

barbican



Classical Music

Concert programme



**Khatia Buniatishvili
and Academy of St
Martin in the Fields**

Mon 9 Dec 7.30pm

Hall

Important information



When does the concert start and finish?

The concert begins at 7.30pm and finishes at about 9.15pm, with a 20-minute interval.



I'm running late!

Latecomers will be admitted if there is a suitable break in the performance.



Please ...

Switch any watch alarms and mobile phones to silent during the performance.



Please don't ...

Take photos or recordings during the performance – save it for the curtain call.



Use a hearing aid?

Please use our induction loop – just switch your hearing aid to T setting on entering the hall.



Need a break?

You can leave at any time and be readmitted if there is a suitable break in the performance, or during the interval.



Looking for refreshments?

Bars are located on Levels -1, G and 1.



Looking for the toilets?

The nearest toilets, including accessible toilets, are located on Levels -1, G and 2.



Carrying bags and coats?

Drop them off at our free cloak room on Level -1.

Khatia Buniatishvili and Academy of St Martin in the Fields

Part of Khatia Buniatishvili Artist Spotlight

Mon 9 Dec 7.30pm, Hall

Academy of St Martin in the Fields
Benjamin Marquise Gilmore director
Khatia Buniatishvili piano

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart *Don Giovanni*
Overture

Piano Concerto No 23

- 1 Allegro
- 2 Adagio
- 3 Allegro assai

Interval 20 minutes

Felix Mendelssohn *The Hebrides Overture*

Joseph Haydn *Symphony No 104, London*

- 1 Adagio – Allegro
- 2 Andante
- 3 Menuetto
- 4 Finale: Spiritoso

Produced by the Barbican

Programme produced by Harriet Smith
All information correct at time of printing
Printed by APS Group on Edixion Offset
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Charismatic pianist Khatia Buniatishvili launches her Artist Spotlight here at the Barbican in the company of the Academy of St Martin in the Fields with a scintillating programme centred around the music of Mozart and Haydn at the peak of their powers, and moving into the early Romantic era with Mendelssohn's wonderfully evocative *Hebrides Overture*.

Like two other works that begin in a shrouded D minor – the Piano Concerto, K466, and the unfinished Requiem – *Don Giovanni* perfectly fulfilled the 19th century's need for a darkly Romantic Mozart. Yet what Mozart and librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte conceived was an essentially comic follow-up to *The Marriage of Figaro*. Premiered in Prague on 29 October 1787, possibly with Casanova as the aptest of spectators, *Don Giovanni* duly replicated *Figaro's* triumph. The Overture's ominous slow introduction foreshadows the music of the 'stone guest', while the feverish Allegro evokes the restlessly driven anti-hero.

Between 1783 and 1786 Mozart successfully promoted himself as composer-virtuoso in the magnificent series of piano concertos he premiered at his Viennese subscription concerts, and designed to appeal both to 'amateurs' (*Kenner*) and 'connoisseurs' (*Liebhaber*). He began to sketch the popular A major concerto K488 in 1784 but only completed it on 2 March 1786, for performance at one of his Viennese 'academies'.

Uniquely among the six concertos of 1785–6, K488 omits trumpets and drums; and with clarinets replacing the



more penetrating oboes, the orchestral colouring has a special warmth and radiance. From the gracefully dipping opening melody, Mozart stakes almost everything on sheer melodic beauty. We might expect the central development to grow from one or other of the main themes, as would be the norm. Not here. Out of the blue Mozart introduces a haunting new string melody, which the piano then takes up and embellishes, in dialogue with the woodwind.

Written against the background of a siciliano, the poignant Adagio, Mozart's only piece in F sharp minor, anticipates the confessional Romanticism of Chopin. The spirit temporarily lightens with a serenading woodwind episode. But the coda, with its forlorn leaps for the soloist against bare string pizzicatos, is unrelievedly desolate.

The finale then bounds in with a glorious sense of release. With its exhilarating rhythmic élan and impish sparring between soloist and orchestra the whole movement is a reminder that so much of Mozart's instrumental music is comic opera by other means.

As a boy Mendelssohn had imbibed a romanticised Scotland through the novels of Sir Walter Scott and the 'Ossian' poems concocted by James Macpherson. In 1829, aged 20, he set out from London on a tour of Scotland with his friend Karl Klingemann. On 8 August, the pair took the ferry from Tobermory, on Mull, to the island of Staffa, with its celebrated 'Fingal's Cave' (named after the hero of Ossian's epic verses). Mendelssohn's overture had already been born the previous day, when he enclosed a sketch of the opening in a letter home: 'To make you understand how

extraordinarily the Hebrides affected me, the following came into my mind there.'

