



Performing Arts Series

presents

Tschaikowski
St. Petersburg State Orchestra

Roman Leontiev, music director and chief conductor

Alexander Anisimov, violin

Sunday, March 4, 2012
Yardley Hall
Johnson County Community College

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and Mark and Nancy Gilman*

Program

Prelude and Liebestod from the Opera *Tristan und Isolde* Richard Wagner
(1813-1883)

Violin Concerto No. 5, “Turkish” Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756-1791)

Alexander Anisimov, violin

Intermission

Pictures at an Exhibition (arr. Ravel) Modest Mussorgsky
(1839-1881)

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Prelude and Liebestod, from the Opera *Tristan and Isolde* Richard Wagner
(Born May 22, 1813, in Leipzig; died February 13, 1883, in Venice)

For many years, the famous opening and closing excerpt from Wagner’s great music-drama about the immortal lovers, Tristan and Isolde, has been called Prelude and Liebestod (“Love-Death”), but when Wagner conducted this piece at a concert in Vienna in 1863, the year in which he completed the opera, he considered the Prelude to describe the “Love Death” and the Finale to be a “Transfiguration.”

Wagner wrote the following note on the program: “Prelude: Tristan, as a bridal envoy, is bringing back Isolde to his uncle, the King. They love each other. From the first stifled moan of speechless longing, from the faintest tremor to the avowal of hopeless love, the heart goes through each phase of futile battle with inner fever, until it swoons and is extinguished, as in death. Finale (Transfiguration): Yet, what Fate, separated from this life, is revived, transfigured and united in death! At the body of the dying Tristan, Isolde sees transcendent consummation of their passionate desire, eternal union in infinite realms; no bond, no barrier, indivisible!”

Franz Liszt, the composer’s father-in-law, was responsible for transferring the name Liebestod from the Prelude to the Finale. When he made a piano transcription of the Finale, he used as an introduction a brief passage from the Love Duet in the second act, in which the word Liebestod appears. He called his transcription of the Finale Liebestod, and the misnomer has stuck.

The music of the Prelude, assembled from themes in the music-drama, soars to great heights of ecstasy, then ends up on a somber note that foretells the tragic but beautiful story that is to unfold on the stage. In the Finale, Isolde arrives too late to save the dying Tristan. He calls her name and falls lifeless at her feet. Oblivious to all around her, Isolde bends tenderly over her dead lover and sings of the eternal rapture that will be theirs as she joins him in death: “Friends, look! Don’t you know and see his beauty, his courage? I hear only a gentle, wondrous song that cries my sadness and that tells all. It sounds and surrounds me. Shall I breathe this air, these scented breezes? To drown in the waves, to sink with the shells, unaware — the greatest joy!”

Concerto for Violin and Orchestra No. 5 in A Major, K. 219. . . Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

(Born January 27, 1756, in Salzburg; died December 5, 1791, in Vienna)

At the height of his career, during his mature years in Vienna, Mozart was admired at least as much for his brilliant piano playing as for his compositions (which were then thought to be only incidental to a virtuoso's work as a performer). In his youth, Mozart had played the violin in public, too, and was the concert-master of the Archbishop's court orchestra in Salzburg, but the young musician always preferred the piano. Leopold Mozart, his father, was a violinist of some distinction whose important instruction book, first published in 1756, was translated into other languages and widely used for at least 50 years. He thought that his son could become the finest violinist in Europe and always regretted his abandonment of his preferred instrument.

Wolfgang wrote beautifully for the violin in his chamber music, and some of his orchestral serenades and divertimentos have long concerto-like solo movements in them. He composed his five violin concertos most likely for one of his colleagues, but we really know no more of their history than that they were written in Salzburg by 1775.

This last violin concerto is a work of great beauty and originality, rich in surprises for the listener of the time, who expected concertos to be cast in a familiar, conventional form. The violin part is boldly written, and the orchestra participates fully in both the exposition and the development of the music.

In the first movement, Allegro aperto, the orchestra plays the main theme at the beginning of the concerto, before the soloist enters. At the point where the soloist begins, he plays instead a free introductory slow passage, Adagio. When he does get to his Allegro, he plays an elegant melody that is elaborated from the formal orchestral opening. The second movement, Adagio, is one of Mozart's most beautiful slow movements. The finale is a Rondeau written in a supremely gracious Tempo di Minuetto into which Mozart inserts, for amusing contrast, an episode in "the Turkish style," taken from an opera he had written two years earlier.

