

LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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

ABOUT THE WORK

Per Nørgård wrote *Dream Play* in 1975 and revised it in 1980. It belongs to one of the most fertile stretches of his career. For about a decade from the late 1960s he built his music on what he called the infinity series, a melodic rule of his own devising that generates an endless, self-similar line: take every third, fifth or fifteenth note of the series and a new melody appears, and all of them fit together harmonically because they share the same source. The big work of those years was his *Third Symphony* for choir and orchestra (1972–75). *Dream Play* came straight out of it, alongside the orchestral piece *Twilight* and the opera *Siddharta*, and it shares the *Third Symphony*'s glowing, overtone-rich sound.

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

b. 1971

In Seven Days, for piano and orchestra

33 minutes

ABOUT THE WORK

In Seven Days is a piano concerto by Thomas Adès, though it was not conceived as a conventional one. Its full title is *In Seven Days: Concerto for Piano with Moving Image*, and it was written as a kind of video ballet in collaboration with the artist Tal Rosner, then Adès's partner. The Southbank Centre and the Los Angeles Philharmonic commissioned it jointly, and it was first performed at the Royal Festival Hall on 28 April 2008, with Nicolas Hodges as soloist and Adès conducting the London Sinfonietta. The US premiere followed in Los Angeles a month later. Rosner's video, projected on six screens at the premiere, used footage and photographs of the two commis-

sioning buildings, the Royal Festival Hall and Walt Disney Concert Hall, and their surroundings. The film is optional, and the music has since had a life of its own in the concert hall.

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

1865–1957

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

30 minutes

ABOUT THE WORK

Sibelius took five years to get his Fifth Symphony right. His fiftieth birthday, 8 December 1915, was treated as a national celebration in Finland, and he conducted the first version of the symphony in Helsinki that evening. It was a huge success, but he was not satisfied. A revised version followed a year later in Turku, and the final version, the one almost always played today, was not heard until 24 November 1919, again in Helsinki with Sibelius conducting.

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.

Tonight's artists

Bertrand Chamayou *piano*

Chamayou's label biography names Thomas Adès among the composers he has worked with closely, so tonight the soloist in *In Seven Days* plays under the composer's own baton.

Bertrand Chamayou is a French pianist, born in Toulouse. He studied at the conservatoire there and then, encouraged by Jean-François Heisser, at the Paris Conservatoire, and completed his training in London with Maria Curcio. He is closely associated with French music: his recording of Ravel's complete works for solo piano (Erato, 2016) was widely praised, and his album of Saint-Saëns's Second and Fifth Piano Concertos with the Orchestre National de France won the Gramophone Recording of the Year award in 2019. He has won France's Victoires de la Musique Classique several times. He is also a committed performer of contemporary music, and a regular chamber partner of musicians including Sol Gabetta and Antoine Tamestit.

CONCERT PROGRAMS

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

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