

WIENER PHILHARMONIKER

Vienna on Tour: Der Rosenkavalier and Korngold's Sinfonietta

Monday, April 19, 2027 · 19:30 · Philharmonie Luxembourg

Lorenzo Viotti, conductor

	TONIGHT'S PROGRAMME	MIN
1	STRAUSS 1864–1949 <i>Der Rosenkavalier, Suite</i>	21'
2	KORNGOLD 1897–1957 <i>Sinfonietta in B major, Op. 5</i>	43'
	TOTAL MUSIC	64'

Richard Strauss

1864–1949

Der Rosenkavalier, Suite

21 minutes

ABOUT THE WORK

Der Rosenkavalier was the opera with which Richard Strauss followed Salome and Elektra, and it could hardly be less like them. He wrote it with the Viennese poet Hugo von Hof-

mannsthal, finished the score in September 1910, and saw it staged in Dresden on 26 January 1911 under Ernst von Schuch. It was a triumph from the first night and became the most popular of his operas in his lifetime.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

The opening. The suite begins exactly as the opera does, with whooping horns answered by surging strings. The curtain has not yet risen: this is the night the Marschallin and Octavian have just spent together, and Strauss leaves little to the imagination. The music then relaxes into the tenderness of the morning after.

The Presentation of the Rose. The scene changes to the second act. Octavian arrives to hand Sophie the rose, and the rose itself is heard as a chain of glittering chords on flutes, solo violins, harps and celesta. The melody around them is one of the most rapt in the opera, and the hesitant conversation of the two young people follows.

Ochs and his waltz. A burst of agitated music marks the moment the Baron grasps what is going on. Then comes the best-known waltz in the score, the one to which he assures Sophie that with him no night will be too long.

Trio and duet. The suite now leaps to the end of the opera. In the trio the Marschallin, Octavian and Sophie each sing their own thoughts at the same moment as she gives

him up; here the lines pass to the orchestra and build to the emotional summit of the piece. The quieter music that follows is the final duet of the two lovers.

The last waltz. Here the suite leaves the opera's order of events. The arranger reaches back for one more of the Baron's waltzes, the exuberant one in which he congratulates himself on his luck, and turns it into a full-orchestra finish.

Erich Wolfgang Korngold

1897–1957

Sinfonietta in B major, Op. 5

43 minutes

ABOUT THE WORK

Erich Wolfgang Korngold was fourteen when he began the *Sinfonietta*, in the spring of 1912, and had just turned fifteen when the sketch was finished that August. Orchestrating it took another year, during which he also wrote a violin sonata and started his first opera. By then he was already a known quantity in Vienna: the son of a prominent music critic, and the composer of a ballet, *Der Schneemann*, written when he was eleven.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Fließend, mit heiterem Schwunge (flowing, with cheerful swing). The motto rises at once and the first theme springs out of it, so the opening bars hold the material of the whole work. The second theme is slower and lilting, with a Viennese sway, and is built on the same fourths. A short development works up to a climax with brass fanfares; when the opening returns, the second theme is quieter than before, and the coda dwells on the five notes in a new harmonisation.

Scherzo: Molto agitato, rasch und feurig (fast and fiery). Brass and timpani launch it, with heavy accents and a restless main idea, and this is where the debt to Strauss is plainest. The middle section could hardly be more different: a slow, warm melody that drifts through one key after another. Listeners who know Korngold's film scores will recognise the manner. An abbreviated return of the scherzo ends the movement with hammered chords.

Molto andante (dreamy). The shortest movement. A cor anglais sings a wistful melody over hushed chords coloured by celesta and harps. The strings then take up the motto, slowed down and richly harmonised, the music rises to a single climax, and it sinks back to where it began.

Finale: Patetico, Allegro giocoso. The start is the darkest music in the piece: a stern gesture, then a slow, uneasy climb from the lower strings. The mood does not last. The same idea turns up in the Allegro giocoso as a cheerful main theme, and a broad, songlike second melody follows it. The movement grows from one climax to the next with the motto threaded through it, and the five rising notes close the work in triumph.

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