

Pappano in Hanoi: Liadov, Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante and Tchaikovsky's Fifth

Friday, October 2, 2026 · 20:00 · Ho Guom Opera House
Antonio Pappano, conductor · Benjamin Marquise Gilmore, violin · Eivind Ringstad, viola

TONIGHT'S PROGRAMME		MIN
1	LIADOV 1855–1914 <i>The Enchanted Lake, Op. 62</i>	8'
2	MOZART 1756–1791 <i>Sinfonia concertante for Violin, Viola and Orchestra in E-flat major, K. 364</i>	30'
3	TCHAIKOVSKY 1840–1893 <i>Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 64</i>	48'
4	TCHAIKOVSKY 1840–1893 <i>Polonaise from Eugene Onegin, Op. 24</i>	5'
TOTAL MUSIC		91'

Anatoly Liadov

1855–1914

The Enchanted Lake, Op. 62

THE COMPOSER

Anatoly Liadov (1855–1914) was a Russian composer and teacher from the circle around Rimsky-Korsakov, with whom he studied at the St Petersburg Conservatory. He went on to teach there himself, and his pupils included Prokofiev and Myaskovsky. A miniaturist of exquisite refinement, he is remembered above all for a handful of short, atmospheric orchestral tone poems on Russian fairy-tale subjects (The Enchanted Lake, Baba-Yaga, Kikimora) and for his arrangements of Russian folk songs. He also had a reputation for idleness. The story goes that he was so slow to start a ballet Diaghilev had proposed that the impresario turned instead to the young Stravinsky, who wrote The Firebird, though there is no evidence that Liadov ever accepted the commission. A perfectionist who worked on a small scale, he left a modest output, but his finest pieces are jewels of orchestral colour.

8 minutes

ABOUT THE WORK

Anatoly Liadov was one of the great perfectionists of Russian music. He worked slowly, wrote small, and left a modest catalogue, but his best orchestral pieces are gems. The Enchanted Lake, which he called a “fairy-tale scene”, was first heard in St Petersburg in 1909 and is the most loved of them. It lasts only about eight minutes and does something unusual for a Russian fairy-tale piece: it tells no story at all.

There is no witch, no firebird, no hero on a quest. Instead Liadov paints a still life: a lake deep in an enchanted forest at night, its surface barely moving, the stars caught in the water. He is said to have wanted to capture the lake in its stillness and its mystery, and he does it with almost no melody. Everything happens through orchestral colour. Divided, softly murmuring strings suggest the water. Harp, celesta and flute catch glints of light. Slow, drifting harmonies never quite come to rest.

In that sense the piece looks ahead to Debussy and to the colour-painting of the early twentieth century, and it shows why Liadov’s teacher, Rimsky-Korsakov, and his own students prized his ear so highly. It is the kind of music that sounds simple and is extraordinarily hard to write, since every chord and every instrumental touch has to be exactly right.

For an audience in Hanoi’s Ho Guom Opera House, it makes a gentle, hushed opening before the classical sparkle of Mozart and the drama of Tchaikovsky: a few minutes of Russian enchantment that set the ear listening closely from the very first bar.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Don’t wait for a tune. There isn’t really one, and that is the point. Listen instead to texture: the soft, rocking figures in the strings that suggest ripples on still water, and the way they keep moving without ever going anywhere.

Listen for the flecks of light on top: the harp, the celesta and the flute, placed with great care, like starlight or moonlight caught on the surface. Notice the harmony too. The chords slide and shift gently, never settling into a firm key for long, which keeps the mood suspended and a little uncanny.

The music is quiet almost all the way through. It swells once, gently, and then sinks back into stillness and fades away. Let it wash over you, and marvel at how much magic Liadov conjures from such quiet means.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

1756–1791

Sinfonia concertante for Violin, Viola and Orchestra in E-flat major, K. 364

THE COMPOSER

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart needs little introduction. Born in Salzburg in 1756, he was a prodigy whose talents were cultivated and exhibited across Europe by his father Leopold. By the time he composed this concerto in 1779, the twenty-three-year-old Mozart was restless in provincial Salzburg, dreaming of Vienna and larger stages. Within two years he would make the move that defined his mature career.

Less well known is his sister Maria Anna, called “Nannerl,” five years his senior. She was an equally brilliant pianist as a child, and the siblings toured together as wonders of nature until Nannerl’s touring career ended when she was about seventeen. Following the customs of the time, she stayed at home while Wolfgang continued traveling with their father. The brother and sister remained close, and this concerto was written for the two of them to play.

