



CADOGAN HALL

Zurich International Orchestra Series 2015-16

IN ASSOCIATION WITH IMG ARTISTS

Dresden Philharmonic

MONDAY 5 OCTOBER 2015, 7.30PM



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Programme:

Wagner

OVERTURE TO
DIE MEISTERSINGER
VON NÜRNBERG

Rachmaninov

PIANO CONCERTO NO. 1

— *Interval* —

Brahms

SYMPHONY NO. 4



Dresden Philharmonic

Andrei Korobeinikov

PIANO

Michael Sanderling

CONDUCTOR

PROGRAMME NOTES

Richard Wagner (1813-1883)

OVERTURE TO DIE MEISTERSINGER
VON NÜRNBERG (1867)

The German composer Richard Wagner was one of the major creative figures of the 19th century. A great man of the theatre, in his middle years he composed an unbroken succession of operatic masterpieces:

The Flying Dutchman (1843), *Tannhäuser* (1845), *Lohengrin* (1848), *Tristan and Isolde* (1859), *The Mastersingers of Nuremberg* (1867), and *The Ring of the Nibelungs* (1852-1874). His final opera was *Parsifal* (1882). He established the Bayreuth Festival for the performance of his music, and he died after an eventful life in 1883.



Wagner, 1867

Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg (The Mastersingers of Nuremberg) was Wagner's only mature comedy, and his only work dealing with ordinary historical figures. The plot focuses upon the cobbler-poet Hans Sachs (1494-1576) and the Guild of Mastersingers. A wealthy member of the Guild, Pogner, has decided to offer his daughter, Eva, in marriage to the winner of a singing contest. The young hero Walther is in love with Eva, and decides to enter the contest but is unaware of its complex rules. With the aid of Sachs, and despite the bitter opposition of Beckmesser, who also aspires to marry Eva, Walther wins the contest with his prize song, and so the hand of Eva.

Wagner created some of his finest music for the opera, which covers a very wide range of dramatic and emotional situations, but which is dominated above all by the fresh enthusiasm of young love, tempered by the wisdom of the Mastersingers, as personified by Sachs. The Overture opens with the majestic theme associated with the Mastersingers themselves, and goes on to encompass many of the principal musico-dramatic themes of the opera, before concluding, as it began, with music of impressive pomp and ceremony with which the operatic action is launched.

Sergei Rachmaninov (1873-1943)

PIANO CONCERTO NO. 1 IN F SHARP MINOR, OP. 1 (1891 rev. 1917)

- I. VIVACE
- II. ANDANTE
- III. ALLEGRO VIVACE

In 1891, at the age of 18, Rachmaninov won the highest honours for his piano playing at the Moscow Conservatory, after studying with Alexander Siloti, who himself had studied with Tchaikovsky, Nicholas Rubinstein and Liszt. In addition, as a student of composition with Taneyev and Arensky, he had written a number of works in different genres, before feeling able to give one of his compositions an opus number. This was to be the First Piano Concerto, by far his most ambitious work to date. The last two movements were written in a rush during July 1891 while still a student: as Rachmaninov himself wrote to a friend, 'I could have finished it much sooner, but after the first movement I idled for a long while...composed and scored the last two movements in two and a half days.'

Dedicated to Siloti, the Concerto was first performed at the Moscow Conservatory the following year, in March 1892, with Rachmaninov as soloist and Safonov conducting. The reception was not especially enthusiastic. Rachmaninov was disappointed but not as devastated as he was to be following the disastrous premiere of his First Symphony in 1897. The weak performance, conducted by Glazunov, and a vitriolic review by Cui, precipitated the depression for which Rachmaninov needed medical assistance, and the product of which was to be the Second Piano Concerto, first performed in 1901.

Following the success of the Second Concerto Rachmaninov received many requests to hear the First, but he was very reluctant to place it before the public. By 1908 however he was definitely planning 'to take it in hand, look it over, and then decide how much time and work will be required for its new version, and whether it's worth doing anyway.' Intensive work on the revision of the Concerto did not however start until the outbreak of the Russian Revolution in 1917, when Rachmaninov was in Moscow. He later described this time: 'I had started to rewrite my First Piano Concerto... I was so engrossed with my work that I did not notice what went on around me... I sat at the writing table or the piano all day, without troubling about the rattle of machine guns and rifle shots.'

As the Revolution progressed Rachmaninov realised that life in Russia was changing beyond recognition.



