

E-CONCERT PROGRAMME

Malaysian
Philharmonic
Orchestra



A Heart Unveiled:
MUSIC OF TCHAIKOVSKY

2026 SEASON

PERFORMANCES AT
DEWAN FILHARMONIK PETRONAS



MALAYSIAN PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

The Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra (MPO) gave its inaugural performance at Dewan Filharmonik PETRONAS (DFP) on 17 August 1998 and has since provided the ultimate concert experience through music that entertains, educates and inspires.

Today, the MPO is made up of talented musicians from Malaysia and other nations, a beautiful example of harmony among different cultures and nationalities.

With immaculate versatility that transcends genres, the MPO continues to present classical masterpieces, film music, pop, jazz, traditional and contemporary works including anime music.

The MPO's artistry and vitality have been lauded by acclaimed international luminaries such as Lorin Maazel, Sir Neville Marriner, Joshua Bell, Harry Connick Jr., José Carreras, Andrea Bocelli, Kiri Te Kanawa, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Chris Botti and Branford Marsalis. Renowned local artists who

have performed with the MPO include S.M. Salim, Sheila Majid, M Nasir, Siti Nurhaliza, Jamal Abdillah, Ella, Dayang Nurfaizah and Aishah.

Affirming its stature in the Asian region, the MPO has performed in Singapore, Japan, Korea, Australia, China, Taiwan and Vietnam besides national tours around Malaysia. The MPO has also released 21 CDs.

Through its talent development programme, the MPO is dedicated in nurturing an appreciation among the young generation through its knowledge and skills transfer to the Malaysian Philharmonic Youth Orchestra. This initiative is supported by contributions from the public.

Beyond its concert schedule, the MPO expands its services to commercial purposes such as musician hire, tours, education and outreach programme and beneficial partnerships.

The MPO remains steadfast in its mission to share the depth and power of great music for all walks of life. Its main benefactor is PETRONAS and its patron is YABhg. Tun Dr. Siti Hasmah Haji Mohd Ali.

A Heart Unveiled: The Music of Tchaikovsky

Sat 22 Aug 2026, 8:00PM

02 Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra
04 Junichi Hirokami, conductor
05 Elias David Moncado, violin

PROGRAMME

TCHAIKOVSKY

Violin Concerto in D major *38 mins*

20-mins intermission

TCHAIKOVSKY

Symphony No. 6 in B minor *45 mins*

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A portrait of Junichi Hirokami, a middle-aged man with a shaved head, smiling. He is wearing a dark suit jacket over a white turtleneck sweater. A red pocket square is visible in his jacket. The background is a warm, textured orange-brown.

conductor

Junichi Hirokami

Born in Tokyo, Junichi Hirokami studied piano, composition and music under Atsutada Otaka before studying conducting at and graduating from Tokyo College of Music. At 26, he became the winner at the first Kondrashin International Conducting Competition in Amsterdam in 1984.

Since 1990, Hirokami has conducted the major orchestras around the world including the Orchestre National de France, Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Orchestre Symphonique de Montreal, London Symphony Orchestra, Wiener Symphoniker, Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, L'Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano Giuseppe Verdi, Saint Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra, Tchaikovsky Symphony Orchestra of Moscow, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and Gewandhausorchester Leipzig.

Apart from guest appearances, he has served as Chief Conductor of Sweden's Norrköping Symphony Orchestra and the Limburg Symphony Orchestra, Principal Guest Conductor of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Principal Conductor of Japan Philharmonic Orchestra and Music Director of the Columbus Symphony Orchestra.

In Japan, he has conducted all the major orchestras including the NHK Symphony Orchestra and Saito Kinen Orchestra. He received great acclaim for his appearance with the Mito Chamber Orchestra. He is prolific in opera, having led celebrated performances of *Un ballo in maschera* and *Rigoletto* at the Sydney Opera House. Other triumphs include *La Traviata* at the Fujiwara Opera, *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Ainadamar* at the Nissay Theatre, and *La Traviata* and *Aida* at the New National Theatre Tokyo.

