

# London Philharmonic Orchestra

TANIA LEÓN

HORIZONS

RAÍCES (ORIGINS)

STRIDE

PASAJES

LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

EDWARD GARDNER | KARINA CANELLAKIS |

DIMA SLOBODENIOUK CONDUCTORS



# CONTENTS

CLICK THE LINKS TO NAVIGATE

[TANIA LEÓN](#) 3

## [PROGRAMME NOTES:](#)

[HORIZONS](#) 5

[RAÍCES \(ORIGINS\)](#) 5

[STRIDE](#) 7

[PASAJES](#) 7

## [BIOGRAPHIES:](#)

[EDWARD GARDNER](#) 8

[KARINA CANELLAKIS](#) 9

[DIMA SLOBODENIOUK](#) 10

[LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA](#) 11

[CREDITS](#) 12

## TANIA LEÓN BORN 1943

### LPO COMPOSER IN RESIDENCE 2023–25



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Cuban-born American composer Tania León was the London Philharmonic Orchestra's Composer-in-Residence for two seasons, from September 2023 to July 2025. This release brings together four works recorded live in concert at the Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall during her residency.

A particular highlight of Tania León's time with the Orchestra was the world premiere of the LPO co-commission *Raíces (Origins)* at the Royal Festival Hall in March 2024, with several further performances on tour across the USA later that year. Other notable moments included the UK premieres of the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Stride* in March 2023 and of *Horizons* in October 2023; and the European premiere of *Pasajes* in February 2025, all of which are captured on this release. During her residency, Tania also continued her lifelong advocacy for the music of living composers as mentor to our LPO Young Composers.

Having studied piano in her native Cuba and earned Bachelor's and Master's degrees in music, Tania León left for the United States in 1967. She settled in New York City, and in 1969 staked her place in New York's cultural scene as a founding member and music director of Arthur Mitchell's Dance Theatre of Harlem. She was



New Music Advisor at the New York Philharmonic from 1993–97, and from 1994–2001 she served as Latin American music advisor for the American Composers Orchestra. She is also the founder and artistic director of Composers Now, dedicated to empowering living composers and celebrating the diversity of their voices.

In 2022 Tania León received a prestigious Kennedy Center Honor. She won the 2021 Pulitzer Prize for Music for *Stride*, the 2023 Michael Ludwig Nemmers Prize in Music Composition, and SGAE's XIX Premio de la Música Iberoamericana Tomás Luis de Victoria 2023. In 2024,

she earned the Distinguished Artist Award from the International Society for the Performing Arts. In February 2025 she was recognised at the 67th Grammy Awards with a Trustees Award, presented to individuals who, during their musical careers, have made significant contributions to the field of recording, and in April 2025 she was announced as the recipient of the 2025 William Schuman Award, given to recognise the lifetime achievement of an American composer whose works have been widely performed and generally acknowledged to be of lasting significance.

*Tania León and conductor Dima Slobodeniouk with the LPO at the Royal Festival Hall following the UK premiere of Stride, 31 March 2023*



## TANIA LEÓN

### HORIZONS (1999)

The orchestral work *Horizons* was commissioned by the Hammoniale Festival der Frauen, an international biennial for women artists in Hamburg, Germany. It was premiered by the NDR Sinfonieorchester, Hamburg, under conductor Peter Ruzicka in July 1999. This recorded performance was the work's UK premiere, given by the LPO under Karina Canellakis on 25 October 2023 at London's Royal Festival Hall. It also marked the launch of Tania León's role as the Orchestra's Composer-in-Residence.

In the composer's own words: 'Rather than being in a fixed form, *Horizons* is more like a stream that widens and narrows unpredictably, following a winding course. It begins with bright ripples in the flute, and throughout its journey, foreground events episodically interrupt the flow of background textures, the currents beneath the surface.'

## TANIA LEÓN

### RAÍCES (ORIGINS) (2024)

*Raíces* was co-commissioned by the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Concertgebouw Brugge. This recording captures the world premiere performance, given by the LPO under Edward Gardner at London's Royal Festival Hall on 6 March 2024. The Orchestra and Gardner gave the work's second performance, at the Concertgebouw Brugge, on 9 March 2024, followed by several further performances on tour across the USA during autumn 2024.

