



FRANZ LISZT

CHAMBER ORCHESTRA





Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra

since 1963

Artistic Director:
István Várdai

Concertmaster:
Péter Tfirst

*“Few chamber orchestras are as accomplished
as the Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra.”*

– The Irish Times

*“An ensemble of players who listen to each other
and achieve a rare musical unanimity.”*

– Financial Times



**At the forefront of classical music
for 60 years.**



*“A defining orchestra in Hungarian
and international classical music life”*

– HarrisonParrot Agency





Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra

The Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra has been a distinguished presence at the forefront of the international classical music scene for more than six decades. Founded in 1963 by graduating students of the Liszt Academy, the ensemble flourished under the leadership of its concertmaster and artistic director, János Rolla, achieving remarkable success at home while performing in the world's most prestigious concert halls. Since 2016, the orchestra has continued to build on this rich legacy under the guidance of concertmaster Péter Tfirst, upholding the highest artistic standards and preserving its uniquely recognisable characteristics. In 2020, the internationally acclaimed cellist István Várdai joined the ensemble's professional leadership, contributing to both its artistic development and the conception of its overall programming. Alongside maintaining the orchestra's esteemed traditions, the artistic management is committed to ongoing renewal and innovation. The ensemble's expansive repertoire spans Baroque masterpieces to contemporary works, embracing virtually every musical genre.

Over the decades, the orchestra has collaborated with an array of legendary soloists, including Sviatoslav Richter, Mstislav Rostropovich, Isaac Stern, Yehudi Menuhin, Jean-Pierre Rampal and Maurice André. In more recent years, internationally renowned artists such as Martha Argerich, Elisabeth Leonskaja, Emmanuel Pahud, Vadim Gluzman, Denis Matsuev, Mischa Maisky, Maxim Vengerov, Ilya Gringolts, David Fray, Pablo Barragán, Martin Fröst, Dmitry Sitkovetsky, Kirill Trousov, Bogdan Volkov, Emőke Baráth and the remarkable Signum Saxophone Quartet have also performed with the ensemble. In the upcoming period audiences can look forward to concerts featuring equally exceptional musicians, including, Kirill Gerstein, Víkingur Ólafsson.

The Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra is a regular guest at many of the world's leading music festivals. In recent years, the ensemble has appeared at Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, the Stradivari Festival in Cremona, and the Festivals of Neumarkt, Kronberg and Heidelberg, as well as at the Varna Summer, the Istanbul International Music Festival, the Izmir Festival, the Ankara International Music Festival, Cartagena Musik Festival and the George Enescu International Festival. As part of the European Capital of Culture programme, the orchestra performed in Bodo and tours regularly in Transylvania, Spain, and South America.

As Hungary's national orchestra, it proudly represents and promotes Hungarian culture worldwide.

Artistic Director: István Várdai

István Várdai is widely admired for the joyous energy, rhythmic vitality, and elegant grace of his deeply expressive interpretations of the solo, chamber, and orchestral cello repertoire. In his sixth season as Artistic Director of the Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra, he continues to curate imaginative and inspiring programmes. Alongside this role, he welcomes internationally renowned artists to the Kaposfest Chamber Music Festival and maintains an active solo career with leading orchestras, performing repertoire ranging from Bach to Péter Eötvös.

In 2025, István Várdai debuted with the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia under Tugan Sokhiev (Shostakovich Cello Concerto No. 2), later recording it with the BBC Philharmonic and John Storgårds. He toured Belgium and Hungary with the Royal Liège Philharmonic under Gergely Madaras (Elgar Cello Concerto) and returned to the NFM Wrocław Philharmonic for a play-and-direct programme.

He appeared at major festivals including the Kronberg Academy, Heidelberger Frühling, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Festival, Cremona Stradivari Festival and Cartagena Music Festival, and directed Dvořák's Cello Concerto from the instrument at the

Musikverein. A dedicated chamber musician, he has collaborated with András Schiff, Yuri Bashmet, Gidon Kremer, Jean-Efflam Bavouzet, Mischa Maisky, Elisabeth Leonskaja and Liza Ferschtman, and continues in 2026 with Víkingur Ólafsson, Kirill Gerstein, Ilya Gringolts and Roman Simović.

