

Saturday, March 14, 2026
7.00 PM - 9.00 PM,
LSO Saint Luke's,
161 Old Street, London,
England (UK), EC1V 9NG

The Fidelio Post

14.03.26

Circle £25 | Rear stalls £25 |
Front stalls £25. Wine, drinks
and snacks will be available
to purchase on the evening
from the bar at the venue.

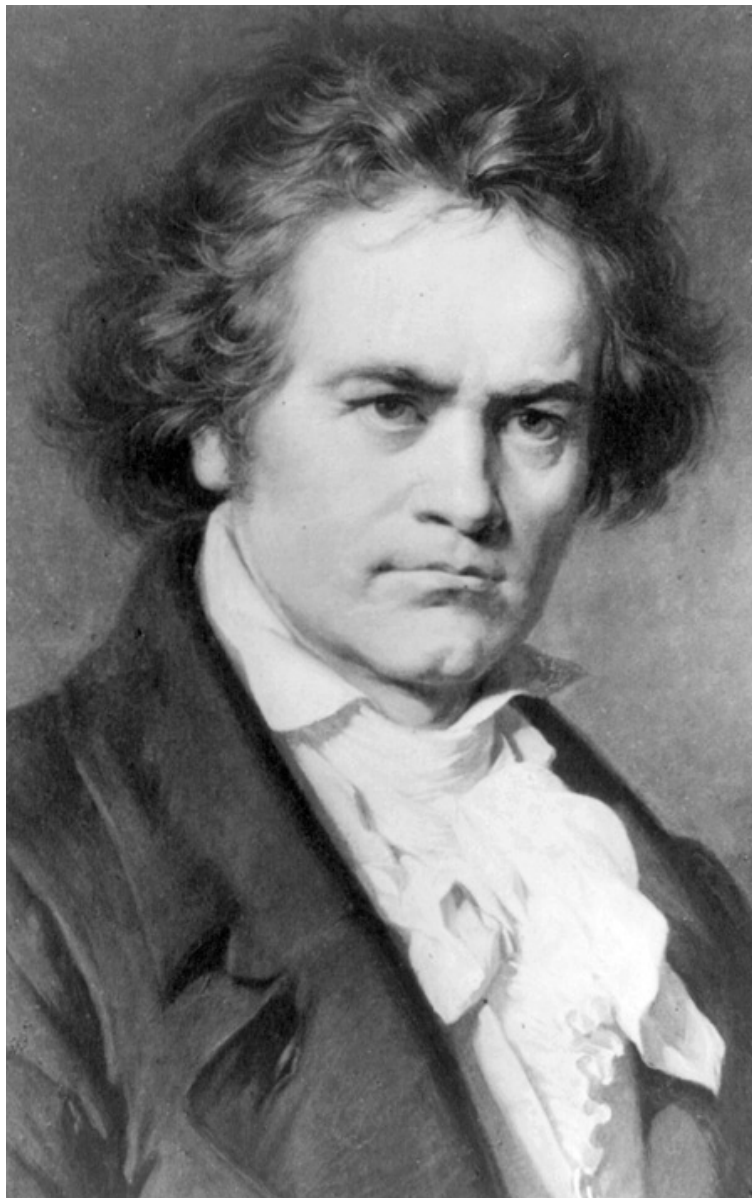
WHO KILLED THE EMPEROR?

Beethoven did. Great exploits do not belong to modernity.
Gabriele Carcano | Fidelio Orchestra | Raffaello Morales

Every young person loves seeing heroes vanquishing foes and coming home to roaring acclaim. Heroes allegedly guarantee safety and restore peace from war. The hero is he who defends our home turf and expands on our idea of the father. Our first hero is our father, before we are overcome by the instinct to get rid of such an overbearing figure. Because everything a hero inspires in us is either to be saved or to become one ourselves.

Beethoven profoundly resented his father, chiefly because of the latter's systematic attempt to prevent him, his son, from becoming who he really was. An uncommonly talented young boy barely in his double-digit age, young Ludwig could improvise at the piano and pen down music way ahead of his time.

