



**GRANT PARK
MUSIC FESTIVAL
IN MILLENNIUM PARK**

Grant Park Orchestra and Chorus
Carlos Kalmar, *Principal Conductor*
Christopher Bell, *Chorus Director*

Rachmaninov Second Piano Concerto

Wednesday, August 14, 2013 at 6:30PM

Jay Pritzker Pavilion

GRANT PARK ORCHESTRA

Carlos Kalmar, *Conductor*

Valentina Lisitsa, *Piano*

SHCHEDRIN *Naughty Limericks, Concerto for Symphony Orchestra*

BORODIN *Symphony No. 2 in B Minor*
Allegro — Animato assai
Scherzo: Prestissimo — Allegretto — Prestissimo
Andante —
Finale: Allegro

RACHMANINOV *Piano Concerto No. 2 in C Minor, Op. 18*
Moderato
Adagio sostenuto
Allegro scherzando
VALENTINA LISITSA

This concert is sponsored by the
Smart Family Foundation and Joan and Robert Feitler

The appearance of Valentina Lisitsa is partially underwritten by a gift from
Jim and Ginger Meyer

Piano provided by
Steinway Piano Galleries of Chicago



CARLOS KALMAR's biography can be found on page 8.



Pianist **VALENTINA LISITSA** is at ease in a vast repertoire ranging from Bach and Mozart to Shostakovich and Bernstein. Her orchestral repertoire alone includes more than forty concertos. In May 2010, she performed the Dutch premiere of Rachmaninov's "New 5th" Concerto in her debut with the Rotterdam Philharmonic. In June 2012, she made her recital debut at the Royal Albert Hall in London. The performance was streamed live on her YouTube channel and a recording of the concert was released on iTunes as well as on DVD by Decca

Classics. Highlights of previous seasons include appearances with the Chicago Symphony, Seattle Symphony, WDR Cologne, Seoul Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony and Pittsburgh Symphony. Her 2011-2012 season featured performances with the Helsinki Philharmonic and Colorado Symphony and recitals at Ravinia, Festival of the Arts Boca, Teatro de Colon in Buenos Aires and Casals Festival in Puerto Rico. Ms. Lisitsa has recorded three independently released DVDs, including her best-selling set of Chopin's 24 Etudes, which long held the coveted No. 1 spot on the Amazon music video list. With more than 30 million YouTube channel views, Valentina Lisitsa is one of the most sought-after classical musicians on the Web. Last summer, thousands of music fans worldwide witnessed the live broadcast of Ms. Lisitsa's practice sessions, allowing her to show a different aspect of her artistic persona. For two weeks, viewers watched her prepare almost four hours of new music in daily fourteen-hour-long sessions.



Joan and Robert Feitler Smart Family Foundation

Joan and Robert Feitler and the Smart Family Foundation are proud to sponsor this concert series at the Grant Park Music Festival. Native Chicagoans, the Feitlers have long celebrated and supported the arts in this city. Returning to Chicago in 1996 after living for many years in Milwaukee, Joan and Bob Feitler have been deeply involved in educational and arts funding through the Smart Family Foundation and through their own work with many Chicago and national organizations.



**NAUGHTY LIMERICKS,
CONCERTO FOR SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA (1963)
Rodion Shchedrin (born in 1932)**



Naughty Limericks is scored for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, four trumpets, four trombones, timpani, percussion, harp, piano and strings. The performance time is eight minutes. This is the first performance of this work by the Grant Park Orchestra.

Rodion Shchedrin, one of the handful of Russian composers of the generation after Shostakovich whose music has made an impact in the West, was born in Moscow on December 16, 1932. His father, a well-known musical theorist and writer on music, encouraged Rodion's musical interests with piano lessons, but the boy's formal training was interrupted by the German invasion in 1941. Shchedrin resumed his musical education in 1948 at the Choir School in Moscow, where he began to compose, and he entered the Moscow Conservatory three years later to study piano with Yacob Flier and composition with Yuri Shaporin. By the time he graduated in 1955, Shchedrin had established a distinctive idiom that incorporates the styles of both folk music from various Russian regions and the simple urban street song known as the *chastushka*.