István Várdai's discography includes cello concertos by Janáček, Prokofiev, and Elgar (Ysaÿe Records), and a critically acclaimed recording of Bach's Solo Cello Suites (Brilliant Classics). His recent album Szinergia, created with Pablo Barragán and the Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra (Accentus), explores rhythm and folk traditions in works by Bartók, Hartmann, Kodály, and Weiner. He holds a teaching position at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, where he succeeded the late Heinrich Schiff and where he himself studied. István Várdai performs on the 'Ex du Pré-Harrell' Stradivari cello (1673)

"His playing was commendable for its fluidity and virtuosity, distinguished by both a fleet-fingered lightness and a rich timbre."

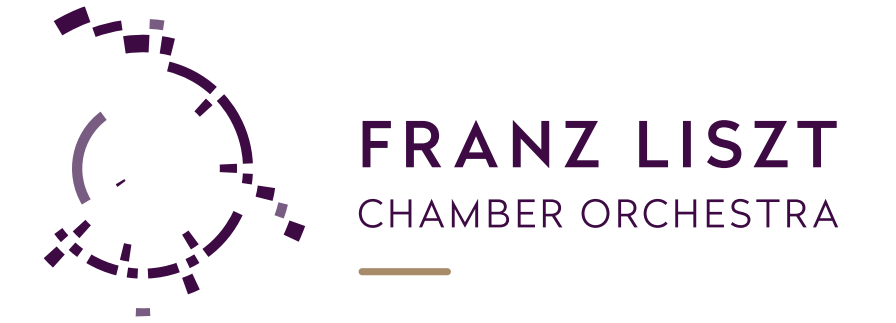
-The New York Times



Across the World's Leading Concert Halls



1 SEPTEMBER 2025
CSÁKY CASTLE, BRATISLAVA, SLOVAKIA



Symfónia Umenia Festival 2025

Bartók | Liszt | Dvořák | Weiner | Brahms

Bartók: Romanian Folk Dances

Liszt: Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2 (arr. Péter Wolf)

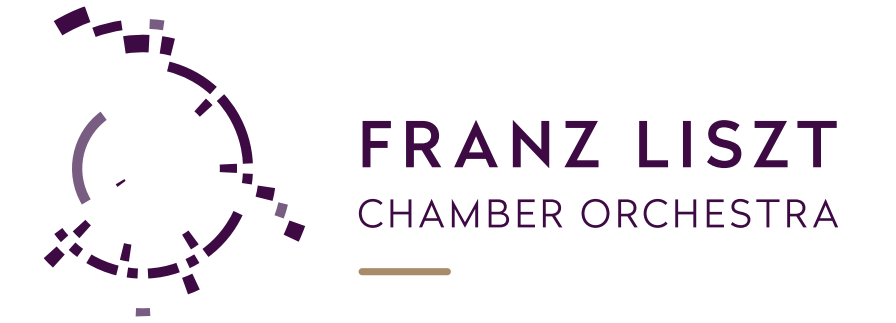
Dvořák: Serenade for Strings in E major, Op. 22

Weiner: Divertimento No. 1, Op. 20

Brahms: Hungarian Dance No. 6



5 SEPTEMBER 2025
KONZERTHAUS WEINVIERTEL, ZIERSDORF



Allegro Vivo Festival 2025

Bartók | Haydn | Liszt | Popper | Weiner

Artistic Director and Soloist: **István Várdai (cello)**

Hungarian Rhapsody

Bartók: Romanian Folk Dances

Haydn: Cello Concerto in C major, Hob. VIIb:1

Liszt: Mephisto Waltz No. 1 (arr. Sándor Devich)

Popper: Hungarian Rhapsody, Op. 68

Weiner: Divertimento No. 1, Op. 20



26 SEPTEMBER 2025

MAGYAR ZENE HÁZA / HOUSE OF MUSIC, BUDAPEST



FRANZ LISZT
CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Youthful Wonders of the Giants of Music History

