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MANOEL THEATRE

1998/99

programme

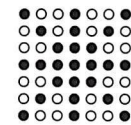
1792

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Teatru Manoel

In association with

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presents

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PIANO RECITAL

by

BARRY DOUGLAS

in aid of the
Orchestra Pit Elevating Platform
of the
Manoel Theatre

Tuesday, 20th April, 1999.

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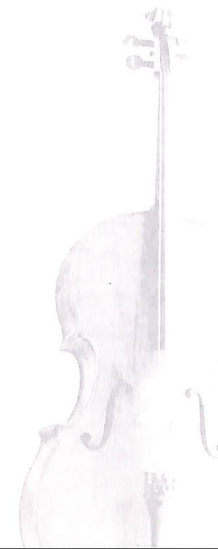
CLAUDE DEBUSSY Pour le piano
(1862-1918)

SERGEY RACHMANINOV Moments Musicaux Op. 16
(1873-1943)

A 20-minute Interval

MODEST MUSSORGSKY Pictures at an Exhibition
(1865-1935)

Promenade
Gnomus
Promenade
Il vecchio castello
Promenade
Les Tuileries
Bydlo
Promenade
Ballet of the
Unhatched Chicks
Samuel
Goldenberg and
Schmuyle
Promenade
Limoges
Catacombae
(Sepulcrum romanum)
Cum mortuis in lingua mortua
The Hut on Fowls Legs (Baba Yaga)
The Great Gate of Kiev



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CLAUDE DEBUSSY



Debussy was born in Saint-Germain-en-Laye and studied at the Paris Conservatoire, which he entered at the age of 10. In 1879, as private musician to Nadejda von Meck, the patron of Russian composer Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky, Debussy traveled to Florence, Italy; Venice, Italy; Vienna, Austria; and Moscow, Russia. While in Russia Debussy became acquainted with the works of such Russian composers as Tchaikovsky, Aleksandr Borodin, Mily Balakirev, and Modest

Mussorgsky and with Russian folk and gypsy music. Debussy won the coveted Grand Prix de Rome in 1884 for his cantata *L'enfant prodigue* (The Prodigal Son). He then studied in Rome for two years, as required by the terms of the award, submitting new compositions regularly but unsuccessfully to the Grand Prix committee. Among these were the symphonic suite *Printemps* and a cantata, *La demoiselle élue*, based on the poem "The Blessed Damozel" by British writer Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

Early Works

During the 1890s Debussy's works were performed with increasing frequency, and despite their controversial nature, he began to gain some recognition as a composer. Outstanding pieces from this period are the String Quartet in G Minor (1893) and the *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* (Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun, 1894), his first mature orchestral work, derived from a poem by French symbolist Stéphane Mallarmé.

Debussy's opera *Pelléas et Mélisande*, based on the play of the same name by Belgian author Maurice Maeterlinck, was produced in 1902. It earned Debussy widespread fame for the extent to which his score retained and enhanced the abstract, dreamlike quality of Maeterlinck's play and for his treatment of the melody, which virtually duplicates the rhythm of natural



speech. Regarded by some critics as a perfectly wedded fusion of music and drama, *Pelléas et Mélisande* has had frequent revivals.

From 1902 to 1910 Debussy wrote chiefly for the piano, rejecting the traditional percussive approach to the instrument and emphasizing instead its capabilities for delicate expressiveness. His most important works of this period include *Estampes* (Engravings, 1903), *L'île joyeuse* (The Isle of Joy, 1904), *Images* (two series, 1905 and 1907), and several preludes.

In 1909 Debussy learned that he was afflicted with cancer. Most of his late works are chamber music, including three extraordinary sonatas, for cello; for violin; and for flute, viola, and harp. Among Debussy's numerous other important works are the ballet score *Jeux* (Games, 1912), the orchestral poem *La mer* (The Sea, 1905), and the songs in *Cinq poèmes de Baudelaire*

SERGEY RACHMANINOV



Rachmaninov was born on April 1, 1873, near Novgorod. In Moscow his piano teachers included the stringent disciplinarian Nikolay Zverov and Rachmaninov's cousin Aleksandr Siloti, who gave him the heritage of his own teacher, the Hungarian pianist-composer Franz Liszt. There also, Rachmaninov studied with three eminent Russian composers—Anton Arensky, Sergey

Taneyev, and his most important musical mentor, Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky.

