

TINE
THING
HELSETH

ECHOES

TRUMPET CONCERTOS
BY ARUTIUNIAN
PENDERECKI
WEINBERG

Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra
Petr Popelka — conductor



ALEXANDER ARUTIUNIAN was born in the Armenian capital Yerevan, just before the country was subsumed into the Soviet Union. He studied at the conservatories of Yerevan and Moscow before becoming one of his homeland's most pivotal musical figures, leading the Armenian Philharmonic Society for decades.

Arutiunian's intense and resourceful music combines elements of Russian romanticism and modernism with the composer's own brand of scented melodiousness. The latter is derived in part from his country's tradition of 'ashugs' - travelling mystics who would communicate by means of improvised, looping songs. Arutiunian's works tend to carry a strong emotional impulse and with it, the distinct national character of a country straddling the oriental divide.

Both are apparent from the off in Arutiunian's Trumpet Concerto, one of four concerti the composer wrote for brass instruments. He started work on the piece in 1943 and it was conceived for first performance by the composer's friend Zsolak Vartasarian, solo trumpet of the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra. But Vartasarian was killed in action during the remainder of the Second World War. The piece was set aside and only completed in 1950, when it was first performed in Moscow by the trumpeter Haykaz Mesriyan.

It took a third trumpeter, however, to make the work famous. Timofei Dokschtizer, solo trumpet of the Bolshoi Theatre Orchestra in Moscow, made the first recording of Arutiunian's concerto, sending it on its way to becoming a staple of the trumpet repertoire. It was also Dokschtizer who, in 1977, wrote the composer-sanctioned cadenza - the soloist's final monologue reveling in virtuosity and expression.

Plenty more virtuosity is demanded by the concerto. While Arutiunian understood the trumpet's lyrical qualities, he was also fascinated by its capacity for dynamic articulation. The score demands frequent rapid tonguing from the soloist as well as long-breathed tunes. Dokschtizer, who

was renowned for underlining the trumpet's capacity for strength and bravado, could dispatch both with flair - often literally.

The single-movement work opens with a series of flourishes before a frisky main melody takes root, including punctuating orchestral decoration in the Armenian style. This prefaces a secondary tune introduced by the clarinet. The central slow section resembles a tango, the trumpet's mute taking it into the domain of the speakeasy. More sprightly, interactive music returns before Dokschtizer's cadenza and a stentorian ending.

Nearly three decades after starting work on the concerto, Arutiunian composed his Theme and Variations for Trumpet and Symphony Orchestra. Unlike the concerto, this score was written expressly for Dokschtizer; as a result, it seems to be less about Armenia and more about the trumpeter and his musical personality, as conveyed via the instrument. There are elements of neo-classical writing to the piece that may have been influenced by Prokofiev. After the concerto, the character of this piece, on the whole, is of a more guarded sort of bravado. The alternating (and dominating) slow tempi of the variations allow plenteous space for the more sultry elements of the composer's style.

The theme, built on a straightforward major triad, is adumbrated by the orchestra and almost immediately introduced in full by the solo trumpet. The variations sections are clearly demarked thereafter with the arpeggiac shape of the theme clearly discernable. Variation 1 (Moderato sostenuto) makes use of Arutiunian's favoured repeated notes, the slow disposition returning for the more intense Variation 3, its long orchestral interlude leading to a nocturnal-feeling passage in which the soloist applies a mute. A fast coda glances again at the mystical spirit of the ashugs.

KRZYSZTOF PENDERECKI was still a child when the Nazis invaded Poland and was barely an adult when his country became part of the Soviet Union. The composer lived for many ye-

ars, until his death in 2020, on the outskirts of Kraków.

For all that consistency, Penderecki's musical voice underwent one particularly significant change. In 1960, the composer signaled his dissatisfaction with the standard pitches of the chromatic scale with his *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima*. This landmark score exploded the sonic possibilities of the orchestra by asking musicians to play notes-in-between-notes, sliding glissandi and non-specific notes such as 'the highest pitch available'.

Then, in the mid-1970s, the first of Penderecki's violin concertos heralded a new direction. The musical notation was conventional (based mostly on tones and semitones) and there was a new emphasis on melodies rooted in the framework of standard scales. Some accused Penderecki of resorting to the rhetoric of the Romantic era. But a thrilling sense of oppression, tension and existential conflict came with the technical shift.

Besides, the move allowed Penderecki to focus more on musical architecture, with the resulting scores often proving more meticulously built and rigorously worked-out than their predecessors. Penderecki's Concertino for Trumpet and Orchestra is a case in point. It is one of the composer's last works, completed in 2015; like many pieces from his last decade, it packs a lot of music into a relatively short span.

