ROYAL LIVERPOOL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Víkingur Ólafsson & Domingo Hindoyan

Sun 29 Nov, 2pm

Please note that all timings are approximate and may be subject to change. Performers are correct at time of uploading.

Domingo Hindoyan *conductor*
Víkingur Ólafsson *piano*

Brahms *Symphony No.3* (33′)
I. Allegro con brio
II. Andante
III. Poco allegretto
IV. Allegro – Un poco sostenuto

-INTERVAL- (20′)

Brahms *Piano Concerto No. 1* (42′)
I. Maestoso
II. Adagio
III. Rondo: Allegro non troppo

First Violins
Thelma Handy *
Adi Brett
Mihkel Kerem
Peter Liang
Martin Richardson *
Concettina Del Vecchio
Stephan Mayer *
Ruth McNamara
Susanna Poole
Elizabeth Lamberton
Emily Mowbray
Qian Wu
Aries Chow
Helen Boardman
Kaylee Ramella

Second Violins
Kate Richardson *
Sophie McQueen
Kate Marsden
James Justin Evans *
David Rimbault
Olga Smoleń
Frances Evans
Chu Yu (Joe) Yang
Konstancja Smolorz
Claire Stranger Ford
Charlotte Dowding
Celia Goodwin

Violas
Catherine Marwood
Nadia Debono
Sarah Hill
David Ruby *
Fiona Stunden *
Rachel Jones
Ian Fair
Daniel Sanxis
Emily Davies
Harriet Mitchell

Cellos
Karen Stephenson
Hilary Browning *
Ian Bracken *
Gethyn Jones *
Alexander Holladay
Mark Lindley
Anna Stuart
Georgina Aasgaard

Double Basses
Marcel Becker
Nathan Knight
Ashley Frampton *
Nigel Dufty *
Filipe Dandalo
Nick Broughton

Flute
Helen Wilson

Piccolo
Sameeta Gahir

Oboe
Catrin Ruth Davies *

Cor Anglais
Drake Gritton

Clarinets
Miquel Ramos Salvadó
Emily Crook

Bassoons
Jonathan Churchett
Rebekah Abramski
Tom Donkin

Contrabassoon
Gareth Twigg

Horns
Timothy Jackson
Simon Griffiths
Stephen Nicholls
Timothy Nicholson
Robert Ashworth

Trumpets
Corey Morris
Hannah Mackenzie

Trombones
Simon Cowen
Simon Powell

Bass Trombone
Simon Chappell

Timpani
Neil Hitt

*Denotes 25 years' service

Víkingur Ólafsson & Domingo Hindoyan
Programme Notes

About the Music

Johannes Brahms (1833-97): Symphony No 3 in F major, op. 90
1. Allegro con brio
2. Andante
3. Poco Allegretto
4. Allegro

Composed: 1883
First Performed: 2 December 1883, Vienna, Musikverein, Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra cond. Hans Richter

Brahms's Third Symphony is in many ways the subtlest, certainly the least 'epic' of his symphonic works. All four movements end quietly – it's hard to think of a symphony before that so completely avoids loudly emphatic endings. In the middle two movements especially, the style and expression are closer to chamber music, with there are intimate dialogues between solo wind instruments, and then there's the beautiful long horn solo in the third movement, with its delicate string accompaniment, closer in style to the gloriously romantic Horn Trio than to anything in the other three symphonies.

Beyond that, the older Brahms's self-protective mask of 'classical objectivity' slips more often here than in any of his other big orchestral works. The Third Symphony begins with the wind instruments outlining a three-note rising figure which dominates the first movement and returns to wind up the argument at the end of the finale. For Brahms this had a specific meaning: the three notes, F – A – F, 'spelt' a motto in German, *Frei aber froh* – 'Free but happy' – an expression of proud defiance, perhaps, by famously lifelong bachelor. Most of the first movement is carried along by a strong, buoyant forward current, though there shadows along the way – there usually are with Brahms.

The middle two movements are much gentler, and are scored for reduced forces (no timpani, trumpets or contrabassoon). The *Andante* begins with a pastoral hymn for woodwind with answering phrases on low strings. So far, so 'happy', , but the searching second theme (clarinet, bassoon with rich supporting string chords) leads into more troubled regions. Woodland imagery is also suggested in the following *Poco Allegretto*, with rippling string figures accompaniment the gorgeous cello melody may suggest gently swaying foliage. Later, the cello melody is taken up by the horn, for German-speaking composers the archetypal romantic woodland instrument.

After a sombre beginning, the finale brings the stormiest, most driven music in the whole symphony. This time we really might expect a noisily triumphant, or

perhaps even atragic conclusion. But at the end it is the element of reverie (again woodwind and rustling strings) that prevails, leading with beautiful emotional logic to a quiet return of the symphony's original 'motto' theme. No triumph, no tragedy, the music seems to say – just peaceful acceptance.

Brahms: Piano Concerto No 1 in D minor, op 15

1. Maestoso
2. Adagio
3. Rondo: Allegro non troppo

Composed: 1858
First Performed: 22 January 1859, Hanover, Court Orchestra, Johannes Brahms (soloist), cond. Joseph Joachim

'My Concerto was a brilliant and decisive – failure', wrote Brahms the morning after the Leipzig premiere of his First Piano Concerto. He wasn't exaggerating. The first performance in Hanover a few days earlier had been received politely, but with little enthusiasm. But Leipzig was much worse. 'At the conclusion three pairs of hands were brought together very slowly,' wrote Brahms, 'whereupon a perfectly distinct hissing from all sides forbade any such demonstration.'

