

Dawidiuk Conducts Debussy, Poulenc and Tchaikovsky's Fourth

Friday, April 10, 2026 · 20:15 · Concertgebouw
Aurel Dawidiuk, conductor · Leo van Doeselaar, organ

TONIGHT'S PROGRAMME		MIN
1	DEBUSSY 1862–1918 <i>Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune</i>	10'
2	POULENC 1899–1963 <i>Concerto for Organ, Strings and Timpani in G minor, FP 93</i>	23'
3	TCHAIKOVSKY 1840–1893 <i>Symphony No. 4 in F minor, Op. 36</i>	44'
TOTAL MUSIC		77'

Claude Debussy

1862–1918

10 minutes

Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Listen, above all, to the very opening: a solo flute, alone and un-accompanied, winding sinuously downward and back, one of the most famous and evocative beginnings in all music, the languid voice of the faun himself. From this single thread the whole piece unfolds.

Notice how Debussy avoids strong beats and clear cadences, so the music seems to float free of time, drifting through shifting harmonies and exquisite orchestral colours: the warmth of horns, the glint of harps, the antique shiver of small cymbals near the close. Rather than developing themes in the German manner, he keeps returning to the flute's melody, each time re-coloured and transformed, as if the faun's reverie circles back on itself. Let the music wash over you: this is not a story to follow but an atmosphere to inhabit: heat, languor, desire and dream, captured in sound.

Francis Poulenc

23 minutes

1899–1963

Concerto for Organ, Strings and Timpani in G minor, FP 93

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Listen to the opening: a series of huge, dramatic organ chords, grave and grand, consciously recalling Bach's great G-minor organ fantasia, an arresting, almost theatrical start that sets a tone of dark solemnity. Then follow how Poulenc keeps changing the mood, often abruptly: the music swings between this Gothic grandeur and lighter, more lyrical or even jaunty episodes, the 'monk' and the 'rascal' alternating without warning.

Keep your ear on the interplay of the three forces: the organ by turns commanding and delicate, the strings warm and singing, and the timpani adding dramatic punctuation and drive. There are passages of real tenderness and others of nervous energy and bustle, even a touch of the dance hall. The single-movement structure means there is no break to relax in: the music carries you continuously through its contrasts to the return of the solemn opening material and a powerful close. It is a piece that shows off both the colossal range of the organ and the many faces of Poulenc.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

44 minutes

1840–1893

Symphony No. 4 in F minor, Op. 36

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

The symphony opens with the 'Fate' motto: a blaring, ominous fanfare for horns and bassoons. Fix it in your mind: it is the seed of the whole work, and it will return at crucial moments to crush the music's hopes. The first movement that follows is anxious and waltz-haunted, surging between despair and fleeting tenderness, and it is interrupted, climactically, by the return of the Fate fanfare.

The second movement (Andantino) is a melancholy, songful lament, introduced by a plaintive solo oboe, music of wistful loneliness and reminiscence. The third movement is the symphony's famous trick: a scherzo played almost entirely in pizzicato, the strings plucking throughout, conjuring a flickering, fantastical world (with a contrasting wind-band episode in the

middle, like a passing military parade). Then the finale erupts: a blazing, festive movement built around a Russian folk song ('In the field stood a birch tree'), depicting the rough joys of a village holiday. Listen for how, near the end, the dreaded Fate fanfare bursts in once more, but this time the music refuses to be cowed, sweeping it aside and driving to a hard-won, exhilarating conclusion.



CONCERT PROGRAMS

<https://concertprograms.eu/concerts/rco-2026-04-10-dawidiuk>

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