

MANCHESTER CLASSICAL

MEDIA RELEASE

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Award-winning festival, Manchester Classical, returns to celebrate the city's rich classical music scene

- The festival includes concerts by the Hallé, the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, English National Opera, Manchester Collective, Riot Ensemble and Royal Northern College of Music
- Festival opens with a Steve Reich special featuring Radiohead guitarist Jonny Greenwood
- The weekend will conclude with an epic concert combining the main stage ensembles including new commission written especially for the festival by Iain Farrington
- Free performances, workshops and family activity throughout the weekend
- Keep up to date at www.mcrclassical.org

Manchester's leading orchestras, choirs and classical music ensembles come together on the weekend of 27-29 June for **Manchester Classical**, a vibrant celebration showcasing Manchester as a premier European hub for world-class artists and classical music.

After the inaugural festival in 2023, which won the 'Series and Events' Award at the 2024 Royal Philharmonic Society Awards, the 2025 festival builds on the collaborative spirit of Manchester to ensure this incredible part of Manchester's music scene continues to thrive.

Taking place at The Bridgewater Hall, the festival includes concerts by the Hallé, the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, English National Opera, Manchester Collective, Riot Ensemble and Royal Northern College of Music.

Friday 27 June – Festival Launch

The Hallé kicks off the festival on Friday evening in a concert celebrating the music of minimalist composer Steve Reich with Radiohead's guitarist **Jonny Greenwood** taking the solo spot in *Pulse*, scored for winds, strings, piano and electric bass. The concert also includes Reich favourites *Clapping Music* and *Variations for Vibes, Piano and Strings*.

Saturday 28 June – Main Stage Highlights

At 11am, the **Hallé Children's Choir** starts the day with a performance of songs from stage and screen. **RNCM Symphony Orchestra and Chorus** will take to the stage at 2pm to perform Mahler's glorious Second Symphony. At 5pm, the innovative **Riot Ensemble** bring a contemporary set and at 8pm, **the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra** conclude the day with an orchestral

programme conducted by Anja Bihlmaier, including Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, featuring piano soloist Hayato Sumino.

Sunday 29 June – Main Stage Highlights

At 10.30am, family audiences will be treated to **the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra's** performance of Quentin Blake's heartwarming *Box of Treasures*, with the film shown on the big screen. Enjoy a concert of Opera Favourites at 1pm with one of the finest professional operatic ensembles in the UK today, the **Chorus of ENO**, accompanied by the **Hallé Manchester Collective** takes the afternoon slot at 3.30pm with an adventurous show *The Body Electric* featuring music by Bach, Missy Mazzoli, and Julia Wolfe.

The weekend draws to a spectacular conclusion at 6.30pm with a landmark joint concert featuring members of the main stage ensembles performing Respighi's *The Pines of Rome* and featuring John Adams' 'fanfare for orchestra', *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*. Conducted by Alpesh Chauhan, the concert will also feature a new commission by Iain Farrington, raising the roof of The Bridgewater Hall as musicians from the main stage ensembles take to the stage for an epic combined performance.

Free events

Free events throughout the weekend include performances by **BVG: The Indian Choir of England**, **AMC Gospel Choir**, **Hallé Youth Training Choir** and **The Hallé Ancoats Community Choir** and a family concert by musicians of **the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra**. There will also be free workshops and family activities for all to enjoy.

Food and drink

Food and drink will be available throughout the weekend. More details will be announced soon.

Tickets

Tickets include day and weekend passes as well as individual ticket options. **Full details can be found at www.mcrclassical.org**

David Butcher, Chief Executive of the Hallé said:

"Manchester Classical represents the forward-thinking, collaborative spirit of Manchester and we are delighted to showcase the rich and diverse talent of the city's classical and choral scene with this inspiring festival. Whether you are a seasoned concertgoer or have never seen an orchestra before, we encourage you to come along, join in, and experience the world leading talent we have to offer for all to enjoy. We would also like to extend our thanks to Manchester City Council for supporting this project and to The Bridgewater Hall for hosting us for the weekend."

