

A Summer Night at Schönbrunn 2026

Friday, June 19, 2026 · 20:45 · Schloss Schönbrunn

Lorenzo Viotti, conductor · Bryn Terfel, bass-baritone

	TONIGHT'S PROGRAMME	MIN
1	SUPPÈ 1819–1895 <i>Light Cavalry (Leichte Kavallerie), Overture</i>	8'
2	BOITO 1842–1918 <i>'Son lo spirito che nega' (Mefistofele, Act I)</i>	4'
3	PUCCINI 1858–1924 <i>Intermezzo from Manon Lescaut</i>	5'
4	VERDI 1813–1901 <i>Falstaff's monologue 'Ehi! paggio!... L'onore! Ladri!' (Falstaff, Act I)</i>	5'
5	TCHAIKOVSKY 1840–1893 <i>Trepak (Russian Dance) from The Nutcracker, Op. 71</i>	1'
6	PRICE 1887–1953 <i>Adoration (orch. Elaine Fine)</i>	4'
7	KORNGOLD 1897–1957 <i>Straussiana (Polka, Mazurka, Waltz)</i>	7'
8	WAGNER 1813–1883 <i>'Abendlich strahlt der Sonne Auge' (Wotan's address, Das Rheingold, Scene 4)</i>	5'
9	MASSENET 1842–1912 <i>Méditation from Thaïs</i>	6'
10	RAVEL 1875–1937 <i>Daphnis et Chloé, Suite No. 2</i>	17'
11	BOCK 1928–2010 <i>'If I Were a Rich Man' from Fiddler on the Roof</i>	5'
	TOTAL MUSIC	67'

Franz von Suppè

8 minutes

1819–1895

Light Cavalry (Leichte Kavallerie), Overture

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

After a brisk military fanfare from the brass, the famous ‘galloping’ main theme breaks out: trotting horns and snapping rhythms that paint a cavalry on the move. Listen for the sudden mood-swing at the centre: a broad, almost mournful cantilena, an operetta tune of real tenderness that interrupts the bustle before the gallop returns. Suppè builds his overture as a string of contrasting episodes rather than a symphonic argument, so the pleasure is in the swerves: fanfare, gallop, song, and a whip-cracking dash to the close.

Arrigo Boito

4 minutes

1842–1918

'Son lo spirito che nega' (Mefistofele, Act I)

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Listen for the swagger in the vocal line. Boito gives the devil a rolling, almost dance-like buoyancy that makes his nihilism sound like fun. The orchestra needles him with sardonic little figures, and everything builds toward the whistle, the moment the audience waits for: a literal whistle that turns metaphysics into music-hall. Note too how the laughter is built into the phrasing, the voice sliding mockingly between registers as the devil relishes his own wickedness.

Giacomo Puccini

5 minutes

1858–1924

Intermezzo from Manon Lescaut

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Listen for a long-breathed cello and string melody that climbs in great waves toward an impassioned climax: Puccini at his most openly Romantic, with no voices to share the spotlight. The themes are drawn from the lovers’ music, so the Intermezzo plays as a wordless love duet. Notice how Puccini withholds and then releases the full orchestra, and how the harmonies darken as the passion peaks, foreshadowing the desolate desert death that ends the opera.

Giuseppe Verdi

5 minutes

1813–1901

Falstaff's monologue 'Ehi! paggio!... L'onore! Ladri!' (Falstaff, Act I)

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Listen for the conversational speed of the writing. Verdi at eighty composes patter that turns on a dime, the orchestra darting and commenting like a fourth character. There are no set-piece arias here; the music follows every shrug and snort of Falstaff's reasoning. Savour the mock-philosophical grandeur Verdi lends to 'L'onore!', inflated then instantly pricked, and the whirlwind of the final chase. It is comedy as orchestral filigree, sung by a bass-baritone who must act with his voice.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

1 minutes

1840–1893

Trepak (Russian Dance) from The Nutcracker, Op. 71

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Listen for the relentless acceleration: the tune starts fast and only gets faster, whipped along by hammered downbeats. The whole orchestra stamps in unison, evoking the squat-and-kick of the Cossack dancer, and Tchaikovsky times the final headlong rush so that the piece ends almost before you expect it, over in a flash, designed to bring the house down.

Florence Price

4 minutes

1887–1953

Adoration (orch. Elaine Fine)

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Listen for the lyrical, hymn-like main melody, sung by the strings with a singer's phrasing and breath. Price's harmonies are warm and unhurried, touched here and there by the inflections of the African-American spiritual and the salon Romanticism she grew up with. Notice how Fine's orchestration keeps the texture transparent. This is music of devotion, not display, and its power lies in its quiet sincerity and the long, arching line that swells gently and then settles back into peace.

Erich Wolfgang Korngold

7 minutes

1897–1957

Straussiana (Polka, Mazurka, Waltz)

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Listen for the three contrasting dance characters: the crisp, bouncing Polka; the swaying triple-time lilt of the Mazurka; and the grand, lilting Waltz that crowns the set. Throughout, hear how Korngold's orchestration upgrades Strauss: richer harmonies, fuller strings, glints of harp and woodwind colour that belong as much to a film score as to a ballroom. It is Strauss seen through a golden, slightly nostalgic lens.

Richard Wagner

5 minutes

1813–1883

'Abendlich strahlt der Sonne Auge' (Wotan's address, Das Rheingold, Scene 4)

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Listen for the broad, hymn-like sweep of Wotan's vocal line, set against shimmering orchestral light as the fortress catches the sunset. Wagner's leitmotifs do the storytelling: hear the gleaming 'Valhalla' theme in the brass, the cascading 'rainbow bridge' music and, crucially, the dark glint of the curse and the sword motif slipping in beneath the splendour. The triumph is real but hollow, and a great singer lets you hear Wotan's unease inside the grandeur.

Jules Massenet

6 minutes

1842–1912

Méditation from Thaïs

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Listen for the solo violin's long, arching melody, rising and falling like a sung prayer over rippling harp arpeggios. The tune unfolds in serene waves, building to a passionate climax, the soul reaching toward grace, before subsiding into hushed peace. Notice the dialogue between the soloist and the gentle orchestra, and how Massenet sustains an almost unbroken line of melody from first note to last.

Maurice Ravel

1875–1937

17 minutes

Daphnis et Chloé, Suite No. 2

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Listen, in 'Daybreak', for one of music's great sunrises: trickling streams in the woodwinds and harps, mist lifting from the strings, and a long melodic swell as the sun floods the stage, a slow, ecstatic crescendo of pure orchestral colour. The 'Pantomime' centres on a famous flute solo, the god Pan wooing the nymph Syrinx, sinuous and tender. Then the 'Danse générale' erupts in a whirling, asymmetrical 5/4 rhythm, driving the whole orchestra to a delirious, pounding close.

Jerry Bock

1928–2010

5 minutes

'If I Were a Rich Man' from Fiddler on the Roof

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Listen for the cantorial vocalise, the wordless 'biddy-biddy-bum' passages where Tevye's voice swoops and trills like a synagogue cantor lost in song. The melody leans on the distinctive intervals of Eastern European Jewish music, giving it its instantly recognizable flavour. Notice how the mood shifts between broad comedy and sudden tenderness, especially when Tevye imagines time to study the holy books: the dream of dignity beneath the dream of riches.



CONCERT PROGRAMS

<https://concertprograms.eu/concerts/wp-2026-06-19-viotti>

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