

2024–2025

Marian Anderson Hall

Wednesday, February 26, at 8:00

Daniil Trifonov Piano

Tchaikovsky Piano Sonata in C-sharp minor, Op. 80

I. Allegro con fuoco

II. Andante

III. Allegro vivo

IV. Allegro vivo

Chopin Waltz in E major, Op. Posth.

Waltz in F minor, Op. 70, No. 2

Waltz in A-flat major, Op. 64, No. 3

Waltz in D-flat major, Op. 64, No. 1

Waltz in A minor, Op. 34, No. 2

Waltz in E minor, Op. Posth.

Intermission

Barber Piano Sonata in E-flat minor, Op. 26

I. Allegro energico

II. Allegro vivace e leggero

III. Adagio mesto

IV. Fuga: Allegro con spirito

Tchaikovsky/arr. Pletnev Concert Suite from *The Sleeping Beauty*

I. Prologue

II. Dance of the Pages

III. Vision

IV. Andante

V. Silver Fairy

VI. Puss in Boots and the White Cat

VII. Gavotte

VIII. The Singing Canary

IX. Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf

X. Adagio

XI. Finale

This program runs approximately two hours.

This recital is funded, in part, by **Joan N. Stern**.

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Soloist

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GRAMMY Award-winning pianist **Daniil Trifonov** has made a spectacular ascent in the classical music world as a solo artist, champion of the concerto repertoire, chamber and vocal collaborator, and composer. Combining consummate technique with rare sensitivity and depth, his performances are a perpetual source of awe. With *Transcendental*, the Liszt collection that marked his third title as an exclusive Deutsche Grammophon artist, he won the GRAMMY Award for Best Instrumental Solo Album of 2018. Named *Gramophone's* 2016 Artist of the Year and *Musical America's* 2019 Artist of the Year, he was made a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French government in 2021.

Mr. Trifonov undertakes season-long artistic residencies with both the Chicago Symphony and the Czech Philharmonic in 2024–25. A highlight of his Chicago residency is Brahms's Second Piano Concerto with Klaus Mäkelä, and his Czech tenure features Dvořák's Piano Concerto with Semyon Bychkov, first at season-opening concerts in Prague and then on tour in Toronto and at Carnegie Hall. He also opened the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra's season with Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 25 under Andris Nelsons; performs Prokofiev's Second Concerto with the San Francisco Symphony and Esa-Pekka Salonen; reprises Dvořák's Concerto for a European tour with Jakub Hrůša and the Bamberg Symphony; plays Ravel's G-major Concerto with Hamburg's NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra and Alan Gilbert; and joins Rafael Payare and the Montreal Symphony for concertos by Schumann and Beethoven on a European tour. In recital, he appears twice more at Carnegie Hall, first on a solo tour and then with violinist Leonidas Kavakos, with whom he also appears in Chicago, Boston, Kansas City, and Washington, DC.

Fall 2024 brought the release of *My American Story*, Mr. Trifonov's new Deutsche Grammophon double album, which pairs solo pieces with concertos by Gershwin and Mason Bates. Bates's Concerto is dedicated to Mr. Trifonov and both orchestral works were recorded live with Yannick Nézet-Séguin and The Philadelphia Orchestra, who previously partnered with the pianist on his award-winning *Destination Rachmaninoff* series and the GRAMMY-nominated *Rachmaninoff Variations*. Born in Nizhny Novgorod in 1991, Mr. Trifonov began his musical training at the age of five and went on to attend Moscow's Gnessin School of Music as a student of Tatiana Zelikman, before pursuing his piano studies with Sergei Babayan at the Cleveland Institute of Music.

The Music

Piano Sonata in C-sharp minor

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–93)

Tchaikovsky showed exceptional musical gifts as a child, yet at the age of 10 he was sent to the St. Petersburg Imperial School of Jurisprudence to prepare for a career as a civil servant. He completed his law degree at age 19, proving himself a student of exceptional intelligence. Music remained his passion, and after three years of service in the Ministry of Justice, he left employment there to begin full-time study at the newly formed St. Petersburg Conservatory. He studied theory with Nikolai Zaremba and piano and composition with Anton Rubinstein. A gifted pianist, he also gained proficiency on flute and organ and became a competent conductor.

