

27 June–4 July



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The Barbican is an international arts and events centre rooted firmly in our own neighbourhood, collaborating with local communities and putting the City of London on the map as a destination for everybody. Central to its purpose is supporting emerging talent and shaping opportunities that will accelerate the next generation of creatives.

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The dedicated and supportive team programmes a series of festivals and events, developing cross-arts collaborations and artistic relationships that deliver unforgettable live experiences.

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Its acclaimed Learning programme engages people of all ages and backgrounds, both in the Hall and in the wider community. Through its £5 ticket scheme for under 35s, the Hall has welcomed more than 200,000 new young people to its audiences since 2015.

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Net proceeds from the Classical Pride concerts at **Wilton's Music Hall** and the **Barbican** will be going to three important LGBTQ+ causes. Funds collected will be evenly distributed between **Terrence Higgins Trust**, **Rainbow Railroad** and **Amplifund**.

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To avoid distracting our performers, please ensure that your **flashes are switched off** and your **phones set to silent**.

If you would like to share anything about the concert, please feel free to post with **#ClassicalPride** and tag **@ClassicalPrideUK**

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www.tht.org.uk

Terrence Higgins Trust

Terrence Higgins Trust is the UK's leading HIV and sexual health charity, offering support, information and advice services for those living with HIV and affected by HIV or poor sexual health. The charity strives for a future where there are no new cases of HIV, where people living with HIV get the support they need and there is good sexual health for all.

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www.rainbowrailroad.org

Rainbow Railroad

Rainbow Railroad is a global not-for-profit organisation that helps at-risk LGBTQ+ people facing persecution based on their sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics get to safety worldwide. Since its founding, they've helped over 10,000 LGBTQ+ individuals experiencing systemic, state-enabled homophobia and transphobia find safety through emergency relocation, crisis response, cash assistance, and other forms of assistance.

Rainbow Railroad is a registered charity in Canada (Canadian Charitable Registration No. 827142530RR0001) and in the US (No. 501(c) (3) EIN47-4896980).

AMPLIFUND

www.gaytimes.co.uk/category/amplifund

Amplifund

Amplifund is a partnership between GAY TIMES and GiveOut, supporting the global movement to advance LGBTQ+ rights, providing vital resources and support to advance equality. Through a partnership with LGBTQ+ Charity GiveOut, Amplifund supports 37 queer NGOs around the world. This is integral to GAY TIMES' mission to create a world where LGBTQ+ people thrive. An essential part of their work lies in amplifying the voices of journalists, artists, culture makers and activists, increasing the impact of their work and message.

All funds for Amplifund are directed and administered through their charity partner Give Out, a registered charity in England & Wales (Registered Charity No. 1176434).

Classical Pride.

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Welcome notes

Central to any Pride celebration must be the voices of the LGBTQ+ community and so I am thrilled to be welcoming back conductor Oliver Zeffman, the rest of the Classical Pride team, and the extraordinary artists who will be taking part in this year's Classical Pride celebrations at the Barbican which, this year, will celebrate those voices to the fullest.

Returning now for a third year, this joyful celebration of inclusivity, queerness and classical music is becoming a firm highlight in our calendar and we're very pleased to be hosting Voices of Joy & Sorrow as well as a free-to-attend recital in our Hall beforehand to bring Classical Pride to a grand finale. Following the success of their first year with the CBSO, and their spectacular return last year - joined by our very own London Symphony Orchestra - we're so pleased to be welcoming Classical Pride back, alongside our Resident Orchestra once again.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the Barbican for what promises to be a triumphant evening.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'William Russell', written in a cursive style.

Sir William Russell
Chair of the Barbican Centre Board

I'm so pleased to welcome you back – or for the first time – to Classical Pride. I couldn't have imagined that just two years after our very first concert – at the Barbican in 2023 – Classical Pride would be back here for the third year in a row – with the London Symphony Orchestra, no less – before heading to the Hollywood Bowl to give LA's very first classical concert celebrating Pride.

We're living in a time in which our hard-won rights – rights many of us assumed were secure – are under increasing pushback. From political rhetoric to legislative rollbacks, and with major institutions retreating from visible support, it's more important than ever to loudly - and proudly - celebrate the enormous contribution that the LGBTQ+ community has made, and continues to make to our cultural life.

For those of you who are new to Classical Pride – and indeed, to classical music – it bears repeating that so many of the most important and influential composers were LGBTQ+. Tchaikovsky, Britten, Barber, Bernstein, Copland, Poulenc, Szymanowski, Smyth, (likely) Handel and Chopin - to name just a few. It's hardly an obscure list.

Clearly, classical music hasn't traditionally suffered from a lack of gay representation - but it's perhaps because of this, we'd never really felt the need to celebrate Pride. I remember, ahead of our first concert in 2023, some people dismissed the whole endeavour as redundant. "There are loads of gays in classical music - what's the point? Why not do Pride at a football club?" Which – aside from the fact that I don't work in football (though if I did, I probably would do something like this) – completely misses the point.

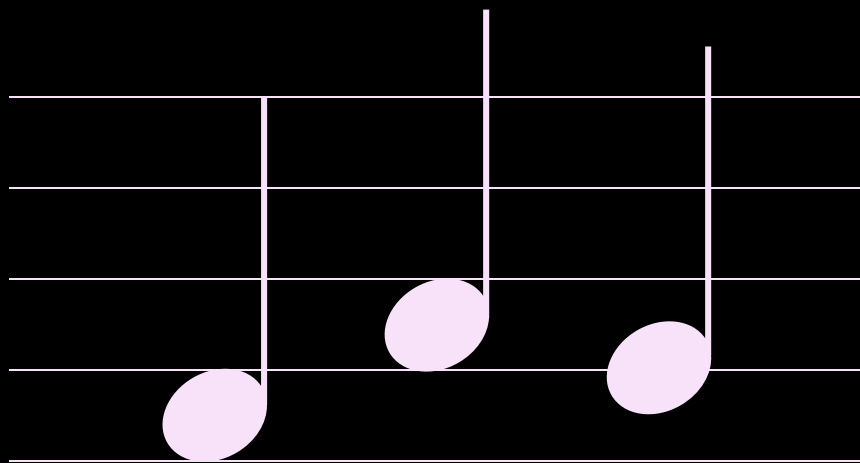
When we think of "gay" music, it's Kylie or Cher or Charli XCX or Elton John – but it's also all these classical composers, all of whom were writing music long before any of today's pop icons were even born. Classical music is – and has been for a very long time – part of queer culture, and it's about time we celebrated this.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Oliver Zeffman". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of "Oliver" being a large capital 'O' and the signature ending with a long, sweeping tail on the 'n'.

Oliver Zeffman

Conductor and Founder of Classical Pride

For biographies of artists and
orchestra list please turn to p. 54



Queer cosmos

**Friday 27 June 2025
22:00, Wigmore Hall**

The ecstasy of mystical experience and its consummation in physical love, and the yearning desire for home, beauty and a world purged of hatred and greed, are among the themes of this concert. The Fourth Choir, London's LGBTQ+ chamber choir, celebrates Pride with works that span nine centuries of human experience.

Meredith Monk *Dawn*
Dominique Phinot *O sacrum convivium*
Ethel Smyth *Kom süsser Tod*
Hildegard of Bingen *O ignis spiritus* (arr. Michael Genese)
Kit Grahame *Though you have left me*
Kerry Andrew *Wild Nights - Wild Nights!*
Caroline Shaw *and the swallow*
Mary Offer *A New Earth*
Cooper Baldwin *Libera Me (as embers singe the tide)*
CN Lester *Be a Choir*

The Fourth Choir
Jamie Powe conductor
CN Lester mezzo-soprano



West Side Story Suite & Appalachian Spring

Sunday 30 June 2025
15:00, Kings Place, Hall One

Aaron Azunda Akugbo curates a programme of rich storytelling and bold musical expression with the Manchester Camerata.

From the raw emotion of Joy Guidry's *They know what they've done to us* – a striking fusion of trumpet and electronics – to the sweeping beauty of Copland's *Appalachian Spring*, this concert is a journey through resilience, nostalgia, and joy. Poulenc's playful *Banalités* leads into the electrifying rhythms of Bernstein's *West Side Story Suite*. A celebration of identity and artistry, this promises to be an afternoon of unforgettable music.

Joy Guidry *They know what they've done to us*
Aaron Copland *Appalachian Spring*
Francis Poulenc *Banalités*
Leonard Bernstein *West Side Story Suite*

Aaron Azunda Akugbo trumpet
Manchester Camerata

Programme notes

Joy Guidry, *They know what they've done to us*

Born in 1995 in Houston, Texas, **Joy Guidry** is a bassoonist, improviser and composer who preaches the concepts of 'radical self-love, compassion, laughter, and the drive to amplify Black artmakers'. Many of her works – such as her 2024 album *Amen* and 2025 album *Five Prayers* – express a spirituality and connectedness which seem to echo the gospel tradition that first introduced her to music.

Rather than gospel, it is free jazz, electronic music and contemporary classical music that converge in *They know what they've done to us*, which features heavy use of the Harmon-muted trumpet (made famous by Miles Davis) alongside piano and electronics. It was written for Aaron Azunda Akugbo and premiered with pianist Zeynep Özsuca at the Lucerne Festival in 2022.

The title is a quote from a 1968 interview with Fannie Lou Hamer, a Civil Rights activist, that appears at the end of the piece. The statement is a haunting indictment of the cruelty of slavery and the slave trade. Hamer's line 'they know what they've done to us' refers specifically to the Middle Passage, the abominable journey from Africa to the Americas that countless black slaves were forced to endure. In an interview with the Lucerne Festival, Guidry explains some of the sounds that appear in the work: 'Many enslaved Africans jumped off the ship or were pushed off... You're going to hear the waves, you're going to hear the footsteps, you're going to hear the chain slowly dragging, and the foot slipping off the boat.'

Aaron Copland, *Appalachian Spring*

Aaron Copland (1900-1990) created a new musical language that brilliantly evokes the American pastoral – the version of America that is projected in so much storytelling about the country's identity, focusing on wide-open landscapes, farmers and cowherds rather than the bustling melting pots of its cities. Copland's background and political leanings stand in almost ironic contrast to all this, and to the prevailing establishment attitudes of the time. He was born in Brooklyn to Lithuanian-Jewish refugees and grew up above their neighbourhood department store. He was later accused of being a communist by the FBI, and though he never 'came out', he lived and travelled relatively openly with male romantic partners.