ABOUT THE WORK

Mozart’s Sinfonia concertante for violin, viola and orchestra is one of the most loved works of his early maturity and one of the great double concertos. He wrote it in Salzburg in 1779, soon after returning from a long and painful journey to Mannheim and Paris. That trip had failed to win him a job, and during it his mother had died in Paris. Yet it had also shown him the most advanced orchestral music in Europe, and he came home full of new ideas.

The sinfonia concertante was one of those ideas. It was a fashionable genre in both Mannheim and Paris: a concerto for several soloists, halfway between a symphony and a concerto, usually light and brilliant. Mozart took the form and deepened it. Nobody knows who the first soloists were or when it was first played, but the result is his finest work for strings and orchestra from those years.

Mozart played both instruments himself and was said to prefer the viola in chamber music. He treats the two soloists as equals, passing phrases between them, letting them imitate each other and then join in sweet parallel harmony. He also wrote a clever trick into the viola part. In the original, the viola is written in D major and tuned up a semitone, so that it sounds in E flat. The raised tension gives the instrument a brighter, more penetrating tone that can stand up to the violin; many modern violists play it at normal tuning.

The orchestra also has a larger role than usual. Mozart divides the violas into two parts, which gives the orchestral sound a warm, rich middle, and uses oboes and horns for colour. The mood of the three movements ranges from ceremonial grandeur to profound sorrow and finally to high spirits.

Tonight's soloists are two principals of the LSO: its leader, Benjamin Marquise Gilmore, and its principal viola, Eivind Ringstad. It is a reminder that Mozart wrote the piece in the spirit of chamber music, for players who listen to each other closely.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

First movement (Allegro maestoso). The orchestra opens with a grand, confident introduction. Listen for the famous “Mannheim crescendo”, a long, gradual build-up over repeated notes, a trick Mozart learned on his travels. Then the two soloists enter together, not one after the other. They begin with a long, high note that seems to float out of the orchestral texture. From then on, listen for the conversation: one instrument states a phrase, the other answers it, and then they combine. The cadenza, which Mozart wrote out himself, is a duet rather than a solo.

Second movement (Andante). This movement, in C minor, is the heart of the work, and one of the most sorrowful pieces Mozart had yet written. It is often linked with the death of his mother the year before, although Mozart left no word about it. The violin and viola trade long, grieving phrases, each echoing and extending the other, before joining in a closing duet. Listen for the moment when the viola takes up the violin's melody: the lower, darker instrument makes the same music sound even sadder.

Third movement (Presto). Sorrow gives way to joy in a quick, sparkling finale. The orchestra starts a cheerful, dance-like tune, and the soloists join in with running passages. They chase each other higher and higher, trade quick figures, and finally race together to a brilliant close.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

1840–1893

Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 64

THE COMPOSER

Tchaikovsky was Russia's first truly international composer and, in his own lifetime, one of the most beloved figures in European music. Born in 1840 in Votkinsk, he trained as a civil servant before turning to music in his early

48 minutes

twenties, studying composition at the newly founded St. Petersburg Conservatory. He began teaching harmony at the newly opened Moscow Conservatory in 1866, and over the following twenty-five years produced six symphonies, three ballets (*Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *The Nutcracker*), a string of operas, numerous concertos, and a wealth of chamber and song repertoire that has never left the international stage.

Tchaikovsky was a man of intense feeling, much of it conflicted. Homosexual in an unforgiving Russian society, often paralysed by depression and self-doubt, he poured the full weight of his emotional life into his music. He died in St. Petersburg in 1893, days after conducting the premiere of his Sixth Symphony. The official cause was cholera, though the precise circumstances of his death have been debated ever since.

ABOUT THE WORK

Tchaikovsky wrote his Fifth Symphony in the summer of 1888, about ten years after the Fourth. He had been worried that he had written himself out, and the new symphony was partly a test of his own powers. He conducted the premiere in St Petersburg that November. The critics were cool, and Tchaikovsky himself soon had doubts, complaining that there was something false and overdone about it. Audiences disagreed almost at once, and it has become one of the best-loved symphonies ever written.

The key to the symphony is a single theme, a slow, sombre melody played by the clarinets at the very beginning. Like the Fourth, the Fifth has a “motto” that stands for fate, but here Tchaikovsky uses it more subtly: it appears in every movement, each time in a new light. In a private notebook he sketched a programme for the first movement that speaks of “complete resignation before Fate, or, which is the same, before the inscrutable predestination of Providence.” He never published a full programme, and the notebook is fragmentary, but the idea of a journey through doubt and struggle is clear in the music.