Mozart | Shostakovich | Schubert

Soloists: **József Balog** (piano), **Gábor Boldoczki** (trumpet)

Conductor: **Mátyás Antal**

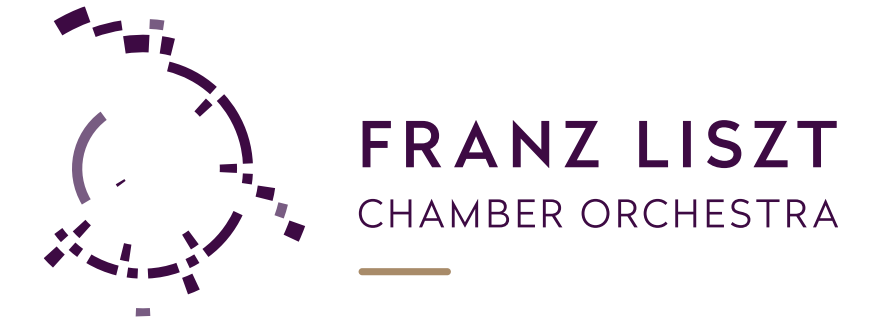
Mozart: Adagio and Fugue in C minor, K. 546

Shostakovich: Piano Concerto No. 1 in C minor, Op. 35

Schubert: Symphony No. 5 in B-flat major, D. 485



1 OCTOBER 2025
LISZT ACADEMY GRAND HALL, BUDAPEST



A Passion Woven from Sounds 2025/26

Artistic Director, Soloist and Conductor: **István Várdai (cello)**

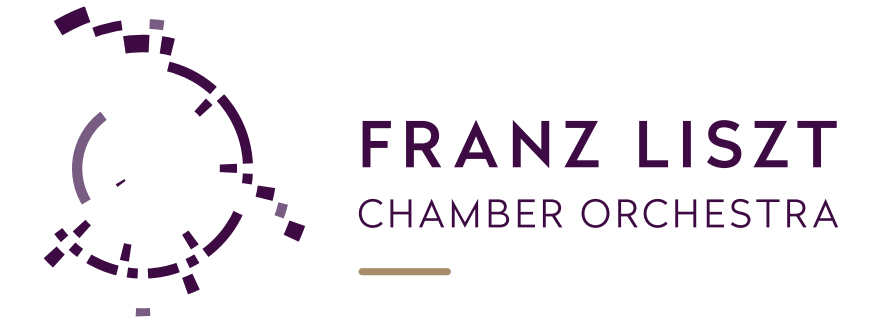
Farkas: Piccola musica di concerto

Shostakovich: Cello Concerto No. 1 in E-flat major, Op. 107

Mozart: Symphony No. 40 in G minor, K. 550



14 OCTOBER 2025
KURHAUS, MERANO, ITALY



Concert in South Tyrol

Haydn | Mozart

Artistic Director, Soloist and Conductor: **István Várdai (cello)**

Mozart: Serenade in D major, "Serenata notturna", K. 239

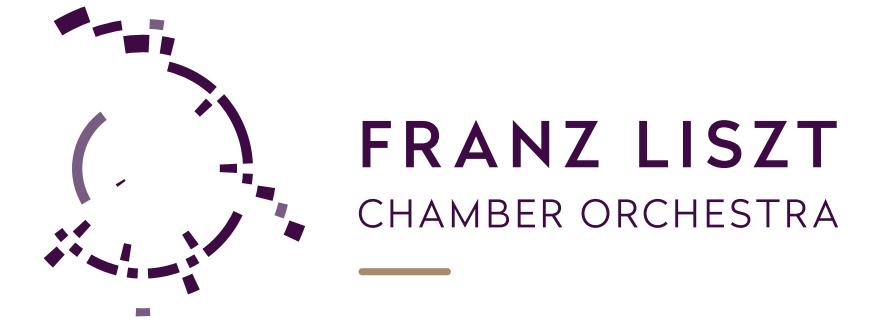
Haydn: Cello Concerto in C major, Hob. VIIb:1

