

2024–25 Biography

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

Throughout its history, the RPO has attracted and collaborated with the most inspiring artists and in August 2021, the Orchestra was thrilled to welcome Vasily Petrenko as its new Music Director. A landmark appointment in the RPO's history, Vasily's first three seasons with the RPO have been lauded by audiences and critics alike. Highlights included a star-studded gala concert to mark the RPO's 75th Anniversary (with soloists Sheku Kanneh-Mason MBE and Sir Bryn Terfel), all three of Mahler's epic Choral Symphonies at the Royal Albert Hall, music by Elgar and Rachmaninov at the Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, performances at the BBC Proms and Edinburgh International Festival, and major tours to the USA, Japan, Germany, Spain and a host of prestigious European festivals.

The RPO is recognised as the UK's most in-demand orchestra, an accolade that would have pleased Sir Thomas Beecham, who founded the Orchestra in 1946. As well as a busy schedule of national and international performances, the Orchestra enjoys an annual season of concerts in London's Royal Albert Hall (where the RPO is Associate Orchestra), the Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall and Cadogan Hall, where it is celebrating its 20th Season as Resident Orchestra. In the 2024–25 Season, Vasily Petrenko and the Orchestra delve deep into the works of composers who overcame great challenges to produce some of their finest music in *Lights in the Dark*. Celebrating music's power to unite and inspire, the series includes orchestral masterpieces such as Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra*, Shostakovich's 'Leningrad' Symphony, Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony and Strauss' *An Alpine Symphony*. The Season will also feature relaxed performances, residencies in venues across the country, a major tour to Germany and Austria, performances in other parts of Europe, and collaborations with artists including Principal Associate Conductor Alexander Shelley, Composer-in-Association Joe Hisaishi, Jeneba Kanneh-Mason, Paul Lewis, Yunchan Lim, Eric Lu, Liya Petrova, Maxim Vengerov, Roderick Williams OBE, Esther Yoo and Artist-in-Residence Johan Dalene, amongst others.

The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra's mission is to place orchestral music at the heart of contemporary society and, through collaboration with creative partners, foster deeper engagement with communities to ensure that live orchestral music is accessible to as inclusive and diverse an audience as possible. To help achieve this goal, in 1993 the Orchestra launched RPO Resound, which has grown to become the most innovative and respected orchestral community and education programme in the UK and internationally. In 2025, the Orchestra will move its headquarters

to Wembley Park in the London Borough of Brent; this will be the realisation of its long-held ambition to embed the Orchestra in a community, in line with its mission to be a truly inclusive and contemporary international orchestra for the modern age.

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

Passion, versatility and uncompromising artistic standards are the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra's hallmarks; as it looks forward to an exciting future with the patronage of His Majesty King Charles III and Vasily Petrenko as Music Director, the RPO will continue to be recognised as one of the world's most open-minded, forward-thinking and accessible symphony orchestras.

Discover more online at rpo.co.uk

692 words

Updated January 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.