



London Philharmonic Orchestra

THOMAS ADÈS ORCHESTRAL SUITES

LUXURY SUITE FROM POWDER HER FACE
FIVE SPELLS FROM THE TEMPEST
INFERNO SUITE

LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA
THOMAS ADÈS CONDUCTOR

CONTENTS

CLICK THE LINKS TO NAVIGATE

[THOMAS ADÈS](#) 4

[LUXURY SUITE FROM POWDER HER FACE](#) 6

[FIVE SPELLS FROM THE TEMPEST](#) 7

[INFERNO SUITE](#) 8

[LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA](#) 9



THOMAS ADÈS

COMPOSER | CONDUCTOR

Born in London in 1971, Thomas Adès studied piano at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, and read music at King's College, Cambridge. A prodigious composer, conductor and pianist, he was described by *The New York Times* in 2007 as 'one of the most accomplished and complete musicians of his generation'.

The London Philharmonic Orchestra has enjoyed a long and fruitful relationship with Adès since his season as Composer-in-Focus in 2000/01. At the 2022 Dresden Festival, the Orchestra gave the world premiere of *Five Spells from The Tempest* under the baton of the composer, and in February 2023 he conducted the Orchestra at London's Royal Festival Hall in a concert of his own music, including the UK premiere of the same work, as well as the *Inferno Suite* performance captured on this disc. The Orchestra's UK premiere of Adès's Concerto for Piano and Orchestra with Kirill Gerstein was nominated for a 2020 South Bank Sky Arts Award. The Orchestra has previously performed and recorded many of Adès's works, including the UK premiere of his *Luxury Suite from Powder Her Face* in 2018, which also appears on this disc, as well as the violin concerto *Concentric Paths* with soloist Anthony Marwood in 2019, and the Chamber Symphony, released on the LPO Label in 2008 (LPO-0035).

Adès's chamber opera *Powder Her Face* (1995) has been performed worldwide, whilst *The Tempest* (2004) was commissioned by London's Royal Opera House and has since been taken up by international houses including New York's Metropolitan Opera, where it was recorded for a Deutsche Grammophon DVD which subsequently won a Grammy Award. Adès's third opera, after Luis Buñuel's *The Exterminating Angel*, premiered at the Salzburg Festival in July 2016 before travelling to London, New York and Copenhagen; in 2024 it received a critically-acclaimed staging from Calixto Bieito at the Opéra national de Paris.

From 1993–95, Adès was Composer-in-Association with the Hallé Orchestra, producing *These Premises Are Alarmed* for the opening of the Bridgewater Hall in 1996. In 2005 he premiered his Violin Concerto *Concentric Paths*, with Anthony Marwood and the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, at the Berlin Festspiele and the BBC Proms. *Asyla* (1997) was written for Sir Simon Rattle and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. Adès's chamber music includes the two string quartets *Arcadiana* (1994) and *The Four Quarters* (2010), a Piano Quintet (2000), and *Lieux retrouvés* (2009) for cello and piano. *Totentanz* for mezzo-soprano, baritone and large orchestra was premiered at the 2013 BBC Proms by the BBC Symphony Orchestra.

Tevot (2007), was commissioned by the Berlin Philharmonic and Carnegie Hall, whilst *In Seven Days* (a concerto for piano with moving image) was premiered in 2008 in London and Los Angeles. *Polaris* (2011) was premiered by the New World Symphony with Michael Tilson Thomas in Miami and was later choreographed to acclaim by Crystal Pite as part of an all-Adès evening at Sadler's Wells. 2021 saw the creation of *Dante*, Adès' first ballet score, at the Royal Ballet and Opera, choreographed by Wayne McGregor with designs by Tacita Dean; it has since been danced at the Royal Danish Ballet and Opéra national de Paris, and recorded by Gustavo Dudamel and the LA Philharmonic for Nonesuch.

As a conductor, Adès appears regularly with the London Philharmonic, London Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw and Finnish Radio orchestras. He was the inaugural Artistic Partner with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, with whom he premiered a Concerto for Piano and Orchestra with Kirill Gerstein as soloist in 2019. Other recent works include *Dawn*, a chacony for orchestra at any distance (2020), *Shanty – over the Sea* for strings (2020) and *Märchentänze* for solo violin and piano/orchestra (2021). *Air – Homage to Sibelius* for violin and orchestra was premiered at the 2022 Lucerne Festival, where Adès was Composer-in-Residence.

Other recent projects include *Aquifer* for Simon Rattle and the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, and an expanded version of *America: A Prophecy* for the Leipzig Gewandhaus, where Adès is the subject of a two-season composer focus. He is also currently engaged in a two-year residency with the Hallé Orchestra. Adès has also created a succession of celebrated recent chamber works: bass clarinet quintet *Alchymia* (2021, for Mark Simpson and Quatour Diotima), *Forgotten Dances* (2023, for guitarist Sean Shibe), *Növények* (2022) – a setting of seven Hungarian songs for mezzo-soprano Katalin Károlyi and piano sextet – and *Wreath (for Franz Schubert)*, a string quintet for the Danish Quartet and cellist Johannes Rostamo, premiered in 2024.