Rachmaninov's *Prelude in C-sharp Minor* (1892), for piano and orchestra, and his opera *Aleko* (1893) established his reputation as a composer. Also written in 1893 was his *Trio élégiaque*, in memory of Tchaikovsky. In 1897 his *Symphony No. 1 in D Minor* was performed. Its disastrous reception caused him to stop composing, and for three years he worked

solely as a pianist and conductor. His *Piano Concerto No. 2 in C Minor* (1900) marked his return to composition. From the next 17 years come his *Symphony No. 2 in E Minor* (1906); the symphonic poem *The Isle of the Dead* (1909); the *Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom* (1910), for choir; the choral symphony *The Bells* (1913), based on a poem by the American writer Edgar Allan Poe; and many highly admired songs. Except for a period in Dresden, Germany (1906-8), he worked mainly in Moscow; in 1904-6 he conducted at the Bolshoi Theater.

After leaving Russia in 1917, Rachmaninov settled in the United States the following year. In exile he concentrated on his piano and conducting careers, making recordings in both fields. His few compositions after 1917 include the *Variations on a Theme of Corelli* (1934), for piano; *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* (1936), for piano and orchestra; the *Symphony No. 3 in A Minor* (1936); and the *Piano Concerto No. 4 in G Minor* (1937). He died in Beverly Hills, California, on March 28, 1943.

MODEST MUSSORGSKY

Composers have always found inspiration in extra-musical stimuli but Modest Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* remains one of the most imaginative and vivid of all such creations. Written in 1874 at the age of



35, it paid a lasting tribute to a dear friend, Victor Hartmann. It was a memorial exhibition of Hartmann's paintings and drawings arranged by Vladimir Stassov, champion of the Russian arts that fired the creative process of Mussorgsky. Following the exhibition, he wrote to Stassov that sounds and ideas came to him in such profusion that he could hardly manage to put them all down on paper.

It is with the recurring Promenade that Mussorgsky leads us through the Exhibition, stopping, sometimes abruptly, to give us the version of a picture-visions for which his friends works are only a starting point. It is also through the Promenades that Mussorgsky reflects his own personal involvement. The tour proceeds as follows:

Promenade - Gnomus – a sketch representing a little gnome clumsily making his way on crooked legs. The sketch was of a nutcracker. **Promenade - Il vecchio castello** – a medieval castle (In Italy) before which a troubadour is singing a song. **Promenade - Tuileries** - The Tuileries. A children's quarrel following a game – a path in the Tuileries gardens (Paris) with a crowd of children and nursemaids. **Bydlo** – a Polish cart on enormous wheels drawn by a pair of oxen. **Promenade - Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks** – Hartmann's sketch of costumes for a picturesque scene of the ballet 'Trilby'. The design depicted the arms, legs and the head of a bird sticking out of a large eggshell. **Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle** – two Polish Jews, the one rich and the other poor. **Promenade - Limoges. Le marche** – Limoges. The market (The great news)- French women quarrelling bitterly in the market. **Catombae (Sepulcrum romanum)** – Catacombs (Roman vaults) – Hartmann's picture shows the artist himself examining the Paris Catacombs by the light of a lantern. Three figures appear in the water-colour with a pile of skulls to the right of them. **Con mortuis in lingua mortua** - (with the dead in a dead language) – an epilogue to the Catombae based on the main Promenade theme. Mussorgsky inscribed in the manuscript, 'the creative spirit of the deceased led me to the skulls and invoking them, they glow softly'. **The Hut on Chicken's Legs** – Hartmann's drawing depicted a clock in the shape of Baba Yaga's hut on chicken legs. Mussorgsky added Baba Yaga's ride in a mortar. Baba Yaga, the witch of Russian fairy tales, flies her evil missions in an iron mortar propelled by the pestle, clearing away her tracks with a broom. **The Great Gate of Kiev** – Hartmann's sketch for a design (never built) for the city gates of Kiev to be built in the grand Russian style with a cupola shaped like a Slavonic helmet. Mussorgsky's music brings to life images of the legendary Russian heroes of Kiev, and of huge religious and secular processions (represented by a Russian church chorale and a variant of the Promenade theme) passing through the gates. The whole work finishes in a blaze of bells and pianistic glory.