Haydn: Symphony in G major, Hob. I:3

Mozart: Symphony No. 29 in A major, K. 201



16 OCTOBER 2025
RAIDING, AUSTRIA



Concert at Liszt Festival

Liszt | Haydn | Kodály | Popper | Weiner

Artistic Director and Soloist: **István Várdai (cello)**

Guest Ensemble: **Sárközy Trio**

Liszt: Mephisto Waltz No. 1 (arr. Sándor Devich)

Haydn: Cello Concerto in C major, Hob. VIIb:1

Liszt: Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2 (arr. Péter Wolf)

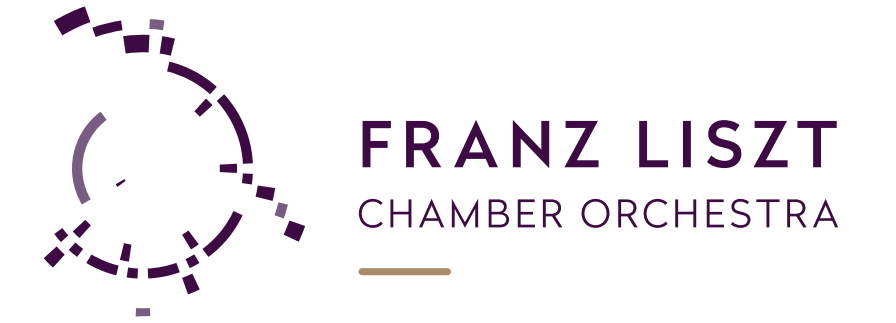
Kodály: Dances of Kálló

Popper: Hungarian Rhapsody

Weiner: Divertimento No. 1, Op. 20



12-16 NOVEMBER 2025
ARAD | CLUJ-NAPOCA | TÂRGU MUREȘ | ODORHEIU SECUIESC



Boundless Music The Transylvanian Tour

**The programme varied from venue to venue,
with different selections performed at each concert.**

J. S. Bach: Concerto in C minor for Oboe and Violin, BWV 1060R

Bartók: Romanian Folk Dances

Enescu: Octet in C major, Op. 7

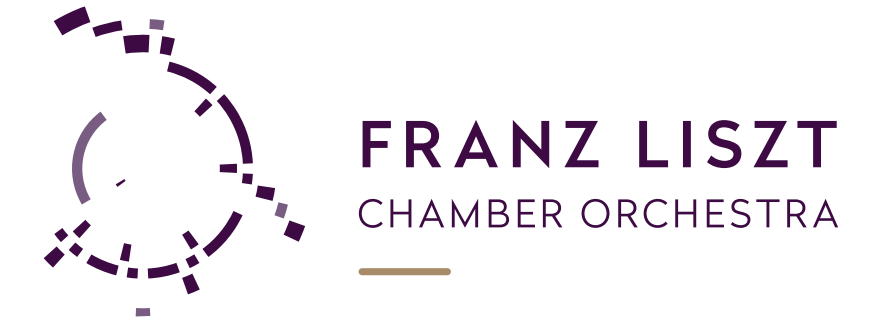
Farkas: Piccola musica di concerto

Liszt: Mephisto Waltz No. 1 (arr. Sándor Devich)

Pēteris Vasks: Concerto for Viola and String Orchestra



14 DECEMBER 2025
LISZT ACADEMY GRAND HALL, BUDAPEST



Liszt Academy

Mozart | Schubert

Soloist: **Elisabeth Leonskaja (piano)**

Conductor: **István Várdai**

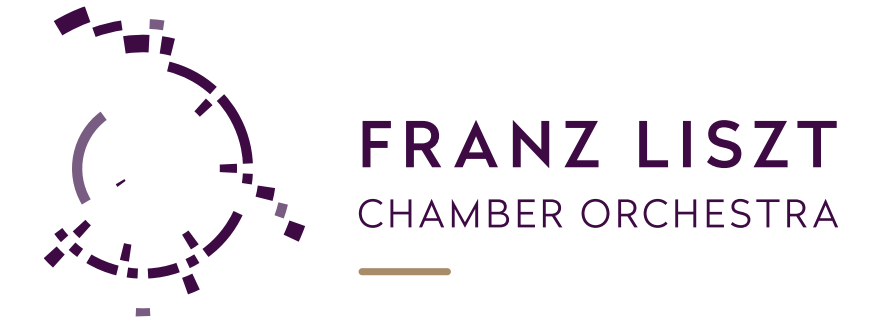
Mozart: Adagio and Fugue in C minor, K. 546

