

Lang Lang plays Saint-Saëns, Klaus Mäkelä conducts Ravel and a Lindberg premiere

Friday, May 7, 2027 · 20:15 · Concertgebouw
Klaus Mäkelä, conductor · Lang Lang, piano

TONIGHT'S PROGRAMME		MIN
1	WENNÄKOSKI b. 1970 <i>Flounce</i>	5'
2	LINDBERG b. 1958 <i>New work (world premiere)</i>	
3	SAINT-SAËNS 1835–1921 <i>Piano Concerto No. 2 in G minor, Op. 22</i>	23'
4	RAVEL 1875–1937 <i>La Valse</i>	12'
TOTAL MUSIC		40'

Lotta Wennäkoski

5 minutes

b. 1970
Flounce

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Wennäkoski describes a double character in the writing as well as in the title. On one side there is an energetic pulse that keeps the music moving forward; on the other there are timbres that she calls sometimes non-conventional, and a feeling of space in the orchestration. So listen for the way the sound is laid out as much as for any tune. The quick, slightly comic gestures tend to arrive suddenly and break off just as suddenly, while the ornamental passages are finer-grained and seem to hang in the air. The orchestra's own description of the piece speaks of light, clarity and movement, as if the composer wanted to escape the pull of gravity. Five minutes is not long, and the piece does not waste any of them.

Magnus Lindberg

b. 1958

New work (world premiere)

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

With no score or description available, any detailed guide would be guesswork. In general terms, Lindberg's publisher names energy, colour and a thrilling density of material as the hallmarks of his recent style, and Music Finland describes a composer who has moved from the hard-edged modernism of his early years towards an idiom in which melody matters more. The orchestra's announcement adds that he always manages to draw new sounds from an orchestra. It is reasonable to expect a piece that uses the full ensemble and keeps it busy. This note will be updated when the orchestra publishes more.

Camille Saint-Saëns

1835–1921

23 minutes

Piano Concerto No. 2 in G minor, Op. 22

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

I. Andante sostenuto. The piano begins alone, with a long passage that sounds improvised, in the manner of a Bach organ fantasia. It is easy to imagine a held pedal note with the hands roaming above it. The orchestra enters with force, and the piano then gives out the restless main theme. The movement builds to a loud return of that theme and a solo cadenza, and the Bach-like opening comes back at the end, now with the orchestra beneath it.

II. Allegro scherzando. A soft chord and a tapping figure on the timpani set the pace. The piano's first tune is light and quick; a second, broader tune appears low down, in the bassoons and lower strings. This was the movement the first audience liked best, and it ends as lightly as it began.

III. Presto. A headlong dance in the rhythm of a tarantella, back in G minor. The piano starts it with a rumble low in the keyboard and scarcely stops afterwards. A second idea, marked by a trill and repeated many times, gives a brief change of texture before the rush to the close.

Maurice Ravel

1875–1937

La Valse

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

The beginning is the clouds. Double basses rumble very quietly, and fragments of waltz rhythm and melody drift past without settling. A first tune takes shape low in the bassoons and violas. The harps sweep the mist aside, and the violins lead the orchestra into the main waltz in full light.

A chain of waltzes follows, as in a set by Johann Strauss, each with its own character and each scored differently: some mild and a little shy, with oboe, violins and flutes to the fore, others loud and sweeping. Ravel's orchestra is large, with two harps and a good deal of percussion, and much of the pleasure is in the detail.

Taken as a whole, the piece is one long crescendo, interrupted and begun again. Each time the dance regathers it is louder and less polite than before, and the elegance of the early waltzes gives way to something closer to violence. The final climax is hard to resist and hard to hear as a mere ballroom scene, which is where the arguments about what Ravel meant begin.



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