

RACHMANINOV CELEBRATION

Monday, February 20, 2023 / 7:30 p.m.

Riverview Performing Arts Center

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

Nutcracker Suite for Two Pianos

Overture

March

Danse de la Fée Dragée

Danse Russe Trepak

Danse Arab

Danse Chinoise

Danse des Mirlitons

Valse des fleurs

Anna Geniushene, Wu Han, pianos

SERGEI RACHMANINOV

Suite no. 1 for Two Pianos, op. 5, “Fantaisie-tableaux”

Barcarole

A Night for Love

Tears

Russian Easter

Dmytro Choni, Anna Geniushene, pianos

INTERMISSION

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

Berceuse for Solo Piano, op. 72, no. 2

Anna Geniushene, piano

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

Scherzo à la russe for Solo Piano, op. 1, no. 1

Anna Geniushene, piano

ALEXANDER SCRIBIN

Piano Sonata no. 4, op. 30

Andante

Prestissimo volante

Dmytro Choni, piano

SERGEI RACHMANINOV

Suite no. 2 for Two Pianos, op. 17

Introduction: Alla marcia

Valse: Presto

Romance: Andantino

Tarantella: Presto

Wu Han, Dmytro Choni, pianos

Anna Geniushene, Wu Han, Dmytro Choni, pianos

Ms. Geniushene and Mr. Choni appear by arrangement with The Cliburn.

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

(Born May 7, 1840, Votkinsk, Russia; died November 6, 1893, Saint Petersburg, Russia)

Nutcracker Suite for Two Pianos, arr. by Nicolas Economou

Composed: 1892

Published: this arrangement 1988, USA

Dedication: Detailed in notes below

First performance: December, 1892; this version recorded in 1983

Other works from this period: Souvenir de Florence, Op. 70; Symphony No. 6, Op. 74

Approximate duration: 22 minutes

Even if you have never attended a Christmas-time performance of the complete ballet *The Nutcracker*, with its sugar plum fairies and waltzing flowers and evil mouse king, you have most certainly heard Tchaikovsky's beloved score, which has become synonymous with the holiday season, and been utilized over the years in film, television and even video games. The music has such universal appeal that it has also been revamped into countless arrangements for performance by a wide variety of other ensembles including big band, guitar quartet and even klezmer orchestra. The immense popularity is well deserved, as Tchaikovsky's remarkable score is brimming with the energy, grand gestures and unforgettable melodies that are the trademark of his extraordinary music.

Composed in 1892, *The Nutcracker* was written for the Imperial Mariinsky Theatre in Saint Petersburg. Based upon the 1816 fairy tale *Nussknacker und Mausekönig* (*Nutcracker and Mouse King*) by E.T.A. Hoffman (as retold in a gentler version by Alexandre Dumas), the ballet tells the story of the child Clara and her beloved toy nutcracker which is transformed into a prince on Christmas Eve. The prince takes Clara back to the Land of Sweets where she is offered treats and entertainment from exotic lands before the two depart to live happily ever after. Although the initial performance of the ballet was considered unsuccessful from a dance perspective, Tchaikovsky's score was immediately singled out as exceptional, and the orchestral suite that Tchaikovsky extracted from it was always popular. The mid-20th century saw a revival of the complete ballet, and it is today the single annual production though which many ballet companies in North America earn the majority of their income.

Cypriot pianist Nicolas Economou composed his arrangement of the *Nutcracker Suite for Two Pianos* in the early 1980's as a gift for his daughter and the daughter of his friend and collaborator, piano virtuoso Martha Argerich. Economou had come to the world's attention at the age of 16 when he performed at the 1969 Tchaikovsky Competition, and had been introduced to Argerich by a mutual friend. She had been so impressed by Economou's playing that the two began performing together.

In 1983 they recorded an LP of music for two pianos that included Rachmaninoff's *Symphonic Dances* and Economou's *Nutcracker Suite*. The fiendishly difficult arrangement proved an immediate success and was published in 1988. Unfortunately, Economou's untimely death 5 years later in a car accident deprived the world of not only a gifted pianist, but also an extraordinary arranger. Economou's arrangement includes every movement contained in Tchaikovsky's original *Nutcracker Suite*.