Mozart: Piano Concerto No. 23 in A major, K. 488

Schubert: String Quintet in C major, D. 956



20 DECEMBER 2025
VATROSLAV LISINSKI CONCERT HALL ZAGRAB, CROATIA



Guest Performance in Zagreb

Mozart | Schubert

Soloist: **Aljoša Jurinić (piano)**

Conductor: **István Várdai**

Mozart: Adagio and Fugue in C minor, K. 546

Mozart: Piano Concerto No. 23 in A major, K. 488

Schubert: String Quintet in C major, D. 956



4-9 JANUARY 2026

TEATRO ADOLFO MEJÍA, CARTAGENA, COLOMBIA

20 años
CARTAGENA FESTIVAL DE MÚSICA

FRANZ LISZT
CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Colombian tour: Cartagena Music Festival

Soloists:

Simon Zhu, Alena Baeva,

Leticia Moreno (violin),

Santiago Cañón-Valencia, István Várdai (cello),

Xavier de Maistre (harp),

Silvia Careddu (flute),

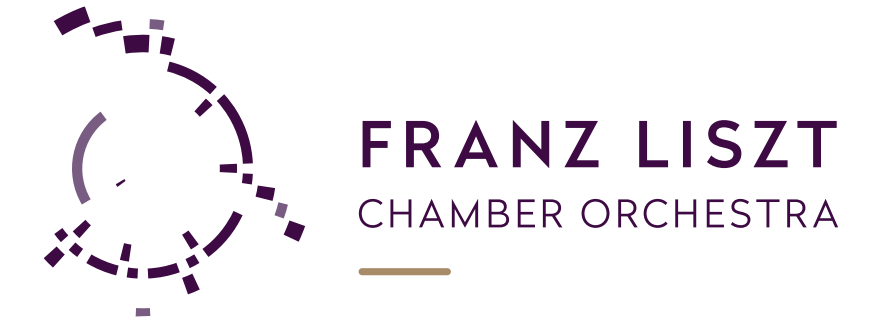
Elisabeth Brauss, Gabriele Strata, Andrea Lucchesini (piano)

