

*SHEPHERD SCHOOL
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA*

LARRY RACHLEFF, music director

Saturday, March 20, 2010

8:00 p.m.

Stude Concert Hall

RICE UNIVERSITY

the
Shepherd
School
of Music

PROGRAM

Francesca da Rimini, Op. 32

Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
(1840-1893)

Cristian Măcelaru, conductor

INTERMISSION

Concerto for Orchestra

Béla Bartók
(1881-1945)

Introduzione: Andante non troppo -

Allegro vivace

Giuoco delle Coppie: Allegro scherzando

Elegia: Andante non troppo

Intermezzo Interrotto: Allegretto

Finale: Pesante - Presto

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

Jing Wang,
concertmaster
ANNE AND CHARLES
DUNCAN CHAIR
David Huntsman
Sonja Harasim
Yennifer Correia
Eric Siu
Emily Herdeman
Chloé Trevor
Tiantian Zhang
Mae Bariff
Hannah Dremann
Regina Dyches
Jiyeon Min
Hong-Ann Liang
Mary Jeppson
Kimia Ghaderi
Sol Jin

Violin II

Malorie Blake,
principal
Rachel Sandman
Emil Ivanov
Creston Herron
Meghan Nenniger
Bo Xun
Emily Jackson
Alyssa Yank
Brooke Bennett
Lijia Phang
Genevieve Micheletti
Meredith Peacock
Vivian Fu

Viola

Julia Immel,
principal
Kathleen Magill
Joshua Kelly
Padua Canty
Molly Gebrian
Andrew Griffin
Lynsey Anderson
Jordan Warmath
Hillary Schoap
Timothy Rowland
Yvonne Smith
Ilana Mercer

Cello

Hope Shepherd,
principal
ANNETTE AND HUGH
GRAGG CHAIR
Cara Cheung
Morgen Johnson
SeHee Kim
Jacob Fowler
Keith Thomas
Caroline Nicolas
Meredith Bates
Sophie Benn
Matthew Kufchak
Benjamin Whitman
Autumn England

Double Bass

Kevin Jablonski,
principal
Annabella Leslie
Ian Hallas
Brian Johnson
Emily Honeyman
Paul Cannon
Jonathan Reed
Katherine Munagian
Robert Nelson
Daniel Smith

Flute

Henrik Heide
Garrett Hudson
Izumi Miyahara
Catherine Ramirez
Henry Williford
Heather Zinninger

Piccolo

Izumi Miyahara
Catherine Ramirez

Oboe

Kristin Kall
Michael McGowan
Erica Overmyer
Emily Snyder
Shane Wedel

English Horn

Malia Smith
Shane Wedel

Clarinet

Carlos Cordeiro
André Dyachenko
Daniel Goldman
James Johnson
Natalie Parker

Bass Clarinet

Carlos Cordeiro

Bassoon

Tracy Jacobson
Briana Lehman
Matthew McDonald
Jeffrey Nesrsta
Maxwell Pipinich

Contrabassoon

Jeffrey Nesrsta

Horn

Katharine Caliendo
MARGARET C. PACK CHAIR
Nicholas Hartman
Tyler Holt
Matthew Muehl-Miller
Roman Ponomariov
Nicholas Wolny

Trumpet

Patrick Corvington
Ryan Darke
Alexander Fioto
Roberto Lares

Cornet

Patrick Corvington
Alexander Fioto

Trombone

Kurt Ferguson
Travis Sheaffer
Benjamin Zilber

Bass Trombone

Joshua Becker

Tuba

Austin Howle
Michael Woods

Harp

Emily Klein
Mason Morton
Sadie Turner

Keyboard

Jannie Le Roux
CHARLOTTE A. ROTHWELL
CHAIR

Percussion

Ethan Ahmad
Aaron Guillory
Heidi Law
Christian Slagle

Orchestra Manager and Librarian

Kaaren Fleisher

Production Manager

Mandy Billings

Assistant Production Manager

Francis Schmidt

Library Assistants

Padua Canty
Yennifer Correia
Annabella Leslie
Joshua Kelly
SeHee Kim
Heather Kufchak
Caroline Nicolas
Xiaoxiao Qiang
Patrick Staples
Alicia Valoti
Alyssa Yank
Jude Ziliak

Stage Assistants

Ryan Darke
Aaron Guillory
Austin Howle
Matthew McDonald
Matthew Muehl-Miller
Maxwell Pipinich
Eric Shin
Nicholas Wolny

STRING SEATING CHANGES WITH EACH CONCERT.

