

Natasha Paremski

SATURDAY | JULY 2 | 8 PM
THE BREAKERS



This concert is dedicated to **Suzanna and John Laramee** in recognition of their generous support of Newport Classical.

Natasha Paremski, piano

CHOPIN Barcarolle in F-sharp Major, Op. 60
(Approximate duration 9 minutes)

CHOPIN Mazurkas in B Major, Op. 63, No. 1
(Approximate duration 3 minutes)

THOMAS ADES Mazurka Op. 27, No. 1: Moderato, molto rubato
(Approximate duration 2 minutes)

CHOPIN Mazurkas in F minor, Op. 63, No. 2
(Approximate duration 2 minutes)

THOMAS ADES Mazurka Op. 27, No. 3: Grave, maestoso
(Approximate duration 4 minutes)

CHOPIN Mazurkas in F-sharp Major, Op. 63, No. 3
(Approximate duration 3 minutes)

CHOPIN Scherzo No. 3 in C-sharp minor, Op. 39
(Approximate duration 7 minutes)

INTERMISSION

PROKOFIEV Sonata No. 6 in A Major, Op. 82
I. Allegro moderato
II. Allegretto
III. Tempo di valzer, lentissimo
IV. Vivace
(Approximate duration 26 minutes)

Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849): Barcarolle in F-sharp Major, Op. 60

When Frederic Chopin completed the Barcarolle, the last work of its relatively large size to come from his pen, he was already laid low by the fatal illness that three years later would take his life. He must have had deep affection for the piece, for he included it on the program of a concert he gave in Paris, February 16, 1848, his last appearance in his loved adopted city. Reports of the event tell of this physically depleted man unable to play much above the level of pianissimo even in the Barcarolle's most expansive sections, a depressing experience for his many friends in the audience. The Barcarolle is the single work of its type in his catalog, which is not surprising considering the limitations imposed by the necessity to maintain a "boat" accompaniment and to invent suitably artless – gondoliere – melodies. In light of these specific guidelines, Chopin has created a composition of remarkable continuity and diversity having, in this temperate context, unexpected dramatic intensity in a soaring climax.

Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849): Mazurkas, Op. 63

The last set of Chopin's mazurkas, Op. 63, was published in 1847, and for all the hidden complexity, there is a return to the earlier feeling of charming simplicity so apparent in the mazurkas of his youth. The opening Vivace is rhythmic and full of rustic flourishes, contrasted by interruptions of a rather simple melodic idea. There is much repetition throughout, with accents on the second and third beats, and a feeling of animation and excitement contrasting with warmth and simplicity. The B major work is vivacious, with a fascinating contour.

Written in 1846 and published in 1847, Chopin wrote this Mazurkas No. 2 in F minor just a few years before his passing in 1849. It is the second of three called "Trois Mazurkas", which was written for Madame la Comtesse L. Czosnowska. Marked Lento, this second installment is melancholy and pensive in its character. The mastery of lyricism one would expect from Chopin is certainly present, along with subtle nuances within the inner voices.

Opus 63, No. 3 is the best known of the set. It is the most waltz-like of these three mazurkas, and its minor mode sections are strikingly similar in spirit to the well-known C-sharp minor Waltz, Op.64 No.2. The Mazurka's brief D-flat major interlude is more exploratory harmonically, migrating seamlessly back to the more sorrowful B minor. Chopin introduces a canonic countermelody in his coda that, combined with the rhythmic displacement of a hemiola, allows for a dramatic close.

Thomas Adès (b. 1971): Mazurka, Op. 27

Thomas Adès composed his Mazurkas in 2009 at the behest of the pianist Emanuel Ax. The result, jointly commissioned by Carnegie Hall, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the San Francisco Symphony, London's Barbican Centre, and the Concertgebouw, was Three Mazurkas. Adès opted for the same Polish dance that Chopin favored above all others, filtering his mazurkas through the lens of a 21st-century aesthetic. In the First Mazurka, persistent dotted rhythms reinforce the dance's personality, but the musical language is highly chromatic. We have little sense of any tonal center until the very end. Adès plays with meter and rubato, allowing for the insertion of occasional bars that are in duple or an irregular meter, rather than the consistent triple meter of a traditional mazurka.

Adès's Third Mazurka, by contrast to the previous two, feel like controlled pointillist melancholy. The texture is spare, emphasizing the distance separating three registers of the piano: uppermost, lowermost, and the center of the keyboard. Rather than focusing on the triple meter, Adès here dwells in spatial uncertainty. We feel unmoored, flung to these far reaches. This Mazurka asks more questions than it answers.

Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849): Scherzo No. 3 in C-sharp minor, Op. 39

The Third Scherzo opens with an almost Lisztian introduction, leading to a subject in octaves of pent-up energy. The key changes to D-flat major, with a choralelike subject, interspersed with delicate falling arpeggios. Louis Kentner thinks of it as "a Wagnerian melody of astonishing beauty, recalling the sound of tubas, harps and all the apocalyptic orchestra of Valhalla." This is the most terse, ironic, and tightly constructed of the four scherzos, with an almost Beethovenian grandeur. The finger-bursting coda rises to emotional HEIGHTS, bringing the score to a rhetorical ending.