The work begins with the sparkling *Overture*, followed by the virtuosic *March* movement with its cascading scales traversing the entire range of the keyboards. The iconic *Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy*, played in Tchaikovsky's original orchestration on the celesta, is equally magical in Economou's version. The Russian dancers arrive next in the whirlwind *Trepak*, and although the pianists are not required to leap up and down with folded arms, their task is no less demanding as the movement charges along at breakneck speed. Things slow down in the *Arabian Dance* as the seductive score sets a bewitching mood. The sparkling *Chinese Dance* is followed by the charming *Dance of the Mirlitons* (reed flutes), before the enchanting *Waltz of the Flowers* sweeps the work to a grand finish. Tchaikovsky could not have known that his final ballet would become a beloved holiday tradition for millions around the world or that, 130 years after its composition, *The Nutcracker* would remain a magnet for arrangers hoping to capture and share the magic found in its score. Generations of music lovers around the world continue to be the grateful beneficiaries of this music's unending allure.

Program notes by Betsy Hudson Traba © 2022

SERGEI RACHMANINOV

(Born April 1, 1873, Oneg, Russia; died March 28, 1943, Beverly Hills, California)

Suite no. 1 for Two Pianos, op. 5, Fantaisie-tableaux

Composed: 1893

Published: 1894, Moscow

Dedication: Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

First performance: November 30, 1893, by the composer and Pavel Pabst in Moscow

Other works from this period: Detailed in the notes below

Approximate duration: 23 minutes

On the occasion of his graduation from the Moscow Conservatory in 1892, Sergei Rachmaninov received that institution's highest honor, the Great Gold Medal, for his one-act opera Aleko.

The work caught the attention of Russian music's most revered figure: Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky was so taken by what the eighteen-year-old Rachmaninov had created that he arranged for it to appear the following year as part of a double bill, alongside a work of his own, at the Bolshoi Theatre. Tchaikovsky subsequently advocated for Rachmaninov to the publisher Gutheil. The publication of his Prelude in C-sharp minor, which quickly became and remained the young composer-pianist's calling card, helped to launch Rachmaninov's career.

Buoyed by this early success, Rachmaninov enjoyed a prolific summer in 1893, completing two sets of songs (Opp. 4 and 8); the Fantaisie-tableaux for Two Pianos, op. 5; the sacred choral work *V molitvakh neusipayushchuyu bogoroditsu* (In our Prayers, Ever-Vigilant Mother of God); Two Pieces for Violin and Piano, op. 6; and the orchestral fantasy *The Rock*. The Fantaisie-tableaux (also referred to as Suite no. 1) would be the second of Rachmaninov's three works for two pianos, following the *Russian Rhapsody* (1891) and the *Suite no. 2*, op. 17 (1901).

At the time of the Fantaisie-tableaux's completion, Rachmaninov, who deified Tchaikovsky in any case, moreover had reason to feel personally indebted. Rachmaninov showed Tchaikovsky the score and requested, and received, permission to dedicate the work to him. Tchaikovsky also agreed to attend the work's premiere but died three weeks before the performance.

Rachmaninov designed the Fantaisie-tableaux as "a series of musical pictures," according to a letter to his cousin Natalia Skalon. The published score prefaces its four movements with

lines of verse by Mikhail Lermontov, Lord Byron, Fyodor Tyutchev, and Aleksey Khomyakov, respectively; scholars differ as to whether the movements are programmatic or merely share an emotional tenor with the poems cited.

These lines from Lermontov precede the first movement:

At dusk half-heard the chill wave laps
Beneath the gondola's slow oar.
...once more a song! once more a twanged guitar!
...now sad, now gaily ringing,
The barcarolle comes winging:
"The boat slid by, the waters clove:
So time glides o'er the surge of love;
The waters will grow smooth again,
But what can rouse a passion slain!"

In addition to the lines above, the opening Barcarole might equally well recall the Venetian gondola songs from Felix Mendelssohn's *Lieder ohne Worte*. It shares with those miniatures its tranquil rhythmic lilt, its air of mystery and romance—but with Rachmaninov's Russian soul pervading its melodic and harmonic character. The primo (first piano) part accompanies a seductive tune in the secondo (second piano) with rippling ascending gestures, at once evocative of a strummed guitar and Lermontov's wave lapping beneath the gondola's oar.

