



Sunday, March 22, 2020, 3pm  
Zellerbach Hall

**Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra**  
**Lahav Shani, *chief conductor***

PROGRAM

Ludwig van BEETHOVEN (1770–1827) Piano Concerto No. 4 in G major, Op. 58  
Allegro moderato  
Andante con moto  
Rondo. Vivace  
  
Lahav Shani, *piano*

INTERMISSION

Béla BARTÓK (1881–1945) Concerto for Orchestra, Sz. 116  
Introduzione. Andante non troppo –  
Allegro vivace  
Giuoco delle coppie. Allegretto scherzando  
Elegia. Andante non troppo  
Intermezzo interrotto. Allegretto  
Finale. Pesante – Presto

*The US tour of the Rotterdam Philharmonic is supported by  
the City of Rotterdam, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Port of Rotterdam,  
Rotterdam Partners, and Hizkia Van Karingen.*

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Cal Performances' 2019–20 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.*

**Ludwig van Beethoven**  
**Piano Concerto No. 4 in G major, Op. 58**  
 (1805–06)

It was after he realized the inevitability of his deafness that Beethoven wrote his poignant Heiligenstadt Testament (1802): “As autumn leaves fall and wither, so have my hopes been blighted. Even the lofty courage that so often animated me in the lovely days of summer is gone forever. O Providence, grant me but one day of pure joy!” Did Providence indeed grant him that? It is a moot point. As far as happiness was concerned Beethoven was left to his own devices, as his tragic life story demonstrates. The only thing he could use in an attempt to ward off fate was his music. And that—especially in the first few years after he became aware of his fate—contains sources of great joy. It resonates of an optimism that was both salutary and powerful. In the Fourth Piano Concerto, for example, we are aware of a sort of latent energy, music with the sound of sunbeams, the deep light of September.

The beginning is revolutionary. Calmly and serenely, all alone, the piano sets out the theme. That was very unusual, as if Beethoven simply wants to present an initial “piano sketch” before showing later on in the orchestra how this theme could grow, shrink, and grow again, gradually gaining significance. What’s more, it allows him to compose an extended orchestral “introduction” without creating the impression that he has forgotten the soloist (in the enormous opening *tutti* of the Third Piano Concerto, the soloist has to wait a very long time for his entry). The Andante unapologetically pits soloist against orchestra. The strings are rebellious, but the pianist exhorts them gently to calm down—successfully: the strident orchestral phrases, becoming ever shorter, merge with the conciliatory pleas of the piano (Liszt compared this dialogue to Orpheus taming the Furies). Then comes the Rondo, bursting with *joie de vivre*, its simple ingredients including repeated notes, broken triplets, and irregular splashes of rhythm. But what an effect!

The premiere on December 22, 1808 in the Theater an der Wien was an unforgettable experience. It was a truly mammoth concert, containing also the first performances of the Fifth and Sixth Symphonies, the Choral Fantasia, the

aria “Ah! Perfido,” and two parts of the Mass in C major. Such an array of beauty, too much actually. In an unheated hall—and this was December!—the audience had to digest four hours of new music. The playing was not of the best quality: second-class musicians, much too little rehearsal time, and Beethoven himself, almost completely deaf, was—to put it mildly—not in great shape. The composer J. F. Reichardt was not the only one who wished “that they had dared to leave the hall earlier.”

**Béla Bartók**  
**Concerto for Orchestra, Sz. 116 (1943/1945)**

Béla Bartók’s Concerto for Orchestra was also written in times of adversity. Bartók had fled from the Nazi occupation in his native Hungary to the United States, but he found it difficult to pick up the pieces again. Apart from some revisions of previous compositions, nothing flowed from his pen. In 1943, to help overcome this impasse, the conductor Serge Koussevitzky commissioned him to write an orchestral work. Bartók was at that time seriously ill—within a year he would be diagnosed with leukemia—but the commission gave him renewed energy. He wrote the piece for Koussevitzky in less than two months—between August 15 and October 8 to be precise. The five-part work could well have been called a symphony, but instead Bartók chose the title Concerto for Orchestra, due to the soloistic and virtuosic ways in which the instrument groupings in the orchestra are treated.

