

Gabetta's Martinů, and Ravel's Daphnis

Wednesday, May 13, 2026 · 20:15 · Concertgebouw
Santtu-Matias Rouvali, conductor · Sol Gabetta, cello

TONIGHT'S PROGRAMME		MIN
1	DVORAK 1841–1904 <i>In Nature's Realm, Op. 91</i>	14'
2	MARTINŮ 1890–1959 <i>Cello Concerto No. 1, H. 196</i>	30'
3	STRAVINSKY 1882–1971 <i>Jeu de cartes</i>	23'
4	RAVEL 1875–1937 <i>Suite No. 2 from 'Daphnis et Chloé'</i>	17'
TOTAL MUSIC		84'

Antonin Dvorak

1841–1904

In Nature's Realm, Op. 91

14 minutes

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Listen, at the very start, for the quiet, expectant opening over a sustained low note, out of which the ‘nature motif’ gently emerges, along with little flecks of flute and oboe that suggest birdsong waking in the woods. This rocking motif is the seed of the whole overture; follow it as it returns again and again, passed around the orchestra in different registers and colours.

The theme has a folk-like, call-across-the-valley quality, and the overture grows from its tranquil opening into warm, full-orchestra climaxes before settling back into peace. Enjoy the glowing Dvořákian orchestration (the warm horns, the singing strings, the woodwind birdcalls) and the overall mood of contented communion with nature. It is a short, gracious tone-poem of the outdoors.

Bohuslav Martinů

1890–1959

30 minutes

Cello Concerto No. 1, H. 196

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Listen for the Baroque-inspired drive of the outer movements: the busy, motoric rhythms, the sense of constant forward motion, and the bracing dialogue between cello and orchestra. Martinů treats the orchestra almost like a Baroque concerto grosso, with the soloist weaving in and out of the texture. Notice his very personal orchestral sound, glittering and syncopated.

The heart of the concerto is its slow movement, a broad, deeply felt song for the cello, lyrical and warm, where Martinů's Czech soul shows through the neoclassical surface. And listen for the soloist's virtuosity throughout, including the cadenza. The cello sings almost continuously; let Gabetta's warm, communicative tone guide you through a concerto that is by turns athletic, tender and exhilarating.

Igor Stravinsky

1882–1971

23 minutes

Jeu de cartes

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Listen for the recurring 'shuffling' fanfare, a strutting little march that opens the ballet and announces the start of each new 'deal,' like the cards being dealt afresh. Around it, Stravinsky spins crisp, brilliant, constantly changing music full of rhythmic snap and bright orchestral colour.

Half the fun is catching the musical jokes: listen for sudden quotations and parodies of other composers' music (a flash of Rossini, a whiff of a Strauss waltz), which Stravinsky tosses in with a wink as the Joker plays his tricks. The music is fast, witty and unsentimental, full of unexpected turns and deadpan humour. You don't need to follow the card-game plot in detail; simply enjoy the dazzling craftsmanship, the rhythmic energy, and the sly, knowing wit of Stravinsky the great musical gamesman.

Maurice Ravel

1875–1937

Suite No. 2 from 'Daphnis et Chloé'

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

The opening 'Daybreak' is one of the supreme sunrises in music. Listen for the rippling, rising figures in the woodwinds and harps (flowing water and dripping dew), over which the strings slowly unfurl a great, broad melody as the sun climbs; the music swells in a vast crescendo of pure orchestral light, dotted with flute birdsong. It is gradual, sensuous and overwhelming.

In the central 'Pantomime,' listen for the long, languorous solo flute, representing the panpipes of Pan, one of the most beautiful and demanding flute solos in the repertoire. Then comes the 'Danse générale': listen for the driving, lopsided rhythm (you can almost feel the music tripping over itself), the whirling strings and woodwinds, and the crashing percussion, as the celebration builds to a frenzied, intoxicating close. Throughout, marvel at Ravel's orchestration, the sheer range and subtlety of colour that makes this music shimmer and blaze like nothing else.



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