

HOROWITZ PIANO SERIES

Boris Berman, *artistic director*

Boris Slutsky
Eric Zuber

Celebrating Rachmaninoff's
150 Anniversary

Wednesday, March 27, 2024 | 7:30 pm
Morse Recital Hall in Sprague Memorial Hall

Yale SCHOOL OF MUSIC

José García-León, Dean

Program

Sergei Rachmaninoff
1873–1943

Suite No. 1 in G minor for two pianos, Op. 5

- I. Barcarolle. Allegretto
- II. La nuit ... L'amour (The night ... The love).
Adagio sostenuto
- III. Les Larmes (The tears). Largo di molto
- IV. Pâques (Easter). Allegro maestoso

Rachmaninoff

Suite No. 2 in C major for two pianos, Op. 17

- I. Introduction. Alla marcia
- II. Valse. Presto
- III. Romance. Andantino
- IV. Tarantelle. Presto

INTERMISSION

Rachmaninoff

Symphonic Dances, Op. 45

- I. Non allegro
- II. Andante con moto (Tempo di valse)
- III. Lento assai – Allegro vivace – Lento assai. Come
prima – Allegro vivace

As a courtesy to others, please silence all devices. Photography and recording of any kind is strictly prohibited. Please do not leave the hall during musical selections. Thank you.

Poems

Suite No. 1 in G minor for two pianos,
Op. 5

I. Barcarolle

At dusk the chill wave laps gently
Beneath the gondola's slow oar.
That song again and again, the twang
of the guitar ...

In the distance the old barcarolle was
heard,
now melancholy, now happy ...
The gondola glides through the water,
and time glides over the surge of love;
The water will grow smooth again and
passion will rise no more.

Mikhail Lermontov

II. La nuit ... L'amour

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

She listens — but not for the nightingale —
Though her ear expects as soft a tale.
There glides a step through the foliage
thick,
And her cheek grows pale — and her heart
beats quick.
There whispers a voice through the
rustling leaves,
And her blush returns, and her bosom
heaves:
A moment more — and they shall meet —
'Tis past — her lover's at her feet.

And heedless as the dead are they
Of aught around, above, beneath;
As if all else had passed away,
They only for each other breathe;
Their very sighs are full of joy
So deep, that did it not decay,
That happy madness would destroy
The hearts which feel its fiery sway.

Lord Byron

III. Les Larmes

Tears, human tears
You flow both early and late —
You flow unknown, you flow unseen
Inexhaustible, innumerable —
You flow like torrents of rain
In the depths of an autumn night.

Fyodor Tyutchev

IV. Pâques

Across the earth a mighty bell is ringing
Until all the booming air rocks like the sea
As silver thunderings sing forth the tidings
Exulting in that holy victory...

Alexei Khomyakov

Artist Profiles

Boris Slutsky, *piano*

Consistently acclaimed for his exquisite tonal beauty and superb artistry, Boris Slutsky has appeared on nearly every continent as a soloist and recitalist, collaborating with eminent conductors and major orchestras in the United States, Europe, Canada, Israel, Latin America, and Asia. He has won first prizes in the Kosciuszko Foundation Chopin Piano Competition, the San Antonio International Keyboard Competition, and the William Kapell International Piano Competition, where he also received the Audience Prize and the William Backhaus Award. An avid chamber musician, Slutsky's almost three decades of chamber music collaborations include the critically acclaimed recording of Schumann's Sonatas for Violin and Piano with Ilya Kaler (Naxos), as well as performances with many other renowned artists.

At the Yale School of Music, Slutsky is Professor of Piano, teaching a studio of graduate-level pianists. Before coming to Yale, he was a faculty member at the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University, visiting faculty at the Bienen School of Music at Northwestern University, and Visiting Professor of Piano at the Eastman School of Music. He has served as a jury member of many international piano competitions and presented master classes throughout North America, Europe, and Asia. His students have won prizes at numerous prestigious international events.

