

# TŌRŌ

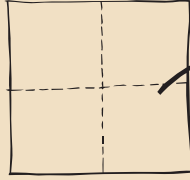
## A Japanese Nocturne

**PROGRAM**

AUDITORIUM PIETER DE SOMER LEUVEN  
12 & 13 MAY 2026

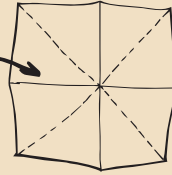


1 START WITH COLORED SIDE UP



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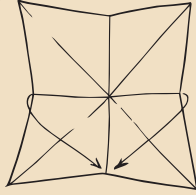
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TURN OVER

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COLLAPSE INTO "WATERBOMB BASE"

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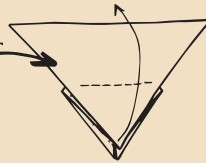
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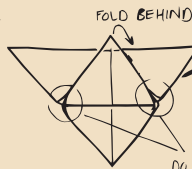
TURN OVER

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FOLD THE CORNER PAST THE EDGE

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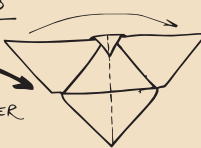


FOLD BEHIND

TURN OVER

DO NOT FLATTEN HERE

8



FOLD ALONG THE CENTER LINE

9



PRESS FLAT HERE AND LET GO

VOILA!



# Welcome

Dear audience,

A warm welcome to the Arenberg Orchestra's spring concerts. Tonight we present the wonderful concert series Toro, a Japanese nocturne inspired by the Obon festival. A festival during which ancestors are honoured with music, taiko drums and lanterns, amongst other things.

We open the festivities with One Summer Day, composed by Joe Hisaishi, whose music you will hear frequently this evening. From his extensive oeuvre, we will also be playing Merry Go Round from Howl's Moving Castle and My Neighbour Totoro.

We continue our journey through the Obon festival with several works of classical Japanese music. You will hear, among other pieces, Rhapsody for Orchestra by Yuzo Toyama and the Andantino and Allegro from Music for Symphony Orchestra by Yasushi Akutagawa.

You can also enjoy the Main Theme from Godzilla, composed by Akira Ifukube. From the same composer, we'll also be performing the Nocturne from his Japanese Rhapsody for you this evening; in this piece, some of our musicians will have the chance to perform as soloists.

Fans of Japanese games are also in for a treat. In a moment, you can enjoy To Zanarkand, composed by Nobuo Uematsu, from the game Final Fantasy X, and a suite of Super Mario music by Koji Kondo.

To make the Obon festival feel even more authentic, you will also see the concert group Yoronami in action this evening. Together with Yoronami, we are presenting a world premiere of an orchestral arrangement of Masataka Kobayashi's Poseidon for taiko ensemble. This work was specifically reworked by Raven Invicta into a version for symphony orchestra and taiko ensemble for the Arenberg Orchestra and Yoronami.

The only reason we are able to put on such fantastic concerts is thanks to the hard work of all our musicians. Every Thursday, they are eager and ready to give their very best at rehearsals. These concerts could not be realised without the mountains of work carried out by all the teams both on and off stage, and, of course, by our conductor Roel Willems!

After the concert, you can enjoy a drink at the reception accompanied by the cheerful sounds of our party band. Until then, I hope you enjoy the performance! Enjoy Toro, a Japanese nocturne.

Lotte Verdonck  
President 2025-2026



# The Arenberg orchestra

Long ago, the Vlaamse Technische Kring (association of civil engineering students) organised castle concerts, where professors and students played music for each other. It started with a few musicians playing for roughly thirty people in the Geel Huis next to the Arenberg castle. In 1985, the castle concerts were a bygone event, until they were revived by a castle ensemble, consisting of a few violinists, a violist, and a cellist. The hodgepodge of VTK members became a proper orchestra with concerts in the Arenberg castle, the Arenberg Orchestra. Although not associated with VTK anymore, we will never forget our roots!

Nowadays, the Arenberg Orchestra is a symphonic student orchestra consisting of more than 100 enthusiastic members. Our vision is to provide a chance to every musician to join us, despite what their musical level may be. As such, everyone can experience how it feels to play in a symphonic orchestra while creating friendships lasting for life.

Our musical repertoire consists of both famous as well as lesser known classical music and film music. We rehearse every Thursday in the STUK. Apart from our weekly rehearsals, we organise rehearsal weekends, orchestra trips, parties and a variety of other activities leading to the great atmosphere among our members.



# Roel Willems

Roel Willems (1973) began his professional career as a scientist, eventually earning the title of Doctor in Biochemistry. The results of his research on blood and bone marrow cancers have been published in scientific journals such as *The Journal of Biological Chemistry* and *Experimental Hematology*. During his scientific career, his passion for music only grew. Eventually, he made the decision to trade the laboratory for the concert hall. Since then, Roel has developed into a versatile musician, active as a tenor, flutist, and conductor.

After five years of training at the Conservatoire Royal de Bruxelles with Dina Grossberger, Roel became a professional tenor. As a choir singer, he is a permanent member of the Flemish Radio Choir, where he has the opportunity to work regularly with top ensembles such as the Concertgebouworkest under Mariss Jansons and the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra under Yannick Nézet-Séguin. Recently, for the album *Louise Bertin: Fausto*, the Flemish Radio Choir won the award for 'Best Recording: Opera' at the 2024 International Opera Awards.

As a flutist, trained by Toon Fret and Frank Hendrickx, he earned the title of 'Master of Music' in flute at the Royal Conservatory of Brussels with high distinction in 2007. Roel distinguished himself by reaching the finals of the Benelux Flute Competition for Soloists in 2006 and freelanced with, among others, the Antwerp Symphony Orchestra under Philippe Herreweghe and I Solisti del Vento.