True to form, Mendelssohn took long to complete the overture, and revised it twice, in the process changing its name from *Die einsame Insel* ('The lonely island') to *Die Hebriden* ('The Hebrides'). In January 1832 he complained to his sister Fanny that 'the would-be working-out of the movement smells more of counterpoint than of train oil, gulls and salted cod ...' The final version was premiered in London on 14 May 1832, and published as *Fingalshöhle*.

The first great Romantic musical seascape, *The Hebrides* evokes the swells and ebbs of the ocean, its violent storms and its mysterious, shimmering calms, within a subtly organised sonata structure. The laconic opening motif, by turns smooth and turbulent, is developed with extraordinary poetic power. Equally inspired is the way the broad, surging second theme later becomes magically becalmed, courtesy of the clarinets, and is then fleetingly recalled in the overture's final bars.

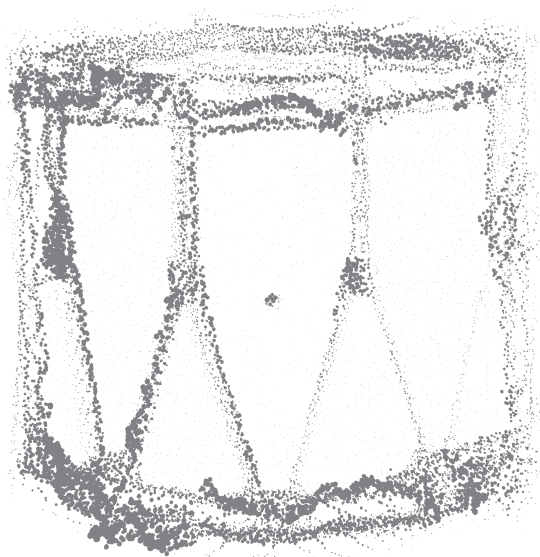
The climax of Haydn's two glittering London visits was a triumphant benefit concert on 4 May 1795 that brought him the colossal sum of 4,000 gulden. ('Such a thing is only possible in England,' he noted with satisfaction). The concert ended with the premiere of his final symphony, No 104. Whether or not Haydn intended the work as his symphonic testament, its mingled grandeur and earthy vigour, argumentative power and visionary poetry, make it a magnificent summation.

In the slow introduction Haydn evokes a cosmic vastness within a two-minute time frame. The Allegro then resolves minor into major with a heart-easing melody whose symphonic potential the composer

mines in the powerfully obsessive central development. The tranquil opening of the Andante is deceptive. Its songlike melody expands with an unsuspected breadth and profundity, then erupts violently in the minor-key central episode.

The boisterous Minuet, replete with aggressive offbeat accents and rude dynamic contrasts, encloses a pastoral Trio in the contrasting key of B flat major. While the finale's main theme, announced over a rustic drone, evoked the street song 'Live cod!' to London audiences (hence the symphony's nickname), its origin has also been traced to a Croatian folk tune. Offsetting the swashbuckling energy is a yearning theme in long sustained notes. Near the end of the development this melody seems to become hypnotised. Then, with a breathtaking harmonic sideslip, the recapitulation takes us unawares – perhaps the subtlest transition in all Haydn, at once witty and poignant.

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© Gavin Evans

Khatia Buniatishvili

French-Georgian pianist Khatia Buniatishvili is one of the most prominent classical artists of today.

She has been blessed with impressive ability and discovered the piano at the age of three thanks to her mother, who used to leave a new musical score on her piano each day for her to devour. She gave her first concert with the Chamber Orchestra of Tbilisi at the age of six. She studied with Tengiz Amiredjibi in Tbilisi and went on to work with Oleg Maisenberg in Vienna.

She has always had a special relationship with her instrument, considering pianos around the world as friends from whom she must bring out the best, respecting both the quirks and charms of their characters.

She is a fixture at the most prestigious venues around the world, and has performed at Carnegie Hall, the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Berliner Philharmonie, Royal Festival Hall, Vienna's Musikverein and Konzerthaus, Philharmonie de Paris, and Suntory Hall, as well as at the Salzburg, Verbier, BBC Proms, Progetto Martha Argerich and Hollywood Bowl festivals. Notable collaborations include performances with the Israel, Los Angeles and Munich Philharmonic orchestras, London, NHK and San Francisco Symphony orchestras, Philadelphia Orchestra and Orchestre National de Paris, and working with prominent conductors, among them Zubin Mehta, Gustavo Dudamel, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Paavo Järvi, Jaap Van Zweden, Gianandrea Noseda, Myung-Whun Chung and Leonard Slatkin.