The Russian *chastushka* is a short, simple song for one, two or more singers with rhymed texts on an apparently limitless number of topics. Shchedrin explained, "In a *chastushka* there is always humor, irony and a sharp satire of the status quo, its defenders and the 'leaders of the people.' Even such powerful or dreaded names as Marx, Lenin and Stalin have been ridiculed in *chastushki*. Everything that occurs in the life of the people, from events of historic importance to the most intimate sensations, finds its way into *chastushki* at once, on the same day or — through extemporizing — at the very moment. [*Chastushka* is derived from the adjective *chastiy*: 'quick.'] Brevity is the chief characteristic of the *chastushka*. Its specifically musical traits are a four-square and symmetric structure, a deliberately primitive melody of limited scope, driving syncopated rhythm, improvisation, numerous repetitions involving variation (chiefly shifting the strong and weak beats), and — which is a must — a *sense of humor* pervading both the words and music."

Shchedrin used *chastushki* in his Piano Concerto No. 1 (1954), the ballet *The Hump-Backed Horse* (1956), the First Symphony (1958) and the opera *Not Love Alone* (1961), and made them the basis of the flamboyantly virtuosic "concerto for orchestra" that he composed in 1963, whose title — *Ozorniye Chastushki* — has been rendered in English as both *Mischievous Folk Ditties* and, more frequently, *Naughty Limericks*. "Unfortunately, the word *chastushka* is associated in the minds of many musicians with simple tunes of eight bars, suggesting nothing but boredom," Shchedrin wrote. "I think, however, that this modest and unassuming form may be likened to a door opening, as in an old fairy-tale, upon a world of most varied and inexhaustible musical riches. In *Naughty Limericks*, conceived as a virtuosic orchestral work, I treat only the comic and dance *chastushka* tunes. The concertante style and virtuosic effects are, to my mind, inherent in this type of *chastushka*."



SYMPHONY NO. 2 IN B MINOR (1869-1877) **Alexander Borodin (1833-1887)**

Borodin's Symphony No. 2 is scored for two piccolos, two flutes, oboe, English Horn, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp and strings. The duration is 26 minutes. The Grant Park Orchestra first performed this Symphony on August 19, 1936, with Clarence Evans conducting.

When the Soviet government finally got around to erecting a monument to Alexander Borodin, it was not to honor his contributions to music but rather those that he made to science and medicine. During his lifetime, Borodin was known less as a musician than as an eminent chemist who invented the nitrometer and as the distinguished physician who helped to found the School of Medicine for Women in St. Petersburg. His busy schedule left him little time for writing music, and he dubbed himself a "Sunday composer." Other than vacations and an occasional weekend, Borodin could only compose when he was too ill to leave home. Given the often frail state of his constitution, those days were quite frequent and not unwelcome, and his musical friends actually wished him sickness rather than health so that could devote himself to his creative work. The Second Symphony was completed while Borodin was confined to bed with an inflamed leg.

Borodin had taken up the cudgel of forging a national musical identity for his native land in 1862, when he became associated with his friend Modeste Mussorgsky and three others in the group of Russian composers known as "The Five." In 1869, Borodin told Vladimir Stasov, a musicologist and the chief journalistic champion of The Five, that he was interested in composing an opera on a Russian historical topic, and the writer drew up a scenario based on the ancient tales about Prince Igor. Some of the early sketches for *Prince Igor*, to which Borodin returned throughout his life but never completed, were borrowed for the Second Symphony. Indeed, so much of the mood and matter of the opera found their way into the Symphony that Stasov wrote, "Borodin was haunted when he wrote this Symphony by the picture of feudal Russia, and he tried to paint it in his music." Stasov reported that Borodin had specific images in mind when composing this work: the first movement was purportedly inspired by a vision of a gathering of 11th-century warriors; the third by a legendary Slavic minstrel; the finale, featuring approximations of the sounds of ancient instruments, by a hero's banquet.