In recent years, the flute has increasingly been replaced by the conductor's baton. In 2008, he became the regular conductor of the Junior Orchestra of Jeugd en Muziek Antwerp. After extensive reforms at Jeugd en Muziek, he co-founded Amaj Jong Symfonisch in 2016, an organisation aimed at coordinating symphonic youth activities across Flanders. Within Amaj, Roel remained the regular conductor of the Junior Orchestra for several years, introducing young musicians to music from all corners of the world: from night-of-the-proms concerts and Argentine tango to Japanese film music and Hans Zimmer. In 2023, he handed over the baton to conductor Sander Vets, but to this day, Roel remains actively involved in Amaj as the artistic director.

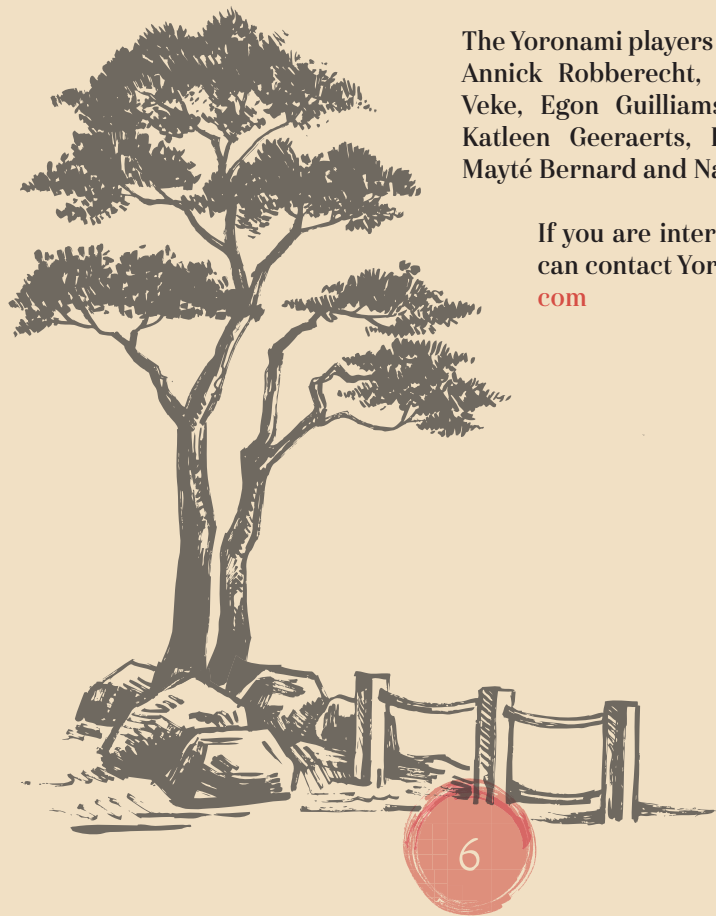
In 2013, Roel became the conductor of the Arenberg orchestra. Since then, he has enthusiastically contributed to the strong profile of the orchestra, where young musicians, regardless of their instrumental level, are given the opportunity to perform a diverse symphonic repertoire as a high-quality collective. This way, we strive to immerse the audience in a total spectacle full of surprises.



# Yoro nami and Yoro kai

Yoronami is Yorokai's concert group. Yorokai's mission is to promote the art of taiko drumming as widely as possible and to share the joy of playing taiko with as many people as possible. Taiko is a form of percussion that first emerged in Japan in the 1960s as a fusion of African-American jazz and Japanese-Chinese traditions. Taiko is played on large drums whose deep sound leaves few unmoved. The large drums require large sticks and sweeping movements, causing rhythm and movement to merge into an intriguing choreography.

"Sharing the magic of drumming," is Yorokai's slogan, and they do this by organising lessons and workouts, running team-building sessions and workshops, training taiko performers, and staging performances ranging from short demonstrations in village squares and full-length programmes in concert halls to powerful energisers at corporate events.



The Yoronami players on stage today are Annick Robberecht, Barbara Van Der Veke, Egon Guilliams, Karin Wauters, Katleen Geeraerts, Lieselore Cuynen, Mayté Bernard and Nancy Verbruggen.

If you are interested in taiko, you can contact Yorokai [info@yorokai.com](mailto:info@yorokai.com)

# Raven Invicta

Raven Invicta is the pseudonym of the Belgian musicologist and composer Katrien van den Hurk (Leuven, 1994). After studying violin and music theory at the music academy, she was active as a composer and electric violinist within the metal scene. Driven by her passion for music, she began studying musicology at KU Leuven. After obtaining her master's degree, her focus shifted to composing bombastic orchestral works, combining academic knowledge with her personal artistic vision. In her concept albums, orchestral traditions merge with electronic elements. Her work is strongly influenced by video game and film music and explores heroic themes and fantasy tropes through narrative compositions.



# PROGRAM

You can find the translated script of the acts on the next pages.

Spirited Away: ONE SUMMERS DAY

Joe Hisaishi

Rhapsody for Orchestra

Yuzo Toyama

Musica per Orchestra Sinfonica

Yasushi Akutagawa

My Neighbour Totoro

Joe Hisaishi

Hero

Masataka Kobayashi

Howl's Moving Castle: MERRY GO ROUND OF LIFE

Joe Hisaishi – arr. Alex Johansson

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Super Mario Suite

Roji Kondo arr. Loris Loichot

Poseidon

Masataka Kobayashi – arr. Raven Invicta

Godzilla: Main Theme

Akira Ifukube - arr. Mikael Carlsson

Japanese Rhapsody: Nocturne

Akira Ifukube

Final Fantasy X: To Zanarkand

Nobuo Uematsu – arr. Andrés Soto



# Translation of the acts

**SPOILER ALERT:** This chapter contains the translation of the acting in between the pieces.

It is a Japanese summer. The Obon festival, a yearly lantern festival to commemorate the spirits of deceased family and friends, has started. A young boy, Asahi, arrives at the house of his grandmother, Mayu, to experience the festival. They dress up, visit Taiko drum concerts, and meanwhile tell each other the good memories they have of the grandfather, who passed away that year.