Conductor: István Várdai





Cartagena Music Festival



4 JANUARY

Svendsen: Romance for Violin and String Orchestra, Op. 26

Mozart: Symphony No. 40 in G minor, K. 550

Tchaikovsky: Elegy in Memory of Ivan Samarin

Paganini: Violin Concerto No. 1 in D major, Op. 6

5 JANUARY

Vivaldi: Concerto for 2 Cellos in G minor, RV 531

Bach: Violin Concerto No. 1 in A minor, BWV 1041

Händel: Harp Concerto in B-flat major, Op. 4 No. 6, HWV 294

Bach: Orchestral Suite No. 3 in D major, BWV 1068

6 JANUARY

Haydn: Cello Concerto in D major, Hob. VIIb:2

Mozart: Piano Concerto No. 23 in A major, K. 488

7 JANUARY

Mozart: Concerto for Flute, Harp and Orchestra in C Major, K. 299

Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 3 in C minor, Op. 37

8 JANUARY

Mendelssohn: Symphony for Strings No. 10 in B minor

Schubert: Symphony No. 8 in B minor "Unfinished," D759

Mendelssohn: Violin Concerto in D minor

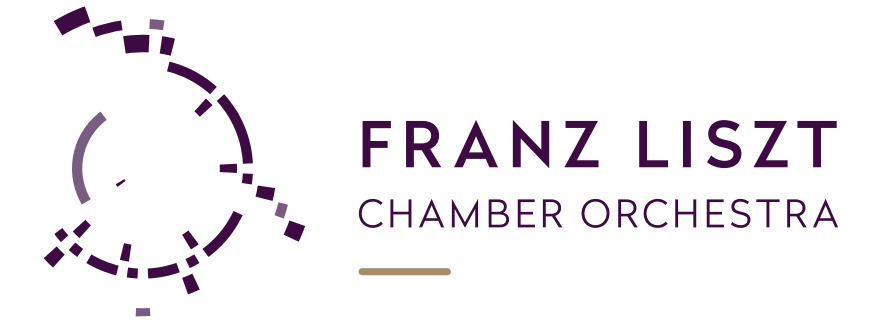
9 JANUARY

Sibelius: Rakastava, Op. 14

Grieg: Holberg Suite, Op. 40

Chopin: Piano Concerto No. 2 in F minor, Op. 21

25 JANUARY 2026
LISZT ACADEMY GRAND HALL, BUDAPEST



A Passion Woven from Sounds 2025/26

Soloist: **Cosima Soulez Larivière** (violin)

Rachmaninov: String Quartet No. 1

Tchaikovsky: Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 35

Schubert: String Quartet in D minor No. 14 "Death and the Maiden", D. 810



15 FEBRUARY 2026

MÜPA, PALACE OF ARTS - BÉLA BARTÓK NATIONAL CONCERT HALL



FRANZ LISZT
CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

English Marathon Festival by Müpa Budapest

Soloist: **István Várdai (cello)**



Elgar: Serenade for Strings in E minor, Op. 20

Elgar: Cello Concerto in E minor, Op. 85

6-7 MARCH 2026

PALACIO EUSKALDUNA JAUREGIA, BILBAO, SPAIN



FRANZ LISZT
CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Musika-Música Festival

Soloist: **István Várdai (cello)**

Haydn: Divertimento in G major, MH 173a

Mozart: Divertimento in B-flat major, K. 137

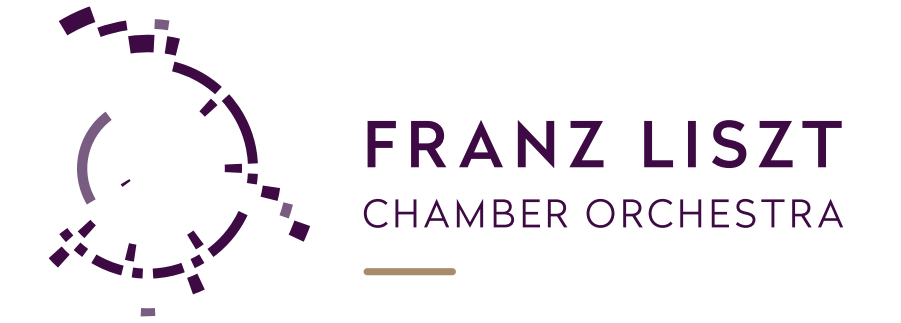
Haydn: : Cello Concerto in C major, Hob. VIIb:1

Tchaikovsky: Variations on a Rococo Theme, Op. 33

Grieg: Holberg Suite, Op. 40



8 MARCH 2026
MUSIKVEREIN, VIENNA, AUSTRIA



Spring in Vienna

Puccini | Elgar | Beethoven

Soloist: **István Várdai (cello)**

Conductor: **Michael Maciaszczyk**

Puccini: Crisantemi

Elgar: Cello Concerto in E minor, Op. 85

Beethoven: Symphony No. 7 in A major, Op. 92



20–25 APRIL 2026
RIO DE JANEIRO | SÃO PAULO



FRANZ LISZT
CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

South American Tour

Soloist: Pablo Barragán (clarinet), István Várdai (cello)

**The following works were presented
in varying selections throughout the tour.**

Mozart: Adagio and Fugue in C minor, K. 546 ; Clarinet Concerto in A major, K. 622

Bartók: Romanian Folk Dances

Khachaturian: Waltz from Masquerade

Weiner: Divertimento No. 1, Op. 20

Shostakovich: Waltz No. 2

Liszt: Mephisto Waltz No. 1 (arr. Sándor Devich)