From 2008 to 2022, he created a golden era as Chief Conductor as well as Music and Artistic Advisor of the Kyoto Symphony Orchestra. In 2015, he received an award at the Suntory Music Award with the orchestra.

Currently, he serves as Artistic Leader of the Orchestra Ensemble Kanazawa, Friend of JPO / Artistic Advisor of the Japan Philharmonic Orchestra, and Friendship Conductor of the Sapporo Symphony Orchestra. The City of Kyoto Symphony Orchestra bestowed on him a special title after his name in recognition of his years of service to the orchestra. He also serves as professor of conducting at Tokyo College of Music. In 2025, he became Music Director of the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra.

A portrait of violinist Elias David Moncado, a young man with dark hair, wearing a dark turtleneck, holding a violin. The background is a warm, golden-brown gradient.

violin

Elias David Moncado

Hailed as “*one of the greatest talents of his generation*”, Elias David Moncado is a 25-year-old German-Spanish-Malaysian violinist, a scholarship holder of the Anne-Sophie-Mutter and the Gautier Capuçon Foundation.

He started a concert career while studying at the University of the Arts Berlin, Mozarteum Salzburg and Kronberg Academy. He catapulted to prominence as the youngest winner of the 1st Grand Prix and accolades at the International Karol Lipinski Competition 2019 in Poland, International Valsesia Musica and International Vladimir Spivakov Competition 2021. His playing was described as “*a sound that electrifies, that moves.*” (Badische Zeitung).

He has performed at music festivals in Lucerne, Gstaad, Schleswig-Holstein and Rheingau. He was a soloist with orchestras such as the Bavarian and Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestras, Sofia Philharmonic, Sendai Philharmonic Orchestra Japan and Budapest Symphony Orchestra. He has collaborated with conductors including Sascha Goetzel, Vladimir Spivakov, Ryusuke Numajiri and Thomas Guggeis.

Concert highlights include performances at Alte Oper (Frankfurt), Isarphilharmonie (Munich), Carnegie Hall (New York), Théâtre des Champs-Élysées (Paris), in Seoul and at Smetana Hall Prague (with the Korean Chamber Orchestra), Tonhalle Zurich, Philharmonie Berlin, Wiener Konzerthaus (Vienna), Liederhalle Stuttgart, Kurhaus Wiesbaden, Hitachi Systems Hall Sendai and Meguro Persimmon Hall (Tokyo).

His critically acclaimed CDs were released by Avi-Music (2022) and Warner Classics/Erato (2026).

He performs on a prestigious collection of violins including a GB Rogeri, Brescia (around 1700), from the Deutsche Stiftung Musikleben Hamburg, a GB Guadagnini, Turin (around 1771) from a private patron as well as the 1724 ‘Ludwig, Ex-Szigeti’ Stradivarius provided by the L-Bank Baden-Württemberg which he will perform on at his debut with the MPO.