The first movement contains “night music,” a style of writing typical to Bartók: lonely melodies and sounds of nature are set against a dissonant backdrop. The second movement is known either as “Giucoco delle coppie” or “Presentando le coppie” (respectively “Game of the Couples” and “Presentation of the Couples”), which here means that five pairs of the same instrument successively start a duet, each pair playing at a fixed interval from each other, while a drum indicates the rhythm. In the third movement, the “night music” and themes from the first movement return. It’s not hard to see why the fourth movement is called an “interrupted intermezzo”: a flowing melody is disrupted by a parody on the march theme from Shostakovich’s Seventh





Symphony, *Leningrad*, which had received its premiere a year earlier. The rousing finale is packed with folk melodies.

“The general mood of the composition,” Bartók explained, “can be interpreted—with the exception of the jokey second movement—as a gradual transition from the seriousness of the first movement and the lamentation of the third, to the optimism of the finale.” Where Bartók drew that optimism from in such dark times remains one of this unsurpassed masterpiece’s greatest mysteries.

### **Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra**

**Lahav Shani**, *chief conductor*

**Valery Gergiev and Yannick Nézet-Séguin**,  
*honorary conductors*

The Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra distinguishes itself with its intensely energetic performances, its acclaimed recordings, and its innovative audience approach. Founded in 1918, it has claimed its own position among Europe’s finest orchestras.

### **Principal Conductors**

After the first pioneering years, the Rotterdam Philharmonic developed into one of the foremost orchestras of the Netherlands under Eduard Flipse, principal conductor beginning in 1930. In the 1970s, under Jean Fournet and Edo de Waart, the orchestra gained international recognition. Valery Gergiev’s appointment heralded a new period of accomplishment, which continued with Yannick Nézet-Séguin and with Lahav Shani, principal conductor since 2018.

### **Concerts**

The main home of the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra is De Doelen Concert Hall, but the orchestra can frequently be heard in other locations—from local venues to the most prestigious halls at home and abroad. Since 2010, the Rotterdam Philharmonic has been a resident orchestra of Paris’ Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. With concerts worldwide, educational performances, and community projects, the orchestra reaches an annual audience of 150,000

to 200,000, among which are a considerable number of young people. During the 2019–20 season, the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra will give concerts at leading venues and festivals in Germany, France, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, and the United States.

### **Recordings**

Since its groundbreaking Mahler albums with Eduard Flipse in the 1950s, the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra has made a large number of critically lauded recordings. At present, the orchestra has contracts with Deutsche Grammophon and BIS Records; in recent years it has also recorded for EMI and Virgin Classics. For the re-release of historical recordings, the orchestra formed its own label, Rotterdam Philharmonic Vintage Recordings. Live streams of concerts can be seen regularly via the online platform Medici.tv.

**Lahav Shani** is chief conductor of the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra. He assumed this position in September 2018, succeeding Yannick Nézet-Séguin and becoming the youngest chief conductor in the orchestra’s history. The 2019–20 season, his second in this position, features several major projects, including the current US tour.

In the 2020–21 season, Shani will succeed Zubin Mehta as music director of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra; he is currently the orchestra’s music director designate. In the 2017–18 season, Shani became the principal guest conductor of the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, following a number of appearances with that ensemble since his debut there in May 2015, including a major European tour in January 2016. He also works regularly with the Berlin Staatskapelle, both at the Berlin Staatsoper and also for symphonic concerts.

Recent and upcoming highlights as a guest conductor include engagements with the Vienna Philharmonic, Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, London Symphony Orchestra, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Dresden Staatskapelle, Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich, Budapest Festival Orchestra, Boston



Symphony, Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, Philharmonia Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris, Philadelphia Orchestra, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, Bamberger Symphoniker, and Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France.

