

Friendship and Imagination

Saturday, February 8, 2014 • 7:30 PM
First Free Methodist Church

Orchestra Seattle
Stilian Kirov, conductor



ANATOLY LYADOV (1855–1914)
Enchanted Lake, Op. 62

FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809–1847)
Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64

Allegro molto appassionato—
Andante—
Allegretto non troppo—*Allegro molto vivace*

Elisa Barston, violin

—Intermission—

MODEST MUSSORGSKY (1839–1881)
orch. MAURICE RAVEL (1875–1937)
Pictures at an Exhibition

Promenade
Gnomus
Promenade
The Old Castle
Promenade
Tuileries
Bydło
Promenade—
Ballet of the Chicks in Their Shells
Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle
Limoges: The Marketplace (Important News)—
Catacombs (Roman Sepulchre)
Cum mortuis in lingua mortua
The Hut on Hen's Legs (Baba-Yaga)—
The Great Gate at Kiev

Special thanks to First Free Methodist Church for all of their assistance in making OSSCS's 44th season possible, and for providing refreshments during intermission. Donations left at the refreshments tables help support FFMC and its programs.

Please silence cell phones and other electronics, and refrain from the use of cameras and recording devices during the performance.

Orchestra Seattle • Seattle Chamber Singers

Clinton Smith, music director • George Shangrow, founder
PO Box 15825, Seattle WA 98115 • 206-682-5208 • www.osschs.org

About OSSCS

Orchestra Seattle and the Seattle Chamber Singers form a partnership unique among Pacific Northwest musical organizations, combining a 60-member orchestra with a 45-voice chorus to perform oratorio masterworks alongside symphonic repertoire and world premieres.

George Shangrow (1951–2010) founded the Seattle Chamber Singers in 1969, when still a teenager. The group performed a diverse array of music, from works of the Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque periods to contemporary pieces, partnering with an ad hoc group of instrumentalists to present Bach cantatas and Handel oratorios—many of which received their first Seattle performances under George’s direction. In 1979, George formed an orchestra originally called the Broadway Chamber Symphony (after the Broadway Performance Hall on Seattle’s Capitol Hill, where it gave its first concerts) and later, beginning with the 1991–1992 season, Orchestra Seattle.

With George on the podium (or conducting from the harpsichord), OSSCS became renowned for performances of the Bach Passions and numerous Handel oratorios—particularly *Messiah*. During the “Bach Year” of 1985, the ensembles presented 35 concerts devoted to dozens upon dozens of Bach’s works to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the composer’s birth.

George Shangrow lost his life in a car crash on July 31, 2010, an event that shocked not only OSSCS musicians and our audiences, but the entire Pacific Northwest musical community. Over the ensuing three seasons, the volunteer performers of OSSCS partnered with a number of distinguished guest conductors to carry on the astounding musical legacy George created. Beginning with the 2013–2014 season, OSSCS welcomes Clinton Smith as our new music director.

About the Conductor

Guest conductor **Stilian Kirov** currently serves as associate conductor for the Seattle Symphony, having previously been appointed SSO assistant conductor for the 2012–2013 season. He has also held the posts of associate conductor of the Memphis Symphony Orchestra and music director of the Memphis Youth Symphony Program.

Mr. Kirov has conducted orchestras around the world, including the Orchestre Colonne (France), Zagreb Philharmonic (Croatia), Lansing Symphony, Orchestra of Colors (Greece), State Hermitage Orchestra (Russia), New World Symphony, Thüringen Philharmonic Orchestra (Germany), National Repertory Orchestra (Breckenridge, Colorado), Sofia Festival Orchestra, Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra “Leopolis” (Ukraine) and the Juilliard Orchestra, among others. Following his successful debut in 2012, Mr. Kirov also appears regularly as a guest conductor at the Pacific Northwest Ballet.

During the 2013–2014 season, Mr. Kirov conducts concerts on the Seattle Symphony’s Mostly Mozart series, Beyond the Score series, Discover Music series, Community Concerts and more. Following an appearance as a 2013 conducting fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center, he was invited to serve as a cover conductor for concerts with the Boston Symphony and the Chicago Symphony. In 2012, he was a fellow at the Aspen Music Festival, and in 2010 was awarded the David Effron Conducting Fellowship at the Chautauqua Music Festival, where he also returned in 2012 as a guest conductor. In 2011, Mr. Kirov made his debut at the Musical Olympus International Festival in St. Petersburg. During the 2012–2013 season, he also appeared twice with the Amarillo Symphony as a music director finalist.

