

Thousands experience the Proms for the first time as BBC Proms Festival weekend at The Glasshouse draws to a close



29th July 2024

BBC Proms at The Glasshouse (26-29 July) concluded with resounding success, with a festival fusing international talent and the North East's musical riches.

Across the weekend, over 5,000 people attended live gigs in the halls, with hundreds more enjoying the free performances on the concourse. Among these attendees, 3,500 experienced the BBC Proms for the very first time. Thousands more heard broadcasts on BBC Radio 3 through the weekend and they are all available now on BBC Sounds. Music lovers travelled from across the country to attend, 'promming' in the main arena in the same format as the Royal Albert Hall. The weekend featured 250 musicians, with over half of them from the North East.

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Don't take our word for it – here are some vox from audience members during the festival:

"I've never been to the Proms. I always tune in, but I have never been to see them at The Royal Albert Hall. So, to have them here at The Glasshouse is great. This is what the Proms are about - accessible concerts. Everyone nearby can get a ticket and come and listen to live music."

"It's fantastic to hear such an incredible performance by the Royal Northern Sinfonia on our own ground tonight. We're all for live music. Live music is fantastic!"

As well as bringing musicians from around the world to The Glasshouse's stages, the festival shone a spotlight on the North East's exciting music scene with an emphasis on emerging talent. The region's orchestra Royal Northern Sinfonia powered the programme playing three explosively different concerts and gigs in Sage One. New collaborations and emerging North East artists brought a host of new music to festival goers. The weekend featured several firsts, including the first-ever Radio 3 Breakfast broadcast from the region in the week leading up to the Proms, the first BBC Introducing collaboration in the North East with a concert and free stage, and the first live Prom from BBC Radio 3's *Night Tracks*.

Throughout the weekend free stage performances and 'promming' tickets for £8 ensured that all music lovers could enjoy world-class performances.

The festival opened on Friday with Royal Northern Sinfonia, led by Principal Conductor Dinis Sousa, giving breathtaking performances of Sibelius's Violin Concerto with soloist Alena Baeva and Dvořák's Symphony No. 8. The night concluded with the immersive Night Tracks Live featuring Hannah Peel, Hania Rani, Beibei Wang, alongside violinist Maria Włoszczowska, one of The Glasshouse's Artistic Partners. On Saturday, jazz and soul artist Jordan Rakei's collaboration with Royal Northern Sinfonia captivated audiences, followed by the BBC Introducing Live at the Proms, celebrating emerging talent with performances from artists like Theon Cross and local band Knats.

The free stage on The Glasshouse concourse showcased the North East's roster of emerging musicians. The festival wrapped up on Sunday with the Voices of the River's Edge choir and Royal Northern Sinfonia in a family Prom, Fantasy, Myths, and Legends, featuring music from iconic films and composers, and ended with a chamber recital by Daniel Piro & Friends.

Abigail Pogson, Managing Director at The Glasshouse, said: *'Bringing together international musicians and the energy that we have in the North East's music scene right now created the most amazing atmosphere. And seeing audiences of all ages promming, dancing on our concourse and listening from our balconies created such a buzz. The BBC and BBC Proms are national and it's brilliant to create a Northern edition of the largest music festival in the world. If you missed it in person, have a listen on BBC Sounds!'*

Sam Jackson, Controller, Radio 3 and BBC Proms, said: *'It has been a joy to return to The Glasshouse for another weekend-long Proms festival. The showcase of North East talent has been outstanding, with orchestral and chamber music, jazz and choral representing the breadth of music making in the area. The BBC Introducing stage, curated by our BBC Open Music trainees provided even more buzz to the festival, and it's just so exciting to see how many talented young musicians are coming through. Every Prom was broadcast on Radio 3 and is available on BBC Sounds now.'*

Kim McGuinness, North East Mayor, said: *'BBC Proms at The Glasshouse had such a buzz this weekend- it was great to see such a diverse and new audience enjoying world class music in this local, but world class venue. This weekend showcased just how much amazing musical talent we have in this region, and that's something we want to shout about. Culture and music are at the heart of our plans to create real opportunity in our North East. We're proud to host these wonderful Proms events outside London and we want to do more. I can't wait to see this event grow and to strengthen even further our outstanding cultural offer here in the North East.'*