Adam Szabo, Director of the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, said:

*"Manchester Classical is a brilliant opportunity to experience the sheer power and beauty of live orchestral music, and it's always exciting to see so many of the city's incredible ensembles come together for one weekend. The BBC Philharmonic Orchestra is especially looking forward to bringing Quentin Blake's *Box of Treasures* to life — it's a magical story that will capture the imagination of audiences young and old. We're also excited to showcase a programme featuring R. Strauss's *Death and Transfiguration*, Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, and Bernstein's *Symphonic Dances*, conducted by Principal Guest Conductor, Anja Bihlmaier, and to join Manchester's orchestras for a grand finale with conductor Alpesh Chauhan, which will include Iain Farrington's exciting new commission and*

Respighi's magnificent Pines of Rome. Festivals like this are vital in making classical music accessible to everyone, and we're proud to be part of such a vibrant celebration of Manchester's musical talent"

Andrew Bolt, Chief Executive of The Bridgewater Hall said:

"I know I speak for the entire team at The Bridgewater Hall when I say that we are delighted to once again be an active partner in supporting Manchester Classical for 2025. We welcome the world class ensembles that will collaborate in bringing the very best in classical music to our beautiful Hall. There really will be something for everyone! We extend our thanks to Manchester City Council and the many organisations, musicians, and artists that will give their resources and talents to the people of this exciting city of Manchester during this amazing weekend."

Annilese Miskimmon, ENO's Artistic Director, said: *'English National Opera are delighted to be taking part in this year's Manchester Classical festival, with the Chorus of ENO making their Manchester debut and collaborating with the Hallé orchestra. This festival is a brilliant celebration of classical music across the city-region showcasing the vibrant talent and collaborative spirit that Manchester has to offer.'*

SCHEDULE

FRIDAY 27 JUNE 2025

20.00 – Main Stage

The Hallé kicks things off with a concert featuring Radiohead's Jonny Greenwood celebrating the music of legendary minimalist composer, Steve Reich, conducted by Colin Currie.

SATURDAY 28 JUNE 2025

10.00 - Barbirolli Room

The BBC Philharmonic Orchestra performs live *Three Billy Goats Gruff* from *Musical Storyland*, as seen on CBeebies. Aimed at children aged 3–7, but enjoyable for all ages.

11.00 - Main Stage

The Hallé's Children's Choir performs music from *Beauty and the Beast*, *Singing in the Rain* and *Come Follow the Band* from the musical, *Barnum*.

12.30 - Barbirolli Room

Hallé Youth Training Choir performs a selection of their favourite songs.

14.00 - Main Stage

The combined forces of the RNCM Symphony Orchestra and Chorus perform Mahler's colossal Second Symphony.

15.45 - Barbirolli Room

BVG: The Indian Choir of England performs joyful, uplifting and soothing Indian choral compositions.

17.00 - Main Stage

Aaron Holloway-Nahum conducts Riot Ensemble in works by Alex Paxton and Kristine Tjøgersen.

19.00 - Barbirolli Room

The Hallé Ancoats Community Choir performs uplifting music, from traditional songs to folk tunes, gospel pieces and original compositions.

20.00 - Main Stage

Anja Bihlmaier conducts the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra in R. Strauss's *Death and Transfiguration*, Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* and Bernstein's *Symphonic Dances*.

SUNDAY 29 JUNE

10.30 - Main Stage

The BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Robert Ames, presents a live family concert with film for children aged 5 +, featuring Stefano Cabrero's score for Quentin Blake's *Box of Treasures*.

12.00 - Barbirolli Room

Come and join in with a fun and uplifting Singing Workshop.

13.00 - Main Stage

Hallé orchestra and the Chorus of ENO perform Opera Favourites by Puccini, Verdi and Britten.

14.30 - Barbirolli Room

AMC Gospel Choir perform rich and vibrant gospel music.

15.30 - Main Stage

Manchester Collective immerse us in the sublime and the electric with violinist Rakhi Singh and cellist Zoë Martlew performing Bach, Missy Mazzoli, and Julia Wolfe's epic *LAD*.

18.30 - Main Stage

Manchester's ensembles combine for a concert including a new commission by Iain Farrington and performances of Respighi's *The Pines of Rome* and John Adams' 'fanfare for orchestra', *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*.

ENDS

Find out more at <https://www.mcrclassical.org>

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LINKS

[The BBC Philharmonic Orchestra](#)

[The Hallé](#)

[Manchester Collective](#)

[English National Opera](#)

[Royal Northern College of Music](#)

[Riot Ensemble](#)