The concerto is scored for two oboes, two horns and strings.

Pictures at an Exhibition (orchestrated by Maurice Ravel) . . . Modest Mussorgsky

(Born March 21, 1839, in Karevo; died March 28, 1881, in St. Petersburg)

In 1874, Mussorgsky and the music critic Vladimir Stasov organized an exhibition of architectural drawings and paintings by their recently deceased friend, Victor Hartmann, of scenes that interested Russians at home and abroad. While walking through the gallery, Mussorgsky had a bold and brilliant inspiration: to compose a set of piano pieces that would be musical reflections of Hartmann's art. He worked with a speed and certainty that were unusual for him, and on June 22, 1874, completed the work.

Although Mussorgsky composed *Pictures at an Exhibition* as a cycle of piano pieces, this work was never well known outside of Russia in its original form. Through the years, many musicians tried to expand interest in the work by arranging it for orchestra, but none of them were successful until the renowned conductor, Serge Koussevitzky, commissioned the composer, Maurice Ravel, to create an orchestral version. Ravel

completed his orchestration in 1922; the work's debut took place October 19, 1922, at the Paris Opera. Since then, it has become one of the most popular works in the orchestral repertory.

The idea of rendering visual images in music was modern at the time, but not really new. The work's most original feature is the opening Promenade music that recurs, appropriately altered in character, binding the work together, showing the visitor ambling around the gallery and stopping to look at the art. Stasov's descriptive notes say: "Mussorgsky has represented himself roving right and left, sometimes hesitantly and sometimes briskly, in order to get close to pictures that have caught his attention." The uneven rhythm depicts the movement well and gives a characteristically Russian feel to the Promenade. After the first Promenade, there are 10 pictures:

1. The Gnome: a grotesque, little bow-legged creature, with an open jaw, which is in fact a nutcracker. Stasov's notes suggest that the gnome "...accompanies his droll movements with savage shrieks." Ravel gives the alto saxophone, which would never have been used in a Russian orchestra of Mussorgsky's era, the balladeer's serenade.
2. The Old Castle, outside of which a troubadour sings a serenade with lute accompaniment, was Hartmann's watercolor study of a medieval castle, painted when he was a student in Italy.

Promenade

3. The Tuileries Gardens in Paris, where children play and quarrel, is presented as a lively, high-spirited game and chase.
4. *Bydlo* represents Hartmann's sketch of a Polish ox-cart with enormous wheels, in the town of Sandomir. (*Bydlo* is the Polish word for cattle.) In Ravel's orchestration, the tenor tuba intones this evocative melody. The music, powerful and ponderous, gives appropriate weightiness to the huge beasts drawing the cart.

Promenade

5. Ballet of the Chicks in their Shells represents a costume design for the ballet, *Trilby*, which was produced in 1870 in St. Petersburg. In this scene, children, as baby canaries, try to break out of their shells.
6. Samuel Goldenberg and Shmuyle follows a drawing of a Sandomir ghetto scene that Mussorgsky described as picturing "two Polish Jews, one rich and the other poor." Goldenberg's music features unison strings and winds, while the whining Shmuyle sounds forth in the notes of a muted trumpet.

Promenade

7. Limoges: The Marketplace. (Great News!) Mussorgsky originally suggested this movement was intended to represent two market women exchanging neighborhood gossip, but when the music was published after the composer's death, Stasov said that the women were quarreling angrily.

8. The Catacombs, *Sepulchrum Romanum* (Roman Graves) followed by *Cum mortuis in lingua mortua*, reflects a view of the artist, lantern in hand, examining the ancient Roman catacombs in Paris, where he sees several skulls. Mussorgsky wrote the title in faulty Latin, and tried to explain (in even worse Latin) the heading of the gloomy version of the Promenade that follows. A footnote (in Russian) says, “With the dead, in a dead language.”
9. Baba Yaga (The Witch’s Hut on Fowl’s Legs) in Russian folklore is a witch who lives in a hut deep in the forest on hen’s legs that she can turn any direction. Hartmann’s drawing was a design for a clock in the shape of Baba Yaga’s hut. Baba Yaga rode cackling through the woods in a huge wooden mortar propelled by a large pestle, hungrily on the trail of naughty children to eat.
10. The Great Gate of Kiev was an architectural sketch for submission in a Kiev city council competition. The monument, intended to commemorate Czar Alexander II’s escape from the Nihilists’ plot to assassinate him, was never erected for political reasons. The fanciful design is rich in Imperial symbols and was Mussorgsky’s favorite. He drew from it the inspiration for very powerful music, a massive hymn of thanksgiving.