Born in Moscow to a family of musicians, Slutsky received his early training at

Moscow's Gnessin School for Gifted Children as a student of Anna Kantor, and completed his formal studies at the Juilliard School and Manhattan School of Music, studying with Nadia Reisenberg, Nina Svetlanova, John Browning, and Joseph Seiger. In addition, he has worked for many years with his mentor Alexander Eydeleman.

Eric Zuber, *piano*

Hailed as an "irresistibly fluid" and "illuminating" pianist by the *New York Times* and the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, Eric Zuber has established himself as one of the leaders of a new generation of American pianism. His recent debut album, *The Young Chopin*, featuring a collaboration with the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra, has received critical acclaim, with *Gramophone* magazine praising his "comprehensive technical command . . . and bravura approach which is never garish or manipulative with careful voicing and subtle gradations of color."

During a period of just a few years, Zuber was a recipient of major prizes from twelve of the world's most prestigious international piano competitions including Arthur Rubinstein, Cleveland, Seoul, Sydney, Dublin, Hastings, Honens, and the Piano-e-Competition, and was named a Laureate of the American Pianist Association Classical Fellowship Awards. He was also a Gold Medalist in both the Hilton Head and Böesendorfer International Piano Competitions. For these and many other remarkable achievements,

Program Notes

he was given the Arthur Rubinstein Prize by the Juilliard School.

Zuber has made solo appearances at the Kennedy Center, Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall, Merkin Hall, the Sydney Opera House, and Severance Hall, and for the International Keyboard Institute and Festival in New York City. After making his orchestral debut at the age of twelve with the Baltimore Symphony, he has gone on to perform with many of the major orchestras in the United States and abroad including Cleveland, Israel, Indianapolis, Minnesota, Phoenix, Sydney, RTE National, and the Royal Philharmonic. His collaborations with internationally acclaimed artists include performances with Lewis Kaplan, Paul Huang, Amir Eldan, Charlie Neidich, Joseph Silverstein, Gerard Schwartz, Johannes Moser, and Amanda Roocroft.

In addition to a busy solo and collaborative career, Zuber is dedicated to helping the next generation of aspiring young artists. He currently serves as Assistant Professor of Piano at the Michigan State University School of Music. Zuber holds degrees from the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University (B.M., A.D., D.M.A.), the Curtis Institute of Music (Diploma), and the Juilliard School (M.M). His major teachers have been Boris Slutsky, Leon Fleisher, Claude Franck, and Robert McDonald.

Suite No. 1 in G minor for two pianos

RACHMANINOFF

Patrick Campbell Jankowski

Rachmaninoff called this Suite for two pianos a "Fantaisie-Tableaux," envisioning each piece as a musical picture and a wordless setting of poetry. Each of the poems was inspired by another writer and printed in the scores, conveying both literal and metaphorical imagery. *Barcarolle*, inspired by Lermontov, depicts a ghostly gondola floating by with waves lapping and a faint song – joyful and mournful – accompanied by a guitar. In *The Night ... The Love*, taken from Lord Byron, the song of the nightingale can be heard in a forest scene at night as a woman awaits her love, only to realize that he lies dead below. *Tears* depicts exactly what its title suggests, in both drops and torrents, while in *Easter* we can hear the tolling of bells so closely connected with Russian Orthodox tradition, known as "singing icons."