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953): Sonata No. 6 in A Major, Op. 82

The Piano Sonata No. 6 in A major, Op. 82 was first performed on April 8, 1940, in Moscow. The first performer other than the composer was Sviatoslav Richter. The young pianist relates: "I was astonished by the amazing clarity of style and the perfect construction of this music. I have never heard anything like this before. With a barbaric boldness the composer breaks with the romantic role models to give life to his music with the devastating urges of the twentieth century." The word "barbaric" is actually not inappropriate for this music. Here, Prokofiev, undoubtedly impressed by the world in war, gets into a kind of violence in his musical language as well as a sort of radicalism unseen in his works since he returned to the USSR.

Allegro moderato

The theme, in alternating minor - major thirds is hard, nervous, and sharp edged. It is also one of the most characteristic ones of the composer. After a section of alternating octaves and chords in both hands, piano, a second theme appears with an amazing purity and softness. A tender melody in unison at both hands. The *écriture*, from linear, becomes gradually compacted and tormented. Troubling triplets at the low range conclude the exposition section of the movement.

In the development section, the mixture of threads and anxious drives is expressed with repeated notes. The dramatic content of this section is based on the opposition of the lyrical second theme always scattered with the "demoniacal" thirds which constitute the main element of the first theme. The cruelty of the discourse raises with harsh chords and glissandos. Then the tension falls to more serene harmonies and the development section also ends with the staccato triplet figures at the basses. The shortened re-exposition, taken one octave lower, re-states all those chaotic visions.

Allegretto

The second movement, in E major, is somewhat relaxed. Staccato chords present a wandering melody. A vertical *écriture* alternated with a melody in large steps. At the key signature change, from E major to C major, repeated chords over a strong left-hand melody bring back the first E major theme with fast falling arpeggios in the left hand. The middle part, *Meno mosso*, is a melodic and linear one, yet it also includes elements from the previous theme.

Tempo di valzer lentissimo

Following the previous "quasi scherzando" movement, a passionate lyricism appears in this "waltz" in 9/8 time. With flexible and amorous chromaticism, it, nevertheless brings in the middle section a darker shade with the ostinato basses even though the elegiac right hand "tries to keep going."

Vivace

Back to the atrocities, the tormented figure as if cut with retch, starts a whirling hallucination. Between its various appearances other themes appear. One of them, the movement's main other theme, is melodic but others are angular and contorted. The middle section, *Andante*, presents the first theme of the first movement, but as a distant remembrance: veiled and wrapped in a haze.

In the concluding parts, a merciless battle is engaged between the present movement's main themes and the first theme of the first movement. That last one will end the Sonata in an aggressive pacing.

Natasha Paremski

With her consistently striking and dynamic performances, pianist Natasha Paremski reveals astounding virtuosity and voracious interpretive abilities. She continues to generate excitement from all corners as she wins over audiences with her musical sensibility and powerful, flawless technique.

Natasha is a regular return guest of many major orchestras, including Minnesota Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Grant Park Festival, Oregon Symphony, Colorado Symphony, and Royal Philharmonic Orchestra with whom she has performed every year since 2008 in venues such as Royal Albert Hall, Royal Festival Hall, and Cadogan Hall. She has performed with major orchestras in North America including Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, San Diego Symphony, to name a few, in addition to extensive touring in Europe and recitals all over the world.

A passionate chamber musician, Natasha is a regular recital partner of Grammy winning cellist Zuill Bailey, with whom she has recorded numerous CDs. Their Britten album on Telarc debuted at No. 1 on the *Billboard* Classical Chart, remaining there for several of weeks, in addition to being featured on *The New York Times* Playlist. She has been a guest of many chamber music festivals such as Jeffrey Kahane's Green Music Center ChamberFest, the Lockenhaus, Toronto, Sitka Summer Music, and Cape Cod Chamber Music festivals to name a few.

Natasha was awarded several prestigious prizes at a very young age, including the Gilmore Young Artists prize in 2006 at the age of eighteen, the Prix Montblanc in 2007, the Orpheum Stiftung Prize in Switzerland. In September 2010, she was awarded the Classical Recording Foundation's Young Artist of the Year. Her first recital album was released in 2011 to great acclaim, topping the *Billboard* Classical Charts, and was re-released on the Steinway & Sons label in September 2016 featuring Islamey recorded on Steinway's revolutionary new Spirio technology. In 2012 she recorded Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1 and Rachmaninoff's *Paganini Rhapsody* with Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Fabien Gabel on the orchestra's label distributed by Naxos.

Natasha began her piano studies at the age of four with Nina Malikova at Moscow's Andreyev School of Music. She then studied at San Francisco Conservatory of Music before moving to New York to study with Pavlina Dokovska at Mannes College of Music, from which she graduated in 2007. Natasha made her professional debut at age nine with El Camino Youth Symphony in California, and at the age of fifteen she debuted with Los Angeles Philharmonic and recorded two discs with Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra. Born in Moscow, Natasha moved to the United States at the age of eight becoming a U.S. citizen shortly thereafter and is now based in New York.