BARRY DOUGLAS

Pianist Barry Douglas enjoys a major international career, which has developed world-wide since he won the Gold Medal at the 1986 Tchaikovsky International Piano Competition in Moscow.

The orchestras with whom Barry Douglas has worked include the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra and Leipzig Gewandhaus in Germany, the orchestras of Philadelphia, Chicago, Cleveland and Los Angeles in the United States, both the NHK and Tokyo Symphonies in Japan, the Israel Philharmonic and all the major London orchestras. The many eminent conductors with whom



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he has collaborated include Ashkenazy, Colin Davis, Masur, Maazel, Slatkin, Tilson Thomas, Temirkanov and Jansons.

Barry Douglas currently has ten recordings in the BMG/RCA catalogue; the most recent release, the Reger Concerto and Strauss Burlesque with Marek Janowski and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, was awarded the Diapason d'Or and also released recently were the Corigliano Piano Concerto with Leonard Slatkin and the saint Louis Symphony Orchestra, and the Britten Concerto and Debussy Fantasia, also with Marek Janowski and Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France.

In 1993 Barry Douglas was the featured soloist on Channel Four's Concerto! Series, which won an Emmy Award, in which he performed Rachmaninov Concerto No. 2 with the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas. Recent highlights include concerts with the DSO Berlin, the Bayerischer Rundfunk, the Maggio Musicale in Florence, the Helsinki and Stockholm Philharmonics, the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, the London Symphony Orchestra, the Cincinnati and Toronto Symphony Orchestras, a series of concerts in Japan and recitals in Oslo, Paris and Milan. Engagements this season include performances with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, Frankfurt RSO, RAI Turin and Dresden Staatskapelle.

Barry Douglas draws inspiration from many cultures: born in Ireland he now resides in Paris. He has a particular interest in opera and Russian culture, and spent a year's sabbatical as a Visiting Fellow at Oriel College, Oxford.

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Forthcoming Theatre Attractions

APRIL 1999

23. **La Compagnia Segnali** of Rome presents Luigi Pirandello's *Uno, Nessuno e Centomila*. Sponsored by the Italian Cultural Institute
30. **Masquerade:** Rodgers & Hammerstein's evergreen Musical *The King and I*

MAY 1999

01. 02. 06. **Masquerade:** Rodgers & Hammerstein's evergreen
07. 08. 09. Musical *The King and I*
04. The BOV Annual Concert features **L'Offerta Musicale** from Venice. Sponsored by the Italian Cultural Institute.
06. **The Music & More** End of Season concert with *Schubert in the Springtime* featuring amongst other famous works, the *Trout* Quintet. Sponsored by British Airways and Le Meridien Phoenicia.
15. **La Plautina** presents **Anfitrione** by Plautus (Italian Cultural Institute.) (School performance on the 14th May)
21. **The Beethoven Society** of Australia and Japan together with St Monica's Choir proudly presents **Beethoven's Chorale** (The 9th Symphony)

Writing and editing of programme: Gerald Fenech

Booking Office

116, Old Theatre Street, Valletta, VLT 07.

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Booking: Booking opens ten days before the first performance.
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from 5.00 p.m. up to 30 minutes after commencement.

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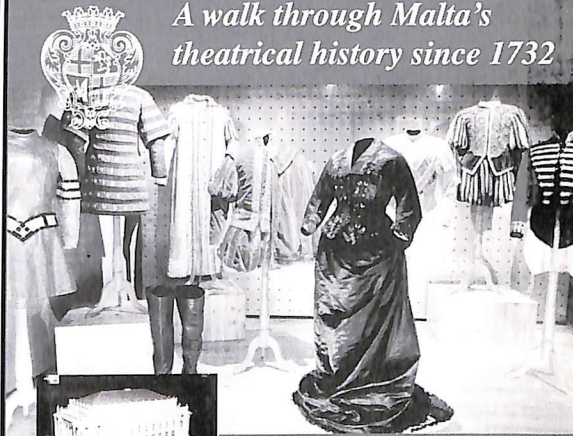
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