Rachmaninov makes use of the pianos' full range of colors, from the crystalline shimmer of both keyboards playing in their high registers to the resonance of their middle and low range. The dual keyboard texture grows increasingly lush as the Barcarole enters a middle G-major section, buoying a suave melody in the primo. As the movement returns to the previous G-minor music, its heightened textural intricacy and sustained virtuosity recast the romantic air as devilish derring-do.

The second movement is spellbinding from the start: an opening horn call in the secondo invites rising chords and then swirling arpeggios, like an early morning mist, in the primo. Birds awaken in the secondo as the music proceeds, evoking Lord Byron's poem

“It Is the Hour”:

It is the hour when from the boughs
The nightingale’s high note is heard;
It is the hour when lover’s vows
Seem sweet in every whisper’d word;
And gentle winds, and waters near,
Make music to the lonely ear...

From its languid opening, the movement blossoms into an impassioned ecstasy.

The slow, descending pattern at the start of the sorrowful third movement conjures “Tears, human tears, that pour forth beyond telling,” per the epigraph taken from Tyutchev:

Early and late, in the dark, out of sight,
While the world goes on its way all unwittingly,
Numberless, stintless, you fall unremittingly,
Pouring like rain, the long rain is welling
Endlessly, late in the autumn at night.

This movement is a morose affair from the disconsolate opening to its dirge-like coda, with no contrasting humor to offer the listener respite. But its funereal end is followed, fittingly, by a resurrection: the *Fantaisie-tableaux*’s final movement is a celebration of Russian Easter. Rachmaninov incorporates the Russian liturgical “Christ is risen” chant with clangorous church bells. “Across the earth a mighty peal is sweeping,” Khomyakov writes,

Till all the booming air rocks like a sea,
As silver thunders carol forth the tidings,
Exulting in that holy victory...

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PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

(Born May 7, 1840, Votkinsk, Russian Empire; died November 6, 1893, St. Petersburg, Russia)

Berceuse for Solo Piano, op. 72, no. 2

Composed: 1893

Published: 1893

Dedication: Pyotr Moskalev

Other works from this period: Symphony No. 6; Six Romances for Voice and Piano; The Nutcracker Ballet

Approximate duration: 6 minutes

It was February of 1893 and 52-year-old Pyotr Tchaikovsky needed some quick cash. After a long absence, he had returned to his country home in Klin, 85 kilometers outside of Moscow, to begin work on his Symphony No. 6, but also noted to his younger brother Modest that he intended to compose a few piano pieces “in order to earn some money.” Finishing the sketches of the Symphony in early April, he set to work on the piano pieces, noting to a friend that “I have decided, for the want of money, to write a few little piano pieces, and have conditioned myself to write at least one a day during this month.” He appeared initially to find the task onerous, writing in mid-April: “I’ve been performing my duties very punctiliously, and each day a musical offspring is born. However, these offspring are very much immature and insubstantial; I have no inclination whatsoever to create them, and do so only for the money. I’m only trying to ensure that they don’t turn out too badly.”

By later that month however, Tchaikovsky appeared to have rediscovered his muse, and by the end of April he acknowledged that he had begun to enjoy the work. “I’m continuing to bake my musical pancakes,” he wrote to his nephew. “Today the tenth is being prepared. It’s remarkable that the further I get, the easier and more enjoyable the job becomes. At the beginning it went slowly, and the first two or three items were merely the result of an effort of will, but now I cannot stop my ideas, which appear to me one after another, at all hours of the day.” By early May, having composed 18 pieces in 15 days, Tchaikovsky decided he had written enough, and immediately delivered the works to his publisher in Moscow, presumably receiving the paycheck that had been the initial goal of the project. Each of the works is dedicated to a different individual, with the Berceuse (cradle song or lullaby) heard on this program honoring Pyotr Moskalev, a friend of the composer from Odessa.