In 2018, Thomas Adès was awarded a CBE in The Queen's Birthday Honours. He was Artistic Director of the Aldeburgh Festival from 1999–2008, and performs worldwide as a pianist, as well as coaching annually at the International Musicians Seminar, Prussia Cove.

THOMAS ADÈS

LUXURY SUITE FROM *POWDER HER FACE*

- I Overture –
- II Scene with Song –
- III Wedding March –
- IV Waltz –
- V Ode –
- VI Paperchase –
- VII Hotel Manager's Aria 'It is too late' –
- VIII Finale

Thomas Adès's sensational first opera, *Powder Her Face*, was commissioned by Almeida Opera, who first performed it at the 1995 Cheltenham Festival. It is scored for four singers and 15 players. In 2007, Adès arranged three sections of the work– the Overture, Waltz and Finale – for large orchestra as a short suite of 'Dances from Powder Her Face'. And in 2017, responding to a joint commission from six European and American organisations, he added further sections to create a continuous orchestral Suite lasting nearly half an hour, which was premiered by the Berlin Philharmonic under Sir Simon Rattle in June 2017. This April 2018 performance by the London Philharmonic Orchestra was its first hearing in Britain.

The opera, with a libretto by the novelist Philip Hensher, centres on an elderly Duchess (in all but name the notorious real-life Duchess of Argyll), on the brink of eviction from her hotel room, looking back over her

salacious career. In flashback scenes, the three other characters, members of the hotel staff, take on multiple roles. The Overture is full of the tango rhythms, often distorted, that permeate the score; the version in the Suite runs on into the first scene, in which a hotel electrician and a maid are parodying the Duchess. 'Scene with Song' links more of this opening scene with a flashback to the 1930s, hinging on the Duchess's favourite song of the period. 'Wedding March' is a portentous interlude depicting the preparations for the Duchess's lavishly hedonistic 1936 wedding. The brittle, irregular Waltz is based on an aria sung by an envious waitress at the wedding itself. The next section is based chiefly on an ensemble in the first scene: it is an 'Ode' to Joy, the Duchess's favourite perfume. This is followed by 'Paperchase', in which the Duke, helped by his mistress, searches for evidence against the Duchess in their 1950s divorce proceedings. Then comes a scene in which the Hotel Manager (impersonated by the first horn) arrives to evict the ageing Duchess, dismissing her protestations. The Finale is a 'Ghost Epilogue', in which the maid and electrician clear the room after the Duchess's departure, not without some dalliance of their own.

© Anthony Burton

Co-commissioned by the Stiftung Berliner Philharmoniker, the Danish National Symphony Orchestra, the London Philharmonic Orchestra with the generous support of the Boltini Trust, The Philadelphia Orchestra, Carnegie Hall, and the St Louis Symphony.

THOMAS ADÈS

FIVE SPELLS FROM *THE TEMPEST*

- I Overture (Storm)
- II Ariel and Prospero
- III Ferdinand and Miranda
- IV The Feast
- V Prospero's Farewell – Caliban

The Tempest, Thomas Adès's second opera and his first on a large scale, had its premiere at Covent Garden in 2003 and has since been staged by companies including the Metropolitan Opera, the Vienna State Opera and La Scala. *Five Spells* provides a compact selection of scenes from *The Tempest* in which the vocal parts are taken by instruments – a vision of the opera as pure, lustrous music, distilled from two hours to a little over 20 minutes. Adès created the score for the London Philharmonic Orchestra, who gave the first performance in Dresden in May 2022.

First, of course, must come the Overture, trimmed of its opening instant of calm to go straight into the music of whistling wind and tumbling wave, of rushing *staccato* quavers and heaving long-short rhythms. When this has all passed, uncertain harmonies remain. The second movement turns to a dialogue between the sprite Ariel and his/her master Prospero, deposed and exiled from Milan to make a little kingdom of his own on the island where all the action of the opera (as of the original Shakespeare play) unfolds. Ariel is sung in the opera by a soprano

whose spectacular switchback line keeps jetting up to a high E and down again, with overflows as far as to F sharp. This daredevil music is taken in this version by high woodwinds. Prospero arrives on muted horn and violas.

Next comes the second half of the love scene that closes the second of the opera's three acts. Prospero's daughter Miranda and the new castaway Ferdinand sing a duet in short phrases that echo each other, clasp each other. In the opera this music is brought to an orchestral climax and returned to the young couple. Prospero enters again, this time on solo cello, to acknowledge a power he cannot control.

