

Classical Music at The Glasshouse 2024/25



18th June 2024

Over 50 brilliant concerts, one home for live music lovers.

- This autumn marks 20 years at The Glasshouse International Centre for Music (formerly Sage Gateshead) for Royal Northern Sinfonia.
- The new season, announced today sees Royal Northern Sinfonia sit at the heart of a year of over 50 classical concerts – ranging from heroic symphonies to intimate chamber works to music of the avant-garde
- Autumn 2024 marks the second three-year term of Principal Conductor Dinis Sousa, and a new position of Artistic Partner for violinist Maria Włoszczowska, a powerhouse partnership building energy and audiences.
- This autumn they are joined by a new appointment: Principal Guest Conductor Nil Venditti.
- Share the Stage – The Glasshouse’s major mass participation series culminates in November’s performance of A Child of Our Time.
- New strands and focuses include contemporary music, piano greats, and the anniversaries of Schoenberg and Ravel.
- Royal Northern Sinfonia now leads five classical series across the region – at home at The Glasshouse, and in Carlisle, Kendal, Middlesbrough, and Sunderland. This totals more than 50 concerts across our centres.
- The Glasshouse’s second hall – Sage Two - becomes the space for the more experimental.

An explosive new season of concerts by Royal Northern Sinfonia, a brilliant line-up of visiting artists, orchestras and ensembles, and a large-scale opportunity for singers and musicians from across the North East are set to fill The Glasshouse International Centre for Music with fantastically talented musicians and a huge array of music as the venue marks its 20th anniversary.

An important moment for music making in the North East, autumn 2024 marks the moment that 36-year-old Dinis Sousa enters his second three-year term as Principal Conductor of Royal Northern Sinfonia, committing to remaining at the centre of musical life in the North East.

Sousa has recently enjoyed a raft of 5* reviews at home and abroad, and is in demand around the world with recent and upcoming appearances at Carnegie Hall, New York; Philharmonie de Paris; BBC Proms, Salzburg and Berlin Festivals; and with the Swedish Radio, BBC Symphony and Royal Concertgebouw orchestras.

Newcastle Gateshead has become this international conductor's home since joining the orchestra in 2021, spending as much time as he can in the North East.

Newly appointed Artistic Partner Maria Włoszczowska – who has helped lead the orchestra to new musical heights since joining as leader in 2021 – will step further into the spotlight with a new series of concerts that reflect her musical passions.

Together Sousa and Włoszczowska are leading the orchestra into one of its most stimulating creative eras yet, having led Royal Northern Sinfonia as it recovered from the pandemic, while nurturing and responding to a growing appetite for classical music in the North East.

Last year new audiences flocked to hear brilliant music, making up a quarter of those coming to see live classical performance at The Glasshouse.

This autumn they are joined by a new appointment - Principal Guest Conductor Nil Venditti. Venditti has already demonstrated her connection with audiences, her passion for this orchestra and the organisation and wowed audiences in Gateshead and Middlesbrough.

This next season includes the second major participation project under the umbrella Share the Stage, an initiative led by Sousa offering people who love making music the opportunity to perform with the orchestra and chorus on the world-renowned stage of Sage One alongside some of the world's greatest singers including Masabane Cecilia Rangwanasha, Sarah Connolly, Nicky Spence and Willard White.

Royal Northern Sinfonia, the orchestra founded in the North East for the North East, now leads five classical series across the region – at home at The Glasshouse, and in Carlisle, Kendal, Middlesbrough, and Sunderland. These five series have been grown substantially by Sousa and Włoszczowska, reaching thousands of new audience members.

In the coming weeks they will also announce a new series for young people and their families, alongside concerts of orchestral music from video games, soundtracks, films and tv.

Dinis Sousa, Principal Conductor said: *"This season we are sharing the stage with an incredible line up of guests and I can't wait to welcome them here. There are some really special people joining us – many of them for the first time – and it's always exciting to see how these new relationships blossom during those projects. I'm also thrilled that our focus has turned to Sage Two this season and we're programming a wonderful varied series of concerts in there. It's such a uniquely theatrical venue, and I really look forward to our more unusual concerts there in the spring."*

Artistic Partner Maria Włoszczowska said: *"I'm thrilled to continue my relationship with Royal Northern Sinfonia as Artistic Partner from next season. The past three years have been pivotal in my development as a musician and director, and the orchestra has played the biggest role in that growth. I couldn't be more grateful for their trust, enthusiasm and openness - qualities that inspire me and encourage me to always explore further. It is a privilege to have the support of such an exceptional group of musicians and it's been the main thought behind planning the programmes for next season. I want them to reflect the excellence and chamber music skills of all the players involved, showcasing their individual character and love for collaboration."*