## Music: ONE SUMMER'S DAY

Asahi: Grandma! Grandma! I'm here! I'm here!

Asahi: I'm so happy to see you again, grandma-san!

Mayu: Oh, me too, Asahi! Here, let's sit down, because you gave Grandma a good hug on the back. Would you like a cup of tea?

Asahi: Yes, please!

Mayu: So, Asahi, how's life in Tokyo?

Asahi: Really busy, Grandma. Mom and Dad are super busy at work!

Mayu: Well, they wanted to tinker with, what was it again... Ah, yes, computers! If only they had just listened to me, they'd have a much quieter life.

Asahi: But they do miss you, Grandma. Just like I do. Especially your hugs and your miso soup. No one makes them as good as you do. Not even Mom!

Mayu: Oh, thank you, Asahi, but I've had plenty of time to practice, haven't I!

Asahi: Grandpa always loved your miso soup too, didn't he? Oh, how I miss him.

Mayu: I miss Grandpa too, Asahi, but he's always close by. Especially now that we're celebrating the Obon festival. Have you seen the lanterns? They'll show all the spirits the way to their families.

Mayu: So you don't have to miss your grandpa at all, Asahi, because he'll be here any minute. You might not recognize him right away as a spirit, but you'll definitely feel him.

Asahi: Thank you, Grandma. Maybe we should play Grandpa's favorite music? Then he can hear his way home too!

Mayu: Excellent idea, Asahi. Oh, how he loved that symphonic music!

## Music: Rhapsody for Orchestra



Asahi: Ah, that was nice. Do you think Grandpa has found his way yet?  
Mayu: You can be sure of that, but now it's really time to go to sleep. Tomorrow will be a busy day at the festival.  
Asahi: Yeah, that's true, I'm really looking forward to it.

Mayu: Good night, Asahi.  
Asahi: Good night, Grandma!

### **Music: Music for Symphony Orchestra**

Asahi: Grandma?..  
Mayu: Good morning, Asahi! Are you looking forward to today?  
Asahi: Yeah, sure, but what do you have under your arm?  
Mayu: Those are our clothes for today, kimonos; everyone wears them during a festival like today. Mayu shows the clothes to Asahi  
Asahi: Oh wow, Grandma, they're beautifully decorated! Does everyone really wear something this beautiful today?  
Mayu: Of course! Everyone is celebrating together today. Don't you wear something festive to your birthday party, too?  
Asahi: laughs. Yeah, that's true—last year I wore this big bow that Dad bought for me! Do you think Grandpa would like this too?  
Mayu: I'm sure of it, son. Come on, let's get ready so we can head to the party!

### **Music: My Neighbour Totoro**

Asahi: Hey Grandma, what are all those crazy drums doing over there? I've never seen one that big before!  
Mayu: Well, Asahi, those are taiko drums.  
Asahi: And are they going to hit them with those big sticks?!  
Mayu: Of course! They throw their whole bodies into it using those sticks.  
Asahi: Are they going to dance with those drums?  
Mayu: Mayu laughs Hahaha, you could call it that! You'll see for yourself in a minute!



Asahi: And why are they performing here?

Mayu: Well, Asahi, the taiko is an instrument that's often used at festivals like today's! You'll see right away why they fit in at this festival!

Asahi: Do you think I can learn this too, Grandma?

Mayu: Of course, dear! You know you can learn anything as long as you try your best, don't you?

**Music: HERO**

Word of thanks from the president

**Music: Howl's Moving Castle**

**BREAK**



### Music: Mario

Asahi: Grandma... This is so much fun here. It's not as big as in Tokyo, but it's cozier. By the way, did you know that the music in that last performance was from my video game at home? And the cotton candy portions are bigger here too! (Yum-yum).

Mayu: Anything for my dearest grandson—you have to enjoy life.

Asahi: Grandma...

Mayu: Yes, Asahi.

Asahi: Can't we have festivals like this all the time? Maybe then Mom would let me eat cotton candy more often.

Mayu: Unfortunately not, Asahi, because then festivals wouldn't mean anything anymore. Just like the seasons, there's a time and place for everything. And you still have to listen to your mom.

Asahi: Okay, Grandma. I think I get it.

Mayu: Tell me, what was your favorite thing you saw today?

Asahi: Hmm... the Taiko drums! They were so cool!

Mayu: Then you're in luck, because I think another one is about to start! Come on, let's get ready quickly!

### Music: Poseidon

Asahi: Grandma, why do we actually celebrate this festival, and why now?

Mayu: Oh, Asahi... It comes from an old Buddhist story. Would you like me to tell it to you?

Asahi: Yes, Grandma!

Mayu: All right. A long time ago, there was a disciple of the Buddha named Morruken. When he gained special powers, he went in search of the spirit of his deceased mother. After a long search, he found her, but she had been reborn as a hungry ghost. She was so thin that her skin was stretched over her bones! Everything she tried to eat turned into fire, so she couldn't eat anything.

### Music: Godzilla



Asahi: Oh no, eating fire—that must have really hurt, right? Couldn't Morruken help her?

Mayu: No, or at least not on his own. Buddha told Morruken that he had to perform good deeds together with the monks to accumulate good karma. The good karma they accumulated together then freed his mother from her suffering on the 15th day of the 7th month.

Asahi: So even after death, we can take care of our parents?