WINDS, BRASS, PERCUSSION AND HARP LISTED ALPHABETICALLY.

PROGRAM NOTES

Francesca da Rimini, Op. 32 Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky is one of Russia's most prominent composers and his works, which span many musical genres, continue to enjoy popular success around the world. His family expected him to become a statesman, as his early education shows, and was therefore disappointed when he chose to become a composer and entered the St. Petersburg Conservatory in 1862. There he received a formal Western education which set him apart from his nationalist contemporaries, The Russian Five. Though he maintained a cordial working relationship with the Five, especially with its leader Mili Balakirev, his music remains distinct both from their strongly Russian style and from the conservative Western style of his conservatory education. Much of his music is very Romantic, and he drew inspiration from the tragedies of Shakespeare (as in his famous fantasy overture **Romeo and Juliet**), the Gothic music and subject matter of Franz Liszt, and from his own tragic love stories.

Francesca da Rimini, composed in 1876, is one such tragedy. The story comes from Dante's **Divine Comedy**, and Tchaikovsky was initially drawn to the operatic possibilities of the **Inferno**. He dropped this idea after working briefly with librettist Konstantin Zvantsev, who was a fanatic Wagnerian. However, a few years later the subject was presented to him again for symphonic treatment by his brother Modest (who famously created the libretto for Rachmaninoff's operatic version of the same tale). This time the story grabbed hold of Tchaikovsky and he worked quickly, completing the sketches in just three weeks. This time he focused only on the fifth canto of the **Inferno**, in which the narrator crosses paths with the doomed soul of Francesca. Reluctantly, she tells the narrator about how she was forced to marry a deformed warlord, and how she fell in love with his handsome brother Paolo. After being caught in the act by her husband, the two lovers were murdered and sent to the second circle of Hell to be separated for all eternity in the whirlwind of souls.

The intensely programmatic work derives its form from a line in Dante in which Francesca states that "there is no greater pain than, in our misery to be reminded of a happy time." Tchaikovsky encloses the poignant inner section with whirlwinds of chaos and sound on either side, depicting the hellish environment around the tragic heroine. The most obvious formal influence is Liszt, who used this same ternary format for this section of his **Dante Symphony** (1857). A less expected influence is the **Ring** cycle of Wagner, which Tchaikovsky had scathingly reviewed only a few weeks before beginning the symphonic fantasy. Tchaikovsky even writes, "Isn't it strange that I should have fallen under the influence of a work of art for which I feel, on the whole, a marked antipathy?" The most obvious instance of Wagnerianism is seen in the Andante lugubre introduction where the brass section portentously outlines harsh and ambiguous harmonies. This section depicts Dante's descent into the second circle of Hell, and it escalates to a syncopated whirlwind of sound as the poet is confronted by the tempest of souls. Then a plaintive clarinet solo introduces the voice of Francesca, and the music immediately changes to a spaciously harmonized chamber-like setting as the heroine begins reluctantly to spin out her tale. Tchaikovsky illustrates

this reticence by a gradual teasing out of the theme through slight variation. This section, the longest in the piece, received mixed reviews at its premiere, from critics who mistook the subtle variations for incessant repetition. The narrator is then swept on to continue his journey through Hell, and he passes again through the tumultuous whirlwind of souls. The stormy music of the introduction returns in a condensed recapitulation, and as the music builds to a frenzy we can clearly hear the narrator fainting in sympathy as he is overwhelmed by the scope and tragedy of Francesca's plight.

Concerto for Orchestra Béla Bartók

Béla Bartók was born in rural Hungary in 1881. He displayed great musical talent in piano and composition at a very early age, and he played his first public concert featuring his own work at age eleven. He met and became very good friends with composer Zoltán Kodály during his time at the Royal Academy of Music in Budapest, and for much of his early career he and Kodály spent their time traveling the countryside collecting and analyzing traditional Magyar folksongs. This extensive catalogue is, perhaps, Bartók's most remembered achievement. As a composer, Bartók's musical style is a mixture of three main elements: folk music, modernism, and classicism. His intense passion for authentic Hungarian folk songs led him to quote them directly in much of his music, but his contemporary influences – Strauss, Debussy, Stravinsky, and Schoenberg, among others – led him to harmonize these songs with great complexity. He found beauty in the pentatonic melodies and asymmetrical rhythms of the Magyar folksongs he emulated, but he also turned away from being overly rhapsodic, choosing to stay within the bounds of Western musical forms. This blend of styles made him versatile and accessible, and during the last two years of his life his many commissions and performances enjoyed great critical acclaim.