The composer writes: 'The title of this work is a Spanish word that means "roots", or "origins". I prefer "origins", because it's more general. It's also a word I've used before as a title, in my *Orígenes* for brass and percussion, which I wrote in 2012. In the case of this new piece, the origins are partly mine and therefore very mixed, for, like many people in Cuba, where I come from, I have quite a lot in my heritage: Spanish, Cuban, Chinese and French. Like a jambalaya. That's why I'm not threatened by any culture; in fact, I'm very curious, and I want to learn. Living now in the United States, there's a lot I have absorbed, to the point that when I go back to Cuba they think I'm from Arizona!

Every time I read a book by Gabriel García Márquez it's like going back home to my childhood. I grew up in a poor neighbourhood and there was always a tapestry of sound in the background; somebody always had a radio

on. Also, in Cuba, and indeed all over Latin America, we have a very strong dance element in our culture, and that's how I grew up: dancing – Cuban, Spanish, even Scottish dancing. You'll certainly hear dancing in this piece. And then there's a touch of Latin America in the orchestra, including an instrument that I'm using for the first time, which is a chime made from animal nails. It's found in various areas of Peru and Colombia.

The piece is in three main sections, but first of all there's a short introduction, which I've marked "Calm". It's scored for the strings, playing harmonics, and it has an internal character. It's a state I try to find in myself: contemplative. Even when the music is much more active, this contemplation is going on behind the scenes. Towards the end of the second section it comes right forward.

When the introduction has come to a stop there's a pause and then the big first section comes in, with the marking 'Jovial'. It's a dance-inspired movement that explodes. This is where I really went ethnic, especially in the transition at the end, where the piano and percussion continue but in the strings, especially the basses, you immediately recognise a Cuban style of syncopation. And then it totally disappears and goes into the second section.

This is really for the woodwinds, under the heading 'Enchanted' ... It's like a forest. And then the brass come in, like the wind, that pushes things. I didn't use the trumpets so much here, because I was reserving them for the finale. It's like a walk through a forest. It always impressed me tremendously, something I heard as a child, that Beethoven used to walk through the forest to gain inspiration. Whenever I have the opportunity, I do that. Also, I owed a lot to Hans Werner Henze, and when we first met, and were discussing how we composed, we did so as we walked through a forest. He invited me to come and see him in Castel Gandolfo. He sent me a fax, and I thought it was a prank until I telephoned him. We spoke in Spanish, and he asked me to be on the jury at his Munich Biennale in 1992. From then on he became like a father to me in Europe.

The last part of the piece is very upbeat. It's a conversation between Latin American influences and jazz influences. It's a way of questioning everything that I have become. And it's a way of leaving the stage.'

Tania León, from a conversation with Paul Griffiths, February 2024

## TANIA LEÓN

### STRIDE (2020)

Tania León was commissioned by the New York Philharmonic to write a piece for 'Project 19', which commissioned 19 women to compose works marking the centenary of the 19th Amendment (which gave American women the right to vote in 1920). She started by researching the pioneering feminist Susan B. Anthony, saying: 'I read her biography, her statements. To me it was tremendous to see the inner force that she had. Then I started looking for a title before starting the piece – not the way I always do it. [It reflected] the way that I imagined her as a person who did not take "no" for an answer. She kept pushing and pushing and moving forward, walking with firm steps until she got the whole thing done. That is precisely what *Stride* means. Something that is moving forward.'

*Stride* received its world premiere by the New York Philharmonic at David Geffen Hall, Lincoln Center, under conductor Jaap van Zweden on 13 February 2020. It was subsequently awarded the 2021 Pulitzer Prize for Music, awarded for a distinguished musical composition by an American that had its first performance or recording in the United States during the year. The awarding committee praised the work as 'a musical journey full of surprise, with powerful brass and rhythmic motifs that incorporate Black music traditions from the US and the Caribbean into a Western orchestral fabric.'

## TANIA LEÓN

### PASAJES (2022)

*Pasajes (Passages)* was written in 2022, commissioned by a consortium of orchestras as part of New Music USA's 'Amplifying Voices' programme. It was premiered by the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra under Akiko Fujimoto on 9 April 2022. This LPO performance, at London's Royal Festival Hall on 21 February 2025 under Edward Gardner, was its European premiere.

