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niagara
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orchestra

**bradley
thachuk**
music
director

2021 | 2022 programme

2021-22

presented at



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nso musicians

FLUTE

Doug Miller **P**
Patricia Dydnansky

PICCOLO

Julia Morley

OBOE

Graham Mackenzie **P**
Karen Ages

CLARINET

Zoltan Kalman **P**

BASSOON

Nicolas Richard **P**
Cathi MacDonnell

FRENCH HORN

Austin Hitchcock **P**
Janice Fralick
Iris Krizmanic
Curtis Vander Hyden

TRUMPET

Ira Zingraff **P**
Brian Roberts

TROMBONE

Steve Fralick **P**
Dave Sisler

BASS TROMBONE

James Zimmermann

TUBA

Brent Adams **P**

HARP

Deborah Braun **P**

PERCUSSION

Laura Thomas **P**
Mike Phelan
Julian Jeun

VIOLIN 1

Valerie Sylvester **P**
Concertmaster
Xiaoling Li
Associate Concertmaster
Dianne Humann
Jihye Kee
Gail Poulsen
Michael van Dongen
Natalie Wong

VIOLIN 2

Charlene Nagel **P**
Vera Alekseeva
David Braun
Mary Beth Doherty
Erika Janzen
Charna Matsushige
Jadwiga Pomorski
Orsolya Szalados

VIOLA

Marlene Dankiw-Bath **P**
Caitlin Boyle
Liam Calhoun
Sarah de Niverville
Pierre Gagnon
Andrée Simard

CELLO

Gordon Cleland **P**
Sonya Nanos Hodgson
Mark Russom

BASS

Brian Baty **P**
Neal Evans
Fil Stasiak

***P denotes Principal**

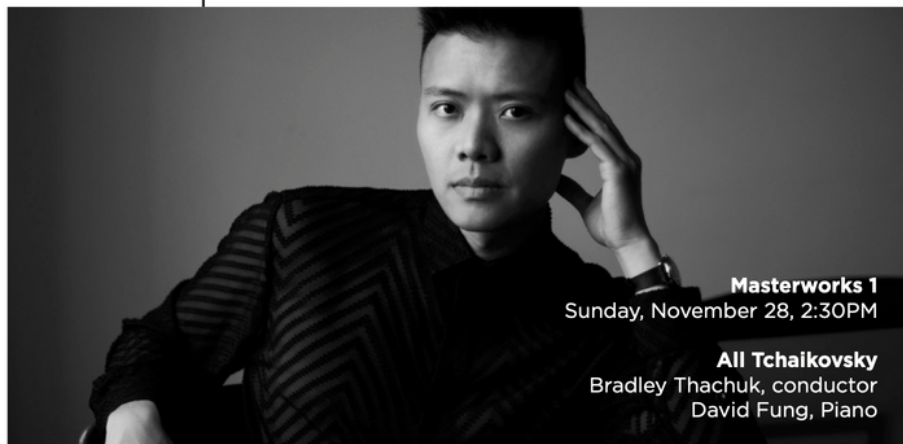
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Masterworks 1
Sunday, November 28, 2:30PM

All Tchaikovsky
Bradley Thachuk, conductor
David Fung, Piano

Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 1 in B-flat minor, Op. 23

37'

David Fung, piano

I. *Allegro non troppo e molto maestoso - Allegro con spirito*

II. *Andantino semplice - Prestissimo - Tempo I*

III. *Allegro con fuoco - Molto meno mosso - Allegro vivo*

- intermission -

Tchaikovsky Romeo & Juliet (Fantasy Overture)

21'

Tchaikovsky Festival Overture: The Year 1812, op. 49

16'



