

Looking Back to Move Forward: Stravinsky, Tchaikovsky, Beethoven

Thursday, May 7, 2026 · 20:00 · Philharmonie Berlin
Kirill Petrenko, conductor · Gautier Capuçon, cello

TONIGHT'S PROGRAMME		MIN
1	STRAVINSKY 1882–1971 <i>"Pulcinella," Suite (1949 revised version)</i>	22'
2	TCHAIKOVSKY 1840–1893 <i>Variations on a Rococo Theme for Cello and Orchestra in A major, op. 33</i>	19'
3	BEETHOVEN 1770–1827 <i>Symphony No. 2 in D major, op. 36</i>	33'
TOTAL MUSIC		74'

Igor Stravinsky

1882–1971

"Pulcinella," Suite (1949 revised version)

22 minutes

ABOUT THE WORK

Pulcinella is the work that launched Stravinsky's neoclassical phase, and it began with a suggestion from Diaghilev. In 1919, the impresario presented Stravinsky with a stack of musical manuscripts he had unearthed in libraries in Naples and London: pieces attributed (largely incorrectly, as it turned out) to the Italian Baroque composer Giovanni Battista Pergolesi. Diaghilev wanted Stravinsky to arrange them into a ballet score on the commedia dell'arte character of Pulcinella.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

1840–1893

19 minutes

Variations on a Rococo Theme for Cello and Orchestra in A major, op. 33

ABOUT THE WORK

The *Rococo Variations* are unique in Tchaikovsky's output: a heartfelt act of homage to the eighteenth-century music of Mozart, the composer Tchaikovsky revered above all others. He composed the work in late 1876 and early 1877, dedicating it to Wilhelm Fitzenhagen, a German cellist and his colleague at the Moscow Conservatory. Despite the title, the theme is not actually drawn from the Rococo era; it is Tchaikovsky's own original melody, written deliberately in an eighteenth-century style.

Ludwig van Beethoven

1770–1827

33 minutes

Symphony No. 2 in D major, op. 36

ABOUT THE WORK

The Symphony No. 2 was composed during that same desperate summer of 1802, the same months in which Beethoven contemplated ending his life. What is astonishing about the work is its character: it is the most exuberantly cheerful, optimistic, and witty of all his symphonies. Almost nothing in it betrays the personal crisis of its creator. Beethoven seems to have used composition itself as a way out of despair, channelling his dark mood into a work of radiant affirmation.



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