Although the Berceuse was published as the second of the 18 pieces, it was almost certainly composed later in the cycle. Several of the 18 pieces

have completion dates noted on them, from which we know that nos. 7, 13, 10, 11 and 8 were the first written. Although the Berceuse had no date noted on the manuscript, we can safely assume that it was composed after those five works. The tranquil rocking motive that opens the piece immediately brings to mind the gentle back and forth sway of a cradle, in this case, rocking between the keys of Ab major and Ab minor via one note that shifts back and forth in the bass. Above this gentle undulation Tchaikovsky crafts an exquisite melody, like a mother singing quietly in the dark. The melody appears a second time, decorated with rolling arpeggios in the right hand. A slightly more animated central section delves briefly into a secondary theme before the soothing rocking motive returns, eventually settling peacefully in Ab major.

The 18 miniatures Tchaikovsky composed during those two weeks in April would be the last works he would compose for solo piano, as he would die a mere six months later. They are the work of a master craftsman at the height of his skills, able to convey more in six minutes than lesser composers could offer in an hour. And while their composition may have been motivated by the composer's basic need to pay his bills, there is nothing ordinary about them. Rather, they are miniature masterpieces, with the emotional potency of a magnum opus, distilled into a perfect, tiny package.

Program notes by Betsy Hudson Traba © 2022

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

(Born May 7, 1840, Votkinsk, Russia; died November 6, 1893, Saint Petersburg, Russia)

Scherzo à la russe for Solo Piano, Op. 1 No. 1

Composed: 1867

Published: 1868

Dedication: Detailed in program notes

First performance: Moscow, March/April 1867 - Nikolay Rubenstein

Other works from this period: Impromptu in E ♭ minor, Op. 1 No. 2; Souvenir de Hapsal, 3 pieces for piano, Op. 2; The Voyevoda, Op. 3 (opera); Valse-caprice in D major, for piano, Op. 4

Approximate duration: 6 minutes

Pyotr Tchaikovsky was a mere five years old when he convinced his family to allow him to study the piano. He had already proven himself precocious, and his family supported his interest by purchasing a keyboard and hiring a local 23-year-old woman to be his teacher. He progressed quickly, and by age eight was said to have already surpassed his teacher in skill. His family had other goals for the youngster however, and at age 10 he was sent 800 miles away to boarding school, in preparation for his eventual enrollment at age 12 in the Imperial School of Jurisprudence in Saint Petersburg. Tchaikovsky's family had a long history of military service, and there was no reason to believe that the 10-year-old was destined for anything other than a career as a civil servant. Indeed, following his nine-year course of study, Tchaikovsky graduated from the School of Jurisprudence and accepted a position at the Ministry of Justice at age 19. His interest in music had never waned however, and when the Saint Petersburg Conservatory opened in 1862, Tchaikovsky left his desk job and enrolled in the Conservatory's first class, studying composition with the Conservatory's founder, pianist and composer Anton Rubinstein.

It was during these Conservatory years that Tchaikovsky began composing seriously. Naturally, many of his earliest compositions were for the piano, as that was the instrument where he felt the most at home, although he did have a string quartet, an overture and a cantata all premiered during his time in the Conservatory. Upon graduation, he went to work at the newly opened Moscow Conservatory, run by Anton Rubinstein's younger brother Nikolay. Tchaikovsky and Nikolay Rubinstein would become close friends, and it was in early 1867 that Nikolay suggested that Tchaikovsky

compose some piano pieces for him to perform. The resulting Scherzo à la russe and Impromptu in E ♭ minor would become Tchaikovsky's first published works, his opus 1, and bore the dedication "À mon ami Nicolas Rubinstein."

Based upon a Russian folk tune that Tchaikovsky had previously used in his student-era string quartet, the work starts innocently as the catchy tune is playfully tossed back and forth between each end of the keyboard. With every phrase of the simple melody however, the setting becomes denser and more virtuosic, until the mood suddenly changes and we slow into a more intimate and reflective middle section. Here, in contrast to the opening jubilation, Tchaikovsky offers a regal, almost anthem-like setting of the tune, with a tinge of Slavic sadness. The solemnity is short-lived however, as the opening revelry returns, this time with ever increasing technical demands on the pianist. The music gathers in intensity, until it appears that a grand finish is imminent. Tchaikovsky has one more trick up his sleeve however, as there is a momentary pause, (perhaps for the pianist to gather strength!), followed by a coda in double time, where the pianistic fireworks fly fast and furious, leading to a grandiose finish. If Tchaikovsky had any insecurities about his new life as a composer, they were certainly not evident in his opus #1, and the rest of Europe soon took notice that a confident new voice had arrived on the scene. The civil servant from the Ministry of Justice had found his destiny, and generations of music lovers have reaped the rewards.

