

New Year's Eve Concert with Kirill Petrenko and Alexander Malofeev

Tuesday, December 29, 2026 · 20:00 · Philharmonie Berlin

Kirill Petrenko, conductor · Alexander Malofeev, piano · David Guerrier, trumpet

TONIGHT'S PROGRAMME		MIN
1	NICOLAI 1810–1849 <i>Overture to Die lustigen Weiber von Windsor (The Merry Wives of Windsor)</i>	9'
2	SHOSTAKOVICH 1906–1975 <i>Piano Concerto No. 1 in C minor, Op. 35</i>	21'
3	PROKOFIEV 1891–1953 <i>Symphony No. 1 in D major, Op. 25, 'Classical'</i>	15'
4	STRAUSS 1864–1949 <i>Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche, Op. 28</i>	15'
5	STRAUSS II 1825–1899 <i>Overture to the operetta Der Zigeunerbaron (The Gypsy Baron)</i>	8'
TOTAL MUSIC		68'

Otto Nicolai

1810–1849

Overture to Die lustigen Weiber von Windsor (The Merry Wives of Windsor)

9 minutes

ABOUT THE WORK

Otto Nicolai is remembered today for two things: he founded the Philharmonic Concerts in Vienna in 1842, the origin of the Vienna Philharmonic, and he wrote *Die lustigen Weiber von Windsor* (The Merry Wives of Windsor), the comic opera whose overture opens tonight's programme.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

The overture opens quietly, with a slow, lyrical introduction in the strings that sets a romantic, nocturnal mood before the comedy begins. The main Allegro is quick, light and full of bustle, with themes from the opera tossed between strings and woodwind. Nicolai, an experienced conductor, writes with great clarity; listen for the crisp dialogue between sections of the orchestra and for the brilliant, high-spirited coda.

Dmitri Shostakovich

1906–1975

Piano Concerto No. 1 in C minor, Op. 35

21 minutes

ABOUT THE WORK

Dmitri Shostakovich wrote his First Piano Concerto in 1933, at the age of twenty-six, for himself to play. The concerto is tailored to his own strengths at the keyboard: brilliance and a light touch, dry humour, and a knack for switching character in an instant.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Allegro moderato. The piano begins with a flourish and a quote from the “Appassionata”, before setting out a wistful main theme. The music moves quickly between lyrical moments and sharp, sarcastic ones, with the trumpet adding the occasional comment.

Lento. The emotional centre: a slow, melancholy movement with a long piano solo in the middle that builds to an impassioned climax. Near the end the muted trumpet takes over the melody in a moment of real tenderness.

Moderato. A short, reflective interlude, often played as an introduction to the finale.

Allegro con brio. The finale is a madcap chase full of quotations, abrupt changes of direction and music-hall humour. After a short piano cadenza that parodies the classical concerto, the trumpet comes into its own with fanfares and street-band tunes, and the work ends with a burst of C major.

Sergei Prokofiev

1891–1953

Symphony No. 1 in D major, Op. 25, 'Classical'

15 minutes

ABOUT THE WORK

In the summer of 1917, as Russia lurched from the February Revolution towards the Bolshevik seizure of power, the twenty-six-year-old Sergei Prokofiev retreated to the countryside outside Petrograd and wrote a symphony of disarming sunniness and poise. He had made his name as an enfant terrible whose raucous early works had outraged his teachers. Now he set out to write a symphony in the style of Haydn. “It seemed to me,” he later wrote, “that if Haydn had lived in our day he would have retained his own style while accepting something of the new at the same time.”

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Allegro. A crisp sonata-form movement that opens with a rocket-like arpeggio. Listen for the way Prokofiev uses classical gestures (scales, trills, sudden contrasts of loud and soft) and then gives them a small twist, jumping into an unexpected key and straight back again. The second theme, for the violins, is famous for its huge leaps and delicate grace notes.

Larghetto. A graceful slow movement whose melody floats high in the first violins over a gently ticking accompaniment.

Gavotta. Barely more than a minute long, a stately old dance with heavy-footed bass notes, wide leaps and harmonic surprises.

Finale: Molto vivace. A breathless finale that Prokofiev wrote, by his own account, without a single minor chord. It races along with sparkling woodwind writing and cheerful good humour to the end.

