

The 1016th Orchard Hall Subscription Concert
Sun. May 11, 2025, 15:00 Bunkamura Orchard Hall

The 1017th Suntory Subscription Concert
Tue. May 13, 2025, 19:00 at Suntory Hall

The 170th Tokyo Opera City Subscription Concert
Mon. May 19, 2025, 19:00 at Tokyo Opera City Concert Hall

Mikhail Pletnev, conductor

Kanon Matsuda, piano*

Masanobu Yoda, concertmaster

Chopin (Arr. By Mikhail Pletnev):
Piano Concerto No. 1 in E minor, Op. 11 (ca. 42 min)

- I. Allegro maestoso
- II. Romance: Larghetto
- III. Rondo: Vivace

— intermission (ca. 15 min) —

Tchaikovsky:
Excerpts from ballet "The Sleeping Beauty"
(Pletnev special edition) (ca. 52 min)

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| 1. Introduction | 7. Pas d'action: Coda (Act II) |
| 2. March (Prologue) | 8. Entr'acte (Act II) |
| 3. Scène dansant (Prologue) | 9. Entr'acte symphonique et Scène (Act II) |
| 4. Finale (Prologue & Act I) | 10. Finale (Act II) |
| 5. Scène (Act I) | 11. Pas d'action: I. Adagio a la rose (Act I) |
| 6. Valse (Act II) | |

Presented by the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra
 Subsidized by the Agency for Cultural Affairs Government of Japan |
 Japan Arts Council, The Mitsubishi UFJ Trust Foundation for the Arts (May 13)
 In Association with **Bunkamura** (May 11)



- ♪ All seats are reserved. Late admittance will be refused during the live performance. If you enter or reenter just before the concert or between movements, we may escort you to a seat different from the one to which you were originally assigned.
- ♪ Exiting during the performance will be tolerated. If you do not feel well, please exit or enter as you need. However, please mind the other listeners so that they will be minimally disturbed.
- ♪ Please refrain from using your cellphone or other electronic devices during performance.
- ♪ Hold applause please. Please cherish the "afterglow" at the end of each piece for a moment before your applause.

Artists Profile



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Mikhail Pletnev, conductor

Special Guest Conductor of
the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra

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Mikhail Pletnev is an artist who cannot be classified in one word. Known as a genius and one of the greatest pianists of our time and also as conductor and composer. Born in Archangel, Russia in 1957. Awarded the 1st prize and Gold Medal at renowned Tchaikovsky Competition in 1978 when he was 21 years old.

In 1990, with funding from individuals and organisations in Russia and abroad, Pletnev founded the Russian National Orchestra (RNO), the first orchestra in Russian history to be independent of the state.

Pletnev is also often invited to conduct noted orchestras such as Staatskapelle Dresden, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, and others. Starting from July 2003, he has been invited to conduct the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra and was appointed as Special Guest Conductor from 2015. As a composer, he has been composing numerous works among which there is a cello sonata written for Steven Issarlis. His CDs have been released from Deutsche Grammophon and Pentatone Classics.

In 2022, he founded the Rachmaninov International Orchestra (RIO).



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Kanon Matsuda,
piano

Kanon Matsuda was born in the city of Takamatsu, Japan. She started her training at 4 years of age. Beginning in 2002, Kanon was a student of the Gnessin Secondary Special Music School (college), in the class of Professor Elena Ivanova.

In 2011, Kanon Matsuda won the Scriabin Scholarship "Path to Scriabin." In February of 2013 she was awarded the title "Best Student of 2012 Gnessin Special Music School." In June of 2014 Kanon graduated from the Gnessin Secondary Special Music School, receiving the "Red Diploma" awarded to students with outstanding academic achievements; and in August of 2014 she entered the Moscow State Conservatory on a scholarship from the Russian government. She continued her study with Prof. Eliso Virsaladze in the graduate school of the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory, and completed the course in June 2021.