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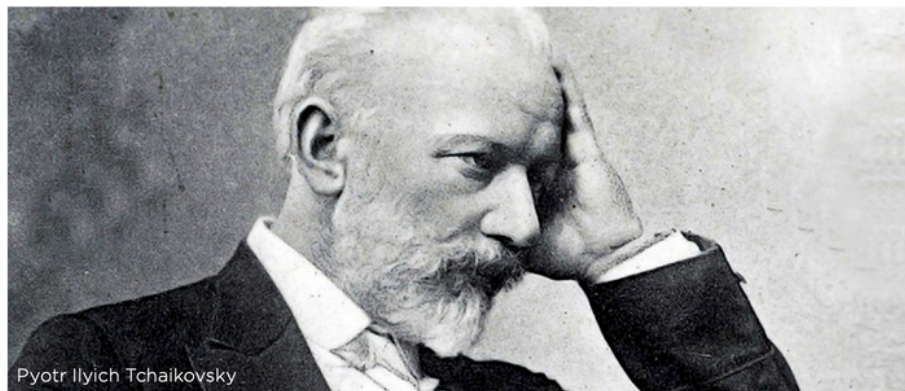


Recording and photography during
the performance are strictly prohibited.



Praised for his “ravishing and simply gorgeous” performances

in The Washington Post, pianist David Fung is widely recognized for interpretations that are elegant and refined, yet intensely poetic and uncommonly expressive. Declared a Rising Star in BBC Music Magazine, Mr. Fung regularly appears with the world's premier ensembles including the Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, San Diego Symphony, Detroit Symphony, Israel Philharmonic, and National Orchestra of Belgium, as well as the major orchestras in his native country of Australia. An incisive interpreter of Mozart and Bach, Mr. Fung has collaborated with the Israel, Los Angeles, Melbourne, Orpheus, and Saint Paul Chamber Orchestras, and Orchestra of St. Luke's. Mr. Fung is the first piano graduate of the Colburn Conservatory in Los Angeles and joins the performance faculty of University of British Columbia in January 2022. He is a Steinway Artist.



Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Tchaikovsky: Piano Concerto No. 1 in B-flat minor, Op. 23

When Tchaikovsky first played over the as-yet-unorchestrated score of his first venture into the genre of the piano concerto, his listener, the Russian pianist and composer Nikolay Rubinstein, told him flatly that the piano part seemed unplayable, so bad that it was barely worth revising! Undaunted, Tchaikovsky nevertheless proceeded to sketch out an orchestration and dedicated the score not to Rubinstein, as he had originally intended, but to Hans von Bülow, a pianist who had already praised Tchaikovsky's compositions, and was far more likely to promote the work in a positive manner. Delighted with his dedication, von Bülow gave the first performance of the Piano Concerto no. 1 in Boston while on an American tour in 1875. Four years later, Rubinstein admitted that his judgment had been far too harsh; his friendship with Tchaikovsky was restored, and he went on to perform the work himself.

This concerto makes use of three borrowed tunes, one per movement. The first theme of the opening movement (after the famous slow introduction) is taken from a folk song which Tchaikovsky said had been sung by "every blind Ukrainian singer" he had met in his travels. Another folk song serves as the main subject of the finale. In the prestissimo section of the second movement, a fragment of a lighthearted French song makes an appearance. These borrowed elements are worked skillfully into the fabric of a concerto that was one of Tchaikovsky's first really large-scale works and is still one of the best-loved of all piano concertos – despite the fact that Tchaikovsky was not himself a virtuoso pianist.

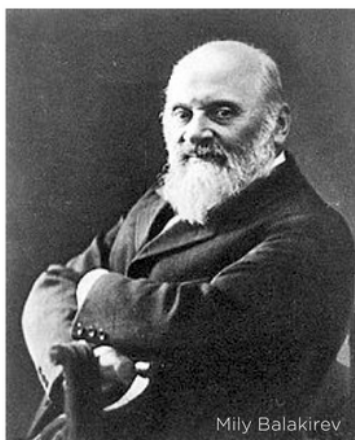
The opening movement is constructed on a vast scale; after the imposing slow introduction, the exposition proper begins with the Ukrainian folksong. This theme, presented in virtuosic octave passagework by the soloist, contrasts vividly with the more intimate second group, which contains two charming melodic ideas. Tchaikovsky spins this thematic material into a massive movement demanding great stamina and virtuosity from the soloist, including two extended cadenza-like passages.

