

BERLINER PHILHARMONIKER

Paavo Järvi and Christian Tetzlaff: Pärt, Shostakovich and Prokofiev's Fifth

Thursday, April 8, 2027 · 20:00 · Philharmonie Berlin

Paavo Järvi, conductor · Christian Tetzlaff, violin

TONIGHT'S PROGRAMME		MIN
1	PÄRT b. 1935 <i>Silhouette (Hommage à Gustave Eiffel)</i>	7'
2	SHOSTAKOVICH 1906–1975 <i>Violin Concerto No. 2 in C-sharp minor, Op. 129</i>	33'
3	PROKOFIEV 1891–1953 <i>Symphony No. 5 in B-flat major, Op. 100</i>	45'
TOTAL MUSIC		85'

Arvo Pärt

b. 1935

Silhouette (Hommage à Gustave Eiffel)

7 minutes

ABOUT THE WORK

Arvo Pärt has said that *Silhouette* began with a recording. He heard Paavo Järvi conducting one of his pieces, liked the performance enough to telephone him, and learned in the course of the call that Järvi was about to become chief conductor of the Orchestre de Paris. Pärt offered to write something for the new post, and looked for a subject that belonged to the city.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

The Arvo Pärt Centre describes a design in layers, modelled on the three platforms of the tower. A slow introduction sets out the material. Then the dance begins: plucked strings in light, unstable harmonies stand for the airy ironwork, and bowed passages in firmer harmony for the platforms where the structure comes to rest. The percussion, which includes vibraphone, tubular bells, crotales and gongs, adds points of metallic colour and never a beat to march to. A slow coda returns to the idea of the opening, so that the piece ends where it began, as if the eye had travelled up the tower and down again.

Dmitri Shostakovich

1906–1975

Violin Concerto No. 2 in C-sharp minor, Op. 129

33 minutes

ABOUT THE WORK

Shostakovich wrote his Second Violin Concerto in the spring of 1967 for David Oistrakh, the violinist for whom he had written the First nearly twenty years earlier. It was meant as a present for Oistrakh's sixtieth birthday that September. Shostakovich had the year wrong: Oistrakh, born in Odessa in 1908, was turning fifty-nine. The composer made up for it the following year with a violin sonata, written for the real anniversary.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Moderato. Cellos and basses begin alone with a winding line. The violin enters above them with a theme that circles round a handful of notes and gradually opens out. A second, perkier idea arrives in the piccolo and is taken up by the soloist in plucked chords, with the tom-tom tapping underneath. Listen for a scrap of an Odessa street song, the bagel seller's "Bubliki", slipped in as a private greeting to Oistrakh. The cadenza is written in two voices, the violin accompanying itself, and the movement fades out to the tom-tom.

Adagio. The slow movement is in three parts, with an accompanied cadenza at the centre. It starts in the depths of the orchestra, and the violin's long melody is joined by a solo flute. Near the end a solo horn is heard, as if from a distance, and its call leads straight into the finale.

Adagio, Allegro. After a short slow introduction the horn and the soloist trade rude remarks, and the rondo is off: a rough, stamping dance with the woodwind and horns answering back. The longest cadenza of the three comes late in the movement and looks back over material from earlier in the concerto. The ending is abrupt, punched home by timpani and tom-tom.

Sergei Prokofiev

1891–1953

Symphony No. 5 in B-flat major, Op. 100

45 minutes

ABOUT THE WORK

Prokofiev had not written a symphony for fourteen years when he began his Fifth, and his previous two had both been made from theatre music. In the summer of 1944 he set out to write one from scratch. He was living at the composers' retreat near Ivanovo, north-east of Moscow, a country estate where the Union of Soviet Composers housed and fed its members away

from the hardships of wartime. Prokofiev drafted the symphony in about a month and finished the orchestration in Moscow in the autumn.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Andante. Unusually, the symphony opens with a slow movement. Flute and bassoon, an octave apart, play the first theme unaccompanied, and from it Prokofiev builds a long span in sonata form. When the opening theme returns it is given to the trumpets, and the coda piles up to a huge, grinding close under a roaring tam-tam.

Allegro marcato. The scherzo is the wry, fast Prokofiev of the ballets. A clarinet starts a tune over ticking violins, and the music darts about like a game of cat and mouse. After a more relaxed middle section the scherzo returns slowly and menacingly, and winds itself up faster and louder to the end.

Adagio. A long, winding melody passes among the woodwind and then climbs into the violins' highest register. The middle of the movement darkens into something like a funeral march, with harsh climaxes, before the opening song comes back.

Allegro giocoso. The finale begins by remembering the first movement, in a quiet passage that hands its opening theme to the cellos. Then a solo clarinet launches the

main theme, cheerful and slightly cheeky, and the movement runs as a rondo. In the last pages the full orchestra suddenly drops away to a handful of solo strings, with piano, harp and percussion clattering mechanically, before the final shout.

Tonight's artists

Christian Tetzlaff *violin*

Christian Tetzlaff plays the less familiar of Shostakovich's two violin concertos, a work the Berliner Philharmoniker describe him as approaching with particular care. Its three cadenzas and long unaccompanied lines leave the soloist very exposed.

Christian Tetzlaff, born in Hamburg in 1966, is a German violinist known for searching, unsentimental interpretations and for a repertoire that runs from Bach's solo sonatas and partitas to the music of his own time. He studied with Uwe-Martin Haiberg in Lübeck and with Walter Levin in Cincinnati, and came to wide attention in 1988 with performances of Schoenberg's Violin Concerto in Munich and Cleveland. Since then he has appeared with most of the world's leading orchestras, and he has championed contemporary concertos by composers such as György Ligeti, Jörg Widmann and Thomas Adès. Chamber music has always been central to his work: in 1994 he founded the Tetzlaff Quartet with his sister, the cellist Tanja Tetzlaff, and for many years he played and recorded with the pianist Lars Vogt. Unusually for a soloist of his standing, he plays a modern instrument, made by the German violin maker Stefan-Peter Greiner.

CONCERT PROGRAMS

<https://concertprograms.eu/concerts/bp-2027-04-08-jarvi>

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