The work is in four sections, each section recalling scenes of the environment where the composer grew up. The opening is reminiscent of a far-off, serene song, indicative of the beautiful melodies of Latin American cultures. Then the song of an imaginary bird enters, surrounded by the sounds of nature. This is increasingly intertwined with rhythmical pulses: the ever-present pulse of Caribbean culture. The work culminates in a joyous flash of rhythm, portraying the bombastic joy of revellers parading through the neighbourhood as they prepare their dances for Carnival.

León likens her composition to visual art: 'Each "passage" in the piece is a fresh idea,' she says. 'Regardless of genre, you have poetry in sounds. It's like going to a museum and looking at a canvas that you have seen before. This is a new way of painting; like Picasso or Monet, but with a new palette.'



## EDWARD GARDNER CONDUCTOR

© Benjamin Ealovega



Edward Gardner has been Principal Conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra since 2021, recently extending his contract until at least 2028. He is also Music Director of the Norwegian Opera & Ballet, and Honorary Conductor of the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, following his tenure as Chief Conductor from 2015–24.

Edward Gardner's previous recordings on the LPO Label include Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage*, which won a 2023 Gramophone Award; Berlioz's *The Damnation of Faust*; a second Tippett disc featuring the Piano Concerto and Symphony No. 2; and works by Rachmaninov, Dvořák, Schumann and Britten.

In demand as a guest conductor, Edward has appeared with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic and Vienna Symphony. He also continues his longstanding collaborations with the City of

Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, where he was Principal Guest Conductor from 2010–16, and the BBC Symphony Orchestra.

Music Director of English National Opera from 2006–15, Edward has an ongoing relationship with New York's Metropolitan Opera, where he has conducted *The Damnation of Faust*, *Carmen*, *Don Giovanni*, *Der Rosenkavalier* and *Werther*. He made his debut at London's Royal Opera House in 2019 in *Káťa Kabanová*, returning for *Werther* the following season and the world premiere of Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Festen* in 2025. He has also conducted at the Bavarian State Opera, La Scala, Chicago Lyric Opera, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Opéra National de Paris and Teatro di San Carlo.

Born in Gloucester in 1974, Edward was educated at the University of Cambridge and the Royal Academy of Music. He went on to become Assistant Conductor of the Hallé and Music Director of Glyndebourne Touring Opera. His many accolades include Royal Philharmonic Society Award Conductor of the Year (2008), an Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in Opera (2009) and an OBE for services to music in The Queen's Birthday Honours (2012).

Edward Gardner's position at the LPO is generously supported by Aud Jebsen.



## KARINA CANELLAKIS

### CONDUCTOR



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Universally acclaimed for her symphonic and operatic performances characterised by their emotional impact, interpretive depth and technical command, Karina Canellakis is welcomed by the finest musical institutions across the globe. She has been Principal Guest Conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra

since 2021, recently extending her contract to the end of the 2026/27 season. She is also Chief Conductor of the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, and her debut recording with them, Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra*, received a Grammy nomination in 2023.

Since winning the Sir Georg Solti Conducting Award in 2016, Karina has developed close relationships with many of the world's leading orchestras. She was Principal Guest Conductor of the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin from 2019–23, and in 2023/24 was a featured Artist-in-Residence at Vienna's Musikverein.

Already established as a virtuoso violinist, Karina was encouraged to pursue conducting by Sir Simon Rattle while playing in the Berlin Philharmonic's Akademie. She performed for several years as soloist, guest leader and chamber musician, spending many summers at the Marlboro Music Festival, until conducting eventually became her focus.

Karina was born and raised in New York City.

Karina Canellakis's position at the LPO is generously supported by Richard Buxton.

## DIMA SLOBODENIOUK

### CONDUCTOR

© Marco Borggreve



Praised by musicians and audiences alike for his exhilarating approach and energetic leadership, Dima Slobodeniouk has become one of the most sought-after conductors of his generation. He studied with the Ukrainian violinist Olga Parkhomenko at Helsinki's Sibelius Academy, where he graduated in 2001. It was also there that he

took up his conducting studies with Leif Segerstam, Jorma Panula and Atso Almila.

From 2016–21 Dima Slobodeniouk was Principal Conductor of the Lahti Symphony Orchestra, as well as Artistic Director of the Lahti Sibelius Festival. He was also Music Director of the Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia from 2013–22. He appears as a guest conductor with the world's foremost orchestras including the London Philharmonic Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Boston Symphony Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Berlin Philharmonic, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, Concertgebouworkest Amsterdam and NHK Symphony Orchestra Tokyo.