Copland's early music was heavily influenced by the European artistic trends he encountered whilst studying with Nadia Boulanger in Paris – bracing, modernist, punch and angular. The later, more populist style for which Copland is now better known – in American ballets such as *Rodeo*,

Hoe Down and *Appalachian Spring*, as well as his *Clarinet Concerto* and *Quiet City* – are hugely accessible, paradoxically reflecting both his leftwing politics and also the sense of national pride and optimism surrounding both the New Deal and American involvement in World War II.

In 1926, choreographer and dancer Martha Graham founded her eponymous Dance Company, which remains the oldest dance company in the US today. The company's biggest success whilst she was alive was the ballet *Appalachian Spring*, with music by Copland, which premiered in 1944 and toured the US in 1945. That same year, Copland was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Music for his score, and made a suite from the ballet that was played extensively by US symphony orchestras; it has remained a core part of the orchestral repertoire ever since.

Copland succeeded in creating perhaps the archetypal evocation of American frontier spirit in his ballet music – meeting Graham's brief, who had asked Copland for a ballet that was 'a legend of American living, like a bone structure, the inner frame that holds together a people'. Copland described the ballet scenario as 'a celebration of the first settlers in springtime around a newly-built farmhouse in Pennsylvania in the early 19th century'.

The main characters are a bride and groom. After a calm, luminous introduction, scenes from their wedding follow: a preacher speaking, a square dance, a fiddler. Variations on the Shaker melody *The Gift to be Simple* form the penultimate section, before a return to calm, depicting the couple 'quiet and strong in their new house'.

Francis Poulenc, *Banalités*
Chanson d'Orkenise
Hôtel
Fagnes de Wallonie
Voyage à Paris
Sanglots

A composer whose music delights in the juxtaposition of 'high' and 'low', **Francis Poulenc** (1899-1963) had an extrovert, flamboyant side, tempered with a devout Catholicism. He was part of a bohemian group of Parisian composers in the 1920s who called themselves *Les six*. Poulenc loved pop and cabaret music, which he called 'adorable bad music', but also Schubert, Mozart, Stravinsky, Ravel and Debussy. His reputation began with, and largely still rests on his secular music. Yet, as openly gay as was possible at the time, he nevertheless felt drawn to the Catholic church that condemned him, composing a great number of serious religious works from the 1930s onwards.

The raucous irreverence in Poulenc's music, with harsh accents and beautiful melody existing side-by-side, is perhaps best suited to piano, wind and brass instruments; yet Poulenc is rightly known as one of the

greatest melodists of the 20th century. He balanced refinement and extreme changeability with a sumptuous harmonic palette and elegant sense of line.

All this can be heard in spades in his *Banalités*, a set of five songs from 1940 setting poems by Guillaume Apollinaire (1880-1918) – known, apart from his poetry, for coining both the terms ‘Cubism’ and ‘Surrealism’.

Chanson d’Orkenise describes a strange interaction between a vagabond trying to leave a city and the sentries guarding the city gates. *Hôtel* is a sultry sigh of a poem, concluding with the words ‘I do not want to work I want to smoke’. We pick up the traveller’s journey again in *Fagnes de Wallonie*, here taking a rest after leaving a forest and shuddering with foreboding at the peat-bogs and chill northern winds. *Voyage à Paris* expresses delight at leaving a ‘dismal place’ for Paris. *Sanglots* (‘Sobs’) is a mysterious, allusory work, filled with nostalgic melancholy; the protagonist is travel-worn and heartbroken, reflecting on past glories.

Leonard Bernstein, *West Side Story Suite* arr. Paul Bateman

America
Maria
Tonight
Somewhere
A Boy Like That
I Have a Love
Mambo

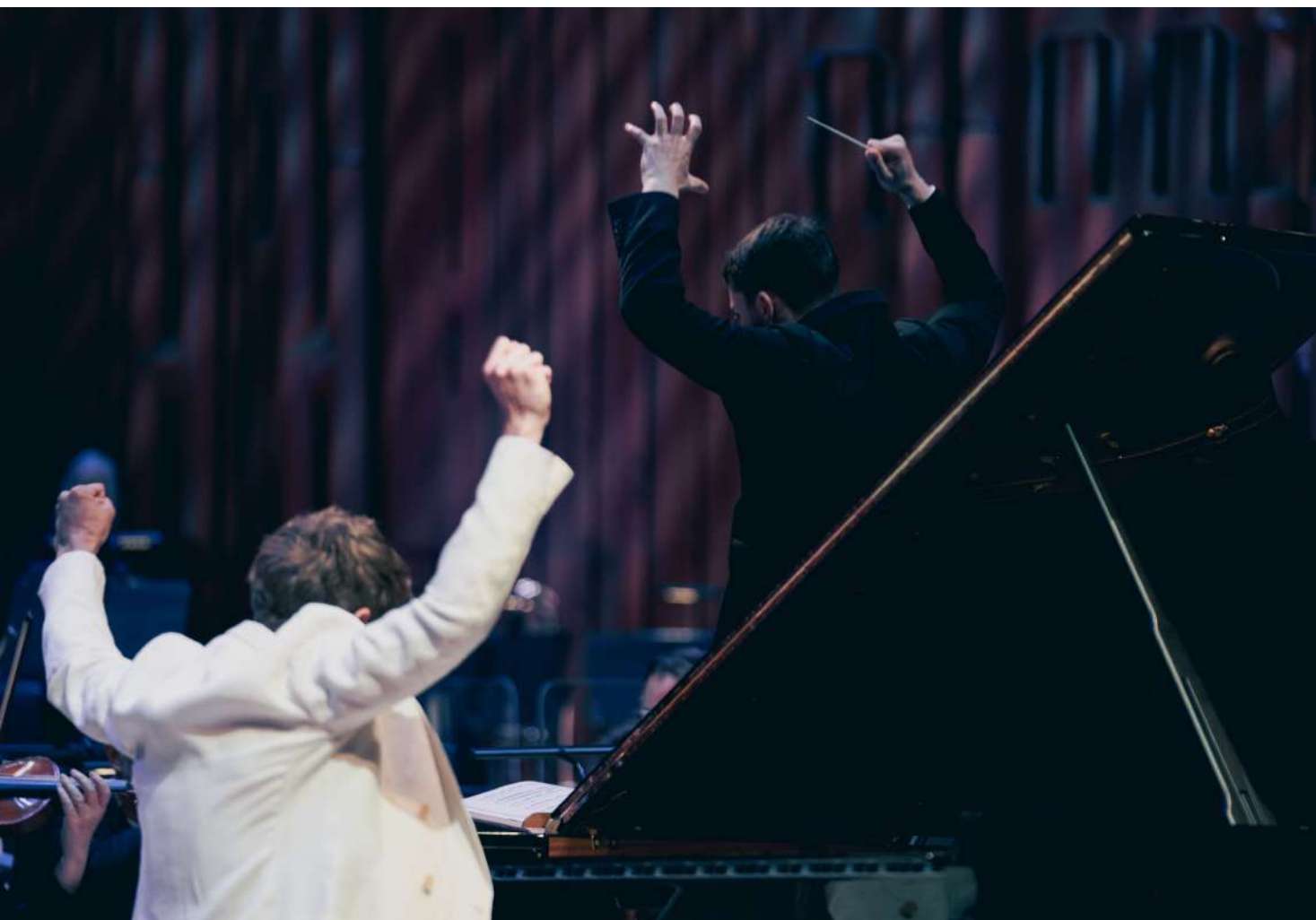
In 1962, the same year as the Cuban missile crisis, the first concerts were given in the newly-opened Lincoln Centre in New York, with **Leonard Bernstein** conducting the New York Philharmonic. Bernstein was a musical polymath, a celebrity conductor, pianist, composer and public intellectual who broadcast passionate lectures on classical music to tens of millions of Americans. It was an age when America wanted to project itself not just as a world military power, but as a cultural heavyweight. Even though Bernstein – a Jewish, homosexual, anti-Vietnam, pro-Civil Rights, leftwing bohemian – was in many ways far removed from America’s projected international image, he was worshipped as a leading figure in the arts in America.

George Gershwin – born 20 years earlier in 1898, and like Bernstein, to Ukrainian-Jewish parents – had forged a musical idiom that offered Bernstein a way forward creatively, fusing Western classical music with the African American vernacular spectacularly in works such as *Rhapsody in Blue* and *Porgy & Bess*. In 1957, Bernstein’s musical *West Side Story*, with lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, hit Broadway, where it has received revivals ever since. A retelling of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* with warring gangs on Manhattan’s West Side, it draws on classical, Latin and jazz music. An immigrant in a nation of immigrants, Bernstein was well placed to create such a quintessentially American piece of music theatre.

Whilst *Romeo and Juliet* is of course a heterosexual love story, the sense of danger and forbidden romance has palpable links to Bernstein's closeted experience as a gay man in 1950s America. That sense of danger provides the tension and menace that underpins much of the action in the musical.

The musical has been adapted numerous times: as a suite of orchestral pieces in the *Symphonic Dances from West Side Story* by Bernstein himself, and as a ballet for New York City Ballet by the original choreographer Jerome Robbins. The present suite, arranged originally for violin and string orchestra by Paul Bateman, takes many of the best-loved songs from the musical and gives them an instrumental treatment, with soaring vocal lines transferred to the violin – and now the trumpet.

Anthony Friend



Proudly *together*



A&O SHEARMAN



Voices from the Edge

Tuesday 1 July
19:30, Wilton's Music Hall

Voices from the Edge traces a powerful arc of spiritual, sonic, and social extremity, where the human voice becomes a vehicle for transcendence, protest, and radical presence. From Hildegard von Bingen's ecstatic medieval mysticism – arranged for this performance by Josephine Stephenson – and Caroline Shaw's deconstructed language play to Julius Eastman's explosive invocation of Joan of Arc, each work pushes vocal expression beyond its limits. In this staged programme *Voices from the Edge* captures these moments where music meets the margins – historical, emotional, and political – and sings defiantly from them.

