

MOSCOW STATE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



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KEYNOTES

WELCOME!

State Theatre New Jersey is delighted to welcome you to this concert by the Moscow State Symphony Orchestra. These *Keynotes* provide helpful information and some fun details to make the concert a memorable experience—one that we hope nourishes a lifelong love of classical music.

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Founded in 1943 by the Kremlin, the Moscow State Symphony Orchestra (MSSO) is one of the oldest symphony orchestras in Russia. The orchestra has become one of the nation's most prominent symphonic ensembles, known in the beginning for its performances of Russian and Soviet classical music—including premieres of works by Myaskovsky, Prokofiev, Shostakovich, and Glière.

In 1989, Pavel Kogan became Music Director and Chief Conductor of the MSSO. He broadened the ensemble's repertoire to include European and American classics. Under his leadership, the orchestra has become celebrated for high standards of artistic excellence, imaginative programming, and community engagement, earning it a broad and loyal following around the world.

Among the orchestra's accomplishments, it has presented cycles of complete symphonic works by Brahms, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, R. Strauss, Mendelssohn, Mahler, Bruckner, Sibelius, Dvořák, Tchaikovsky, Glazunov, Rachmaninoff, Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Scriabin, Berlioz, Debussy, and Ravel. The orchestra's wide-ranging programs combine great orchestral, operatic, and choral classics with significant music of the 21st century, including many forgotten or neglected works.

The MSSO plays some 100 concerts annually. Along with the series in the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory and in Tchaikovsky Concert Hall, the orchestra performs in the Great Hall of the Saint-Petersburg D.D. Shostakovich Philharmonic Society, and on the stages of many other Russian cities. The MSSO tours regularly overseas, to countries including the U.S., U.K., Japan, Spain, Austria, Italy, Germany, France, South Korea, Australia, China, and Switzerland.

The Moscow State Symphony Orchestra also has a long and distinguished history of studio and live recordings, and television and radio broadcasts. In the early 1990s, Russian television released the documentary *Travels with the Orchestra*, about the MSSO and Pavel Kogan's tour in Europe and Saint Petersburg. Their recording of the Rachmaninoff cycle, which includes all the symphonies and symphonic dances, has become a chart-topping album.

The MSSO has a proud history of collaborating with eminent conductors and soloists, including Evgeny Svetlanov, Kirill Kondrashin, Aleksandr Orlov, Natan Rahlin, Samuil Samosud, Valery Gergiev, David Oistrakh, Emil Gilels, Leonid Kogan, Vladimir Sofronitsky, Sergei Lemeshev, Ivan Kozlovsky, Svyatoslav Knushevitskyi, Svyatoslav Richter, Mstislav Rostropovich, and Daniil Shafran.



PAVEL KOGAN

With a career spanning more than 40 years and five continents, Pavel Kogan has become one of the most respected and widely recognized Russian conductors of our time. He was born into a distinguished musical family: his parents are legendary violinists Leonid

Kogan and Elizaveta Gilels, and his uncle is the inimitable pianist Emil Gilels. From an early age Maestro Kogan's artistic development was divided between conducting and violin. He was granted special permission to study both disciplines at the same time—an extreme rarity in the Soviet Union. In 1970, at 18 years of age, he won first prize in the Sibelius Violin Competition in Helsinki, which launched his career. He went on to perform at concert halls around the world.

In 1972, he made his conducting debut with the USSR State Symphony Orchestra, and subsequently turned his focus to conducting. In the years that followed, he conducted the leading Soviet orchestras both at home and abroad. As conductor of the Bolshoi Opera, Maestro Kogan opened the 1988 season with a new production of Verdi's *La traviata*. That same year he became the head of the Zagreb Philharmonic Orchestra. In 1989, he was appointed the Music Director and Chief Conductor of the eminent Moscow State Symphony Orchestra (MSSO), and has since built it into one of Russia's most widely-known and highly-acclaimed orchestras.

Maestro Kogan has appeared with many prominent orchestras, among them the St. Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra, Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Staatskapelle Dresden, Orquesta Filarmónica de Buenos Aires, L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Orchestre National de France, and the Houston Symphony. He served as principal guest conductor of the Utah Symphony Orchestra from 1998-2005.

Pavel Kogan has recorded numerous works with the MSSO and other ensembles, many of which have won acclaim from critics and listeners alike. He is a member of the Russian Academy of

Arts, recipient of the "Order of Merit" of Russia, the "Peoples' Artist of Russia" award, and is a Chevalier de L'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, among many other international accolades.



