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KLASSIK FÜR HAMBURG

8. September 2026

Wiener Philharmoniker

Tugan Sokhiev Leitung

Hilary Hahn Violine

B

Konzerttipp

© Vittorio Greco

2. Oktober 2026 • 20 Uhr
Elbphilharmonie, Großer Saal

Golda Schultz Sopran
The Cleveland Orchestra
Franz Welser-Möst Leitung

Richard Strauss Vier letzte Lieder AV 150
Dmitri Schostakowitsch Sinfonie Nr. 8 c-Moll op. 65

Tickets direkt buchen

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B – Internationale Orchester
Tuesday · 8. September 2026
Elbphilharmonie, Großer Saal

In Kooperation mit
ELBPHILHARMONIE HAMBURG

Program

Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904)
Violin Concerto in A minor Op. 53
(Duration approx. 32 minutes)
I. Allegro ma non troppo, *attacca:*
II. Adagio, ma non troppo
III. Finale. Allegro giocoso, ma non troppo

Intermission

Sergei Prokofiev (1891–1953)
Romeo and Juliet. Suite No. 2 Op. 64b
I. Montagues and Capulets
II. Juliet as a Young Girl
III. Friar Laurence
IV. Dance
V. Romeo and Juliet Before Parting
VI. Dance of the Girls With Lilies
VII. Romeo at Juliet's Tomb

V. Masks
VII. Death of Tybalt
from: **Romeo and Juliet. Suite No. 1 Op. 64a**
(Duration of the second concert half: approx. 40 minutes)

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The program is subject to change. Out of consideration for the artists, please refrain from taking photos, making audio recordings, or filming, and please turn off your cell phones.

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At a Glance

A violin concerto, a ballet suite: two works with ties to their composers' homelands. Antonín Dvořák infused his Violin Concerto with the musical idiom of his Bohemian homeland, thereby setting an important milestone on his path to international recognition. Sergei Prokofiev composed his version of *Romeo and Juliet* shortly after returning to the Soviet Union. A fateful decision: the long-awaited fresh start in his homeland was soon overshadowed by state control and ideological pressure. Nevertheless, Prokofiev created a distinctive musical language that is accessible and vividly evocative, yet never compromises its modernity.

Music with a Sense of Home

There's no question about it: Johannes Brahms was thrilled! As a reviewer for an artist grant from the Austrian Ministry of Education, he had, of course, seen many works by promising composers pass through his hands. But what a certain **Antonín Dvořák** from Prague had been submitting regularly since 1874 caught Brahms's attention. He had never met him in person. And how could he have? Neither the Bohemian himself nor his music had made it significantly beyond the borders of his homeland well into the 1870s. But with Brahms as a staunch advocate, that was soon to change: When Brahms got his hands on Dvořák's *Sounds from Moravia* in 1877, he didn't hesitate; he immediately sent the sheet music to his Berlin publisher, Fritz Simrock, adding the note: "In any case, he is a very talented man. And poor, too! I ask that you keep this in mind!"

Antonín Dvořák 1882 © Bibliothèque nationale de France

A publisher with a keen instinct

Simrock took the bait and immediately commissioned Dvořák to compose a series of *Slavonic Dances*. The shrewd publisher knew the tastes of his clientele and, at the same time, was exceptionally adept at assessing what suited his new contractual partner best: an accessible folk style that masters classical rigor but is enriched with tonal freshness, Eastern European rhythms, and sheer endless melodic invention. It wasn't long before Simrock approached Dvořák with another commission: "Would you like to write a violin concerto for me? Something quite original, rich in cantilenas, and suited for good violinists?"

Listen

Antonín Dvořák allows the orchestra only four measures plus an upbeat before the solo part enters with self-assured declamation, and an unconventional movement unfolds: The dramaturgy does not follow classical thematic dualism, but is literally carried along from thought to thought.

A gifted melodist

Of course, Dvořák was happy to agree to compose the concerto. He knew that on the path toward international recognition – a path he had embarked upon thanks to Brahms's mediation and Simrock's business acumen – a virtuoso solo concerto would be an important milestone. Furthermore, the expected success was bolstered by the fact that Joseph Joachim – one of Europe's leading violinists – had taken an interest in the new work and held out the prospect of a prompt premiere. In late summer 1879, Dvořák sent him the first draft of the Violin Concerto in A minor, Op. 53. Joachim gratefully accepted the score and the concerto's dedication. However, the planned premiere never materialized. Too many requests for changes from the capricious master violinist delayed the event until the concert finally premiered on October 14, 1883 – without Joseph Joachim. František Ondříček took over the solo part and, together with his friend Dvořák, received great applause for the work, which fully met Simrock's demands. However, he hardly needed to make a special request for the desired cantilenas from the gifted melodist Dvořák, who was only too happy to draw on the musical idiom of his homeland. It goes without saying that his Violin Concerto, too, is brimming with melodic gems. Especially in the second movement – the tranquil heart of the entire work – Dvořák fully displays his talent, while the outer movements thrive on exuberant dance rhythms – such as the final movement, which unleashes a feather-light furiant in ethereal heights.

Back Home

Sergei Prokofiev was homesick. It was so intense that in 1936 he decided to take a step that caused many of his colleagues – who had found new homes in France or the United States– to shake their heads in disbelief: After 20 years abroad, he felt drawn back to Russia. He made Moscow – which had by then become the center of power in the Soviet Union – the permanent center of his life: "I have to go back. I have to reacclimate myself to the atmosphere of my homeland," he had explained. "I have to talk to the people who are my own flesh and blood, so that they can give me back what I'm missing here: their songs, my songs."