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ALEXANDER SCRIBIN

(Born January 6, 1872, Moscow, Russia; died April 14, 1915, Moscow, Russia)

Piano Sonata No. 4 in F# Major, Op. 30

Composed: 1903

Published: 1904

Other works from this period: 4 Preludes op. 31; 4 Preludes op. 33; 3 Preludes op. 35; 4 Preludes op. 37; 8 Etudes, op. 42

Approximate duration: 8 minutes

1903 was a year of momentous upheaval for 31-year-old Russian pianist and composer Alexander Scriabin. Having been raised and educated in Moscow, and having taught at the Moscow Conservatory for the previous five years, Scriabin chose in 1903 to relocate to Switzerland, where he shortly thereafter abandoned his wife and four children. He simultaneously made the decision to re-invent his musical life as well, turning his back on the romantic-era style of writing which had been his calling card since he had begun composing. In place of the wife and children, Scriabin embarked on a relationship with a former student. In place of the "Chopin-esque" romanticism of his early works, he began exploring a more modernist style of composition which was rooted in mysticism, eastern philosophy, metaphysics and synesthesia (Scriabin said he saw distinct colors when hearing different pitches.)

Both the personal and professional upheavals were inspired by Scriabin's search for enhanced meaning in his life and music. His rejection of the traditional rules of marriage coincided with a desire to move beyond the traditional rules of composition, which had already undergone a substantial metamorphosis over the previous 100 years. The goal of both transformations was his search for higher spiritual enlightenment and new avenues to find harmony with the universe. His first composition written in this new, highly personal and somewhat exotic style, was his Piano Sonata No. 4. Composed in the summer of 1903, it is widely viewed as signaling a dramatic change not only in Scriabin's approach to composition, but in his intent to use music as a gateway to an enhanced state of existence. Despite its short length, its expanded harmonic vocabulary and mystical atmosphere have made it among the most often performed of Scriabin's sonatas. Scriabin wrote a short poem to accompany the sonata, and the text makes

clear his intentions.

Thinly veiled in transparent cloud
A star shines softly, far and lonely.
How beautiful! The azure secret
Of its radiance beckons, lulls me ...
Vehement desire, sensual, insane, sweet ...
Now! Joyfully I fly upward toward you,
Freely I take wing.
Mad dance, godlike play ...
I draw near in my longing ...
Drink you in, sea of light, you light of my own self ...

The first movement *Andante* is an introspective, mystical movement, consisting of a chromatic melody which repeats, but which is surrounded by polyrhythms and otherwise blanketed with tonally ambiguous chord structures. This is music designed to be perceived as an untethered experience, devoid of the usual harmonic and rhythmic “guardrails” that help the listener feel grounded. Rather, we float in a sea of sound, as we gaze at the “radiant star shining softly in the thinly veiled cloud.” This short movement leads without pause into the *Prestissimo volando*, a wildly expansive affair. Here Scriabin pushes hard against the boundaries of the traditional romantic music of the era, refusing to be pigeonholed into any predetermined harmonic or rhythmic scheme. There is a ferocious energy to the movement, as he depicts the joyful flight toward the sun. Scriabin is said to have wanted the movement performed “as fast as possible, on the verge of the possible,” and noted that “it must be a flight at the speed of light, straight towards the sun, into the sun!” Alexander Scriabin was determined that his life and music should be unrestricted, unrepentant explorations of the sensory world. Even today, encountering his works is akin to watching crashing waves or a stunning sunset, irrepressible natural elements that cannot be controlled, only witnessed.

