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PRESS RELEASE

Music as Freedom. George Enescu Philharmonic Opens the 2026–2027 Season

In a world where both our humanity and freedom are being progressively worn away, the George Enescu Philharmonic opens its 2026-2027 Season at the Romanian Athenaeum with a fundamental idea at heart: music doesn't give us freedom; it reveals the freedom already within us.

The Chamber Music Season opens tonight, September 29, at the Romanian Athenaeum, with a sold-out recital featuring legendary pianist Martha Argerich, mezzo-soprano Magdalena Kožená, and pianist Iddo Bar-Shai. On October 1 and 2, the Symphonic Season begins with two sold-out concerts conducted by Mikhail Pletnev, with Martha Argerich returning to the Philharmonic stage—making her Symphonic Season debut—as a soloist.

Beyond these encounters with some of the leading artists on the international stage, the new Season offers a shared experience that is, at the same time, profoundly personal: music as a revealer of freedom.

The 2026–2027 Season video can be viewed here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Spxz69BGePU>

The full program for the 2026–2027 Season is available at
<https://www.filarmonicaenescu.ro/en/evenimente>

The 2026–2027 Symphonic Season Opening will take place on Thursday, October 1, and Friday, October 2, with two sold-out concerts conducted by **Mikhail Pletnev**, featuring **Martha Argerich** as soloist.

Mikhail Pletnev is an artist who defies simple classification. His impressive career as a conductor is primarily focused on the Russian National Orchestra, although he also appears as a guest conductor with such prestigious orchestras as the Philharmonia, the London Symphony Orchestra, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the Oslo Philharmonic, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

Firmly established as one of the great pianists of our time, Mikhail Pletnev continues to perform regularly as a soloist and recitalist in the music capitals and at major festivals of Europe, Asia, and his native Russia.

Over the years, he has collaborated with Bernard Haitink, Riccardo Chailly, Kurt Sanderling, Neeme Järvi, Herbert Blomstedt, Lorin Maazel and the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Christian Thielemann and the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Daniele Gatti and the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Libor Pešek and the Czech Philharmonic, Carlo Maria Giulini and the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, as well as Claudio Abbado and the Berlin Philharmonic.

With a remarkable career and an artistic reputation that has left a profound mark on the concert landscape, **Martha Argerich** is undoubtedly one of the most important pianists of all time. Her concert career, during which she has been invited to perform with the world's greatest orchestras and most renowned conductors, is complemented by her extensive chamber-music career. She regularly plays and records with artists such as Mischa Maisky, Alexandre Rabinovitch, Gidon Kremer, and Daniel Barenboim, giving frequent recitals and making numerous recordings. She has performed and recorded with Brazilian pianist Nelson Freire for more than 50 years, both in four-hand and two-piano repertoire.

Martha Argerich has recorded for EMI, Sony, Philips, Teldec, and Deutsche Grammophon, with many of her performances broadcast on television worldwide. Her recordings have received numerous prestigious international awards, including a Grammy Award, Gramophone – Artist of the Year and Best Piano Concerto Recording of the Year, Choc du Monde de la Musique, and Künstler des Jahres – Deutscher Schallplattenpreis. Among her three Grammy Awards is the one awarded for her recording of Prokofiev's Cinderella with Mikhail Pletnev.

The Symphonic Season Opening program brings together works by George Enescu, Sergei Prokofiev, and Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. The Concerts will open with **George Enescu's Symphonic Poem Isis**, a work recovered and completed by Pascal Bentoiu, presented in an extended version featuring the Philharmonic's Female Choir. A central moment of the concerts will be Martha Argerich's performance of **Sergei Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 3 in C major, Op. 26**. In the second half, the audience will hear **Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake Suite**, presented for the first time in Romania in an arrangement by Mikhail Pletnev.

Legendary pianist **Martha Argerich** opens the **George Enescu Philharmonic's Chamber Music Season** for the second time with a **sold-out** recital. Following her resounding success in 2024, when she performed alongside violinist Geza Hosszu-Legocky, the great Argentine artist returns **today, September 29**, to the stage of the Romanian Athenaeum, this time, joined by two other outstanding names from the international music scene: mezzo-soprano **Magdalena Kožená** and pianist **Iddo Bar-Shai**.

Mezzo-soprano **Magdalena Kožená**, an exclusive artist with Deutsche Grammophon since 1999, has made numerous recordings acclaimed by the specialist press. In 2017, Magdalena forged a long-term relationship with the Dutch label Pentatone. Her discography encompasses Baroque opera repertoire, Lieder and Czech songs, French mélodie, as well as important recital projects with pianists such as Yefim Bronfman and Mitsuko Uchida. Her recording career has earned her numerous prestigious awards, including Gramophone's Artist of the Year, the Echo Klassik, the Record Academy Prize Tokyo, and the Diapason d'Or.

Iddo Bar-Shai made his debut as a soloist with an orchestra at the age of twelve. He has won prizes at various international competitions in Israel, the United States, and France. This was followed by invitations to important international festivals such as those in Verbier, Ravinia, and La Roque d'Anthéron. He has also taken part in the La Folle Journée festival in Nantes, as well as festivals in Lisbon, Tokyo, and Rio de Janeiro. As a chamber musician, Iddo Bar-Shai has performed with the Ysaÿe Quartet, the Aviv Quartet, and the Ebène Quartet.

The Chamber Music Season Opening program has been designed to give each of the three protagonists equal prominence. The first half explores French Impressionism in two distinct forms. **Maurice Ravel's** well-known suite **Mother Goose**, inspired by fairy tales such as Sleeping Beauty, Tom Thumb, and Beauty and the Beast, will be performed in its original version for piano four hands, capturing the charm and simplicity of the childhood universe.

It is paired with a lesser-known work by **Claude Debussy, En blanc et noir**, written for two pianos during the First World War. The piece is a synthesis of his mature style, rich in rhythm and colour. **Moravian Folk Songs** by **Leoš Janáček** offer another distinctive moment in the program, evoking the sounds of the singer's homeland.

The second half of the evening returns to Romanticism, with music by **Franz Schubert** and **Robert Schumann**. Schubert's delicate and contemplative **Rondo**, composed during the final year of his short life, is followed by some of the most beloved art songs ever written, brought together by Schumann under the title **Dichterliebe (A Poet's Love)**, setting poems by Heinrich Heine and portraying 16 facets of love.

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