Matsuda has performed with orchestras including Russian National Orchestra, National Philharmonic of Ukraine, Prague Symphony Orchestra, NHK Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of conductors Mikhail Pletnev, Pietari Inkinen, Mark Gorenstein, Andrea Battistoni, Tadaaki Otaka, Ken Takaseki, Michiyoshi Inoue, etc.

She released her first disc in Japan in 2014 and the second disc in 2017 on the label Deutsche Grammophon.

Program Notes

Text by Robert Markow

Chopin (Arr. By Mikhail Pletnev): Piano Concerto No. 1 in E minor, Op. 11

Between 1827 and 1831, Chopin wrote several works for piano and orchestra, including two piano concertos. The first of these was the one we now call No. 2 in F Minor, written prior to the E-Minor Concerto but published later. The E-Minor Concerto, now known as No. 1, followed. The E-Minor Concerto received a highly successful premiere in Warsaw on October 11, 1830, with the 21-year-old composer as soloist.

The three movements follow the standard classical concerto format. The first opens with an orchestral introduction that presents the two principal thematic ideas – the first vigorous and sturdy, the second gentle and flowing. Both are heard initially in the violins. The orchestral introduction is expansively laid out, but once the soloist enters, the orchestra plays a decidedly subordinate role for the remainder of the movement except for a few brief interludes to reaffirm the principal themes. In the slow movement, the soloist spins out a long, quasi-improvisatory melodic line of classical elegance and beauty. A somewhat agitated central episode disturbs the tranquil atmosphere. Chopin described this movement as being “of a romantic calm and rather melancholic character. It is intended to convey the impression which one receives when the eye rests on a beloved landscape that calls up in one’s soul beautiful memories, a kind of reverie in the moonlight on a beautiful spring night.” The Finale follows without pause. It is rhythmically related to the *krakowiak*, a popular Polish dance said to have originated near the city of Krakow.

Chopin is often belittled for his lack of imagination in orchestration, though most listeners are far more interested in the piano writing than in the orchestral contribution (he wrote nothing for orchestra alone). Mikhail Pletnev is the latest in a line of musicians (among them the composer Mily Balakirev) who have touched up the original score of the E-minor Concerto, though only listeners well familiar with the music will notice the differences – details where the orchestral is thinner here, heavier there, and matters relating to articulation, dynamics, and choice of instruments.

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FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN: Born in Zelazowa Wola, near Warsaw, March 1(?), 1810; died in Paris, October 17, 1849

Work composed: 1830 **World premiere:** October 11, 1830 in Warsaw, with the composer as soloist

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, strings, solo piano

Tchaikovsky: Excerpts from ballet "The Sleeping Beauty" (Pletnev special edition)

Charles Perrault's fairy tale of the Sleeping Beauty from his *Mother Goose* stories (1697) has captured the imagination of dozens of composers: operas by Humperdinck and Respighi, cantatas by Reinecke and Raff, ballets by Henze and Hérold, songs by Borodin and Debussy, a film score by Poulenc, and much more. But standing head and shoulders above all others is Tchaikovsky's ballet score, which captures all the beauty, magic, and enchantment of Perrault's tale to perfection. Tchaikovsky himself thought it to be one of his greatest creations. Since its first performance in St. Petersburg on January 15, 1890, *The Sleeping Beauty* has been continuously in the repertory, and it remains one of the half dozen most beloved of all full-length ballets.

"Tchaikovsky was," biographer John Warrack explains, "as no other composer of his generation, ideally gifted to make a child's fairy tale into a masterpiece of danced musical drama. His background and upbringing had given him a love of the French stories he associated with his own happy childhood and his beloved mother; in later years, he connected them with escape into this remembered bliss from the painful realities of his life, lonely and unhappy as he was."

The music for *The Sleeping Beauty* can properly be described as "symphonic" in that, unlike most other ballet scores of the nineteenth century, it has an inner, organic unity achieved through the use of leading motifs and formal but flexible design (as opposed to a succession of unrelated short numbers). To Warrack, "no score of his possesses a finer

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flow of brilliant, attractive, memorable ideas; but it does so because of the strength of the design.”

