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# SEASON OPENING CONCERT: AN EVENING OF SCHUMANN

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# Programme

## Season Opening Concert: An Evening of Schumann

Qatar National Convention Center- Auditorium 3

Thursday, September 4, 2025

7:30 pm

Elias Grandy, conductor  
Zee Zee , piano

### Programme

Robert Alexander Schumann :  
(1810-1856)

*"Genoveva"* Overture, Op. 81

Robert Alexander Schumann :

**Piano Concerto in A Minor, Op. 54**

Allegro affettuoso

Intermezzo - Andantino grazioso

Allegro vivace

### Intermission

Robert Alexander Schumann :

**Symphony No. 2 in C Major, Op. 61**

Sostenuto assai - Allegro, ma non troppo

Scherzo: Allegro vivace

Adagio espressivo

Allegro molto vivace

Out of respect for the musicians and fellow audience members please silence your mobile phones. Applause between movements is not customary. Please also refrain from flash photography. Seating begins 30 minutes before performances. Latecomers cannot be seated during the concert. Children 6 and over are welcome at Philharmonic concerts. The Philharmonic retains the right to expel anyone disturbing other. Food and beverages can be consumed in the lobby only.



# Composers and Programme Notes



## Robert Alexander Schumann

Schumann was born in Zwickau, in the Kingdom of Saxony. His father was a novelist, publisher and bookseller. He initiated the young Robert to German poets such as Richter and Hoffmann and encouraged him to take piano classes at age 7. Robert started composing short piano pieces and spent his boyhood in the cultivation of literature as much as music. His passion for music determined his choice of making a career as a pianist but a chronic disability affected his hand, cutting short his ideas of a concert career and designating him to composition instead.

But the truth is Schumann's entire life was an oscillation between music and literature. Realising the importance of this duality sheds light on the understanding of Schumann's oeuvre. If for Chopin, music was the same essence of his existence, or for Liszt an expression of his incomparable virtuosity, it was for Schumann the substitute of the literary oeuvre that he never wrote. The music of the "literary composer" that Schumann was, excelled at painting moods, scenes and personalities and it illustrated the passionate Romanticism which dominated the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Contrary to Chopin and Liszt, Schumann did not seek inspiration in the technical possibilities of the modern piano. Schumann's originality resided in the polyphonic and rhythmic complexity of his works. Since his first two opuses—the *Abegg Variations* and *Papillons* where we find the first fusion of literary ideas with musical ones—Schumann's style was distinctly clear. Before 1837, his production was predominantly pianistic. His most famous titles of that period are *Carnaval*, *Papillons*, his sonatas No. 1

and 2, *Kreisleriana*, *Kinderszenen*, *Noveletten* and the *Fantasie* in C Major. In 1840, Schumann married his beloved Clara, the beautiful and talented virtuoso pianist, after many years of courting. After his marriage, Schumann composed 200 lieder and moved to chamber and orchestral composition. During a stay in Dresden, he wrote his second symphony (1847), *Album for the Young*, (1848), his only opera *Genoveva* (1850), a musical adaptation for *Manfred: A dramatic poem* by Lord Byron (1848-1849) and a large choral piece named *Requiem für Mignon* (1849).

After he accepted a position as conductor in Dusseldorf in 1850, Schumann composed relentlessly six Lieder based on texts by Lenau, his Cello Concerto and his Third *Rhenish* Symphony followed only one year later by the final version of his Fourth Symphony in addition to overtures, piano pieces, and two piano and violin sonatas. In 1852, and despite the rest time that Clara imposed him, he wrote *The Pilgrimage of the Rose*, his *Missa sacra* and his *Requiem*. In 1853, it was the turn of a Violin Concerto, a *Fantasy* for violin and orchestra, *Fairy Tales* for clarinet, alto and piano and his piano piece *Songs of Dawn*. But soon Schumann's destructive mental state was to drive him to attempt suicide by throwing himself from a bridge into the Rhine River. Miraculously saved, he chose to be interned into a mental asylum where he remained until he died two years later in 1856. His oratorio, *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*, was created posthumously after his death in 1862.

Schumann represents the German Romantic musician par excellence: both poetic, capricious, depressive and passionate. All of his life and musical oeuvre is the reflection of this quintessential Romanticism.

## “Genoveva” Overture, Op. 81

*Genoveva*, Op. 81, is a four-act opera in the genre of German Romanticism by Robert Schumann, with a libretto by Robert Reinick and the composer.