Josephine Stephenson (after Hildegard) *Caritas abundat*

Caroline Shaw *Partita for 8 Voices*

Julius Eastman *The Holy Presence of Joan d'Arc*

Lucia Lucas baritone

London Voices

Ben Parry conductor

Tom Isaac leader

Barnaby Booth director

Programme notes

An abbess who became a saint and corresponded with Kings and Popes, **Hildegard of Bingen** was an author, mystic, writer, and one of the earliest named composers in the Western musical tradition. From early childhood she was confined to a convent in Disibodenberg, western Germany. Though she had been experiencing powerful ‘visions’ – multisensory hallucinations – from the age of three, it was not until her late forties, when she began to write to leaders within the Church about them, that these were taken seriously, and she was encouraged to record them in writing. She describes experiencing the word of God reverberating as sacred sounds within the holy domain of the Virgin’s body; a brilliant light, beyond all physical comprehension and dimensions, spreading up and throughout the world. Her visions were authenticated by Pope Eugene III in 1147-48.

Hildegard is a rarity within the Middle Ages, in that large amounts of written material from her life survives: over 400 letters, including details of her sermons over a period of decades; the earliest surviving ‘morality play’ (a liturgical music-drama); treatises on natural medicine; three volumes of visionary theology; an invented language, called *Lingua ignota*, with its own alphabet; and many musical compositions.

Within her letters, correspondence with one woman in particular, Richardis von Stade (c.1124-1152), has suggested to some scholars that they may have had a romantic relationship. Richardis was a secretary and close confidant to Hildegard, helping to edit, translate and publish *Scivias*, the first volume of Hildegard’s visionary writings. Reaching back 900 years through history, the problems in verifying such claims are clear, but Hildegard does seem to have fought hard to prevent Richardis from being moved to another abbey, and to have professed love for her. Hildegard is also held to have presented a queer perspective on Christianity, with an interpretation of Christ as a physical, feminine being.

Composed using medieval chant notation, Hildegard’s works indicate how words and pitches are related, but lack modern rhythmic notation. Today, many Catholics will be familiar with the sound of chant or ‘plainsong’, and Hildegard’s compositions will no doubt leap out for their extraordinary freedom and inventiveness within this tradition, with soaring ‘melismas’ (changing notes during the course of a single syllable). *Caritas abundat in omnia* (‘Love abounds in all’) is a succinct expression of the physicality of her religious feeling; Divine love is first described as inhabiting the universe, and then as a physical act of love, with the poet reaching up to the heavens and kissing the ‘highest King’.

Here, French-British composer Josephine Stephenson (b. 1990) has reimagined Hildegard’s music, with the chant line deftly passed between the four voices of the choir; an ensemble of three cellos sometimes accents moments within this line, and sometimes provides the drone-like support that allows it to resonate fully.

*Caritas abundat in omnia,
de imis excellentissima super sidera,

atque amantissima in omnia,
quia summo Regi osculum pacis dedit.*

*Love abounds in all,
from the depths exalted and excelling
over every star,
and most beloved of all,
for to the highest King the kiss of
peace she gave.*

American composer, violinist and singer **Caroline Shaw** (b. 1982) became the youngest composer ever to win a Pulitzer Prize in 2013, for her *Partita for 8 Voices*; her success has continued, with Grammy Awards in 2022 and 2025 and a constant stream of performances and commissions from the most illustrious names in classical music and beyond. Shaw conducts bold experiments with sonority, rhythm and structure within an accessible tonal language, and her distinctive yet appealing aesthetic has led to collaborations with several mainstream pop musicians.

One such experimental piece was her Pulitzer-winning vocal octet, *Partita for 8 Voices*, developed for specialist vocal ensemble Roomful of Teeth. This performance will be the first ever without Shaw's direct involvement as a performer with the ensemble; Classical Pride is grateful to the composer for granting permission.

Partita is arranged and titled as though it were a Baroque instrumental suite, each in a different Baroque dance or conventional form. Within this framework, styles such as katajjaq (Inuit throat singing) to sighing, wordless humming and percussive effects, a kaleidoscopic array of vocal techniques is on display. Snippets of written instructions from conceptual artist Sol LeWitt's *Wall Drawing 305* (where a draughtsperson has to execute the artist's instructions) emerge from the texture, alongside words that express the essence of the score's inscription – suggestions of movement and space. Shaw writes,

Partita is a simple piece. Born of a love of surface and structure, of the human voice, of dancing and tired ligaments, of music, and of our basic desire to draw a line from one point to another.

Julius Eastman (1940-1990) was a prodigious pianist and singer who rose to prominence alongside radical New York composers like John Cage and Morton Feldman. Eastman became increasingly uncomfortable in his predominantly white milieu and frustrated at the way fellow gay composers like John Cage kept their sexuality hidden. From the late-70s onwards, Eastman began radically to embrace both his blackness and his queerness, immersing himself in an alternative, queer avant garde scene centred in Manhattan's Lower East Side. Whilst his former collaborators gradually became accepted by the academic and musical establishment, Eastman found himself in the early 1980s evicted from his flat and increasingly struggling with addiction. He died homeless and alone in 1990. *The Holy Presence of Joan d'Arc* is a work for ten cellos from 1981 that fuses Eastman's minimalism with the punk rock movement that was the soundtrack to the nightlife in lower Manhattan in the late 70s. In 1978

Eastman had heard Patti Smith's *Rock 'n' Roll N****r*, a song in which she (a white woman) describes herself as a 'black sheep' and therefore an outsider. Despite Smith's lack of racial awareness, Eastman loved the song, and included it as a riff in *Holy Presence*, transforming it into a foundational motif that is heard clearly in unison at the beginning of the piece.

The motoric rhythms and punk energy fit well with Eastman's minimalist aesthetic, but also with Eastman's chosen theme of Joan d'Arc – the patron saint of France who, fuelled by divine visions, inspired France to take several important victories over the English in the 15th century before being burned at the stake. Subverting gender norms, flexing power and ultimately suffering horrific punishment for her hubris, Eastman took Joan d'Arc as a symbol of what he called 'Emancipation'.

In Eastman's recording of *The Holy Presence of Joan d'Arc*, the main work is preceded by an improvised prelude for unaccompanied voice, performed by Eastman himself. With the fervour and commitment of a preacher, Eastman expounds his feelings about Joan d'Arc. These same feelings are expressed in a letter to her that served as a programme note to the work for cello ensemble:

Dear Joan,

Find presented a work of art, in your name, full of honor, integrity, and boundless courage. This work of art, like all works of art in your name, can never and will never match your most inspired passion. These works of art are like so many insignificant pebbles at your precious feet. But I offer it none the less. I offer it as a reminder to those who think that they can destroy liberators by acts of treachery, malice, and murder. They forget that the mind has memory. They forget that Good Character is the foundation of all acts. They think that no one sees the corruption of their deeds, and like all organizations (especially governments and religious organizations) they oppress in order to perpetuate themselves. Their methods of oppression are legion, but when they find that their more subtle methods are failing, they resort to murder. Even now in my own country, my own people, my own time, gross oppression and murder still continue. Therefore I take your name and meditate on it, but not as much as I should.

Dear Joan when meditating on your name I am given strength and dedication.

Dear Joan I have dedicated myself to the liberation of my own person firstly. I shall emancipate myself from the materialistic dreams of my parents; I shall emancipate myself from the bind of the past and the present; I shall emancipate myself from myself.

Dear Joan there is not much more to say except Thank You. And please accept this work of art, The Holy Presence of Joan d'Arc, as a sincere act of love and devotion.

*Yours with love,
Julius Eastman*

One Dedicated to Emancipation

Anthony Friend

Voices of Tomorrow

**Friday 4 July 2025
18:00, Barbican Hall**

Texts by queer poets and music by LGBTQ+ composers are brought together in this song recital that showcases some of today's leading young classical music talent.

Ricky Ian Gordon *Joy*
Maude Valérie White *The Thristle*
Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky *The Cuckoo*
Judith Weir *Lady Isobel and the Elf Knight*
Martin Bussey *We Two*
Leonard Bernstein *To What You Said*
Edward Picton-Turbervill *Always Rejoicing*
Jonathan Dove *Between Your Sheets*
Reynaldo Hahn *A Chloris*
Stephen Hough *All Shall Be Well*

Harriet Burns soprano
Jonathan Evers baritone
Edward Picton-Turbervill piano

Platoon is proud to support Classical Pride with the release of *All Shall Be Well* – a new album featuring the 2025 Classical Pride Young Artists.

Curated by pianist and composer Edward Picton-Turbervill, the album brings together works by composers including Stephen Hough and Judith Weir in a vibrant celebration of joy. Performed by rising stars Jonathan Evers (baritone), Harriet Burns (soprano), and Picton-Turbervill himself on piano, *All Shall Be Well* showcases the next generation of classical talent.



PLATOON







Voices of Joy & Sorrow

LSO in partnership with Gilead Sciences

**Friday 4 July 2025
19:30, Barbican Hall**

A triumphant finale to 2025's Classical Pride, as the London Symphony Orchestra and conductor Oliver Zeffman celebrate LGBTQ+ voices in classical music with a vibrant programme.

American mezzo-soprano Jamie Barton ('Opera's nose-studded rock star' – New York Times) joins the LSO and Zeffman for a new Classical Pride commission by US composer Jake Heggie, as well as the iconic gay anthem *Over the Rainbow* from *The Wizard of Oz*. Jennifer Higdon's luminous, meditative memorial to her brother, *blue cathedral* is preceded by Saint-Saëns' rambunctious *Bacchanale*, and the evening finishes with Tchaikovsky's heart-rending and much-loved *Swan Lake Suite*.