Tschaikowski St. Petersburg State Orchestra

On its inaugural tour of the United States, Roman Leontiev, widely regarded as one of the pre-eminent Russian conductors of his generation, has been leading the orchestra as its music director since 2002. He also is its chief conductor. Leontiev’s career has been accented by distinguished engagements in Russia and Western Europe.

The Orchestra’s repertoire ranges from baroque compositions by Vivaldi, Bach and Handel and contemporary compositions by Schnittke, Banchikov, Desyatnikov and Kancheli. It is at home performing the works of famous Russian Romantic composers (Tschaikowski, Rachmaninoff) to the classical composers of the 20th century (Honegger, Poulenc, Hindemith, Stravinsky). The Orchestra performs in the best St. Petersburg halls, such as the Dmitry Shostakovich St. Petersburg Philharmonic Grand Hall, State Academic Capella, Smolny Cathedral and City Cultural Center. Since the 1990s the Orchestra has held a regular Subscription Series in addition to standard concerts throughout Russia. The Orchestra offers many educational programs that give children and young people the opportunity to experience the rich repertoire as well as attend performances at the very popular Young People’s Concerts in St. Petersburg.

Many of Russia’s most distinguished soloists and conductors have worked with the Orchestra. They have included Montserrat Caballe, Sviatoslav Richter and Elena Obrastva.

Roman Leontiev, Music Director and Chief Conductor

Roman Leontiev is widely regarded as one of the pre-eminent Russian conductors of his generation. His career has been accented by distinguished engagements throughout Russia and Western Europe since his graduation in 1981 with highest honors from the Glinka Conservatory of Music in St. Petersburg. His mentors include the People’s Artists

of Russia (Russia's highest cultural honor) Gennady Rozhdestvensky and Dr. A.M. Katz. Upon his graduation from the Glinka Conservatory of Music, Mr. Leontiev was accepted as an apprentice to the St. Petersburg State Conservatory of Music, where he studied under the People's Artist of Russia, I.A. Mussin.

Mr. Leontiev's first professional acclaim was received when he was awarded the USSR State Medal of Excellence in Conducting for his leadership of the Moscow International Festival Orchestra. This success was followed with Mr. Leontiev being the recipient of the Special Award for Conducting at the Third Annual Russian National Folk Music Festival.

These honors led to Mr. Leontiev's engagement to conduct leading orchestras of Russia including the Moscow State Radio Symphony Orchestra, and USSR State Symphony. Critical acclaim following these engagements spearheaded an invitation to France to conduct a series of concerts, which included appearances at the Palais des Congrès, Notre Dame Cathedral and at the UNESCO Conference, broadcast nationally on French Television and Radio (ORTF). His additional European engagements included performances in Germany, Finland and Sweden.

In 1997 Mr. Leontiev made his Italian debut conducting the Symphonica Toscaninit, which was followed by engagements in Hungary with the Budapest Radio and Television Orchestra and Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra. Mr. Leontiev's masterful skill has afforded him the opportunity to conduct the Bolshoi Theatre Orchestra in the Bolshoi's Great Hall, the Orchestra of the Mariinski Theatre and the State Symphony Orchestra of St. Petersburg.

The Tschaikowski St. Petersburg Symphony Orchestra engaged Mr. Leontiev as Principal Guest Conductor in 2001, and that season he and the orchestra performed the complete Beethoven Symphony cycle. Following the success of these performances, Mr. Leontiev and the orchestra were invited to undertake a tour of the United Kingdom.

In 2002 Mr. Leontiev was named Music Director of the Tschaikowski St. Petersburg Symphony Orchestra, and in honor of this title was invited to lead the world premiere of the work "Vladimirskaya Square" in commemoration of the 300th Anniversary of the founding of the City of St. Petersburg, Russia. That same year Mr. Leontiev was also named Principal Guest Conductor of the Symphony Orchestra of Konstanz, Germany.

We welcome Mr. Leontiev and the Tschaikowski St. Petersburg Symphony Orchestra on its inaugural transcontinental tour of the United States of America.