DMITRY MASLEEV

Winner of the 2015 International Tchaikovsky Competition, Dmitry Masleev has gone on to make a series of notable debuts on the international stage. His Munich debut at the Philharmonie led to two additional engagements, including a performance of Prokofiev's piano sonatas

streamed live by medici.tv, and Beethoven's First Piano Concerto with the Munich Symphony Orchestra. His appearance at the Klavier-Festival Ruhr was followed by recital invitations from the Rheingau Musik Festival, Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, and Kissinger Sommer. Mr. Masleev made his Berlin debut with Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* with the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra.

At the invitation of Valery Gergiev, he performed the first three Prokofiev piano sonatas with the Philharmonie am Gasteig. Mr. Masleev's other orchestral appearances include a German tour with the National Philharmonic of Russia and concerts with the Bamberg Symphony, the Philharmonie de Paris, Festival International de Piano de La Roque-d'Anthéron, Festival Pianoscope Beauvais, the Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France. He made his Carnegie Hall debut in January 2017 with a recital program featuring works by Scarlatti, Beethoven, Liszt, Rachmaninoff, and Prokofiev.

Among Mr. Masleev's other credits are a solo recital at the Fondation Louis Vuitton, duo recitals in Moscow with Boris Berezovsky, and an artist residency with the Stuttgart Radio Symphony Orchestra.

Born and raised in Ulan-Ude (a Siberian town between Lake Baikal and the Mongolian border), Mr. Masleev was educated at the Moscow Conservatory and at the International Music Academy at Lake Como.

The program book (or playbill) contains helpful information about the performance. It lists the pieces the orchestra will play in the order they will play them. It tells you the name of each piece, the name of the composer, and the movement headings. If you're not familiar with a piece, the program will help you keep track of what's going on and know when the piece is finished. The program page for the Moscow State Symphony Orchestra's concert looks like this:

MOVEMENT - a section within a musical piece, like a chapter in a book. Movements are usually referred to by the tempo marking that the composer has written at the beginning of the section. At the concert, it is considered polite not to applaud between the movements—wait until the entire piece is finished.

 = It's okay to applaud here.

KEY - the group of notes (called a scale) that are used in a piece of music. The name of the key tells you which note is the most important note in the scale. Scales can be major or minor, depending on what other notes are in the scale.

NUMBER - When a composer writes two or more works of the same type (for example, a symphony), each one is given a number. Looking at the program page for this concert, we know that we will be hearing the first piano concerto that Tchaikovsky wrote and the second symphony that Scriabin wrote.

OPUS NUMBER - Opus means an artistic work. Lists of all the works by a composer are usually put in order according to when each piece was published—not when it was written. So, the lower the opus number, the earlier a piece of the composer's music was published. For example, Tchaikovsky's Op. 20 (*Swan Lake*), was written in 1876, while his Op. 23 (*Piano Concerto No. 1*), was written in 1875. Though he wrote the concerto a year earlier than the ballet score, the concerto has a higher opus number because it was published after the ballet score.

Sun, November 12, 2017 at 3pm

MOSCOW STATE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

PAVEL KOGAN, principal conductor
DMITRY MASLEEV, piano soloist

Sergei Rachmaninoff



COMPOSER

The Rock, Op. 7

OPUS NUMBER

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 1 in B-flat minor, Op. 23

- I. Allegro non troppo e molto maestoso (*not too fast, and very majestic*)
- II. Andantino semplice (*Moderately slow*)
- III. Allegro con fuoco (*Very fast, passionately*)



Dmitry Masleev, piano soloist

—Intermission—

Symphony No. 2 in C minor, Op. 29

KEY

NUMBER

Alexander Scriabin

- I. Andante (*Moderately slow*)
- II. Allegro (*Fast*)
- III. Andante (*Moderately slow*)
- IV. Tempestoso (*Stormily*)
- V. Maestoso (*Majestically*)



MOVEMENTS

PROGRAM SUBJECT TO CHANGE

UNDERWRITTEN BY



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Sergei Rachmaninoff *The Rock*, Op. 7

In the summer of 1893, the 20-year-old Rachmaninoff went to stay at the country home of friends. They had built him a little cottage where he could compose without interrupted. One of the pieces he wrote that summer was a short piece for orchestra, whose English title is *The Rock*. The composer Tchaikovsky, who had helped and encouraged Rachmaninoff, liked the

piece so much that he announced that he would conduct the first performance the following year. But Tchaikovsky died unexpectedly that November—a terrible disappointment for Rachmaninoff. *The Rock* had its premiere performance in Moscow the following March.

