



Wednesday 14 October 2026, 7:30pm

£4.00





RECORDINGS OF CONCERTS



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Food & beverages: A selection of drinks, sandwiches, confectionary and snacks is available from our bars, and concert-goers can enjoy a wider selection of champagnes, spirits, wine, beer and soft drinks from the Culford Room (the main bar in our foyer). Draught beer is also available in our smaller Oakley Bar. Please be aware that refreshments bought outside Cadogan Hall cannot be brought on-site, and that glasses and bottles may not be taken into the auditorium.

Cameras and electronic devices: Video and audio recording equipment of all kinds are not permitted on-site. Please ensure that all mobile devices are switched off before entering the auditorium.

Interval and timings: Intervals vary with each performance. Some performances may not have an interval. Latecomers will not be admitted until a suitable break in the performance.

Cadogan Hall
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Box Office: 020 7730 4500 Book online: cadoganhall.com

Programme

Wednesday 14 October 2026, 7:30pm

Wagner - Tannhäuser: Overture

Wagner - Tristan and Isolde: Prelude and Liebestod

Interval

Wagner - Götterdämmerung:

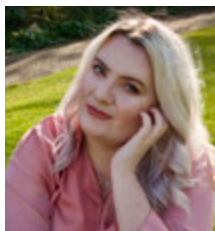
Siegfried's Rhine Music

Siegfried's Funeral Music

Brünnhilde's Immolation



James Blair
Conductor



Lorna McLean
Soprano

Alumni of the YMSO play in virtually every professional orchestra in the United Kingdom, many as section principals.

THE LIST INCLUDES:

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By the time a student leaves music college they will have committed at least fifteen years to developing skills as a musician. Abruptly, competition for the small number of performance opportunities against several hundred others in the same position becomes a fact of life.

The number of students destined for a successful solo career is limited. The majority will end up as music's foot-soldiers, of necessity equally at home in a string quartet, a chamber or a symphony orchestra. Today's musician must be versatile, flexible and thrifty in order to survive.

Most will remain self-employed and need to promote themselves to ensembles and orchestras whilst, in some cases, performing recitals on a small scale. They will be required to reach public performance standard after the minimum rehearsal and be available in the most disparate venues from one day to the next.

The richness of London's musical life is world renowned, but the music educational system does not have the resources to address these issues and many students find themselves abandoned in a world of work without being equipped to handle it. The YMSO provides a bridge between college and the profession and gives students a real advantage with experience of the major classical repertoire, realistic rehearsal schedules and performances in the great concert halls of the country.

These young people are passionate about their music and have dedicated much of their lives to reaching professional standards. In such a precarious situation, anything that can enhance their opportunities for employment should be applauded and encouraged.

For over fifty years the YMSO, with no contribution from national or local government, but with the generous support of its private and corporate admirers has filled in the gaps. Our gratitude for that support is immeasurable.

"I found the YMSO to be the training orchestra with the most professional outlook....The extensive range of large symphonic music that the orchestra is prepared to tackle is a unique opportunity for the members. Now, as a regular tutor of the orchestra, I endeavour to continue the traditions that were so invaluable to me in the past."

Gerry Ruddock - Trumpet, LSO

"The orchestra has been an inspiration and provided a wealth of experience for young musicians for as long as I can remember..... I will remember the richness that it has brought to my playing with affection."

John Harle - Saxophone/Composer



"My time and experience with YMSO were invaluable to me in helping to shape my career. The opportunity to play a variety of repertoire, including large-scale works, in different venues with students from all of the music conservatories in London gave a good insight to the profession."

Martin Gibson - Former Timpanist, Royal Scottish National Orchestra

"I certainly found the YMSO.... an extremely valuable experience and a great help in my development as an orchestral player as well as an all round musician."

Graham Salvage - Former Principal Bassoon, Hallé Orchestra

"Vitality, brio and an unbridled optimism allied to a certain innocence, qualities that the established symphony orchestras lack."

Lord Palumbo – Former Chairman, Arts Council

"The Young Musicians Symphony Orchestra represents the realisation of an ambition I have had for some time – that the musicians of this orchestra be drawn not only from the most eminent Conservatoires in England but that it be an orchestra representing the whole of the British Isles, Ireland and beyond. Their audiences will be treated to an integrated body of musicians incorporating the great cultural strands which compose these green islands. I am happy that this more than national orchestra is now in existence and will continue, I pray, for years to come to bring to our audiences the most wonderful music played in a most wonderful way by our young people."