On the partnership with Maria, Dinis commented: *"When we first played together, almost by chance, I was amazed not only by Maria's playing but also by the fact that we seemed to feel music completely in the same way. When we rehearse together, we don't have to say much to each other and we seem to know what the other person is thinking all the time. Making music like that is extremely special, and we've been so lucky to have shared these last three years with Royal Northern Sinfonia, who are so open and willing to go on a journey each time we gather to prepare a programme. It's been such a joy so far and I can't wait to see how this develops in the next few years."*

Commenting on her appointment, Venditti said: *“My first encounter with Royal Northern Sinfonia in November 2022 was very positive; the musicians are fantastic, so open to experiment and quick to respond. When I met them again in May, it was a blast, both on stage and with the audience. I felt we all connected at an amazingly deep level. I am very much looking forward to collaborating with them again soon.”*

James Thomas Director, Royal Northern Sinfonia & Classical Programme said:

“It’s been a joy to work with Dinis and Maria on our 2024/25 season, my second full season as Director of our exceptional orchestra, Royal Northern Sinfonia. It’s a season packed with musical highs and exceptional artists – something the North East of England can be truly proud of. It also marks the next chapter with Dinis Sousa as Principal Conductor and Maria Włoszczowska as Artistic Partner and I’m so pleased to welcome Nil Venditti to our musical family as Principal Guest Conductor. Over 50% of the orchestras work takes place across the wider region and we’re looking forward to welcoming audiences in Gateshead and beyond.”

Visiting artists and orchestras

This year Royal Northern Sinfonia and The Glasshouse will welcome great musical friends to build a year of concerts that reflect the brilliance of classical music. These include John Wilson’s Sinfonia of London with Sheku Kanneh-Mason; singers Sarah Connolly, Willard White, Veronique Gens, Roderick Williams, Masabane Cecilia Rangwanasha; pianists including Víkingur Ólafsson and Kristian Bezuidenhout; the BBC Philharmonic, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, The Hallé and The Philip Glass Ensemble; Opera North in a concert performance of Simon Boccanegra; and conductors Sofi Jeannin and Ricardo Minasi alongside new Principal Guest Conductor Nil Venditti.

Share the Stage: A Child of Our Time

Building on the success of the 2021 community performance of Verdi’s Requiem – ‘The People’s Requiem’ – the orchestra presents the next in its ‘Share the Stage’ series, this time around Tippett’s deeply moving *A Child of Our Time* - a plea for forgiveness and peace in a time of disharmony.

This is a huge invitation for non-professional musicians from across the North East to work with Dinis Sousa, Royal Northern Sinfonia and RNS Chorus over a period of months in one of the biggest performing groups the region will have ever seen. A joyful celebration of the power and humanity of music.

Composer anniversaries and new projects

This year of concerts celebrate two major figures of classical music, Ravel and Schoenberg, both celebrating landmark anniversaries this season.

Ravel’s 150th is celebrated through his symphonic music by the BBC Philharmonic and pianist Bertrand Chamayou; his masterworks for chamber forces including Mother Goose by Royal Northern Sinfonia; an ensemble concert led by Artistic Partner Maria Włoszczowska; and a new music and digital collaboration with the new media arts collective Mediale.

Schoenberg 150th is the focus of two concerts celebrating the century-defining composer, including the brilliantly theatrical *Pierrot lunaire* and the movingly, poetic *Verklärte Nacht*, both directed by Włoszczowska.

Celebrating composers who have altered our musical universe forever, a new series of contemporary music features György Ligeti, John Cage, Pauline Oliveros, Nico Muhly and a the world premiere of a new commission from Heloise Werner.

A stellar line-up of some of the world’s greatest pianists align in a celebration of the dramatic and versatile instrument, including: Kristian Bezuidenhout, Jeneba Kanneh-Mason, David Fray, Stephen Hough, Víkingur Ólafsson, Bertrand Chamayou, Elisabeth Leonskaja, Francesco Piemontesi, Piotr Anderszewski, Steven Osborne, Alasdair Beatson, Boris Giltburg, Jean-Efflam Bavouzet, Pierre-Laurent Aimard, Benjamin Grosvenor and the winner of the Leeds International Piano Competition here the day after the competition, appearing with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra.