

**EDINBURGH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

**Conductor: Gerard Doherty**

**Leader: Sheena Jardine**

# **Winter Concert**

**Saturday 25th November 2023**

**7.30pm Greyfriars Kirk**

## **Programme Notes**

**[www.edinburghsymphonyorchestra.co.uk](http://www.edinburghsymphonyorchestra.co.uk)**

## **The Distant Princess - Nikolai Tcherepnin (1873 – 1945)**

Nikolai Tcherepnin was born in St Petersburg and studied under Rimsky-Korsakov. The Distant Princess was composed in 1894 and is heavily influenced by Russian Orientalism. After a slow introduction by the strings including the harp, the first quiet meandering theme is heard. A more robust theme is heard later, which eventually builds to a climax, that dies away quietly ending the piece.

## **Piano Concerto No 3 In C Major - Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)**

*I Andante - Allegro;*

*II Tema Con variazioni;*

*III Allegro, Ma non troppo.*

Sergei Prokofiev was born in the Ukraine on the 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1891. He showed an early talent for music and studied privately with Gliere. He then moved to the St Petersburg Conservatory where he studied under Lyadov and Rimsky Korsakov. However, he found their lessons quite stifling and preferred to ally himself with the rising avant garde and soon became an enfant terrible, developing a formidable piano technique.

His first major work was his first piano concerto composed in 1911. Shortly afterwards he wrote his second piano concerto, which demonstrated many modernistic techniques including a large amount of dissonant harmony and the development of a spiky piano texture. In parallel with his avant garde music, he developed an interest in the classical style of Haydn and Mozart, a key work reflecting this being his Classical Symphony. The combination of a classical style with avant garde music would be a major influence on his style including his third and most popular piano concerto in C major composed in 1921.

By this time Prokofiev had moved to America initially for a short trip, but the Russian revolution intervened and he settled in America,

then France for about 20 years. During this time, he wrote many pieces, including the opera *The Love of Three Oranges* and two more piano concertos. The fourth Piano Concerto was composed for left hand only, for the soloist Paul Wittgenstein, the brother of the famous philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein.

The Third Piano concerto was first performed on 16 September 1921 in Chicago with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra conducted by Frederick Stock with Prokofiev himself playing the solo part.

The concerto consists of three movements. The first movement is in the key of C major in sonata form. It begins with an Andante clarinet solo which is soon joined by a second clarinet following the soloist. The introductory theme is repeated by violins and flute before the main body of the Allegro movement begins. This is a rhythmically vital theme introduced by the piano and drives the movement forward. The end of the first phrase introduces a sudden change of key. The second theme has a slightly tongue in cheek quantity. It is presented by oboe and pizzicato violins against a staccato chordal accompaniment. A third and final theme opens with a descending chromatic scale and introduces a wide-ranging triplet figuration in the piano. This closes the exposition section of the first movement. A short development section focuses on the introductory clarinet solo and has a dialogue between the bassoon in its high register and the piano soloist. This is followed by another dialogue between the clarinet and piano. The recapitulation ensues and starts by greatly expanding the Allegro introduction giving the piano soloist considerable room for virtuosic display. The delicate second theme of the introduction is transformed into a grotesque version making use of loud chords, woodwinds and strings. It introduces many unorthodox chord sequences and ends on a tonally ambiguous note.

The second movement in E minor is a theme followed by five variations. The main theme is reminiscent of the classical style of Haydn and Mozart, but with a modernistic touch unique to Prokofiev. The first variation remains in the original tempo, beginning in the solo piano and then suddenly veers off into a new key. Two vigorous variations follow with brilliant figuration in the piano and parts of the main theme being repeated by the orchestra. The quiet fourth variation, to be played *andante meditativo*, stands out due to its haunting nature. It includes distant romantic horn calls and lyrical snatches of melody for oboe, clarinets and violins. The final variation has a deeply Russian feel about it. Finally, the theme is repeated at the conclusion of the movement, making use of a high register chordal filigree in the piano.

The finale is in ternary form (ABA). Bassoons and pizzicato strings introduce the first idea of the movement, which is a typically Russian theme. The middle section begins with a quiet, almost spiritual theme in descending chromatic steps and expressive upward leaps. A grotesque idea introduced by the piano follows, making use of repeated notes and upward moving fragments. The first of these ideas is developed in many keys. In the final third part of the movement, which returns to the opening, the piano is radiant. An energetic coda ends the piece.

