



Press Release

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Patron: Her Majesty the Queen

Royal Philharmonic Society Bicentenary Celebrations

Beethoven "Super Sunday" Sunday 11 August 2013

BBC Proms

Beethoven's *9th Symphony*, the Society's most famous commission, performed by the National Youth Orchestra, conducted by Vasily Petrenko alongside the world premiere of Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Frieze*

Beethoven Plaque Unveiling, Regent Street, London Westminster City Council Green plaque to be unveiled at the site of the first UK performance of Beethoven's *9th Symphony* in 1825

This summer, the Royal Philharmonic Society celebrates its most famous commission, Beethoven's *9th Symphony*, in the way it knows best – by commissioning new music. Mark-Anthony Turnage's Beethoven inspired orchestral work, *Frieze*, receives its world premiere at the BBC Proms alongside Beethoven's masterwork (broadcast live on BBC Radio 3, and on BBC4 on 18 August and 6 September).

Beethoven's Ninth Symphony was commissioned by the Philharmonic Society in 1817 for 50 pounds. It continues to inspire people of all ages around the world, providing the anthem for the European Union and even hitting the right note with myriad celebrities, who have made it the most requested work on BBC Radio 4's Desert Island Discs.

The Royal Philharmonic Society enjoyed close links with Beethoven right from its foundation in 1813, giving first UK performances of his 5th and 7th Symphonies and 1st, 3rd and 4th Piano Concertos. In 1827, when the Society learnt that Beethoven was both ill and much in need of money, the Directors decided that a sum of £100 should be sent to him "to be applied to his comforts and necessities". The money, held up en route, reached him only a few days before he died, but time enough for him to express his heartfelt appreciation to the Society. Schindler, his amanuensis,

reported that *"the Society had comforted his last days, and that event on the brink of the grave he thanked the Society and the whole English nation for the great gift, God bless them."*

BBC Prom, Royal Albert Hall at 7.30pm

Mark-Anthony Turnage's new work, *Frieze*, co-commissioned by the RPS, BBC Radio 3 and the New York Philharmonic, will receive its world premiere at the BBC Proms alongside Beethoven's 9th Symphony. Performed by the National Youth Orchestra, National Youth Choir of Great Britain and youth choirs from the UK and Ireland, including from Derry-Londonderry, UK City of Culture 2013 under **Vasily Petrenko**, the concert is this year's Free Prom. Soloists include **Jennifer Johnston, Andrew Kennedy, Lisa Milne** and **Gerald Finley**. The concert will be broadcast live on BBC Radio 3 on Sunday 11 August, and televised on BBC4 on Sunday 18 August (Turnage premiere) and Friday 6 September (Beethoven 9). In a pre-concert talk, writer **Helen Wallace** and academic **Amanda Glauert** discuss Beethoven's 9th Symphony and the Philharmonic Society's role as commissioner (5.45pm, Royal College of Music).

Turnage's work, *Frieze*, takes its name from the *Beethoven Frieze* by the painter Gustav Klimt, which itself is inspired by Beethoven's 9th Symphony. Commenting on the commission, Turnage said: *"I've been obsessed with Beethoven from the age of eight. What a joy, therefore, to be asked by the RPS to write a piece inspired by Beethoven's great symphony. Beethoven is a towering figure, but I find him more inspiring than intimidating."*

The New York Philharmonic will give the US Premiere of *Frieze* in October 2013, and the Prom will be also be attended by members of the **Orange County Youth Symphony Orchestra**, who will give the West Coast U.S. premiere of *Frieze* on 15 May 2014.

Green Plaque Unveiling, Regent Street, Westminster Midday

Beethoven's 9th Symphony received its UK premiere on 21 March 1825 at the Argyll Rooms, now NatWest Bank on Regent Street.

To mark the Society's Bicentenary, a green plaque will be unveiled at Midday on the site of the former concert hall, to the accompaniment of a new fanfare commissioned by the RPS from one of the current NYO composers and performed by members of the National Youth Orchestra.

Launched in 1991, Westminster City Council's Green Plaque Scheme draws attention to particular buildings in the London Borough of Westminster associated with people of renown who have made lasting contributions to society. Other luminaries marked by the scheme include Edward Elgar, Oscar Wilde, Jane Austen, Robert Browning and Voltaire, and sites of historical significance include the Queen's Hall, The Turks Head Tavern and the Tyburn Gallows.

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