

BERLINER PHILHARMONIKER

Iván Fischer conducts Mahler's Fifth Symphony

Thursday, November 5, 2026 · 20:00 · Philharmonie Berlin

Iván Fischer, conductor · Noah Bendix-Balgley, violin · Bruno Deleplaire, cello · Jonathan Kelly, oboe · Stefan Schweigert, bassoon

	TONIGHT'S PROGRAMME	MIN
1	HAYDN 1732–1809 <i>Sinfonia concertante in B-flat major, Hob. I:105</i>	22'
2	MAHLER 1860–1911 <i>Symphony No. 5</i>	70'
	TOTAL MUSIC	92'

Joseph Haydn

1732–1809

Sinfonia concertante in B-flat major, Hob. I:105

22 minutes

ABOUT THE WORK

When Joseph Haydn arrived in London in 1791, he came at the invitation of Johann Peter Salomon, the violinist and impresario who had engaged him for a series of concerts. London

audiences loved him, but the city's concert life was also fiercely competitive. A rival series had brought over Ignaz Pleyel, Haydn's former pupil, and the newspapers were happy to present teacher and student as opponents. One of the fashions of the moment was the *symphonie concertante*, a work in which several soloists share the stage with the orchestra, and Pleyel had just won warm praise for one. Haydn answered within weeks.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

I. Allegro. The orchestra introduces the main ideas before the soloists take them up. Listen for how Haydn passes a phrase from violin to oboe, or from cello to bassoon, and for moments when all four play together as a miniature wind-and-string ensemble.

II. Andante. A gentle, song-like movement and the most intimate music of the evening's first half. Listen to the blend of the oboe and the violin, and to the bassoon's warm tone in the low register.

III. Finale: Allegro con spirito. The finale is where Haydn's wit comes through most clearly, with the sudden silences that caught the attention of the first critics. The solo violin has the most brilliant passages, written with

Salomon's playing in mind, but every soloist gets a moment in the spotlight before the movement races to its close.

Gustav Mahler

1860–1911

Symphony No. 5

70 minutes

ABOUT THE WORK

In February 1901 Gustav Mahler suffered a sudden haemorrhage and came, as his doctor later told him, very close to death. That summer, recovering at his new lakeside villa at Maiernigg in Carinthia, he began his Fifth Symphony. In November he met Alma Schindler, the daughter of a well-known landscape painter; they married in 1902, and by the following summer, when Mahler finished the draft, she was expecting their first child. The symphony's journey from a funeral march to an exuberant finale has often been read against this background: a brush with death, then a new life.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Part I. A solo trumpet opens the symphony with a fanfare whose rhythm recalls the opening of Beethoven's Fifth. The funeral march it introduces alternates with sudden, wild outbursts. The second movement, marked

“Stürmisch bewegt, mit größter Vehemenz” (stormy, with the greatest vehemence), picks up that turbulence. Near its end a brass chorale in D major breaks through like sunlight, only to collapse. Remember that chorale: it comes back.

Part II: Scherzo. Four horns set off a whirl of Austrian country dances and Viennese waltzes. The solo horn is so prominent throughout that its part is almost a concerto in miniature. In the quieter middle section, listen for the horn calls echoing across the orchestra, as if in open country.

Part III: Adagietto and Rondo-Finale. The Adagietto is scored for strings and harp alone, after the huge forces of the previous movements. Mahler marks it “very slow”. A single held horn note links it to the Finale, which bursts in with cheerful, bustling counterpoint. Fragments of the Adagietto reappear at a quicker tempo, and at the climax the brass chorale from the second movement returns, this time complete and triumphant.

Tonight's artists

Noah Bendix-Balgley *violin*

First Concertmaster

Bruno Delepelaire *cello*

First Principal Cello

Jonathan Kelly *oboe*

Principal Oboe

Jonathan Kelly has been principal oboe of the Berliner Philharmoniker since 2003. He played in the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain and read history at Cambridge before studying the oboe at the Royal Academy of Music in London with Celia Nicklin and then in Paris with Maurice Bourgue. Straight after his studies he became principal oboe of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, a post he held until his move to Berlin. Alongside his orchestral work he appears as a soloist and chamber musician, and he has taught at the orchestra's Karajan Academy and at the Royal Academy of Music, of which he is a Fellow.

Stefan Schweigert *bassoon*

Principal Bassoon

Stefan Schweigert, born in Kaiserslautern, has been principal bassoon of the Berliner Philharmoniker since 1985. He studied with Klaus Thunemann in Hanover and has taught at the orchestra's Karajan Academy since 1987. A committed chamber musician, he has been a member of the Scharoun Ensemble Berlin, has performed with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe and at Gidon Kremer's Lockenhaus festival, and plays in András Schiff's Cappella Andrea Barca and in Sabine Meyer's wind ensemble.

CONCERT PROGRAMS

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