Mayu: Indeed, Asahi. We must always be grateful to our ancestors. When they are reborn as spirits, it is up to us to care for them just as they did for us throughout their lives.

### **Music: Japanese Rhapsody**

Asahi: Grandma... Do you remember when Grandpa taught me how to play chess at this table? He always said I just needed a little more practice, and then I'd be able to beat him easily! Every summer I helped him weed the garden, and afterwards we'd sometimes play hide-and-seek in the yard... I miss him, Grandma. I wish he could have come to see the Taiko drums in person. And I still need to tell him about the new friends I've made at school this year!

Mayu: I know, son... I miss him too. It hasn't been the same here at home since he's passed away.

Mayu: Asahi, I think it's time to really wrap up the festival. The spirits deserve some rest after this busy festival, too, and to leave again. Just as the lanterns showed the spirits the way to us, the light now shows them the way back.

Asahi: But Grandma, I don't want Grandpa to leave already! He just got here!

Mayu: That's true, but Asahi, he never really leaves us. His spirit may be leaving, but all the good memories you have of him will never fade! Grandpa will always live on in our memories. Come on, we need to make sure Grandpa takes the right path back.

Asahi: That's true, Grandma. I'm glad I got to celebrate this festival with you.

### **Music: Zanarkand**



# Spirited Away: ONE SUMMERS DAY

Joe Hisaishi 藤澤守

*In Spirited Away, 10-year-old Chihiro moves to a new home with her parents. On the way, they stop in a deserted village, where they come across a buffet of food laid out for them. Chihiro's parents immediately start eating, despite their daughter's protests. Chihiro runs away and meets a boy named Haku in a bathhouse, who warns her to leave the village before sunset. However, when the girl returns to her parents, they have been turned into pigs and she finds herself surrounded by spirits from Japanese Shinto folklore, the kami (神). She flees back to the bathhouse and gets a job as a servant in the bathhouse for spirits, but in the process forgets her name and thus who she is. Through adventures and train journeys, Chihiro and Haku try together to remember their names, so they can escape from the spirit village.*

*The film is deeply rooted in a critique of consumerism, for example in the greed of Chihiro's parents, which ties in with "mottainai" (もったいない), a Japanese saying expressing regret at waste. On the other hand, Chihiro's quest for self-discovery can be interpreted as a search for historical and social values during the economic crisis in post-war Japan. Furthermore, Spirited Away is deeply rooted in Shinto-Buddhism and the belief in the existence of spirits in nature. As Miyazaki himself says:*

*"In my grandparents' time, it was believed that kami existed everywhere - in trees, rivers, insects, wells, anything. My generation does not believe this, but I like the idea that we should all treasure everything because spirits might exist there, and we should treasure everything because there is a kind of life to everything."*



# Rhapsody for orchestra

## Yuzo Toyama, 外山雄三

The Japanese conductor and composer Yuzo Toyama (1931-2023) became one of the great maestros of post-war Japan. His musical journey began at the Tokyo University of the Arts (Tokyo Geijutsu Daigaku - ), from which he graduated in 1952. Shortly afterwards, he joined the renowned NHK Symphony Orchestra, first as a percussionist and later as an assistant conductor. Before becoming the orchestra's principal conductor, he completed his training in Vienna under Erich Leinsdorf. In 1960, Toyama made an international impression during a world tour. For that occasion, he composed Rhapsody for Orchestra as an encore, a work in which he – much like his major influences Bartók, Shostakovich and Kodály – masterfully weaves traditional folk music into the classical symphonic language. Throughout his long career, he was showered with honours, including the Otaka Award (1963) and the Akeo Watanabe Music Fund Special Award (2017). In his own country, he is regarded as a true ‘grandfather’ of Japanese symphonic music.

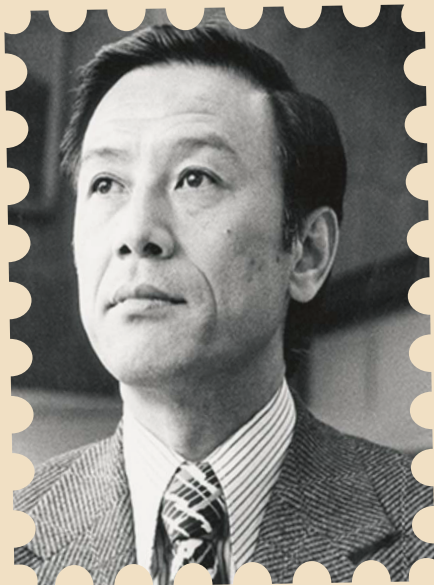
Toyama's rhapsody opens like a ceremonial call: the rhythmic clatter of wooden clappers (hyoshigi - ) and the clear tone of the chanchiki bell ( ) herald the start of a celebration. Immediately afterwards, the work bursts into life with the entrance of various taiko drums, evoking the energy and rhythm of a traditional Japanese matsuri festival. Gradually, these folk musical elements merge with the power of a symphonic orchestra. Pentatonic melodies rise like ancestral voices traversing the hills and rice fields. The work unfolds into a lively dance, full of rhythmic vitality and colourful orchestral splendour, a

celebration of the Japanese musical soul. With Rhapsody for Orchestra, Toyama brings together the intimacy of ancient folk songs and the grandeur of modern symphonic orchestras into a single colourful and compelling whole. The result is a work that sounds at once festive, poetic and deeply rooted in Japanese tradition.



