


# SPRING CONCERT

**Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> March – 19:00**  
Great Hall, Imperial College

**Conductor**      **Thomas Goff**  
**Soloist**          **James Chen**



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# WELCOME

**A very warm welcome from the committee to our 2024 winter concert. We are so excited to showcase what we've been preparing this term,**

## **Our 2024-2025 Committee:**

<b>Bryony Lanigan</b>	<b>Chair</b>
<b>Samuel Tan</b>	<b>Vice Chair</b>
<b>Ruiqi Zhang</b>	<b>Secretary</b>
<b>Seo Won Park</b>	<b>Treasurer</b>
<b>Bendit Chan</b>	<b>Librarian</b>
<b>Ben Bishop</b>	<b>Assistant Librarian</b>
<b>Cara Waters</b>	<b>Patrons Officer</b>
<b>Seyon Niranjani</b>	<b>Social Media Manager</b>
<b>Kiyan Eddaoudi</b>	<b>Publicity Officer</b>
<b>Colby McKim</b>	<b>Tour Officer</b>
<b>Sebastien Shaw</b>	<b>Social Secretary</b>

## **We'd like to thank our Patrons and Honorary Patrons for their continued support of**

**Professor Sir Robert Lechler  
Professor Giovanna Lombardi  
Daniel Capps  
Anneliese Capps  
Zoe Martlew  
Michael Son BEM**

**Maxine Son  
John Underwood  
Susi Underwood  
William Carslake  
Naomi Anderson-Eyles  
Steve Anderson-Eyles**

The background of the page is an impressionistic painting. It depicts a lush, green landscape with a large, dark tree in the center-right. The foreground is filled with tall grass and small white flowers. The overall style is soft and textured, with visible brushstrokes and a rich palette of greens, yellows, and browns.

# PROGRAMME

**John Adams**

**The Chairman Dances**

**Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov**

**Symphony No.1 in E Minor**

*I. Largo assai - Allegro*

*II. Andante tranquillo*

*III. Scherzo*

*IV. Allegro assai*

-----INTERVAL-----

**Sergei Prokofiev**

*Soloist: James Chen*

**Piano Concerto No. 2**

*I. Andantino - Allegretto*

*II. Scherzo: Vivace*

*III. Intermezzo: Allegro moderato*

*IV. Finale: Allegro tempestoso*

# ABOUT US

Founded by Daniel Capps in 1996, Imperial College Sinfonietta is a full, student-run orchestra with players ranging from first year undergraduates to postgraduates, staff and even alumni. We are conducted by Thomas Goff. Despite having a reputation as being very sociable, the orchestra performs at a high standard and the concerts are a brilliant way to spend an evening.

Sinfonietta is run by a dedicated committee of full-time students who organise every aspect of the orchestra's operation, as well as socials, weekends away, and even International tours! The orchestra performs concerts in the Great Hall at Imperial College and other venues at the end of each term, and provides opportunities for Imperial students to perform concertos. Being student-led, Sinfonietta covers a wide range of repertoire to suit the tastes of its members. The orchestra's recent repertoire has included works by Prokofiev, Tchaikovsky and Gershwin.

Sinfonietta has toured annually since 2000, with past destinations spanning Europe — the most recent of which was Spain in 2024. The orchestra, in combination with Imperial College Symphony Orchestra and Imperial College Choir, performed three concerts in Zaragoza and Burgos. The annual tour is a fantastic opportunity for musicians to take a break from their studies while experiencing new cultures and performing in some incredible venues!

# THE ORCHESTRA

## Violin I

Chen Fan  
Bendit Chan  
Ruiqi Zhang  
Jisun Lee  
Owen AuYeung  
Riashat Hossain  
Coco Zhang  
Garnet Zhao  
Freya Stewart  
Kasper Vermeesch  
Imogen Key  
Seyon Niranjan

## Violin II

Sebastien Shaw  
Nick Manrique  
Christian Tan  
Chloe Bi  
Kevin Pan  
Michael Song  
Adam Quayyum  
Sasha Sausman  
Anya Sithambaram  
Lau Wing Hin  
Yash Singh  
Alina Krokhina  
Ikem Enebeli  
Amelia Mitchell

## Viola

Shuwen Liu  
Samuel Tan  
Kiyam Eddaoudi  
Scott Pickett  
Charlie Shaw  
Sebastien Roach

