

Dmitry Masleev

WEDNESDAY | JULY 13 | 8 PM
THE BREAKERS



This concert is dedicated to **Ms. Virginia Gambale and Dr. Austin Feeny** in recognition of their generous support of Newport Classical.

Dmitry Masleev, piano

TCHAIKOVSKY *The Seasons, op. 37a*

January: By the Fireside
February: Carnival
March: The Song of the Lark
April: Snowdrop
May: White Nights
June: Barcarolle

July: The Reaper's Song
August: The Harvest
September: The Hunt
October: Autumn Song
November: In the Troika
December: Christmas

(Approximate duration 40 minutes)

INTERMISSION

RAVEL Sonatine

(Approximate duration 4 minutes)

RAVEL *À la manière de Borodine*, M. 63/1

(Approximate duration 2 minutes)

SCRIABIN Etude in C-sharp Minor, op. 2, no. 1

(Approximate duration 3 minutes)

KHACHATURIAN Adagio from Ballet Spartacus

(Approximate duration 8 minutes)

RACHMANINOFF Sonata No. 2 in B-flat Minor, op. 36

Allegro agitato

Non allegro. Lento

Allegro molto

(Approximate duration 25 minutes)

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893): The Seasons, Op. 37a

Tchaikovsky composed *The Seasons* as a commission from Nikolai Bernard, publisher of the monthly musical magazine *Novelliste*. Tchaikovsky was to provide a piece for each of the magazine's twelve issues reflecting the sense of the month in which it was published. Honoring Bernard's request, he wrote *January: (At the Fireside)*, with its tinge of regret,

and *February (Carnival)* with its festive feeling. *March (The Song of the Lark)* seems to suggest the question of when winter will end, while *April (Snowdrop)* brings springtime but with its many variations. *May (Starlight nights)* is a sweet and lively follow up to April. The Chopin-like *June (Barcarolle)*, with its mixture happiness and sadness, has become the most popular of the set. *July: The Reapers Song* is appropriately varied in its joyous mood swings, while *August (The Harvest)* suggests a concentrated work time. *September: The Hunt* has a fanfare reminiscent of the music that accompanied that undertaking. *October: An Autumn Song* almost stands alone in the set with its sense of sadness. *November: In the Troika* is playful and bright, while *December: Christmas* is, as we might expect, a charming waltz. Tchaikovsky's ability to catch all these moods in one piano work is remarkable.

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937): *Modéré* from *Sonatine*

In considering the music of Maurice Ravel, it is well to remember that he was a student of Fauré, that most subtle and refined of French composers whose fame pales next to that of his famous student. But surely it is this heritage that accounts, at least in part, for the meticulous craftsmanship of Ravel's work. Craftsmanship, however, seems ironic in light of Ravel's comment, "Music, I feel must be emotional first and intellectual second." Perhaps it is the combination of the two that is the key to the ravishing quality of Ravel's music.

Despite the waning of traditional sonata form at the beginning of the 20th century, Ravel honored it in his *Sonatine* of 1904. Yet his take on it is completely original and heard through a veil of French coloration. The beautiful melody of the first movement grows in excitement and tension. This is not the ominous Ravel of *La Valse*, yet the *Sonatine* still bears an indefinable dark edge.

Ravel himself gave the first performance of the work on June 16, 1904.

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937): *À la manière de Borodin*, M. 63/1

Ravel composed this brief piece in 1913 as a contribution to an anthology by Alfredo Casella of works written in the style of other composers. Ravel much admired Borodin and thus chose to treat him in this work entitled "In the Manner of Borodin." It is a melodic and even playful work that grows in strength with a powerful moment before a simple and quiet ending.

Alexander Scriabin (1872-1915): *Étude in C-sharp Minor*, Op. 2, No. 1

Scriabin studied both piano and composition at the Moscow Conservatory with Anton Arensky, Sergei Taneyev, and Vasily Safonov. While he received special honors in piano performance, he did not complete a degree in composition because of his disagreements with Arensky about compositional form. After graduating, his career as a pianist flourished despite an injury to his right hand which encouraged him to focus on composing. From 1898 to 1904, he taught at the Moscow Conservatory where he also concentrated on composition. Scriabin left Russia to live in Switzerland and Paris but returned in 1909 and remained there permanently until his death in 1915 at the age of forty-three.

Scriabin's works are generally divided into three periods. The works up to 1903 are flavored with the Romantic tradition we associate with Chopin and Liszt. That is not to say, however, that Scriabin's singular voice was not already present. He is quoted as having said of himself in 1903: "I was once a Chopinist, then a Wagnerist, now I am only a Scriabinist."

The Étude in C-sharp Minor, Op. 2 was composed in 1887 when Scriabin was only fifteen but is considered one of his earliest successes. The rich harmonies and moving melody of the work also smack of Russian Gypsy music.

Aram Khachaturian (1903-1978): Adagio from Ballet *Spartacus*

Soviet-Armenian composer Aram Khachaturian is well-known for his ballet music, and within that category *Spartacus*, composed in 1954, is surely the most acclaimed. From that ballet music, we hear the stunning piano transcription of the *Adagio* with its familiar melody that becomes powerful and complex in its treatment for piano. For this piece, Khachaturian won the Stalin Prize in 1959.

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943): Piano Sonata No. 2 in B-Flat Minor, Op. 36

Rachmaninoff had moved to Dresden in 1909 but spent the summers at Ivanovka, a family estate in Russia. It was there, in 1913, that he wrote the Second Piano Sonata. His first version of it was so monumental in scope and difficulty that he decided to revise it in 1931. Vladimir Horowitz took exception to the revision and offered a version in 1940 that was a combination of Rachmaninoff's two, a suggestion that Rachmaninoff employed.

Even in its revised form, however, the Second Sonata remains immense in its demands for the pianist. It seems to reach all the dimensions of the vertical and the horizontal. In the first movement, for example, huge chordal passages are interspersed with great sweeps of Romantic melody. The poignant second movement grows in intensity to a resounding climax. The third movement, like the first, seems a war between opposing moods, although its conclusion has a positive ring. ©2022 Lucy Murray

Dmitry Masleev

“Super-soloist” is the way France Musique introduced Dmitry Masleev when he made his debut with the Orchestre National de France playing the Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 1, the work that helped launch his international career, when he won the 2015 Tchaikovsky International Piano Competition in Moscow.

Dmitry's solo recital debut at the Philharmonie de Paris with a program of Russian and French music was a tremendous success, with two encores offered to a nearly sold-out audience and a series of glowing reviews from France's toughest critics.

North America fell in love with Dmitry Masleev when he made his Carnegie Hall recital debut at the Isaac Stern Auditorium in January 2017 and repeated the same program at Toronto's Koerner Hall in March. In 2018, he toured coast-to-coast with the Moscow State Symphony and Pavel Kogan. Annual visits to South America have established Dmitry as an audience favorite in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, and Ecuador. This season Dmitry collaborates with Allegro HD, the main arts and culture TV network of the continent, to deliver music to his fans despite the travel restrictions.

Dmitry regularly performs in the Asian capitals, both with orchestras such as Seoul Philharmonic, New Japanese Philharmonic, and National Symphony Orchestra of Taiwan, as well as in recital. A solo recital tour of China and Japan is planned for this season, along with a return to Taipei for a performance with NSO Taiwan and Joshua Weilerstein.

Born and raised in Ulan-Ude (a Siberian town between Lake Baikal and the Mongolian border), Dmitry was educated at the Moscow Conservatory in the class of Professor Mikhail Petukhov, and at the International Music Academy at Lake Como.