Rachmaninov c.1900

He was offered a series of concerts in Scandinavia in November 1917 and decided to leave Russia with his family, for what in fact was to be for ever. From Scandinavia he travelled to America, and in urgent need of funds, he considered re-launching his career there either as a conductor or as a pianist. On the advice of Josef Hofmann he chose the latter, and was to be one of the world's finest concert pianists for the rest of his life, until his death in Hollywood in 1943. The First Piano Concerto, in its now revised form, was first performed soon after his arrival in America, on 28 January 1919 in New York, with Rachmaninov as soloist and Modeste Altschuler conducting the Russian Symphony Orchestra.

Rachmaninov was very pleased with his revision of the Concerto, commenting '...it is really good now. All the youthful freshness is there, and yet it plays itself so much more easily.' He had tightened the construction of the work, and had given the orchestration, over which he had originally hurried, greater clarity. The **first movement** opens with an arresting brass fanfare, followed by a rapid solo passage of descending octaves and weighty chords from the piano, indicating the influence of Tchaikovsky, who had supported Rachmaninov as a young composer. The orchestra then introduces the first theme, which is taken up by the soloist. There is a second theme, marked *meno mosso*, and the opening plays a part in the working out of the thematic material, notably in the extended cadenza for the solo piano.

The **slow movement** has been compared to a Chopin *Nocturne*. It is quite short and the piano enters almost at once, with an expressive melody, which is developed with increasingly elaborate and complex figuration. The **final movement** opens in 9/8 time: this is contradicted in the second bar by the piano's quadruple-time 12/8. The pattern of contrasting metres continues, before the excitement of the opening gives way to a more tranquil central section in E flat that is marked *Andante ma non troppo*. The original mood and key of F sharp major are gradually restored as the Concerto moves towards its final optimistic conclusion.

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

SYMPHONY NO. 4 IN E MINOR, OP. 98 (1885)

- I. ALLEGRO NON TROPPO
- II. ANDANTE MODERATO
- III. ALLEGRO GIOCOLO
- IV. ALLEGRO ENERGIACO E PASSIONATO

Strange things happened to the symphony during the course of the 19th century. Berlioz and Liszt gave its movements literary titles and freely married it to the tone poem. Wagner in his maturity never wrote a symphony and believed that he had absorbed its essential qualities into the texture of his music dramas. The results were original and beautiful. But in opposition to this trend arose Brahms, who felt that something important in the great tradition of music had been lost. He bent his life's work towards the restoration of what he saw as the main line, stemming from the giants of the past, and epitomised by Beethoven. A part of this task was the recreation of the symphony as a monumental, self-contained form in the classical tradition.

By the very nature of this task, as Brahms saw it, it could not be approached lightly. An early effort turned into the massive and dramatic First Piano Concerto. Not until he was 43, in 1876, did he produce his First Symphony, the splendour of which caused it to be described, jokingly yet admiringly, as 'Beethoven's Tenth'. The following year came the more genial and lyrical Second Symphony. Six years then elapsed before the Third Symphony appeared, with its engaging combination of earthy, folk-style melodies and autumnal sadness. Then in 1885 came the monumental Fourth Symphony. Probably of all the four works, it best sums up what Brahms was aiming at, in turning the old great formal tradition to the deepest romantic expressive uses.

The affecting 'sighing' theme, played by violins and echoed by woodwinds, that opens the **first movement**, *Allegro non troppo*, was drawn by Brahms from one of Beethoven's most introspective works, the slow movement of the Op. 106 piano sonata. A dramatic conflict is set up by the second theme group, with its brilliant fanfares from horns and woodwinds, followed by a grand, soaring theme from the cellos. Two moods are thus put into opposition, and Brahms alternately develops the second theme group and the first, then moves with gathering force and power to the great climax which takes place in the very closing pages, or coda, an affirmative transformation of the reflective opening theme.



Brahms

Notable in the movement, as indeed throughout the Symphony, are the subtle cross-rhythms which straddle bar-lines, and which give the music a richness of texture and turbulent inner life. In his orchestral colour Brahms seeks to create not sharp contrasts, but a subtly changing balance of strings, woodwinds and brass, like the innumerable degrees of light and shadow through which Rembrandt realises the underlying monumental structure of his great paintings.

