

WIENER PHILHARMONIKER

Blomstedt Conducts Schubert and Bruckner

Friday, June 18, 2027 · 19:30 · Wiener Konzerthaus

Herbert Blomstedt, conductor

TONIGHT'S PROGRAMME		MIN
1	SCHUBERT 1797–1828 <i>Symphony No. 8 in B minor, D. 759 ('Unfinished')</i>	25'
2	BRUCKNER 1824–1896 <i>Symphony No. 7 in E major, WAB 107</i>	70'
TOTAL MUSIC		95'

Franz Schubert

1797–1828

Symphony No. 8 in B minor, D. 759 ('Unfinished')

25 minutes

ABOUT THE WORK

Herbert Blomstedt was born on 11 July 1927, and the Wiener Konzerthaus announces the first of these concerts, on 18 June, under the heading of his 100th birthday. Three more follow in the Musikverein: the Philharmonic's subscription concerts on

19 and 20 June and a concert of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde on 22 June. Blomstedt came to this orchestra late. He first conducted it in 2011, at the age of eighty-three, and it made him an honorary member in 2019. The programme sets two symphonies side by side, one that stops after two movements and one that runs for more than an hour.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Allegro moderato. The symphony begins very quietly, with a dark phrase for cellos and double basses alone. The violins then set up a restless murmur over plucked notes in the lower strings, and oboe and clarinet together sing the first theme above it. A brief link leads to one of the best-known melodies Schubert wrote, introduced by the cellos over a gently syncopated accompaniment. It does not get far. The tune breaks off into silence, and the full orchestra crashes in. That pattern, a song interrupted by violence, shapes the whole movement. The middle section grows out of the opening bass phrase and builds to a climax in which the three trombones are prominent.

Andante con moto. The second movement is in E major and moves at an easy walking pace, not much slower than the first. Horns, over a walking line in the basses, lead into a calm melody for the strings. The second idea, in C-sharp minor, is a long solo line passed from clarinet to oboe, and here too the calm is broken by passages of great

weight, with trumpets, trombones and timpani. The music travels through several distant keys before E major is restored at the close. Bruckner's symphony begins in the same key.

Anton Bruckner

1824–1896

Symphony No. 7 in E major, WAB 107

70 minutes

ABOUT THE WORK

Bruckner wrote his Seventh Symphony between 1881 and 1883. In July 1882 he travelled to Bayreuth for the first performances of *Parsifal*, and it was the last time he saw Wagner, the composer he revered above all others. By his own account the main theme of the slow movement came to him with the thought that Wagner would not live much longer. Wagner died in Venice on 13 February 1883, while Bruckner was still at work on the Adagio, and the closing pages of the movement became what he called his funeral music for the master.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Allegro moderato. Violins shimmer quietly, and the cellos, joined at first by a horn, play a long, spacious melody that seems unwilling to end. Two further groups of themes follow, a calmer one introduced by the woodwind

and a more rhythmic third. Everything in the movement is built on this scale, in long paragraphs that gather slowly towards a blazing close in E major.

Adagio: Sehr feierlich und sehr langsam (very solemn and very slow). The Wagner tubas open the movement in C-sharp minor, and the strings answer with a broad phrase of their own. A second, more flowing theme brings relief. The opening music returns twice, each time more richly worked, and the third statement builds to the summit of the movement, a great arrival in C major (this is where the cymbal crash comes, if the conductor uses it). What follows is the passage Bruckner wrote in mourning, with a cry of pain from the horns before the movement sinks to its close.

Scherzo: Sehr schnell. In A minor, driven by a rhythmic figure in the strings, over which a solo trumpet calls out a theme that leaps an octave. The trio is slower and in the major, a singing melody for the violins.

Finale: Bewegt, doch nicht schnell (with movement, but not fast). A short finale by Bruckner's standards. Its lively first theme is the melody that opened the symphony, with the rhythm sharpened and the pace quickened. At the very end the theme returns in its original, solemn form.

CONCERT PROGRAMS

<https://concertprograms.eu/concerts/wp-2027-06-18-blomstedt>

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