

*SHEPHERD SCHOOL
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA*

LARRY RACHLEFF, music director

VIKTOR VALKOV, piano

Friday, December 2, 2011

8:00 p.m.

Stude Concert Hall

RICE UNIVERSITY

the
Shepherd
School
of Music

PROGRAM

*Piano Concerto No. 2
in G Major, Op. 44*

*Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
(1840-1893)*

Allegro brillante e molto vivace

Andante non troppo

Allegro con fuoco

*Viktor Valkov, soloist
David In-Jae Cho, conductor*

INTERMISSION

*Suite from the Opera
"Der Rosenkavalier", Op. 59*

*Richard Strauss
(1864-1949)*

An American in Paris

*George Gershwin
(1898-1937)*

The reverberative acoustics of Stude Concert Hall magnify the slightest sound made by the audience. Your care and courtesy will be appreciated. The taking of photographs and use of recording equipment are prohibited.

SHEPHERD SCHOOL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Violin I

Yi Zhao,
concertmaster
ANNE AND CHARLES
DUNCAN CHAIR
Tiantian Zhang
Chloé Trevor
Sarah Arnold
Derek Powell
Alyssa Yank
Rachel Sandman
Niccoló Muti
Micah Ringham
Mark Kagan
Andy Liang
Tara Slough
Haerim Lee
Kimia Ghaderi
Robert Landes

Violin II

Katrina Bobbs,
principal
Philip Marten
Rachel Shepard
Ioana Ionita
Meghan Nenniger
Caroline Ewan
Lisa Park
Eun-Mi Lee
Rebecca Reale
Carmen Abelson
Chelsea Sharpe
Rebecca Nelson
Benjamin Brookstone
Julian Nguyen

Viola

Allyson Goodman,
principal
Padua Canty
Kostadin Dyulgierski
Tracy Wu
Woosol Cho
Dawson White
Yvonne Smith
Jill Valentine
Stephanie Mientka
Ilana Mercer
Ashley Pelton
Maya Rothfuss
Rebecca Lo

Cello

Brian Yoon,
principal
ANNETTE AND HUGH
GRAGG CHAIR
Annamarie Reader
Coleman Itzkoff
Chauncey Aceret
Allan Hon
Benjamin Stoehr
SeHee Kim
Rebecca Landell
Hellen Weberpal
Benjamin Whitman
Michael Frigo
Daniel Kopp

Double Bass

Paul Cannon,
principal
Kevin Brown
Jonathan Reed
Daniel Smith
Ian Hallas
Robert Nelson
Renaud Boucher-
Browning
Rosemary Salvucci
Evan Hulbert
Michael Ehrenkranz
Flute
Jessica Anastasio
Kayla Burggraf
Gina Choi
Kathryn Ladner
Masha Popova
Christen Sparago
Patrick Tsuji

Piccolo

Jessica Anastasio
Gina Choi

Oboe

David Barford
Sophia Parente
Kevin Pearl
Neal Rea
Geoffrey Sanford
Emily Snyder

English Horn

Geoffrey Sanford

Clarinet

Erika Cikraji
Camilo Davila
Juan Olivares

Clarinet (cont.)

Natalie Parker
LeTriel White

E-flat Clarinet

Natalie Parker

Bass Clarinet

Nicolas Chona
Juan Olivares

Saxophone

Aaron Paul Martinez
Scott Plugge
Seth McAdow

Bassoon

Joseph Grimmer
Kevin Judge
Michael Matushek
Thomas Morrison
Alex Zdanis
Wenmin Zhang

Contrabassoon

Kevin Judge

Horn

Matthew Berliner
MARGARET C. PACK CHAIR
Nicholas Hartman
Young Kim
Maura McCune
Emily Nagel
John Turman

Trumpet

Kathryn Driscoll
Ian Kivler
Jeffrey Northman
Alexander Pride
Aaron Ritter

Trombone

Kurt Ferguson
Steven Holloway
Berk Schneider
Kyle Siegrist

Bass Trombone

Joshua Becker

Tuba

Victor Gomez

Harp

Emily Klein
Caroline Nelson

Celeste

Makiko Hirata
CHARLOTTE ROTHWELL
CHAIR

Timpani

Robert Frisk
Robert Garza
Andrew Keller

Percussion

Regina Chavez
Dino Georgetown
Andrew Keller
Kelsey Lamb
Robert McCullagh
Lindsey Pietrek
Colin Ryan
Lucas Sanchez

Orchestra Manager and Librarian

Kaaren Fleisher

Production Manager

Mandy Billings

Assistant Production Manager

Jamie Hahn
Francis Schmidt

Library Assistants

Nicholas Cathcart
Woosol Cho
David Connor
Seth Freeman
Joshua Kelly
Mathew Kufchak
Rebecca Landell
Haerim Lee
Alison Luthmers
Stephanie Mientka
Caroline Nicolas
Tatiana Trono
Yi Zhao

