

Stutzmann and Jansen: Mozart's 'Turkish' Concerto and Bruckner's Fifth

Thursday, May 20, 2027 · 19:00 · Barbican
Nathalie Stutzmann, conductor · Janine Jansen, violin

TONIGHT'S PROGRAMME		MIN
1	MOZART 1756–1791 <i>Violin Concerto No. 5 in A major, K. 219 'Turkish'</i>	30'
2	BRUCKNER 1824–1896 <i>Symphony No. 5 in B-flat major, WAB 105 (ed. Cohrs)</i>	80'
TOTAL MUSIC		110'

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

30 minutes

1756–1791

Violin Concerto No. 5 in A major, K. 219 'Turkish'

THE COMPOSER

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart needs little introduction. Born in Salzburg in 1756, he was a prodigy whose talents were cultivated and exhibited across Europe by his father Leopold. By the time he composed this concerto in 1779, the twenty-three-year-old Mozart was restless in provincial Salzburg, dreaming of Vienna and larger stages. Within two years he would make the move that defined his mature career.

Less well known is his sister Maria Anna, called “Nannerl,” five years his senior. She was an equally brilliant pianist as a child, and the siblings toured together as wonders of nature until Nannerl’s touring career ended when she was about seventeen. Following the customs of the time, she stayed at home while Wolfgang continued traveling with their father. The brother and sister remained close, and this concerto was written for the two of them to play.

ABOUT THE WORK

Mozart’s five violin concertos are music of his Salzburg youth, and the A major, K. 219, is the last and largest of them. It dates from December 1775, when he was nineteen and living in Salzburg. Nobody knows for certain whom it was written for. Mozart was by all accounts an accomplished violinist, and he may well have played it himself.

Like all his violin concertos it is an early work, but it is the most adventurous of the set, with several ideas that have no precedent in the other four. The scoring is modest, two oboes, two horns and strings, but almost every movement contains something a listener of 1775 would not have expected.

The nickname ‘Turkish’ comes from a single episode in the finale. Turkish subjects were in fashion across Europe, in coffee houses, stage plays and operas, and the percussion-heavy bands of the Ottoman janissaries had given composers a stock of exotic effects to imitate. Mozart would use them again in *The Abduction from the Seraglio* and the *Rondo alla turca*. Here he has no drums or cymbals to hand and makes his ‘Turkish’ noise out of an ordinary orchestra.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

The first movement is marked *Allegro aperto*, ‘open’, a direction Mozart rarely used in instrumental music. The orchestra sets off briskly, and then the soloist does something no one expects: instead of joining in, the violin enters with six bars of slow, rapt *Adagio*, as if stepping onto the stage in a different play. Only then does the *Allegro* resume, and the violin’s real theme arrives, soaring over the music the orchestra began with.

The slow movement is a long, unhurried *Adagio* in E major, a test of sustained tone and line more than of fingers.

The finale begins as a courtly minuet, all poise. Halfway through, the key drops to A minor, the metre changes from three beats to two, and the ‘Turkish’ music bursts in: stamping accents, swirling chromatic scales with sudden crescendos, and cellos and basses striking their strings with the wood of the bow to stand in for percussion. Then the minuet returns as if nothing had happened, and the concerto ends not with a flourish but quietly, with a polite upward gesture.

Anton Bruckner

1824–1896

Symphony No. 5 in B-flat major, WAB 105 (ed. Cohrs)

THE COMPOSER

Anton Bruckner was among the most unlikely of great composers. Born in 1824 in the small Austrian village of Ansfelden, the son of a schoolteacher, he seemed destined for provincial obscurity. After his father’s death, the thirteen-year-old Bruckner became a choirboy at the monastery of St. Florian,

80 minutes

where he would eventually serve as organist. He trained as a schoolteacher, since the family was too poor for a musical career, and for years divided his time between teaching and organ playing in small towns.

Bruckner was a late bloomer. He did not begin serious composition studies until his thirties, spending some six years studying harmony and counterpoint with the Viennese theorist Simon Sechter, much of it by correspondence. He completed the course in 1861, at thirty-seven, with such mastery that one examiner, Johann Herbeck, remarked: "If I knew one tenth of what he knows, I'd be happy." Soon afterwards his next teacher, Otto Kitzler, introduced him to the music of Wagner, which Bruckner studied intensively from 1863 onwards.

In 1868 Bruckner moved to Vienna, where he would spend the rest of his life teaching at the Conservatory and, later, the University. But Vienna was hostile territory. The city's musical life was dominated by the critic Eduard Hanslick, a champion of Brahms who despised Wagner, and Bruckner, by aligning himself with Wagner, made a powerful enemy. His symphonies were mocked, rejected by orchestras, or subjected to humiliating premieres. The Vienna Philharmonic rehearsed his Third Symphony in 1874 and declined to perform it; when it was finally premiered in 1877, with Bruckner himself conducting, most of the audience walked out.

Recognition came late. Bruckner was sixty when his Seventh Symphony, premiered in Leipzig in 1884, brought him the first genuine triumph of his career. He died in 1896, aged seventy-two, leaving his Ninth Symphony unfinished. He was buried, as he had wished, beneath the organ at St. Florian.

ABOUT THE WORK

Bruckner began his Fifth Symphony in February 1875, at one of the low points of his years in Vienna. He was fifty, underpaid, and had just seen his hopes of a university post disappointed again. He started, unusually, with the slow movement, and had the whole symphony substantially finished by May 1876; some retouching followed over the next two years. He called it his 'contrapuntal masterpiece' and is also said to have referred to it as the 'Fantastic', though he never gave it a title.

