

2025–26 Full Biography

'An orchestra on top form' *The Guardian* on the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

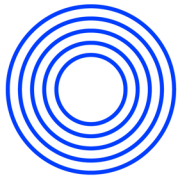
The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (RPO), with Music Director Vasily Petrenko, is on a mission to bring the thrill of live orchestral music to the widest possible audience. The RPO's musicians believe that music can – and should – be a part of everyone's life, and they aim to deliver on that belief through every note. Based in London and performing around 200 concerts per year worldwide, the RPO brings the same energy, commitment and excellence to everything it plays, be that the great symphonic repertoire, collaborations with pop stars, or TV, video game and movie soundtracks. Proud of its rich heritage yet always evolving, the RPO is regarded as the world's most versatile symphony orchestra, reaching a live and online audience of more than 70 million people each year.

Innovation is in the RPO's genes. Sir Thomas Beecham, who founded the RPO in 1946, was a force of musical nature: an entrepreneur, a wit and a conductor of great integrity, and he believed that great music-making belonged to everyone and that Britain needed an orchestra that was as adaptable as it was brilliant. This vision has remained integral to the RPO's approach. The RPO was one of the first orchestras to set up a community and education programme, RPO Resound, and the first orchestra to create its own record label, as well as the first to travel to America post-COVID-19.

Throughout its history, the RPO has performed with the world's most inspiring musicians, including André Previn, Yehudi Menuhin, Yuri Temirkanov and Vladimir Ashkenazy, as well as icons such as Kylie Minogue, Shirley Bassey, Deep Purple, Def Leppard and Rod Stewart. And not just musicians, either. From British movie classics such as *The Red Shoes* and *The Bridge on the River Kwai* to the anthem for the UEFA Champions League, the RPO has been part of the soundtrack to millions of lives, sometimes without people knowing it. The Orchestra has continued to embrace advances in digital technology and attracts a growing global audience for its streamed performances, artist interviews, 'behind-the-scenes' insights and other digital output. Each year, the RPO's recorded music is streamed over 50 million times, has 17 million views on YouTube, and the Orchestra welcomes around 200,000 audience members to its live performances.

But live performance has always been at the heart of what the RPO does, and through its thriving artistic partnership with Vasily Petrenko, the RPO has reaffirmed its status as one of the world's most respected and in-demand orchestras. In London, that means flagship concert series at Cadogan Hall (where the RPO's residency is 21 years young this season), the Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, and the iconic Royal Albert Hall, where the RPO is proud to be Associate Orchestra. The Orchestra is also thrilled to be resident in four areas of the UK, performing at The Hawth in Crawley, Hull City Hall, Northampton's Royal & Derngate and The Hexagon in Reading.

Recent concert highlights have included performances of all three of Mahler's epic choral symphonies at the Royal Albert Hall, appearances at the BBC Proms and Edinburgh International Festival, and concerts within leading European festivals, such as the George Enescu, Lucerne, Merano and Grafenegg festivals. Artistic partners have included Joe Hisaishi (RPO Composer-in-Association), Anne-Sophie Mutter, Yunchan Lim, Julia Fischer, Eric Lu, Maxim Vengerov, Roderick Williams OBE and the RPO's 2024–25 Cadogan Hall Artist-in-Residence Johan Dalene, among many others. During the 2025–26 Season, the Orchestra looks forward to welcoming Ray Chen, Midori, Benjamin Grosvenor, Boris Giltburg, Artist Laureate Sir John Rutter, Principal Associate Conductor Alexander Shelley, Associate Conductor Emilia Hoving and Cadogan Hall Conductor-in-Residence Kevin John Edusei. And around the world, the RPO will be flying the



**ROYAL
PHILHARMONIC
ORCHESTRA**

Join the journey
rpo.co.uk

Patron: HM King Charles III
Music Director: Vasily Petrenko

flag for the best of British music-making, with tours to Japan and South Korea, Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland and the USA.

The RPO remains true to its pioneering, accessible roots. Now in its fourth decade, the RPO Resound community and education programme continues to thrive as one of the UK's – and the world's – most innovative and respected initiatives of its kind. And in 2025, the RPO moved its headquarters to Wembley Park in the London Borough of Brent – the realisation of a long-held ambition to become part of the everyday life of a diverse community and audience that the Orchestra is seeking to serve.

Passionate, versatile and uncompromising in its pursuit of musical excellence, and with the patronage of His Majesty King Charles III and the artistic leadership of Vasily Petrenko, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra continues to build on an enviable heritage to scale new heights. The Orchestra looks to the future with a determination to explore, to share and to reaffirm its reputation as an orchestra with a difference: open-minded, forward-thinking and accessible to all. Sir Thomas Beecham would have approved.

Discover more online at rpo.co.uk

798 words

Updated October 2025

Not to be edited without permission. If you require an updated version of the RPO biography, please contact the RPO Office: +44 (0)20 7608 8800 / info@rpo.co.uk.