In 1936 Prokofiev settled in Russia again where his music, just like Shostakovich, was subject to intense criticism by the authorities and his style became more orthodox as a result. During this period, he wrote his famous Ballet *Romeo and Juliet* and his epic opera *War and Peace* in the middle of the War years. He also wrote several minor orchestral pieces such as *The Lieutenant Kije Suite* often heard at Christmas. Other pieces include a work for children *Peter and the Wolf* which introduces many of the instruments of the orchestra. One is tempted to identify the Wolf as Stalin! Prokofiev died on the 5<sup>th</sup> of March 1953, the same day as

Stalin which meant that he didn't benefit from the slight loosening of artistic freedom in Russia that followed, under Khrushchev.

## Interval

### **Symphony No 6 in B Minor (Pathétique) Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky ( 1840 -1893 )**

*I Adagio – Allegro non troppo;*

*II Allegro con grazia;*

*III Allegro molto vivace;*

*IV Adagio lamentoso.*

Tchaikovsky was born in the provincial town of Votkinsk in 1836. Despite showing an early talent for piano and composition he was ordered by his father to study law at St Petersburg University, where he studied until 1859. After working for the civil service for a while Tchaikovsky returned to the study of music studying with Nicolai Zarembo. The music school at St Petersburg became a famous conservatory and Tchaikovsky became a talented student eventually becoming a teacher of harmony at Moscow University. There he met the composer Anton Rubenstein who became a great influence in his life. Along with other composers such as Balakirev he became interested in Russian folk music and his early works show a distinctly Russian nationalistic style. However, he was sufficiently cosmopolitan to not entirely associate himself with other groups of Russian composers such as the Five led by Balakirev.

Tchaikovsky's musical career developed, and he composed many works including the overture Romeo and Juliet, his first Piano concerto and the ballet Swan Lake. In the year 1877, Tchaikovsky,

who was gay, faced a monumental crisis in his life. He received a letter from a young female admirer Antonia Milyukava who wished to marry him. Ironically Tchaikovsky was in the middle of composing his famous opera *Eugene Onegin* based on a novel by Pushkin in which a young girl writes a letter to the rather aloof Eugene and is rejected by him. Tchaikovsky, perhaps seizing on the chance to gain respectability, accepted Antonia's proposal and they were married shortly afterwards. However, that proved disastrous and Tchaikovsky attempted suicide a few days later.

This incident convinced Tchaikovsky that Fate was an important part of his life. He completed his Opera and also wrote a Fourth symphony which became the first of the so-called Fate symphonies. His fifth symphony and the opera the *Queen of Spades* continued Tchaikovsky's obsession with Fate. However, for a while he managed a balance between his darker moods and a lighter touch, reflected in his ballets the *Sleeping Beauty* and *The Nutcracker*, along with a number of other lighter instrumental pieces.

In 1890 despite his growing success as the most famous composer in Russia he became depressed again. In part this was because a mysterious benefactor *Nadezhda von Meck* became bankrupt and was unable to continue supporting him. Despite never meeting, they corresponded with each other over a period of about 15 years and the abrupt nature of the termination plunged Tchaikovsky into despair. This was compounded by the fact that Tchaikovsky was threatened with exposure, as he had a romantic liaison with a male member of the Tsarist family. It is this background which led to the composition of Tchaikovsky's last and arguably greatest symphony the so called *Pathétique* (Passionate) was composed.

Tchaikovsky's 6<sup>th</sup> symphony was composed in the summer of 1893 and received its first performance in St Petersburg conducted by

Tchaikovsky himself. It is scored for a conventional orchestra but includes a Tam Tam (gong). Due to its unusual structure it received a mixed reception.

The first movement starts off with a mournful bassoon solo in the key of E minor. This is followed by the first main theme in B minor introduced by the violas and taken up by the flutes. For a tragic symphony it is surprisingly light almost Mendelssohnian in nature. The music reaches a climax and then begins a long slow introduction to the second theme in D major. The theme is a full-bodied romantic one, which enters in a slow tempo, played by muted strings over a throbbing bass line. It is developed fully before dying away. The theme is then restated quietly by the clarinets, ending the exposition section. A dramatic crash starts the development, which becomes extremely agitated and quotes the funeral music of the Russian Orthodox Church. There are loud *ffff* interjections by the brass, including the trombones. After a climax is reached the second theme is played by the full orchestra in the key of B minor which then dies away in a cry of despair ending the movement.

