



## Sounding the Century

**Oslo Philharmonic and Vasily Petrenko celebrate the orchestra's centenary with eight-concert, seven-country European tour (13-22 October 2019)**

**Centenary season includes major new works by Kaija Saariaho, Steve Reich and Rolf Wallin, and focus on the art of listening**

National and civic pride helped launch the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra a century ago. They have been boosted since by its outstanding achievements at home and on the international stage. The Norwegian orchestra, which gave its first performance in September 1919, marks its centenary year in style with a landmark season at home and a major European tour under the direction of Chief Conductor, Vasily Petrenko. The eight-concert tour opens on Sunday 13 October at Cologne's Philharmonie and unfolds over the following fortnight with visits to, among other leading venues, the Amsterdam Concertgebouw (14 October), the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg (15 October), the Vienna Konzerthaus (16 October) and Turin's Centro Congressi (20 October). It is set to conclude at the Barbican Centre in London on Tuesday 22 October.

The Oslo Philharmonic's centenary tour programme celebrates the best of Norway's musical heritage in the form of Arne Nordheim's *Canzona* and Edvard Grieg's Piano Concerto in A minor, with Leif Ove Andsnes as soloist. It also embraces Richard Strauss's tone poem *Don Juan*, performed at the orchestra's first subscription concert in 1919, Shostakovich's Symphony No.10 and Rachmaninov's Symphony No.2, compositions drawn from the heart of Vasily Petrenko's repertoire. The A minor Piano Concerto connects directly with the programme of the orchestra's debut concert and more broadly with Grieg's role in creating the institution from which the Oslo Philharmonic developed.

"We're taking the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra's signature pieces on tour," comments Vasily Petrenko. "We have one of the most famous contemporary pieces by a Norwegian composer, Nordheim's *Canzona*, as well as Grieg's Piano Concerto, perhaps the best-known work from Norway." The orchestra, he adds, developed its lasting affinity for the works of Shostakovich and Rachmaninov under the long and distinguished leadership of Mariss Jansons. "I'm very glad to bring a fresh interpretation to this repertoire for the centenary. We've played quite a lot of Russian repertoire together over the last six years, and I look forward to exploring these great works on tour. We have also performed and are recording a cycle of the Strauss tone poems, and *Don Juan* will be part of our next release. It's very much under the players' fingers and in their veins! We're going to perform at some fantastic halls and I expect this to be a great tour."

Ingrid Røynesdal, the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra's Chief Executive Officer, places the centenary tour within a broad context of local, national and international celebrations. The orchestra, she explains, plans to reach diverse audiences across Oslo with performances given from the back of a specially adapted truck. It will also present an open-air concert in front of the Royal Palace for an audience of 20,000 people, and celebrate Norway's historic commitment to democracy with a campaign devoted to the art of listening.

The tour, adds Røynesdal, offers the ideal vehicle for the orchestra to deliver its centenary project to major concert halls across Europe. "Being on tour for two weeks allows us to take our message about listening and reaching out to audiences and journalists in six countries. That message will be so important throughout the whole anniversary year. This is a special time for the arts and culture in Oslo, with our centenary starting shortly before the new National Museum, Munch Museum and Public Library open in 2020. It's exciting for us to be part of such a vibrant cultural scene and, with our centenary tour, to draw attention to that beyond Norway. This is the start of a long investment in the arts in Oslo, which is central to our vision for the orchestra's future."

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**Autumn 2019 international tour dates:**

**Vasily Petrenko** conductor | **Leif Ove Andsnes** piano

**13 October in Cologne, Philharmonie**

**Nordheim** *Canzona*

**Grieg** Piano Concerto

**Rachmaninov** Symphony No.2

**14 October in Amsterdam, Concertgebouw**

**Strauss** *Don Juan*

**Grieg** Piano Concerto

**Shostakovich** Symphony No.10

**15 October in Hamburg, Elbphilharmonie**

**Nordheim** *Canzona*

**Grieg** Piano Concerto

**Rachmaninov** Symphony No.2

**16 October in Vienna, Konzerthaus**

**Strauss** *Don Juan*

**Grieg** Piano Concerto

**Rachmaninov** Symphony No.2

**18 October in Ljubljana, Cankarjev Dom**

**Strauss** *Don Juan*

**Grieg** Piano Concerto

**Shostakovich** Symphony No.10

**19 October in Udine, Teatro Giovanni da Udine**

**Nordheim** *Canzona*

**Grieg** Piano Concerto

**Rachmaninov** Symphony No.2

**20 October in Torino, Centro Congressi Turin**

**Strauss** *Don Juan*

**Grieg** Piano Concerto

**Shostakovich** Symphony No.10

**22 October in London, Barbican**

**Strauss** *Don Juan*

**Grieg** Piano Concerto

**Shostakovich** Symphony No.10

**Highlights from the 2019/20 Oslo Philharmonic season**

Petrenko will launch the Oslo Philharmonic's centenary season on Wednesday 21 August with the world premiere of a specially commissioned composition by Øyvind Torvund set in company with Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony. He returns for the orchestra's birthday concerts on Friday 27 & Saturday 28 September, opening with the first performance of Rolf Wallin's *Soundspeed* and placing movements from works written in 1919, Elgar's Cello Concerto and Stravinsky's *The Firebird* Suite among them, alongside scores minted in 2019 by Norwegian composers Øyvind Torvund and Therese Birkelund Ulvo. The programme also includes the first movement of Grieg's Piano Concerto and extracts from Pauline Hall's *Verlaine Suite*. Petrenko will lead the Oslo Philharmonic in performances of Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben*, Mahler's Ninth Symphony, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (in Mahler's orchestration), Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra and other large-scale symphonic works.

"There are clear links between Beethoven and Mahler in our centenary season," says Vasily Petrenko. "We will celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Beethoven's birth next year. Mahler promoted Beethoven's work as a conductor and was, in many ways, his heir as a symphonic composer. Mahler's reorchestration of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony shows the connection between the two composers. We're also performing Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* together

with Wagner's Prelude and Liebestod from *Tristan und Isolde*, so the whole season is packed with great musical milestones."

Other centenary highlights include Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony with the orchestra's Chief Conductor Designate, Klaus Mäkelä (Wednesday 6 & Thursday 7 October); the premiere of the hugely popular comedy duo Igudesman & Joo's *Beethoven's Nightmare* (Tuesday 7, Wednesday 8 & Thursday 9 January 2020); Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*, conducted by Dalia Stasevksa and presented at Oslo's Spectrum (Tuesday 28 January); a programme of works by Wagner, Berg and Brahms conducted by Kent Nagano (Thursday 5 March); the third and fifth symphonies of Mahler conducted respectively by Esa-Pekka Salonen and Manfred Honeck (Thursday 19 & Friday 20 March; Wednesday 29 & Thursday 30 April); Beethoven's Violin Concerto with Vilde Frang and Herbert Blomstedt (Thursday 26 & Friday 27 March); Kaija Saariaho's *Vistas*, a co-commission with the philharmonic orchestras of Berlin, New York and Helsinki (Thursday 23 April 2020); and a new work for orchestra by Steve Reich and Gerhard Richter (Thursday 14 May).

The centenary season, observes Ingrid Røynesdal, has been built around the theme of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow. "We have commissioned 15 new works for the centenary," she says. "Our audience can explore material from the orchestra's archives presented on new webpages and in a book we've commissioned to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and we will use the programme to talk about the future of the Oslo Philharmonic and of the symphony orchestra over the coming century."