The central movement combines a cantabile opening section with a prestissimo continuation, thus serving the double function of slow movement and scherzo. The two sections – one based on a wistful melody introduced by solo flute, the other featuring rapid-fire piano figuration woven around an irreverent tune – complement each other ideally and provide a respite from the high drama of the outer movements. The rhythmic drive of the finale reflects its derivation from folk material; around it, Tchaikovsky constructs another sonata-form movement, culminating in a joyous B-flat-major melody which finally releases the tension created throughout the entire concerto.

Tchaikovsky: Romeo and Juliet (Fantasy Overture)

Tchaikovsky, while not a member of the famous "Russian Five" (Balakirev, Cui, Mussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov and Borodin – aka the "Mighty Handful"), was praised by one of their sympathetic critics, Vladimir Stassov, when *Romeo and Juliet* (Fantasy Overture) was first performed in 1870. The idea of using the Shakespearean love story as a model for a lush, passionate orchestral setting came from Tchaikovsky's mentor Balakirev, for whom he had the utmost respect, and whose approval or disapproval was the ultimate test. In fact, Tchaikovsky had to be pushed

forcibly by Balakirev out of a lull of inactivity to compose the work. The mentor seemed to feel that the younger, often brooding composer needed a new project to occupy his mind and talents. Tchaikovsky dutifully prepared several versions of the score and revised it considerably, particularly in the introduction, under Balakirev's stern criticism. Tchaikovsky's final version in fact resembles in many ways Balakirev's own *King Lear Overture*. Unfortunately, the premiere of *Romeo and Juliet*, conducted by Nikolay Rubinstein in Moscow, went almost completely unnoticed by the public, even though Tchaikovsky received no end of accolades from his colleagues in the "Five". The work did not begin to gain acclaim in wider circles until the conductor Rubinstein managed to persuade a Berlin publishing firm to distribute it. Today, use of this Romantic overture in countless recordings and film scores seems to have ensured its permanent popularity in the classical concert scene.



Tchaikovsky: Festival Overture: The Year 1812, Op. 49

Written to commemorate the 60th anniversary of Napoleon's invasion and retreat from Russia during the War of 1812, Tchaikovsky's noisiest and most frequently heard overture was premiered in August 1882 at the consecration of the Cathedral of Christ the Redeemer in Moscow, whose construction was not actually completed until the following year. The thematic material of the overture juxtaposes Russian hymns and folk tunes with the French anthem "La Marseillaise" and original ideas that effectively evoke the din of battle. Although Tchaikovsky was generally averse to politics, his overture succeeded in its purpose of glorifying the reign of the Czars, in particular Alexander III, crowned the previous year.

Notes by Brian E. Power



Canadian Conductor, Bradley Thachuk, is the Music Director for the Niagara Symphony Orchestra (NSO), with the 2021-2022 season marking his 11th as artistic leader and conductor.

Previously, he held the positions of Music Director of the Erie Chamber Orchestra, Associate Conductor of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic, Interim Music Director of the Prince George Symphony Orchestra, Conducting Assistant of the Cincinnati Symphony and Pops Orchestras, Staff Conductor of the Opera Theatre of Lucca, and Music Director of the Brampton Symphony Orchestra.

Thachuk has also established himself globally as an in-demand guest conductor who moves easily between the classical and rock worlds. Recent projects and engagements include the English Symphony Orchestra, Sinfonieorchester Wuppertal, the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, the U.K. "Genesis Revisited" tour with legendary guitarist Steve Hackett, the music of Leonard Cohen, a tribute to the Tragically Hip, ABC's *Dancing with the Stars* franchise, Sarah Slean, and The Beach Boys.

A supporter of the next generation of orchestral musicians, Thachuk is also a lecturer in Orchestral Literature at the world-renowned Glenn Gould School at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, sharing his knowledge and passion for orchestral music with post-grad students from around the world.



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Sayer Roberts, Vocalist

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