Saint-Saëns *Bacchanale* from *Samson et Dalila*
Jennifer Higdon *blue cathedral*
Jake Heggie *Or am I in a rut?* (world premiere, Classical Pride commission)
Saint-Saëns *Mon cœur s'ouvre à ta voix* from *Samson et Dalila*
Harold Arlen *Over the Rainbow* from *The Wizard of Oz*
George Benjamin *Dream of the Song*
Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky *Swan Lake Suite*

London Symphony Orchestra
Oliver Zeffman conductor
Jamie Barton mezzo-soprano
Cameron Shahbazi countertenor

Programme notes

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921) was one of the 19th century's most brilliant child prodigies as a pianist, making his concert debut at 10. As a composer in his early twenties, he received the admiration of such major figures as Gioachino Rossini (composer of *The Barber of Seville*), Hector Berlioz and Franz Liszt. Later, as a professor of composition and piano at the Paris Conservatoire, he was revered by his students, who included Gabriel Fauré (composer of the song *Après un rêve*) and Georges Bizet (composer of *Carmen*). But Saint-Saëns also grew up to embody the classical establishment in late 19th-century and early twentieth-century France. He found himself at odds with the emerging early twentieth-century modernism of Debussy, Ravel, Stravinsky and Schoenberg, but also with the rich late-Romantic music of Wagner, Strauss and Mahler. He claimed that 'expression and passion seduce the amateur,' and that 'an artist who is not fully satisfied by elegant lines, harmonious colours and beautiful harmonic progressions has no understanding of art.'

Saint-Saëns eventually married the much-younger Marie-Laure Truffot (1855-1950) but their relationship fell apart after the tragic death of both their infant children in quick succession. Saint-Saëns became the subject of speculation regarding his sexuality. There was no possibility of Saint-Saëns living as a gay man in France, but he allegedly took numerous gay lovers on his frequent trips to north Africa. In any case, he seemed immune to gossip: 'If it is said that I have a bad character, I assure you that it is all the same to me. Take me as I am.'

In the late 19th century a choral revival swept through France's musical life, and Saint-Saëns was keen to try his hand at the now antiquated form of oratorio, settling on the story of *Samson and Delilah* (*Samson et Dalila* in French) from the Old Testament. His librettist, Ferdinand Lemaire (1832–1879) persuaded him to turn it into an opera. Act

It was premiered privately in 1870, but the operatic (and therefore theatrical) treatment of a Biblical offended the public. He eventually returned to the work in 1876 and it was staged by Liszt in Weimar in 1876; it was first staged in France in 1890 and in Paris in 1892.

The *Bacchanale* is a musical depiction of the wild, hedonistic dancing of the Philistine crowd who has come to revel in the misfortune of Samson, blinded after Delilah had cut his hair in response to being rejected by him; it is full of winding, snake-like melodies and up-beat percussive dance rhythms.

The *Bacchanale* opens the programme, with the opera's most famous aria appearing later on: *Mon cœur s'ouvre à ta voix* ('My heart opens to your voice'). The aria is the means by which Dalila seduces Samson in order to get him to reveal the source of his powers.

*Mon cœur s'ouvre à ta voix,
comme s'ouvrent les fleurs
aux baisers de l'aurore!
Mais, ô mon bienaimé,
pour mieux sécher mes pleurs,
que ta voix parle encore!
Dis-moi qu'à Dalila
tu reviens pour jamais.
Redis à ma tendresse
les serments d'autrefois,
ces serments que j'aimais!
Ah! réponds à ma tendresse!
Verse-moi, verse-moi l'ivresse!*

*Ainsi qu'on voit des blés
les épis onduler
sous la brise légère,
ainsi frémit mon cœur,
prêt à se consoler,
à ta voix qui m'est chère!
La flèche est moins rapide
à porter le trépas,
que ne l'est ton amante
à voler dans tes bras!
Ah! réponds à ma tendresse!
Verse-moi, verse-moi l'ivresse!*

Samson, Samson, je t'aime!

*My heart opens to your voice
Like the flowers open
To the kisses of the dawn!
But, oh my beloved,
To better dry my tears,
Let your voice speak again!
Tell me that you are returning
To Delilah forever!
Repeat to my tenderness
The promises of old times,
Those promises that I loved!
Ah! respond to my tenderness!
Fill me with ecstasy!*

*Like one sees the blades
Of wheat that wave
In the light wind,
So trembles my heart,
Ready to be consoled,
By your voice that is so dear to me!
The arrow is less rapid
In bringing death,
Than your love is
By flying into your arms!
Ah! respond to my tenderness!
Fill me with ecstasy!*

Samson, Samson, I love you!

American composer **Jennifer Higdon** (b. 1962) has won a Pulitzer Prize, three Grammy Awards, and received commissions from many of the top US orchestras. Accomplishments and recognition of this kind usually follow a high-achieving childhood steeped in classical music, but Higdon came to it late, and from a different angle. Her father was a painter, so visual art was central to her early education, and music at home was 60s rock and folk. In high school she joined a concert band as a percussionist, and then began to teach herself the flute; these experiences gave her enough of a foundation to join her university orchestra and from there to experiment with composition, all the while feeling herself to be far behind her peers and having to catch up rapidly.

A vivid picture in Higdon's mind formed the basis of her best-known orchestral work, a one-movement tone poem called *blue cathedral* – a glass cathedral in the sky, clouds and blueness radiating inwards and mingling with celestial music; an imaginary listener enters and takes in a view filled with openness and possibilities, the mood shifting from contemplation to spiritual ecstasy.

Such a positive vision arose at a difficult moment in Higdon's life, shortly after the death of Higdon's younger brother, Andrew Blue Higdon. The siblings' instruments, flute and clarinet respectively, feature in orchestral solos – the flute, representing the older sibling, appearing first, but the clarinet continuing on throughout the work's upwards journey. Reflection and growth, rather than sadness and despair, were Higdon's response to this tragedy. She writes that the piece is 'a story that commemorates living and passing through places of knowledge and of sharing and of that song called life'.

Harold Arlen (1905-1986) was part of a generation of Jewish American musicians and songwriters who created many of the classic early-twentieth century popular songs that have gone on to become so-called 'standards'. Of Arlen's output, some of the best known include *Let's Fall in Love*, *Stormy Weather*, *One for My Baby* (and *One More for the Road*) and *The Man that Got Away*. It was his music for the 1939 film *The Wizard of Oz*, however, that cemented his legacy, winning him an Oscar for Best Original Song (though he received eight other Oscar nominations) in collaboration with lyricist (and another Jewish American) Yip Harburg (1896-1981).

In *Over the Rainbow* Arlen combines lush sentimentality with soaring vocal leaps to create a powerful sense of yearning – a perfect match for the utopian vision of Harburg's lyrics. It was through Judy Garland's performance, however, that the song became an iconic plea for acceptance and a better tomorrow, and consequently resonated so profoundly, first with the soldiers fighting in the Second World War, and subsequently with the LGBTQ+ community.

A child star born to vaudevillian parents, Judy Garland was the subject of constant criticism and manipulation of her appearance, with MGM putting her on strict diets, making her wear rubberised discs to reshape her nose

and removable caps on her teeth. Garland claimed she and other child actors were given amphetamines and barbiturates as uppers and downers to keep pace with the relentless rate of movie releases; Garland later suffered with addiction and died of a barbiturate overdose in 1969, at the age of 47. Added to which, Garland went through bruising relationships in her personal life.

In Garland's lack of acceptance by Hollywood, parallels with the lives of LGBTQ+ people are clear: this was a world that would not tolerate them as they were, forced people to contort themselves to fit society's expectations, and ultimately did not care for their wellbeing. The song offers a different possibility: a vision of hope and tolerance.

Jake Heggie (b. 1961) is an American composer now regarded as 'arguably the world's most popular 21st-century opera and art song composer' (*Wall Street Journal*) – though his career path has been far from conventional. Having studied composition at the American University in Paris and then UCLA, he started out as a song pianist. He developed focal dystonia and was forced to abandon his performing career, pivoting instead to working in Public Relations for the arts and eventually becoming PR Associate at San Francisco Opera.

When calling in on star mezzo-soprano Frederica von Stade during the interval at an opening night performance, he presented her with a gift of his *Three Folk Songs* for voice and piano. With her encouragement, they began performing together, and he won the Schirmer American Art Song Competition with his composition '*If you were coming in the fall...*' (an Emily Dickinson setting).

Two years later, in 1997, his boss at SF Opera, Lofti Mansouri, surprised him by setting up an opportunity for him to compose his first full-length opera. Heggie had thought the meeting was going to be about a new press release, but instead was appointed to the new role of Composer in Residence, and his debut opera *Dead Man Walking* was premiered by SF Opera in 2000.

The opening, title song of *Good Morning, Beauty* was commissioned for the 2024 Classical Pride festival, and Heggie has now expanded the work into a four-part cycle; this is the world première performance of the third song from this cycle, entitled *Or Am I in a Rut?*

A setting of a text by the prodigiously multi-talented American actor and writer Taylor Mac, it is a depiction of a loving, queer relationship and its evolution over time. The first two songs, *Good Morning, Beauty* and *Rising*, express the sheer joy and wonder of new love, and then trace the peaks and valleys of intensity and energy in a life spent together. *Or Am I In A Rut?* sees the couple older, no longer burning with passion and now questioning and reevaluating.



Or Am I in a Rut?

*Or am I in a rut?
Gauging from the nervous gut,
Sex therapy and ageing.
Paging Dr. Kinsey.
The real estate is caging us,
While staging us
To sell to younger versions.*

*Perhaps an excursion?
To Mexico?
No.
You silly privileged shit.
- I'll call myself it first,
Before they come for me,
Those Ivy League
Social justice workers.*

*She says the passion only lasts
Two years.
Two years?
For everyone.
Well, almost everyone.
Well ... Us.*

*Or am I in a rut?
Judging from the sagging butt
And the way that I'm begrudging
Drudging up the reasons.
And we are we still fudging it
While nudging it
To be a better version?*

*Perhaps an excursion?
To Tokyo?
No.
You can't escape the country
Simply because you leave it.
They always come for you,
Those Ivy League
Anti-elitist creepers.*

*Why does the passion only last
Two years?
Two years?
For everyone.
Well, almost everyone.
Well ... us.*

*Or maybe just accept
Beauty's not what you have kept
But what you deem a duty.
Beauty's the beholder.
So what, you're getting older, so
Get bolder, so
Go be your better version.*

Taylor Mac

English composer, pianist and conductor **George Benjamin** was born in 1960. His academic and musical brilliance was evident from an early age. At 16, whilst still a pupil at Westminster School, he was taken on as a student by the great twentieth-century composer Olivier Messiaen in Paris, where he also studied piano with Messiaen's wife and pianistic muse, Yvonne Loriod (Benjamin is a prodigious pianist and has often performed his own works in concert). A few years later, he began his studies at King's College, Cambridge, where a piece he wrote for the university's main orchestra was then performed at the Proms – making Benjamin, then 20, the youngest living composer to have had a piece performed at the festival.

