

10-25-2011

UNLV Symphony Orchestra

Taras Krysa

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

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UNLV

Department of Music
College of Fine Arts

presents the

UNLV Symphony Orchestra

Taras Krysa, Music Director and Conductor

PROGRAM

Modest Mussorgsky
(1839 – 1881)

Dawn on the Moscow River

Sergei Rachmaninov
(1873 – 1943)

Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini

Jae Ahn-Benton, soloist

INTERMISSION

Igor Stravinsky
(1882 – 1971)

L'oiseau de Feu

Tuesday, October 25, 2011

7:30 p.m.

Dr. Arturo Rando-Grillot Recital Hall
Lee and Thomas Beam Music Center
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

UNLV Symphony Orchestra Personnel

Violin I

Christina Riegert*
Edward Mendiola
Sarah Wright
Dmytro Nehrych
Michael Burkhardt
Sammi Ciarlo
Amanda Gentile
Debra Yavitz

Violin II

Belinda Martinez*
Samantha Altermann
Keegan Bonabian
Elizabeth Bedrosian
Megan Hermansen
Anna Childs
Robert Hunt
Braydon Pikyavit
Sam Valdez
Joshua Sjoen

Viola

David Chavez*
Valerie Reives
Youngmee Merrick
Rahmaan Phillip
Rosemary Fajardo
Shelby Rosten

Cello

Rebecca Gray*
Chang Yue
David Warner
Anthony Rodriguez
Jeremy Russo
Corinne Hymel
Robert Chavez
Domenique Jackson
Brad Taylor

Bass

Timothy Harpster*
Zuriel Santoyo
Issa Acosta

Flute

Kate Zigterman**
Chrissy McHugh***
Emily Schank, Piccolo

Oboe

Chris Fujiwara**
Ben Serna-Grey
Alexandra Gilroy***,
English Horn

Clarinet

Tallyn Wesner**
Jennifer Iles***
Jonathan Cannon

Bassoon

K.C. Chai*
Bronson Foster
Brock Norred

Horn

Erin Paul**
Fred Stone***
Jordan Rush
Kyle Tolstyka

Trumpet

Allison McSwain**
Dumitru Cernei***
Justin Bland

Trombone

Noe Otani*
Dustin Stevens

Bass Trombone

Saxon Lewis*

Percussion

Chris Bernabe
Kyle Bissantz
Bronson Purdy
Chris Tusa

Piano

Spencer Baker

*Principal

**Principal, Rachmaninov

***Principal, Stravinsky

Program Notes

Dawn on the Moscow River Modest Mussorgsky

Dawn on the Moscow River began as a Prelude to *Khovanshchina*, Modest Mussorgsky's epic opera about the political turmoil surrounding Peter the Great's accession to the throne. Mussorgsky began compiling the libretto for the opera, which he wrote himself, in 1872. Over the following nine years, Mussorgsky shifted his attention between *Khovanshchina*, *Boris Godunov*, and *Sorochints'i Fair*, leaving *Khovanshchina* unfinished at the time of his death in 1881. Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, a prolific Russian composer and Mussorgsky's close friend, took it upon himself to orchestrate and complete a number of Mussorgsky's works, including *Khovanshchina*. He assembled the work into its present form from two separate versions. Even still, the opera takes approximately four hours to perform. The comparatively short prelude lasts a mere six minutes and sets the stage for the opera by subtly evoking a sunrise. The prelude is a lyrical string of variations based on a Russian folk song. The work avoids bombastic outbursts, moving seamlessly between different orchestrations and harmonizations of the folk song. *Dawn on the Moscow River* has since solidified its place in orchestral literature as an independently performed tone poem. Dmitri Shostakovich also orchestrated the prelude.

Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini Sergei Rachmaninov

Sergei Rachmaninov's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* takes nineteenth-century violin virtuoso Niccoló Paganini's 24 *Caprices* for Violin and transforms them into a dynamic showpiece for orchestra and piano. While Paganini's *Caprices* have since become a standard in solo violin literature, Paganini never performed the pieces in public, dedicating them to "the artists." Rachmaninov's *Rhapsody* is a set of 24 variations closely based on the theme from the *Caprices*. Nevertheless, the work maintains its individuality and originality and has since become a concert staple. Unlike Paganini, Rachmaninov was not hesitant to perform *Rhapsody* in public and, in fact, premiered the work with the Philadelphia Orchestra under Leopold Stokowski on November 7, 1934. He also played the piano on the Boston Symphony Orchestra's premier, under Serge Koussevitzky, in December 1937.

