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**ASKONAS  
HOLT**

## Ukrainian artists to perform Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in special concert at St Paul's Cathedral



**Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra: Beethoven's Ninth**  
**29 July 2024, 7.30pm**  
**St Paul's Cathedral**  
**Tickets from £30 plus booking fee**

On the evening of Monday 29 July 2024, the **Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra** and its founder and conductor **Keri-Lynn Wilson** will join the **Royal Opera House's Songs for Ukraine Chorus** in a historic performance at London's St Paul's Cathedral.

In a concert presented by the Barbican, Royal Opera House and Askonas Holt, the orchestra and chorus will perform Beethoven's Symphony No 9 in the Ukrainian language. In the 200th-anniversary year of the symphony and its famous "Ode To Joy" fourth movement

which premiered in May 1824, the orchestra's acclaimed Ukrainian-language version of the work (recorded and released on Deutsche Grammophon in Feb 2024) will be performed to re-assert values of freedom, sovereignty, and resistance against Russia's invasion.

Following their performance at the Barbican in 2023, the orchestra return to the City of London for this special performance in St Paul's Cathedral, as part of the orchestra's tour of the great cathedrals and concert halls of Europe and the USA and their continuing demonstration of Ukrainian artistry as the nation fights for its freedom.

The orchestra is joined for this performance by the Royal Opera House's Songs for Ukraine Chorus, formed in spring 2023 in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and made up of 130 Ukrainian people, a majority of whom have been displaced by the war.

**Yaroslava Matvieienko, member of the ROH Songs for Ukraine Chorus** says: *"I went to St Paul's a few years ago as a tourist but could not even think that I would be returning as a performer of a classical masterpiece in the Ukrainian language! I want to welcome old and especially new friends and compatriots to share the power of music, and the sense of togetherness and pride for our country Ukraine and Ukrainians. This concert is the best way to see and understand our inner spirit when we unite."*

The awe-inspiring architecture of St Paul's Cathedral is an apt backdrop for Beethoven's mighty work and this unique collaboration between the Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra, the Barbican and the Royal Opera House. Performing together beneath the iconic dome of St Paul's for the first time, the orchestra, choruses and the orchestra's founder and conductor Keri-Lynn Wilson will join the ranks of other great orchestras and conductors who have performed beneath it.

**Keri-Lynn Wilson, Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra founder and conductor**, says: *"As Ukraine continues its fight on behalf of the free world, it needs our support more than ever and we will proudly take our message across Europe and the United States in an expression of love for Ukraine and our steadfastness in our resistance to tyranny."*

Over the years, St Paul's Cathedral has held performances from Barbican's resident orchestra the London Symphony Orchestra, the Philharmonic Orchestra, the Hallé Orchestra, and conductors from Leonard Bernstein to Mark Elder and Daniel Harding.

The concert will open with the **UK premiere** of a new work by acclaimed Ukrainian composer **Victoria Vita Polevá** entitled *Freedom*. The piece is the latest in a series of responses to the invasion composed by Polevá, including *Bucha. Lacrimosa*, created in memory of the innocent victims of the Russian invasion of the Ukrainian town of Bucha in 2022.

**Helen Wallace, Barbican Head of Music** says: *"We're thrilled to be supporting the Ukraine Freedom Orchestra again following their Barbican concert last year, and at this very special City of London venue. The Royal Opera House's inspirational Songs for Ukraine project is all about the importance of collaboration and the power of music to unify people. It's a timely opportunity to honour the bravery of the Ukrainian people in the face of this brutal invasion."*

**Jillian Barker, Royal Opera House Director of Learning and Participation** says: *"The Royal Opera House is incredibly proud and humbled to be a part of this wonderful concert. Our Songs for Ukraine Chorus was created to unite the Ukrainian community through the power of music, and this collaboration with the Barbican, Keri-Lynn Wilson and the Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra is a continuation of our support and admiration for the people of Ukraine."*

## **About the Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra**

The **Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra** was formed in 2022 by Keri-Lynn Wilson, in coordination with the Ukrainian Ministry of Culture, New York's Metropolitan Opera, and the Polish National Opera in Warsaw. It was a direct response to Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine and a bold initiative to defend Ukraine's cultural legacy as the country fights for its freedom in the face of violence and aggression. The orchestra brings together leading musicians in Ukraine alongside Ukrainian musicians forced into exile by the war and Ukrainian members of European ensembles. Male members of the orchestra based in Ukraine have been given special governmental permission to leave the country and deploy their musical excellence as part of the wider war effort in a remarkable demonstration of the power of art over adversity.