Soloists with whom he collaborates with include Leif Ove Andsnes, Martha Argerich, Emanuel Ax, Khatia Buniatishvili, Seong-Jin Cho, Kirill Gerstein, Håkan Hardenberger, Martin Helmchen, Alexandre Kantorow, Patricia Kopatchinskaja, Beatrice Rana, Yuja Wang and Frank Peter Zimmermann.

Known for his musical expertise and interpretive depth, Dima is also an acclaimed recording artist. Notable recordings include Esa-Pekka Salonen's Cello Concerto with the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra and Nicolas Altstaedt (Alpha Classics), for which he received an ICMA Award. His latest releases on the BIS label are Stravinsky's *Symphony in Three Movements* and *Symphony in C*, which he recorded with the Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia. Other releases for BIS include works by Kalevi Aho with the Lahti Symphony Orchestra, which won a 2018 BBC Music Magazine Award; a later disc of Aho's *Sieidi* and his Fifth Symphony; and a disc featuring music inspired by the Finnish folk epic, the *Kalevala*. For the Ondine label, he has recorded works by Perttu Haapanen and Lotta Wennäkoski with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra.

# LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

The London Philharmonic Orchestra is one of the world's finest orchestras, balancing a long and distinguished history with its present-day position as one of the most dynamic and forward-looking ensembles in the UK. This reputation has been secured by the Orchestra's performances in the concert hall and opera house, its many award-winning recordings, trailblazing international tours and wide-ranging educational work.

Founded by Sir Thomas Beecham in 1932, the Orchestra has since been headed by many of the world's greatest conductors, including Sir Adrian Boult, Bernard Haitink, Sir Georg Solti, Klaus Tennstedt and Kurt Masur. In September 2021 Edward Gardner became the Orchestra's Principal Conductor, succeeding Vladimir Jurowski, who became Conductor Emeritus in recognition of his transformative impact on the Orchestra as Principal Conductor from 2007–21.

The Orchestra is based at the Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall in London, where it has been Resident Orchestra since 1992. Each summer it takes up its annual residency at Glyndebourne Festival Opera where it has been Resident Symphony Orchestra for 60 years. The Orchestra performs at venues around the UK and has made numerous international tours, performing to sell-out audiences in America, Europe, Asia and Australasia.

The London Philharmonic Orchestra made its first recordings on 10 October 1932, just three days after its first public performance. It has recorded and broadcast regularly ever since, and in 2005 established its own record label. These recordings are taken mainly from live concerts given by conductors including those with LPO Principal Conductors from Beecham and Boult, through Haitink, Solti, Tennstedt and Masur, to Jurowski and Gardner.

[lpo.org.uk](http://lpo.org.uk)



**TANIA LEÓN** (born 1943)

- 01 11:05 Horizons**  
Karina Canellakis *conductor*
- 02 17:23 Raíces (Origins)**  
Co-commissioned by the London Philharmonic  
Orchestra and Concertgebouw Brugge  
*World premiere recording*  
Edward Gardner *conductor*
- 03 14:17 Stride**  
*World premiere recording*  
Dima Slobodeniouk *conductor*
- 04 13:02 Pasajes**  
*World premiere recording*  
Edward Gardner *conductor*

**London Philharmonic Orchestra**  
Pieter Schoeman *leader*

Recorded at the Southbank Centre's Royal  
Festival Hall: *Stride* on 31 March 2023,  
*Horizons* on 25 October 2023, *Raíces*  
(*Origins*) on 6 March 2024 and *Pasajes* on  
21 February 2025.

**Producers:** Andrew Walton, K&A  
Productions (*Horizons*) Tim Burton, K&A  
Productions (*Stride*); Nick Parker, Floating  
Earth (*Raíces (Origins)* & *Pasajes*)  
**Engineers:** Deborah Spanton, K&A  
Productions (*Horizons* & *Stride*); Tom  
Lewington, Floating Earth (*Raíces*  
(*Origins*)); Mike Hatch, Floating Earth  
(*Pasajes*)

**Executive Producers:**  
Elena Dubinets, David Burke, Graham Wood  
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