Beethoven also happened to live at a time in the development of European civilisation in which the formal development of music had reached its most perfect state: sonatas, quartets, symphonies, concertos, overtures. Everything obeyed the seemingly unquestionable guidelines of the newly enlightened mind, which laughed at the old order of



religion and superstition and took aim at any attempt to question the unlimited power of rationality over human matters. The reasons for the blight of humanity lay in sovereigns not having followed reason in the pursuit of their policies. It would suffice for an enlightened sovereign, a hero – not necessarily a

man – to grab power to set Europe on a new course of bonanza. The naivety of such convictions was to be brutally shattered. The formal developments in the arts and music reflected the sense of political intent that the recent philosophical revolution had prompted. In a way, as it has been observed by Anthony

Burgess before, the eighteenth century represents the ultimate triumph of the bourgeois view of the arts, despite the bourgeoisie being in its infancy. The finality of the music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart somehow reflects a social order which some contemporary prophets could eagerly term “the end of society”. Arguably a very illiberal one, artistically speaking. The artist was supposed to produce art to be enjoyed by those in the know, without any fanciful desire to push the boundaries within which the comfortable lives of the middle classes unfolded. The middle classes became that social stratum which included successful workers and beneficiaries of the early capitalist bubble, as well as those aristocrats who survived the revolutions and had to somehow rebrand themselves to maintain any sort of social relevance. Music was good only insofar as it received the tacit approval of those who were supposed to know it (interestingly not the artists producing it). In essence, those who paid for it or who could afford to consume it.

Continued overleaf

Beethoven is often portrayed as a genius of classical music whose stormy character and uncompromising artistic standards paid no heed to any authority or title. His perfection of the classical canon went to such heights that he could master the composition of string quartets even in total deafness. His musical forms (sonatas, symphonies, concertos, quartets) are classical whilst pushing the boundaries of the form. His *Third Symphony*, allegedly dedicated to Napoleon, was turned into a work “to celebrate the coming of a great man” once he learned that the Corsican short man had crowned himself emperor of the whole of Europe. The thing is that Napoleon was supposed to be the most refined product of the legacy of the Enlightenment, a movement whose political season lasted – being extremely generous – roughly as long as Hitler’s 1,000-year Reich. One can see how an artist eager to embrace ambition fueled by passions could be deeply disappointed by such foundering of idealistic outlooks about humanity.

A much more accurate description of Beethoven than the one shown in the few popular sketches of him is one of a man whose commitment to art found a natural ground in his love for humanity. This is in itself a character trait deeply at odds with the Enlightenment. Beethoven had captured the **deep contradiction at the heart of the Enlightenment** programme and was keen to replace it – before it got too fossilised into European culture – with a Promethean version of it, one that nodded back to antiquity more than to the recent philosophical revolution. The contradiction is that immutable natural laws, however much trust one may want to put in science, are not enough to liberate mankind from the state of misery in which most people find themselves. They simply replace one authority, the religious one, with another, the rational one. What freedom is left to the man whose future is already written by predictable natural laws?

Beethoven went a completely different way. The purpose of art was to give space to personal feelings, emotions: the very fact that one single individual could think of something as beautiful was enough to justify a creation. Whether this individual was an artist or not would be assessed by how the rest of humanity reacted to it. To hell with the canon and the universal laws of this sonata or that symphony. Beethoven was keen to write a symphony as much as he was keen to empty his bowels on a regular basis. He couldn’t care less about avoiding parallel octaves or resolving sevenths IF NOT, because there was a **higher calling** demanding that he do so.

Who is the great man whose arrival the *Eroica Symphony* should celebrate? Perhaps Beethoven himself. Definitely not an Emperor, not a man of power in the conventional sense. Not a hero in the pre-modern conception. Not a Hollywood character assigned to Brad Pitt or Tom Cruise. Beethoven was not interested in great heroic exploits. He was interested in commitment to a higher purpose which would eventually benefit the whole of humanity. He was unwittingly writing **the agenda for modernity**.

