

Sofia Philharmonic Orchestra

Bulgaria's internationally acclaimed and illustrious orchestra



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Sofia Philharmonic Orchestra

Derek Gleeson, Co-Principal Conductor

PROGRAM

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Coriolan Overture, Op. 62

Piano Concerto No. 5 in E-flat Major (“Emperor”), Op. 73

Featuring Ivaylo Vassilev, pianist

20-Minute Intermission

Symphony No. 7 in A Major, Op. 92

Program is subject to change.

Please see your pre- and post-performance emails for program notes.

Sofia Philharmonic Orchestra

Founded in 1892 as the Guards Symphony Orchestra, the Sofia Philharmonic Orchestra has been known since 1945 as the national orchestra of Bulgaria, and it has long established itself as one of the leading cultural institutions, representative of the overall contemporary musical culture of the country. The orchestra's high artistic achievement is associated with the names of prominent figures such as Sasha Popov, Konstantin Iliev, Dobrin Petkov, Vassil Stefanov, Vladi Simeonov, Vassil Kazandjiev, Dimitar Manolov, Emil Tabakov, Julian Kovatchev and Nayden Todorov. Unforgettable in the chronicle of the Sofia Philharmonic are the instances of cooperation with personalities such as conductors Bruno Walter, Hermann Abendroth, Kurt Masur, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, Valery Gergiev, Yuri Simonov, Yuri Temirkanov, Igor Markevitch, Carlo Zecchi, Karl Österreicher, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Neville Marriner, Charles Dutoit, Marin Alsop, Frédéric Chaslin, Gianluigi Gelmetti and others. Soloists who have performed with the orchestra include David Oistrakh, Sviatoslav Richter, Emil Gilels, Alexis Weissenberg, Dmitri Shostakovich, Mstislav Rostropovich, Vladimir Spivakov, Ruggiero Ricci, Gheena Dimitrova, Jose Carreras, Julian Rachlin, Plácido Domingo, Sarah Chang, Thomas Hampson, Yuri Bashmet, Tabea Zimmermann, Elena Bashkirova, Alexandrina Pendatchanska, Sonya Yoncheva, Patricia Kopatchinskaja, Maxim Vengerov, Svetlin Roussev, Angela Gheorghiu, Vadim Repin, Paul Badura-Skoda, Joshua Bell, Dmitri Ratser, Elina Garanča, Sharon Kam, Ivo Pogorelić, Martha Argerich, Viktoria Mullova, Mischa Maisky, Shlomo Mintz, Gidon Kremer and many more world-renowned artists.

The repertoire of the Sofia Philharmonic comprises works from the entire historically available range of music—from classical to contemporary opuses, including premiere performances of numerous works by Bulgarian composers. The orchestra has garnered substantial recognition all over the world. It has guest-performed with great success in the major musical centers across Europe (Austria, Belgium, Great Britain, Germany, Greece, Italy, Spain, Luxembourg, Netherland, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, Turkey, France, Croatia and Switzerland), Asia (China, Korea, Singapore, Taiwan and Japan), and North America, and it has received frenetic acclaim even from the most demanding of audiences. The Sofia Philharmonic Orchestra has been awarded many prestigious accolades, including Musician of the Year, Golden Lyre, Golden Stave, Golden Quill, Crystal Lyre, the Honorary Sign of Sofia and the Honorary Sign of the President of Bulgaria. The general director of the Sofia Philharmonic is maestro Nayden Todorov.

Derek Gleeson, Co-Principal Conductor

Maestro Derek Gleeson is the music director and principal conductor of The Dublin Philharmonic Orchestra, and he was named co-principal conductor of the Sofia Philharmonic Orchestra in 2020. Born in Dublin, Ireland (a U.S./Irish dual citizen), Gleeson studied piano, percussion, composition and conducting at the music conservatories of Dublin, London and Vienna, as well as film scoring at the University of California, Los Angeles. By the age of 11, Gleeson was the recipient of many piano and percussion competition prizes within Ireland and Great Britain. At the age of 15, he represented Ireland as a conductor in the European Community Youth Orchestra, where he had the opportunity to perform at the leading European music festivals,

such as Salzburg, Edinburgh and Lucerne Festivals under the direction of maestros Herbert von Karajan, Claudio Abbado, Leonard Bernstein, Sir George Solti and others. These early experiences directed him toward a career in conducting. In 1984, he was a first-prize winner of the London Symphony Orchestra's music scholarship.

As a guest conductor, maestro Gleeson conducted the London Symphony Orchestra, the BBC Orchestras, the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. He was music director of the Ruckert Orchestra of Dublin (1990–1993), and since 1997, he has been the music director of The Dublin Philharmonic Orchestra.

