HARRISON PARROTT

Leia Zhu
Violin

Winner of the 2025 OPUS KLASSIK Young Talent of the Year Award, 20-year-old British violinist Leia Zhu has appeared as a concert soloist with the London Symphony Orchestra under Sir Simon Rattle, Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich under Paavo Järvi, and the London Philharmonic Orchestra, as well as at the BBC Proms at the Royal Albert Hall. Praised by *The Guardian* for her "poise and musical intelligence", she has performed on international stages in more than 20 countries since making her debut at the age of four.

Zhu opened the 2026/27 season with her Latin American debut, performing Brahms' Violin Concerto with the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de Costa Rica at the Teatro Nacional in San José, followed by Bruch's Violin Concerto No. 1 with the Orquesta Filarmónica de la UNAM at the Sala Nezahualcóyotl in Mexico City. Further highlights include Britten's Violin Concerto with the Orquesta Filarmónica de Málaga and the Classic FM Hall of Fame concert with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra at Symphony Hall, Birmingham, where performs Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto and Bruch's *Scottish Fantasy*.

The 2025/26 season saw Zhu return to the London Philharmonic Orchestra for Prokofiev's Second Violin Concerto and rejoin Festival Strings Lucerne for tours to Munich, Mozartfest Würzburg and the Rheingau Musik Festival. She also made her debuts with the Shanghai Philharmonic, Beijing Symphony, Arctic Philharmonic and Macao orchestras, performing concertos by Glazunov, Prokofiev and Sibelius.

Zhu's debut album, *Camille Saint-Saëns: Complete Concertos* (Berlin Classics, 2025), recorded with the ORF Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra under Howard Griffiths, received five stars from *BBC Music Magazine*, was longlisted for the Preis der deutschen Schallplattenkritik and won her the OPUS KLASSIK Young Talent of the Year Award, presented at the Konzerthaus Berlin in October 2025. She has also recorded Tigran Mansurian's Violin Concerto No.1 with the Armenian State Symphony Orchestra under Sergey Smbatyan for the composer's 85th birthday celebrations.

Further orchestral partners include the Belgian National Orchestra under Maxim Vengerov, Russian National Orchestra, RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra, Luzerner Sinfonieorchester, Royal Northern Sinfonia, Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra and London Mozart Players, with whom she was Artist-in-Residence from 2021 to 2023. She opened the Khachaturian International Festival with Khachaturian's Violin Concerto alongside the Armenian State Symphony Orchestra and Sergey Smbatyan, in a concert presented with UNICEF to mark World Children's Day and the 35th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. At the Royal Albert Hall she has also performed Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto with the Philharmonia Orchestra in a live event with the podcast *The Rest Is History*, and in 2021 she performed "You Raise Me Up" with Westlife in a livestream viewed by more than 27 million people.

Zhu has performed at London's Royal Festival Hall, Wigmore Hall and Barbican Centre, Berliner Philharmonie, Konzerthaus Berlin, KKL Luzern, Großer Saal of the Mozarteum in

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Salzburg, Mariinsky Theatre in St Petersburg, BOZAR in Brussels and the European Parliament. Festival appearances include the Lucerne Festival, Salzburg Festival, White Nights Festival, Musical Olympus and the Trans-Siberian Art Festival, and she has given recitals at the Tonhalle Zürich, Menuhin Festival Gstaad, Sociedad Filarmónica de Bilbao, Fundación Juan March in Madrid, St Martin-in-the-Fields and the University of Oxford. Her performances have been broadcast on Classic FM, BBC Radio 3, ZDF, BR-KLASSIK and RTÉ lyric fm.

In 2025 Zhu was nominated for the Royal Philharmonic Society Young Artist Award. In 2022 she became the youngest musician named in Classic FM's "30 Brilliant Young Musicians Under 30", and in 2021 she was named a Rising Star by *BBC Music Magazine*.

Beyond the concert platform, Zhu is a Patron of the HarrisonParrott Foundation, which widens access to classical music across generations. Since the age of four she has annually raised funds for causes close to her heart, among them the cancer charities Maggie's and Daft as a Brush as well as the Lord Mayor's Appeal. She is also the founder of Culture Meets Capital, building new connections between culture, capital and civic life in Britain. In recognition of her civic contributions, she was admitted to the Freedom of the City of London and elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts in 2026.

Zhu is the author of the memoir *Bows, Strings and Dreams* (2023). She has been featured on BBC News, ITV, Sky News and Channel 4 and in *The Strad*, and shares her love of music with an international audience through her YouTube and social media channels.

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