

From Puppets to Star-Crossed Lovers: A Lithuanian Debut

Thursday, April 16, 2026 · 20:00 · Philharmonie Berlin
Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla, conductor · Emanuel Ax, piano

TONIGHT'S PROGRAMME		MIN
1	WEINBERG 1919–1996 <i>"Burattino and the Golden Key": Orchestral Suite No. 4, op. 55d</i>	20'
2	WILLIAMS b. 1932 <i>Concerto for Piano and Orchestra</i>	22'
3	PROKOFIEV 1891–1953 <i>"Romeo and Juliet," op. 64: Excerpts</i>	50'
TOTAL MUSIC		92'

Mieczysław Weinberg

20 minutes

1919–1996

"Burattino and the Golden Key": Orchestral Suite No. 4, op. 55d

ABOUT THE WORK

In 1954-1955, Weinberg composed a children's ballet based on Alexei Tolstoy's *The Golden Key*, a Russian retelling of Carlo Collodi's Pinocchio story in which the wooden puppet Burattino discovers a magical key that opens the door to a hidden world. Weinberg revised the ballet in 1961, and in 1964 he arranged its music into four orchestral concert suites, designated Op. 55a through Op. 55d. The Fourth Suite, heard tonight, brings together some of the most charming and theatrical numbers from the score.

John Williams

22 minutes

b. 1932

Concerto for Piano and Orchestra

ABOUT THE WORK

This Piano Concerto has an unusually charming origin story. Williams had mentioned to only a few associates that he was interested in writing for piano and orchestra when Emanuel Ax, tonight's soloist, called him with an offer: *"If you write it, I will play it!"* Williams began the score in 2022, and the concerto was given its world premiere on 26 July 2025 at Tanglewood, with Ax as soloist and Andris Nelsons conducting the Boston Symphony Orchestra. The composer was 93 years old.

Sergei Prokofiev

50 minutes

1891–1953

"Romeo and Juliet," op. 64: Excerpts

ABOUT THE WORK

Romeo and Juliet grew out of negotiations with the Kirov Theatre in Leningrad in 1934, and Prokofiev wrote most of the score in 1935, after a contract had been signed with Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre. But the road to the stage was tortuous. Neither theatre staged it at first, and Prokofiev's original ending, in which the lovers survive (because, as he later explained, "living people can dance, the dying cannot"), provoked controversy and was eventually replaced by Shakespeare's tragic conclusion. The full ballet finally received its world premiere on 30 December 1938 not in Russia but at the Mahen Theatre in Brno, Czechoslovakia. The Soviet premiere followed at the Kirov on 11 January 1940, with the legendary Galina Ulanova as Juliet, a performance that immediately entered the history of dance.



CONCERT PROGRAMS

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