In 1888, the French-born director of the Imperial Ballet in St. Petersburg, Marius Petipa, decided to mount a full-length ballet production based on Perrault’s tale. He chose Tchaikovsky for the music and Director of Imperial Theaters Ivan Vsevolozhsky for the libretto, which the latter based on both Perrault and on a later version of the tale (*Dornröschen*) by the Brothers Grimm. Vsevolozhsky also designed the costumes. Petipa’s daughter Marie danced the role of the Lilac Fairy. Collaboration between the choreographer Petipa and the composer Tchaikovsky closely resembled how film composers work today, with the composer following written instructions from the director and/or visual cues from the film itself.

Years ago, Mikhail Pletnev created a piano reduction of a concert suite using eleven numbers drawn from the complete *Sleeping Beauty* score. More recently, he has also assembled his own orchestral suite of nine numbers, all different from the piano suite. All but the last number follow in chronological order:

The theme of good triumphing over evil, and life over death, is represented by the frequent recurrence in various guises of the motifs of the wicked fairy Carabosse and the good Lilac Fairy. Indeed, the score’s **Introduction** presents us with these two motifs right from the very start. There is no mistaking which is which! The curtain opens on the court of King Florestan XIV. A grandiose **March** accompanies the arrival of the guests for the christening of Princess Aurora. The Master of Ceremonies, Catalabutte shows each guest to his or her place. The King and Queen also enter. Next comes the Entrance of the Faires / **Scène dansant** with their pages and attendants. We skip to the Prologue’s **Finale**. Up until now, the six fairy godmothers have been bestowing their gifts upon the child. The happy proceedings are interrupted by the arrival of Carabosse in a chariot drawn by black rats. She has not been invited to the party, and the music – nasty, distempered, evil-sounding – tells us why. She is a miserable, bitter old crone, but she nevertheless does have a “gift” for the Princess – a curse. One day she will prick her finger on a spindle and die. Amidst much consternation Carabosse departs. The curse cannot be undone, but its power can, through the Lilac Fairy, be mitigated. Death is changed to a 100-year

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slumber, during which time will stop, and the spell will be broken by a kiss from a Prince.

The curtain rises on Act I (**Scène**) as the sixteenth-birthday celebrations for Princess Aurora are underway. Peasants and courtiers crowd into the palace garden. A group of girls dance a serenely beautiful **Waltz**, one of Tchaikovsky's most famous.

One hundred years later, in Act II, the Lilac Fairy appears and conjures up for the Prince a vision of Aurora. He is enchanted, and begins dancing with the image before him. A second vision (**Entr'acte**), the one in this suite, depicts Aurora dancing with the fairies in the forest. The Prince attempts to catch Aurora, whom he imagines dancing too, but the fairies prevent him from doing so. The Lilac Fairy then transports the Prince in her boat through the forest to the castle where the Sleeping Beauty lies (**Entr'acte symphonique et Scène / Entr'acte –Sleep**). The act concludes with a long symphonic interlude (**Finale**) that accompanies their arrival at the palace, the kiss that awakens Aurora, and the gradual reversion of the whole court to its condition of one hundred years ago.

To conclude this suite, we return to Act I for the famous **Adagio** in which Princess Aurora dances with four suitors in turn, each of whom offers her a rose (hence, the so-called “Rose Adagio”). The music is marked *Adagio maestoso* in the score, though it is usually played more like an *Andante*. No matter, really. The music is grandly symphonic and sumptuously scored, revealing Tchaikovsky in his most glorious orchestral vein.

PIOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY: Born in Votkinsk, May 7, 1840; died in St. Petersburg, November 6, 1893

Work composed: 1889 **World premiere:** January 15, 1890 in St. Petersburg, conducted by Riccardo Drigo

Instrumentation: piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 cornets, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (snare drum, bass drum, triangle, cymbals, tam-tam, glockenspiel), harp, strings

Formerly a horn player in the Montreal Symphony, **Robert Markow** now writes program notes for numerous orchestras and other musical organizations in North America and Asia. He taught at Montreal's McGill University for many years, has led music tours to several countries, and writes for numerous leading classical music journals.