The only opera Schumann ever wrote, it premiered on June 25, 1850, at the Stadttheater in Leipzig, with the composer conducting.

It only received three performances during its premiere, and the negative press reaction influenced Schumann’s decision not to write a second opera.

*Genoveva* is based on the story of Genevieve of Brabant, an 8th century medieval legend based on the 13th century life of Marie of Brabant, wife of Louis II, Duke of Bavaria. The story became popular in the first half of the nineteenth century, primarily in Germany, thanks to various theatrical settings. The libretto for the opera was based on two of the settings from this time period: Ludwig Tieck’s play *Leben und Tod der heiligen Genoveva* and Christian Friedrich Hebbel’s play *Genoveva*.

The story begins when Genevieve’s husband leaves for a crusade, leaving her in the care of his trusted servant Golo. Genevieve must defend herself from Golo’s obsessive advances while Siegfried is away.

Golo plots murderous vengeance after being rebuffed repeatedly. When Siegfried learns of her alleged infidelity, he orders Genevieve’s execution; however, Golo’s treachery is revealed at the last minute, and the couple is happily reunited.

The plot of the opera shares several similarities with Wagner’s *Lohengrin*, which was written around the same time as Schumann’s *Genoveva*.

*Genoveva* never gained a large popular following, but it is revived at regular intervals around the world and has been recorded several times.

‘Schumann’s preoccupation with the interplay between his characters, incidentally, led him to adopt a system of musical imagery amazingly advanced for the time: the highly complex web of musical symbols in *Genoveva* cannot be found in Wagner until *Tristan*,’ writes Linda Siegel of the opera.

## Piano Concerto in A Minor, Op. 54

The Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 54, composed by the German Romantic musician Robert Schumann, was finalised in 1845 and stands as the sole piano concerto by the composer. The entire piece was first performed in Dresden on December 4, 1845. It is regarded as one of the most frequently performed and recorded piano concertos from the Romantic era.

1st Movement: *Allegro affettuoso*, was originally a one movement work named *Phantasie in A Minor*. Its main theme is similar to the melody of the Florestan aria from Ludwig van Beethoven’s opera *Fidelio*. The underlying idea expressed in the work is that of yearning and happiness between two lovers. The piece starts with an energetic strike by strings and timpani, followed by a fierce, descending attack by the piano. This opening theme is contrasted with a lyrical piano and clarinet duet, providing an elegant contrast between the two divergent moods. A more vigorous tune, presented by the full orchestra, offers a counterpoise to the melancholy strains of the first theme.

The piano and strings lead into this sweet and songlike 2nd Movement: *Intermezzo - Andantino grazioso* in F major with a small, delicate tune, which is heard throughout the movement before the cellos, and later, the other strings, finally take the main theme; with the piano mainly used as accompaniment. The movement closes with small glimpses of the first movement’s theme in a reworked inversion, before moving straight into the third movement: *attacca subito* (meaning no break between this and the next movement).

3rd Movement: *Allegro vivace* is a deeply intricate piece opened predominantly by the strings, the piano taking the main A major theme. Schumann shows great colour and variety in this movement. The piece finishes with a restating of the previous material before finally launching into an exciting finale, ending with a long timpani roll and a huge chord from the orchestra.

Despite its three movements, the work has retained the character of a fantasy. Schumann skillfully composed the colourful orchestral part, without diminishing the role of the piano, and managed to beautifully link both independent parts together. Clara Schumann wrote after the premiere in 1845: “... how rich in invention, how interesting from the beginning to the end, how fresh and what a beautiful coherent whole!”

## Symphony No. 2 in C Major, Op. 61

The Symphony in C major by Robert Schumann was composed in 1845-46 during a difficult phase of his life. It bares the No. 2, although Schumann had written two before it, because he abandoned second of them, the Symphony in D minor, would later become, after many revisions, his daring and unconventional Symphony No. 4. The Symphony No. 2 was first performed on November 5, 1846 in Leipzig, with Felix Mendelssohn.

