

Knights Errant: From Wagner's Pilgrims to Strauss's Windmills

Thursday, March 5, 2026 · 20:00 · Philharmonie Berlin
Daniel Harding, conductor · Diyang Mei, viola · Ludwig Quandt, cello

	TONIGHT'S PROGRAMME	MIN
1	WAGNER 1813–1883 <i>Tannhäuser und der Sängerkrieg auf Wartburg: Overture</i>	15'
2	HENZE 1926–2012 <i>Barcarola für großes Orchester</i>	20'
3	STRAUSS 1864–1949 <i>Don Quixote, Fantastic Variations on a Theme of Knightly Character, Op. 35</i>	42'
	TOTAL MUSIC	77'

Richard Wagner

15 minutes

1813–1883

Tannhäuser und der Sängerkrieg auf Wartburg: Overture

ABOUT THE WORK

Tannhäuser, Wagner's fifth opera, premiered in Dresden on October 19, 1845, with the composer conducting. The work draws on three medieval legends: the story of the minnesinger knight Tannhäuser, ensnared by the goddess Venus; the historical Wartburg singing contest; and the life of St. Elisabeth of Hungary.

Hans Werner Henze

20 minutes

1926–2012

Barcarola für großes Orchester

ABOUT THE WORK

Henze wrote the *Barcarola* in the summer of 1979 on a commission from the Tonhalle-Gesellschaft Zürich, and Gerd Albrecht conducted the premiere in Zurich on April 22, 1980. It came out of a difficult period in the composer's life, overshadowed by ill-

ness and by the deaths of close friends, among them the film director Luchino Visconti and the composer Paul Dessau. The low D-flat (in German, *Des*) on which the piece begins is a musical nod to Dessau's name.

Richard Strauss

42 minutes

1864–1949

Don Quixote, Fantastic Variations on a Theme of Knightly Character, Op. 35

ABOUT THE WORK

Don Quixote was composed in Munich in 1897 and premiered in Cologne on March 8, 1898. It is often paired with *Ein Heldenleben* (A Hero's Life), which followed a year later. Where *Heldenleben* presents heroism straight, *Don Quixote* offers heroism tilted: the heroism of delusion, of magnificent folly, of a madman who believes himself a knight.



CONCERT PROGRAMS

<https://concertprograms.eu/concerts/bp-2026-03-05-harding>

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