The first movement of the Symphony creates a characteristically Russian quality through several techniques: its melodic and harmonic modalism, which evokes a certain oriental or even primitive mood; the vivid brilliance of its scoring, often dominated by the brasses (Borodin and Rimsky-Korsakov had undertaken extensive studies of the military band, and believed that the brass instruments were capable of more virtuosity than had hitherto been required of them); and the elemental rhythmic energy that accumulates around the many repetitions of its craggy opening motive. There are several lyrical episodes in this sonata-form movement, but the music's dominant impression is one of ferocious and enduring strength. The second movement is a winged Scherzo that, according to Gerald Abraham, "suggests the gleam of sunlight upon the helmets of Slavic warriors." The limpid central trio employs an arched melody that resembles an Italian barcarolle in its warm lyricism. The slow third movement recalls an ancient bardic strain, perhaps an epic about fearsome struggles against sinister enemies. The finale is a festival of blazing orchestral color that combines vigorous dance themes, striding melodies and forceful dramatic gestures.



PIANO CONCERTO NO. 2 IN C MINOR, OP. 18 (1900-1901)

Sergei Rachmaninov (1873-1943)



Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2 is scored for pairs of woodwinds, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion and strings. The performance time is 33 minutes. The Grant Park Orchestra first performed this Concerto on August 24, 1938, with Walter Steindel conducting. The soloist was Alec Templeton.

When he was old and as mellow as he would ever get, Rachmaninov wrote these words about his early years: "Although I had to fight for recognition, as most younger men must, although I have experienced all the troubles and sorrow which precede success, and although I know how important it is for an artist to be spared such troubles, I realize, when I look back on my early life, that it was enjoyable, in spite of all its vexations and bitterness." The greatest "bitterness" of Rachmaninov's career was the total failure of the Symphony No. 1 at its premiere in 1897, a traumatic disappointment that thrust him into such a mental depression that he suffered a complete nervous collapse.

An aunt of Rachmaninov, Varvara Satina, had recently been successfully treated for an emotional disturbance by a certain Dr. Nicholas Dahl, a Moscow physician who was familiar with the latest psychiatric discoveries in France and Vienna, and it was arranged that Rachmaninov should visit him. Years later, in his memoirs, the composer recalled the malady and the treatment: "[Following the performance of the First Symphony,] something within me snapped. A paralyzing apathy possessed me. I did nothing at all and found no pleasure in anything. Half my days were spent on a couch sighing over my ruined life. My only occupation consisted in giving a few piano lessons to keep myself alive." For more than a year, Rachmaninov's condition persisted. He began his daily visits to Dr. Dahl in January 1900. "Dahl had inquired what kind of composition was desired of me, and he was informed 'a concerto for pianoforte.' In consequence, I heard repeated, day after day, the same hypnotic formula, as I lay half somnolent in an armchair in Dr. Dahl's consulting room: 'You will start to compose a concerto — You will work with the greatest of ease — The composition will be of excellent quality.' Always it was the same, without interruption.... Although it may seem impossible to believe," Rachmaninov continued, "this treatment really helped me. I started to compose again at the beginning of the summer." In gratitude, he dedicated the new Concerto to Dr. Dahl.

The Concerto begins with eight bell-tone chords from the piano that herald the surging main theme, announced by the strings. A climax is achieved before a sudden drop in intensity makes way for the arching second theme, initiated by the soloist. The development, concerned largely with the first theme, is propelled by a martial rhythm that continues with undiminished energy into the recapitulation. The second theme returns in the horn before the martial mood is re-established to close the movement. The *Adagio* is a long-limbed nocturne with a running commentary of sweeping figurations from the piano. The finale resumes the marching rhythmic motion of the first movement with its introduction and bold main theme. Standing in bold relief to this vigorous music is the lyrical second theme, one of the best-loved melodies in the entire orchestral literature, a grand inspiration in the ripest Romantic tradition. These two themes, the martial and the romantic, alternate for the remainder of the movement. The coda rises through a line of mounting tension to bring the work to a close.

©2013 Dr. Richard E. Rodda