Richard Strauss

1864–1949

Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche, Op. 28

15 minutes

ABOUT THE WORK

Richard Strauss wrote *Till Eulenspiegel* in 1894 and 1895, in the wake of a failure. His first opera, *Guntram*, had met a lukewarm reception in Weimar and a disastrous one in Munich, his home city. His first idea for revenge was another opera, in which the medieval prankster Till Eulenspiegel would take on the narrow-minded burghers of Schilda, a thinly disguised Munich. He dropped the opera and poured the idea into an orchestral piece instead.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

After a few gentle bars in the strings that suggest “once upon a time”, the horn plays Till’s first theme, a long, lilting phrase that rises, falls and ends with three emphatic notes. Soon the D clarinet answers with his second theme, a cheeky, wheedling figure that seems to laugh at its own joke. These two ideas return throughout the piece in endless disguises.

Then the adventures begin. Till rides his horse through the market, scattering the stalls (listen for the rattle of the ratchet). He disguises himself as a priest, and the mu-

sic turns mock-solemn until his theme pokes through. He flirts with the girls, with a love theme in the first violins. He mocks a group of pompous scholars, their pedantic theme given to the bassoons.

The mood changes abruptly with a loud drum roll. Till is arrested and put on trial, and the heavy chords of the court alternate with his increasingly nervous attempts to joke his way out. The sentence is death. The D clarinet screams as he is hanged, and then the music falls silent. But Strauss adds an epilogue: the “once upon a time” music returns, and a final burst from the whole orchestra suggests that the spirit of a Till Eulenspiegel can never really be killed.

Johann Strauss II

1825–1899

Overture to the operetta Der Zigeunerbaron (The Gypsy Baron)

8 minutes

ABOUT THE WORK

After the enormous success of *Die Fledermaus* in 1874, Johann Strauss II struggled for a decade to repeat it. His second lasting hit came from Hungary. His wife Adele introduced him to *Saffi*,

a story by the Hungarian writer Mór Jókai, and in 1883 Strauss met Jókai, who was delighted with the idea of an operetta and suggested the librettist Ignaz Schnitzer.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

The overture is a medley of the operetta's best tunes, in the manner of a Viennese potpourri. It moves between Hungarian and Viennese moods: dark, chromatic themes and the fiery accelerations of the *csárdás* on one side, lilt-ing waltz melodies on the other, above all the tune of the famous *Schatz-Walzer* (Treasure Waltz). Listen for the colourful orchestration that gives the Hungarian passages their flavour, and for the way Strauss builds the final pages into a whirlwind of speed and brilliance, a fitting close to a New Year's Eve programme.

Tonight's artists

Alexander Malofeev *piano*

Alexander Malofeev makes his debut with the Berliner Philharmoniker in these concerts. Shostakovich wrote the concerto as a showcase for himself as a young pianist in his twenties, and it rewards exactly the qualities of a young virtuoso: speed, wit and the ability to turn from mockery to tenderness in a bar. Listen for the long solo in the slow movement and for the parody cadenza near the end.

Alexander Malofeev was born in Moscow in 2001 and began playing the piano at five. He studied at the Gnessin music school and at the Moscow Conservatory, and came to international attention in 2014 when, at the age of thirteen, he won first prize at the International Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians. He has since appeared as a soloist with orchestras including the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia and the Lucerne Festival Orchestra, working with conductors such as Riccardo Chailly and Yannick Nézet-Séguin, and is especially admired in Rachmaninoff, Prokofiev and Tchaikovsky. An outspoken critic of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, he left Russia in 2022 and has lived in Berlin since. He records exclusively for Sony Classical, which released his first solo album, *Forgotten Melodies*, in February 2026.

David Guerrier *trumpet*

The trumpet soloist comes from within the orchestra: David Guerrier has been the Berliner Philharmoniker's principal trumpet since January 2024. He has recorded this concerto before, with Martha Argerich and the Verbier Festival Chamber Orchestra. The part is less a solo role than a running commentary, mostly short interjections until the finale, when the trumpet takes centre stage.

David Guerrier, born in Pierrelatte in France, began playing the trumpet at the age of seven and later took up the horn as well. He studied at the Conservatoire de Lyon with Pierre Dutot and won first prizes at the Maurice André Competition in Paris and the ARD Music Competition in Munich, and was twice named instrumental soloist of the year at France's Victoires de la Musique. Unusually, he has held principal posts on two instruments: he began his orchestral career in 2004 as principal horn of the Orchestre National de France, held the same post with the Luxembourg Philharmonic, where he switched to trumpet, and became principal trumpet of the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France in 2021. He joined the Berliner Philharmoniker as principal trumpet in January 2024, and is also active as a soloist and chamber musician, on modern and period instruments.

CONCERT PROGRAMS

<https://concertprograms.eu/concerts/bp-2026-12-29-petrenko>

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