

Henze's Chaconne and Brahms's Second

Wednesday, December 9, 2026 · 20:15 · Concertgebouw
Fabio Luisi, conductor · Julia Fischer, violin

TONIGHT'S PROGRAMME		MIN
1	MEYER b. 1991 <i>Fleur de verre</i>	10'
2	HENZE 1926–2012 <i>Il Vitalino raddoppiato</i>	28'
3	BRAHMS 1833–1897 <i>Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 73</i>	42'
TOTAL MUSIC		80'

Sophie Søs Meyer

b. 1991

Fleur de verre

10 minutes

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Come to this one with open ears and few preconceptions. With music of this kind, the rewards lie less in following tunes than in attending to texture and atmosphere: the way sounds emerge and dissolve, the play of orchestral colour, the sense of a fragile image (glass, light, a flower) translated into shifting sonority. Listen for how Meyer uses the full resources of the orchestra not to build a traditional argument but to conjure a state, an atmosphere, a single sustained image rendered in sound. It is a brief, concentrated opening, a pane of glass held up to the light before the Baroque-tinged Henze and the warmth of Brahms.

Hans Werner Henze

1926–2012

Il Vitalino raddoppiato

28 minutes

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

The key to this piece is its sense of journey through musical time, so listen for the gradual transformation. At the start, the solo violin presents the old Vitali chaconne theme, a slow, dig-

nified, descending pattern, unmistakably Baroque, and the early variations stay close to that world: ornate, expressive, almost like a period performance.

Then follow how Henze begins to pull the music away from its origins. The harmonies grow more pungent and ambiguous, the orchestral colours stranger, the violin writing increasingly free and virtuosic, until the Baroque frame has dissolved into something thoroughly modern. The high point is the soloist's extended cadenza late in the work, where the music turns most hallucinatory and intense. Keep one ear on that steady chaconne bass-pattern underneath it all: even as the surface is transformed almost beyond recognition, the old foundation keeps the piece anchored. It is the sound of three centuries collapsing into a single span.

Johannes Brahms

42 minutes

1833–1897

Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 73

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

The symphony grows from a tiny seed planted in its very first bars: a three-note turn in the cellos and basses (down–up) that recurs, transformed, throughout the work. Listen for it at the warm, flowing opening, and for the gentle horn calls that follow; this first movement is broad and lyrical, but notice the sudden shadow cast early on by soft, solemn trombones, the ‘mourning’ Brahms half-joked about.

The slow movement (*Adagio non troppo*) is the symphony's most serious music: deeply felt, harmonically rich, with long-spun cello melody and a searching, complex argument. The third movement is a delight: not a driving scherzo but a graceful, gently rocking intermezzo led by the oboe, twice interrupted by quicker, skipping episodes that grow from the same tune. Then comes the finale, which begins hushed and conspiratorial before bursting into exuberant high spirits; listen for how Brahms builds the momentum and saves his trump card for the very end, where the trombones ring out a blazing D-major peroration to close the symphony in pure jubilation.



CONCERT PROGRAMS

<https://concertprograms.eu/concerts/rco-2026-12-09-luisi>

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