The audience she inspires with her artistry is not limited to traditional classical music lovers. Her charisma attracts a younger generation and those who would not usually listen to classical music. Her deeply humanistic qualities, piercing intellect, mastery of five languages, involvement in diverse areas of art and in several cultures, mixture of traditional classical musical training and very personal interpretations of composers' scores give her performances depth, intensity and grace.

She is the recipient of two ECHO Klassik Awards, and her recordings range from music by Chopin, Rachmaninov, Brahms, Liszt, Bach and Schubert, to Satie, Morricone, Gainsbourg, Pärt and Cage. In addition to her solo albums, she has recorded with Gidon Kremer, Paavo Järvi and the band Coldplay.

A committed humanitarian, Khatia Buniatishvili has participated in benefit concerts for causes close to her heart: the plight of refugees, the United Nations, human rights and music education.



© Richard Lea-Hair

Academy of St Martin in the Fields

Founded in 1958 by Sir Neville Marriner, the Academy of St Martin in the Fields has evolved into a musical powerhouse, an orchestra renowned across the world for its commitment to the musical freedom of its players and the sharing of joyful, inspiring performances.

Today, with Music Director Joshua Bell, ASMF's player-led approach empowers every member of the orchestra. This creates a direct line and electrifying connection between the orchestra and its audiences, resulting in ambitious and collaborative performances that transcend the more traditional conductor-led model.

In 2024/25, ASMF presents more than 100 concerts, launching the season at the Royal Albert Hall with a BBC Proms performance of Handel's *Messiah* with John Butt and a live show of *The Rest is History* podcast with Tom Holland and Dominic Sandbrook.

Internationally, ASMF and Joshua Bell toured Prague and Switzerland in September and the ASMF Chamber Ensemble toured the US in October. In November, the orchestra visited Korea with pianist Federico Colli and China with violinist Ning Feng, returning for tonight's Barbican concert. International highlights early in 2025 include a 19-date European tour featuring cycles of Beethoven's piano concertos with Jan Lisiecki alongside works by Errollyn Wallen, Ruth Gipps and Anna Clyne, followed by a visit to the USA with pianist Bruce Liu and a player-led residency and performance of Rimsky-Korsakov's

Scheherazade with Joshua Bell alongside the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

Its season at the church of St Martin-in-the-Fields includes collaborations with cellist Anastasia Kobekina, pianists Bruce Liu and Alexandra Dariescu, countertenor Anthony Roth Costanzo, violinist Augustin Hadelich and violist Timothy Ridout. ASMF is the principal orchestral partner of St Martin-in-the-Fields, which is the orchestra's historic home.

Beyond the concert hall, ASMF's commitment to a social purpose is borne out by projects that harness the power of music to empower people. It has a longstanding history of work which connects with people experiencing homelessness, while its education projects develop autonomy and creativity among emerging musicians worldwide.

ASMF's collective artistic responsibility fosters enduring collaborations with world-renowned soloists, exemplified by its 15-year partnership with Music Director and virtuoso violinist Joshua Bell.

Building on its rich global legacy, the Academy of St Martin in the Fields remains one of the world's most-recorded orchestras, igniting a love for classical music in people around the world through live performance and digital initiatives. Today, it continues a busy international touring programme alongside a significant presence in the UK – making the ensemble one of the country's most celebrated cultural exports.



Academy of St Martin in the Fields

violin I

Benjamin Marquise
Gilmore
Miranda Playfair
Matthew Ward
Sijie Chen
Antonia Kesel
Miranda Dale
Jessica Coleman
Mark Derudder

violin II

Amanda Smith
Clare Hayes
Harriet Haynes
Cecily Ward
Tanya Sweiry
Ruth Funnell

viola

Robert Smissen
Fiona Bonds
Nicholas Barr
Alexandros Koustas

cello

Will Schofield
Reinoud Ford
Judith Herbert
Sarah Suckling

double bass

Lynda Houghton
David Stark

flute

Michael Cox
Sarah Newbold

oboe

John Roberts
Hannah Condliffe

clarinet

Fiona Cross
Thomas Lessels

bassoon

Julie Price
Graham Hobbs

horn

Stephen Stirling
Joanna Hensel

trumpet

Mark David
William O'Sullivan

timpani

Louise Goodwin

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We're passionate about expanding access to ensure anyone can participate in art and creativity in London and beyond. From our work with local schools to provide unforgettable learning experiences, to development opportunities for emerging creatives, to discounted tickets to our events, your support helps us make a real difference every day.

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Khatia Buniatishvili

Artist Spotlight



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Buniatishvili**
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Khatia Buniatishvili in Recital
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