## **About the Royal Opera House's Songs for Ukraine Chorus**

The Royal Opera House's **Songs for Ukraine Chorus** was established in spring 2023 in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Made up of 130 Ukrainian people, a majority of whom have been displaced by the war, the Chorus celebrates Ukrainian culture and resilience. Formed as part of the Royal Opera House's Creative Exchange programme, the Songs for Ukraine Chorus, performing alongside members of the Royal Opera Chorus, demonstrate the power of music to inspire hope and solidarity.

## **ENDS**

### **Notes to Editors**

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### **About the Barbican**

The Barbican is a catalyst for creativity, sparking possibilities for artists, audiences, and communities. We showcase the most exciting art from around the world, pushing traditional artistic boundaries to entertain and inspire millions of people, create connections, provoke debate, and reflect the world we live in.

We are an international arts and events centre rooted firmly in our own neighbourhood, collaborating with local communities and putting the City of London on the map as a destination for everybody. Central to our purpose is supporting emerging talent and shaping opportunities that will accelerate the next generation of creatives.

As a not-for-profit, we rely on the generosity of individuals and organisations, including our principal funder the City of London Corporation. Every ticket purchased, donation made, and pound earned supports our arts and learning programme and enables the widest possible range of people to experience the joy of the arts.

Opened in 1982, the Barbican is a unique and audacious building, recognised globally as an architectural icon. As well as our theatres, galleries, concert halls and cinemas, we have a

large conservatory with over 1,500 species of plants and trees, a library, conference facilities, public and community spaces, restaurants, bars, and a picturesque lakeside oasis.

We're proud to be the home of the [London Symphony Orchestra](#), and a London base of the [Royal Shakespeare Company](#). We regularly co-commission, produce and showcase the work of our other associates and partners including the [Academy of Ancient Music](#), [the BBC Symphony Orchestra](#), [Boy Blue](#), [Britten Sinfonia](#), [Cheek by Jowl](#), [Darbar Festival](#), [Doc'n Roll Film Festival](#), [Drum Works](#), [EFG London Jazz Festival](#), [Human Rights Watch Film Festival](#), [London Palestine Film Festival](#), [National Open Youth Orchestra \(NOYO\)](#), [Serious](#), and [Trafalgar Entertainment](#).

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## **About Royal Opera House**

Home to The Royal Ballet, The Royal Opera and the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, the Royal Opera House brings together world-class performers and trailblazing creative teams to share unforgettable performances with audiences near and far. Our theatres are in the heart of London's Covent Garden, but our work is accessed and experienced across the UK and globally through ROH Stream, tours, cinema programme, radio broadcasts and TV output. Our work in schools and communities up and down the country is driven by our curriculum linked Create & Learn programmes, specially designed to inspire creativity, broaden participation and diversify the future of opera and ballet. These sit alongside industry-leading talent development projects, regional partnerships, and a raft of daytime events, family activities, tours, exhibitions and free concerts here in our iconic Covent Garden home. We are also expanding our audience through our flagship Young ROH scheme and are committed to reducing our impact on the environment and net zero emissions by 2035.

## **About Askonas Holt**

With a history dating back over a century, Askonas Holt is one of the world's leading arts management companies, specialising in classical music. Working across the globe, the highly experienced team provides bespoke, strategic career management for established and emerging artists, with a roster that includes Sir Simon Rattle, Nicola Benedetti, Joyce DiDonato and Jakub Józef Orliński. The Askonas Holt Fellowship programme nurtures the next generation of talent, providing bespoke mentorship and financial support for emerging conductors and singers.

The award-winning Tours and Projects department arranges tours and residencies for orchestras, ensembles and dance companies, and is committed to leading new collaborative initiatives that put the containment of the climate crisis at the heart of every touring decision. It has been breaking new ground for decades, from the Berliner Philharmoniker's first tour of Asia and the Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra's landmark tour in 2007, to the Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra's debut tour in 2022.

Askonas Holt has offices in London and Berlin, and is part of a strategic alliance under the umbrella of the San Francisco of Music, along with sister companies Opus 3 Artists in New York and recording label Pentatone. The alliance organisations share a common mission to increase the impact of music in the world, and to change the nature of how artists, students, patrons and audiences interact with one another.