His legendarily precise musical ear is manifested in the music he composes, which is fastidious in its detail, frequently employing extremely sophisticated and subtle orchestration to achieve new colours. His relatively small output is dense in information, and alongside numerous orchestral and chamber works, he is perhaps best known for his four operas (including 2012's *Written on Skin* – perhaps the most successful opera of the 21st century) with librettos by Martin Crimp.

Dream of the Song was composed in 2015 and blends poetry from Al-Andalus in the 11th century – where Arabic, Jewish and Spanish cultures flourished side-by-side in cities such as Granada, Córdoba and Seville – with 20th-century poetry by the great Spanish modernist Federico García Lorca, who was assassinated by Fascists in 1936 at the age of 38. Lorca's texts evoke this golden time and place, which contrasted with the war-torn and divided Europe of the early 20th century. The two Andalusian poets, Samuel HaNagid (993-1056) and Solomon Ibn Gabirol (d. approx 1050), lived in Granada as Talmudic scholars and were fluent in Arabic. Benjamin blends their poetry, translated from Hebrew by American poet Peter Cole (b.1957) and sung by the countertenor soloist, with Lorca's, sung by the female chorus.

A countertenor voice is a male voice at soprano or mezzo-soprano pitch; this vocal colour shimmers in close contrast to the female chorus. The way the words and musical lines interact seems to reflect the principles of Arabic architecture that are on stunning display in Granada's Alhambra palace; geometric designs, patterns that repeat in not-quite-perfect symmetry, a fountain splashing in an internal courtyard, reflections of moonlight.

I

THE PEN (countertenor)

*Naked without either cover or dress,
utterly soulless, and hollow—
from its mouth come wisdom and prudence,
and in ambush it kills like an arrow.*

Solomon Ibn Gabirol, trans. Peter Cole

II

THE MULTIPLE TROUBLES OF MAN (countertenor)

*The multiple troubles of man,
my brother, like slander and pain,
amaze you? Consider the heart
which holds them all
in strangeness, and doesn't break.*

Samuel HaNagid, trans. Peter Cole

III

GAZING THROUGH THE NIGHT (countertenor)

*Gazing through the
night and its stars,
or the grass and its bugs,
I know in my heart these swarms
are the craft of surpassing wisdom.*

*Think: the skies
 resemble a tent,
 stretched taut by loops
 and hooks;
 and the moon with its stars,
 a shepherdess,
 on a meadow
 and the crescent hull in the looser clouds
 looks like a ship being tossed;
 a whiter cloud, a girl
 in her garden
 tending her shrubs;
 and the dew coming down is her sister
 shaking water
 from her hair onto the path;
 as we
 settle in our lives,
 like beasts in their ample stalls–
 fleeing our terror of death,
 like a dove
 its hawk in flight–
 though we'll lie in the end like a plate,
 hammered into dust and shards.*

Samuel HaNagid, trans. Peter Cole

from:

CASIDA DEL LLANTO (female chorus)

*Pero el llanto es un perro inmenso,
 el llanto es un ángel inmenso,
 I llanto es un violín inmenso,
 las lágrimas amordazan al viento
 y no se oye otra cosa que el llanto.*

CASIDA OF THE WEEPING

*But the weeping is an immense hound, the
 weeping is an immense angel,
 the weeping is an immense violin,
 tears have muzzled the wind
 and all that can be heard is the weeping.*

from: *Diván del Tamarit* by Federico García Lorca
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IV

from:

GACELA DEL AMOR MARAVILLOSO
(female chorus)

*Cielos y campos
 anudaban cadenas en mis manos.
 Campos y cielos
 azotaban las llagas de mi cuerpo.*

CASIDA OF THE MARVELLOUS LOVE

*Skies and fields
 tied chains on my hands.
 Fields and skies
 lashed the wounds of my flesh.*

from: *Diván del Tamarit* by Federico García Lorca
 © 1940 Herederos d e Federico García Lorca

V

THE GAZELLE (countertenor)

*Id' give everything I own for that gazelle
who, rising at night to his
harp and flute,
saw a cup in my hand
and said:*

*"Drink your grape blood against my lips!"
And the moon was cut like a D,
on a dark robe, written in gold.*

Samuel HaNagid, trans. Peter Cole

VI

MY HEART THINKS AS THE SUN COMES UP (countertenor)

*My heart thinks as the sun comes up
that what it does is wise:
as earth borrows its light,
as pledge it takes the stars.*

Solomon Ibn Gabirol, trans. Peter Cole

from:

CASIDA DEL HERIDO POR EL AGUA
(female chorus)

*iqué desiertos de luz iban hundiendo
los arenales de la madrugada!*

CASIDA OF THE WOUND BY WATER

*what deserts of light
buried the sands of dawn!*

from: *Diván del Tamarit* by Federico García Lorca
© 1940 Herederos de Federico García Lorca

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893) was one of the great 19th-century Russian composers, best known today for his six symphonies and other orchestral pieces like *Romeo and Juliet*, his *Violin Concerto* and his *Piano Concerto No. 1*, operas like *Eugene Onegin* and, most of all, his ballet music; *Swan Lake*, *The Nutcracker* and *Sleeping Beauty* are all staples of ballet companies around the world. He combined supreme gifts for drama and melody, balancing orchestral power and passion with clarity and logic to build vast structures in sound in his symphonies, or to create coherence and architecture over the course of long successions of ballet numbers.

Well known to have been gay by those closest to him, Tchaikovsky is now believed to have had quite an active love life despite the constraints of the time. Nevertheless, he entered into a short-lived marriage in order to protect his reputation in homophobic 19th-century Russia (even today,

Russia prefers not to acknowledge this aspect of the composer's life). His cause of death, in 1893 at the age of 53, is still debated; officially attributed to cholera, some have always insisted it was a suicide preempting a public 'outing'.

Swan Lake was premiered in Moscow in 1877, the composer's first ballet. Despite its enduring popularity – and initial run of 41 performances, many more than was typical at the time – it was a failure both with contemporary critics and with choreographers and dancers. Moreover, this remained true when the ballet was revived in St Petersburg in 1895, two years after Tchaikovsky's death. People took issue with the complexity of the music, but also perhaps its intensity: ballet music was typically written by so-called 'specialists' such as Léo Delibes (composer of *Sylvia*) and Adolphe Adams (composer of *Giselle*); they knew how to give dancers music that fit easily into the range of steps and patterns that they were used to, whilst incorporating memorable tunes that the audience would be humming as they left the theatre; whilst these specialists' ballets are of course full of emotion, the role of the orchestra is secondary to the spectacle of the dancers. *Swan Lake* refashions this relationship and creates something akin to a Wagnerian opera in ballet: music, choreography and scenario unified in creating a powerful drama for the first time.

The story of *Swan Lake* has murky origins, possibly originating in German or Slavic folk tales that were known either to Tchaikovsky or to the original Czech choreographer, Julius Reisinger (1828-1893) – but no exact precedent seems to exist.

The ballet opens with Prince Siegfried celebrating his coming of age. His mother tells him he must choose a bride at his birthday ball the next day, and, longing for love and not duty, he escapes instead with a friend to hunt swans in the forest. There, they encounter a magical vision: Odette, a woman cursed by the sorcerer von Rothbart to live as a swan by day. She is watched over by other young women under the same spell, all dwelling by a lake formed from her parents' tears. At the ball, von Rothbart tricks Siegfried by presenting his daughter Odile, disguised as Odette. Realising the deception too late, Siegfried reunites with the true Odette. In a final act of defiance and love, the pair leap into Swan Lake, breaking the curse and defeating von Rothbart through self-sacrifice. The emotion and strength of this narrative transfers easily to an orchestral suite, with highlights from the music played by orchestra alone.

Anthony Friend



Classical Pride at the Hollywood Bowl

**Thursday 10 July 2025
20:00, Hollywood Bowl, Los Angeles**

From London to LA: Classical Pride, now in its third year, has expanded from a single pioneering concert at the Barbican to a full annual festival. This year, following the events in London in June and July, founder and conductor Oliver Zeffman brings Classical Pride to the Hollywood Bowl for an evening of music from LGBTQ+ composers and performers.

Zeffman leads the LA Phil in a programme that opens with Bernstein's glittering *Candide* overture. The rich, otherworldly orchestral textures of Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Jennifer Higdon's *blue cathedral* are followed by the US premiere of a cycle of Pride Songs with music by Jake Heggie and lyrics by Taylor Mac, with a trio of celebrated vocalists.

After intermission, violinist and drag performance artist Thorgy Thor of RuPaul's Drag Race fame takes the stage for her spirited blend of comedy and music, and the evening's programme is completed by Tchaikovsky's tragic *Francesca da Rimini*, based on Dante's *Francesca* and dedicated to the composer's lover Taneyev.

Leonard Bernstein *Overture to Candide*

Jennifer Higdon *blue cathedral*

Jake Heggie *Good Morning, Beauty* (world premiere, Classical Pride co-commission)

Thorgy Thor *Drag Moment*

Pytor Ilyich Tchaikovsky *Francesca da Rimini*

Oliver Zeffman conductor

Pumeza Matshikiza soprano

Jamie Barton mezzo-soprano

Anthony Roth Costanzo countertenor

Thorgy Thor violin

Programme notes

The programme begins with the sparkling overture to Leonard Bernstein's operetta *Candide*, based on the play of the same name by Voltaire. *Candide* ran three months on Broadway following its December 1956 premiere, but its overture – cleverly written in sonata form – has become a beloved concert staple. A year later, Bernstein (1918–90) debuted *West Side Story* and became the Music Director of the New York Philharmonic. Publicly, he was the dean of American composers and conductors and a devoted husband and father; privately, he had affairs with other men (a subject central to Bradley Cooper's 2023 Bernstein biopic, *Maestro*). Zeffman honours both his genius and his identity as a gay man with this inclusion.

