

School of Music
University of Washington Seattle, Washington

599
2007
5-10

Presents

THE UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY
Maestro Peter Erös, *conductor*

with guest pianist

OKSANA EZHOKINA

110 + 710

7:30 PM
May 10, 2007
MEANY THEATER

NONCIRC CD# 15,412

PROGRAM

CD# 15,413

1] PETITE SUITE, L. 65 14:05 CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862-1918)

- I. En Bateau
- II. Cortège
- III. Menuet
- IV. Ballet

2] SYMPHONIC VARIATIONS FOR PIANO AND ORCHESTRA, M 46 15:02 CÉSAR FRANCK (1822 - 1890)

Oksana Ezhokina, *piano*

~ INTERMISSION ~

3] VARIATIONS ON A HUNGARIAN FOLK SONG (PEACOCK VARIATIONS) 24:54 ZOLTAN KODALY (1882 - 1967)

DEBUSSY, PETITE SUITE

The Petite Suite was written originally for piano duet. Henri Büsser, a composer and conductor contemporary of Debussy, orchestrated the piece for a pair of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, trumpets, timpani, percussion (triangle and cymbals), harp and strings. In addition, an English horn instead of a second oboe is used in the second movement, and a piccolo instead of a second flute is used in the final movement. Although the piano duet was published in 1889, it was the orchestral transcription (published in 1907) that made the Suite famous.

Stylistically the Petite Suite is an early work of Debussy, with each movement hinting at the musical influence of a French master of the previous generation: Fauré in the first movement, Bizet in the second, Massenet in the third, and Chabrier in the fourth. All four movements are in simple ternary form, although the return of the opening section is always accompanied by elements from the middle one. Still, the contrast between the outer and middle sections is clearly marked by a change of tonality (to dominant key in the middle section of the first and third movements, or subdominant key in the second and fourth movements), thematic materials (new melody for the middle section), character and mood (lyrical or bold, smooth or rhythmic, subdued or energetic), instrumental color (alternating between woodwinds and strings in presenting the initial melody), texture (normally thinner texture at the beginning of the middle section with reduced instrumentation), and tempo. In the last movement, the beginning ballet (in 2/4) turns into a waltz (in 3/8) in the middle section and at the end of the piece.

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CÉSAR FRANCK, SYMPHONIC VARIATIONS FOR PIANO AND ORCHESTRA

César Franck's Symphonic Variations, written in 1885, is the closest this composer ever came to producing a concerto. It resembles that genre in its scoring for solo piano and orchestra, and in its broad formal outline of three main sections, the second being more relaxed than the others. But the inner dynamics of the piece are quite unlike those of any traditional concerto. As Franck's title indicates, the composition employs theme-and-variations procedure; in effect, it combines concerto and variation form, the resulting hybrid being one that Rachmaninoff also achieved in his famous Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini. Franck, however, struc-

tures his variations in an unorthodox way, shifting his attention between two subject melodies that complement each other and enrich the complexion of the music, much as two main themes of a conventional symphonic movement might achieve.

The initial idea, a series of stern figures in the orchestral strings answered by more pliant phrases from the piano, appears at the very outset of the work. At first, this subject seems halting and tentative, but it grows increasingly confident and fully developed during the varied restatements that ensue. The tempo slows and another melody, which Franck had briefly suggested earlier, is given by the piano alone. More wistful in character than the opening theme, this now becomes the subject for a new set of paraphrases that forms the central section of the piece.

This second set of variations grows progressively animated before subsiding at last into a passage of hypnotic keyboard arpeggios over strands of counter-melody played by the muted strings. With it, Franck effects a transition to the third "movement." The tempo accelerates, the first theme reappears transformed by major-key harmonies, and the music assumes the lighter, more colorful aspect of a finale.