The second movement provides some light relief but there is still an air of melancholy about it. It is a dance movement in the unusual time signature of 5/4, which has been described as a limping waltz. It is in ternary form, the first section being in D major with a darker trio section in B minor. The music is punctuated by ominous tones in the lower strings and brass, reminding the listener that death is never far away.

As a last flourish of life, before the flame of the candle dies out, the 3<sup>rd</sup> movement is a triumphant march. Fragments of melody are tossed about by the orchestra before the march theme is ushered in by the clarinets, a sort of perpetual mobile ensues, which is worked up into a rousing climax. It is difficult to resist the temptation to applaud at the end.

A dramatic change of tempo introduces the finale with a lament introduced by the strings. This is followed by a more consoling theme in D major, however the grief of the opening returns with more anguished intensity. The consoling theme returns in the minor key and the brass section introduces a mournful chorale. After a despairing climax, a single stroke on the Tam Tam is played quietly, ushering in death. The rest is silence.

Tchaikovsky died shortly afterwards by drinking unboiled water during a cholera outbreak. Whether this was an accident, or he was ordered to commit suicide by a committee of Aristocrats, to cover up a scandal, is a matter of current debate.

The unusual structure of the symphony including two middle scherzo like movements and ending with a slow movement was to play a large influence on later composers such as Mahler. Instead of ending the symphony on a light note Tchaikovsky had solved the problem of giving sufficient weight to the first movement, in the finale of a symphony.

Chris Finlay Feb 2023.



## DANIEL TODERAS



Daniel Toderas is a 22 year old Romanian pianist based in London, who currently studies piano with Joan Havill at the prestigious Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where he is a scholarship holder. He was born in Romania and moved to Scotland in 2014, living in the UK ever since.

Daniel began piano lessons at the age of 8 and studied until 2014 at the Expressive Arts High School 'Regina Maria'. He has won a number of prizes in music competitions both in Romania and UK, such competitions include the Romania National Music Olympics in which he achieved first place and being a prize winner in many other competitions like the Oxford Piano Competition coming in third place in the final. Daniel has also been a finalist in the 2019 Edinburgh Concerto Competition where he performed Prokofiev's 1st Piano Concerto with orchestra. He has also done numerous concerts in Scotland and England, including performing the Gershwin Concerto in F with the Edinburgh Symphony Orchestra in 2022, performances at the Mercers Hall in London, and obtaining a contract at the Cowdray Hall in Aberdeen, and had his debut concert in France in the summer of 2021, which was a delightful start to his soloistic career. Throughout his studies, Daniel has been sponsored by many foundations and patrons including Dewar Arts Award and been featured in the newspaper in 2018 for winning sponsorship from Young Musician Awards for his dedicated playing and performances.

## GERARD DOHERTY



Gerard Doherty studied violin and conducting at the Royal Scottish Academy. He studied conducting at post graduate level with Martin Brabbins at the Royal Scottish Conservatoire and also won a scholarship to study for two seasons at the American Academy of Conducting, Aspen, with Murry Sidlin, David Zinman, Jorma Panula and James Levine.

Gerard's natural gift as a conductor first came to prominence when he conducted the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO) in Debussy's *La Mer* in the presence of Walter Weller. With Weller's highest recommendation, Gerard made his debut as a conductor, which led him to conduct the RSNO on numerous occasions, including when he had to step in during a recording session, as the conductor was indisposed, to complete a recording of opera arias, which were highly acclaimed.

His conducting has taken him to the United States, Europe and the Middle East. Gerard is currently Principal Conductor of the Glasgow Sinfonia and the Edinburgh Symphony Orchestra and also guest conducts a number of other Scottish ensembles.

He has conducted a wide range of choral and symphonic works and is much admired for his natural musicianship, clear understanding, integrity and breadth of repertoire, which spans baroque to contemporary. His reviews have described his music making as "thrilling", "exhilarating", "triumphant" and "vibrant". He is also a well established conductor of choral music having spent 20 years as conductor of the Ayr Choral, conducting many

major symphonic and sacred choral works as well as 'A Capella' repertoire.

