

Sheku's Finnis Concerto and Bruckner's Ninth

Sunday, October 25, 2026 · 19:00 · Barbican
Antonio Pappano, conductor · Sheku Kanneh-Mason, cello

TONIGHT'S PROGRAMME		MIN
1	FINNIS b. 1984 <i>Cello Concerto</i>	25'
2	BRUCKNER 1824–1896 <i>Symphony No. 9 in D minor, WAB 109 (ed. Cohrs)</i>	60'
TOTAL MUSIC		85'

Edmund Finnis

b. 1984

Cello Concerto

25 minutes

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

As a very new work, come to it with fresh ears and no expectations of famous tunes. With Finnis, the rewards lie in colour, texture and line. Listen for the way the solo cello sings long, expressive melodies (Finnis writes beautifully for the voice-like quality of the instrument), and for the finely detailed orchestral textures that surround it, often delicate and luminous rather than heavy.

Listen for the relationship between soloist and orchestra: how the cello emerges from the ensemble, is echoed and coloured by it, and how Finnis builds atmosphere and momentum through shifting harmony and instrumental light rather than through conventional display. Above all, listen to Sheku Kanneh-Mason's tone, warm, lyrical and deeply communicative, in music written to show it off. It is a rare opportunity to hear a new concerto near the very start of its life, in the hands of the cellist it was written for.

Anton Bruckner

1824–1896

Symphony No. 9 in D minor, WAB 109 (ed. Cohrs)

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

The first movement (Feierlich, misterioso: ‘solemn, mysterious’) grows, as so often in Bruckner, from a hushed string tremor, with horn calls emerging out of the mist. Listen for how it builds through vast paragraphs to a tremendous, dissonant climax and a hammering D minor unison of overwhelming power.

The Scherzo is one of Bruckner’s most extraordinary. It is not a genial dance but something demonic and obsessive: stamping, dissonant chords and a relentless, almost mechanical drive, framing a strangely fleet, ghostly trio. It is among the most modern-sounding music Bruckner ever wrote.

The Adagio is the heart of the work and Bruckner’s farewell. Listen for the great leaping theme that opens it (a yearning rise in the violins), for the noble, chorale-like passages on the Wagner tubas, and for the shattering, grinding dissonance at its climax, perhaps the most anguished moment in all Bruckner. Then the music subsides into a long, glowing, peaceful coda, quoting earlier works and dying away into acceptance. With no triumphant finale to follow, this quiet, transcendent close becomes the final word of the symphony and of the composer.



CONCERT PROGRAMS

<https://concertprograms.eu/concerts/lso-2026-10-25-pappano>

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