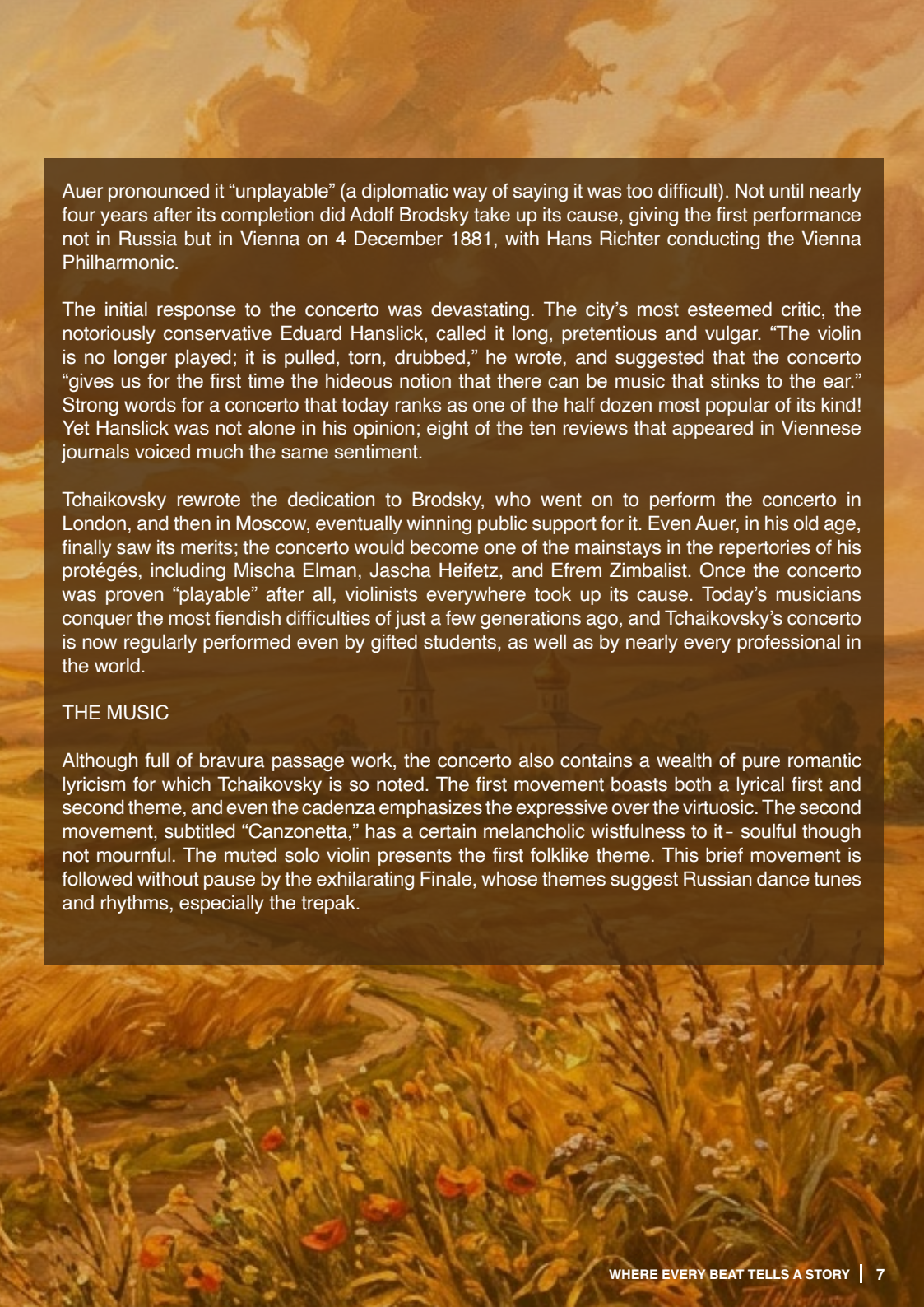
Tchaikovsky's music largely reflected his personal life: by turns hyperemotional and passionate, reflective and introspective, often darkly turbulent, and overlaid with a touch of neuroticism. Tonight's programme consists of two beloved masterpieces by this Russian composer, each an icon of the genre. The Violin Concerto in D major is one of the half dozen most famous such concertos in the repertory, and for good reason – sparkling virtuosity, memorable melodies, and eminently violinistic writing infuse the work. The Sixth Symphony is in the seldom-used key of B minor, which just happens to be the relative minor of D major (they share the same key signature of two sharps), making the two works a perfect pair. It stands in stark contrast to the concerto – dark colours, trenchant instrumental dialogues, emotions pushed to their limits, and an ending that tears at the heartstrings. The catchy subtitle (*Pathétique* – Tchaikovsky used the French term) derives from the Greek *patheticos*, referring to something passionate, emotional and having overtones of suffering.

PIOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840 - 1893) **Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 35 (1878)**

- I. Allegro moderato
- II. Canzonetta: Andante
- III. Finale: Vivacissimo

THE BACKGROUND

Tchaikovsky wrote his Violin Concerto during March and April 1878 in Switzerland where, inspired by the natural beauty around him and by the friendship of a young violinist friend and composition student, Yosif Yosifovich Kotek, who was the one responsible for introducing Tchaikovsky to the wealthy patroness Nadejda von Meck. Kotek expressed dissatisfaction with the second movement, and Tchaikovsky replaced it with an entirely different one. Madame von Meck was not entirely pleased with the concerto either. But the biggest blow was probably the rejection from the celebrated virtuoso and teacher Leopold Auer, to whom the work was originally dedicated.

The background of the page is a warm, golden-hued painting. The top half shows a sky with soft, billowing clouds in shades of orange and yellow. Below the sky, a river or path winds through a landscape. The foreground is filled with tall, golden-brown grasses and clusters of small, bright orange flowers. The overall style is impressionistic and romantic, with visible brushstrokes and a rich, textured appearance.

Auer pronounced it “unplayable” (a diplomatic way of saying it was too difficult). Not until nearly four years after its completion did Adolf Brodsky take up its cause, giving the first performance not in Russia but in Vienna on 4 December 1881, with Hans Richter conducting the Vienna Philharmonic.

The initial response to the concerto was devastating. The city’s most esteemed critic, the notoriously conservative Eduard Hanslick, called it long, pretentious and vulgar. “The violin is no longer played; it is pulled, torn, drubbed,” he wrote, and suggested that the concerto “gives us for the first time the hideous notion that there can be music that stinks to the ear.” Strong words for a concerto that today ranks as one of the half dozen most popular of its kind! Yet Hanslick was not alone in his opinion; eight of the ten reviews that appeared in Viennese journals voiced much the same sentiment.

Tchaikovsky rewrote the dedication to Brodsky, who went on to perform the concerto in London, and then in Moscow, eventually winning public support for it. Even Auer, in his old age, finally saw its merits; the concerto would become one of the mainstays in the repertoires of his protégés, including Mischa Elman, Jascha Heifetz, and Efrem Zimbalist. Once the concerto was proven “playable” after all, violinists everywhere took up its cause. Today’s musicians conquer the most fiendish difficulties of just a few generations ago, and Tchaikovsky’s concerto is now regularly performed even by gifted students, as well as by nearly every professional in the world.

THE MUSIC

Although full of bravura passage work, the concerto also contains a wealth of pure romantic lyricism for which Tchaikovsky is so noted. The first movement boasts both a lyrical first and second theme, and even the cadenza emphasizes the expressive over the virtuosic. The second movement, subtitled “Canzonetta,” has a certain melancholic wistfulness to it – soulful though not mournful. The muted solo violin presents the first folklike theme. This brief movement is followed without pause by the exhilarating Finale, whose themes suggest Russian dance tunes and rhythms, especially the trepak.

Symphony No. 6 in B minor, Op. 74 (1893)

- I. Adagio - Allegro non troppo
- II. Allegro con grazia
- III. Allegro molto vivace
- IV. Adagio lamentoso

THE BACKGROUND

Tchaikovsky began working on his last symphony in February 1893, and conducted the first performance on 28 October in St. Petersburg. It was only mildly successful, due to a puzzling *Adagio* finale that ended softly, an indifferent orchestra, and the composer's consequent lack of enthusiastic leadership. Nevertheless, he felt that it was "the best and especially the most sincere of my works. I love it as I have never loved any of my other musical creations." At the second performance, three weeks later, conducted by Eduard Napravnik, the symphony left a powerful impression. But the composer was dead. His *Symphonie pathétique* had become his swan song.

