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S99
 1998
 1-27

presents

The University Symphony

Peter Erös, *conductor*

with faculty guest artist

Robin McCabe, *piano*

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8:00 PM
 January 27, 1998
 Meany Theater

DAT 13,168

CD-R 13,169
13,170

PROGRAM

DAT
ID 2 Overture
"The Italian Girl in Algiers" 8:32 Gioacchino Rossini
(1792-1868)

ID 3 Rhapsody on a theme
of Paganini (op. 43) 25:11 Sergei Rachmaninoff
(1873-1943)

INTERMISSION

ID 5 Symphony No. 5
in E minor (op. 64) 47:40 Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky
(1840-1893)
(i) *Andante - Allegro con anima*
(ii) *Andante cantabile*
(iii) *Allegro moderato*
(iv) *Finale*

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The name of Rossini is forever linked with the world of Italian opera. He was a great wit, raconteur and gourmand: anybody who has ever eaten the mouth-watering *tournedos Rossini* will testify to the latter attribute. Much has been written about this fascinating character. Also, one must not forget, among the iconography of Rossini, the picture of the composer by the French photographer Nadar. In this photograph we see Rossini seated imperiously, but with a hint of a sly grin about his mouth. (Perhaps this offers us a clue to his compositional style?) He enjoyed much prestige, wealth and popular acclaim for his operatic works. Additionally, he exerted a huge artistic influence upon the music of his day. One of the most extraordinary statistics about Rossini is the fact that he managed to compose 39 operas by the year 1829. In that year, at the age of 36, he effectively retired, saying that he was 'tired' and wanted to enjoy the wealth that he had managed to accumulate. He spent the rest of his life holding court at his Parisian salon and railing against 'new' music, especially that of Wagner.

"The Italian Girl in Algiers" was one of the operas which assured Rossini's fame and helped establish his career as an operatic composer. This delicious overture begins with a hushed *andante*. The strings play a *pizzicato* introduction

after which appears a beautiful, almost vocal oboe melody. Following this section is the heart of the overture—a breathless *allegro* which is characterized by *staccato* figures in the woodwinds. A more lilting secondary theme appears later. However, this more graceful melody is swept away by the rest of the orchestra as the overture comes to an exciting conclusion.

Sergei Rachmaninoff was a pianist, composer, conductor and one of the last representatives of Russian romanticism. In his symphonies, piano concertos, songs, choral works and many solo piano works he proved himself to be a composer with the gift of being able to write enduring melodies of enormous breadth and scope. As a pianist he was the supreme technician who was also able to coax a huge variety of sounds from the instrument. Rachmaninoff was also a depressive man: having fled Russia during the October Revolution, he was always filled with regret at never being able to return to the country that he had been forced to flee. In 1925 he settled in America, living at first in New York City. He maintained a busy schedule of performance and composition, until ill-health brought about his move to the warmer climate of California. He died at his Beverly Hills home in 1943.

The Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini dates from 1934. This is actually a set of twenty four variations on the famous Caprice in A minor by the great Italian violin virtuoso, Nicolo Paganini. In this work, Rachmaninoff's skill and inventiveness are astounding. He seems able to perform a spectacular conjuring trick with the theme. This theme appears in the major and minor tonalities, in various keys, inverted, and in a wide variety of moods and colors. Indeed, one of the quirks about this work is the fact that the first variation occurs before we even hear the theme in its entirety! We are taken on a whirlwind ride in which we hear some of the most spectacular writing for the piano, coupled with a huge range of orchestral color. Some variations are dark and brooding, some are crystalline and transparent; some show unashamedly virtuosic skills, some are of great depth and beauty—the eighteenth variation in particular is one of Rachmaninoff's greatest melodies. Moreover, there is an almost ghoulish apparition in the form of the plainsong melody for the *Dies irae*, the text of which speaks of the day of judgment. This melody is first heard in variation seven, creating an almost menacing atmosphere, and continues to appear during the course of the work. It makes its final thunderous appearance at the end of the work, after which the piano brings the work to an unexpected quiet ending: an ending which seems to be like the switching off of a light, very suddenly.

For many, Tchaikovsky represents the apex of the Russian symphonic style. The coupling of opulent melodies with luxuriant orchestrations is very much a hallmark of the symphonies of Tchaikovsky. However, he was also able to incorporate many moments of tenderness and intimacy into these large scale structures. The Fifth Symphony is a perfect example of these traits.

This work dates from 1888 and is, therefore, a work of the composer in his maturity. At the outset we hear a clarinet melody, somber in its mood, which Tchaikovsky described as being representative of "complete resignation before Fate." This melody is the structure on which the introduction is built. Additionally, it will make several dramatic reappearances during the course of this

symphony. The next melody to be heard is a lilting, but ominous figure which is the basis for the whole of the first movement.

The second movement opens with one of Tchaikovsky's best loved melodies, one filled with an overwhelming sense of yearning. This is followed by an oboe melody which, for the composer, was an illustration of some sort of 'redemption.' A lyrical atmosphere pervades this *adagio*. However, a sense of urgency emerges, giving way to the 'fate' motif from the opening of the symphony. However, the more peaceful mood returns, thus drawing the movement to its conclusion. The third movement is a graceful waltz which reminds us of Tchaikovsky the ballet composer. Sweeping melodies with scurrying string and woodwind figures dominate this movement. However, right at the end, we hear a slightly transformed version of the 'fate' theme, reminding us of the true nature of this work.