We don't know exactly what inspired *The Rock*, since Rachmaninoff gave two different explanations. He wrote a note on the score saying that the piece was inspired by Mikhail Lermontov's poem, "Utyos" ("The Rock.") He quoted these lines from the poem:

*A little golden cloud slept one night
On the breast of the giant rock*

Several years later, though, Rachmaninoff said that the real inspiration for this music was a short story by Anton Chekhov called "On a Journey." In the story, two travelers meet in a lonely inn on a stormy Christmas Eve. One is a beautiful and charming young woman, the other a sad old man. She listens to his troubles, then departs the next morning. Alone with his sorrows, the old man stands outside in the falling snow. Slowly, he is completely covered with snow, until he becomes a motionless white lump; he looks just like a white rock.

Though you can hear music that sounds like the snowstorm and the two characters, Rachmaninoff was not trying to tell the story through music. Instead, he wanted *The Rock* to bring out the different emotions inspired by Chekhov's story. The piece begins with rough-sounding cellos and double basses, followed by the bassoon; they represent the storm outside and the gruff old man. Then you can hear the light voice of the lively young woman, in a bright, delicate flute solo, followed by music that sounds like the whistling and rushing snowstorm. These different parts intermingle, and the mood brightens, with colorful woodwinds and strings. The music builds to a powerful climax, as the old man watches the girl disappear into the distance, leaving him sad and hopeless. With two sighs, the music finally fades into lonely silence.

RACHMANINOFF FACTS

- Sergei Vasilievich Rachmaninoff was born April 1, 1873, in Oneg, Russia. He died in Beverly Hills, California, on March 28, 1943.
- Rachmaninoff was a child prodigy as both a composer and pianist.
- He fled the Russian Revolution in 1917, and eventually emigrated to the U.S. He became a citizen in 1943.
- Besides being a famous composer, he was one of the great concert pianists of his time, and a sought-after conductor.
- He had huge hands that could span 12 piano keys from the tip of his little finger to the tip of his thumb. His compositions for piano showed off his enormous reach, but are fiendishly difficult for pianists with more conventionally-sized hands.
- He composed four piano concertos, three operas, a great number of songs and piano pieces, and many works in other genres.
- Rachmaninoff married his first cousin, Natalya Satina, even though it was against the law in Russia.
- A theme from the second movement of his second Piano Concerto appears in the ballad "All By Myself" (1975) by Eric Carmen. The song has been covered by the likes of Frank Sinatra, Sheryl Crow, and Celine Dion.



Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 1 in B-flat minor, Op. 23

In 1874, Tchaikovsky was teaching at the Moscow Conservatory, but his real desire was to write music. That winter, he began composing a piano concerto, hoping it would be successful enough that he could give up his teaching job.

When the Concerto was finished, he played it for Nicholas Rubinstein, the Director of

the Conservatory. Rubinstein told him the piece was terrible. Tchaikovsky was devastated. Years later, he still remembered Rubinstein's harsh judgement:

I played the first movement....a torrent poured forth from Nicolai....My concerto was worthless and unplayable....The piece as a whole was bad, trivial, vulgar. It was so clumsy, so badly written that it was beyond rescue. An impartial witness would have concluded that I was an untalented idiot. "I shall not change a single note," I answered. "I shall publish it just as it is," and I did.

Tchaikovsky then showed the Concerto to the pianist and conductor Hans von Bülow, who called it "original, noble and powerful." Bülow presented the work in Boston on October 25, 1875. It was a huge hit. Rubinstein eventually admitted he had been wrong, and even started performing the Concerto himself throughout Russia. Tchaikovsky himself conducted the work at one of the very first concerts played at Carnegie Hall. It is now one of the most popular piano concertos ever written.

The Concerto, written in three movements. The first movement lasts nearly 25 minutes—more than the length of the two other movements combined. It opens with the grand, sweeping melody that is one of the most beloved in all of classical music. Then Tchaikovsky presents two contrasting themes—one gentle and romantic, and the other based on a Ukrainian folk song that he once heard a blind beggar singing in the street.

The second movement is tender, opening with muted pizzicato strings. Then the solo flute presents the main melody. The piano frolics playfully, then soon the violas and cellos join in with a waltzing melody: the French song "Il faut s'amuser, danser et rire" ("One must have fun, dance and laugh"), which was a favorite of Désirée Artôt, to whom Tchaikovsky was briefly engaged.