In a moment, then, from the third act, Ariel conjures up a feast for the sympathetic senior shipwreck survivors. Twinkling glockenspiel, harp and high piano, together with airy Ariel music on high woodwinds and violins, evoke magic, with strands from the love scene intertwined. Afterwards the tuba, supported by trombones, sings an aria for the generous-spirited Gonzalo. The voyage through *The Tempest* ends with the finale. Accompanied by softly scintillant stairways, Prospero's voice, at first on cellos, dissolves, and the island is left to human-free tranquillity.

© Paul Griffiths

Co-commissioned by Dresdner Musikfestspiele (for the London Philharmonic Orchestra), and Cleveland Orchestra; Franz Welser-Möst, Music Director.

THOMAS ADÈS

INFERNO SUITE

- I Abandon Hope
- II The Selfish – stung by wasps
- III The Ferryman
- IV Pavan of the Souls in Limbo
- X The Popes' Adagio – heads first
- XI The Hypocrites – in coats of lead
- XII The Thieves – devoured by snakes
- XIII Satan – in the lake of ice

Playing continuously for a little under 20 minutes, this Suite draws sections from the opening part of *Dante*, a triptych based on *The Divine Comedy* that Adès composed in 2019/20 to a joint commission from the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Royal Ballet. The latter gave the first complete performance in October 2021, with choreography by Wayne McGregor. Earlier, in January of that year, the *Inferno Suite* had received its premiere in Rome, Gianandrea Noseda conducting the Orchestra of the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia.

Adès has described his *Inferno* as 'a grateful tribute to Franz Liszt, the composer of Hell and demonic music.' The work begins, demonically enough, with gyrations raging under words from the sign that Dante saw placed over the gates of Hell: 'Abandon Hope'. In Hell's vestibule are those who, though barred from Paradise on account of their selfishness, were not quite wicked enough in life to deserve the serious punishments the Inferno has in

store. Their lot is, nevertheless, pretty bad. They are perpetually being stung by wasps, graphically represented at the start of this episode by trilling (drilling, one might say) clarinets, violas and cellos. Charon then ferries Dante and Virgil across the river Acheron, to rowing music with solo cor anglais. Also to be heard are the howlings of miscreants en route with the two poets to deeper Hell, not going as visitors, never to return. From this point we proceed, as Dante and Virgil do in the poem, through the *Inferno's* nine circles of increasingly infamous inhabitants. The first is limbo, where virtuous pagans dwell in a subdued pleasantness – and dance a pavan, gently scored at first for strings and harp.

Leaping over several regions pictured in the complete ballet score, we come to a part of the eighth circle where corrupt clerics, including two successive popes of Dante's time, are stuffed head first into holes in the rock, their feet burned by flames. The 'Popes' Adagio' considers this situation. Elsewhere in the eighth circle, hypocrites have to drag themselves around in coats of lead, while in another domain, thieves scurry away from devouring snakes.

Within the ninth circle, at the very centre of Hell, is the spot reserved for Satan, seen as a three-faced monster held waist-deep in ice. In this final short scene, Adès dares us to feel pity for the object of pitiless judgment.

© Paul Griffiths

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



© Benjamin Ealovega/Drew Kelley

THOMAS ADÈS (BORN 1971)

25:02 Luxury Suite from Powder Her Face

- 01 03:51 Overture
- 02 06:02 Scene with Song
- 03 02:03 Wedding March
- 04 03:53 Waltz
- 05 02:54 Ode
- 06 01:05 Paperchase
- 07 03:19 Hotel Manager's Aria 'It is too late'
- 08 01:57 Finale

22:08 Five Spells from The Tempest

- 09 03:25 Overture (Storm)
- 10 03:08 Ariel and Prospero
- 11 05:01 Ferdinand and Miranda
- 12 05:32 The Feast
- 13 05:01 Prospero's Farewell – Caliban

22:48 Inferno Suite

- 14 01:06 Abandon Hope
- 15 01:59 The Selfish – stung by wasps
- 16 04:08 The Ferryman
- 17 02:02 Pavan of the Souls in Limbo
- 18 01:57 The Popes' Adagio – heads first
- 19 05:38 The Hypocrites – in coats of lead
- 20 03:09 The Thieves – devoured by snakes
- 21 02:49 Satan – in the lake of ice

Thomas Adès conductor

London Philharmonic Orchestra

Pieter Schoeman leader (tracks 1–8)

Ania Safanova guest leader (tracks 9–21)

Recorded at the Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall:
Luxury Suite from Powder Her Face on 11 April 2018;
Five Spells from The Tempest & Inferno Suite on
22 February 2023

Producers: Tim Thorne, Floating Earth (tracks 1–8);
Andrew Walton, K&A Productions (tracks 9–21)

Engineers: Mike Hatch, Floating Earth (tracks 1–8);
Deborah Spanton, K&A Productions (tracks 9–21)

Executive Producers:

Elena Dubinets, David Burke, Graham Wood

Publisher: © Faber Music Ltd, London

© 2025 London Philharmonic Orchestra Ltd

© 2025 London Philharmonic Orchestra Ltd

LPO-0131

lpo.org.uk