Indeed, it is the 'fate' motif which opens the Finale. However, now it is in the major tonality and has a sense of great nobility and grandeur to it. This air is quickly dispelled as another figure, hammered out by the strings almost seems to generate an atmosphere of anger. This is dispelled, momentarily, by a secondary woodwind theme. However, the charged atmosphere keeps returning until we near the end of the movement. Now, after a dramatic pause, we hear the 'fate' motif, again in the major tonality, and again with a sense of grandeur. It is this noble character which wins over the mood of anger, and which brings this symphony to its blazing, triumphant conclusion.

(Notes by Robert Huw Morgan)

Celebrated American pianist *ROBIN MCCABE* has electrified audiences on four continents with her virtuosic performances, and has established herself as one of America's most communicative and persuasive artists. As the *New York Times* has written, "What Ms. McCabe has that raises her playing to such a special level is a strong lyric instinct and confidence in its ability to reach and touch the listener." Ms. McCabe's involvement and musical sensibilities have delighted audiences across the United States, Europe, Canada, South America and the Far East. She has made four concert tours of Asia, performing as guest soloist with orchestras, in solo recitals, as well as lecturing and teaching at conservatories. The *San Antonio press* in 1990 praised Ms. McCabe for her "fleet-footed, on-target keyboard agility and her luminous coloristic palette." Following her April, 1991 recital in Seattle's Meany Hall, the *Seattle Times* review was headlined, "When Robin McCabe plays, people listen!"

Critics respond both to Ms. McCabe's prowess and to her expressive intensity. The Japanese press declared her "a pianistic powerhouse" and a Prague critic claimed her to be "a musical magnet for the listener."

Robin McCabe's recordings have earned unanimous international praise. Her debut album featured the Agosti transcription of Stravinsky's "Firebird Suite," a premiere recording of that piece. Critics praised it as "mightily impressive."

Stereo Review described her disc of Bartok as "all that we have come to expect from this artist, a first-rate performance!"

A faculty member of the Juilliard School until 1987, Ms. McCabe returned at that time to her native northwest to accept a position at the University of Washington. A persuasive arts ambassador and advocate for arts audience development, Robin McCabe is an articulate speaker. She has been the subject of frequent television and radio features and has addressed numerous arts organizations throughout the United States.

The winner of numerous prizes and awards, including the International Concert Artists Guild Competition and a Rockefeller Foundation Grant, Robin McCabe was the subject of the *New Yorker* magazine profile, "Pianist's Progress," later expanded into a book of the same title.

In May of 1993 Robin McCabe was named "Woman of Achievement" at Seattle's 65th annual Matrix Dinner Awards. In July of 1994 Robin McCabe was appointed Director of the School of Music at the University of Washington. In January of 1995 she presented the annual faculty lecture at the University of Washington. She is the first professor of music in the history of the University to be awarded this lectureship.

Seattle Magazine, in November 1997, selected Robin McCabe as one of seventeen present and past University of Washington professors who have had an impact on the life of the Pacific Northwest. She was also featured in the recent publication, *UW Showcase: A Century of Excellence in the Arts, Humanities and Professional Schools*. On Sunday, February 8 at Meany Hall, Robin McCabe will appear as soloist in Saint-Saens' "Carnival of the Animals" as a benefit performance for the Seattle Youth Symphony.

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1997-98 UPCOMING EVENTS

Tickets and information for events listed below in Meany Theater and Meany Studio are available from the UW Arts Ticket Office at 543-4880.

Tickets for events listed below in Brechemin Auditorium (Music Building) and Walker-Ames Room (Kane Hall) are on sale at the door, beginning thirty minutes before the performance. Information for those events is available from the School of Music Calendar of Events line at 685-8384.

To request disability accommodations, contact the Office of the ADA Coordinator at least ten days in advance of the event. 543-6450 (voice); 543-6452 (TDD); 685-3885 (FAX); access@u.washington.edu (E-mail).

- February 9, Guitar Ensemble. Free. 8 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.
 February 10, Faculty Recital: Carole Terry, 20th-century harpsichord. 8 PM, Meany Theater.
 February 12, Keyboard Debut Series. Free. 8 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.
 February 13, Collegium Musicum. 8 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.
 February 17, Faculty Recital: Helen Callus, viola. 8 PM, Meany Theater.
 February 19, University Symphony. Free. 8 PM, Meany Theater.
 February 21, Young Internationals Chamber Music. Free. 8 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.
 February 27, ProConArt. Free. 8 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.
 March 1, Master Class: Pamela Frank, violin. Free. 6 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.
 March 2, Voice Division Recital. Free. 7 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.
 March 2, Studio Jazz Ensemble. 8 PM, Meany Theater.
 March 3, Percussion Ensemble. 8 PM, Meany Theater.
 March 4, Jazz Combos. 8 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.
 March 5, Guest Artist Recital: Rudolfas Budginas, piano. Free. 8 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.
 March 6, Seattle Opera Preview: *Florencia in the Amazons*. Free. 1:30 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.
 March 6, Jazz Combos. 8 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.
 March 8, Student Chamber Music Series. Free. 2 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.
 March 8, Vocal Jazz Ensemble. Free. 8 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.
 March 9, Contemporary Group. 8 PM, Meany Theater.
 March 9, Master Class: Maia String Quartet. Free. Time to be determined, Brechemin Auditorium.
 March 10, Guest Artist Recital: Maia String Quartet. 8 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.
 March 10, Wind Ensemble & Symphonic Band. 8 PM, Meany Theater.
 March 12, Keyboard Debut Series. Free. 8 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.
 March 13, University Symphony & Combined Choruses. 8 PM, Meany Theater.
 March 17, Opera Workshop. 8 PM, Meany Studio Theater. CANCELLED