

BERLINER PHILHARMONIKER

A Game of Thrones: New Music Meets the Firebird

Thursday, May 14, 2026 · 20:00 · Philharmonie Berlin

Klaus Mäkelä, conductor

TONIGHT'S PROGRAMME		MIN
1	NORMAN b. 1979 <i>"Play" for orchestra (German premiere)</i>	45'
2	STRAVINSKY 1882–1971 <i>"L'Oiseau de feu" (The Firebird), Ballet Music (complete)</i>	45'
TOTAL MUSIC		90'

Andrew Norman

b. 1979

"Play" for orchestra (German premiere)

45 minutes

ABOUT THE WORK

Play is the piece that put Andrew Norman on the international map. Written in 2013 while he was composer in residence with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, it was premiered by BMOP under Gil Rose in Boston's Jordan Hall that May, and

Norman revised it in 2016 for the Los Angeles Philharmonic. It was nominated for a 2016 Grammy, won the 2017 Grawemeyer Award, and one critic called it the best orchestral work the twenty-first century had produced so far. Tonight's performance is its German premiere, a major moment for Berlin audiences.

Igor Stravinsky

1882–1971

"L'Oiseau de feu" (The Firebird), Ballet Music (complete)

45 minutes

ABOUT THE WORK

The Firebird is based on Russian fairy tales, assembled into a scenario by the choreographer Michel Fokine and his collaborators. The action centres on Prince Ivan Tsarevich, who wanders into the enchanted garden of the immortal sorcerer Kashchei. There he captures the magical Firebird, who buys her freedom by giving him one of her feathers, with which he can summon her in time of need. Ivan then encounters thirteen captive princesses, falls in love with one of them, and is taken prisoner by Kashchei. The Firebird returns, casts Kashchei and his followers into a deep sleep, and reveals the secret of his immortality (an egg containing his soul); Ivan smashes the egg, freeing the princesses and the kingdom.

KLAUS MÄKELÄ, CONDUCTOR

Klaus Mäkelä, born in Helsinki in 1996, is by some distance the most talked-about young conductor in the world today. The son of cellist Sami Mäkelä and pianist Taru Myöhänen-Mäkelä, he trained as a cellist himself; by fifteen he was good enough to substitute in the Helsinki Philharmonic, which he has called his second training as a conductor. He had wanted to conduct since the age of seven, when he sang in the children's chorus of a *Carmen* production at the Finnish National Opera, and at twelve he began studying with the legendary teacher Jorma Panula, later at the Sibelius Academy.

His career has moved at extraordinary speed. He became Chief Conductor of the Oslo Philharmonic in 2020 and Music Director of the Orchestre de Paris in 2021, and in the 2027–28 season he will take up two of the most prestigious posts in classical music at once: Chief Conductor of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam *and* Music Director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. He records exclusively for Decca Classics, only the third conductor in the label's history to be offered such a contract, after Georg Solti and Riccardo Chailly.

Mäkelä made his Berliner Philharmoniker debut in April 2023 and has returned regularly since. Tonight's programming is characteristic of his approach: the German premiere of a major contemporary American work paired with one of the founding masterpieces of twentieth-century music.

CONCERT PROGRAMS

<https://concertprograms.eu/concerts/bp-2026-05-14-makela>

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