Jennifer Higdon (b. 1962) wrote *blue cathedral* (1999) as a commission for the 75th anniversary celebration of the Curtis Institute of Music. Her younger brother, Andrew Blue Higdon, had recently died from skin cancer and the commission became an opportunity to memorialise their relationship. Atop of bed of strings and twinkling percussion, a dialogue between flute, Jennifer's instrument, and clarinet, Andrew Blue's, emerges. At the end, the clarinet ascends alone. Higdon writes in her composer's note: "*This piece represents the expression of the individual and the group...our inner travels and the places our souls carry us, the lessons we learn, and the growth we experience.*"

Higdon has spoken openly about increasing the representation of LGBTQ+ musicians, particularly among historical figures who felt the need to hide their sexuality. "*I constantly hear the classical world saying that they want to be relevant to their communities, and part of that is reflecting and celebrating those communities.... I think more people would feel that classical music is a relevant expression of the emotion, struggles, and joy of their own lives.*"

Jake Heggie (b. 1961) is best known today as a composer of operas – including *Dead Man Walking* and *Moby Dick* – that have been mounted across the globe. He is also a prolific writer of songs, with nearly 300 in his catalogue. In 2023, Zeffman reached out to Heggie to compose a song for the 2024 Classical Pride Festival in London. The result was *Good Morning, Beauty*, featuring lyrics by the iconoclastic New York Downtown theatre artist Taylor Mac. “*That collaboration went so well that a consortium of three companies (Los Angeles Philharmonic, Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, and Classical Pride London) asked us about adding three more songs to create a full cycle. What emerged is what Taylor refers to as ‘a present to queers in long-term relationships’,*” Heggie writes in his programme note.

Since appearing on Season 8 of RuPaul's Drag Race, **Thorgy Thor** has brought the worlds of drag and classical music together, mainly through her Thorgy and the Thorchestra programs that have toured around the world. A trained violinist, violist, and cellist, Thorgy's mission dovetails with the goals of Classical Pride, as she explained to her hometown radio station, WSHU: “*This has become my responsibility, to make drag lovers fall in love with classical music... and vice versa, I want to see some of the older folks at the drag club on a Monday night at 1 o'clock in the morning supporting your local drag performers, and everyone laughs.*”

The concert closes with the oldest work on the programme: Tchaikovsky's symphonic fantasy, *Francesca da Rimini*. The figure Francesca da Rimini appears in the *Inferno* of Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Dante meets her in the Second Circle of Hell, where she tells of her marriage to a cruel warlord, Giovanni Malatesta, and subsequent affair with his brother, Paolo. Upon discovering the lovers, Giovanni stabs them to death. Tchaikovsky's fantasy unsettles at the outset as Dante descends into the Second Ring, eventually reaching the swirling winds where the souls of Francesca and Paolo are doomed to roil for eternity. Eventually the winds subside, and Francesca, embodied by a solo clarinet, narrates her plaintive tale. The romantic middle section signals Francesca's tale.

Amanda Angel



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Queer Cosmos Fourth Choir

Soprano

Alison Woodman
Esther Zuke
Hat Orbell
Hat Tyler
Mary Dawson
Nina Lejderman
Philippa Peall
Rachel Bird
Rhiannon Bone
Theodora Ntoka

Alto

Adele Julier
Edward Arden
Elly Dragonetti
Hope Heaven
Jeremy Oliver
Jill Pett
Kathryn Thomson
Mikhi Stuurman

Tenor

Andrew Way
Daniel Owers
Ed Long
Francis Letschka
Jack Ferro
James Bridgwood
Julian Mohr
Simon Turpin
Tobin Webb
Tyler Clarke

Bass

David Clasen
Finn Schulze-Feldmann
Foeke IJntema
Harry Grimshaw
Imants Auziņš
James McEvoy-Stevenson
Jonathan Rippon
Kit Burton-Senior
Séamus Rea
Will Shepherd

Voices from the Edge London Voices & Cello Ensemble

London Voices

Imogen Parry
Freya Parry
Christina Gill
Helen Hughson
Oliver Griffiths
Charles MacDougall
Michael Dore
Ben Parry

Sound projectionist

Alex Sermon

Cello ensemble - Julius Eastman

Thomas Isaac (leader) *
Hugh Mackay
Kieran Carter *
George Hoult
Abigail Hayward
Michael Atkinson
Henry Hargreaves
Stephanie Tress
Elias Rooney *
Mark Bailey

* Member of cello trio for Josepine Stephenson/
Hildegard von Bingen

Voices of Joy & Sorrow

London Symphony Orchestra

First Violins

John Mills (Guest Leader)
Rebecca Chan
Stefano Mengoli
Laura Dixon
Maxine Kwok
Laurent Quénelle
Harriet Rayfield
Olatz Ruiz de Gordejuela
Sylvain Vasseur
Richard Blayden
Sofia Gomez Alberto
Shoshanah Sievers
Kynan Walker

Second Violins

Anna Blackmur
Thomas Norris
Miya Väisänen
Helena Buckie
Alix Lagasse
Belinda McFarlane
Paul Robson
Ingrid Button
Cindy Foster
Mitzi Gardner
José Nuno Matias
Djumash Poulsen

Violas

Malcolm Johnston
Anna Bastow
Thomas Beer
Germán Clavijo
Julia O'Riordan
Sofia Silva Sousa
Errika Collins
Fiona Dalglish
Nancy Johnson
Anna Dorothea Vogel

Cellos

David Cohen
Laure Le Dantec
Salvador Bolón
Daniel Gardner
Danushka Edirisinghe
Henry Hargreaves
Silvestrs Kalnins
Ghislaine McMullin

Double Basses

Nikita Naumov
Patrick Laurence
Michael Fuller
Toby Hughes
William Puhr
Evangeline Tang

Flutes

Silvia Careddu
Imogen Royce

Piccolo

Rebecca Larsen

Oboes

Juliana Koch
Rosie Jenkins

Cor Anglais

Maxwell Spiers

Clarinets

Sérgio Pires
Chi-Yu Mo

Bass Clarinet

Ferran Garcerà Perelló

Bassoons

Daniel Jemison
Dominic Tyler

Contra Bassoon

Michael Elderkin

Horns

Timothy Jones
Zachary Hayward
Andrew Sutton
Jonathan Maloney
Alex Willett

Trumpets

James Fountain
Adam Wright
Katie Smith
Holly Clark

Trombones

Simon Johnson
Jonathan Hollick

Bass Trombone

Paul Milner

Tuba

Ben Thomson

Timpani

Nigel Thomas

Percussion

Neil Percy
Jeremy Cornes
Mark McDonald
Matthew Farthing

Harps

Bryn Lewis
Lucy Wakeford

Piano

Catherine Edwards

Voices of Joy & Sorrow
Tenebrae

Soprano

Beth Cooter
Lizzie Drury
Izzy Gibber
Emilia Morton
Laura Newey
Áine Smith
Katie Trethewey
Rosanna Wicks

Alto

Hannah Cooke
Olivia Shotton
Miranda Ostler
Melanie Marshall
Eleanor Minney
Sophie Overin
Elisabeth Paul
Elena Stamp

**ARE YOU A
CALLAS B*TCH?**

Artist biographies

Aaron Azunda Akugbo, trumpet
Westside Story and Appalachian Spring

Born in Edinburgh, Nigerian–Scottish trumpeter Aaron Azunda Akugbo is developing a following as a leading exponent of his instrument. He brings a musical breadth to his artistry and while classically trained in both trumpet and singing, cites Louis Armstrong as his biggest musical inspiration. He is a charismatic performer with an abundance of natural humour, which translates into an effortless engagement with colleagues and audiences.

Akugbo made his London concerto debut at the Royal Festival Hall in 2020 and his BBC Proms concerto debut in 2023, performing the Haydn Trumpet Concerto both times with Chineke!, Europe's first black and minority ethnic orchestra. His concerto performances often feature standard works alongside lesser-known pieces, for example by Eric Ervazén and Florence Price.

Recent highlights include recitals at St George's, Bristol, and Royal Conservatoire, Glasgow, as well as visits to Bath International, Lichfield, Petworth, Ryedale, Chipping Campden, Bedford Park, St Magnus and Lammermuir festivals and he led the Emerging Talent programme at the 2024 Edinburgh Festival.

Jamie Barton, mezzo-soprano
Voices of Joy and Sorrow & Hollywood Bowl

Jamie Barton's career launched with her double victory at the 2013 BBC Cardiff Singer of the World with Richard Tucker and Beverly Sills Artist Awards following, she has since become one of the world's leading mezzo-sopranos. Named 2020 Personality of the Year by BBC Music Magazine, Barton is a trailblazer for inclusion, making history at the 2019 Last Night of the Proms, raising the rainbow flag in a globally broadcast performance conducted by Sakari Oramo.

Barton is a frequent presence at the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Houston Grand Opera. In Europe, she regularly appears at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Bayerische Staatsoper, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Teatro Real Madrid, and made her house debut this season at Opéra National de Paris. An avid concert performer, Barton has appeared with Orchestre de Paris, Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, Danish National Symphony, NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester, Wiener Philharmonik, WDR Sinfonieorchester, and San Francisco Symphony.



Barnaby Booth, director

Voices from the Edge

Barnaby is an award winning choreographer, theatre maker and lighting designer. His work in contemporary dance has been seen all across Europe, in China, Singapore, South Korea, Mexico and the United States. This year he completed his second dance theatre work for Club Guy & Roni (Netherlands) and in previous years has choreographed for English National Opera at the London Coliseum, Sub-Lab Pro Dance Company (Hungary), Los Little Guys (USA/Mexico), NSCD Verve (UK) Folkwang Tanzstudio of Folkwang University of the Arts (Germany), TRAK Dance Ensemble (Austria) and Dantzaz Dance Company (Spain). Barnaby's solo for dancer Samuli Emery won them multiple prizes at the Stuttgart solo competition, and continues to tour internationally. As well as creating his own work, Barnaby is also a guest lecturer and mentor at Northern School of Contemporary Dance and London Contemporary Dance School. His lighting credits include work for Sita Ostheimer, DeNada Dance Theatre/Carlos Pons Guerra, Xie Xin Dance Company in Shanghai, Żfin Malta, Andrea Costanzo Martini, Jamaal Burkmar/Extended Play Dance, National Dance Company of Wales among many others.