Mr. Kirov is a graduate in orchestral conducting of the Juilliard School, where he was a student of James DePreist. He also holds a master’s degree from the Ecole Normale de Musique in Paris, where he studied with Dominique Rouits, and has worked with such distinguished conductors as Kurt Masur, Robert Spano, Michael Tilson Thomas, Gianluigi Gelmetti, George Manahan and Asher Fisch. A gifted pianist, Stilian Kirov is the 2001 gold medalist of the Claude Kahn International Piano Competition in Paris.

About the Soloist

Violinist **Elisa Barston** is principal second violinist of the Seattle Symphony, having previously served as the associate concertmaster of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. Praised for her “glowing sound” and “technical aplomb” (*The Strad*), she is currently a violinist in the critically acclaimed Corigliano Quartet.

As a soloist and chamber musician, Ms. Barston has performed extensively throughout the United States, Europe and Asia, appearing with the Chicago Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic and Taipei Symphony Orchestra, among many others. In 1986, she made her European debut with the English Chamber Orchestra at the request of Sir Yehudi Menuhin. During her tenure as associate concertmaster, Ms. Barston made yearly appearances as featured soloist with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, performing a diverse concerto repertoire ranging from Mozart and Beethoven to Shostakovich and Schnittke.

Among her awards are the Jascha Heifetz Scholarship, the Starling Foundation Grant, top prizes at the Yehudi Menuhin International Competition (including the audience prize), first prize at the Julius Stulberg Auditions, grand prize at the International Kingsville Young Performers’ Competition and first prize in the *Seventeen*–General Motors National Music Competition. Ms. Barston has been awarded first prizes in the Fischhoff National Chamber Music, Kuttner Quartet and Indiana University competitions.

Elisa Barston studied violin performance at the University of Southern California with Robert Lipsett and at Indiana University with Josef Gingold.

Program Notes

Anatoly Lyadov

Enchanted Lake, Op. 62

Anatoly Konstantinovich Lyadov was born May 11, 1855, in St. Petersburg, and died August 28, 1914, in Novgorod, Russia. Nikolai Tcherepnin conducted the premiere of this tone poem in St. Petersburg on February 21, 1909. The work calls for 3 flutes, 2 oboes, 3 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, timpani, percussion, harp, celesta and strings.

Lyadov came from an extended musical family—his father was a conductor at St. Petersburg’s Maryinsky Theater—and entered the St. Petersburg Conservatory at age 15, where he studied composition with Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov and soon gained a reputation as a slacker: Rimsky called him “irresponsible” and said Lyadov “simply could not be bothered” with attending classes on a regular basis. Nevertheless, Rimsky admired Lyadov’s talents enough to eventually hire him at the conservatory, where he taught such notable younger composers as Sergei Prokofiev (who, although he too admired Lyadov’s talents, later wrote that “laziness was [his] most remarkable feature”).

Perhaps due to this “laziness,” Lyadov’s compositional output was relatively small—for 25 years he composed almost exclusively brief works for solo piano—although a more charitable interpretation might be that he was simply a perfectionist: the works he did produce are exquisitely polished miniatures. Around 1900, Lyadov turned his attention to choral music and then to a handful of brilliantly scored orchestral works, including the 1904 tone poem *Baba-Yaga*, about a witch who lives in a hut supported by giant chicken legs. It may have been this work that led Sergei Diaghilev to ask Lyadov to compose the score for *The Firebird* (after Lyadov’s colleague Nikolai Tcherepnin had withdrawn from the project), but Lyadov declined, paving the way for Igor Stravinsky to change the course of musical history.

In 1908, Lyadov visited Lake Ilmen in Russia’s Novgorod region, writing to a friend: “How purely picturesque it is—with bountiful stars over the mysteries in the depths! But most importantly it is uninhabited, without entreaties and complaints; only nature—cold, malevolent, but fantastic as a fairy tale.” It is likely this body of water that inspired Lyadov to compose his “fable-tableau” *Enchanted Lake*. Given that Lyadov had rarely written for symphonic ensembles, his mastery of orchestral color is even more remarkable and with *Enchanted Lake* he produced a miniature masterpiece that relies on magical harmonies and brilliant orchestration in lieu of identifiable melodies.

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy

Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64

Jakob Ludwig Felix Mendelssohn was born February 3, 1809, in Hamburg, and died November 4, 1847, in Leipzig. He completed this concerto on September 16, 1844. Niels Gade conducted the premiere at the Leipzig Gewandhaus on March 13, 1845, with Ferdinand David as soloist. The accompaniment requires pairs of woodwinds, horns and trumpets, plus timpani and strings.

