

Klaus Mäkelä conducts Beethoven's Seventh, Lisa Batiashvili plays Sibelius

Wednesday, January 27, 2027 · 20:15 · Concertgebouw

Klaus Mäkelä, conductor · Lisa Batiashvili, violin

	TONIGHT'S PROGRAMME	MIN
1	SCHUMANN 1810–1856 <i>Manfred Overture, Op. 115</i>	12'
2	SIBELIUS 1865–1957 <i>Violin Concerto in D minor, Op. 47</i>	34'
3	BEETHOVEN 1770–1827 <i>Symphony No. 7 in A major, Op. 92</i>	37'
	TOTAL MUSIC	83'

Robert Schumann

12 minutes

1810–1856

Manfred Overture, Op. 115

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Three stabbing chords from the full orchestra tear open the curtain. A slow, sorrowing introduction follows, and the tempo gradually quickens until the music breaks into the main fast section.

The principal theme is breathless and driven, always pressing forward and never finding a firm footing. Against it Schumann sets gentler, plaintive phrases. Listen to how the ideas are pulled apart, stretched and joined together again instead of simply being repeated: the whole movement surges up towards passion again and again, and each time falls back.

There is no victory at the end. The fast music exhausts itself, and the slow introduction returns as an epilogue. The overture closes in the minor key, without the redemption a listener might expect.

Jean Sibelius

1865–1957

34 minutes

Violin Concerto in D minor, Op. 47

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

I. Allegro moderato. There is no orchestral introduction. Over a soft, pulsing cushion of strings the soloist enters at once with a long, wandering melody that seems to come out of the far distance. A second theme arrives dark and low on the violin's G string. Where a development section would normally stand, the orchestra falls silent and the soloist plays a long cadenza built on the opening theme, full of double stops, trills and runs. When the themes return they are darker in colour, and the movement ends with the main theme's dramatic material at full strength.

II. Adagio di molto. A short phrase from clarinets and oboes leads in the violin's broad, heartfelt melody, played over plucked strings. It asks for restraint and simplicity more than brilliance. The orchestra turns stormy in the middle of the movement, and the violin answers with plaintive double stops before the opening melody returns and the music sinks to a serene close.

III. Allegro, ma non tanto. Four bars of drumming rhythm from timpani and low strings set the pace, and the violin leaps in on its lowest string with a dance theme of fierce energy. Tovey called this movement 'a polonaise for polar bears', a joke that has stuck to it ever since. A second theme, with something of the waltz about it, is given first to the orchestra. The solo part grows steadily harder, with passages in thirds, arpeggios, octaves and high harmonics, and the major key is won only in the final bars, where the violin's line climbs upward and the orchestra seals the ending with it.

Ludwig van Beethoven

1770–1827

37 minutes

Symphony No. 7 in A major, Op. 92

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

I. Poco sostenuto, Vivace. The slow introduction is unusually long, almost a movement in itself, with long rising scales and excursions into the keys of C and F. At the end everything

shrinks to a single note, E, repeated more than sixty times until it catches the skipping dotted rhythm of the Vivace. That rhythm then runs through almost every bar of the movement.

II. Allegretto. A single unstable chord in the winds opens the movement. Then violas and cellos begin a quiet march in A minor on a pattern of one long note, two short and two long, and the theme is at first little more than one repeated pitch. It is handed upward through the strings, gathering a counter-melody and growing each time, like a procession approaching from far away. Gentler episodes in A major bring relief. This is the movement that was encored in 1813, and it has had a life of its own ever since.

III. Presto. A racing scherzo in F major, full of sudden changes between loud and soft. The slower trio, a broad tune in D major said to be based on an Austrian pilgrims' hymn, comes round twice instead of the usual once.

IV. Allegro con brio. The finale goes at a relentless pace. Its whirling main theme is driven by heavy accents, and the movement outdoes even the scherzo in sheer force. The energy never lets up, and by the last pages the music seems to dissolve into pure sound and motion.



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