Lord Menuhin – late President of the YMSO

Programme Notes

05

Richard Wagner (1813-1883)

Tannhäuser: Overture, WWV 70

Following the triumphant success of *Rienzi* in October 1842 and his appointment as Conductor of the Royal Saxon Court in Dresden in February 1843, Wagner was giving full attention to the next venture taking shape in his mind. Here he found a subject that, in his own words, allowed him to express the two tendencies of his nature: the “sacred earnest” and the “inclination to unbridled sensuality”. At the same time, he seized upon a theme that would remain one of his overriding concerns: the redemption of man by woman. From strands of German folklore with which he had become acquainted - the tale of the minstrel Tannhäuser, the legend of the Venusberg, the story of the song contest on the Wartburg at the 13th-century court of Thuringia - Wagner fashioned his libretto, wherein the title character is torn between pure, idealised love as represented by Elisabeth, niece of the Landgrave Hermann, and sensual, physical lust as represented by the goddess Venus in the subterranean domain of the Venusberg.



Wagner constructed the overture according to principles he himself set out in his January 1841 essay “On the Overture,” creating “a musical artwork entire in itself and providing a sense of the opera’s argument through the interweaving of thematic materials drawn from the opera to follow.” The solemn Pilgrims’ March gives way to the music of the Venusberg, which is followed by Tannhäuser’s hymn to Venus in praise of love. A central, seductive Venusberg episode with solo clarinet and violins leads to another stanza of Tannhäuser’s hymn and the reiteration of the frenzied Venusberg music, which in the overture’s original Dresden version yields to a triumphant, overwhelming return of the Pilgrims’ March.

Tristan and Isolde: Prelude and Liebestod, WWV 90

In the early 1850s, Wagner began reading the works of the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer. For Schopenhauer, music occupied a station above all other arts, which meant that the text of an opera was relegated to a supporting role. Wagner started to show symptoms of his exposure to Schopenhauer by the mid-1850s, and naturally the composer’s major operatic project of the decade reflected this influence. Until *Tristan and Isolde*, no one had imagined the extent to which music alone could embody drama. In one long arc, Wagner lays bare the inner lives of the opera’s title characters, as their love, doomed from its beginning, finds fulfillment in death.

The Prelude and Liebestod (Love-Death) comprise the beginning and ending of the opera. The Prelude opens with the cellos softly playing four notes. The last note fades into an extraordinary chord played by oboes, bassoons, and cor anglais. This chord, coined the “Tristan chord”, is an unresolved dissonance, an academic way of saying that it sounds like it’s leading to something. However, because Wagner at this point withholds resolution, the chord is a beginning without an end. The oboe and cor anglais are particularly important in the drama that follows, their distinctive voices returning at moments of great emotional significance. What follows is a lush orchestral work that charts the psychology of the opera, which itself explores the unexplainable, primal nature of love.

The chord returns during the course of the opera, but it is only resolved during the work's final, ecstatic closing Liebestod. It is the culmination of the opera's tragic events, set in motion when Tristan and Isolde drink a love potion. Tristan, though, has claimed Isolde on behalf of his lord, King Marke. When Marke discovers the lovers together, one of the King's knights stabs Tristan, who returns to his fortress to die. Isolde has just arrived to find Tristan dead when the Liebestod begins. Her worldly surroundings fade away as she contemplates sinking unconscious into supreme bliss and finally consummating her love with Tristan in death. The passage builds to a climax as "waves of refreshing breezes" begin to envelop Isolde and again as she imagines expiring in "the vast wave of the world's breath". In the final moments, the oboe continues to play through the silence, while the cor anglais ceases before the final chord. Finally, after the longing and unresolved tension that has defined the work from its opening, Wagner allows the music to come to rest.

Götterdämmerung, WWV 86D

Siegfried's Rhine Music

Siegfried's Funeral Music

Brünnhilde's Immolation

Wagner composed *Götterdämmerung* between 1869 and 1874. It is the last of the four operas that make up Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* cycle, a project that had taken him over 25 years to complete. The opera is much renowned for its orchestral sequences, and these are often performed as concert extracts. Siegfried's Rhine Music is taken from the Prologue of the opera, opening with a depiction of sunrise. Siegfried's noble horn theme is alternated with Brünnhilde's melody, and there is a brief love duet. Siegfried leaves for a new journey, taking with him the Ring of Power. He follows the Rhine until reaching the Gibichungs Hall, where the mood darkens and the scene comes to a close.

At the Hall of the Gibichungs, Siegfried meets Gunther, his sister Gutrune, and their half-brother Hagen. Hagen gives Siegfried a potion which causes him to forget Brünnhilde and fall in love with Gutrune. He is subsequently manipulated into betraying Brünnhilde, although he has no memory of their love. Believing that Siegfried has willingly betrayed her, Brünnhilde joins Hagen and Gunther in a plot to kill him. During a hunting expedition, Hagen gives Siegfried another potion which restores his memory. As Siegfried recalls his love for Brünnhilde, Hagen stabs him in the back with his spear, killing him.