That journey goes from darkness to light. The motto begins in E minor as a kind of funeral march. By the finale it has been turned into a blazing E major march. Whether this is a genuine victory over fate or just a brave face is something listeners have argued about ever since. Tchaikovsky’s own misgivings about the ending only add to the debate.

In between come some of Tchaikovsky’s greatest melodies, including the famous horn solo of the slow movement, and a movement in which the symphonist and the ballet composer meet: a waltz. It is a

work of great emotional directness, orchestrated with the brilliance of a composer at the height of his craft. Many listeners find it the most satisfying of his symphonies, balancing passion and control.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

First movement (Andante; Allegro con anima). Fix the opening in your mind: the clarinets, low and dark, play the fate motto over hushed strings. It is the thread that ties the whole symphony together. The music then quickens into a restless Allegro, driven by a swaying, march-like theme. Listen for the contrast with a warm, yearning string melody, and for how the movement ends quietly, sinking back into the gloom.

Second movement (Andante cantabile, con alcuna licenza). After a few dark chords in the low strings, a solo horn sings one of the most beautiful melodies Tchaikovsky ever wrote. The oboe and then the cellos take up the conversation, and the music grows into an impassioned love song. Twice, at the height of the emotion, the fate motto crashes in on the brass and shatters the mood.

Third movement (Valse: Allegro moderato). In place of a scherzo, Tchaikovsky writes a graceful, slightly melancholy waltz, with a busier, scurrying middle section in the strings. Near the end, listen for the fate motto stealing in quietly in the clarinets and bassoons, like a figure glimpsed across the ballroom.

Fourth movement (Finale: Andante maestoso; Allegro vivace). The motto returns in the major key, now noble and hymn-like, played by the full strings. Then a fierce, driving Allegro breaks out. The music surges through a long struggle and seems to come to an end, but it is a false ending, and audiences often clap too soon. After the pause the motto returns as a blazing triumphal march on full brass. The symphony ends with a rush of tempo and a final quotation of the first movement's theme, now in the major.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

1840–1893

Polonaise from Eugene Onegin, Op. 24

THE COMPOSER

Tchaikovsky was Russia's first truly international composer and, in his own lifetime, one of the most beloved figures in European music. Born in 1840 in Votkinsk, he trained as a civil servant before turning to music in his early twenties, studying composition at the newly founded St. Petersburg Conservatory. He began teaching harmony at the newly opened Moscow Conservatory in 1866, and over the following twenty-five years produced six symphonies, three ballets (*Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *The Nutcracker*), a string of operas, numerous concertos, and a wealth of chamber and song repertoire that has never left the international stage.

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ABOUT THE WORK

Eugene Onegin, based on Alexander Pushkin's verse novel, is Tchaikovsky's best-loved opera. He called it "lyrical scenes" rather than an opera. It was first performed by students of the Moscow Conservatory in 1879, and it soon became the cornerstone of Russian opera. The story follows Tatyana, a young country girl who pours out her heart in a letter to the aloof, worldly Onegin, only to be coldly rejected. Years later he meets her again, now a married princess in St Petersburg society, and falls desperately in love with her, too late.

The Polonaise opens the third act. The scene is a grand ball in a St Petersburg palace, and the aristocracy parade in a stately procession to the polonaise, a Polish dance that had long since become the ceremonial dance of the Russian court. Onegin has returned from years of travelling and wanders among the guests, bored and alone, before he sees Tatyana transformed.

Tchaikovsky, the great ballet composer, gives the scene all the glitter and grandeur it needs. The Polonaise has become a popular concert piece on its own. With its proud rhythm and sweeping melodies, it is a festive way to end the evening. It shows another side of the composer from the struggle of the Fifth Symphony: Tchaikovsky the master of spectacle and the orchestral painter of Imperial Russia.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

The piece begins with a burst of fanfares on the brass, as if announcing the arrival of the guests. Then the polonaise rhythm takes over: a stately triple time with a characteristic, emphatic accent. Listen for the dignified main tune in the full orchestra, full of pride and swagger, and for a lighter, more lyrical middle section that gives the dancers a moment of grace. The opening music returns in full splendour, and the piece ends in a blaze of brass and percussion that captures the grandeur and polish of aristocratic society.