© Paul Schiavo

KODÁLY, *VARIATIONS ON A HUNGARIAN FOLK SONG (PEACOCK VARIATIONS)*

The folk song "The Peacock" is the seventh example in Kodály's study "Folk Music in Hungary," coming right at the beginning of the chapter on "The Primitive Stratum of Hungarian Folk Music." This section of the book deals with the most ancient melodies of the Eastern European tradition, some of which are so old — perhaps a millennium and a half — that they are less like individual songs than an acorn from which an entire branch of folk music sprang. Such a venerable root-melody is the basis of this superlative set of variations. The song's text ("Fly peacock fly ...To bring freedom for poor prisoners") expresses the ages-old peasant cry of longing for release from bondage. Such was the wide-spread nationalistic message of the song and the stirring nature of Kodály's orchestral composition based on it that performances of the Peacock Variations were forbidden by the Nazis during World War II.

The Peacock Variations, which ranks at the top of Kodály's small output for orchestra, consists of an introduction, the theme, sixteen variations and a finale. The slow introduction presents the outline of the Peacock melody in the low strings, accompanied by mysterious rumblings in the timpani. The theme, given by the solo oboe, consists of four two-measure phrases which are almost epigrammatic in their brevity. (In the estimation of Kodály's friend and colleague Béla Bartók, the entire Variations is "a classic example of incomparable musical concision from which everything superfluous has been excluded.") The sixteen variations fall into three large groups. The first ten variations are generally fast in tempo, and preserve the melodic shape and harmonic implications of the theme. Beginning with the eleventh variation, however, a new mood enters the piece. The tempo becomes very slow (Variation 13 is marked *Marcia funèbre*), and a melancholy sorrow envelops these four variations. The theme is swallowed by the Gypsy pathos of the melodic line, and the harmony often shows a wispy parallelism reminiscent of Impressionism. (Kodály had been much impressed by the music and person of Debussy during a Parisian visit early in the century.) The center group of variations fades, and a three-note summons begins the vigorous concluding portion of the work. The last two variations lead into the high-speed finale, which slows just long enough to present the original theme in grand orchestral vestment. The dance resumes, and hurtles head-long toward the brilliant ending.

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Born in Russia, pianist OKSANA EZHOKINA is a much sought-after soloist and chamber musician. The winner of numerous piano competitions in Russia and the United States, she has given solo and chamber performances in both countries. Ezhokina is often a featured guest soloist on concert series across the United States, and her frequent chamber music collaborations have recently included work with the Avalon String Quartet, the Seattle Chamber Players, the Contemporary Chamber Players, and the Icicle Creek Piano Trio, an ensemble in which she serves as Resident Pianist. A dedicated champion and performer of works by contemporary composers, she has premiered music by Laura Kaminsky and Paul Drescher, among others.

Awarded a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the State University of New York at Stony Brook in 2004, Ezhokina also holds an Artist Diploma from the Ryazan School of Music in Russia, a Master of Music degree in Piano Performance from Northern Illinois University, and a Bachelor of Music degree in Piano Performance from Walla Walla College. Her principal teachers include such notables as Christina Dahl, Donald Walker, Leonard Richter and Eleanor Oragyoff, and she has coached chamber music with many of the world's leading artists including pianists Gilbert Kalish and Seymour Lipkin, as well as members of the Juilliard, Emerson, Orion, and Vermeer String Quartets.

Currently serving as Associate Director of the Icicle Creek Music Center in Leavenworth, Washington, Ezhokina is also Director of the Icicle Creek Music Center Annual Piano Festival and Co-Director of the Icicle Creek Chamber Music Institute. She also serves as a member of the piano faculty at the Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle, Washington.

Hungarian-American conductor PETER ERÖS was born in Budapest in 1932 and attended the Franz Liszt Academy of Music, where he studied composition with Zoltán Kodály, chamber music with Leo Weiner, and conducting with László Somogyi.

During the Hungarian Revolution in 1956, Erös emigrated to Holland. At age 27, he was named Associate Conductor of the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra, a post he held for five years. While in Amsterdam, he assisted Otto Klemperer in opera productions for the Holland Festival. In the summers of 1960 and 1961, he served as a coach and assisted Hans Knappertsbusch at the Bayreuth Festival, and in 1961 he was assistant conductor to Ferenc Fricsay for the Salzburg Festival production of Mozart's *Idomeneo*. He continued to assist Fricsay both in Salzburg and in Berlin with the RIAS Symphony Orchestra and Deutsche Grammaphon through 1964. In 1965, Erös came to the United States for the first time at the invitation of George Szell to work with him and the Cleveland Orchestra as a Kulas Foundation Fellow.