The whirlwind finale is again based upon a Ukraine folk tune, a galloping dance made up of many short phrases. A graceful, romantic melody reappears towards the end, capped by the soloist and orchestra's breathless race to the finish.

TCHAIKOVSKY FACTS

- Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky was born May 7, 1840, in Votkinsk, Russia. He died in Saint Petersburg, Russia, on November 6, 1893.
- Though Tchaikovsky was a musical prodigy, his parents sent him to a school that trained boys for civil service careers.
- He later studied composition at the St. Petersburg Conservatory.
- He composed in a wide range of genres: symphonies, concertos, operas, ballets (most famously, *Nutcracker*), chamber music, piano music, and more.
- Tchaikovsky had a wealthy patroness, Nadezhda von Meck, who provided him with emotional and financial support for 13 years. She insisted that they never meet face-to-face; they developed a close relationship through letters—over 1,200 of them.
- Throughout his life, Tchaikovsky struggled with depression and writer's block.
- The circumstances surrounding Tchaikovsky's death (at age 53) are hotly debated. The official cause was listed as cholera from drinking contaminated water, but many believe it was suicide.
- In 1941, the opening melody from his Piano Concerto No. 1 was used in a popular song, "Tonight We Love," with lyrics by bandleader Freddy Martin.



Alexander Scriabin Symphony No. 2 in C minor, Op. 29

Following the negative reaction to his First Symphony, Scriabin stated, “I will show them that I have something more to say.” The following year, he produced his Symphony No. 2, which premiered in Moscow in 1902. This symphony, too, was received with boos and catcalls. The composer Anton Arensky wrote to a colleague that “[Scriabin] should have called it ‘cacophony,’ not Symphony. One dissonance after another piles up without a single thought behind it”.

Today, it is hard to see what all the fuss was about. The Second Symphony is fairly traditional, especially compared to some of Scriabin’s other compositions, but it still had some unconventional characteristics. It has five movements (rather than the usual four), that are laid out as a three-part structure: the first and second are played without a break, as are the fourth and fifth. These two linked pairs stand on either side of a long slow movement. Unusually, each movement is set in a different key. The first movement introduces central thematic ideas that will shape the movements that follow: a dynamic Allegro; an atmospheric and lyrical slow movement colored by the sounds of birdcalls; a tempestuous and driven scherzo; and a grand triumphant finale.

While the Second Symphony is still grounded in the spirit of the 19th-century masters Scriabin revered, it is also the work of a composer with his own distinctive voice; to this day, no other music sounds quite like Scriabin’s. Although he never spoke of any overt subject or narrative for his Second Symphony, the sequence of movements and the transformation of the musical themes suggest an early attempt to express in music the mystical ideas that were beginning to take hold of him. These would soon lead him to declare that “the external world is the result of my subjective spiritual activity,” and later, that “I am the apotheosis of creation—I am the aim of all aims—I am the end of all ends.” Out of this monstrous self-aggrandizement, he created a musical language that made him one of the most radical composers of his time.

Scriabin isn’t the sort of composer whom you’d regard as your daily bread, but is a heavy liqueur on which you can get drunk periodically, a poetical drug, a crystal that’s easily broken.

—Sviatoslav Richter (pianist)

SCRIABIN FACTS

- Scriabin was born December 25, 1871, in Moscow, Russia. He died in Moscow on April 14, 1915.
- Scriabin’s mother, a concert pianist, died when he was only one year old. He started studying the piano when he was very young.
- One of Scriabin’s classmates at the Moscow Conservatory was Sergei Rachmaninoff.
- Scriabin began his career as a professional concert pianist, even though he had very small hands. Whereas Rachmaninoff could span 12 piano keys with one hand, Scriabin could barely reach nine.
- His earliest compositions were fairly traditional, but later he developed a radical, innovative style.
- Scriabin had unconventional, grandiose ideas about art, religion, mysticism, and the supernatural. He conceived a monumental performance piece to be performed in the Himalaya Mountains—with music, scent, dance, and light—that would bring about the end and rebirth of the world.
- He created a system in which musical notes represented different colors.
- Scriabin died from a blood infection resulting from a sore on his upper lip.
- Though he was famous and influential during his lifetime, Scriabin was quickly forgotten after his death. His most enduring works are his piano compositions.