The works Tchaikovsky composed in his early 20s already contain a considerable amount of the melodic elan, harmonic sophistication, and structural ingenuity that would mark his mature style. To the period of the early 1860s belong the tone poem *The Storm* (an overture for Alexander Ostrovsky's play), an Overture in F major, a movement for String Quartet in B-flat major, and an Ode "an die Freude" for chorus, soloists, and orchestra.

The Piano Sonata in C-sharp minor from 1865, written during Tchaikovsky's last year at the Conservatory, became his first full-scale, four-movement composition. It is impressive for its bold design, memorable themes, and densely packed textures. Nevertheless, it was not published during the composer's lifetime; the manuscript turned up after his death among the materials at Klin, the country home the composer rented and that is now the Tchaikovsky House Museum.

A full version of the sonata, with tweaks by his student Sergey Taneyev, was released in 1900 by Tchaikovsky's long-time publisher, Pyotr Jurgenson. In the fall of 1900, in Odessa and Moscow, the pianist Alexander Siloti performed only the first and third movements, and in 1901 Jurgenson published that two-movement version as well.

The Allegro con fuoco is a sharply etched sonata form featuring a boisterous opening subject and an arching subsidiary theme. The tender Andante in A major is followed by a dynamic Scherzo (Allegro vivo), which he would adapt the following year as the Scherzo of his Symphony No. 1 ("Winter Dreams"). The Schumannesque finale (Allegro vivo) is a noisy stomp to conclude.

Six Waltzes

Frédéric Chopin (1810–49)

Many of Chopin's piano pieces are titled according to their function or musical character. The etudes are "study pieces," while the nocturnes are reflections on night moods. The preludes and impromptus possess the character of being improvised, and the ballades were inspired by the narrative designs of the

celebrated Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz. The quirkily titled scherzos seem to have picked up on some of the dark comedy that Beethoven mined in his late works.

Chopin's mazurkas, polonaises, and waltzes, in contrast, are inspired by dance rhythms. If the first two of these genres are drawn from Polish folk dances (or at least stylized versions of them), the waltz has roots in the Austrian *Ländler*, which by the early 19th century was evolving from its bucolic origins into a sophisticated ballroom dance. Chopin was well aware of the Viennese waltz that Johann Strauss, Sr., and others had popularized, and he sought to bring its effervescence to his works. Yet his lilting character-pieces are so filled with nuance and implied rhythmic flexibility that one would be hard-pressed to actually dance to them.

Chopin composed waltzes throughout his creative life, from his teenage years to his final months. Twenty survive, although he might have produced as many as twice that number. Only eight were published during his lifetime. Tonight's group of six are framed by two waltzes, one in E major and one in E minor, composed in 1829 and 1830 respectively and published after Chopin's death. The little-known E-major Waltz is brisk and straightforward, while the familiar E-minor Waltz is one of his most florid.

The F-minor Waltz, Op. 70, No. 2, from 1842 opens with a plaintive strain, then slides effortlessly into a cheerful melody that feels strikingly Viennese. The Waltz in A-flat major, Op. 64, No. 3, alternates sunny charm with intermittent clouds. Op. 64, No. 1, is the "Minute" Waltz, its nickname a reference to its "miniature" nature. And Op. 34, No. 2, from 1831, is a discursive, pensive embrace of a wide range of temperaments. Dedicated to Baroness d'Ivry, one of Chopin's students in Paris, it is a richly refined gem.

Piano Sonata

Samuel Barber (1910–81)

Nearly all the major American composers of the 20th century—from Aaron Copland to Elliott Carter, Florence Price to Walter Piston—composed at least one piano sonata. Yet of the hundreds of works called sonata, only a handful have achieved repertoire status. One of the most durable is Samuel Barber's, written on commission from the League of Composers (est. 1923) as part of its 25th anniversary.

The request came during one of the busiest periods of Barber's career, when he was completing two of the orchestral works for which he is most celebrated: *Medea* for Martha Graham and *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* for the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Once it was established that Vladimir Horowitz would present the premiere of the Sonata, Barber resolved to deliver his best. In early 1948 he traveled to the American Academy in Rome, hoping that it would help him focus on the piece. But he found post-war Italy to be chaotic and filled with distractions.

Back in New York, by August of 1948 he had completed three movements, at which point Horowitz offered a suggestion. "I saw three movements and I told him

the sonata would sound better if he made a very flashy last movement, but with content," the pianist said. Horowitz performed the Sonata in Havana in December 1949 and the following month at Constitution Hall in Washington, DC, and in New York. "He does it superbly," Barber wrote of Horowitz's interpretation, "and with a surprising emotional *rapprochement* which I had not expected."

