



SOUTHBANK CENTRE

MULTITUDES FORGED IN SOUND: HEAVY METAL ORCHESTRATED

Wednesday 22 April 2026, 7.30pm | Royal Festival Hall

Welcome to *Multitudes*, our multi-arts festival powered by orchestral music. We're bringing together some of the world's finest classical music ensembles – including our six Resident Orchestras – for collaborations with an incredible range of artists from different art forms. Together, we're creating a new way for you to encounter the enduring power of classical music, with unique, adventurous, boundary-breaking concerts.

It's a musical experience like no other!

Mark Ball, Artistic Director, Southbank Centre

Commissioned by the Southbank Centre and the Philharmonia Orchestra

At a glance, heavy metal and orchestral music may appear to be musical worlds apart: one born of the concert hall, the other of late-night venues. But go beyond the surface, and you will be surprised to discover that they have much in common – both are defined by bombastic themes, complex structures and musical virtuosity. Tonight, the 100-strong Philharmonia Orchestra is joined by special guest vocalists and musicians for a head-banging show, going full throttle on anthems from the rock and heavy metal world and some of the biggest pieces of orchestral music ever composed.

This performance marks the latest chapter in a rich history of genre-clashing experimentation. Deep Purple pioneered the pairing of an orchestra and rock band in 1969, and the influence of orchestral music is unmistakable in many of the world's most iconic rock and metal acts. Even at rock's most primal and minimalistic, with bands such as The Kills, the song riffs share a lineage with the orchestral world.

Leading the charge is the Philharmonia's Principal Conductor Santtu-Matias Rouvali. Himself a former rock drummer, Rouvali brings together the defiant and often iconoclastic energy of those two extraordinary musical forms with flair. Joined by Suzi Quatro, The Kills' Alison Mosshart and Lordi's Mr Lordi, alongside a house band created specifically for this show, the Philharmonia proves that when these two worlds collide, the result is nothing short of epic.

Run time (approx.): 2 hours, with a 20-minute interval

MUSIC

Wagner arr. Iain Farrington Ride of the Valkyries from Die Walküre

Metallica arr. Iain Farrington Orion

Mike Chapman & Nicky Chinn arr. Fiona Brice Can the Can
Shostakovich Allegro from Symphony No.10 in E minor

Metallica arr. Fiona Brice Enter Sandman

Daniel Nelson Steampunk Blizzard

The Kills arr. Fiona Brice Doing It To Death

Mosolov The Iron Foundry

Interval

Holst Mars, the Bringer of War from The Planets

Motörhead arr. Fiona Brice Ace of Spades

Mahler Excerpt from Adagietto from Symphony No.5

Bob Dylan arr. Fiona Brice Knockin' on Heaven's Door

Led Zeppelin arr. Jaz Coleman Kashmir

Vivaldi arr. Iain Farrington Presto from Summer from The Four Seasons

Saint-Saëns arr. Iain Farrington Finale from Symphony No.3 in C minor (Organ)

Mr Lordi arr. Marzi Nyman Hard Rock Hallelujah

CREATIVE TEAM

Philharmonia Orchestra

Santtu-Matias Rouvali *conductor*

Marzi Nyman *guitar*

Pete Friesen *guitar*

Jonathan Noyce *bass*

Hayley Cramer *drums*

Suzi Quatro *vocals*

Alison Mosshart *vocals*

Mr Lordi *vocals*

FORGED IN SOUND: Heavy Metal Orchestrated

Opening the show in a burst of fanfare, Richard Wagner's 'Ride of the Valkyries' is one of his best-known works. Composed between 1851 and 1856, it's the prelude to the final act of *Die Walküre*, the second of Wagner's four-opera cycle, *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (The Ring of the Nibelung). The piece shares musical DNA with the works of heavy metal giants like Metallica: bombastic, aggressive and flamboyant.

With a heavy pummelling motif that twists and turns through its progressive and complex structure, 'Orion' is an epic instrumental taken from Metallica's third album, 1986's *Master of Puppets*. Its interchanging dynamics, classically inspired elements and thematic structures lead us into 'Can the Can': the song that earned rock royalty Suzi Quatro her first UK number one in 1973. Written by the hit-making team of Mike Chapman and Nicky Chinn, who also wrote hits for Sweet, Mud and Smokie, among others, 'Can the Can' served up stomping beats, raucous sounds and fierce energy, topped by a contagious earworm of a melody. Quatro helped break down gender barriers in rock music at the time, paving the way for future women rockers.

The Tenth Symphony by Russian composer Dmitri Shostakovich was completed in 1953, following the death of Stalin. It has been said that the second movement, Allegro, paints a musical portrayal of the Russian leader from whom Shostakovich lived in constant fear of reprisals. This tension is encapsulated in the music's unrelenting, intensely aggressive sound, echoing the terror of living in the shadow of such a regime.

When Metallica teamed up with the San Francisco Symphony in 1999 for their live album *S&M (Symphony and Metallica)*, it underscored how much heavy metal music and orchestral music are indeed perfect bedfellows. 'Enter Sandman' encapsulates everything that defines what orchestral music is all about: anthemic motifs, shifting dynamics, emotive melodies and monumental compositions. Tonight, Finnish hard rock group Lordi's Mr Lordi lends his unique theatrical touch to proceedings.

Commissioned by the Orchestre national d'Île-de-France, 'Steampunk Blizzard' was composed by Daniel Nelson in 2016, and evokes the composer's attraction for all things industrial and mechanical. Its highly charged retro-futuristic sound is described by Nelson as a 'steam engine ballet in a snowstorm'.