Young Felix Mendelssohn’s prodigious talents—as a composer, pianist and violinist—exceeded those of other famous musical prodigies, even Mozart. But the well-to-do Mendelssohn family had no need to parade young Felix around the continent, so he rarely performed in public prior to his 18th birthday, while much of the music he composed remained unpublished and was performed only in private—including the brilliant string octet he wrote at age 16.

It was at that time, in 1825, when Mendelssohn first met the violinist Ferdinand David, one year his junior. The two young men often performed chamber music together and remained friends throughout the remainder of Mendelssohn’s all-to-brief life. When, in 1835, Mendelssohn became conductor of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, he appointed David as its concertmaster. Several years later, when Mendelssohn founded the Leipzig Conservatory, David was one of his first appointments to the faculty.

On July 30, 1838, Mendelssohn wrote to David, “I’d like to write a violin concerto for you next winter; one in E minor sticks in my head, the beginning of which will not leave me in peace.” Their correspondence about the work continued over the next six years, but Mendelssohn was unable to devote significant time to the project until the summer of 1844. In his younger days, Mendelssohn had been a violinist himself and at age 13 had even written a concerto for the instrument (now largely forgotten, along with another concerto for violin, piano and orchestra) but nevertheless sought advice from David, who supplied many suggestions that found their way into the finished product.

“I rather envy the enjoyment of anyone who should hear the Mendelssohn concerto for the first time,” wrote Donald Francis Tovey in 1921, “and find that, like *Hamlet*, it was full of quotations.” Indeed, the immense familiarity of this work makes it difficult to appreciate its groundbreaking features. Composers before Mendelssohn had dispensed with the traditional lengthy orchestral introduction before the entry of the soloist at the beginning of the concerto, and others had experimented with linking movements so that they are played without pause, but none so convincingly as Mendelssohn does here.

Perhaps the most striking innovation is the placement of the cadenza, which traditionally would have come after the recapitulation of the first movement’s melodic material and before a brief coda. Mendelssohn repositions it between the development and the recapitulation, where the soloist continues the arpeggiated figurations of the cadenza while the first violins of the orchestra restate the movement’s principal theme. Mendelssohn consulted with David not only about the technical demands of the solo passagework, but this unusual placement of the cadenza and even orchestral details in the concerto’s poetic slow movement, suggesting that David seek the opinion of one of their Leipzig Conservatory colleagues, Danish composer Niels Gade.

Gade conducted the concerto’s premiere due to the composer’s ill health—Mendelssohn would die less than three years later, leaving this violin concerto as his final major orchestral work.

Modest Mussorgsky
orch. Maurice Ravel
Pictures at an Exhibition

Modest Petrovich Mussorgsky was born March 21, 1839, in the Pskov region of Russia, and died March 28, 1881, in St. Petersburg. He composed *Pictures at an Exhibition* for solo piano during June 1874. Ravel orchestrated the work during the summer of 1922 at the request of Serge Koussevitzky, who conducted the premiere in Paris on October 22 of that year. Ravel's version calls for 3 flutes (2 doubling piccolo), 3 oboes (1 doubling English horn), 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, alto saxophone, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, glockenspiel, bells, triangle, tam-tam, rattle, whip, cymbals, side drum, bass drum, xylophone, celesta, harp and strings.

Had it not been for composer Modest Mussorgsky, Victor Hartmann, a Russian-born architect and artist of French ancestry, would be little remembered today. The two met around 1870 and formed a fast friendship that lasted until Hartmann's unexpected death at age 39 a mere three years later. Their mutual friend Vladimir Stasov, a noted art critic, organized an exhibit of Hartmann's works—to which Mussorgsky loaned pieces from his own collection—in St. Petersburg during February and March of 1874. (Only about 100 of the more than 400 works of art from this exhibition survive.) Mussorgsky's visit to the memorial exhibit inspired him to compose a suite of piano pieces the following June. Surprisingly, there is no record of a performance during the composer's lifetime.

After Mussorgsky's death, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov edited *Pictures at an Exhibition* (polishing some of the rough edges, as he was wont to do, and inserting a few ideas of his own), publishing it in 1886. One of Rimsky's students, Mikhail Tushmalov, subsequently orchestrated the work (omitting several movements), perhaps with guidance from Rimsky-Korsakov himself, who conducted the premiere in 1891. In 1915, the British conductor Henry Wood created his own orchestral version, and subsequent generations of composers and arrangers have scored Mussorgsky's music for all manner of ensembles, but Maurice Ravel's 1922 orchestration quickly cemented itself as the transcription most widely performed in concert halls around the world.