The **Concerto for Orchestra** was one of these later commissions. After Bartók moved to the United States in 1940 his health steadily declined, and after he completed his sixth string quartet he was hospitalized again for increasingly severe and unexplained fevers and weakness. In spite of his ill health, Serge Koussevitsky's foundation commissioned the piece, and it was at this time that he made one of the most remarkable medical recoveries of his day. He was one of the first civilians in the United States to receive penicillin during World War II, a privilege granted by the War Production Board in Washington, D.C. and for which ASCAP paid an extravagant price. The extra effort on Bartók's behalf was well worth it, and Bartók completed his **Concerto** in less than two months. After its premiere in Boston in 1944, it quickly became his most popular and successful work, and it has been a staple of orchestral repertoire ever since.

The term "concerto" usually refers to a multi-movement work in which a solo instrument is given virtuosic treatment to orchestral accompaniment. In the **Concerto for Orchestra**, all the instruments in the orchestra are called upon to give a virtuosic display. The first two movements have been characterized as "conspicuously Hungarian," possibly reflecting the aging Hungarian nationalist's homesickness in America. The first movement, which Bartók subtitled *Introduzione*, opens with a passage of slow night music. Distant trumpets play a fanfare-like theme, which contrasts with the lyrical backdrop.

This gives way to an allegro fugato passage in a broader Hungarian style that continues the earlier trumpet's call to battle. The influence of the traditionally asymmetrical Magyar rhythms is particularly evident here. The second movement was subtitled *Giuoco della Coppie* (*Game of the Couples*) in Bartók's revised score, a title that supports the movement's jocular tone. In five thematically distinct sections, pairs of instruments – bassoons, oboes, clarinets, flutes, trumpets – are introduced over slightly militaristic side drum interjections. This presentation of couples is representative of the old Hungarian folk tradition known as the "Sunday order of dances." The third movement of the concerto, *Elegia*, is dominated by a feeling of nostalgia and loss. Acclaimed music commentator István Csicsery-Rónay identified the central thematic material as belonging to a Székely threnody which Bartók collected from one of the oldest Hungarian tribes in Transylvania.

The fourth movement, *Intermezzo interrotto*, returns to his lighter style. Here, he contrasts a flowing asymmetrical melody with a harsh burlesque theme, which Bartók admits is his own satirical reaction to the march theme of Shostakovich's seventh symphony that he heard over the radio from the confines of his hospital bed. The second theme features the timpani, and is a stylized quotation of a line from an operetta by Zsigmond Vincze's that states, "You are lovely, you are beautiful, my Hungary." The fifth movement, *Finale*, returns to folk melodies with an exuberant dance-like feeling. It represents, as Bartók states, "the brotherhood of all nations, in spite of wars and conflicts... a whirling paroxysm of dance in which all the peoples of the world join hands."

– Notes by Rebecca Hook

UPCOMING ORCHESTRA EVENTS

March 25, 26, 28 and 29 – SHEPHERD SCHOOL OPERA and the SHEPHERD SCHOOL CHAMBER ORCHESTRA present *A Little Night Music* by Stephen Sondheim; Richard Bado, conductor; Debra Dickinson, director. Wortham Opera Theatre at the Shepherd School. Sunday's performance at 2:00 p.m.; all other performances at 7:30 p.m. Admission (general seating): \$12; students and senior citizens \$10. For tickets call 713-348-8000.

Thursday, April 22, 8:00 p.m. – SHEPHERD SCHOOL CHAMBER ORCHESTRA Larry Rachleff, conductor PROGRAM: Betty Beath - *River Songs* (Susan Lorette Dunn, soprano); Ferdinand David - *Concerto for Bassoon and Orchestra, Op. 12* (Gwen Seaton, soloist); and Mozart - *Symphony No. 41 in C Major, K. 551 "Jupiter."* Stude Concert Hall. Free admission.

Friday, April 23, 8:00 p.m. – SHEPHERD SCHOOL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, RICE CHORALE and COMBINED CHORUSES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON Larry Rachleff, conductor PROGRAM: Ives - *Decoration Day from New England Holidays* and Beethoven - *Symphony No. 9 in D Minor, Op. 125 "Choral."* Stude Concert Hall. Admission (reserved seating): \$12; students and senior citizens \$10. For tickets call 713-348-8000.



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