Released in 2016, 'Doing It To Death' is a moody and minimalistic outing by lo-fi indie rock duo The Kills, formed by singer Alison Mosshart and guitarist James William Hince in 2002. Driven by a bluesy guitar riff-heavy motif and underscored by a drum machine beat, the song, with Mosshart joining the orchestra on vocals, is atmospheric and dissonant in equal measure. The driving rhythms of Mosolov's futurist *The Iron Foundry*, composed in 1930, bring us to the interval.

'Mars, the Bringer of War' is the first movement in Gustav Holst's orchestral suite *The Planets*, composed 1914–17, inspired by the composer's fascination with astrology. The movement's unnerving slow-burning pace finally comes to a hammering climatic refrain that conjures marching armies. At the time of Holst writing this movement of the suite, the outbreak of World War One was looming.

Fast and furious with unbridled punk energy, 'Ace of Spades' was released in 1980 by speed metal merchants Motörhead – though the band has always explicitly disowned the 'metal' label – and with the addition of the sheer might of an orchestra and guest vocals by Mosshart will be an almighty exercise in brute musical force.

The brooding Adagietto from Mahler's Symphony No.5 (composed in 1902) takes the tempo down a notch ahead of 'Knockin' on Heaven's Door'. Written by Bob Dylan in 1973 and most famously recorded by Guns N' Roses, the song has been covered by various orchestras over time, most notably the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. And while Guns N' Roses took the folk-rock elements of Dylan's original to new heights with its thundering hard-rock take, in tonight's performance Quatro stamps her own style onto the song.

The hypnotic riff of Led Zeppelin's 'Kashmir', here performed in an orchestral version, has led this track to be covered and sampled innumerable times, by orchestras and rock artists alike. Cascading violins announce the final movement of Vivaldi's 'Summer' from 1723's *The Four Seasons*, painting a vivid picture of a summer storm in all its intensity.

Composed by Camille Saint-Saëns in 1886, the *Organ* Symphony has become a staple of the orchestral repertoire. Due to the lyrical nature of the melody, the complete theme of the Maestoso was later recycled for the basis of the 1977 pop chart hit 'If I Had Words' by duo Scott Fitzgerald and Yvonne Keeley. The symphony prefigures the epic scale and 'wall of sound' approach that would later define the symphonic metal genre.

Lordi won Eurovision in 2006 with their irresistible anthem 'Hard Rock Hallelujah', and in turn brought their country its first-ever win in the contest. It was also the first time a group from the genre of hard rock and metal had won – and with the highest score in Eurovision history at the time. Mr Lordi joins the orchestra to reprise this history-making song.

Programme notes © Joe Matera, 2026



SCAN THE QR CODE TO SEE ALL
THE EVENTS IN MULTITUDES



PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA

Wednesday 22 April 2026, 7.30pm | Royal Festival Hall

VIOLIN I

Zsolt-Tihamér Visontay
Rebecca Chan
Fabrizio Falasca
Dániel Mészöly
Lulu Fuller
Adrián Varela
Joonas Pekonen
Eunsley Park
Soong Choo
Victoria Irish
Karin Tilch
Izzy Howard
Peter Fisher
Jonathan Lee

VIOLIN II

Annabelle Meare
Fiona Cornall
Nuno Carapina
Marina Gillam
David López Ibáñez
Ilhem Ben Khalifa
Susan Hedger
Gideon Robinson
Julian Milone
Mee-Hyun Esther Park
Susan Bowran
Natalia Bonner

VIOLA

Scott Dickinson
Sylvain Séailles
Carol Hultmark
Sara Sheppard
Linda Kidwell
Gijs Kramers
Cheremie Hamilton-Miller
Cameron Campbell
Stephanie Edmundson
Daichi Yoshimura

CELLO

Louisa Tuck
Richard Birchall
Ella Rundle
Alexander Rolton
Silvestrs Kalniņš
Tamaki Sugimoto
Yaroslava Trofymchuk
Raphael Lang

DOUBLE BASS

Sebastian Pennar
Michael Fuller
Benjamin du Toit
Ryan Smith
Rupert Ring
Jakub Cywinski

FLUTE

Frederico Paixão
Joidy Blanco Lewis
Robert Looman

PICCOLO

Robert Looman

OBOE

Timothy Rundle
Imogen Davies
Maxwell Spiers

COR ANGLAIS

Maxwell Spiers

CLARINET

Maura Marinucci
Jordan Blac
Chris Goodman

E FLAT CLARINET

Katie Lockhart

BASS CLARINET

Chris Goodman

BASSOON

Robin O'Neill
Shelly Organ
Luke Whitehead

CONTRA BASSOON

Luke Whitehead

HORN

Norberto López
Richard Bayliss
Kira Doherty
Henry Ward
Carsten Williams

TRUMPET

Jason Evans
Robert Farley
Louis Barclay
Ruth Shaddock
Chris Evans

TROMBONE

Roger Cutts
Philip White

BASS TROMBONE

James Buckle

EUPHONIUM

Rory Cartmell

TUBA

James Tavares

TIMPANI

Jonathan Phillips

PERCUSSION

Paul Stoneman
Neil Percy
Christopher Thomas
Calum Crosbie
Ethan Windle
Iolo Edwards

HARP

Heidi Krutzen

PIANO

Fionnuala Ward

ORGAN

Iain Farrington

List correct at 20 April 2026

FIND OUT MORE

- ▶ Philharmonia Orchestra
- ▶ Santtu-Matias Rouvali
- ▶ southbankcentre.co.uk