

Tchaikovsky @ the Royal Festival Hall

Our A Level music visit to the Royal Festival hall was a highly enjoyable experience overall. Not only did it provide us with the opportunity to extend our wider listening knowledge as A-level musicians, it allowed us to listen to a live performance of an orchestra, which in itself elevated the experience for us all. The repertoire was an amazing selection of Tchaikovsky pieces, including his second piano concerto and his Symphony no.6. We were particularly pleased to hear the Symphony live as it stood to be a favourite amongst many of us and we were not disappointed to walk away with it having more than exceeded our expectations. An added bonus to the trip was the incredible night-time views of the Southbank centre which we were more than happy to explore and take some photos of, proving it to be a perfect end to a memorable school trip!

The concert at the Royal Festival Hall showcased some of Tchaikovsky's best works, with his piano concerto no 2, played by the very talented Bruce Liu, winner of the highly prestigious Chopin Piano Competition in 2021, his symphonic poem 'Francesca da Rimini,' based on Dante's 'Divine comedy,' and his 6th symphony, which turned out to have a tragic and mysterious back story. The concert had many highlights, including an encore from the piano, but easily the biggest one was Tchaikovsky's sixth symphony, rumoured to be a suicide note from the artist. The overall mood of the symphony was dark and gloomy, but it was punctuated by moments of lightness and a jovial second movement in an unusual time signature. The symphony ended on a dark note, leaving us all astounded by the power that the Philharmonia conveyed with this incredible performance.

We were also privileged to hear a touching tribute to the current situation in Ukraine from the principle French horn which highlighted how the diversity of music can bring people together. Following this, everyone stood for a powerful performance of Ukraine's beautiful national anthem by the Philharmonia. The event was overall very significant, enriching both our academic knowledge of music and experience as it relates to current events.

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