## Cello

Luca White  
Chun Hei Lau  
Robyn Liu  
Ben Cummings  
Alex Wong  
Ida Caspary

## Double Bass

Bryony Lanigan  
Bella Hobby  
Becca Stanton

## Percussion

Ben Bishop  
Yiming Sun  
Wanqian Xiong  
Thomas Fox

## Flute

Greta Strickland  
Harry Atkins

## Oboe

Kyle Lee

## Clarinet

Colby KcKim  
Freya Hennessey

## Bassoon

Cara Waters  
Li Ma

## French Horn

David Silcock  
George Bindloss  
Camilo Carvajal Reyes  
Lucas Emmott

## Trumpet

Leanne Painter  
Robin Flower

## Trombone

Alex Tan  
Filip Zajdler  
Nitin Premkumar  
Leo Matteucci

## Harp

Diana Shroff

# CONDUCTOR

**Thomas Goff** (b.1992) has conducted orchestras across Europe and in the USA. After studying cello, jazz piano and composition at the University of Manchester, he became the Oglesby Scholar at the Royal Northern College of Music where he completed a masters degree in conducting, graduating with distinction and winning the Brierly/Kershaw Prize. He then studied on the prestigious National Masters of Orchestral Conducting program in Amsterdam and The Hague, where he lived for five years. During this time he served as assistant conductor at many orchestras across Europe, and took part in masterclasses with Daniele Gatti, Sir Mark Elder, Vasily Petrenko, and Valery Gergiev at Rotterdam Philharmonic's Gergiev Festival 2018.

Thomas has worked with orchestras including the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Ulster Orchestra, Netherlands Philharmonic, and Residentie Orkest. He has a particular affinity for contemporary music and has led performances with ensembles including Aarhus Sinfonietta and Psappha. He made his debut in the Royal Concertgebouw leading the world premiere of Tansy Davies' *Soul Canoe* with Asko/Schönberg.



Thomas' music-making is distinctively multi-faceted: he is active as a composer, having composed and produced scores for several independent films; as a cellist, particularly interested in baroque music; and in pop music as a guitarist, songwriter and arranger. He currently lives in London where he enjoys a freelance career alongside his positions as Music Director of the Imperial College Sinfonietta and Hampshire County Youth Orchestra.

# SOLOIST

**James Chen** is a recently graduated Mathematics student from Imperial. He started learning the piano at the age of 6 under the guidance of Barbara Bury and at the age of 11, attended Chetham's School of Music to pursue his musical journey. There, he studied under Simon Bottomley and frequently performed both in his hometown and near his school, including performing Ravel's Piano Concerto No.1 in G and Bartók's Piano Concerto No.3 in E. His achievements include being awarded an FTCL in piano performance and winning first prize at the prestigious Emanuel Trophy Piano Competition.



During his time at Imperial College, James performed regularly in concerts organised by the Chamber Music Society and lunchtime concerts, supported by his fellow musicians at Imperial College. He is currently a postgraduate student studying Mathematics at the University of Cambridge, where he also recently performed Liszt's Piano Concerto No. 1 with the Clare College Music Society Orchestra. He hopes to continue to pursue both music and mathematics in the future.

# JOHN ADAMS

## The Chairman Dances

John Adams (born 1947) is one of, if not the, best-known opera composers of the late 20<sup>th</sup>/early 21<sup>st</sup> century, celebrated for his musical work in operas that tell modern stories, such as 1987 *Nixon in China* and 2005 *Doctor Atomic*, about Nixon's 1972 visit to China, and the lead-up to the 1945 atomic bomb test respectively. He comes from a musical family, with both of his parents being musicians, and has been composing music since he was a child, with his first orchestral composition performed while he was a teenager.

At the same time as he was starting *Nixon in China*, he needed to fulfill a commission from Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, and thus *The Chairman Dances* was born. Adams has called it 'an outtake' to Act III of the opera, the final act of the opera during which the world leaders are musing on their personal lives and histories, and wondering what is to come. The feeling of perpetual motion that this piece gives (time signature changes notwithstanding) is present in much of the full opera, from the very first time we see Nixon touch down to the dream-sequence of memories of act III.