The **slow movement**, *Andante moderato*, begins with horns, soon joined by the other woodwinds over pizzicato strings, in a theme that has the slow lilt of dance music carrying a heavy weight of sadness. The violins come to the forefront with a long, singing melodic line of beautiful serenity. A stormy climax builds up, with triplet figures peeled out by the full orchestra, and then the triplet motif is transformed into a hauntingly lovely melody for the cellos. One of the great moments in this movement comes near the close, when this same consoling melody is taken up and expanded upon by the full string section.

The boisterous **third movement**, *Allegro giocoso*, had justly been called the only 'true scherzo' in the Brahms Symphonies. In its amiable and vigorous nature it is akin to a robust folk song. The **last movement**, *Allegro energico e passionato*, is one of the greatest examples of Brahms's 'groundbreaking conservatism'. He adapted the old baroque form of the chaconne, or passacaglia, with its variations over a ground bass. The basic theme of eight notes is announced by brass, woodwind and drums in eight mighty chords. It is present as the foundation of all the subsequent 30 variations and coda. But unlike the use of the form a century or two before Brahms, here the theme is so absorbed in the harmonic texture, and in melodies which are subtle variants of its basic shape, to the point that often the listener feels, rather than hears, its presence. This is especially so in the reflective middle section of the movement, with its plaintive flute solo, followed by awesome trombone chords. And, as in the first movement, the conclusion is a powerful and confident transformation of the opening theme.

Programme notes: David Patmore

Andrei Korobeinikov

PIANO



Photo: © Irene Zankl

Andrei Korobeinikov was born in Moscow in 1986. This outstanding pianist has been awarded more than 20 prizes in national and international competitions, among them Alexander Scriabin International Piano Competition and Rachmaninov Piano Competition in Los Angeles in 2005 where he received a special public prize. At the age of 19, he graduated with honors from the Moscow Conservatory (Best Musician of the Decade) and pursued his studies at the Royal College of Music in London.

Being invited regularly all over the world, he has appeared with prestigious orchestras such as the Philharmonia Orchestra, St Petersburg Philharmonic, Konzerthausorchester Berlin, Orchestre National de France, NHK Symphony Orchestra, Budapest Festival Orchestra, Sinfonia Varsovia, Lahti Symphony Orchestra and Tchaikovsky Symphony Orchestra of Moscow.

In chamber music, he plays with distinguished musicians such as Vadim Repin, Alexander Kniazev, Dmitri Makhtin and the Borodin Quartet

In 2008, he recorded his first CD for Mirare, devoted to Scriabin. The recording brought him extraordinary success and awards – the *Diapason d'Or* of the year from *Diapason* magazine and a *Choc* award from *Classica* magazine – and was followed by two CDs: a selection of Beethoven Sonatas and Bagatelles and the other dedicated to Shostakovich's Preludes, Op. 34 and two piano concertos (with Lahti Symphony Orchestra/ Okko Kamu). The latest was acclaimed by the

international press (including *Gramophone*, *Diapason d'or* and *BBC Music Magazine*). Andrei recently completed for a Scriabin solo cycle for the Mirare label that he recorded at the Bayerischer Rundfunk in Munich and is now considered to be one of the finest Scriabin interpretations.

This exceptional artist is multi-talented, graduating at the age of 17 from the Law European University of Moscow. Additionally he composes his own music and writes poetry.

His recent appearances with Maestro Iván Fisher and Konzerthausorchester Berlin in Rachmaninov's Second Piano Concerto, and with Maestro Yuri Temirkanov and the St Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra in Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto and Rachmaninov *Paganini Variations* were marked by extraordinary success.

Highlights of the 2015-16 season include concerts with the St Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra/ Alexander Vedernikov, Ural Philharmonic Orchestra/ Dmitri Liss, Latvian National Symphony Orchestra/ Andris Poga, Orchestre de Paris/Yutaka Sado, Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte Carlo/Aziz Shokhakov, solo recitals (Berlin Konzerthaus, Barcelona Palau de la Musica, Paris Salle Gaveau), a European tour with the violonist Vadim Repin, a UK tour with Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra and a European tour with the Tchaikovsky Symphony Orchestra and Vladimir Fedoseyev.

WEBSITE: www.korobeinikov.com

Michael Sanderling

CONDUCTOR



Photo: © Nikodij Fandi

Michael Sanderling has been Principal Conductor of the Dresden Philharmonic since 2011. As his contract was extended, this extremely successful example of co-operation between conductor and the orchestra will continue until at least 2019.