Sergej Prokofjew 1938 © Fine Art Images Süddeutsche Zeitung Photo

What a move! Back to the country he had left in 1918, primarily to "get a breath of fresh air" artistically. Back to the place where, since the late 1920s, Stalin had been systematically expanding his regime of terror. Perhaps a fair amount of naivety was at play; perhaps Prokofiev had imagined that this decision would not change anything about his life or his artistic practice. But reality quickly caught up with him. From the very beginning, the government made things incredibly difficult for him as well. Yet his music was certainly open to adapting to the socialist demand for simplicity and clarity.

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In Times of Terror

Nevertheless, the production of the ballet *Romeo and Juliet* was fraught with dire omens. Between 1936 and 1938, during Stalin's most brutal campaign of terror against his own people, the art world also came under the regime's scrutiny. Anyone whom the government suspected of not toeing the party line had to fear for their very survival. Contracts were, in any case, no

Sergei Prokofiev, Romeo and Juliet, photo from the world premiere © ArchivNDB

longer valid. Prokofiev learned this firsthand; as early as 1934, he had held initial discussions about his new ballet at the Kirov Theater in Leningrad. He had set to work on the composition with great enthusiasm. It was to be his first major work since returning to his homeland. But vague adversities prevented the premiere in Leningrad. Another attempt at the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow failed due to the absurd demand that the piece be given a happy ending.

Did you know?

Sergei Prokofiev was able to sketch characters, moods, and entire scenes so aptly with just a few musical elements that you can literally picture them in your mind's eye as you listen. Everyone knows *Peter and the Wolf*. But what not everyone knows is that his gift also made him a pioneer of film music by the 1940s at the latest.

Direct and Unvarnished

After all the leading Soviet theaters had withdrawn from the contracts, the ballet premiered in 1938 in Brno, which is now in the Czech Republic. Prokofiev found quicker success on the concert stage with his version of the immortal love story and extracted three orchestral suites by 1946. They require no staging, for Prokofiev knew how to illustrate with music and bring characters to life. He drew from the collective musical memory of Eastern Europe, which has more than enough to offer, especially in terms of dance rhythms. These rhythms serve as the inspiration and driving force behind Prokofiev's music as well. In *Romeo and Juliet*, he used rhythm to emphasize key moments. He was equally generous with melodic richness and vivid orchestral colors, pushing the harmonies to their limits. Unvarnished, direct, and vivid, Prokofiev's ballet recounts the plot of Shakespeare's tragedy and, despite an audible effort to ensure clarity, does not deny musical progress.

Ilona Schneider

© Julia Wesely

Vienna Philharmonic

Hardly any other orchestra is more closely and enduringly associated with the history and tradition of European classical music than the Vienna Philharmonic. Over the course of its more than 180-year history, the orchestra has shaped the global musical landscape. To this day, performers and conductors alike highlight the "Viennese sound" as a hallmark of the orchestra's exceptional quality. The cornerstone of the "Philharmonic Idea" – which remains valid to this day – is its democratic structure, which places all artistic and organizational decisions in the hands of the orchestra members: They take full responsibility for organizing concerts, selecting the works to be performed, and choosing the conductors and soloists. The orchestra's international concert activities began in the early 20th century. This took the orchestra across all continents, with regular guest performances in Germany, Japan, the United States, and China. In 2018, the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra Academy was founded. The Vienna Philharmonic has made it its mission to bring music's ever-relevant humanitarian message and its social responsibility into everyday life and into the public consciousness.

Since 2008, the Vienna Philharmonic has been supported by ROLEX as its exclusive sponsor.

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Tugan Sokhiev

Internationally renowned conductor Tugan Sokhiev enjoys close relationships with the world's most prestigious orchestras such as the Vienna, Berlin and Munich Philharmonic orchestras, the Bavarian Radio Symphony, Gewandhausorchester and the Sächsische Staatskapelle Dresden. In recent seasons, Mo. Sokhiev has conducted the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra on several tours in Europe and Asia, the orchestra's celebrated *Sommernachtskonzert* as well as the Gala concert on the occasion of the 200th birthday of Johann Strauss II. This privileged relationship continues with a tour of major Asian cities in October 2026 and the world-famous New Year's Concert at the Vienna Musikverein. Mo. Sokhiev has a close collaboration with the musicians of the Philharmonic Brass, the elite brass ensemble made up of members of the Berlin and Vienna Philharmonic Orchestras and Friends and is honoured to be a Patron of the Philharmonic Brass Education Program. Among other initiatives, he collaborates with young musicians at the Vienna Philharmonic's Angelika Prokopp Summer Academy and the Mahler Chamber Orchestra Academy. Outside Europe, Tugan Sokhiev is invited to conduct the finest American orchestras and spends several weeks each season with the NHK Symphony Orchestra in Japan. In June 2026, Tugan Sokhiev was named Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor of the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande.

© Chris Lee

Hilary Hahn

Three-time Grammy Award-winning violinist Hilary Hahn combines expressive musicality and technical mastery with a diverse repertoire shaped by artistic curiosity. Her commitment to sharing her experiences with a global community has made her a favorite with audiences in the classical music scene. In recent seasons, she has served as Principal Artist-in-Residence of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Artist-in-Residence of the New York Philharmonic, Vienna Konzerthaus and Radio France, and Curating Artist for the "Hilary Hahn & Friends" festival at the Dortmund Konzerthaus. Hilary Hahn has commissioned works from over 40 contemporary composers and championed their performance, including works by Steven Banks, Jennifer Higdon, Jessie Montgomery, and Carlos Simon. Since the beginning of her career, Hilary Hahn has cultivated a natural and approachable rapport with her audience. Her commitment to her audience is evident, among other things, in her longstanding dedication to music education. Her social media initiative *#100daysofpractice* has turned practicing into a communal expression of artistic development. Since Hahn launched the hashtag in 2017, more than one million posts have been shared by musicians and students worldwide.

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