



Art Above All

Concerto Budapest Symphony Orchestra's latest UK tour invites audiences to experience the transcendent power of works by Beethoven, Liszt, Shostakovich and Tchaikovsky

Hungarian symphony orchestra and its Chief Conductor and Artistic Director András Keller, will be joined on tour by Paul Lewis in Beethoven's Piano Concerto No.3

Five-concert itinerary comprises dates in Dublin, Warwick, Birmingham, London and Edinburgh

'[Concerto Budapest Symphony Orchestra] are indeed an excellent ensemble with a distinctive sound, the strings lean rather than plush, the woodwind poised and expressive, the brass warmly vibrant. Keller, meanwhile, also well known as a violinist, and founder of the string quartet that takes his name, brings a chamber musician's instinct for detail to his conducting, with results that can be compelling,' *The Guardian*, review of Cadogan Hall concert, 15 September 2023.

Tour Teaser: [UK / IRELAND Tour 2025](#)

Concerto Budapest Symphony Orchestra together with its Artistic Director and Chief Conductor, András Keller, are set to undertake their third UK tour later this year. They preface their return with a trip to Ireland for an evening at the National Concert Hall in Dublin (29 November), before heading to Warwick Arts Centre (2 December), Birmingham Symphony Hall (3 December), London's Cadogan Hall (4 December) and Usher Hall in Edinburgh (7 December). Concerto Budapest's tour programmes are guaranteed to stir the heart and soul of the 80-strong Hungarian orchestra. Their repertoire includes Beethoven's Symphony No.5, Shostakovich's Symphony No.9, Liszt's symphonic poem *Les Préludes* and Tchaikovsky's symphonic fantasy after Dante, *Francesca da Rimini*. Paul Lewis will take the solo part in Beethoven's Piano Concerto No.3 in all five concerts.

Under András Keller's charismatic leadership since 2007, the youthful members of Concerto Budapest Symphony Orchestra have built on a tradition that stems from the orchestra's foundation more than a century ago. Together they have cultivated a corporate dynamism and collective passion that are reflected in the richness and intensity of the orchestra's sound and the profound insights and eloquence of their interpretations. Their music-making, praised by the *Guardian* for its 'clarity and focus', is supported by Maestro Keller's imaginative programming, collaborations with acclaimed guest artists, and an extensive schedule of domestic and international tours. Concerto Budapest also draws inspiration from the example of its Honorary President, the great Hungarian composer György Kurtág, former master of Keller, who has been fundamental to the creation and development of the organisation's artistic ethos. The orchestra will play a key role premiering exclusive new compositions of the composer as part of the international celebrations his 100th birthday later that month.

"It gives me great pleasure to return to the UK with Concerto Budapest for the third time since making our debut in 2022, and to renew our acquaintance with the fantastic British audience," comments András Keller. "Discerning, knowledgeable and sensitively attuned to what they're hearing, the British public is particularly important to me, and I am proud to be able to boast many connections to this wonderful country. I made my debut there at the Bath Festival with Bartók's Sonata for solo violin over 40 years ago, and have returned many times since to perform as a soloist or with the Keller Quartet at every major UK concert hall and festival."

The Budapest-born conductor's choice of tour repertoire encapsulates what he describes as an infinite range of human emotions. "In today's increasingly virtual world," he notes, "we all have a great need for communicating genuine feelings: this is why we have selected works for our latest tour of the UK and Ireland that explore the enormous struggles we might face in our paths to attaining redemption or fulfilment. In this sense, Liszt's *Les Préludes*, Tchaikovsky's *Francesca da Rimini* and Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 3 and immortal Fifth Symphony are all connected to each other. Shostakovich's brilliant Ninth Symphony, depicting heroic struggles

against fate, can be related to the above masterpieces on another level. This remarkable work, completed at the end of the Second World War, is actually a kind of 'anti'-ninth symphony. It reminds people today that art can never be placed in the service of any ideological or political goal, because it is transcends them all!"

These works combined, notes Keller, hold the power to plunge performers and listeners alike into a world of heightened emotions and supercharged feelings. "The drama of *Francesca da Rimini* begins amidst the terrifying tempest of hellfire, from where emerges what is perhaps the most beautiful and tortured love-song the world has ever known. Then Beethoven's Third Piano Concerto opens up new horizons for us as we enter his vast realm of heroic struggle. From there we venture boldly forth into *Les Preludes* ("What else is our life but a series of preludes to that unknown Hymn, the first and solemn note of which is intoned by Death?", as Liszt put it), before culminating with Beethoven's immortal Fifth – his 'Fate' symphony. Fate never ceases to knock ruthlessly at our doors. But Beethoven tells us to fight, to resist it with all our strength. Only through this battle does our life gain meaning; only in this way can we emerge victorious. Beethoven's idealistic and infinite love for all humanity illuminates our path from the depths of hell to the heavens."