Death seems to lurk throughout Tchaikovsky's final symphony. The words "death" and "dying" occur in a letter the composer wrote explaining the plan of the symphony. Some listeners hear an expression of a hypersensitive artist given to alternating moods of exaltation and dejection, and try to follow each emotional state in the music as a mirror of the composer's soul. Predominantly dark orchestral colours, the frequent use of sinking themes and downward scales, the minor tonality, and outbursts of defiance and poignant dissonances all contribute to Tchaikovsky's expressive purpose. Other listeners take their cue from critic Philip Hale, who wrote, "Here is a work that, without a hint or a suggestion of a program, sums up in the most imaginative language the life of man, with his illusions, desires, loves, struggles, victories, unavoidable end."

Musicologist and composer Jonathan Kramer offers this balanced view: "Tchaikovsky's language is one of immediacy, not subtlety, and nowhere is his emotionalism more personal than in the *Pathétique*. His sentimentalism was symptomatic of his era but today the excesses of late romantic art can be appreciated in their historical context. We have known, in the wars of the 20th century, a deeper and far more devastating hysteria than is depicted in the Sixth Symphony. The unbridled outpouring of this music, especially in its last movement, is tolerable today because it does not seem to portray the deepest possible human despair. Although the composer may have intended high tragedy, the music itself does not seem to attempt such lofty heights. It is over-effusive, unstable, impulsive, yet it is immediate and spontaneous- it is, in a word, human."



THE MUSIC

The introductory bassoon solo, which crawls slowly through the murky depths of the orchestra, becomes the melodic material for the *Allegro* section's principal theme. The second theme, presented by the violins, is probably the most memorable of the entire work – haunting in its beauty, poignancy and sad lyricism.

The second movement is the famous “broken-backed waltz,” limping yet graceful, in 5/4 metre. The central Trio section, also in 5/4, is noteworthy for the steady, pulsing notes in the bassoons, double basses and timpani.

The third movement combines elements of a light scherzo with a heavy march. So festive and exuberant does the march become that one is tempted to stand and cheer at the end, making all the more effective the anguished cry that opens the finale.

The finale's infinitely warm and tender second theme in D major works itself into a brilliant climax and crashes in a tumultuous descent of scales in the strings. The first theme returns in continuously rising peaks of intensity, agitation and dramatic conflict. Finally the energy is spent, the sense of struggle subsides, and a solemn trombone chorale leads into the return of the movement's second theme, no longer in D major but in B minor – dark, dolorous, weighted down in inexpressible grief and resignation. The underlying heart throb of double basses eventually ceases, and the symphony dies away into blackness ... nothingness.

ABOUT THE WRITER

Formerly a horn player in the Montreal Symphony, Robert Markow has been writing programme notes for more than forty years for musical organizations in Canada, the USA, Japan, Taiwan, Malaysia and Singapore. He taught at Montreal's McGill University for many years, and as a Wagner specialist, has lectured at the Bayreuth Festival and the Wagner Society of New York. He writes regularly for the journals *Fanfare*, *Der neue Merker* (Vienna), *The Strad*, *Strings*, *Opera* (UK), and the website *classicalvoiceamerica.org*. Extra-musical interests include travel, film, literature and decadent desserts.

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Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra
Junichi Hirokami, conductor
Santiago Cañón-Valencia, cello

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Cello Concerto in B minor
Henry V: Touch her soft lips and
part

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**2
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PETRONAS TWIN TOWERS

Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra
Ahmad Muriz Che Rose, conductor
The Solianos

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MAURICE STEGER'S

Nature Concerti

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PETRONAS TWIN TOWERS

Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra
Maurice Steger, conductor & recorder

Programme to include:

TELEMANN Sinfonia TWV 50:1 in G major "Cricket
Symphony"
TELEMANN Violin Concerto, TWV 51:A4 "The Frogs"
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Vivaldi's Ring of Mystery

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From Broadway to Disney: *Lea Salonga* WITH THE MPO

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PERFORMANCE AT
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Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra
Gerard Salonga, conductor
Lea Salonga, vocals

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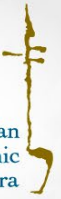
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THREE

BY

Three

3
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PERFORMANCE AT
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PETRONAS TWIN TOWERS

Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra
Michał Nesterowicz, conductor
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Tony Yike Yang, piano

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