Brahms shouldn't have been too surprised. Here was a piano concerto on much grander terms than most contemporary symphonies, and it wasn't the kind of dashing display-piece audiences had come to expect. The orchestral contribution was much weightier than normal in a concerto, and the harmonic language must have seemed exceptionally harsh to its first hearers.

Rooted in a deeply traumatic memory from Brahms' youth, the opening of the Concerto can startle audiences even today. A fortissimo growl from timpani, low horns and low strings introduces a darkly impassioned first theme. For a while the soloist seems to offer consolation in the face of the orchestra's onslaughts. But as this long movement unfolds the piano is drawn deeper and deeper into the conflict. The ending is as stormy as the beginning.

The slow movement is mostly peaceful and otherworldly, at first almost hymn-like. In his sketches Brahms offered no explanation, but the movement's hushed ending has been heard by several commentators as a prayer for the repose of a soul. The finale returns to action, beginning with a muscular theme that looks back to the first movement's grim struggle, but at a crucial moment an ardent piano solo turns the key from minor to major, and from painful conflict to defiant hope.

About the Artists

Domingo Hindoyan

Domingo Hindoyan was born in Caracas in 1980 to a violinist father and a lawyer mother. He started his musical career as a violinist in the ground-breaking Venezuelan musical education programme El Sistema. He studied conducting at Haute Ecole de Musique in Geneva, where he gained his masters, and in 2012 was invited to join the Allianz International Conductor's Academy, through which he worked with the London Philharmonic and the Philharmonia Orchestra and with conductors like Esa-Pekka Salonen and Sir Andrew Davis.

He was appointed first assistant conductor to Daniel Barenboim at the Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin in 2013, and in 2019, he took up a position as principal guest conductor of the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra. In the same year, he made his debut with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and was appointed as the Orchestra's new Chief Conductor in 2020, taking up his position in September 2021. He has now extended his contract with the Orchestra to 2028.

Víkingur Ólafsson

Víkingur Ólafsson returns to Liverpool Philharmonic Hall after widely acclaimed concerts in 2023, when he stepped in to replace Daniel Barenboim, and 2025.

Ólafsson is regarded as one of the most celebrated classical artists of our time; a unique and visionary musician who brings his profound originality to some of the greatest works in music history.

His recordings resonate deeply with audiences around the world, reaching over one billion streams and winning numerous awards including the 2025 GRAMMY for Best Classical Instrumental Solo for his album of Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, BBC Music Magazine Album of the Year, and Opus Klassik Solo Recording of the Year (twice).

Other notable honours include the Royal Philharmonic Society Gold Medal, Rolf Schock Music Prize, Gramophone's Artist of the Year, Musical America's Instrumentalist of the Year, the Nordic Council Music Prize, the Order of the Falcon (Iceland's order of chivalry) as well as the Icelandic Export Award, given by the President of Iceland.

Ólafsson's latest album, ***Opus 109***, places Beethoven's *Piano Sonata No.30 Op.109* at its heart. In an illuminating and thrilling musical dialogue with Schubert, J S Bach and other works by Beethoven, it traces the lineages that converge on this masterpiece of the piano literature. He tours the anticipated new programme widely, bringing it to the greatest concert halls across Europe and North America.

Engagements in a busy 2026/27 season include appearances in Baden-Baden, Gothenburg, Cincinnati, at the Barbican in London, Paris, several concerts in Germany including with the London Philharmonic in Frankfurt, Salzburg, New York, Seattle, Los Angeles, Vienna, Madrid and Lisbon.

Last season Ólafsson toured the US with Philharmonia Orchestra as featured artist, as well as returning to the Berlin Philharmonic with Semyon Bychkov and the Czech Philharmonic with Sir Antonio Pappano. He also reunited with John Adams and the LA Philharmonic for performances of *After the Fall*, the piano concerto written expressly for him.

Ólafsson was born in Iceland in 1984 and studied piano, first with his mother Svana Víkingsdóttir and later with Erla Stefánsdóttir and Peter Máté, before attending the Juilliard School in New York.

About the Composer

Johannes Brahms

He's been described as the 'Janus' of musical history – a figure looking both back to the classical tradition of Mozart and Beethoven but also forwards, incorporating features of 19th Century Romanticism in work that was innovative, new and entirely his own.

Johannes Brahms was born in 1833 in Hamburg, and showed early promise on the piano, giving his first recital aged 14. Alongside the piano, he also started to compose. While on concert tours with young Hungarian violinist Ede Reményi, he met and played some of his works to violinist Joseph Joachim who became a (mostly) lifelong friend. It was a letter of introduction from the future superstar fiddler that first threw Brahms into the orbit of **Robert and Clara Schumann**. And the rest, as they say, is history.

Over the course of the next four decades, despite his often painfully meticulous approach and the powerful self-criticism that saw him destroy both early drafts and completed works – including, it's said, a score of string quartets – Brahms would produce a prodigious number of compositions. Among the work that survived its composer's own cull are four symphonies, choral works including his *German Requiem*, serenades, chamber works, overtures and variations such as the 1879 *Academic Festival Overture*, motets, organ music, piano music and songs.

It also wasn't just music he destroyed – Brahms also burned letters and other papers, even asking for his own letters to be returned so he could consign them to the flames.

In later life, many honours were bestowed on the composer. He received the freedom of Hamburg in 1889, and six years later was acclaimed as the third 'B' alongside Bach and Beethoven at a **music festival in Meiningen**. Brahms succumbed to cancer in April 1897, a year after Clara Schumann's death, to whom he had remained devoted for more than 40 years.