So here is a reading of tonight’s music which considers the *Eroica Symphony* as composed of three separate steps: the old man, the death of the old man, the new man. The old man is about form and struggle, about canon and tradition. This man needs to succumb, to leave space to the new man. A man in constant motion and subject to a never-ending variation of himself. But with a clear and simple idea in mind: **a vision for a future of freedom**.

Tonight we are therefore paying a special homage to Beethoven by ripping his much-revered *Eroica Symphony* to pieces, unpacking it in such a way that we can look for meaning in its rich, complex content. Why such an iconoclastic approach to established repertoire? Who gives us the right to do so to a sacred work of art? When I was a young piano student and encounters with the fauna of piano luminaries were still few and far between, I stumbled upon a random, improvised piano lecture forced upon me by a bumptious dinner guest at my parents’ house. She had allegedly taught a pianist who then went on to do a decent career and whom I have met a few times. The woman had me play the first half of Chopin’s *Ballad No. 1* only to stop me, incensed as if I had perpetrated the most hideous profanity, when she saw that I was playing the F major pedal cords that introduce the famous E-flat major second theme with both hands, rather than with the left hand alone (as it is most often played, I was made to learn!). “How dare you?! These are horns!” she belched at me, leaving me incredibly disappointed not to be able to let the tension of the F major stillness resolve into the unexpected b-flat in the bass which was to provide a soft cushion to the sweetness of the upcoming melody. Little did it count that the use of the right hand to play the upper fourth allowed me to produce a more mellow sound, much more in line with that of a horn call, that the rigid left hand could have allowed me to achieve. She couldn’t be bothered to let me finish the piece but went on to bemoan the state in which music education was, outside of the few oases of excellence, one of which she was proud to belong. The Conservatory of Bari, for the record. A few years have passed since that unfortunate incident and I feel that the right to unpack the *Eroica* is given to me by the conviction I have of it being the true artist’s duty to ensure a dialectical relationship with the work of art, in such a way that its essence is discovered not in a definitive way, like the Enlightenment would prescribe, but in one that leaves space for the open heart to agree or disagree with. Our chief concern at this critical juncture in the history of European civilisation needs to be that of championing freedom more as a project than as a value. Values are nothing without their meaningful application and we can all see how much sorrow is sown in the name of presumably good values. The tendency to pack values into sacred objects to be simply worshipped leads to the sclerosis of the heart and the idleness of the mind. Both states which Beethoven would have deeply despised and which we should reject as counter to a morally grounded idea of progress.



Raffaello Morales is a conductor, chef, composer and entrepreneur. Born in Rome in 1987, he studied piano and composition in Italy, Austria, and the UK, and earned an MSc in Theoretical Physics and a PhD in Applied Mathematics in London. After working in investment banking, he turned fully to music and hospitality, founding the Fidelio Orchestra and the Fidelio Cafe in 2019. Under his baton, the Fidelio Orchestra brings together professionals, students, and talented amateurs, performing ambitious works with renowned soloists. Reflecting the same spirit, the Fidelio Cafe hosts concerts where audiences can dine and meet performers in a vibrant yet relaxing environment. Morales advocates accessibility and innovation in classical music, blending his scientific, musical, and philosophical interests. He is also the author of the historical-fiction novel *The Earth to the Skies*, published earlier this year.



Founded in 2019, the **Fidelio Orchestra** has quickly become a vibrant and dynamic presence in London’s music scene. Led by its founder Raffaello Morales, the orchestra brings together professional musicians, emerging talents, and skilled amateurs, united by a shared commitment to performing music at the highest standard in an atmosphere both joyful and unpretentious. Run as a charity, it provides musicians with valuable orchestral experience and opportunities