His wide experience and in-depth knowledge of orchestral technique and repertoire are also in demand with the next generation of musicians. He was for 10 years Principal Conductor of the Strathclyde University Symphony Orchestra. He has been course director and conductor of the NYOS repertoire course on three occasions and has also conducted the Symphony Orchestra of the Royal Scottish Academy of Music, the Orchestra of the University of Castel Branco, Edinburgh University Chamber Orchestra, Renfrewshire Schools Symphony Orchestra, West of Scotland Independent Schools Orchestra and Glasgow Schools Symphony Orchestra, the National Youth String Orchestra of Scotland. He is at present conductor of the East Renfrewshire Schools Symphony and Senior String Orchestras, winning numerous awards.

He played violin for all of the major orchestras in the country, including 23 years as first violin in the RSNO. He is also a renowned violin teacher.

## **THE EDINBURGH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

The Edinburgh Symphony Orchestra was the brainchild of its first conductor, Donald James – then the Head of Music at Edinburgh Academy – and gave its first concert in aid of Oxfam at the Reid Concert Hall in June 1963. Since then, for over 50 years, it has given amateur players the opportunity to perform a symphonic repertoire to a high standard under the batons of Donald James (1963-67), Henry McGlone (1967-72), Neil Butterworth (1972-73), Leon Coates (1973-85), Alasdair Mitchell (1985-2004) and Gerard Doherty, the present conductor.

Many young soloists in the early stages of their professional careers have been given the opportunity to play with the ESO, and the work of local composers has been commissioned. The repertoire includes not only the best-known pieces, but also music which is not so regularly performed. The Orchestra has, on occasion, combined with choral societies and in May 2005 was invited to accompany a huge choir of volunteers from all of Scotland in a charity performance of Verdi's Requiem in the Usher Hall. There are usually 3 or 4 performances each year: November, February and May – normally in Greyfriars Kirk. ESO is a subscription orchestra managed by an elected committee. The orchestra is always pleased to hear from amateur musicians who would like to play. Anyone interested in joining the orchestra should contact [esoenquiries@gmail.com](mailto:esoenquiries@gmail.com)

### **Date for your diary**

Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2024  
Greyfriars Kirk  
7:30pm

Brahms – Violin Concerto  
Solo violin – Sophie Williams

Shostakovich – Symphony No. 10

## ORCHESTRAL PLAYERS

### **Violin 1**

Sheena Jardine  
Helen Adamson  
Sheila Beattie  
Elise le Bihan  
Cath Cormie  
Adam Hamer  
Alison Lucas  
Claire McLean  
Caroline Mortimer  
Iain Scott  
Aimee Truesdale  
Graeme Wilson

### **Violin 2**

Emma Waite de Kalaf  
Barbara Bell  
Kaye Brewster  
Henry Buckley  
Song Su Dewar  
Helen Downes  
Melissa English  
Nigel Hambly  
Thea Harte  
Jessie Jungels  
Malcolm McKitterick  
David Scott  
Ute Skiba

### **Viola**

Kay Smith  
Rachel Ademokun  
Marena Salerno  
Collins  
Vanessa Fisher  
Cheuk Ting Hon  
Jennifer Meakin  
Anne Parker

### **Cello**

Gerard Delaney  
David Beattie  
Dianne Beattie  
Peter Fielding  
Murdo Homewood  
Alison McMillan  
Alice Paine  
Jennifer Orr  
John Tanner

### **Double Bass**

John Wilkinson  
Angela Dimmock  
Ray Leonard  
Patrick Sturt  
David Wilson

### **Flute**

Catriona Crosby  
Stella Henzell  
Elizabeth Wells

### **Piccolo**

Catriona Crosby  
Stella Henzell

### **Oboe**

Jo Watts  
Anne Wilson  
**Clarinet**  
Vaughan Townhill  
Nadine Thompson

### **Bassoon**

Rainer Thönnies  
Andrew Hazard

### **French Horn**

Marian Kirton  
Stephen Bradley  
Hamish McRitchie  
Gary Nichol

Victoria North

### **Trumpet**

Elliot Longworth  
Ruari Wilson

### **Trombone**

Daniel Richards  
Murray Campbell

### **Bass Trombone**

Ruth Andrew

### **Tuba**

Arnold Myers

### **Timpani**

Russell Wilson

### **Percussion**

Jake Spence  
Euan Fairbairn

### **Harp**

Esther Swift