## Musica per Orchestra Sinfonica Yasushi Akutagawa, 芥川也寸志

Yasushi Akutagawa (1925-1989) was an influential Japanese composer and conductor. He mainly wrote orchestral works, such as *Musica per Orchestra Sinfonica*, but he was also known for his film music. Akutagawa studied at the prestigious Tokyo Music School (Tokyo Ongaku Gakkō -



) that later became the Tokyo University of the Arts. In 1954, Akutagawa managed to travel illegally to the Soviet Union. There he became friends with Dmitri Shostakovich and Aram Khachaturian. During that period, Akutagawa's works were the only compositions by a Japanese composer to be officially published in the Soviet Union. In addition to his career as a composer, he was also popular as a presenter of various television programmes. After his death, an award was established in his memory: the Yasushi Akutagawa Suntory Award for Music Composition.

Akutagawa wrote *Musica per Orchestra Sinfonica* in 1950. In this piece, his admiration for composers such as Shostakovich and Prokofiev is clearly audible. Although it is one of his earlier works, many people consider it to be one of his best-known compositions. The work won several awards and was subsequently performed repeatedly by major orchestras around the world. The work is divided into two parts: a slow, mysterious part and a faster festive one.

# My Neighbour Totoro

Joe Hisaishi, 藤澤守

Chances are you've already come across the famous character Totoro, now the mascot of Studio Ghibli. *My Neighbour Totoro* is one of Studio Ghibli's classics, released in 1988. The film follows two sisters, Mei and Satsuki, who move with their dad to the post-war Japanese countryside. This brings them closer to their mum, who is recovering in hospital from a long-term illness. Next to their new house stands a large, old tree, and when the youngest sister, Mei, wanders over to the tree whilst playing, she meets the friendly forest spirit Totoro. However, the forest spirits reveal themselves only to the girls, not to the adults, and help the girls in their own way to cope with the sadness caused by their mother's illness. When Mei hears that they can no longer visit their mother because her recovery has taken a turn for the worse, she runs away from home and gets lost. Fortunately, with Totoro's help, Satsuki finds her younger sister in time.

The film's warm, almost enchanting art style is the work of art director Kazuo Ogo, who also served as lead and associate art director on many other Studio Ghibli films, such as *Princess Mononoke* (1997), *Spirited Away* (2001), *Howl's Moving Castle* (2004) and the more recent *Boy and the Heron* (2023). His animation style makes every twig and blade of grass look as though it might spring to life at any moment, lending a magical quality to the film's almost simple concept. The film went on to win several awards, including the Animage Anime Grand Prix, the Mainichi Film Prize and the Kinema Junpo Award for Best Film in 1988.





## Hero

Masataka Kobayashi, 小林 政高

*Hero is a work by Masataka Kobayashi, the leader of Bonten, a professional taiko group from Tokyo. Kobayashi founded this ensemble himself in 1999 and continues to lead it to this day. Bonten performs pieces that blend traditional Japanese sounds with a modern twist. The ensemble is now recognised as a leading figure in the taiko world thanks to their discipline and self-composed pieces, such as Hero and Poseidon, which are full of power and fast rhythms.*

The taiko group Yoronami learnt this piece personally from Masataka Kobayashi in Tokyo in 2023. Annick Robberecht, the leader of Yoronami, chose this piece to play for you tonight because the fast rhythms and dazzling movements allow the joyful energy of the taiko to flow freely. Crescendo after crescendo, the tempo is ramped up and wave after wave of energy and joie de vivre is rolled out over the audience until a swirling force fills the entire hall! Brace yourselves!

# Howl's Moving Castle: Merry Go Round of Life

JOE HISAISHI, 藤澤守 – arr. ALEX JOHANSSON

Just like in Miyazaki's previous Studio Ghibli films, *Howl's Moving Castle* (2004) is not without its critique of modern society. The film is set in an early 20th-century setting, where magic is part of society, against the backdrop of a war. The idea for *Howl's Moving Castle* therefore arose from Miyazaki's aversion to the United States' invasion of Iraq in 2003. The character Howl is against a war and refuses to fight for the king. His anger at the destruction grows throughout the story, leading him to fight against both sides and contribute to the destruction himself. In this way, he slowly loses his humanity. Furthermore, the film is also brimming with tender moments of compassion and love, in stark contrast to the war, and casts a positive light on old age. Howl's castle represents Miyazaki's Taoist belief that industrialism must be merged with nature in order not to be destructive.

Sophie is a young milliner in a town surrounded by war. When a witch curses her and she turns into an old woman, Sophie leaves the town to break the curse. A living scarecrow leads her to Howl's castle, where she meets Calcifer, a flame bound to Howl. He wants to help Sophie break her curse if she helps him sever his link with Howl. Sophie therefore sets to work in Howl's castle as a self-

appointed cleaning lady, whilst Howl transforms into a bird to fight against both sides of the war. However, it becomes increasingly difficult for Howl to turn back into a human. During an attack on the town, Sophie discovers that Howl has given his heart to Calcifer. She gives him her heart, and in doing so he regains his humanity, a tenderness that you may feel through the music.





## Super Mario Suite

Koji Kondo, 近藤 浩治 – arr. Loris Loichot

Super Mario, also known as Mario or Super Mario Bros, is a game created by the Japanese game designer Shigeru Miyamoto for Nintendo. This game is the flagship title of the Mario franchise, which also includes Mario Kart, amongst others. The game is set in the fictional Mushroom Kingdom, where Mario, usually alongside his brother Luigi, must rescue Princess Peach from Bowser.

The music for this game was mainly composed by Koji Kondo (1961), a Japanese composer who has written the music for various Nintendo games. His first work at Nintendo was for the game Punch-Out, which was released in 1984, and he continues to work there to this day. Over the years, he has composed music for various games, but he is best known for the music of The Legend of Zelda and various Super Mario games. He was also closely involved in the music for the film The Super Mario Bros, released in 2023. Tonight, the Arenberg Orchestra presents a suite featuring various well-known tunes from different Super Mario games, arranged by Loris Loichet.

