

The 30th Ludwig van Beethoven Easter Festival will take place in Warsaw from 22 March to 3 April 2026.

This anniversary edition was devised by the late Elżbieta Penderecka, the Festival's creator and founder of the Ludwig van Beethoven Association, who guided it from its inception. The Festival brings together distinguished soloists and conductors as well as leading orchestras from Poland and abroad.

The central theme of the 30th edition – **Beethoven – The Time of the Classical and Romantic Breakthrough** – informs a programme spanning 11 symphonic concerts, three chamber concerts and a piano recital presented across 13 festival days. The programmes highlight those works by Beethoven that heralded the emergence of a new Romantic era while also embracing those grounded in classical ideals. This duality of classical grounding and Romantic expressivity is echoed in selected works by Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Brahms, Bruckner and Mahler selected for the Festival.

The Festival is slated to open with Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, its final movement crowned by Friedrich Schiller's immortal *Ode to Joy*, performed by the Orchestra and Choir of the Teatr Wielki – Polish National Opera under the baton of Maestra Marzena Diakun, one of the most highly regarded Polish conductors of the younger generation in Europe and worldwide. On Good Friday, the Festival will close with Krzysztof Penderecki's *St Luke Passion* the work that sealed the composer's place among the foremost voices of contemporary music, presented on the 60th anniversary of its premiere. The Orchestra and Choirs of the Kraków Philharmonic and the Polish Radio Choir – Łusławice will be conducted by the composer's long-time assistant Maciej Tworek. The soloists will be Natalia Rubiś (soprano), Mariusz Godlewski (baritone), Artur Janda (bass) and Krzysztof Gosztyła (narrator).

Symphonic concerts will feature leading Polish ensembles: the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Jacek Kaspszyk with the celebrated soprano Olga Bezsmertna in Mahler's Fourth Symphony, the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra in Katowice under Kirill Karabits with an exceptional trio of soloists in Beethoven's Triple Concerto – violinist Jonian Iljas Kadesha, cellist Vashti Hunter, and pianist Alexander Lonquich – and Sinfonia Varsovia led by Sergey Smbatyan with violin virtuoso Vadim Gluzman in Brahms's Concerto in D major.

In keeping with tradition, the Festival welcomes winners of major international music competitions. Jong Jie Yin, winner of the Grzegorz Fitelberg International Conductors' Competition, will lead Sinfonietta Cracovia, with pianist Maxim Lando, winner of the Cleveland International Piano Competition, as soloist. The American pianist Seth Schultheis, winner of the Telekom Beethoven Competition 2025, will perform with Sinfonia Iuventus under Alexander Humala. South Korean brothers Hyo Lee and Hyuk Lee, who distinguished themselves at the 19th International Chopin Competition, will appear as soloists with the Beethoven Academy Orchestra conducted by Jean-Luc Tingaud.

Among international ensembles, the Sinfonieorchester Liechtenstein will make its Festival debut under its chief conductor Dawid Runtz, appointed this season, with violinist Arabella Steinbacher as soloist. The Stuttgarter Kammerorchester will also make its first appearance, joining forces with the Radom Chamber Orchestra. Under the baton of Jurek Dybał, the two ensembles will present rarely performed works for double string orchestra, including music by Vaughan Williams and Bohuslav Martinů.

This year, the Unknown Operas series will continue with conductor Łukasz Borowicz, joined by the Poznań Philharmonic Orchestra and singers of the younger generation, reviving one of Gioachino Rossini's earliest stage works, *La cambiale di matrimonio* (*The Marriage Contract*).

The British virtuoso Barry Douglas, closely associated with the Festival since its inaugural edition, will return with a piano recital. One of the outstanding cellists of his generation, Danjulo Ishizaka, will appear with pianist Herbert Schuch in Beethoven's cello sonatas. Chamber concerts have been entrusted to the Sitkovetsky Trio and the Karol Szymanowski Quartet. Concerts, the central strand of the Easter Festival, are as always complemented by established accompanying events: the Exhibition of Musical Manuscripts at the Jagiellonian Library and the

International Scientific Symposium. This year's edition also features masterclasses led by Barry Douglas.

The 30th Easter Festival is heralded by a poster designed by Patrycja Piętka.