Stage Assistants

Gina Choi
Kathryn Driscoll
Kostadin Dyulgierski
Andrew Griffin
Joseph Grimmer
Robert McCullagh
Niccoló Muti
Masha Popova
Neal Rea
Colin Ryan
Berk Schneider
Douglas Surber
Alex Zdanis

PROGRAM NOTES

Piano Concert No. 2 in G Major, Op 44 . . . Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Tchaikovsky's **Piano Concerto No. 1 in B-flat Minor** is one of the most celebrated pieces in the repertoire. Originally written during 1874-1875, it was severely criticized by Nikolai Rubinstein, the virtuoso for whom Tchaikovsky wrote it. As a result Tchaikovsky revised the piece twice, which mainly affected the piano writing. Unfortunately, because of the popularity of the **Piano Concerto No. 1**, audiences know little of Tchaikovsky's second concerto, which he wrote during 1879-1880 and dedicated again to Nikolai Rubinstein. The great Russian pianist wanted to give its first performance to make up for his harsh criticism on the first concerto, but unfortunately he died shortly after the piece was completed. The concerto had its premiere performance in New York in 1881 with Madeline Schiller as the soloist, with Theodore Thomas conducting the New York Philharmonic.

Despite its unfamiliarity, the **Concerto No. 2 in G Major** contains some of the most beautiful and passionate pages of Tchaikovsky's output. Unlike the first concerto, where several motivic links hold the movements together, this concerto consists of three rather distinct movements. In the opening Allegro brillante e molto vivace the piano and the orchestra act as two opposing forces. As Tchaikovsky once told his close friend Hermann Laroche, he thought that he could never write a piano concerto because he could not tolerate the sound of piano and orchestra playing together. His distinctive solution in this first movement is to intersperse cadenza-like passages for the solo piano among the magnificent symphonic tuttis. The development section is also clearly divided between soloist and orchestra. The final solo section of the development becomes the biggest cadenza of this movement, leading to the climactic return of the orchestra.

The second movement is unique in the concerto repertoire in that it places violin and cello solos on equal footing with the piano. Following a short introduction, the main theme of the movement is presented first in the violin and then in the cello, the two of them gradually uniting in a lovely conversation. This treatment turns the beautiful Andante into a triple concerto, with the piano alternating as accompanist and soloist.

The last movement, marked Allegro con fuoco, is a brilliantly virtuosic conclusion to the work, typical for Tchaikovsky. It is marked by a festive atmosphere, where for the first time a real unity of orchestra and soloist is achieved.

Tchaikovsky's **Second Concerto** exists in two versions: the original and the Alexander Siloti edition, which is the version usually performed today. Siloti was a contemporary of Tchaikovsky, a great pianist of his time and a close friend of the composer. When editing the piano part he was trying to achieve more transparency and power. Although Siloti solves some pianistic problems in the outer movements quite masterfully, he completely destroys the structure and integrity of the second movement by cutting out most of the violin and cello solos and trying to turn this unique piece into a conventional piano concerto slow movement. That is why I have decided to use Siloti's revised piano parts for the first and the third movements, but to keep Tchaikovsky's rarely played original version of the second.

— Note by Viktor Valkov

Suite from the Opera "Der Rosenkavalier", Op. 59 . . . Richard Strauss

The **Der Rosenkavalier Suite** is a study in nostalgia. The opera **Der Rosenkavalier**, written in 1910, looks nostalgically on love, social class, and mortality within the eighteenth-century golden age of Vienna's aristocracy; by

anachronistically incorporating the musical genre of the waltz into the opera, Strauss also referenced nostalgically the nineteenth-century era of Viennese economic stability when the waltz enjoyed its heyday. The *Suite*, completed in 1945, looks back nostalgically not only on those earlier ages but also on the year of the opera's composition, seen from the other side of two world wars in a Germany destroyed by political extremism and Allied bombing. Artur Rodziński, then head of the New York Philharmonic, arranged the suite and conducted its October 5, 1944 premiere. In financial need following World War II, Strauss agreed to the arrangement's publication the following year.

The *Suite* opens with the opera's *Einleitung* ("Introduction"), the whooping horns depicting the passion between the titular *Rosenkavalier* Octavian and his older lover, the *Marschallin*. The exquisite music of the *Presentation of the Rose* in Act II follows, with lustrous chords played by flutes, solo violins, harps, and celesta representing the silver rose. The duet between Sophie and Octavian, scored here for oboe and horn, is interrupted by a brief passage of turbulent music signaling the arrival of the clumsy, coarse Baron Ochs, Sophie's much older fiancé.

The remainder of the suite veers from the original narrative, as the violins introduce a waltz from the beginning of Act II before the solo violin ushers in another waltz. Another solo violin passage segues to an orchestral version of the opera's famous final trio and duet, as the *Marschallin* sadly defers to Sophie before Octavian and Sophie sing their transcendent, rapturous duet. The work continues with a robust Act III waltz characterizing the pretentious Ochs, and concludes with a raucous, newly-composed coda.