Not only had Ravel orchestrated a number of his own piano works, he had previously transcribed the piano music of others, including Robert Schumann's *Carnaval* (now mostly lost), so the task proved to be relatively straightforward. Ravel attempted to track down Mussorgsky's original score (which remained unpublished until 1930), but made do with the Rimsky-Korsakov edition.

Mussorgsky opens his suite with a **Promenade**—cast in alternating bars of $\frac{5}{4}$ and $\frac{6}{4}$ to suggest a museum visitor wandering about from painting to painting—which returns in various guises to link subsequent movements. The first “picture” we encounter is **Gnomus**, inspired by a drawing for a Christmas ornament that Stasov described as “a gnome into whose mouth you put a nut to crack.” Mussorgsky's music evokes a much more enormous figure, proceeding in stops and starts with violent outbursts; a menacing central episode recalls the composer's *Night on Bare Mountain*.

A quieter promenade (which Ravel scores for solo horn and woodwinds) leads to **The Old Castle**, inspired by a Hartmann painting of a medieval Italian castle. Solo saxophone assumes the role of a troubador singing in the foreground. Another promenade introduces **Tuileries**, based on a watercolor of the Parisian park with which Ravel was no doubt more familiar than Mussorgsky. Scurrying woodwind passages evoke quarreling children at play.

In **Bydło** (the Polish word for “cattle”), Ravel employs a solo tenor tuba to evoke an oxcart traveling along a muddy road, following Rimsky-Korsakov's dynamic markings that begin the movement very quietly, reach an enormous climax and then recede, to suggest the cart approaching and then moving into the distance. Another promenade leads directly to **Ballet of the Chicks in Their Shells**, a brilliant scherzo inspired by several watercolors that Hartmann had made to suggest costumes for an 1871 ballet (*Trilbi*, with music by Yuli Gerber) in which “a group of little boys and girls, pupils of the Theater School, dressed as canaries, scampered on the stage. Some of the little birds were wearing over their dresses big eggshells resembling breastplates.”

Mussorgsky used two portraits (“A Rich Jew in a Fur Hat” and “A Poor Jew”) that Hartmann had presented to him as a gift as the basis for **Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle**. (When Hartmann visited southern Poland in 1868, he painted these works as well as *Bydło*.) The first man speaks with great authority while Ravel uses muted trumpet to characterize the second man's complaining tone.

During an 1866 visit to **Limoges**, France, Hartmann painted over 100 watercolors, including a depiction of the bustling activity in the city's marketplace. Mussorgsky initially wrote his own description of the scene in the score (before ultimately crossing it out): “Important news! M. de Puissanceout has just recovered his cow Fugitive. But the good ladies of Limoges don't care, because Mme. de Remboursac has acquired handsome new porcelain dentures, while M. de Panta-Pantaléon is still troubled by his big red nose.” This leads directly to **Catacombs**, a remarkable evocation of underground Paris, inspired by a watercolor showing Hartmann, a friend and a guide illuminated by gaslight. The somber atmosphere continues into the following promenade, marked *Con mortuis in lingua mortua*—“With the dead in a dead language.”

The Hut on Hen's Legs involves the same Russian legend that inspired Lyadov's tone poem *Baba-Yaga*. Hartmann had created a bronze clock depicting the child-eating witch and her bizarre abode.

On April 4, 1866, Czar Alexander II escaped an assassination attempt while visiting Kiev. Hartmann entered a competition (subsequently called off, perhaps due to lack of funds) to design a gateway to the city in commemoration of the event. Mussorgsky recasts the promenade theme (now in a regular meter) to create a celebratory splendor, contrasting it with a quieter chorale theme based on a Russian hymn. Ravel's blazing brass and tolling bells evoke the grand ceremony that might have taken place to unveil **The Great Gate at Kiev**, had it actually been built.

—Jeff Eldridge

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Clinton Smith, conductor • **Mark Salman**, piano

Jones Elegy

Liszt Totentanz

Mozart *Requiem* in D Minor, K. 626

Reverence + Spirituality

Saturday, April 12, 2014 • 7:30 PM
Clinton Smith, conductor

J.S. Bach Mass in B Minor, BWV 232

Reflection + Wonder

Saturday, May 10, 2014 • 7:30 PM

Clinton Smith, conductor

Karin Wolverton, soprano

Sarah Larsen, mezzo-soprano

Ives *The Unanswered Question*

Fauré *Après un rêve*, Op. 7, No. 1

Bach *Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied*, BWV 225

Barber *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*

Elgar *The Music Makers*, Op. 69

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Learn more about our fabulous 2013–2014 season, featuring the debut of music director Clinton Smith, by following OSSCS on Facebook and Twitter and visiting www.ossacs.org to subscribe to our e-mail newsletter.