Suite No. 2 in C major for two pianos

RACHMANINOFF

Patrick Campbell Jankowski

If his first suite for two pianos was written by a young and ambitious optimist enamored of Tchaikovsky's music, this second one follows Rachmaninoff's sobering bout with depression and frustration. His First Symphony had been panned, its premiere a disaster for a variety of reasons including, some say, a drunk conductor. That work was abandoned when the composer fled Russia, only to be restored after his death (for the curious, it is not actually terrible). During his bout

Program Notes, *cont.*

with depression, Rachmaninoff did not publish or perform any new music but worked occasionally on some pieces while seeing a therapist, this suite being one of them. It begins with a striking march, its chords dense and clanging, and unfolding into boisterous joy. The march fades away at the end as though having passed us by (or so we think). An evocative waltz follows, fluctuating between vibrant, glistening energy and more mellow refinement. A *Romance* is quite emotive with an elegant trading back and forth of melody between the instruments and unexpected fluctuations of mood. A wild *Tarantella* – that Italian dance of frenzied mania – closes the suite in a virtuosic if unhinged fashion. Perhaps Rachmaninoff was shaking off his years of worry.

Symphonic Dances

RACHMANINOFF

Patrick Campbell Jankowski

It was during a stay on Long Island Sound, after his departure from Russia alongside many other artists in the first half of the twentieth century, that Rachmaninoff wrote what might be his most inventive, and certainly among his most enduring works. Masterful in orchestration, the composer crafted a brilliant three-movement symphony disguised as a suite of dances. While writing the orchestral version, the composer created a two-piano iteration, both practical and independently fascinating. Often called a nostalgic work, there are a number of references throughout the dances that point to his Russian past, including quotations from his “lost” first symphony in the first dance, indicating

perhaps that he came to terms with its failure. In the final dance, we hear a dialogue of religious themes: the *Dies irae* and a quotation from his own setting of the Orthodox *All Night Vigil*. At its heart, though, is dance, including in the piece’s central waltz, which veers wildly between metrical groupings and tempos, making it nearly impossible to dance to despite being characteristically, undeniably, a waltz. A friend, the renowned choreographer Mikhail Fokine, was actually staying nearby to Rachmaninoff at the time, and the composer had hoped that these dances might become a ballet. Fokine wrote to his friend “The valse rhythm seems to disturb you.... The thought of dancing is a side issue. If the joy of creating dances to your music is again given me, I should not at all feel the need for this rhythmic support.” Sadly, the two never created a work together. We are left with such possibility, if you just close your eyes and imagine the movement.

About the Horowitz Piano Series

The Horowitz Recital Series was established in 2000 to honor the artistry of the great Ukrainian-American pianist Vladimir Horowitz (1903–1989), who chose to leave his papers to Yale upon his death in 1989. Today, Yale honors his legacy through the Horowitz Piano Series, which brings many of the world's great keyboard artists to Yale and presents the distinguished pianists of the Yale faculty.

Emanuel Ax, Yefim Bronfman, and Radu Lupu are among the guest pianists who have performed at Yale. The series also presents pianists who are less known in the United States, such as Paul Lewis, Pierre Réach, and Mikhaïl Rudy.

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Laura Berry & Bernard Hulin
Eduardo Groisman
Susan Holahan
Jon Resnik

List as of March 20, 2024

Upcoming Events at YSM

- APR 3 **Lunchtime Chamber Music**
12:30 p.m. | Morse Recital Hall
Free admission, no registration required
- APR 3 **Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem***
Yale Symphony, Yale Glee Club, Yale Camerata, & Elm City Girls' Choir
7:30 p.m. | Woolsey Hall
Tickets at yso.yalecollege.yale.edu
- APR 5 **Peter Oundjian, *principal conductor***
Yale Philharmonia
7:30 p.m. | Woolsey Hall
Tickets start at \$13, Yale faculty/staff start at \$9, students free (ticket required)
- APR 16 **Augustin Hadelich, *violin* & Orion Weiss, *piano***
Faculty Artist Series
7:30 p.m. | Morse Recital Hall
Free admission, no registration required
- APR 17 **Lunchtime Chamber Music**
12:30 p.m. | Morse Recital Hall
Free admission, no registration required
- APR 18 **Martin Bresnick, *faculty composer***
New Music New Haven
7:30 p.m. | Morse Recital Hall
Free admission, no registration required

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