

**ROYAL
PHILHARMONIC
ORCHESTRA**

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Patron: HM King Charles III
Music Director: Vasily Petrenko

2026–27 Season 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. In 2026, the RPO's journey reaches a milestone: 80 years since its first concert. Over the last eight decades, millions have been inspired, touched and entertained by its music. Over the same period, the Orchestra has continually reimagined what an orchestra can be, never stopping adapting, innovating and including, and bringing the same energy, commitment and excellence to everything it plays, from the great symphonic repertoire to collaborations with pop stars and music for TV, video games and film.

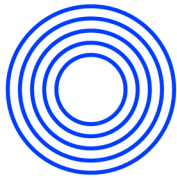
Innovation is in the RPO's genes. Sir Thomas Beecham, who founded the RPO in 1946, was a force of musical nature: an entrepreneur, a wit and a conductor of great integrity, and he believed that great music-making belonged to everyone and that Britain needed an orchestra that was as adaptable as it was brilliant. This vision has remained integral to the RPO's approach.

Throughout its history, the RPO has performed with the world's most inspiring musicians, including Rudolf Kempe, 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 continues to embrace digital technology, attracting global audiences through streamed performances, artist interviews and behind-the-scenes content. Each year, its recorded music is streamed more than 50 million times, attracts 17 million YouTube views and reaches around 200,000 people through 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 its home Cadogan Hall, 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 and across the USA. Artistic partners have included Joe Hisaishi (RPO Composer-in-Association), Anne-Sophie Mutter, Yunchan Lim, Maxim Vengerov, Roderick Williams OBE, Midori, Kevin John Edusei, Masabane Cecilia Rangwanasha and Ray Chen, among many others. During its 80th Anniversary Season, the Orchestra looks forward to welcoming Julia Fischer, Pablo Ferrández, Jan Lisiecki, Eric Lu, Elisabeth Leonskaja, Sunwook Kim, Miah Persson, Kirill Karabits OBE, Artist Laureate Sir John Rutter, Associate Conductor Emilia Hoving and 2026–27 resident artists Adam Hickox and Liya Petrova. And around the world, the RPO will be flying the flag for the best of British music-making, with tours to Austria, China, Germany, Japan and Türkiye.





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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, fulfilling a long-held ambition to become part of the everyday life of the community it serves.

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. There has never been a better time to join us on the journey.

Discover more online at rpo.co.uk

717 words

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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 / marketing@rpo.co.uk.