Beethoven's Piano Concerto No.3 in C minor is a work in which soloist and orchestra operate as equals. The resulting dialogue demands courage from the pianist and, in András Keller's view, requires a genuine spirit of competition. Paul Lewis makes his Concerto Budapest Symphony Orchestra debut with a composition that stands at the heart of his repertoire. "This was Beethoven's first truly symphonic concerto. Of course, some of the later Mozart concertos are symphonic in their way," he says. "But this, I think, pushes it to another level of dramatic tension. So the orchestra certainly establishes itself as a major character on stage, and I think it's the soloist's job, when the piano eventually enters, to step up to that. Interestingly, it's the first concerto I can think of where the cadenza is the climax of the first movement, the high dramatic point. And it's there, in the cadenza, that the piano really asserts itself over the orchestra, where it has that space to speak with a big voice. I look forward to working with András and Concerto Budapest and discovering their vision of the piece."

International touring has played a significant role in raising Concerto Budapest Symphony Orchestra's status as one of Hungary's leading symphonic ensembles in recent years. Its forthcoming visit to the UK follows its landmark debut tour three years ago and an equally successful return in 2023. "When it comes to developing an orchestra, making recordings and completing tours are particularly strong building blocks," comments András Keller. "Tours offer several benefits at once: shared inspiration across the ensemble, an enhanced sense of community, and a huge professional challenge. It's very important to restrict each tour to an optimal length, so that we can keep ourselves physically and mentally fit, and also preserve our level of interest and sense of curiosity. In fact, our lives are very similar to those of elite athletes, only we form a much larger team!"

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For a multimedia summary of Concerto Budapest Symphony Orchestra's work and ongoing development see:

[EXPLORE CONCERTO BUDAPEST](#)

Concerto Budapest Symphony Orchestra has created an extensive video and film library over the past five years. With special concert films, produced for MEZZO TV under the music direction of **András Keller** and directed and produced by **Imre Szabo-Stein**, they have earned prestigious international television and film awards, the Venice TW Award and New York Festivals TV & Film Awards among them. Their film-quality live streaming enterprise, evolved since the first days of the Covid pandemic, has reached an audience of millions in Hungary and internationally, delivered in cooperation with such important media as The Violin Channel and [Gramophone](#). Their last streaming venture, Mozart Day 2024, won a Lovie Award for excellence in internet content.

[Mozart Day 2024 LOVIE AWARDS teaser](#)

[Mozart Day 2024: \(WINNER OF LOVIE AWARDS - FILMS & VIDEOS IN ENTERTAINMENT SPECIAL 2024\)](#)

[Carpathian Rhapsody \(WINNER OF SILVER TOWER AT NEW YORK FESTIVALS TV&FILM AWARDS IN PERFORMING ARTS FILMS 2022\)](#)

[MEZZO INTRO Concerto Budapest Kremerata Baltica Intro \(WINNER OF GOLDEN \(WINGED\) LION A](#)

TOUR DETAILS

PROGRAMME A

Paul Lewis piano | **András Keller** conductor | **Concerto Budapest**

Tchaikovsky Francesca da Rimini

Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 3

Interval

Liszt Les Preludes

Beethoven Symphony No. 5

PROGRAMME B

Paul Lewis piano | **András Keller** conductor | **Concerto Budapest**

Liszt Les Preludes

Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 3

Interval

Shostakovich Symphony No. 9

Tchaikovsky Francesca da Rimini

PROGRAMME C

Paul Lewis piano | **András Keller** conductor | **Concerto Budapest**

Shostakovich Symphony No. 9

Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 3

Interval

Liszt Les Preludes

Beethoven Symphony No. 5

Saturday 29 November 2025, 7.30pm

National Concert Hall, Dublin

[Event page](#)

PROGRAMME A

Tuesday 2 December 2025, 7.30pm

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

[Event page](#)

PROGRAMME B

Wednesday 3 December 2025, 7.30pm

Symphony Hall, Birmingham

[Event page](#)

PROGRAMME C

Thursday 4 December 2025, 7.30pm

Cadogan Hall, London

[Event page](#)

PROGRAMME C

Sunday 7 December 2025, 7.30pm

Usher Hall, Edinburgh

[Event page](#)

PROGRAMME A