



Shaping the Future

Vasily Petrenko launches 2021-22 season with first concerts in charge of Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and State Academic Symphony Orchestra of Russia 'Evgeny Svetlanov' Conductor's guest engagements include returns to Liverpool, Montreal and Oslo and dates in Australia, New Zealand and Asia

Waiting for providence to run its course has never appealed to Vasily Petrenko. The Russo-British conductor has shown dynamic leadership throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, speaking up for orchestral musicians, highlighting the value of what they do and raising their public profile. He is set to reinforce his case during the 2021-22 season when he starts work as the new Music Director of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Artistic Director of the State Academic Symphony Orchestra of Russia 'Evgeny Svetlanov' (otherwise known as GASO for its Cyrillic acronym). Petrenko's schedule is also rich in guest conducting dates everywhere from Amsterdam and Dresden to Melbourne and Singapore and further work in his role as Chief Conductor of the European Union Youth Orchestra. He also returns to familiar grounds in Oslo and Liverpool, having assumed with the RLPO the title of Conductor Laureate following his acclaimed 15-year tenure at the orchestra's helm.

Questions about the future of classical music have long been on Vasily Petrenko's mind. Positive answers, he suggests, will only arise from a position of artistic strength. While many uncertainties remain about the post-Covid world, the conductor looks forward to influencing his two new orchestras' prospects. "I'm thrilled to begin work with the RPO and GASO this season," he comments. "They are quite different in their structures, schedules and character. But both orchestras are determined to rise to the very top; they both really want to work hard to improve, which is so important. And both have great managements. Coming into my new role in Moscow, where I have been a regular guest, I can see many opportunities, just as there are in London with the RPO, as it celebrates its 75th anniversary season."

Petrenko's portfolio of concerts over the coming year strikes a fine balance between commitments to the RPO and GASO and guest engagements around the world. He returns to conduct the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra on 16 March 2022, where he served as Chief Conductor from 2013 to 2020, with a compelling programme of music by Ethel Smyth and George Gershwin, before making his first appearance on 5 May in his role as the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra's Conductor Laureate with Mahler's Fifth Symphony and the UK premiere of Victoria Borisova-Ollas's Cello Concerto *Remember me Giselle*. He will also direct works by Liadov, Shostakovich and Rimsky-Korsakov for the RLPO's latest 'White Nights' concerts (7 & 10 July 2022).

Other guest conducting highlights include returns to the Danish National Symphony Orchestra (30 September & 1 October), the Montreal Symphony Orchestra (13 & 14 October) and the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, and his first concerts in Australia, New Zealand, and in Japan with the NHK Symphony Orchestra for almost five years.

"I have generally been lucky with quarantines over the last season," recalls Petrenko. "I hope that continues and I'm able to travel to all of these places. The problem is when travel restrictions are made without notice. The vaccination programme around the world and, hopefully, the acceptance of international vaccination certificates will make travel much easier, along with ways of working that protect musicians and allow concerts to continue. Hopefully we can see the light at the end of the tunnel. It's very important now for people to be able to hear live music and be present at concerts."

Vasily Petrenko made headline news at the beginning of August when he called on countries to set aside political differences about the merits of one Covid vaccine over another and find ways to help musicians tour again. He

is certain that orchestras help sustain cultural tourism in their home cities and beyond, which is why he calls on the UK government to recognise the sector and develop a clear vision for its long-term development.

“I believe society needs to see some understanding from government that culture is something that can unite society and heal the divisions that are so obvious in the world today” comments Vasily Petrenko. “Humanity without culture is unthinkable. We want to provide this emotional unity for everyone – that’s our job as musicians. I think it’s possible to resolve all the big problems that Covid and Brexit have created for performing artists, but only if the government treats them as priorities. Look how they responded to the European Super League in football, which was effectively killed off within a week. We need to see the same commitment to the future of musicians in this country.”

Petrenko’s personal commitment to the future of music in the UK is beyond doubt. After fifteen years as Chief Conductor of the RLPO, he brings deep reserves of experience and energy to his new role with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. His first season with the RPO includes a performance of Walton’s *Belshazzar’s Feast* to close the orchestra’s 75th anniversary concert at the Royal Albert Hall (21 September 2021). Their British Choral Masterworks series continues with two further Albert Hall outings, the first for Elgar’s *The Dream of Gerontius* (7 April 2022), with soloists Ed Lyon, Christine Rice and Roderick Williams, the second devoted to Britten’s *War Requiem* (26 May 2022). The Philharmonia Chorus will feature in the Walton, Elgar and Britten performances.