## POSEIDON

Masataka Kobayashi, 小林 政高 – arr. RAVEN INVICTA

*Like Hero, Poseidon is a taiko piece composed by Masataka Kobayashi. As the title suggests, Masataka Kobayashi aims to express the power of the god Poseidon through this piece. Poseidon is not only the God of the Sea, whose mighty waves you will feel rolling, but also of horses and earthquakes. You will certainly feel a herd of horses galloping through the piece, shaking this auditorium to its foundations!*

Raven Invicta's inspiration for the symphonic arrangement for the Arenberg Orchestra arose from the question: "What if the Greek God of the Sea were the ultimate 'end boss' in a video game?" The result is an energetic piece of music that would fit perfectly as background music in the final level of a JRPG (Japanese Role-Playing Game). In her orchestral expansion, she has reinforced Masataka Kobayashi's original intention in an inimitable way. The piece opens with powerful taiko drums, with the orchestra swiftly joining the fray against Poseidon. In a blend of symphonic sound and ancient drumming, the battle intensifies like storming horses amidst the waves. Whilst heroic brass instruments introduce the melody, the woodwinds weave rippling counter-melodies through it. Let the battling drums and the orchestral power sweep you away on the waves of a raging sea; a musical journey that – despite the storm – ends in a triumphant homecoming.



Poseidon, performed by Bonten and Yoronami during their joint concert in December 2024



# Godzilla

Akira Ifukube, 伊福部昭 - arr. Mikael Carlsson

The Japanese composer Akira Ifukube (1914-2006) is best known for the music he composed for the Godzilla film. Ifukube made his breakthrough in the music world after composing Japanese Rhapsody, which we'll hear later in the program. With this composition, he won first place in a competition for Japanese composers. In addition to his work as a composer, he was also a teacher and musician. He taught at the Tokyo University of the Arts, where he influenced many young Japanese composers. His compositions are recognisable by their blend of Western symphonic music and Japanese traditions. This gives him a unique place in the world of both film music and Japanese classical music.



The Godzilla: Main Theme is one of the most famous pieces of film music in Japanese cinema. The music was first heard in 1954 and has since become the musical symbol of the famous monster Godzilla. The theme stands out for its menacing, heavy rhythm and powerful orchestration. To evoke this sense of foreboding, Ifukube primarily used low brass and strings. This musical style perfectly matches the film's dark tone, in which an ancient monster threatens the modern world. The soundtrack has become so iconic that, many Godzilla films later, it continues to be rearranged and used time and again. It has become one of the most recognisable film music themes ever and continues to have a major influence on the music of monster and science-fiction films to this day.

## Japanese Rhapsody: Nocturne

Akira Ifukube, 伊福部 昭

In addition to Godzilla and the world of Japanese film music, composer Ifukube is recognised within the classical music world as well as one of the most important innovators of 20th-century Japanese compositions. His musical language was deeply shaped by his childhood on the northern island of Hokkaido, where he grew up amidst Ainu traditions, shamanistic rhythms and unspoilt nature. These influences form the core of his style. Ifukube initially studied forestry and composed in his spare time, but his 1935 Japanese Rhapsody instantly put him on the international map: the work unanimously won first prize in a European composition competition judged by, among others, Alexander Tcherepnin, who subsequently became his mentor and encouraged him to continue composing.



The Nocturne from Japanese Rhapsody embodies a very different atmosphere to the bombastic Godzilla. Here, Ifukube paints a nocturnal landscape in which Japanese melodies and Western symphonic timbres blend into a broad, lyrical whole that echoes his native Ainu epic. The opening exudes the stillness of a moonlit plain, where long, singing lines float above a dark harmonic undercurrent. Gradually, a hint of pentatonicism unfolds, a rhythmic pulse that remains ever-present. Ifukube's characteristic blend of simplicity, archaic expression and almost sacred intensity is clearly audible here. The Nocturne unites Japanese melancholy with Western orchestral grandeur and the spiritual depth so characteristic of Ifukube's oeuvre. The result is a sonic world that feels both timeless and unmistakably Japanese: music that transports the listener to a tranquil night, where tradition, nature and memory merge seamlessly.

# FINAL FANTASY X: TO ZANARKAND

Nobuo Uematsu, 植松 伸夫 – arr. ANDRÉS SOTO

Unlike the strict distinction between classical music and film music that often exists in the West, in Japan symphonic music is regarded as a single entity. To Zanarkand by Nobuo Uematsu (1959) is a striking example of this approach. The work did not originate within the traditional music world, but as the opening track of Final Fantasy X, the tenth instalment in the famous RPG series. That series has grown into one of the most beloved musical universes of the 21st century and stands as a rare example of popular music that has effortlessly made the transition to the concert hall. To Zanarkand is perhaps Uematsu's best-known and most iconic composition.

Whereas much game music focuses on suspense and action, Uematsu opts here for an intimate, almost nocturnal soundscape. The gentle piano melody unfolds like a memory slowly taking shape, steeped in melancholy. The music evokes the atmosphere of the lost city of Zanarkand: a place that was once full of life, but now survives only in stories and the recreated city of Dream Zanarkand in which the game is set. The piece beautifully embodies the Japanese expression “mono no aware” ( ), the tender awareness of the impermanence of the world, rooted in the broader concept of mujō ( ). It is music that encourages stillness, reflection and an embrace of the transient. Despite the fact that To Zanarkand was written for a digital world, it speaks a harmonic language that feels both modern and traditional. The simple, pure melody nestles effortlessly in the memory. The power of the work lies precisely in that silence and simplicity. Uematsu does not sketch a grand adventure, but a deeply human moment of

reflection. The music takes the listener to another world that is strange and fictional, yet at the same time eerily recognisable and human.