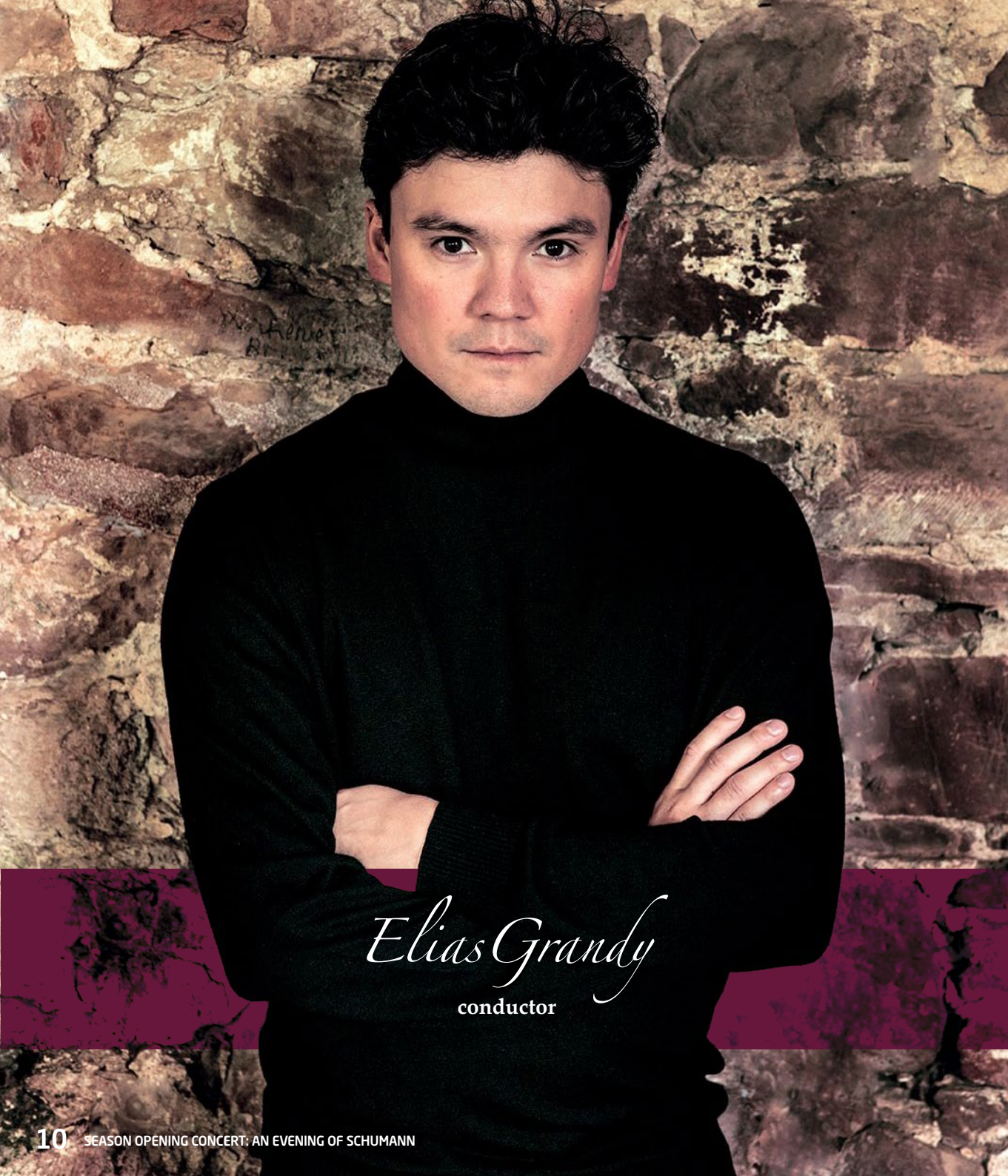
In the post-Beethoven age, a symphony crisis urged the composers to rethink its forthcoming. Schumann was not alone in wondering where the symphony's future lay. Those efforts produced important results in all of his symphonies and in much of his chamber music and piano music as well. Schumann's C Major Symphony is often considered his best symphony, even his finest orchestral work. It is characterised by the abundance and beauty of its thematic material, by the elaboration practice of musical ideas, and by the bold originality of its form.

The C major Symphony begins with a slow introduction. It provides the main theme and several subsidiary ideas for the ensuing *Allegro ma non troppo* as well as the brass fanfare that returns to crown the first three movements and to hover near the end of the symphony. At this stage of his career, Schumann no longer conceives the "musical idea" as a primal motive—like the famous four-note motto of Beethoven's Fifth—but rather as a contrapuntal combination of two distinct melodic lines. The Second Symphony begins with a "meta-motive" of precisely this kind: a solemn chorale-like melody, stated quietly by the horns, trumpets, and trombones, supported by a flowing counterpoint in the strings. Presented combined at their birth, these melodic components are developed independently as the music unfolds. This compositional process spreads across the entire four-movements of the symphony.

