

Kavakos Plays Korngold; Wagner and Respighi

Wednesday, January 21, 2026 · 20:15 · Concertgebouw
Jaap van Zweden, conductor · Leonidas Kavakos, violin

TONIGHT'S PROGRAMME		MIN
1	ZARIÑA b. 2000 <i>Bloom</i>	8'
2	KORNGOLD 1897–1957 <i>Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 35</i>	25'
3	WAGNER 1813–1883 <i>Prelude and Liebestod from 'Tristan und Isolde'</i>	18'
4	RESPIGHI 1879–1936 <i>Pini di Roma</i>	22'
TOTAL MUSIC		73'

Annija Anna Zariņa

b. 2000

Bloom

8 minutes

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Come to this one with open ears and no preconceptions: there are no famous tunes to wait for, because no one has heard it before. With music in this vein, the rewards usually lie in process and texture: listen for how sound emerges and grows, how the orchestra's colours shift and combine, how a small amount of material is patiently transformed. The title invites you to hear the music as a kind of blossoming, a gradual unfolding from something simple toward something fuller. Let it set the ear, and the mind, before the great Romantic statements that follow.

Erich Wolfgang Korngold

1897–1957

25 minutes

Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 35

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

From the soloist's very first phrase, this is music of soaring, golden lyricism. Listen for the gorgeous opening theme (lifted from the film *Another Dawn*) that the violin sings high above shimmering orchestral colour. The whole first movement luxuriates in big, cinematic melodies and lush harmony, with a brilliant cadenza for the soloist.

The slow movement (*Romance*) is the concerto's heart: a tender, dreamy nocturne built on a melody from Anthony Adverse, the violin spinning long, rapt lines over a glowing accompaniment touched with celesta and vibraphone: pure Hollywood enchantment. Then the finale bursts in, a fast, jaunty, jig-like romp full of bravura fireworks and high spirits. Listen for the dazzling virtuosity Korngold demands (rapid runs, leaps and double-stops) and for the way the movement drives to a brilliant, exhilarating close. Throughout, savour the sheer unembarrassed beauty of the writing: this is Romanticism that survived into the twentieth century and went to the movies.

Richard Wagner

1813–1883

18 minutes

Prelude and Liebestod from 'Tristan und Isolde'

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Listen, right at the start, for the Tristan chord, the very first sustained harmony, which seems to lean forward, asking to resolve, and then slips instead into another unresolved chord. This refusal to settle is the engine of the whole piece. The Prelude builds in great waves of rising, surging melody, each climbing higher and pulling back, generating an almost physical sense of longing and frustration that mounts to a shattering climax before subsiding.

Then, without the opera's intervening hours, Wagner gives us the Liebestod. Listen for how Isolde's transfiguration theme rises, gradually and inexorably, through the orchestra: the same kind of surging phrases as the Prelude, but now flooding toward fulfilment rather than frustration. The music swells to an over-

whelming peak and then, finally, melts into a long, glowing resolution, the harmonic release withheld since the opera's first bar. After so much yearning, the effect of that final, peaceful chord is profound: desire consummated, at last, in death and transcendence.

Ottorino Respighi

22 minutes

1879–1936

Pini di Roma

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

The four movements run without a break, each a vivid picture. **'The Pines of the Villa Borghese'** bursts in with brilliant, chattering energy: children playing and shouting in a Roman park, the orchestra glittering and boisterous. Then, abruptly, **'Pines Near a Catacomb'**: the mood turns dark and solemn, with hushed, chant-like brass evoking ancient subterranean worship; listen for the music swelling from the depths and receding.

'The Pines of the Janiculum' is a moonlit nocturne, opening with a rippling piano cadenza and a long, dreamy clarinet melody; at its close, listen for the famous recorded nightingale, singing over the quiet orchestra. Then comes the finale, **'The Pines of the Appian Way.'** It begins almost inaudibly, with a low, throbbing tread in the basses and a steady drumbeat, depicting a Roman legion approaching from far off along the ancient road at misty dawn. Listen for how Respighi builds, with extraordinary patience and cumulative power, from that distant rumble to a blazing, brass-drenched march (with extra brass often placed around the hall), the legion advancing in overwhelming triumph as the sun rises over Rome. It is one of the most spine-tingling crescendos in all music.



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