The concerto was written for the Hungarian trumpeter Gábor Boldoczki. When Penderecki heard Boldoczki playing Haydn's E flat trumpet concerto in Warsaw - a piece he had furnished with newly-written cadenzas - he was inspired to write a concerto for the musician. The trumpeter visited the composer's studio with five varieties of trumpet, demonstrating their sound and capabilities. Penderecki alighted on the C trumpet and flugelhorn (an alto variant of the standard trumpet), whose more mellow sound is put to use for the lyrical melody that opens the slow movement.

Dramatic gambits from the orchestra herald the arrival of the solo trumpet, initially playing off-stage. The opening movement takes the form of an extended fanfare supported by orchestral interjections. The remaining three movements of the compact concertino proceed without a break, embracing the brittle good humour that is central to Penderecki's late style. A flute prefaces the melancholy-tinged slow movement that gradually ratchets tension before dissolving into droll gestures from wind and percussion. These set up the energetic finale, in which the trumpet's athleticism echoes that of Arutiunian's concerto.

MIECZYSLAW WEINBERG was born into persecution. He escaped from Warsaw in 1939 just before Hitler's forces murdered his immediate family. When he eventually settled in Moscow, he was subjected to the new anti-Semitism of Stalin's final years. He had survived the Nazis, Stalin and even the Soviet Union by the time of his death in 1996. But he hadn't lived long enough to witness the significant surge in enjoyment of his music that took root this millennium.

Weinberg is closely associated with Dmitri Shostakovich, who risked his own life to protect that of his friend and arranged safe passage for the composer to Moscow in 1943 (before the two had even met). Both men were forced, in their art, to react to the very worst of humanity and the music they wrote shares a great deal - from a distinctive tense lyricism and sardonic humour to the countering of anguish and darkness with hope. The fortitude with which Weinberg bore his torrid existence made his music particularly tough. His works contain elements of Jewish, Polish, Russian, and Moldavian folk music.

The metabolic rate of Weinberg's striking Trumpet Concerto is even higher than that of Penderecki's. Again, this is a work written for Timofei Dokschtizer, who gave the first performance in Moscow in January 1968 (the score was completed the year before). Movement titles 'Etudes', 'Episodes' and 'Fanfares' belie music that powers onwards with nervous energy and brittle tension.

Shostakovich described the concerto as 'a symphony for trumpet and orchestra.'

As in much of Shostakovich's work – and his own aborted concerto for trumpet (that became the Concerto for Piano, Trumpet and Strings) – the solo instrument's heritage in the Russian circus tradition resounds through much of the animated repartee of the opening movement, characterized principally by rapid exchanges of five-note scales.

Anxieties stalk the slow movement, 'Episodes' – the trumpet wearing a mute for much of the discourse and whose music, for the Weinberg expert David Fanning, 'rarely crawls out of its shell' despite the orchestra's attempts to instill martial confidence. The final movement, 'Fanfares', follows without a break, beginning with an accompanied cadenza from the soloist whose pregnant opening ticks-off canonic trumpet solos from Mendelssohn's *Wedding March*, Mahler's Symphony No 5, Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Golden Cockerel*, Stravinsky's *Petrushka* and more. The ensuing waltz never quite achieves the traction it promises – for Fanning, the central feature of a concerto by a composer whose personal trauma so often peers out through his music.

Andrew Mellor, 2025

Andrew Mellor is author of
*The Northern Silence:
Journeys in Nordic Music and Culture*
(Yale University Press, 2022)





TINE THING HELSETH

Tine Thing Helseth is an unparalleled champion of the trumpet repertoire celebrated for her soulful sound, lyrical style, and collaborative spirit. Renowned for pushing genre boundaries, she brings a fresh and open-minded approach to classical music. Since 2023, she has served as Artistic Director of the Risør kammermusikkfest, with which she has been associated for over a decade.

Tine has received numerous accolades, including the 2013 Echo Klassik “Newcomer of the Year,” a 2009 Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship, and second prize in the 2006 Eurovision Young Musicians Competition, later returning as a juror in 2016. In 2007, she became the first classical artist to win “Newcomer of the Year” at the prestigious Spellemannprisen music awards in Norway.

She has performed with leading orchestras such as the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, Oslo Philharmonic, and NDR Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, and tours internationally with her all-female brass ensemble, tenThing.

Tine records for LAWO Classics, with notable releases including *She Composes Like a Man* recorded with tenThing Brass Ensemble featuring only female composers, *Seraph* (5★ BBC Music Magazine), and *Magical Memories for Trumpet and Organ* (Gramophone “Editor’s Choice” recording in August 2021).

Based in Oslo, Tine is also active as a TV and radio presenter and teaches trumpet at the Norwegian Academy of Music.

BERGEN PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

The Bergen Philharmonic, a Norwegian national orchestra, is one of the oldest in the world, dating back to 1765. Edvard Grieg served as its artistic director from 1880 to 1882. Edward Gardner was Chief Conductor from 2015 to 2024, and he is now Honorary Conductor. Sir Mark Elder is the orchestra's Principal Guest Conductor, Jan Willem de Vriend is Artistic Partner, and Rasmus Hella Mikkelsen is Assistant Conductor. The Orchestra enjoys a high international standing through recordings, touring and international commissions, and was nominated Orchestra of the Year 2020 and 2025 by Gramophone, and won two Gramophone Classical Music Awards in 2021: Recording of the Year and Opera Award Winner for the recording of Britten's *Peter Grimes*.