Following Beethoven's innovative idea in his Symphony No. 9, Schumann chooses to follow the energetic, powerful first movement not with the accustomed calm of a slow movement but with a virtuosic scherzo. And he lingers the expectations by giving us two independent trios, the first rustic and genial, and the second reminding of Bach's music.

The long-awaited slow movement does not disappoint. The *Adagio espressivo* of the Second Symphony is unforgettable, one of Schumann's most noble creations, with a long main melody and its continuation of uninterrupted, heaven-reaching serenity. The orchestration is light but full; as in the Scherzo, and the strings carry the main substance.

The Finale begins with great authority and confidence. It includes as its second theme a brilliant transformation of the principal melodic material. Then follows a very lengthy remarkable coda (half the movement's length), that nearly overshadows all that came before. It is based on a theme that is completely new to the symphony, though Schumann had used it before, in his Piano Fantasy, deliberately borrowing it from Beethoven's lieder cycle *An die ferne Geliebte (To the distant beloved)*. The bounding, triumphant Finale is overtly heroic, but it contains a deeply personal message to his beloved ever supporting wife, the pianist Clara Schumann.



*Elias Grandy*  
conductor

Elias Grandy's international profile is rapidly rising by conducting first-class orchestras and opera productions in Europe, America, and Asia.

Hailed by the press as "passionate and full of temperament", "vigorous and equally precise" and praised for his ability to "grasp psychological subtleties under a microscope", the German-Japanese conductor gave recently highly successful debuts with renowned orchestras such as the Vienna Symphony, Osaka Philharmonic and Minnesota Orchestra.

In 23/24 the energetic, charismatic conductor will return to Frankfurt Radio Symphony, National Youth Orchestra of Germany and Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Tokyo and give debuts with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte-Carlo, Norwegian Radio Orchestra, Antwerp Symphony Orchestra, Orquesta Filarmonica de Buenos Aires and the Deutsche Radio Philharmonie Saarbrücken. Furthermore, he will take the Robert-Schumann-Philharmonie Chemnitz on a tour to Poland as their "conductor in residence" for 23/24 and appear frequently with the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra with whom he enjoys a close relationship for many years.

Elias is equally devoted as an opera conductor, feeling passionately about theatre and musically shaping the narrative of each drama. In recent years he has conducted highly acclaimed productions of *Elektra* and *Carmen* at Minnesota Opera, *Werther* and *A Village Romeo and Juliet* at Frankfurt Opera, *Un ballo in maschera* at Aalto-Theatre Essen, *Carmen* at Opera Nikikai Tokyo and *Rusalka* at Portland Opera. Future engagements include the Semperoper Dresden and reinventions to Frankfurt Opera and Opera Nikikai Tokyo.

Last season he finished his tenure as music director of Heidelberg's Opera and Philharmonic orchestra where he significantly raised the caliber of both, providing thoughtful, innovative programming and burnishing the city's fast-growing reputation as a vital musical hub. Enthusiastic about making music more accessible, he introduced several highly popular concert formats for young people and an educated audience. His final season programme included Prokofjev's *Love for Three Oranges*, Bruckner's *Symphony No.7* and a series of unknown works by female composers.

Born of German-Japanese parents Elias studied cello and conducting in Munich, Basel, and Berlin.

He worked as a cellist in orchestras such as the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra and the Komische Oper Berlin. He started his conducting career as Resident Conductor at Staatstheater Darmstadt and shortly after won the prestigious Sir Georg Solti International Conducting Competition. In 2015 he was named music director in Heidelberg, a position he held until 2023.



*Zee Zee*  
piano

Recent season highlights include returning to the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Ulster Orchestra, Borusan Philharmonic Istanbul, Wigmore Hall, Macao International Music Festival, etc. She debuted with the Oxford Philharmonic at the InClassica Dubai International Music Festival and will play at Concertgebouw, Prague Spring Festival, among others.

In the past seasons, Zee Zee performed with leading orchestras worldwide including the BBC Symphony, BBC Philharmonic, London Philharmonic, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Philharmonia Orchestra, Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich, Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Minnesota Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony, Seattle Symphony, Hong Kong Philharmonic, and Shanghai Symphony Orchestra, among others. She cooperated with conductors including Marin Alsop, Charles Dutoit, Domingo Hindoyan, Paavo Järvi, Neeme Järvi, Julian Rachlin, Yan Pascal Tortelier, Yu Long and Xian Zhang.