Shani was born in Tel Aviv in 1989 and started his piano studies at age six with Hannah Shalgi, continuing with Prof. Arie Vardi at the Buchmann-Mehta School of Music in Tel Aviv. He went on to complete his studies in conducting with Prof. Christian Ehwald and piano with Prof. Fabio Bidini, both at the Academy of Music Hanns Eisler Berlin. While a student, he was mentored by Daniel Barenboim. In 2013, he won First Prize in the Gustav Mahler International Conducting Competition in Bamberg. June of 2016 saw Shani's debut with the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra as a conductor and as a piano soloist; his appointment as Chief Conductor beginning 2018 was announced two months later.

As a pianist Shani made his solo recital debut at the Boulez Saal in Berlin in July 2018. He has play-directed piano concertos with many orchestras, including the Philharmonia Orchestra, Staatskapelle Berlin, and Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France. Recent concerto engagements include appearances with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and the Beethoven Triple Concerto with Renaud and Gautier Capuçon with the Israel Philharmonic. Shani also has considerable experience performing chamber music, appearing recently at the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, the Cologne Philharmonie, and the Verbier Festival.

#### **Tour Direction**

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# Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra

## Chief Conductor

Lahav Shani

## Honorary Conductors

Valery Gergiev

Yannick Nézet-Séguin

## Assistant Conductors

Adam Hickox

Corinna Niemeyer

## First Violin

Igor Gruppman,

*concertmaster*

Marieke Blankestijn,

*concertmaster*

Quirine Scheffers

Hed Yaron Mayersohn

Saskia Otto

Arno Bons

Mireille van der Wart

Shelly Greenberg

Cor van der Linden

Rachel Browne

Maria Dingjan

Marie-Jose Schrijner

Noemi Bodden

Petra Visser

Sophia Torrenga

Hadewijch Hofland

Annerien Stuker

Alexandra van Beveren

Koen Stapert

## Second Violin

Charlotte Potgieter

Cecilia Ziano F

rank de Groot

Laurens van Vliet

Tomoko Hara

Elina Hirvilammi-

Staphorsius

Jun Yi Dou

Bob Bruyn

Letizia Sciarone

Eefje Habraken

Maija Reinikainen

Sumire Hara

Wim Ruitenbeek

Babette van den Berg

Melanie Broers

## Viola

Anne Huser

Roman Spitzer

Maartje van Rheeden

Galahad Samson

Kerstin Bonk

Lex Prummel

Janine Baller

Francis Saunders

Veronika Lánártová

Pierre-Marc Vernaudon

Rosalinde Kluck

Léon van den Berg

## Cello

*Vacancy*

*Vacancy*

Joanna Pachucka

Daniel Petrovitsch

Genevieve LeCouffé

Mario Rio

Ge van Leeuwen

Eelco Beinema

Carla Schrijner

Pepijn Meeuws

Yi-Ting Fang

## Double Bass

Matthew Midgley

Ying Lai Green

Jonathan Focquaert

Peter Luit

Harke Wiersma

Robert Franenbergh

Arjen Leendertz

Ricardo Neto

## Flute

Juliette Hurel

Joséphine Olech

Desiree Woudenberg

## Flute/Piccolo

Justine Caillé

## Oboe

Remco de Vries

Karel Schoofs

Hans Cartigny

Anja van der Maten

## Oboe/Cor Anglais

Ron Tijhuis

## Clarinet

Julien Hervé

Bruno Bonansea

Jan Jansen

## Clarinet/Bass Clarinet

Romke-Jan Wijmenga

## Bassoon

Pieter Nuytten

David Spranger

Marianne Prommel

## Bassoon/

## Contra-bassoon

Hans Wisse

## Horn

David Fernández

Alonso Cristina Neves

Wendy Leliveld

Richard Speetjens

Laurens Otto

Pierre Buizer

## Trumpet

Giuliano Sommerhalder

Alex Elia

Arto Hoornweg

Simon Wierenga

Jos Verspagen

## Trombone

Pierre Volders

Alexander Verbeek

Remko de Jager

## Bass Trombone/

## Contra-Bass Trombone

Ben van Dijk

## Tuba

Hendrik-Jan Renes

## Timpani/Percussion

Randy Max

Danny van de Wal

Ronald Ent

Adriaan Feyaerts

Martijn Boom

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