

Symphonic Landscapes: Kirill Petrenko and Leif Ove Andsnes in Sibelius, Grieg and the Pastoral Symphony

Wednesday, April 28, 2027 · 20:00 · Philharmonie Berlin
Kirill Petrenko, conductor · Leif Ove Andsnes, piano

TONIGHT'S PROGRAMME		MIN
1	SIBELIUS 1865–1957 <i>Night Ride and Sunrise, Op. 55</i>	15'
2	GRIEG 1843–1907 <i>Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 16</i>	30'
3	BEETHOVEN 1770–1827 <i>Symphony No. 6 in F major, Op. 68 ('Pastoral')</i>	40'
TOTAL MUSIC		85'

Jean Sibelius

1865–1957

15 minutes

Night Ride and Sunrise, Op. 55

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

The ride. After a few violent opening bars the strings settle into a galloping long-short rhythm, quiet and relentless, that runs for minutes on end. The harmony shifts beneath it, the volume swells and drops, and little else changes. Eventually the woodwind add a plaintive, drooping melody over the hoofbeats.

The transition. The rhythm at last gives out. The strings alone take up the woodwind's melody and turn it into something like a hymn, broad and eloquent. This is the hinge of the piece.

Sunrise. The first light comes in the horns, with soft chords that swell and overlap. Woodwind figures stir above them, the brass harmonies widen step by step, and the work ends not in a blaze but in a calm, full glow, fading on a quiet chord.

Edvard Grieg

1843–1907

30 minutes

Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 16

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Allegro molto moderato. A drum roll swells from nothing, the orchestra strikes one chord, and the piano crashes down the length of the keyboard. After that flourish the woodwind give out the main theme quietly, a tune with a march rhythm that is meant to be played gently. The second theme belongs to the cellos, warm and songlike. Near the end the soloist has a long cadenza, which is Grieg's own and builds from a murmur to full thunder before the opening flourish returns.

Adagio. Muted strings play a long, calm melody in a distant key, D-flat major. The piano does not take it up at first but answers with delicate filigree of its own, and only later states the theme in full, grandly. The movement leads into the finale almost without a pause.

Allegro moderato molto e marcato. The main theme is a halling, stamped out by the piano with strong accents. In the middle the dance stops and a solo flute plays a new melody, high and still, over shimmering strings: a clearing in the forest. The dance returns, then changes into a quick triple-time version of itself, and at the very end the flute's quiet tune comes back transformed, in the full orchestra and the major key, with the piano thundering chords beneath it.

Ludwig van Beethoven

1770–1827

40 minutes

Symphony No. 6 in F major, Op. 68 ('Pastoral')

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

I. Awakening of cheerful feelings on arrival in the countryside. The violins begin with a short, simple phrase and pause on it, as if taking a breath. Almost everything in the movement grows from that phrase and its little rhythmic cells, repeated dozens of times with constantly changing colour.

II. Scene by the brook. The murmuring of the water runs through the lower strings, with two muted solo cellos in the middle of the texture. Near the end the music halts for three birds, which Beethoven names in the score: a nightingale (flute), a quail (oboe) and a cuckoo (two clarinets).

III. Merry gathering of country folk. A rustic scherzo. In the middle section Beethoven affectionately mocks a village band: the oboe comes in off the beat, and the bassoon can manage only a few notes.

IV. Thunderstorm. The dance breaks off. Low strings rumble, raindrops patter in the violins, and the storm bursts. Beethoven saves instruments for this moment: the timpani and piccolo play only here, and the trombones enter for the first time.

V. Shepherd's song: happy and thankful feelings after the storm. A clarinet and then a horn call across the valley, and the violins turn the call into a broad, swinging melody. The Berlin note hears in it not jubilation but humility. The tune returns in ever richer variations, and just before the end a muted horn recalls the opening call once more, followed by two firm closing chords.



CONCERT PROGRAMS

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