for anyone - big cities and rural villages, tiny babies and life-long listeners, die-hard fans and curious minds - they travel far and wide to make sure there's top-notch classical music on offer for anyone ready to say "I'll give that a go". You'll find them in churches, castles, and community venues across the North, as well as leading the charge in Carlisle, Kendal, Middlesbrough, and Sunderland.

With 65 years of success to build on, they've signed a dynamic artistic leadership – Music Director Dinis Sousa, Artistic Partner Maria Włoszczowska, Principal Guest Conductor Nil Venditti and Associate Conductor Ellie Slorach – to lead the way into a bold, bright future.

Wherever the orchestra play and whoever they share a stage with, every performance is a chance to see, hear and feel the music.