

Zimmermann's Frank Martin and Shostakovich's Tenth

Wednesday, February 18, 2026 · 20:15 · Concertgebouw
Rafael Payare, conductor · Frank Peter Zimmermann, violin

TONIGHT'S PROGRAMME		MIN
1	GUBAIDULINA 1931–2025 <i>Fairytale Poem</i>	9'
2	MARTIN 1890–1974 <i>Violin Concerto</i>	30'
3	SHOSTAKOVICH 1906–1975 <i>Symphony No. 10 in E minor, Op. 93</i>	52'
TOTAL MUSIC		91'

Sofia Gubaidulina

1931–2025

Fairytale Poem

9 minutes

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

This is a brief, picturesque orchestral fable, so listen above all for colour. Gubaidulina is a master of orchestral sound, and even in this early, approachable piece you can hear her setting glowing, shimmering, dreamlike passages against drier and more earthbound music.

Listen for the composer's fascination with individual sounds (a single instrumental colour held up to the light, a texture that thins and thickens) and for the way she builds the music from oppositions: bright against dull, soaring against earthbound. It makes an evocative, atmospheric opening to the concert, a miniature with a tender and slightly wistful character.

Frank Martin

1890–1974

30 minutes

Violin Concerto

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Come to this expecting atmosphere and lyricism rather than fireworks. Listen for the ‘mysterious and magical’ quality Martin spoke of: the way the solo violin emerges from and floats above shimmering, finely-spun orchestral textures, in music that is harmonically rich and subtly shaded without ever losing its tonal warmth or its singing line.

The concerto follows the classic fast–slow–fast plan. In the outer movements, listen for the interplay of the violin’s long lyrical lines with the orchestra, and for Martin’s distinctive harmony, chromatic and piquant but never harsh. The slow movement is the expressive heart, a grave, song-like meditation of real beauty, the soloist spinning out long melodies of quiet intensity. Throughout, notice how Martin keeps the orchestra transparent so the violin can always be heard, and how the music’s mood is contemplative and inward even at its most animated. It is a concerto that rewards close, patient listening with a beauty that is all its own.

Dmitri Shostakovich

1906–1975

52 minutes

Symphony No. 10 in E minor, Op. 93

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

The symphony begins in darkness: a long, brooding first movement (Moderato) that grows from the low strings, gathering through anxious climaxes and desolate woodwind solos: music of enormous span and bleak intensity, the sound of years of fear.

Then comes the shock: the second movement, a ferociously fast and violent scherzo, hammering and relentless, over almost before you can catch your breath. This is the supposed ‘portrait of Stalin’, brutal and terrifying. The third movement is the most personal: listen here for the DSCH motif (a falling-and-rising four-note figure) emerging in the strings, and for a second code, a horn call repeated twelve times that spells the name ‘Elmira’

(for Elmira Nazirova, a young composer close to Shostakovich), the two themes circling each other in a strange, haunted nocturne.

The finale opens with a slow, mournful introduction before breaking into a fast, almost manic Allegro. Listen for how the DSCH motif fights its way to the foreground and finally rings out in triumph, the composer's own signature blazoned across the close, hammered out by the timpani, asserting the survival of the individual voice over everything that tried to crush it.



CONCERT PROGRAMS

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