

Adès's In Seven Days with Chamayou, and Sibelius's Fifth

Thursday, November 5, 2026 · 19:00 · Barbican
Thomas Adès, conductor · Bertrand Chamayou, piano

TONIGHT'S PROGRAMME		MIN
1	NØRGÅRD 1932–2025 <i>Dream Play</i>	10'
2	ADÈS b. 1971 <i>In Seven Days, for piano and orchestra</i>	33'
3	SIBELIUS 1865–1957 <i>Symphony No. 5 in E-flat major, Op. 82</i>	30'
TOTAL MUSIC		73'

Per Nørgård

1932–2025

Dream Play

10 minutes

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Think of the piece as a set of variations rather than a story. Listen for the way melodies seem to grow out of one another, sometimes overlapping at different speeds, which is the infinity series at work: the same line heard at several tempos at once. The piano, celesta and percussion add a bell-like glitter to the texture.

Then follow Nørgård's 'tournament'. Some passages set strongly contrasting characters against each other, a big brassy idea beside something small and delicate, the David and the Goliath of his note. Other passages melt into warm, consonant harmony, the 'fondest embraces'. The music is never aggressive for long; conflict here is a game.

Thomas Adès

33 minutes

b. 1971

In Seven Days, for piano and orchestra

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

The opening is chaos: a churning, formless mass from which clearer shapes slowly emerge. Listen for the moment light breaks through. From there, try to track the variations. Each 'day' has its own character and colour, and the piano is less a star soloist in front of the orchestra than a restless, glittering thread running through the texture, full of spiralling, cascading figures.

The fifth and sixth days are fugues, which is a good place to listen for Adès's humour. Tommasini described twittering flutes and a 'crazed piccolo' for the creatures of the sky, and lumbering basses and low brass for the creatures of the land.

Then comes Contemplation. After all that activity, the theme appears in its simplest form, slowly, and the music thins out towards silence, as though the work of creation is done.

Jean Sibelius

30 minutes

1865–1957

Symphony No. 5 in E-flat major, Op. 82

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

The symphony opens with a soft horn call over a timpani roll, and much of what follows grows from it. Woodwinds answer with a twittering, 'warbling' figure. Listen to the first movement as one long arc: the tempo creeps upwards so smoothly that you may not notice the moment it becomes a scherzo, until trumpets are ringing out and the whole orchestra is racing towards a sudden end.

The middle movement is a gentle set of variations on a simple, rocking tune first heard in the flutes over pizzicato strings. It is an interlude, relaxed and pastoral, though the swan theme flickers in the background for a moment.

The finale starts with a rush of strings. Then the horns begin the 'swan hymn', a slow, swinging pattern of two notes, while woodwinds sing a melody above it. That idea returns later, rising and gathering weight until it arrives in full majesty. Then listen for

the ending, one of Sibelius's most original ideas and absent from the first version: six great chords, each separated by silence.



CONCERT PROGRAMS

<https://concertprograms.eu/concerts/lso-2026-11-05-ades>

Version 2, 30 September 2026