Harriet Burns, soprano

Voices of Tomorrow

British soprano Harriet Burns is in demand for her "polished, witty, expressive and sweet toned" singing (the Times) both in recital and on stage. An acclaimed interpreter of song, Harriet has performed at the Wigmore Hall, Philharmonie Luxembourg, Oxford International Song Festival, Leeds Lieder Festival, International Lied Festival Zeist, Ryedale Festival and de Singel with pianists including James Baillieu, Imogen Cooper, Christopher Glynn, Graham Johnson, Sholto Kynoch, Malcolm Martineau and Joseph Middleton. With her regular duo-partner, Ian Tindale, she released Schubert Lieder Love's Lasting Power to critical acclaim with Delphian Records in January 2024. Their next album with Delphian A short story of falling will be released later this year. On the operatic stage, recent roles include Berta (Il barbiere di Siviglia) for West Green House Opera, King Harald's Saga (Judith Weir) for Waterperry Opera, Sifare (cover, Mitridate, re di Ponto) and Oriana (cover, Amadigi) for Garsington Opera. In concert, she has appeared with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, the Royal Northern Sinfonia, the Oxford Millenium Orchestra and the Southbank Sinfonia.

Jonathan Evers, baritone

Voices of Tomorrow

New Zealand baritone Jonathan Evers trained at the National Opera Studio, Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and The University of Waikato. Recent operatic experience includes Pirate King The Pirates of Penzance (Tarantara UK Tour), Papageno Die Zauberflöte (Nevill Holt Festival), Figaro Il barbiere di Siviglia (Charles Court Opera), Official and Fiorello (cover) Il barbiere di Siviglia (Glyndebourne), Harlekin (cover) Ariadne auf Naxos (Garsington Opera), and Ernie (cover) It's a Wonderful Life (English National Opera). Jonathan was awarded Third Prize at the 2024 Wigmore Hall/Bollinger International Song Competition. He is an Oxford Song Young Artist, a City Music Foundation Artist, a Britten-Pears Young Artist, and a founding member of Whānau Voices. He has performed at the Oxford International Song, London Song, Aldeburgh, Glasperlenspiel, and Edinburgh International Festivals.

LA Phil

Hollywood Bowl

For over a century, the LA Phil has been as vibrant as Los Angeles, one of the world's most open and dynamic cities. Under the leadership of Music & Artistic Director Gustavo Dudamel, it presents nearly 300 events per year, harnessing the transformative power of live music to build community, foster intellectual and artistic growth, and nurture the creative spirit, while redefining what an orchestra can be.

London Symphony Orchestra

Voices of Joy and Sorrow

The London Symphony Orchestra believes that extraordinary music should be available to everyone, everywhere – from orchestral fans in the concert hall to first-time listeners all over the world.

The LSO was established in 1904 as one of the first orchestras shaped by its musicians. Since then, generations of remarkable talents have built the LSO's reputation for quality, ambition and a commitment to sharing the joy of music with everyone. The LSO performs some 70 concerts every year as Resident Orchestra at the Barbican, with its family of artists: Chief Conductor Sir Antonio Pappano, Conductor Emeritus Sir Simon Rattle, Principal Guest Conductors Gianandrea Noseda and François-Xavier Roth, Conductor Laureate Michael Tilson Thomas, and Associate Artists Barbara Hannigan and André J Thomas. The LSO has major artistic residencies in Paris, Tokyo and at the Aix- en-Provence Festival, and a growing presence across Australasia.

Through LSO Discovery, the LSO's learning and community programme, 60,000 people each year experience the transformative power of music. The Orchestra's musicians are at the heart of this unique programme, leading workshops, mentoring bright young talent, and visiting schools, hospitals and community spaces. The home of much of this work is LSO St Luke's, the LSO's venue on Old Street. In 2025, following a programme of works, the LSO will open up the venue's facilities to more people than ever before, with new state-of-the-art recording facilities and dedicated spaces for LSO Discovery.

The LSO's record label LSO Live is a leader among orchestra-owned labels, bringing to life the excitement of a live performance in a catalogue of over 200 acclaimed recordings, and reaching millions through streaming services and online broadcasts. The LSO has been prolific in the studio since the infancy of orchestral recording, and has made more recordings than any other orchestra – over 2,500 projects to date – across film, video games and bespoke audio collaborations.

Through inspiring music, learning programmes and digital innovations, the LSO's reach extends far beyond the concert hall. And thanks to the generous support of The City of London Corporation, Arts Council England, corporate supporters, trusts and foundations, and individual donors, the LSO is able to continue sharing extraordinary music with as many people as possible, across London, and the world.

London Voices

Voices from the Edge

Founded in 1973 by Terry Edwards, former Director of the Royal Opera House Chorus, London Voices is now directed by conductor, composer, singer, and arranger Ben Parry. The ensemble performs internationally and ranges from a small consort to over 100 singers, covering repertoire from Renaissance polyphony (e.g. Tallis at the Lucerne Festival) to contemporary works (e.g. Frank Zappa at London's Southbank Centre).

Collaborations include leading composers and conductors such as John Adams, Sir Simon Rattle, Bernard Haitink, and Luciano Berio, with whom the group had a close relationship. London Voices performed Berio's *Sinfonia* multiple times, most recently in Alicante (2024), and took part in the world premiere of Stockhausen's *Mittwoch aus Licht* in 2012. The choir has toured globally, with appearances in cities including Beijing, Berlin, New York, and Istanbul. It is especially known for recording hundreds of film and game soundtracks, including *Star Wars*, *Harry Potter*, *Halo 5*, *Barbie*, *Wonka*, and *Mission: Impossible – Fallout*. London Voices has also collaborated with artists such as Andrea Bocelli, Sir Paul McCartney, Sting, Sam Smith, and Renée Fleming.

Lucia Lucas, baritone

Voices from the Edge

Lucia Lucas, celebrated for her powerful and emotionally resonant performances, has captivated audiences internationally in operatic staples such as Wagner's *Die Walküre*, Verdi's *Rigoletto*, and Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, and Puccini's *Tosca*, and numerous contemporary operas. Lucia Lucas has performed with opera companies worldwide including the New York Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, London's English National Opera, and Deutsche Oper Berlin. At Theater St. Gallen in Switzerland, she created the title role of Lili Elbe in the world premiere of Tobias Picker's eponymous opera, expressly composed for her and for which she also served as dramaturg. Her performance as Lili was described by Tagblatt as "...sung in a ravishing and extremely multifaceted manner..." and Mannschaft raved, "Lucia Lucas brings a fundamental credibility to Lili Elbe that is important... [she] sings the title role with an impressive baritone and carries the production confidently...". The production won 'Best World Premiere' at the 2024 Opera Oper! Awards.

Manchester Camerata

Westside Story and Appalachian Spring

Manchester Camerata is a registered charity working and performing in Manchester and worldwide since 1972. Be it opening Glastonbury festival in front of 40,000 people or working intimately in care homes with people living with dementia, we believe in the transformative and connecting nature of music. That connection drives us, and we work with the best creative talent to make this happen.

With our live performances, we play music with no boundaries. From an orchestral rave performed in isolation to over one million people during the Covid-19 pandemic, to touring Mozart in the most beautifully intimate concert halls, or re-imagining classical music with electronic producers at the top of their game, we believe great music is great music and we present this to you at the highest level. To achieve our artistic excellence and forward-thinking ethos, collaboration is at the heart of everything we do. Led by our visionary Music Director, Gábor Takács-Nagy, we collaborate with diverse international artists, from New Order to Martha Argerich to Aziz Ibrahim to Lewis Capaldi.

Pumeza Matshikiza, soprano

Hollywood Bowl

South African soprano Pumeza Matshikiza, an exclusive Decca Artist since 2014, has performed at many of the leading opera houses across Europe and the United States. She has released two solo recordings with Decca: “Voice of Hope,” her debut album combining well-known arias with traditional and popular African songs, and “Arias”, for which The Guardian praised her ‘versatility, range and huge personality’. In recent seasons Pumeza has won critical acclaim for performances at the Staatsoper Hannover, Garsington Opera and English National Opera. Throughout her career Pumeza has championed numerous contemporary operatic works, and she made her debut at Teatro alla Scala in the world premiere of Giorgio Battistelli’s CO2, staged by Robert Carsen.

Highlights from Pumeza’s upcoming engagements include a concert in Paris’s Olympia Hall under the auspices of Le Festival de Paris, a world premiere of Jake Heggie’s “Good Morning, Beauty” at the Barbican in London, a Christmas tour around the UK with Bryn Terfel and her role debut in the title role of Tosca at the Staatsoper Hannover.

Ben Parry, conductor

Voices from the Edge

Ben Parry is a conductor, composer, arranger, singer, and producer with over 300 recordings to his name. His choral works and arrangements, published by OUP, Stainer & Bell, Peters Edition, and Faber, have been performed at the BBC Proms and by King’s College Choir. After 11 years leading the National Youth Choir, he is currently Director of London Voices, working on notable film soundtracks (Harry Potter, The Hobbit, Avengers) and classical collaborations (Stockhausen’s Mittwoch, Berio’s Sinfonia). A Cambridge graduate and former member of King’s College Choir, he toured internationally with the Swingle Singers, co-founding the Dunedin Consort and directing the Scottish Chamber Orchestra Chorus. He has appeared with ensembles including the Academy of Ancient Music, London Symphony Orchestra, BBC Orchestra, and Vancouver Youth Symphony. Formerly Assistant Director of Music at King’s College Cambridge, he has also served as Director of Music at St Paul’s School and the Junior Royal Academy of Music.

Edward Picton-Turbervill, piano

Voices of Tomorrow

Edward Picton-Turbervill is a prize-winning pianist and composer, recently selected as both a Britten Pears Young Artist 2024-25 and a 2024 City Music Foundation Artist. He has performed alongside internationally renowned artists including Ben Appl, Laurence Kilsby, Ben Johnson, Carolyn Sampson, Paul Huang and Eldbjørg Hemsing, and can regularly be heard on Radio 3.

His first large-scale composition Out of Eden receives its premiere this season at Smith Square Hall and his first album of his song cycles will be released on Delphian Records in November 2025, with Helen Charlston, Alex Chance, Harriet Burns and Elgan Llŷr Thomas.