# Our musicians

## 1st Violin -

### CONCERTMASTER\*

**Liam McLoughlin\***

Joachim Baetsle

Hannah Daems

Annalisa Devolder

Marie Hancart

Salomé Lourenço

Luxin Ma

Raquel Oishi

Jana Raes

Clara Renneboog

Lise Salemans

Lucia Tejera Vicente

Charlotte Tolle

Noor van der Meer

Tine Van de Watering

Latisha Vanorbeek

Klaartje Van Wayenberge

## 2ND VIOLIN

**Daphne Geukens**

**Jana Hassewens**

Helena Aerts

Ruth Bauwens

Olivia Berghs

Luna Cuypers

Janne Deridder

Anna Gladines

Hélène Manca

Yasmin Mochtar

Emma Molders

Nadège Montfort

Quentin Reusens

Tianfang Shi

Louise Steyaert

Marie Temmerman

Maryline Van Laer

Nieke Van Turnhout

Annelien Verbist

## Viola

**Kaat Verbruggen**

Evan Danills

Gabriella Dow

Anneleen Gabriels

Floor Jacobs

Mats Loenders

Zhiyuan Ma

Wannes Michielsens-

Meulemans

Melanie Sailer

Laute Sijbers

Ismene Vandenbroucke

Nathan Van Mol

## Cello

**Flo De Vos**

Elise De Cock

Ward Geens

Hasse Klinckaert

Wout Moerdyck

Nette Schryvers

Reinout Vandenabeele

Saar Vandeweyer

Annekatrijn Vanparys

Lars Verhoelst

Linde Wauters

## Double bass

**Senne Claes**

Doran De Gersem

Ward Jochmans

Lara Peeters

Eren Tarimnci

## Piano

Jialin Li

## Harp

Soetkin De Smedt

Kato Govaerts

## Flute - Piccolo\*

**Lotte Bekaert**

**Lisse Wolfs**

Carolina Caeiro

Lisa Peeters\*

Lien Van Gils

Eline Veldeman\*

## Oboe - Cor Anglais\*

**Chloé Bouquet**

Dorien Decubber

Antoon Luyckx

David Minten

Lotte Verdonck\*

## Clarinet - Bass

**Clarinet\***

**Taveendi Lecluyse**

Fran Beyens

Ciel Machiels

Mathis Ongenaet\*

Martijn Staes

Jana Van den Block

## Bassoon - Double

**Bassoon\***

**Wiebke Destoop**

Wannes Duthoit\*

Marthe Lavens

## **FRENCH HORN**

**Corneel Meylaers**

Daan Alens

Kasper De Ceulaer

Flore Delboo

Charlot Mercken

Linus Rowley

Alexis Van Merris

Juliana Ye

## **TRUMPET - CORNET\***

**Marianne Moens**

Leonie Amand

Clara Lavens

Judit Neirynek

Robbe Renard\*

Ianthe Van Marcke

Belén Verschueren

## **TROMBONE - Bass**

### **TROMBONE\***

**Sander Das**

Wouter Busselot\*

Janne Caytan

Maria Karegla

Tim Yde

## **Tuba**

Ward Caytan

Raf Nauwelaerts

## **PERCUSSION**

**Nick Bulté**

Anke Deboeck

Ayline Goossens

Pol Nauwelaerts

Andrei Stoica

Hannah Van Ammel

Elias Van den Bulck

Wout Van den Eynde

## **Wishing Tree**

Did you spot our wishing tree in the foyer already?

Write down a wish on a card on our tree. Perhaps your wish will come true very soon ...

## **Word Search**

Look for the words below in the word search. The words can be found horizontally, vertically and diagonally.



AKUTAGAWA GODZILLA HISAISHI IFUKUBE JAPAN

KIMONO LANTAARN NOCTURNE OBON ORIGAMI

RHAPSODY TAIKO TOKYO TOTORO TOYAMA

ZANARKAND

# Our Task Forces

## Archivist

Judit Neiryneck  
Lise Salemans  
Charlotte Tolle  
Reinout Vandenabeele

## Artistic Team

Janne De Ridder  
Liam McLoughlin  
Eren Tarimci

## CONCERT

Lotte Bekaert  
Sander Das  
Nette Schryvers  
Andrei Stoica

## Orchestra Trip

Luna Cuypers  
Ward Geens  
Alexis Van Merris  
Latisha Vanorbeek

## Graphic Design

Hannah Daems  
Daphne Geukens  
Marthe Lavens  
Taveendi Lecluyse  
Kaat Verbruggen

## Logistics

Anke De Boeck  
Corneel Meylaers  
Nette Schryvers  
Martijn Staes  
Lars Verhoelst

## NON-MUSICAL Activities

Pauline Fossion  
Lisa Peeters  
Annekatrijn Vanparys  
Juliana Ye

## Rehearsal Weekend

Leonie Amand  
Flore Delboo  
Ciel Machiels  
David Minten  
Lisse Wolfs

## Light and sound ENGINEERING

Marthe Lavens  
Jana Raes  
Marie Temmerman

## Web Team – Social Media

Kasper De Ceulaer  
Taveendi Lecluyse  
Hélène Manca  
Reinout Vandenabeele  
Juliana Ye

# Our board

The board of the Arenberg Orchestra supports its members on a daily basis and ensures everything runs smoothly.