In Siegfried's Funeral Music, the hero's body is borne away by the vassals, the warriors and retainers of Gunther's court. The march begins solemnly, the brass entering quietly as moonlight falls on the cortège and as fog shrouds the Rhine. The full brass utter Siegfried's motif, recalling his heroic deeds and the confident mood that characterised his youthful adventures. Many musical reminders of these events occur in this central section. Those unfamiliar with the dramas may judge it to be a hotchpotch but for others, it chimes with emotions unacknowledged hitherto. The March ends as solemnly as it began, desolate and subdued.

The final scene of the opera is known as Brünnhilde's Immolation and it is one of Wagner's greatest achievements. Having seen Siegfried killed, Brünnhilde comes to understand that he had been manipulated and was not responsible for betraying her. She orders a funeral pyre to be made by the Rhine, so that she can take her own life in it and be reunited with Siegfried in death. Carrying the Ring, she tells the Rhinemaidens to claim it from her once the fire has removed its curse. Brünnhilde rides her horse into the flames, the Rhine overflows its banks and the Ring's gold is returned to the river. Valhalla and the Gods are consumed by fire, bringing Wagner's vast cycle to its apocalyptic conclusion.

Forthcoming Events

07

Wednesday 25 November 2026

Glinka - Ruslan and Ludmilla Overture

Beethoven - Piano Concerto No. 4

Tchaikovsky - Symphony No. 6 'Pathétique'

Conductor - James Blair

Soloist - Ronan O'Hora

Wednesday 17 February 2027

Shostakovich - Festive Overture

Elgar - Cello Concerto

Strauss - An Alpine Symphony

Conductor - James Blair

Soloist - Maxim Calver

Wednesday 17 March 2027

Rossini - The Thieving Magpie Overture

Rachmaninoff - Piano Concerto No. 3

Sibelius - Symphony No. 5

Conductor - James Blair

Soloist - Zvezdan Vojvodić



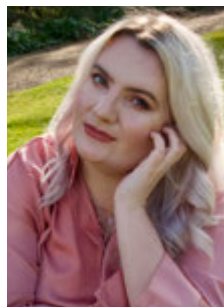
Lorna McLean Soprano

Lorna McLean recently completed her studies on the Guildhall Opera Course and competed in the final of Guildhall's most prestigious award, the Guildhall School Gold Medal in the Barbican Hall. She is a Prize Winner of the 2024 Carole Rees Awards for young Wagnerian voices, a quarter finalist for the Elizabeth Connell Prize.

Recent performances include Daphne (Daphne, Strauss) and Guttrune (Götterdämmerung, Wagner) for the Edinburgh Players Opera Group, Maria (Maria de Rudenz, Donizetti) for Gothic Opera and the title role of Suor Angelica at Wexford Festival Opera. Lorna was a scholarship holder at Bayreuth Festival 2026 with the Wagner Society UK, and performed in the Stipendiat Konzert.

Upcoming performances include Sieglinde (Die Walküre, Wagner) for the Sutton Philharmonic Orchestra in collaboration with the Wagner Society UK.

www.lorna-mclean.com



India Reilly Leader

India Reilly is a violinist studying with Gabrielle Lester at the Royal College of Music. Her work reflects a broad musical perspective, combining modern violin performance with a strong engagement with historical practice.

A graduate of St Mary's Music School, she was awarded the Director's Recital Prize, as well as the John Doig and Calvert String Prizes. She received the Winifred Gavine Medal for Strings Recital and the Horace Fellows Medal for Chamber Music at the Edinburgh Competition Festival, and was highly commended in both the Lord Clyde Concerto Competition and the Nan Christie Memorial Prize for Strings.

She has participated in masterclasses with leading violinists including Esther Yoo, Jonian Ilias Kadesha and Simon Fischer, and regularly studies with Daniel Roberts. She also studied with Ann Setzer and Paul Kantor at the Meadowmount School of Music. As a soloist, she has performed at venues including Greyfriars Kirk and St Mary's Cathedral, as well as appearing at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

India has a particular interest in orchestral leadership, serving as concertmaster with ensembles including the Innova Orchestra, the Albion Orchestra and the Edinburgh Youth Orchestra. She was also a member of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, working with conductors including Sir Mark Elder, Andrew Gourlay and Alexandre Bloch, and performing at the Royal Albert Hall as part of the BBC Proms.

Alongside her modern studies, she studies historical violin with Catherine Martin and has taken part in masterclasses with Baroque specialists including Simon Standage, Oliver Webber, and Leila Schayegh. In April 2026, she toured Bolivia with the RCM Baroque Ensemble, performing at the International Festival of Renaissance and Baroque Music. She is also an active chamber musician, performing regularly in solo and chamber recitals across the UK and Europe.