His principal appointments were as Music Director and Conductor of the Malmö Symphony Orchestra (1966-1969) in Sweden, the Australian Broadcasting Commission Orchestras (1967-1969, Sydney and Melbourne; 1975-79, Perth), the San Diego Symphony and La Jolla Chamber Orchestra (1971-1980), and the Aalborg Symphony Orchestra (1982-1989) in Denmark.

As a guest conductor, Erös appeared regularly with major symphony orchestras and opera companies on five continents, including the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, Seattle Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Hamburg Philharmonic Orchestra, Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Swedish Opera in Stockholm, Hamburg State Opera, the Hague Residentie Orchestra, and the Scottish National Orchestra, and made nine tours of South Africa. He received ASCAP awards in 1983 and 1985 for his programming of music by American composers.

Erös came to the University of Washington School of Music in 1989 as the Morrison Endowed Professor of Conducting and Music Director and Conductor of the University Symphony. He also taught conducting from 1960 to 1965 at the Amsterdam Conservatory, where his pupils included Hans Vonk, and served as Director of Orchestral and Operatic Activities at the Peabody Conservatory of Music from 1982 to 1985.

At the personal request of Richard Wagner's granddaughter Friedelind, Erös led the first set of recordings of orchestral works by Friedelind's father, Siegfried Wagner. Two discs were released on the Delysé label, featuring the Aalborg Symphony Orchestra conducted by Erös: the Symphony in C and the tone poems *Glück*, *Und wenn die Welt voll Teufel wär* (Scherzo), *Weltersteinspilung*, and *Sehnsucht*. He also conducted the first recording of the opera *Jesus Before Herod* by Hungarian composer Gabriel von Wayditch (1888 - 1969) with the San Diego Symphony.

UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY

VIOLIN I

Lauren Roth,
Concertmaster
Julia Tai
Ian Ma
Kelli Geiger
Emily Bishop
Su-Min Lee
Audrey Djunaedi
Kang Yu
Rachel Simon

VIOLIN II

Matthew Wu*
Aurora Burd
Kevin Mosher
Sam Byun
Brittany Newell
Sean Chang
Rae Kim
Josh Chang

VIOLA

Julia King*
Jonathan Ip
Annika Donnen
Dane Armbruster
Lisa Philip
Jacqueline
Benthuyesen
Anthony Pierce
Andrea Waade
Ruth Navarre
Sam Alkek
Sam Whittle
Pam Burovac
Sheila Francis
Tony Chen

CELLO

Ho-Lin Hsu*
Joanne de Mars
So-Young Lee
Nathan Whittaker
Hae-Yoon Shin
Suhrim Choe
James Qunell

BASS

Bren Plummer*
Jeff Norwood
Will Jameson
Brett Nakashimi
Evan Muehlhausen
Anna Brodie
Shaunessey Scott
Gavin Kovite

PICCOLO

Alyssa Treber

FLUTE

Debussy

Hsiao-Chieh Lin*
Alyssa Treber

Franck

Torrey Kaminski*
Catherine Bender

Kodaly

Pamela Saunders*
Catherine Bender

OBOE

Jayne Drummond*
Justin Henderlight

ENGLISH HORN

Chris Aagaard

B^b CLARINET

Timothy Nelson
Cindy Chou

BASSOON

Ya-Yun Tseng*
George Hamilton

HORN

Josiah Boothby*
Kenji Ulmer
Aaron Avril
Severn Ringland

TRUMPET

Toby Penk*
Carey Rayburn
Kerri Ondracek

TROMBONE

Colby Wiley*
Vince LaBelle

BASS TROMBONE

Caleb Lambert

PERCUSSION

Emily Kimes
Memmi Ochi*
Spenser Smith
Adam Page

HARP

Ashley Wong

TIMPANI

Paul Pogreba

**denotes principal*

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