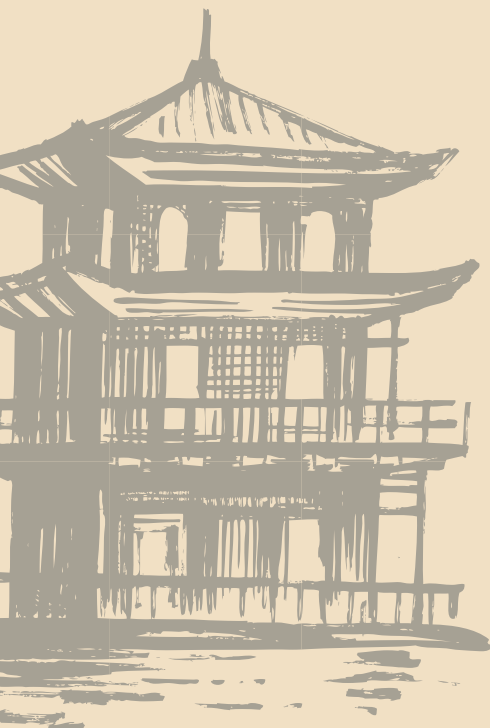
The 2025-2026 board of the Arenberg Orchestra consists of:

Lotte Verdonck  
Helena Aerts  
Lars Verhoelst  
Tine Van de Watering  
Mats Loenders

President  
Vice president  
Treasurer  
Public Relations  
Director

# Special thanks to ...

- ✦ Our conductor Roel Willems for leading the ensemble and directing our musical performance;
- ✦ Our concertmaster Liam McLoughlin, for musically leading the orchestra;
- ✦ Raven Invicta for the wonderful arrangement of Poseidon;
- ✦ *Yoronami* for the nice cooperation
- ✦ Our actors, Kas Cuypers and Bernadette Detienne, who guided you throughout the evening
- ✦ The members of all task forces who contributed to the musical, creative, logistical, and technical preparations, and who also ensured everything ran smoothly during the concert evenings: Archivist, Artistic Team, Concert, Digital Media, Graphic Design, Logistics and Light & Sound Engineering;
- ✦ The Board of Directors, for their continuing support and advice;
- ✦ Paul Bielen for the audio recordings;
- ✦ Lennert Ovaere and Thomas Van Ryckeghem for visual recordings;
- ✦ Bavo Nys, our photographer;
- ✦ The technicians for controlling lights, sound and presentations;
- ✦ Our friends of the Alumni Arenbergorkest, LUK, UHO and USO for their support before, during and after the concerts;
- ✦ Musicians from other ensembles for helping us out;
- ✦ The KU Leuven Culture Office, especially Stefaan Vaes and Heidi Froyen, for logistical support;
- ✦ Our sponsors and patrons;
- ✦ Our motivated musicians;
- ✦ You, the audience, our incentive to play, for your input, motivation and attendance!



# Support us

The Arenberg Orchestra aspires to offer students the opportunity to make music and work together towards an amazing concert in an agreeable setting. However, organising a concert comes along with a significant cost. We would therefore like to make an appeal to sympathisers, also called “patrons”, whose financial support allows us to expand our possibilities.

For **€70** we offer you:

- ✦ One free ticket per set of concerts available at the VIP cash register;
- ✦ Two reserved seats to be chosen in advance;
- ✦ A VIP reception for 2 people;
- ✦ A mentioning on our website;

For **€120** we offer all of the above, with two free tickets for each set of concerts instead of one.

For **€150** we offer all of the above, with three tickets, three people allowed at the VIP reception, an unlimited number of reserved seats, a mention in our programme booklet and the recordings of the concerts.

For **€200** there will be two additional tickets and two more persons allowed at the VIP reception.

Do you feel like financially supporting our orchestra in a different way? Feel free to transfer an amount to your liking to BE23 7330 2625 4291 mentioning ‘Gift’ in the comment section. We thank you kindly for your support.

Meer info? Mail naar [pr@arenbergorkest.be](mailto:pr@arenbergorkest.be) of neem een kijkje op onze website.

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# BOOK US

Are you organizing an event and looking to surprise your guests with a spectacular concert? Or would you rather skip the string quartet that keeps playing the same, repetitive chamber music at your charity evening? Then we're exactly what you're looking for!

The Arenberg Orchestra traditionally organizes concerts in Leuven, but also aims to make itself heard throughout the country. We also have an enthusiastic partyband ready to add an extra dose of atmosphere to any occasion. Whether long or short, large or small, we are happy to explore the possibilities for every event.

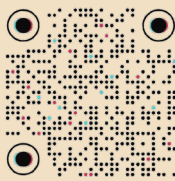
Interested? Don't hesitate to send an email to [partyband@arenbergorkest.be](mailto:partyband@arenbergorkest.be) for a performance by the party band, or to [bestuur@arenbergorkest.be](mailto:bestuur@arenbergorkest.be) for other occasions.

# FOLLOW US

We warmly invite you to our autumn concerts on 8 & 10 December 2026. Keep an eye on our website, [www.arenbergorkest.be](http://www.arenbergorkest.be), and our socials for more information!



INSTAGRAM



TIKTOK



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The other university ensembles in Leuven will also host their concerts in the upcoming months:

- ✦ Alumni Arenbergorkest: 30 & 31 May 2026
- ✦ Universitair Symfonisch Orkest: 12 & 13 November 2026
- ✦ Universitair Harmonieorkest: 25 & 27 November 2026
- ✦ Leuvens Universitair Koor: December 2026



# A word of thanks to ...

## Our patrons and sponsors

- ✦ Annick Degeeter
- ✦ Bert Destoop
- ✦ Dansstudio You Can Dance
- ✦ Familie Alens - Olbrechts
- ✦ Familie Amand - Jacobs
- ✦ Familie Cuypers - Verlaenen
- ✦ Familie Das - Vleugels
- ✦ Familie De Ceulaer
- ✦ Familie McLoughlin - Engelen
- ✦ Familie Van Turnhout - Van Loon
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- ✦ Familie Verhoelst - Fernagut
- ✦ Lysitech BV
- ✦ Praktijk 't Kabien - Meerhout



VLAAMS-  
BRABANT



Thank you for coming!  
Enjoy the reception and  
see you next time!



# 灯笼



Arenbergorkest

Symfonisch orkest KU Leuven