Program notes by Betsy Hudson Traba © 2022

SERGEI RACHMANINOV

(1873–1943)

Suite no. 2 in C minor for Two Pianos, op. 17 (1900–1901)

Introduction: Alla marcia

Valse: Presto

Romance: Andantino

Tarantella: Presto

Approximate duration: 24 minutes

In the years following his death, with manifold strains of modernism animating an increasingly contentious musical landscape, the unabashed Romanticism of Rachmaninov’s compositional language did his legacy no favors. Writing in the 1954 edition of Grove’s *Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Eric Blom infamously asserted that Rachmaninov, belying the celebrity he had achieved in his lifetime as composer, pianist, and conductor, “did not have the individuality of Taneyev or Medtner.” Blom went on to predict, “The enormous popular success some few of Rachmaninov’s works had in his lifetime is not likely to last, and musicians never regarded it with much favor.”

Hindsight half a century hence has reinforced the music critic Harold C. Schonberg’s acute dismissal of Blom’s assessment as “one of the most outrageously snobbish and even stupid statements in a work that is supposed to be an objective reference.” (Schonberg did acknowledge that Blom was only articulating the day’s prevailing critical thought.) The early twenty-first century finds Rachmaninov’s image rehabilitated and, indeed, his artistic legacy more compelling than ever before. While the pop-star sheen of his performing career has long since faded, Rachmaninov endures as one of the repertoire’s most cherished, and most performed, composers.

Rachmaninov’s catalogue of music for his own instrument—from solo works to four concerti—rests at the center of that legacy. This body of work includes three works for two pianos: *Russian Rhapsody*, composed in 1891, when Rachmaninov was eighteen; the *Fantaisie-tableaux* (*Suite no. 1*), composed two years later; and the *Suite no. 2, op. 17*, completed in 1901. This last work was part of a triumphant string of successes that marked a comeback from creative trauma for Rachmaninov.

In 1897, a reportedly inebriated Aleksandr Glazunov conducted

the premiere of Rachmaninov's First Symphony. The performance was a disaster. César Cui called the twenty-one-year-old Rachmaninov's new work "a program symphony on the Seven Plagues of Egypt...If there was a conservatory in Hell, Mr. Rachmaninov's symphony...would no doubt thoroughly entertain all of Hell's creatures." Three depressed, fallow years followed (which nevertheless had a bright side: hesitant to compose, Rachmaninov took up conducting, an arena in which he would find considerable success). Visits to a hypnotist restored Rachmaninov to "a cheerfulness of spirit, a desire to work, and confidence in his abilities," wrote his sister-in-law. And he returned to composition with a vengeance, producing the Second Piano Concerto, Cello Sonata, Opus 23 preludes, Spring (a cantata), Twelve Songs (op. 21), and the Suite no. 2.

Beyond overcoming demons, it was also during this period and in these works, that Rachmaninov found his compositional voice. The Second Piano Concerto casts off the youthful angst and bombast of the beleaguered symphony in favor of the ravishing harmonies and impassioned lyricism that would become his signature.

These qualities likewise characterize the Suite no. 2. Like the concerto, the suite is poetically expressive and stylistically assured. It is cast in four movements, beginning with a bold Introduction, orchestral in its conception. Dizzying passagework elevates the second-movement Valse from elegance to ecstasy. Even in its luxurious middle section, the movement remains rapturous. The third movement Romance is one of Rachmaninov's loveliest creations. Long, generous melodic lines rise from a texture conceived from the sonic opulence of two pianos. The suite concludes with a heady tarantella.

As in his concerti, Rachmaninov's ferocious skill as a pianist is audible in the suite. Its virtuosic bravado and majestic sound serve as much to glorify the instrument as to gratify the pianists. For its perfect matrimony of technical assurance and personal expression, the Suite no. 2 must be heard as one of Rachmaninov's finest artistic achievements.

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ARTISTS



Dmytro Choni took home bronze at the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition in June 2022, only the second Ukrainian pianist to medal at the prestigious contest. He won hearts and accolades with a compelling and colorful musicality that is fortified by a genuine, immediately engaging stage presence.