The Allegro energico is built from the restless dotted rhythms of the opening subject, the Allegro vivace e leggero is a scherzo with an affinity to Prokofiev, and the Adagio mesto stands as one of Barber's more emotionally effective slow movements. The energy of the finale grows, first, from the spiky, inventive fugue subject (Allegro con spirito), which is worked out thoroughly with retrograde, inversion, stretto, and other traditional fugal techniques.

Concert Suite from *The Sleeping Beauty*

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (arr. Pletnev)

At the heart of Tchaikovsky's output are three masterful ballet scores: the archetypical Romantic tragedy (*Swan Lake*), the fantastical dream of warrior mice and dancing candy canes (*The Nutcracker*), and the quintessential fairy-tale-set-to-dance (*The Sleeping Beauty*). Composed in the first half of 1889, on the heels of the Fifth Symphony, *Sleeping Beauty* was staged at St. Petersburg's Mariinsky Theater in January 1890, with choreography by Marius Petipa and lavish scenic designs by Ivan Vsevolozhsky. The scenario was drawn from Charles Perrault's version of the tale, *La Belle au bois dormant*, found in the 1697 collection of *Tales of Mother Goose*—a source for familiar stories of Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, and Puss in Boots, some of whom make appearances in this ballet. The story runs thus: When Princess Aurora is christened, her parents leave the evil fairy Carabosse off the invitation list. He vows revenge, placing a curse on Aurora so that she will die at age 16. The Lilac Fairy arrives to mitigate the curse: Aurora only has to sleep 100 years, at which time she will be awakened by a handsome prince. A century passes. Aurora wakes up and marries the Prince, amidst general rejoicing.

Mikhail Pletnev, the prominent pianist/conductor who won the Gold Medal at the 1978 International Tchaikovsky Competition, has transformed excerpts from this ballet into a virtuosic showpiece.

—Paul J. Horsley

Paul J. Horsley is performing arts editor for the Independent in Kansas City. Previously he was program annotator and musicologist for The Philadelphia Orchestra and music and dance critic for the Kansas City Star.

Musical Terms

GENERAL TERMS

Chord: The simultaneous sounding of three or more tones

Coda: A concluding section or passage added in order to confirm the impression of finality

Fugue: A piece of music in which a short melody is stated by one voice and then imitated by the other voices in succession, reappearing throughout the entire piece in all the voices at different places

Gavotte: A French court dance and instrumental form in a lively duple-meter popular from the late 16th century to the late 18th century

Harmonic: Pertaining to chords and to the theory and practice of harmony

Harmony: The combination of simultaneously sounded musical notes to produce chords and chord progressions

Inversion: Chords in which the notes have changed position, and the tonic, or root, of the chord is no longer the lowest note

Ländler: An Austrian folk dance in triple time

Meter: The symmetrical grouping of musical rhythms

Op.: Abbreviation for opus, a term used to indicate the chronological position of a composition within a composer's output. Opus numbers are not always reliable because they are often applied in the order of publication rather than composition.

Scherzo: Literally "a joke." Usually the third movement of symphonies and quartets that was introduced by Beethoven to replace the minuet. The scherzo is followed by a gentler section called a trio, after which the scherzo is repeated. Its characteristics are a rapid tempo, vigorous rhythm, and humorous contrasts. Also an instrumental piece of a light, piquant, humorous character.

Sonata: An instrumental composition in three or four extended movements contrasted in theme, tempo, and mood, usually for a solo instrument

Sonata form: The form in which the first movements (and sometimes others) of symphonies are usually cast. The sections are exposition, development, and recapitulation, the last sometimes followed by a coda. The exposition is the introduction of the musical ideas, which are then "developed." In the recapitulation, the exposition is repeated with modifications.

Stretto: A division of a fugue in which subject and answer follow in such close succession as to overlap

Suite: During the Baroque period, an instrumental genre consisting of several movements in the same key, some or all of which were based on the forms and styles of dance music. Later, a group of pieces extracted from a larger work, especially an opera or ballet.

THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)

Adagio: Leisurely, slow

Allegro: Bright, fast

Andante: Walking speed

Con fuoco: With fire, passionately, excited

Con spirito: Spirited, lively

Energico: With vigor, powerfully

Leggero: Lightly, nimbly

Mesto: Sad, mournful

Vivace: Lively

Vivo: Lively, intense

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