An ardent champion of contemporary music, Gleeson has provided many premiere performances of works by living composers, with his own works also being performed in Europe and the U.S. In 2004, Gleeson's concert-work titled *Buenos Aires* premiered in Buenos Aires, Argentina. His recordings as a conductor include premieres of contemporary American and Irish composers with The Dublin Philharmonic Orchestra and Philharmonia Bulgaria.

Amongst others, Gleeson has conducted the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the RTE Concert Orchestra (Ireland's national broadcaster), The National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, The Dublin Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestra Da Camera Fiorentina, Czech National Symphony Orchestra, Prague Philharmonic Orchestra, Beijing Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre Symphonique de Bretagne, Orchestra of the Sadlers Wells Royal Ballet, Bulgarian National Radio Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonica Bulgaria, The Vratza Philharmonic, Plovdiv State Opera and the Los Angeles Composers Guild Chamber Orchestra. Maestro Gleeson's extraordinary conducting talent also extends to opera. He has conducted repertoire such as performances of Verdi's *La Traviata*, *Il trovatore*, *Rigoletto* and *Un ballo in maschera*; Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan tutte* and *The Magic Flute*; Bizet's *Carmen*; and Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*. Gleeson conducted *Rigoletto* for the Anna Livia International Opera Festival in Dublin.

Maestro Gleeson is touring the U.S. in 2024 with the Sofia Philharmonic Orchestra.

Ivaylo Vassilev, pianist

Ivaylo Vassilev was born in 2007 in Sofia, Bulgaria, and studied piano at the National Music School in Sofia with Borislava Taneva. At 16 years old, he has earned an impressive collection of more than 30 prizes from international competitions around the world.

Vassilev has played in various piano festivals, including the 2023 Cliburn Junior Festival (Dallas), Lancaster International Piano Festival (Lancaster, 2022), Wunderkinder (Toblach, Italy, 2018), Musical Olympus (St. Petersburg, 2019) and Moscow Meets Friends (2019). He has studied with world-renowned pianists and pedagogues, including Konstantin Scherbakov, Dmitry Bashkirov and Alexander Kobrin. He has performed at iconic halls around the world, such as the Great Hall and Rachmaninoff Hall of the Moscow State Conservatory, Tchaikovsky Hall, the House of Music in Moscow, Symphonic Capella in St. Petersburg and, of course, Bulgaria Hall in Sofia.

As a soloist, he has performed with famous conductors, like Pavel Balev, Sascha Goetzl, Vyacheslav Valeev, Alexander Titov, Alexander Chernushenko, Mikhail Kirkhoff, Igor Lerman and others, and with the Sofia Philharmonic, Bulgarian National Radio Orchestra, Classic FM Orchestra, Varna Philharmonic and more.

His first album, which includes Mozart and Shostakovich piano concertos, was released in 2019 as a special prize for winning the Golden Nutcracker Award.

Sofia Philharmonic Orchestra U.S. Tour

Derek Gleeson, Co-Principal Conductor

First Violin

Rotaru Mariana
Kovacheva Petya Stoyanova
Canova Katia Borissova
Tsanova Kristina Rumenova
Kirilov Boyan Slavchev
Vlaseva Nina
Kaymakanova Ludmila
Karshuleva Maya Savova

Second Violin

Maksimov Milen Todorov
Belcheva-Shaleva Divna Todorova
Kosovski Boris Hristov
Milenkova Kremena Nikolova
Ivanova Isabel Bozhidarova
Kircheva Radostina Hristova

Viola

Seykova Ani Tinkova
Dimova Ralitsa Nikolova
Mitrov Todor Metodiev
Milanov Miroslav Simeonov
Slavcheva-Dudova Veronika Lazarova
Sugarev Christian Edvinov

Violoncello

Aleksandrov Ivo Lyubomirov
Georgiev Georgi Rumenov
Damyanov Nikola Kirilov
Girginova Evgenia Alexandrova

Double Bass

Maystorska Dea Dimitrova
Dobrev Isabel

Flute

Acheva-Stoyanova Kremena Ivanova
Atanasova Petra Dragomirova

Oboe

Hansen Mickey
Fotev Ivo Kirilov

Clarinet

Georgiev Stanimir Chankov
Hristov Georgi Mariusov

Bassoon

Zahariev Hristo Yordanov
Ma Ke

Horn

Soriano Pablo Sanchez
Kostova Gabriela Tsvetanova

Trumpet

Stoianov Stoian Haralambiev
Tzonev Viktor Hristov

Timpani

Atanasova Zdravka Kamenov