In *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, Rachmaninov artfully blurs the distinction between soloist and accompanist. The soloist does not present thematic material until the second variation and proceeds to wind between foreground and background throughout the following variations. In variation VII Rachmaninov introduces the *Dies Irae* chant, which serves as a counter-melody to the *Caprice* theme for the remainder of the work. In this sense *Rhapsody* can be said to be almost autobiographical, reflecting the dramatic struggle between creation and death. Rachmaninov left Russia following the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, spending some time in Europe before immigrating to the United States. Rachmaninov's anti-Soviet sentiments led his music to be banned in the USSR until 1933, when the ban was lifted and his music was once again performed and celebrated.

L'oiseau de Feu Igor Stravinsky

In 1909, Russian ballet impresario Sergei Diaghilev commissioned Igor Stravinsky to write music for a ballet based on the Russian fairytale *Zhar'-ptitsa*, or The Firebird. Stravinsky completed the full orchestral score in mid-May of 1910 and it was first premiered by at the *Opéra* in Paris on June 25 of the same year. The work represents an outstanding balance between lyric and rhythmic elements. This

duality is immediately juxtaposed in the opening Introduction where a mysterious string ostinato gives way to schizophrenic bird calls in the lower winds. As the work progresses, rhythm and melody become even further diametrically opposed. The work reaches its rhythmic climax in the incredibly intricate and complex “Danse infernale”, or infernal dance, followed by the gentle and comparatively simple “Berceuse” or lullaby. The work’s “Finale” again unites rhythmic and lyric elements in its famous, and frequently excerpted, triumphant 7/4 conclusion.

Artists

Jae Ahn-Benton is an undergraduate student at UNLV, majoring in Piano Performance. He has studied piano with Mr. Roger Bushell before college; he currently studies under Professor Mykola Suk. Jae is also an active collaborative pianist for any instrumentalist or vocalist. He participates in many chamber groups, inside and outside of school. Jae is also a piano teacher to a few beginner students around town. He is currently employed at the Little Church of the West as a pianist for weddings, as well as Nevada School of the Arts as an accompanist. Jae also composes music regularly – his recent completed works include Twenty-Four Preludes for Piano, Four Romances for Piano and Violin, Capriccio for One Piano, Four Hands, and a Toccata for Cello and Piano.

Taras Krysa serves as the director of orchestras at UNLV and music director of the Henderson Symphony Orchestra.

Krysa was born in Kiev, Ukraine to a musical family and began his formal studies as a violinist at the Moscow Conservatory. After moving to United States, Krysa continued his studies at Indiana University and Northwestern University both in violin and conducting. His conducting teachers have included Victor Yampolsky, Jorma Panula and David Zinman. As a violinist, Krysa has won positions with the New World Symphony orchestra and St. Louis Symphony Orchestras.

In recent seasons his conducting appearances have included National Ukrainian Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra van het Osten, New World Symphony, St. Petersburg Symphony, Moscow Soloists, Slovak Sinfonietta, Kiev Chamber Orchestra, Chernigiv Symphony Orchestra and the Lublin Philharmonic Orchestra. He has made three critically acclaimed recordings for the Brilliant Classics label.

The **UNLV Symphony Orchestra** is comprised of undergraduate and graduate students both within the music department and the university at large.

The ensemble strives to enrich the cultural life of the Las Vegas and UNLV communities, to include non-music majors in high quality performances, and to train music majors to become professional performers and educators.

The UNLV Symphony Orchestra offers a variety of exciting programs each season. In addition to standard orchestral repertoire, the orchestra performs at least one major work with chorus each year and a fully-staged opera. In addition, the UNLV Symphony hosts an annual Solo Concert Competition and a Student Soloists Concert that showcase UNLV's remarkable student talent. The UNLV Symphony orchestra prides itself on collaborating with many notable guest conductors and soloists, including Itzhak Perlman, Sarah Chang, Hillary Hahn, and many others.