Tonight's artists

Benjamin Marquise Gilmore *violin*

Mozart's Sinfonia concertante is a conversation between two equal voices, and it gains a great deal when the soloists already play together every week. Benjamin Marquise Gilmore, one of the LSO's leaders and a keen chamber musician, steps out from the front desk of the orchestra to take the violin part, with the orchestra's principal viola beside him.

Benjamin Marquise Gilmore has been a Leader of the London Symphony Orchestra since August 2023. He studied at the Yehudi Menuhin School and in Vienna, and won prizes at the Oskar Back, Joseph Joachim and Salzburg Mozart competitions. He led the Scottish Chamber Orchestra from 2016 to 2019 and was concertmaster of the Philharmonia Orchestra from 2019 to 2023. He is also a member of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe and of the Navarra Quartet.

Eivind Ringstad *viola*

The viola is often the quiet inner voice of the orchestra, but in the Sinfonia concertante Mozart makes it an equal partner to the violin, and gives it some of the most moving music in the slow movement. Eivind Ringstad, the LSO's principal viola and an experienced concerto soloist, takes the part alongside his colleague Benjamin Marquise Gilmore.

Eivind Ringstad is a Norwegian viola player, born in 1994, and principal viola of the London Symphony Orchestra, which he joined in 2024. His breakthrough came when he won first prize at Eurovision Young Musicians in Vienna in 2012, and he has since appeared as a soloist with orchestras including the Oslo Philharmonic, the Mozarteum Orchestra Salzburg, the Lahti Symphony Orchestra and the BBC Symphony Orchestra. He is also a professor of viola at the Royal College of Music.

FURTHER READING

ACCESSIBLE **Mozart: The Reign of Love**

Jan Swafford, Harper Perennial 2021

A recent life of Mozart that covers the travels of 1777 to 1779 behind the Sinfonia concertante for violin and viola.

ACCESSIBLE **Tchaikovsky: The Man and His Music**

David Brown, Faber and Faber 2007

A one-volume life of Tchaikovsky by a leading specialist, with an account of the Fifth Symphony and Eugene Onegin.

DEEPER **Tchaikovsky: The Quest for the Inner Man**

Alexander Poznansky, Schirmer Books 1995

A detailed biography built on Tchaikovsky's letters and diaries, useful for the years of the Fifth Symphony.

SOURCES

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5. The Enchanted Lake, LA Phil. <https://www.laphil.com/works/the-enchanted-lake>
6. Anatoly Lyadov's The Enchanted Lake, Op. 62, Interlude. <https://interlude.hk/leaving-it-to-the-imagination-anatoly-lyadov-the-enchanted-lake-op-62/>
7. Sinfonia Concertante for Violin, Viola and Orchestra (Mozart), Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinfonia_Concertante_for_Violin_Viola_and_Orchestra_\(Mozart\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinfonia_Concertante_for_Violin_Viola_and_Orchestra_(Mozart))

8. Sinfonia Concertante in E-flat major for Violin and Viola, K. 364, LA Phil. <https://www.laphil.com/works/sinfonia-concertante-in-e-flat-major-for-violin-and-viola-k-364>
9. Sinfonia Concertante in E ♭ major, K. 364, Tucson Symphony Orchestra. <https://www.tucson-symphony.org/program-notes/mozart/sinfonia-concertante-k364/>
10. Symphony No. 5 (Tchaikovsky), Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symphony_No._5_\(Tchaikovsky\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symphony_No._5_(Tchaikovsky))
11. Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 5, Boston Symphony Orchestra. <https://www.bso.org/works/tchaikovsky-symphony-no-5>
12. Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 64, LA Phil. <https://www.laphil.com/works/symphony-no-5-in-e-minor-op-64>
13. Eugene Onegin (opera), Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eugene_Onegin_\(opera\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eugene_Onegin_(opera))
14. Polonaise and Waltz from Eugene Onegin, Hollywood Bowl. <https://www.hollywoodbowl.com/musicdb/pieces/5208/polonaise-and-waltz-from-eugene-onegin>
15. Benjamin Marquise Gilmore, London Symphony Orchestra. <https://www.lso.co.uk/bio/benjamin-marquise-gilmore/>
16. Welcome to Benjamin Marquise Gilmore and Andrej Power, our new Leaders, London Symphony Orchestra. <https://www.lso.co.uk/welcome-to-benjamin-marquise-gilmore-and-andrej-power-our-new-leaders/>
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22. Tchaikovsky: The Quest for the Inner Man, Open Library. <https://openlibrary.org/isbn/9780825672323>



CONCERT PROGRAMS

<https://concertprograms.eu/concerts/lso-2026-10-02-pappano>

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