He never heard it played by an orchestra. A performance on two pianos took place in Vienna in 1887. The orchestral premiere had to wait until April 1894, in Graz, under his pupil Franz Schalk, and by then Bruckner was too ill to travel. That may have been a mercy, since Schalk had reorchestrated the score and cut the finale heavily. Bruckner's own text was not performed until 1935. The edition used in this concert is a recent one by the German conductor and scholar Benjamin-Gunnar Cohrs, prepared for the Anton Bruckner Urtext Gesamtausgabe, a new series of critical editions of the composer's works.

The Fifth is the most severe and the most tightly built of Bruckner's symphonies, about eighty minutes long. Its peculiarity is that the weight falls at the very end. The first three movements, however grand, are preparation; the summit is the chorale that crowns the finale. A performance has to hold something back for well over an hour to make that work.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

This is the only Bruckner symphony to open with a slow introduction. Low strings walk quietly, pizzicato, under a web of violas and violins; then come a blazing fanfare for the full orchestra and a solemn brass chorale. These three ideas, set down like foundation stones, are the material much of the symphony grows from. The Allegro that follows moves between a restless main theme, a second idea begun pizzicato, and great swells that break off at their peak, a habit this symphony never loses.

The Adagio opens with plucked strings in a slow six, against which an oboe sings a bleak melody in a rhythm of four: two metres at once. The warm, full-throated string theme that answers it is one of Bruckner's great tunes. The Scherzo starts with the very same string figure as the Adagio, now at high speed, and keeps swerving into a heavy-footed country dance.

The finale begins by remembering. The slow introduction returns, and a solo clarinet interrupts with a cheeky falling octave; fragments of the first movement and the Adagio pass by, much as Beethoven reviews his earlier movements in the Ninth. The clarinet's octave turns out to be the head of a fugue subject. Later the brass announce a broad chorale, which becomes the subject of a second fugue, and then the two are combined in a double fugue of enormous energy. In the last pages the main theme of the first movement joins them, and the chorale, in full brass over the whole orchestra, has the final word.

Tonight's artists

Janine Jansen *violin*

Janine Jansen is the subject of the LSO's Artist Portrait this season, a series of three appearances with concertos by Mozart and Richard Dubugnon, alongside a recital with Sir Antonio Pappano at the piano. This is the Mozart evening of the series. Nathalie Stutzmann, whose passion for Bruckner the orchestra's own listing singles out, takes the second half. It is a single Barbican concert on 20 May 2027, and a long one: the orchestra expects it to end at about 9.25pm.

Janine Jansen, born in Soest in 1978, is one of the most charismatic and admired violinists in the world. From a musical Dutch family, she studied with Coosje Wijzenbeek, Philippe Hirschhorn and Boris Belkin, and has built a career of the highest distinction as soloist and chamber musician, recording widely and founding the International Chamber Music Festival in Utrecht. She is the LSO's Portrait Artist this season. Renowned for the intensity, communicative warmth and fearless commitment of her playing, she also has a long creative partnership with the composer Richard Dubugnon, who has written several works for her, which makes her the natural soloist for tonight's premiere.

FURTHER READING

ACCESSIBLE **Mozart: The Reign of Love**

Jan Swafford, Harper Perennial 2021

Swafford is especially good on the Salzburg years: the bored court musician of nineteen, his father's ambitions for him as a violinist, and the run of concertos that ends with K. 219.

ACCESSIBLE **Bruckner**

Derek Watson, Oxford University Press 1996

A compact life and works in the Master Musicians series, with a clear chapter on each symphony; the best first guide to how the Fifth is built and why it waited so long to be heard.

DEEPER **The Cambridge Companion to Bruckner**

John Williamson (ed.), Cambridge University Press 2004

Essays on the editions problem, on Bruckner's counterpoint and on the reception of the symphonies: the background to why a new Urtext of the Fifth, free of Schalk's alterations, still matters.

SOURCES

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2. London Symphony Orchestra/Nathalie Stutzmann: Mozart and Bruckner, Barbican. <https://www.barbican.org.uk/node/222097>
3. Press Release: The LSO announces its 2026/27 season, London Symphony Orchestra. <https://www.lso.co.uk/press-release-the-lso-announces-its-2026-27-season/>
4. Violin Concerto No. 5 (Mozart), Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Violin_Concerto_No._5_\(Mozart\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Violin_Concerto_No._5_(Mozart))
5. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: Violin Concerto No. 5 in A major, K. 219 (programme note by Martin Pearlman), Boston Baroque. <https://baroque.boston/mozart-violin-concerto-5>
6. Symphony No. 5 (Bruckner), Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symphony_No._5_\(Bruckner\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symphony_No._5_(Bruckner))
7. Anton Bruckner: Symphony No. 5 in B-flat major (programme notes), Berliner Philharmoniker. <https://www.berliner-philharmoniker.de/en/programme-notes/anton-bruckner-symphony-no-5-in-b-flat-major>
8. Benjamin-Gunnar Cohrs, Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benjamin-Gunnar_Cohrs
9. What you should know about Anton Bruckner, London Symphony Orchestra. <https://www.lso.co.uk/what-you-should-know-about-anton-bruckner/>
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12. The Cambridge Companion to Bruckner, Open Library. <https://openlibrary.org/isbn/9780521008785>



CONCERT PROGRAMS

<https://concertprograms.eu/concerts/lso-2027-05-20-stutzmann>

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