During the last few seasons, the orchestra has played in the Concertgebouw, at the BBC Proms, Wiener Musikverein and Konzerthaus, Carnegie Hall, New York, Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg and the Philharmonie, Berlin. The orchestra and Edward Gardner appeared at the Edinburgh International Festival (2017) and Royal Festival Hall (2019) with their critically acclaimed production of *Peter Grimes*. In 2022 the orchestra's production of Richard Strauss' *Salome* was hailed as an artistic highlight at the Edinburgh International Festival.

The orchestra offers a free streaming service, [Bergenphilive.no](https://bergenphilive.no), with a fine selection of works performed by the orchestra and a range of internationally renowned conductors and soloists.

The Orchestra has released a series of recordings. Projects include Messiaen's *Turangalila*, bal-

lets by Stravinsky, and the complete symphonies, ballet suites, concertos by Prokofiev, Bruckner symphonies, Mendelssohn symphonies and the complete orchestral music of Edvard Grieg.

Edward Gardner and the Orchestra have released orchestral works by Janáček, including a Grammy-nominated recording of his *Glagolitic Mass*, Schönberg's *Gurre-Lieder*, songs by Sibelius, Grieg's Piano Concerto and Incidental music to *Peer Gynt*, featuring Jean-Efflam Bavouzet, Ann-Helen Moen and Lise Davidsen, Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra and Rhapsodies with James Ehnes, Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle*, Brahms symphonies Nos. 1 and 3, Schoenberg's *Erwartung* and *Pelleas und Melisande*, Britten's *Peter Grimes* with Stuart Skelton and Erin Wall, songs by Britten and Canteloube with soprano Mari Eriksmoen, a cd with saxophonist Marius Neset, *The Tempest* by Arne Nordheim, three cds with Carl Nielsen's symphonies and concertos, Brahms' Requiem and a live recording of Strauss' *Salome*. In 2023 a recording of Frederick Delius' *Eine Messe des Lebens* with Sir Mark Elder was awarded a Norwegian Grammy (Spellemannprisen).

PETR POPELKA

Petr Popelka, born in Prague in 1986, is a distinguished Czech conductor and composer. He began his musical journey studying double bass at the Prague Conservatory and furthered his education at the Hochschule für Musik Freiburg. At 19, he joined the Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra and later became the deputy principal double bassist of the Sächsische Staatskapelle Dresden, a position he held from 2010 to 2019.

Transitioning to conducting, Popelka's mentors included Vladimir Kiradjiev, Péter Eötvös, Alan Gilbert, Jaap van Zweden, and Johannes Schläfli. In 2017, he was honored with the Neeme Järvi Prize. From 2019 to 2020, he served as the inaugural Conductor Fellow at the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra. He was Chief Conductor of the Norwegian Radio Orchestra from 2020 to 2023. In the 2022–2023 season, he assumed the role of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra.

In June 2023, the Vienna Symphony announced Popelka as its next Chief Conductor, effective with the 2024–2025 season, with an initial contract of five years.

His inaugural performance in Vienna featured Arnold Schönberg's *Gurre-Lieder* at the Musikverein, commemorating the composer's 150th anniversary.

Popelka has collaborated with esteemed ensembles such as the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, and Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra. His operatic engagements include productions at the Zurich Opera House,

Semperoper Dresden, and Oslo Opera. Beyond conducting, he remains active as a composer, with works like *Labyrinth des Herzens* and *Szenen für Klavierquartett* to his credit.



Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra



Petr Popelka



**TINE THING HELSETH,
TRUMPET**

**BERGEN
PHILHARMONIC
ORCHESTRA**

**PETR POPELKA,
CONDUCTOR**

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Alexander Arutiunian
(1920–2012)

01. Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra__16:23

Krzysztof Penderecki
(1933–2020)

Concertino per tromba e orchestra

02. Andante__04:39

03. Larghetto__02:59

04. Intermezzo__01:11

05. Vivo ma non troppo__02:33

Alexander Arutiunian
(1920–2012)

Theme and Variations

06. Theme

Allegro moderato__00:54

07. Variation I.

Moderato sostenuto__02:56

08. Variation II.

Allegro assai__01:45

09. Variation III.

Adagio con dolore__03:40

10. Variation IV.

Andante mesto__05:14

11. Variation V.

Allegro risoluto (coda)__02:10

Mieczysław Weinberg
(1919–1996)

Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra Op. 94

12. Etudes

Allegro molto__08:10

13. Episodes

Andante__09:39

14. Fanfares

Andante__05:33