Alexander Anisimov, violin

Born in Orenburg, Russia, in 1975 to a musical family, Alexander began musical studies at the age of 6 at the Orenburg Musical School. He graduated the Russian State Music Academy (class of Professor Alexander Shisman) and studied with Professor A. Shisman at the postgraduate level.

Since 2000, he performs regularly as a soloist with various Russian Orchestras in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kazan, Ufa, Astana (Kazakhstan) and others. His repertoire includes concertos of Vivaldi, Mozart, Paganini, Wieniawski and Khachaturian; sonatas

by Beethoven and Brahms; and pieces of Sarasate, Rachmaninoff, Kreisler, Tchaikovsky and Gershwin, as well as other composers.

Alexander performs works of contemporary composers and composes his own music: Suite for Piano, “Puppetry,” String Quartet, Fantasy for Violin and Orchestra in music of Verdi’s “Traviata,” Poem for Flute and Piano, Suite “Concert Dances” for symphony orchestras. In 2009, he was admitted to the Association of Russian Composers. For his achievements in the performing arts, he was awarded a grant from the Russian Musical Association, TV Prize “Person of the Year,” which is the Orenburg Governor’s Prize.

Anisimov has also been the prize-winner of the following international competitions: Citta di Moncalieri (1999, Italy); Hopes, Talents, Masters (2004, 2007, Bulgaria); Valtidone (2005, Italy); LISMA International Music Festival (New York, USA, 2006); Peter the Great Festival (Netherlands, 2009). His awards are in a variety of categories, including Solo Performance (Violin), Chamber Ensemble and Composition.

Tschaikowski St. Petersburg Symphony Orchestra

Roman Leontiev, Music Director and Chief Conductor

Dr. Elena Kostyuchenko, General Director

Orchestra Personnel

First Violins

Anna Orekhova, Principal

Tatiana Naletskaya

Alexandr Anisimov

Anna Yakovleva

Vladimir Troitskiy

Maya Yudina

Elena Ananieva

Olga Egorova

Lilia Elakhovskaya

Galina Kharitonova

Vera Kharitonova

Galina Kuzmicheva

Maria Platonova

Anna Prudentova

Gleb Rezykh

Larissa Rybakova

Evgenii Zinin

Yulia Zorina

Second Violins

Kristina Popova, Principal

Oxana Dolya

Elvira Kapustinskaya

Evgenia Karpova

Natalia Mitsura

Inna Pivneva

Elena Popova

Gyuzel Sultanova

Praskovia Tanikova

Elena Vedayko

Nina Zayatz

Daria Khvalovskaia

Anna Chertova

Violas

Elena Andreeva, Principal

Aliaxandr Bogdanovich

Konstantin Plekhanov

Irina Morozova

Vadim Dvoynishikov

Irina Prodan

Tatiana Soldukhina

Marina Zakharova

Ksenia Ivanova

Cellos

Yuri Niniev, Principal
Vadim Kaminskiy
Sergei Mikhailychev
Ilya Elinson
Elena Bystrova
Anastasia Golenischeva
Daria Morozova
Inna Yakupova
Alexandra Karpenko

Basses

Alexandr Kuznetsov, Principal
Vitalii Goriachev
Mikhail Tcimbalenko
Rustam Murtazin
Kirill Benediktov
Dmitri Perminov
Elena Lazareva

Flutes

Mikhail Tokarv, Principal
Natalia Chernousova
Anton Alexeevskii
Anna Suzdalkina

Oboes

Evgeny Khvalovsky, Principal
Elena Kissel
Julia Orlova

Clarinets

Anton Dereza, Principal
Vyacheslav Korshunov
Anna Kochegura
Musheg Mikaelyan

Bassoons

Anatoly Buvalenko, Principal
Anna Kolesnikova
Sergei Nikulin

Horns

Maxim Kuvychko, Principal
Sergey Fausto
Anatoly Tarov
Roman Bazanov
Ragim Karakhmazli
Victor Kostiuchenko

Trumpets

Yuri Poliakov, Principal
Ilya Kulenko
Nikolaj Aseev
Vasily Karbyshev

Trombones

Rifat Vildanov, Principal
Alexandr Sevastianov
Alexei Bogdanov
Victor Perevoznikov

Tuba

Shamil Salimov

Timpani

Kirill Ksenofontov

Percussion

Andrei Belichkov, Principal
Vasily Katanov
Olga Kosyreva
Artem Chigrik
Taras Tkach

Harp

Olga Pilyukova

Keyboard

Julia Grekhova

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