“I look forward to working with the choir after its long silence during the pandemic,” comments Vasily Petrenko. “These will be very special performances, I’m sure, because they haven’t sung together on the big stages for almost two years. While this will be my first *War Requiem*, I have performed the Walton and Elgar several times. All three reflect different stages in the development of British musical culture and, to some extent, different aspects of British mentality. *Belshazzar’s Feast*, which was commissioned as a showpiece for the Leeds Festival, carries a message about the defeat of a tyrant. *Gerontius*, for me, is about more than old age and death; it’s about the eternity of a composer’s creativity and the part musicians play in that.”

Petrenko and the RPO are set to tour the United States in January 2022, including a concert of works by Britten, Elgar and Holst at Carnegie Hall at the end of the month. They also plan to launch their postponed Mahler project at the Royal Albert Hall in the 2022-23 season, opening with the monumental Eighth Symphony on 23 October. His first term in charge of the State Academic Symphony Orchestra of Russia, meanwhile, opened on 15 September 2021 with Shostakovich’s Symphony No.5 and Beethoven’s Third Piano Concerto.

“Throughout the coming season we have programmed pieces such as Elgar’s Second Symphony that are rarely performed in Russia,” he notes. “This is my act of cross-pollination, bringing a piece to GASO that I’ve performed many times and recorded in the UK. We’ll also perform Medtner’s Piano Concerto with Nikolai Lugansky, which is great music. We have several tours together, to the Canary Islands Music Festival in February, for instance, and two large tours to the Russian regions. And we will be busy with three festivals, including open-air concerts in Moscow’s New Jerusalem region and a festival of neglected music from the 20th century and contemporary works.”

In addition to speaking in support of the global community of orchestral players, Vasily Petrenko will also continue to champion the cause of music education at all levels in the UK. He calls for an extension of In Harmony projects and other initiatives designed to give children and young people the chance to learn an instrument or sing in groups, and delivers a heartfelt tribute to the European Union Youth Orchestra. “This is an important part of my life, which is why I wish to continue with the EUYO for long as possible. This orchestra, a great example for Europe, shows how people from all nations can work together. For me it’s a shame that young British musicians can no longer participate. Only time will tell, but I hope some agreement can be found between the EU and the UK that allows them to join us again.”

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The information in this press release was correct at the time of sending. Please check the organisations’ websites and social media for the latest updates.

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RPO 75th ANNIVERSARY CONCERT
Tuesday 21 September 2021, 7.30pm
Royal Albert Hall, London

Vasily Petrenko conductor | **Sir Bryn Terfel** baritone | **Sheku Kanneh-Mason** cello | **Philharmonia Chorus** | **Royal Philharmonic Orchestra**

Delius Over the Hills and Far Away
Elgar Cello Concerto
Walton *Belshazzar's Feast*

Thursday 30 September & Friday 1 October 2021, 7.30pm
DR Koncerthuset, Copenhagen

Vasily Petrenko conductor | **Valentine Michaud** saxophone | **Danish National Symphony Orchestra**

Ravel *La Valse*
Glazunov Saxophone Concerto
Rachmaninov *Symphonic Dances*

Wednesday 13 October 2021, 7.30pm & Thursday 14 October 2021, 10.30am & 7.30pm
Maison symphonique, Montreal

Vasily Petrenko conductor | **Yefim Bronfman** piano | **Orchestre Symphonique de Montreal**

Dorothy Chang *Precipice* (world premiere)
Beethoven Piano Concerto No.3
Sibelius Symphony No.5

Wednesday 3 November 2021, 7.30pm
Royal Festival Hall, London

Vasily Petrenko conductor | **Ning Feng** violin | **Royal Philharmonic Orchestra**

Walton *Johannesburg Festival Overture*
Stravinsky *Petrushka* (1911 original version)
Elgar Violin Concerto

Friday 26 November 2021, 6.30pm, Michael Fowler Centre, Wellington
Saturday 27 November 2021, 7.30pm, Auckland Town Hall

Vasily Petrenko conductor | **Madeleine Pierard** soprano | **Kristin Darragh** mezzo-soprano | **Simon O'Neill** tenor | **Paul Whelan** bass baritone | **Voices New Zealand Choir** | **New Zealand Symphony Orchestra**