Schubert: String Quintet in C major, D. 956

Schumann: Cello Concerto in A minor, Op. 129



15 MAY 2026

LISZT ACADEMY GRAND HALL, BUDAPEST



FRANZ LISZT
CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

A Passion Woven from Sounds 2025/26

Soloist: Ilya Gringolts (violin), István Várdai (cello),
Kirill Gerstein (piano)

Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 4 in G major, Op. 58

Beethoven: Triple Concerto in C major, Op. 56



23 MAY 2026

MÜPA, PALACE OF ARTS - BÉLA BARTÓK NATIONAL CONCERT HALL



FRANZ LISZT
CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Müpa Concert

Olli Mustonen | Haydn | Beethoven

Soloist: **Víkingur Ólafsson (piano)**

Conductor: **István Várdai**

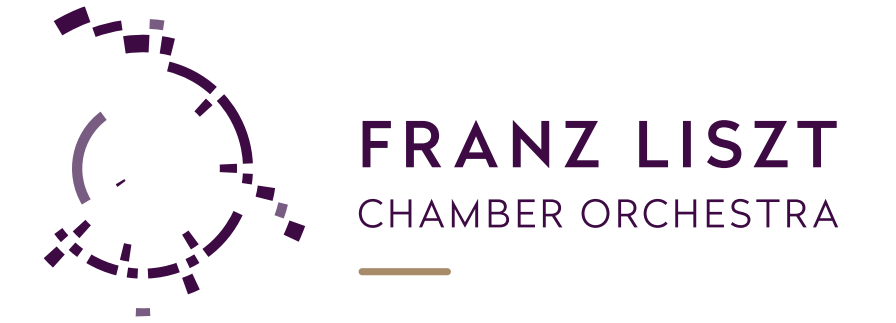
Olli Mustonen: Nonet No. 2

Haydn: Symphony in D major, Hob. I:93

Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 5 in E-flat major, Op. 73



11 JUNE 2026
SOPRON, HUNGARY



Franz Liszt Concert Series, Sopron

M. Haydn | Mozart | Beethoven | Tchaikovsky

M. Haydn: Divertimento in G major, MH 173a

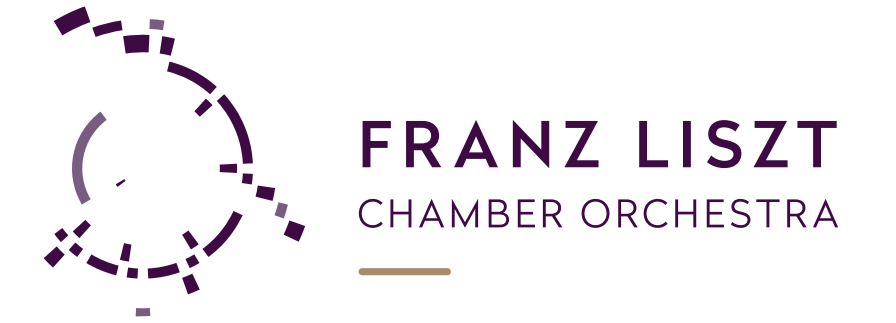
Mozart: Divertimento in B-flat major, K. 137

Beethoven: Sonata in A major, "Kreutzer", Op. 47, Movement III

Tchaikovsky: Serenade for Strings, Op. 48



11 JUNE 2026
UNION HALL, LJUBLJANA



74th Ljubljana Festival

Mozart | Mendelssohn | Tchaikovsky

Liszt | Brahms

Soloist: **Kirill Trousov (violin)**

Artistic Director, Soloist and Conductor: **István Várdai (cello)**

Mozart: Overture from Le nozze di Figaro, K. 492

Mendelssohn: Violin Concerto in E minor, Op. 64

Tchaikovsky: Variations on a Rococo Theme, Op. 33

Liszt: Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2 (arr. Péter Wolf)

Brahms: Hungarian Dances Nos. 5 and 6, WoO 1



CONTACT INFORMATION
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FRANZ LISZT

CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

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