James Blair

Conductor

09



James Blair, Principal Conductor and Artistic Director of the Young Musicians Symphony Orchestra was born in Scotland. He studied in London with Bernard Keffe and Sir Adrian Boult and his talents were soon recompensed with numerous accolades including the Ricordi Conducting Prize and an Italian Government Scholarship to study with Franco Ferrara in Siena and Venice.

Mr Blair has been associated with the YMSO since 1971 and has established it as the UK's leading training orchestra. Every professional orchestra in the UK has ex YMSO players within its ranks, many of whom attribute their success to their time spent in it. He has received particular renown with the orchestra in two areas: the interpretation of large scale romantic works and the re-discovery of and in some cases, British and World Premieres of neglected works by a variety of eminent composers.

Mr Blair has worked with every major choir in England including the London Symphony Chorus, London Philharmonic Choir and the Huddersfield Chorus and with many of the UK's major orchestras including the Royal Philharmonic, Philharmonia, Scottish Chamber, BBC Philharmonic and Scottish Symphony Orchestra and London Mozart Players. He has toured the USA where he has given concert series with the San Jose, Sacramento, Kansas City, Delaware and Colorado Springs Symphony Orchestras. In the field of opera he has conducted performances at the Dublin Grand Opera and the Athens Opera House. He had a close association with Yehudi Menuhin, assisting him in Spain and Russia working with the Orchestra Sinfonica de Euskadi in Saint Sebastian and the St. Petersburg Camerata.

The Orchestra



Tutors

Upper Strings Lower Strings

Adrian Charlesworth

Francois Rive
Chris West

Harp

Alison Martin

Woodwind

Howard Legge

Brass

David Lee
Gerry Ruddock

Percussion

Jeremy Cornes

Violin 1

India Reilly *Leader*
 Alice Younger
 Nick Francis
 Ellie McKenzie-Jones
 Adam Skelton
 Joe Stoller
 Rosa Stemp
 Anna Lezdkan
 Kseniia Bogomolova
 Goulwenna Vigneron
 Rebecca Nicolas
 Sofi Lomidze
 Jeongmin Park
 Abigail Roberts

Violin 2

Freya Stewart *Principal*
 Maylee Velasco
 Sean Fan
 Eunice Tan
 Jenny Wells
 Anaïs Tran Ngoc
 Júlia Lourenço
 Lizzie McEneaney
 Phedra Low
 Sophie Reaville
 Aimee Ashmore
 Isabelle Rawa

Viola

Izzy Nettle *Principal*
 Florence Cope
 Joshua Law
 Sasha Grimes
 Megan Elkins
 Leeloo Creed
 Natasha Adamcyk
 Mairi McKellar
 Sam Wilson
 Michael Parker

Cello

Paula Skulte *Principal*
 Sam Booth
 Carolina Lopez Del Nero
 Ella Harrison
 Louis Delstanche
 Samuel Silmon-Clyde
 Eugene Lee
 Fei Pu
 Raphael Herberg
 Eva Mawson
 Sebastian Todd

Double Bass

Anton Avis *Principal*
 Al Gregory
 Lucas Jordan
 Nathan Ng
 Anselm King
 Ronald Morgan

Harp

Lucia Foti *Principal*
 Elizabeth Rajhans
 Katya Rajhans
 Imogen Emmett
 Caterina Nevi
 Georgiana Rosioru-Carp

Flute

Cyrus Lam *Principal*
 Kiera Exall
 Joseph Geary (*Picc.*)
 Daisy Jones (*Picc.*)

Oboe

Miriam Cooper *Principal*
 Becky Corcoran
 Josie Russell
 Alana Lynch (*Cor.*)

Clarinet

Taran McNeil *Principal*
 Nathan Quilter
 Birce Kayhan
 Rita Feditsa (*Bass*)

Bassoon

Hannah McCallum-Benson *Principal*
 Rosie Lupton
 Harry Jones

Horn

Oli Pitman *Principal*
 Polly Bishop
 Katie Parker
 Sinead McEvoy
 Archie Halward (*Wg. tuba*)
 Sami Pang (*Wg. tuba*)
 Hannah Spry (*Wg. tuba*)
 Owen McClay (*Wg. tuba*)

Trumpet

Sam Tarlton *Principal*
 Alice Newbould
 Elias Simojoki
 Dylan Savage
 Anna Bailey (*Bass*)

Trombone

James Talboys *Principal*
 Jonathan Stevens
 Noah Corey (*Bass*)
 Jonny Lovatt (*Contra*)

Tuba

Ini Kuti *Principal*

Timpani

Elinor Mason *Principal*
 Matt Baynham

Percussion

Carys Underwood *Principal*
 Roman Parshin
 Jack Izard

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Lord Menuhin, President 1993–1999



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Mobile: 07850 038 564

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