Recipient of a 2010 Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship Award, Turin-born **Gabriele Carcano** is a pianist active in recitals, as a soloist with orchestras, and in chamber music. Praised by the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* as a “sculptor of sound” following his Munich debut, he has received multiple awards including the Casella Prize and has appeared in major venues such as the Zurich Tonhalle, Berlin’s Konzerthaus, and the Mariinsky Theatre in Saint Petersburg, performing internationally across Europe, the United States, and Asia. Carcano has collaborated with leading orchestras and conductors including Alain Altinoglu, and regularly performs with musicians including Caroline Widmann and Lorenza Borrani. His recordings of Brahms and Schumann have received great critical acclaim. He studied in Italy and France and has taught at the Accademia di Musica in Pinerolo since 2015. Gabriele Carcano is a Steinway Artist.

to collaborate with exceptional soloists, fostering a creative space where historical repertoire connects classical music with the broader society. Named after Beethoven’s operatic heroine, the Fidelio Orchestra champions artistic freedom and inclusivity, performing in iconic venues such as LSO St Luke’s and Milton Court. Highlights include outstanding performances of Mendelssohn’s *Violin Concerto* and Strauss’ *Ein Heldenleben*, combining creative programming, accuracy, and passion.

— Last but not least —



The Fidelio CIO Board of Trustees wishes to thank its supporters for donating generously to its charitable purpose. Your kindness allows us to go from strength to strength and to support a large network of grassroots musicians in London and beyond.



Continuing the exciting collaboration between **Tarisio** and Fidelio, tonight we are delighted to feature a pair of Vuillaume instruments in the hands of violinist Yeva Volkava and principal cellist William Lui. **Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume** is regarded as one of the greatest violin makers of all time, known for his highly-skilled copies of instruments by Stradivari and Guarneri. As the most prolific and important master of the French school, Vuillaume and his workshop produced over 3,000 instruments spanning over five decades. His instruments are favoured for their remarkable tonal properties, projecting extraordinarily well and offering players abundant power coupled with ease of playing. They have long been the choice of many of the world's greatest musicians, from those in orchestras to soloists including Hilary Hahn and Isaac Stern.



Yeva Volkava performs on a violin made in Paris in 1859. Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume's immense talent for subtle antiquing made his copies of the great Cremonese violins of the past extremely convincing. This particular violin is a copy of a golden period Stradivari, and features a stunning two-piece back with wide flames, showcasing the excellent materials and attractive varnish of Vuillaume's work.



William Lui plays a cello made in Paris in 1863. Vuillaume's cellos are as sought-after by players as his violins, and are almost always Stradivari models like this one. The instrument comes from a fruitful period of Vuillaume's work, characterised by a tendency toward a more orange-amber varnish. While the varnish on the 1859 violin is "antiqued" to imitate wear, instruments from the 1860s have a more honest appearance with a consistent varnish.

About Tarisio

Tarisio is the leading name in the world of fine string instruments, known for its expertise, its trusted private sales, and its renowned online auctions. Its historical research is anchored by the Cozio Archive, the most comprehensive reference of its kind. With offices in New York, London, and Berlin, Tarisio brings together deep scholarship, global reach, and a commitment to connecting exceptional instruments with exceptional musicians.

Here's a snippet of next year's events

23 May, LSO St Luke's

Popular Music

Why is classical music so unpopular? Why do some composers continue to refer to themselves as classical? Can it ever be popular? We will explore this topic with music by Philip Glass, George Gershwin, and Maurice Ravel, featuring violinist Roberts Balanas.

18 September, Holy Trinity Sloane Square

Imprisoned

The yearning for freedom of the Romantic generation paved the way for new forms of imprisonment with the advent of the technology and progress. In today's world, that freedom amounts to self-exploitation. Music to include excerpts from *Fidelio*, Janáček's *Violin Concerto*, Ullmann's *Second Symphony*, and Messiaen.

For tickets and further information, simply scan the QR code on the right. You can also visit our website, where you'll be able to join our newsletter for the latest updates on upcoming concerts, learn more about



our history and mission, explore our donation schemes, and browse the full programme of our orchestral events. The rest of the season promises to be even more exciting, so be sure to book your tickets early before they sell out!