Zee Zee has given notable recitals, including at the Wigmore Hall in London, Kennedy Center in Washington DC, Lincoln Center in New York, Vancouver Recital Society and Hong Kong's Premiere Performances, and has appeared at festivals such as MiTo Festival, Lucerne Festival - Klavier - Festival Ruhr - BBC Proms - the Gilmore Festival, Aspen Music Festival among others, Zee Zee was a BBC New Generation Artist in 2013-2015.

A passionate chamber musician, Zee Zee is a founding member of the Z.E.N. Trio, alongside violinist Esther Yoo and cellist Narek Hakhnazaryan. The trio released two albums under Deutsche Gramophone, and regularly tour throughout the world.

In October 2019, Zee Zee released her first album under Deutsche Gramophone, featuring Ravel's Piano Concerto in G and Liszt's Piano Concerto No. 2 with Paavo Järvi and the Philharmonia Orchestra, the second one, a highly-acclaimed solo album <journey> under Decca Classics featuring works from Wagner, Schönberg and Liszt is released in May 2022.

Zee Zee is the founder and the artistic director of the Z+ music festival, which takes place annually in Spring in Shanghai and is one of the biggest and most-acclaimed chamber music festivals in Asia.

# Upcoming Concerts

## Qatar Philharmonic Presents: Spanish Impressions

Qatar National Convention Centre, Auditorium 3  
Thursday, 11 September 2025  
7:30 pm

Elias Grandy, conductor  
Hassan Moataz El Molla, cello

Experience an evening of vivid musical storytelling as conductor Elias Grandy leads the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra in a programme bursting with rhythm and flair. The concert opens with Friedrich Gulda's genre-defying Concerto for Cello and Wind Orchestra, performed by QPO's Hassan Moataz El Molla, a dazzling fusion of classical tradition with jazz, funk, and improvisation. After the intermission, the orchestra turns to the vibrant spirit of Spain with Manuel de Falla's evocative Three-Cornered Hat Suites, brimming with folkloric energy and theatrical drama. The evening concludes with Rimsky-Korsakov's brilliant Capriccio Espagnol, a virtuosic showcase of orchestral colour inspired by Spanish melodies and dances.

### PROGRAMME:

**Friedrich Gulda:**

**Concerto for Cello and Wind Orchestra**

### INTERMISSION

**Manuel de Falla:**

***El sombrero de tres picos* (Three-Cornered Hat) Suite No. 1  
*El sombrero de tres picos* (Three-Cornered Hat) Suite No. 2**

**Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov:**

***Capriccio Espagnol*, Op.34**

# Musicians



LIONEL SCHMIT



JOO YOUNG OH



VITALII PERVUSHYN



LORENA MANESCU



DMITRI TORCHINSKY



TOBIAS GETTE



MICHAELA LINSBAUER



TAEHYUN KIM



ANNEMARI AINOMAE



DINA LEINI



PAVLO DOVHAN



RALUCA GETTE



ANA MARIA RUSU



FULVIO FURLANÙ



ROLANDA GINKUTE



MAIAS ALYAMANI



REEM KHOURY



GEORGES YAMINE



ISLAM EL HEFNAWY



SHAZA OWEDA



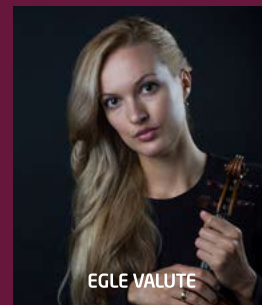
JULIA KORODI



ANNE-CATHRIN EHRLICH



MOHAMED OWEDA



EGLÉ VALUTE



GIOVANNI PASINI

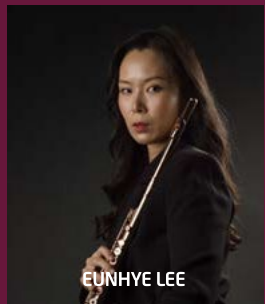


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# Musicians



# Musicians



MIROSLAV STOYANOV



PETER DAVIDA



GIDEON SEIDENBERG



ATILLA SZÜCS



ZSOLT PÉTER



LASZLO FROSCHL



JORIS LAENEN



DANIEL EDELHOFF



PHILIPP REBMANN



TOMOKI KIRITA



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RICHARD ALBERTO DIAZ



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