At the same time, he is a sought-after guest conductor in the world's greatest music centres and directs renowned orchestras such as the Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra, Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra in Tokyo, Berlin Konzerthausorchester, Munich Philharmonic Orchestra, Bamberg Symphony Orchestra, Vienna Symphony Orchestra, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, NHK Symphony Orchestra in Tokyo, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra and Germany's great radio orchestras.

Born in Berlin, Michael Sanderling is one of the few who made their way from being orchestra musicians into the top league of conductors. In 1987, aged 20, he became a cello soloist at the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra under Kurt Masur, then from 1994 to 2006 he filled the same position at the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra. As a soloist, he gave guest performances with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra and the Orchestre de Paris, to name but a few, and as a passionate chamber musician he was a member of the Ex Aequo trio for eight years.

It was at a rehearsal of the Berlin Chamber Orchestra in 2000 that he stood as conductor for the first time – with thrilling results. Familiar with the work of a conductor from his childhood as the son

of legendary Kurt Sanderling, Michael assumed more and more conducting jobs and was appointed Principal Conductor and Artistic Director of the renowned Kammerakademie Potsdam in 2006. His success as an opera conductor was proven with Philip Glass' *The Fall of the House of Usher* in Potsdam and with a new production of Prokofiev's *War and Peace* at Cologne Opera. As a cellist and conductor he has made CD recordings of important compositions by Dvořák, Schumann, Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Tchaikovsky and many others.

Working with young musicians is close to Michael Sanderling's heart. He is a professor at Frankfurt University of Music and Performing Arts and works regularly with the Bundesjugendorchester, the Jerusalem Weimar Youth Orchestra, the Junge Deutsche Philharmonie and with the Schleswig-Holstein Festival Orchestra. From 2003 to 2013 he was associated with the Deutsche Streicherphilharmonie as its Principal Conductor.

His musical horizon encompasses Bach and Handel as well as premieres, of which he has now conducted many, and it is a major aim of his to develop the Dresden Philharmonic's flexibility of sound and style even further.

Dresden Philharmonic

The Dresden Philharmonic is the orchestra of Dresden, the State Capital of Saxony. Since 2011, Michael Sanderling has been its Principal Conductor, following Kurt Masur, Marek Janowski, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos and others in this position. The Dresden Philharmonic continues the tradition of the Ratsmusik, the city council's musicians who were first mentioned in the fifteenth century and had grown into an orchestra by the early nineteenth century. Since 1870, the year when Dresden got its first great concert hall, the Philharmonic's symphony concerts have been an established part of the city's concert life. The Dresden Philharmonic has ever since been a concert orchestra with regular ventures into the fields of opera concertante and oratorios. It is housed in the Palace of Culture in the middle of the Old Town. The listed shell of the building will be built-in with a new, ultra-modern concert hall by 2017. Until then, the Philharmonic performs concerts for large orchestra mainly in the Albertinum and the Schauspielhaus.

The Dresden Philharmonic offers great musical and stylistic variety. On the one hand, the orchestra has been able to retain its very own "German" sound in the Romantic repertoire. On the other hand, it has developed flexibility of sound and style for Baroque and Viennese Classic music as well as for modern works. Renowned conductors and composers headed the orchestra early on, from Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Dvořák and Richard Strauss to Erich Kleiber and

Knappertsbusch, Previn and Marriner, to Andris Nelsons and Kristjan Järvi. Premieres remain an important part of the orchestra's programme today.

The Dresden Philharmonic joins the Dresden Kreuzchor for the Christmas and Easter Bach performances at the Kreuzkirche. For the great choral symphonies the orchestra can rely on the Dresden Philharmonic Choir as an excellent partner. Another important tradition is chamber music and chamber symphonies performed by the Dresden Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra, all of whose musicians come from the Dresden Philharmonic.

Not only does the Dresden Philharmonic enjoy an extraordinarily large number of regular subscribers; with its family programmes, film music concerts etc. it does a great job in introducing classical music to new groups of listeners. Guest performances all over the world are testimony to the high renown the Dresden Philharmonic enjoys in the world of classical music. Another remarkable aspect is the Philharmonic's impressive discography which started to develop in 1937. Currently, a new cycle is being recorded for the Sony Classical label, with Principal Conductor Michael Sanderling pairing a selection of Dmitri Shostakovich's symphonies with Beethoven's symphonies.

WEBSITE: <http://en.dresdnerphilharmonie.de>



Dresden Philharmonic

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