Beethoven *Missa Solemnis*

Friday 10 December, 7.30pm & Saturday 11 December 2021, 2pm
Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre

Vasily Petrenko conductor | **Daniel Müller-Schott** cello | **NHK Symphony Orchestra**

Tchaikovsky *Variations on a Rococo Theme*
Mussorgsky/Ravel *Pictures at an Exhibition*, suite

Thursday 3 February 2022, 7.30pm
Royal Festival Hall, London

Vasily Petrenko conductor | **Mao Fujita** piano | **Royal College of Music Chorus** | **Royal Philharmonic Orchestra**

Howard New commission (world premiere)
Rachmaninov *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*
Holst *The Planets*

Saturday 5 March 2022, 7.30pm & Sunday 6 March 2022, 6pm
Kulturpalast, Dresden

Vasily Petrenko conductor | **Ruxandra Donose** alto | **Burkhard Fritz** tenor | **Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra**

Zemlinsky *Sinfonietta*
Mahler *Das Lied von der Erde*

Thursday 10 March 2022 Broadcasting Music Centre Hilversum, 12.30pm (rep TBA)
Friday 11 March 2022 Tivoli Vredenburg Utrecht, 8.15pm
Sunday 13 March 2022 Concertgebouw Amsterdam, 11am

Vasily Petrenko conductor | **Alban Gerhardt** cello | **Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra**

Martin *The Four Seasons*
Tchaikovsky *Variations on a Rococo Theme*
Stravinsky *Le sacre du printemps*

Wednesday 16 & Thursday 17 March 2022, 7pm
Oslo Concert Hall

Vasily Petrenko conductor | **Louis Schwizgebel** piano | **Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra**

Ethel Smyth Overture from *The Wreckers*
Gershwin Piano Concerto
William Walton Symphony No.1 (17 March only)

Wednesday 23 March 2022, 7.30pm
Royal Festival Hall, London

Vasily Petrenko conductor | **Pablo Ferrández** cello | **Royal Philharmonic Orchestra**

Britten *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*
Shostakovich Cello Concerto No.1
Walton Symphony No.1

Thursday 7 April 2022, 7.30pm
Royal Albert Hall, London

Vasily Petrenko conductor | **Christine Rice** mezzo-soprano | **Ed Lyon** tenor | **Roderick Williams** baritone |
Philharmonia Chorus | **Royal Philharmonic Orchestra**

Wagner *Prelude to Parsifal*
Elgar *The Dream of Gerontius*

Tuesday 26 April 2022, 7.30pm
Royal Festival Hall, London

Vasily Petrenko conductor | **Boris Giltburg** piano | **Royal Philharmonic Orchestra**

Coleridge-Taylor *Overture to The Song of Hiawatha*
Beethoven Piano Concerto No.5, 'Emperor'
Vaughan Williams *A London Symphony*

Thursday 5 May 2022, 7.30pm & Sunday 8 May 2022, 2.30pm
Liverpool Philharmonic Hall

Vasily Petrenko conductor | **Truls Mørk** cello (5 May only) | **Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra**

Victoria Borisova-Ollas *Remember Me Giselle*: Cello Concerto (UK premiere, 5 May only)
Mahler Symphony No.5

Thursday 26 May 2022, 7.30pm
Royal Albert Hall, London

Vasily Petrenko conductor | **Lyubov Petrova** soprano | **Andrew Staples** tenor | **Dietrich Henschel** baritone
| **Philharmonia Chorus** | **Royal Philharmonic Orchestra**

Britten *War Requiem*

Sunday 29 May 2022, 7.30pm
Royal Festival Hall, London

Vasily Petrenko conductor | **Kathryn Rudge** mezzo-soprano | **Royal Philharmonic Orchestra**

Elgar *Sea Pictures*
Mahler Symphony No.6

Friday 3 June 2022, 8pm
Maison de la radio, Paris

Vasily Petrenko conductor | **Vadim Gluzman** violin | **Christophe Gaugué** viola | **Stéphane Coutaz** bassoon
| **Catherine Cournot** piano | **Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France**

Glazunov *Stenka Razine*
Shostakovich Concerto for Violin and Orchestra No.2
Sofia Gubaidulina *Quasi hoquetus*
Stravinsky Symphony in three movements