Edward studied at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, where he graduated with Distinction in Piano Accompaniment and the Concert Recital Diploma for exceptional performance. This followed a year at the University of Heidelberg and an MPhil in Environmental Policy at St John’s College, Cambridge. He was organ

scholar at St John's from 2012-2015, graduating with a First in Music. Edward's first book *Talking Through Trees* was published in 2017 by the Old Stile Press.

Jamie Powe, conductor
Queer Cosmos

Jamie is currently Musical Director of The Fourth Choir, Laurelin Voices, The New London Singers, Putney Choral Society and The Aubrey Singers. He was Director of The Arcadian Singers 2019-23, the Chapel Choir of Regent's Park College, Oxford 2019-2021, and was also Associate Director of Ware Choral Society 2022-23.

Jamie was awarded a scholarship to study at the Royal Academy of Music, where he achieved a distinction in his choral conducting MA. He was also awarded the Thomas Armstrong prize for outstanding choral leadership. In 2022, he conducted at the Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall in front of the royal family and on prime time BBC 1.

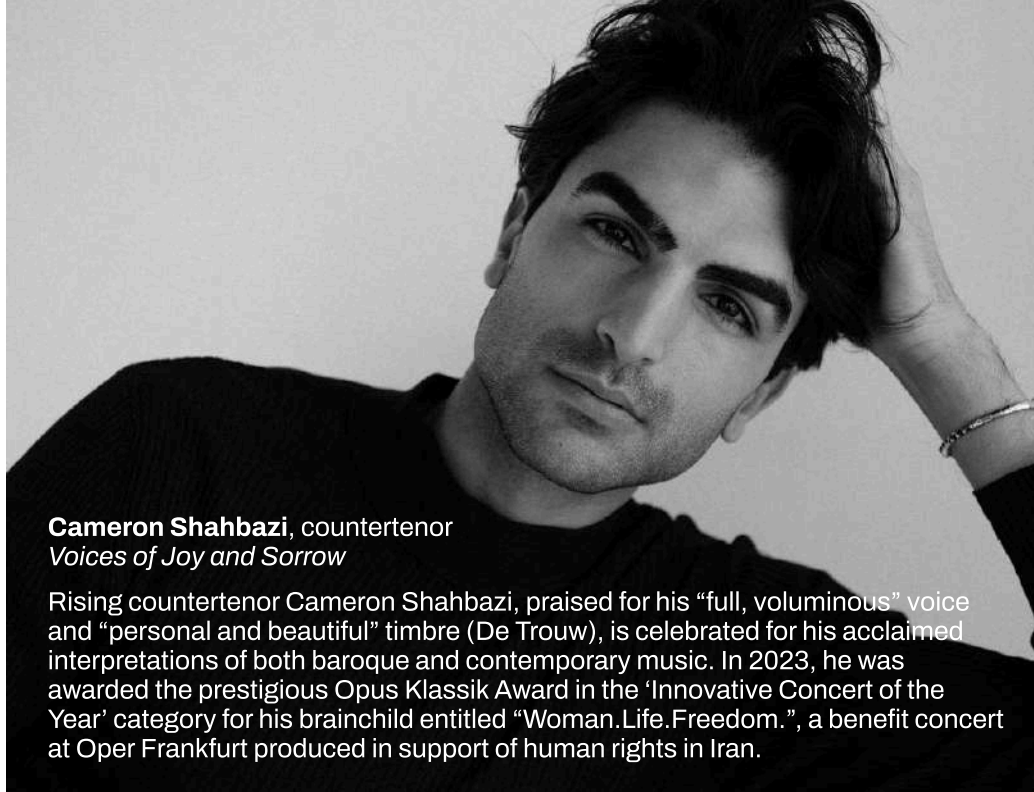
Anthony Roth Costanzo, countertenor
Hollywood Bowl

Countertenor Anthony Roth Costanzo began performing professionally at the age of 11 and has since appeared in opera, concert, recital, film, and on Broadway. In June 2024, he began his tenure as the General Director and President of Opera Philadelphia.

He has appeared with many of the world's leading opera houses including the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Francisco Opera, Opera National de Paris, English National Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Opera Philadelphia, Los Angeles Opera, Canadian Opera Company, Glyndebourne Opera Festival, Dallas Opera, Teatro Real Madrid, Spoleto Festival USA, Glimmerglass Festival (where he served as the 2023 Artist in Residence), and Finnish National Opera.

In concert he has sung with the New York Philharmonic (where he was named The Mary and James G. Wallach Artist-in-Residence for the 2021-22 season), The Cleveland Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Met Orchestra Chamber Ensemble, Boston Baroque, Berlin Philharmonic, NDR at the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg, and the London Symphony Orchestra, among others.. Mr. Costanzo's most recent album, *Anthony Roth Costanzo & Justin Vivian Bond: Only an Octave Apart* was released in January 2022. His first solo album, *ARC* was released in September 2018 and nominated for the 2019 GRAMMY Award for Best Classical Solo Vocal Album. He also stars on the Metropolitan Opera's recording and DVD of *Akhnaten* which won the 2022 GRAMMY Award for Best Opera Recording.





Cameron Shahbazi, countertenor
Voices of Joy and Sorrow

Rising countertenor Cameron Shahbazi, praised for his “full, voluminous” voice and “personal and beautiful” timbre (De Trouw), is celebrated for his acclaimed interpretations of both baroque and contemporary music. In 2023, he was awarded the prestigious Opus Klassik Award in the ‘Innovative Concert of the Year’ category for his brainchild entitled “Woman.Life.Freedom.”, a benefit concert at Oper Frankfurt produced in support of human rights in Iran.

The 2024-25 season marks numerous exciting projects for Cameron Shahbazi. The countertenor makes his much-anticipated house debut at the Gran Teatre del Liceu Barcelona as Tolomeo in Giulio Cesare in a production by Calixto Bieto. With the Vancouver Opera, he makes his house and role debut as The Refugee in Jonathan Dove’s Flight. Building on the great success of George Benjamin’s new opera Picture a day like this staged by Daniel Jeanneteau and Marie-Christine Soma, Shahbazi thrice presents the acclaimed interpretation: at the Opéra Comique in Paris, Opéra national du Rhin, and at the Grand Théâtre de Luxembourg. Together with pianist Sophia Muñoz, Cameron Shahbazi presents Warsaw Sessions, a recital reinterpreting familiar and unfamiliar music in a journal-like setting, fusing musical styles and genres from Henry Purcell to Louis Armstrong complimented by baroque arias and Iranian melodies. The concerts will take place under the auspices of the Nowa Miodowa in Warsaw and Les Lundis Musicaux in Paris.

Tenebrae
Voices of Joy and Sorrow

Described as “phenomenal” (The Times) and “devastatingly beautiful” (Gramophone Magazine), award-winning choir Tenebrae is one of the world’s leading vocal ensembles, renowned for its passion and precision.

Under the direction of Nigel Short, Tenebrae performs at major festivals and venues across the globe, including the BBC Proms, Wigmore Hall, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Rheingau Musik Festival and Sydney Festival. The choir has earned international acclaim for its interpretations of choral music from the Renaissance through to contemporary masterpieces, and has commissioned new music from composers including Judith Bingham, Joanna Marsh, Owain Park, Josephine Stephenson, Joby Talbot and Roderick Williams.

Tenebrae has enjoyed collaborations with some of the UK’s leading orchestras, including the London Symphony Orchestra, Aurora Orchestra, the Academy of Ancient Music and Britten Sinfonia. The choir also undertakes regular session work, having contributed the vocals for Max Richter’s Voices (2020), Jean-Jacques Annaud’s Notre Dame brûle (2022), and blockbuster sci-fi movie Avatar:

The Way of Water (2022) among others. Its extensive recording catalogue comprises a wide range of music on labels including Signum, LSO Live and Warner Classics, and has earned the choir two BBC Music Magazine Awards, an Edison Classical Award and a Grammy nomination.

The Fourth Choir

Queer Cosmos

The Fourth Choir was formed in 2013 with the aim of representing the LGBTQ+ community on London's classical music scene. The Choir is as at home singing polyphony in Heaven nightclub or the Royal Vauxhall Tavern as at London's top cultural venues such as the British Museum, the V&A, the Royal Albert Hall, the Wigmore Hall, and the Chapel Royal at Hampton Court Palace. It performs regularly at Shakespeare's Globe (both in productions and solo concerts) and was featured in the 2022 Festival of Remembrance on BBC1. Overseas, it has performed in Amsterdam, Antwerp and Rome. Recently it has recorded its first album, *Songs of Ourselves*, for release next year. The Choir is delighted to be returning to Milton Court for the third time, previously having performed *A Meeting Place*, a collaboration with professional D/deaf musicians in 2021, and *Shoulder to Shoulder*, a celebration of Dame Ethel Smyth in 2023.

Thorgy Thor, violin

Hollywood Bowl

One of the most famous drag queens in the world, Thorgy has starred in the American TV series *RuPaul's Drag Race* & *Drag Race UK* on TLC, but before that, they studied music at the Hartt School of Music and Purchase Conservatory, playing viola, violin and cello and has performed at Le Poisson Rouge, Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall. Thorgy has also staged their own show 'Thorgy & The Thorchestra' which debuted with Symphony Nova Scotia in 2018. Since then, Thorgy has been invited to perform with dozens of international orchestras including the San Francisco Symphony, Toronto Symphony, Seattle Symphony, NAC Orchestra in Ottawa and the Boston Pops Orchestra.

Oliver Zeffman, conductor

Voices of Joy and Sorrow & Hollywood Bowl

A conductor of "tremendous ardour and shrewd dramatic timing" (The Telegraph, 2023), Oliver is widely seen as one of today's most intrepid young musicians. Alongside recent concerts and recordings with the likes of the London Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia, CBSO, Academy of St Martin in the Fields and the Orchestre national d'Île-de-France, Oliver is recognised as "an entrepreneurial tour de force" (BBC Music Magazine, 2023), "with a record for getting things done" (Gramophone, 2023).

As well as Classical Pride, recent projects include a partnership with the popular podcast *The Rest Is History* investigating the lives of the great composers in an ongoing series of concerts and recordings at the Albert Hall; and Music x Museums, a concert series in partnership with London museums such as the V&A, Cutty Sark and Science Museum, all filmed for Apple Music. Outside of conducting, Oliver is a trustee of Goldsmiths University and the Rio Cinema.



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