As one critic noted: "Each time he strode onstage, it was with winning confidence and a big smile. He's clearly an accomplished, assured—and communicative—pro" (Dallas Morning News) Dmytro's Cliburn prize builds on an already impressive resume. He has collaborated with renowned orchestras, such as the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Phoenix Symphony, RTVE Symphony, Seongnam Philharmonic, Ukraine National Symphony, Liechtenstein Symphony, and Dominican Republic National Symphony Orchestras, working with conductors Andrew Manze, Marin Alsop, Nicholas McGegan, Oksana Lyniv and others. His performances in major halls and festivals in Europe, Asia, South America, and the United States have made a lasting impression on his musical development.

Highlights from Dmytro's 2022–2023 inaugural tour as Cliburn medalist include Beethovenfest Bonn, the Duszniki International Chopin Piano Festival (Poland), Salle Cortot (Paris) and Palau de la Música (Barcelona); concertos with the Hamburger Camerata and Silesian Philharmonic; and a recital tour across the United States.



Anna Geniushene's fresh, layered, and powerful interpretations defined her participation at the 2022 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition—and won her the coveted silver medal and the adoration of fans around the globe. And the critics couldn't get enough: "powerhouse sound, forceful musical personality, and

sheer virtuosity...had this critic on the edge of his seat" (Musical America); "a performance of rare devotion and insight" (Onstage NTX); "a fresh version...that had this listener hanging on every bar" (La Scena). And when Anna closed the Cliburn Competition with a momentous performance of the Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 1, Gramophone likened it to the contest's revered namesake, "I couldn't help but equate Anna Geniushene's seasoned pianism to Cliburn at his best."

Born in Moscow on New Year's Day in 1991, Anna made her recital debut just seven years later in the small hall of the Berlin Philharmonic. She has since developed a diverse and versatile career as an artist: performances in major world venues such as the Town Hall in Leeds, National Concert Hall in Dublin, Museum of Arts in Tel Aviv, Teatro Carlo Felice in Genova, Great Hall of Moscow Conservatory, and Sala Greppi in Bergamo; a dedication to chamber music, including duo piano repertoire with her husband, Lukas Geniušas, and close collaboration with Quartetto di Cremona; and the creation of her own festival of collaborative music-making (NikoFest). She currently resides in Lithuania with her husband and their young son, Tomas.



Pianist Wu Han, recipient of Musical America's Musician of the Year Award, the highest honor bestowed by the organization, enjoys a multi-faceted musical life that encompasses performing, recording and artistic direction at the highest levels.

Her recent concert activities have taken her from New York's Lincoln Center stages to the most important concert halls in the United States, Europe, and Asia. In addition to countless performances of virtually the entire chamber repertoire, her recent concerto performances include appearances with the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Atlanta Symphony, and the Aspen Festival Orchestra.

She is the founder and Artistic Director of ArtistLed, classical music's first artist-directed, internet-based recording label (1997), which has released her performances of the staples of the cello-piano duo repertoire with cellist David Finckel. Her more than 80 releases on the ArtistLed, CMS Live and Music@Menlo LIVE labels include masterworks of the chamber repertoire with numerous distinguished musicians, the latest being Schubert's Winterreise with baritone Nikolay Borchev. During the pandemic seasons, Wu Han designed and produced more than 270 digital media projects, including concerts and innovative educational programs, which sustained the art of chamber music in dozens of communities across the United States.

Currently Artistic Co-Director of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and Music@Menlo, Silicon Valley's innovative chamber music festival, she also serves as Artistic Advisor for Wolf Trap's Chamber Music at the Barns series and for Palm Beach's Society of the Four Arts, and in 2022 was named Artistic Director of La Musica in Sarasota, Florida.

Passionately dedicated to education for musicians of all ages and experience, Wu Han guides CMS's Bowers Program, which admits stellar young musicians to the CMS roster for a term of three seasons. Wu Han also oversees the Chamber Music Institute at Music@Menlo, which immerses some forty young musicians every summer in the multi-faceted fabric of the festival. Wu Han was privileged to serve on multiple occasions as a faculty member of Isaac Stern's Chamber Music Encounters in Israel, New York, and Japan.

A recipient of the prestigious Andrew Wolf Award, Wu Han was mentored by an elite selection of some of the greatest pianists of our time, including Lilian Kallir, Rudolf Serkin, and Menahem Pressler. Married to cellist David Finckel since 1985, Wu Han divides her time between concert touring and residences in New York City and Westchester County.