Perhaps the best way to introduce this piece is given by John Adams himself on his website, where he presents the following scenario by Peter Sellars (who wrote the libretto for *Doctor Atomic*) and Alice Goodman (who wrote the libretto for *Nixon in China*):

"Chiang Ch'ing, a.k.a. Madame Mao, has gatecrashed the Presidential Banquet. She is first seen standing where she is most in the way of the waiters. After a few minutes, she brings out a box of paper lanterns and hangs them around the hall, then strips down to a cheongsam, skin-tight from neck to ankle and slit up the hip. She signals the orchestra to play and begins dancing by herself. Mao is becoming excited. He steps down from his portrait on the wall, and they begin to foxtrot together. They are back in Yenan, dancing to the gramophone..."



# SERGEI PROKOFIEV

## Piano Concerto No.2

Although classified as No. 2, Prokofiev actually finished this concerto two years after his Piano Concerto No. 3. The reason for this discrepancy is that the original version of the concerto was lost in a fire during the Russian Revolution. As such, Prokofiev rewrote the piece from scratch, this time heavily incorporating many polyphonic elements, which can be heard throughout the piece.

Unlike his first piano concerto, the 1st movement begins with a dark, surreal main subject, characterised by Prokofiev's unusual marking of *narrante* (narrating). This eventually gives way to the more lively and quirky second subject. Then comes the notorious cadenza, which is one of the longest and most difficult in the repertoire and forms much of the development and recapitulation of the piece, twisting the previous themes together culminating in a cataclysmic orchestral return.

The Scherzo is short but unrelenting. It heavily features one of Prokofiev's self-described five "lines" of music, namely the motoric line, through the endless semiquavers in the solo. By contrast, the third movement starts off with an ominous, grotesque march, which eventually leads to the frenetic Finale, featuring a "lullaby" with its characteristic Russian bassline. The concerto ends with a rapid synopsis of the previous themes finishing with a ferocious bang.

# NIKOLAI RIMSKY-KORSAKOV

## Symphony No. 1 in E Minor

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov was born in 1844 in Tikhvin, a town near Saint Petersburg. Though he showed an aptitude for music as a young boy, he followed in the footsteps of his older brother Voin and enlisted in the Imperial Russian Navy, attending the School for Mathematical and Navigational Sciences. While there, he took piano lessons in an effort to develop his social skills and at age 17 started his first composition: a full symphony in E flat minor. Despite departing on a two-and-a-half-year naval voyage not long after he begun this composition, he continued, mailing drafts of movements back to Mily Balakirev when he made port.

At 27, he was made Professor of Practical Composition and Instrumentation (orchestration) at Saint Petersburg Conservatory, despite a complete lack of any technical music theory training. He used his time at the conservatory to become, in his own words, "the very best pupil [he] could", learning the academic theory and technical aspects of music to support what he had so far naturally intuited. Perhaps because of this, he spent his later life making extensive edits to his earlier works, sometimes engaging in multiple re-writes decades apart, in search of perfection.

This Symphony No. 1 in E Minor is an 1884 re-write of his very first symphony, started in 1861, composed at sea and mailed back, critiqued and refined and eventually completely re-written in a different key decades later. Drawing heavily from Russian folk music motifs, when it was first performed some Russian nationalists hailed it as the "First Russian Symphony", a sentiment that Rimsky-Korsakov would distance himself from later in life. Whilst it lacks the some of the storytelling magic you can feel in some his later works (e.g. the ever-popular Scheherazade), the joyful opening and closing give a taste of a young man's zest for life, someone ready to set off on his first ever adventure.

# KEEP IN TOUCH

We hope that you've enjoyed the concert. For updates and news on upcoming performances, please find and follow us on our social media platforms. We welcome your support!



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**ICsinfonietta**



**Imperial College Sinfonietta**

Join us in the Imperial College Great Hall on Saturday, 14<sup>th</sup> June for our Summer Concert. Details and tickets will be published on our website [icsinfo.uk](http://icsinfo.uk) soon!

An impressionist painting of a landscape. In the center, there is a white, somewhat abstract building or structure. The foreground is filled with lush green foliage and trees, with some trees showing pink blossoms. The background shows a hazy, light-colored sky and distant buildings. The overall style is characterized by visible brushstrokes and a vibrant, warm color palette.

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