An American in Paris George Gershwin

George Gershwin first met Maurice Ravel during the French composer's 1927 tour of the United States. In response to Gershwin's request to study with him, Ravel directed him instead to eminent French pedagogue Nadia Boulanger. When Gershwin traveled to Europe in 1928 to study and acquaint himself with modern music, he auditioned for Mme. Boulanger, but upon after hearing just ten minutes of his music she proclaimed that she had nothing to teach him. Hailed as a musical celebrity in Paris, Gershwin also met Milhaud, Stravinsky, Prokofiev, and Poulenc.

In gratitude to hosts Robert and Mabel Schirmer during an earlier visit to Paris, Gershwin had penned a melodic fragment, "Very Parisienne," which in 1928 became the opening measures of a new work commissioned by Walter Damrosch and the New York Philharmonic, the symphonic poem *An American in Paris*. In it Gershwin sought to portray an American visitor strolling about the city, taking in street noises and "absorb[ing] the French atmosphere." Damrosch premiered it at Carnegie Hall on December 13, 1928. With colorful instrumentation including saxophones, automobile horns, and celesta, the work comprises five sections in a loose ABA structure.

Influenced by the music of Claude Debussy and later French composers known collectively as *Les Six*, the opening section in duple meter introduces three "walking themes." The more relaxed, lyrical B section reflects Stravinsky's influence in a pattern of changing meters uncharacteristic of Gershwin; in order to capture the American visitor's "spasms of homesickness," it also incorporates blues and syncopation in the trumpet's wistful descending theme and the *Allegro's* faster twelve-bar blues. After recapitulating the "walking themes," the final *Grandioso* culminates in the contrapuntal layering of the slow blues theme.

— Notes by Avi DePano

BIOGRAPHY

VIKTOR VALKOV, highly acclaimed by the critics as "lion of the keyboard" and "sensational", has conquered numerous prizes at international piano competitions, including First Prize at "Albert Roussel" 2006, Bulgaria; First Prize at "Koeller Osbahr" 2005, Germany, and Second Prize at "Tunbridge Wells" 2004, England. In 2009, he gave his Carnegie Hall debut at Zankel Hall with the cellist Lachezar Kostov. After winning the Seiler International Piano Competition in 2002 he was invited to sit on the jury for the 17th Greek National Piano Competition in Athens. At a recital he gave for this event, he was awarded the title of Honorable Member of the Greek organization "Ch.O.N" which, is a member of UNESCO.

Since 2002 Valkov has given a number of recitals in Bulgaria, Macedonia, Greece, Italy, Germany, Japan and the USA. A Japanese tour in 2002 took him to Tokyo, Toyama, Yokohama and Okinawa after which he received a full scholarship for the "8th Hamamatsu Piano Academy". In Bulgaria, Viktor Valkov appeared in performances with most of the major orchestras and at most of the important music festivals such as March Music Days, Sofia Musical Weeks, Apollonia, Plovdiv Chamber Festival and others. In 2003, he received an invitation from the New Symphony Orchestra and conductor Rossen Milanov to perform Dimitar Nenov's Grande Piano Concerto. Thus he became the fifth pianist to perform that concerto and the only one to do the entire version. In 2007, Mr. Valkov made his debut with the Sofia Philharmonic Orchestra. The same year, he played at the opening of the Passau Music Festival, Germany.

Viktor Valkov studied at the State Music Academy in Sofia, Bulgaria with Prof. Stella Dimitrova and subsequently in the Folkwang Hochschule in Essen, Germany with Michael Roll. In the summer of 2006 he took part in the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara and subsequently earned his Masters Degree at the Juilliard School studying with Jerome Lowenthal and Matti Raekallio. In the fall of 2010, Viktor Valkov started pursuing a DMA Degree at Rice University with Jon Kimura Parker.

Mr. Valkov has made a number of recordings for the Bulgarian National Radio archive, many of which have been broadcast. He has also recorded for Bulgarian National Television and Macedonian Radio and Television. In October 2008 he recorded the entire music for cello and piano by Nikolay Roslavets in collaboration with the cellist Lachezar Kostov. This CD was released by NAXOS in 2011.

UPCOMING ORCHESTRA CONCERTS

Friday, Feb. 3, 8:00 p.m. - SHEPHERD SCHOOL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Larry Rachleff, conductor PROGRAM: Bartók - **Violin Concerto No. 2** (SoJin Kim, soloist; David Cho, conductor); and Shostakovich - **Symphony No. 7 in C Major, Op. 60, "Leningrad"**.

Stude Concert Hall. Free admission; no tickets required.

Saturday, Feb. 4, 8:00 p.m. - SHEPHERD SCHOOL CHAMBER ORCHESTRA;
Larry Rachleff, conductor PROGRAM: Dittersdorf - **Sinfonia Concertante for Double Bass & Viola** (Ivo-Jan van der Werff & Timothy Pitts, soloists); Stravinsky - **Dances Concertantes** (David Cho, conductor); and Mozart - **Symphony No. 39 in E-flat Major, K. 543**.

Stude Concert Hall. Free admission; no tickets required.

