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GRANT PARK ORCHESTRA AND CHORUS

Carlos Kalmar Artistic Director and Principal Conductor

Christopher Bell Chorus Director



Saturday, June 23, 2018 at 7:30 p.m.

Jay Pritzker Pavilion

RACHMANINOV PIANO CONCERTO NO. 3

Grant Park Orchestra

Carlos Kalmar Conductor

Natasha Paremski Piano

Walter Piston

Symphony No. 6

Fluendo espressivo

Leggerissimo vivace

Adagio sereno

Allegro energico

INTERMISSION

Sergei Rachmaninov

Piano Concerto No. 3 in D Minor, Op. 30

Allegro ma non tanto

Intermezzo: Adagio—

Finale: Alla breve

This concert is presented with generous support from
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The appearance of Natasha Paremski
is underwritten by Jerry and Jeannette Goldstone
Piano provided by Steinway Piano Galleries of Chicago



NATASHA PAREMSKI was born in Moscow, moved to the United States at the age of eight, and is now based in New York City. She won several prestigious prizes at a young age, including the Gilmore Young Artists Prize in 2006 at the age of 18 and Prix Montblanc and Orpheum Stiftung Prize in 2007. In September 2010, she was awarded the Classical Recording Foundation's Young Artist of the Year. Ms. Paremksi's first recital album was released in 2011 to great acclaim, topping the Billboard Classical Charts, and was re-released on the Steinway & Sons label in September 2016. In 2012 she recorded Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1 and Rachmaninov's *Paganini Rhapsody* with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and conductor Fabien Gabel on the orchestra's label, distributed by Naxos. The 2017–2018 season includes return recitals at Wigmore Hall and Istanbul Resitalleri, as well as return engagements with the North Carolina Symphony, Oregon Symphony (playing Prokofiev's Second Piano Concerto with Carlos Kalmar), Winnipeg Symphony, Colorado Symphony, Columbus Symphony, and her debut with Kansas City Symphony. Natasha Paremksi's recording of Fred Hersch's *Variations on a Theme by Tchaikovsky*, commissioned for her by the Gilmore Festival, and Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* on the Steinway & Sons label is scheduled for imminent release.



Walter Piston (1894–1976)
SYMPHONY NO. 6 (1955)

Scored for: piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, two harps and strings

Performance time: 28 minutes

Grant Park Music Festival premiere

Walter Piston, one of America's most distinguished men of music, taught himself to play violin and piano but trained in draftsmanship and architecture at the Massachusetts Normal School of Art. He worked as a draftsman for the Boston Elevated Railway while still a student but also played violin in pickup bands and theater orchestras around Boston. After graduating in 1916, he enlisted in the Navy as a bandsman and was assigned to play saxophone; he learned the instrument by himself in a few days from an instruction manual. Piston determined to follow a musical career after his stint in the Navy, and he enrolled at Harvard upon his discharge in 1919; he graduated summa cum laude in 1924. After spending two years in Paris studying with Nadia Boulanger and Paul Dukas, he accepted a teaching position at Harvard, where he nurtured such notable musicians as Carter, Bernstein, Berger, Fine, Pinkham and Kubik during a tenure that lasted until 1960. Piston's distinctions included two Pulitzer Prizes, a Naumburg Award, memberships in the National Institute of Arts and Letters and American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the French *Officier dans l'ordre des Arts et des Lettres*.

Piston's close association with the Boston Symphony Orchestra was initially developed in the late 1920s by the ensemble's music director, Sergei Koussevitzky, and fruitfully continued by his successor, Charles Munch. The BSO premiered 11 of Piston's works between 1927 and 1971, and commissioned from him the Symphony No. 6 in 1955 in celebration of its 75th anniversary. The score was dedicated to the memory of Sergei and Natalie Koussevitzky, and premiered under Munch's direction in Boston on November 25, 1955. With its non-referential content, masterful formal contrast and balance within and between movements, luminous orchestration, finely drawn counterpoint, expansive lyricism and rhythmic vitality, the Sixth Symphony is a superb example of Piston's creative idiom. The composer himself gave a succinct description of the work: "Little need be said in advance about the Symphony. The headings listed on the program page are indicative of the general character of each movement. The first movement is flowing and expressive, in sonata form; the second a scherzo, light and fast; the third a serene *Adagio*, theme one played by solo cello, theme two by the solo flute; and the fourth an energetic finale with two contrasting themes. The Symphony was composed with no intent other than to make music to be played and listened to."



Sergei Rachmaninov (1873–1943)
**PIANO CONCERTO NO. 3 IN D MINOR,
 OP. 30 (1909)**

Scored for: solo piano, pairs of woodwinds, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion and strings

Performance time: 39 minutes

First Grant Park Orchestra performance: July 6, 1949; Nikolai Malko, conductor; Sigi Weissenberg, piano

The worlds of technology and art sometimes brush against each other in curious ways. In 1909, it seems, Sergei Rachmaninov wanted one of those new mechanical wonders—an automobile. And thereupon hangs the tale of his first visit to America.

The impresario Henry Wolfson of New York arranged a 30-concert tour for the 1909–1910 season for Rachmaninov so he could play and conduct his own works in a number of American cities. Rachmaninov was at first hesitant about leaving his family and home for such an extended overseas trip, but the generous financial remuneration was too tempting to resist. With a few tour details still left unsettled, Wolfson died suddenly in the spring of 1909, and the composer was much relieved that the journey would probably be canceled. Wolfson's agency had a contract with Rachmaninov, however, and during the summer finished the arrangements for his appearances so that the composer-pianist-conductor was obliged to leave for New York as scheduled. Trying to look on the bright side of this daunting prospect, Rachmaninov wrote to his longtime friend Nikita Morozov, "I don't want to go. But then perhaps, after America I'll be able to buy myself that automobile.... It may not be so bad after all!" It was for the American tour that Rachmaninov composed his Third Piano Concerto.

The Concerto consists of three large movements. The first is a modified sonata form that begins with a haunting theme, recalled in the later movements, that sets perfectly the Concerto's mood of somber intensity; the *espressivo* second theme is presented by the pianist. The development section is concerned mostly with transformations of fragments from the first theme. A massive cadenza leads to the recapitulation. The earlier material is greatly abbreviated in this closing section. The second movement, subtitled *Intermezzo*, which Dr. Otto Kinkleday described in his notes for the New York premiere as "tender and melancholy, yet not tearful," is a set of free variations with an inserted episode. "One of the most dashing and exciting pieces of music ever composed for piano and orchestra" is how Patrick Piggot described the finale. The movement is structured in three large sections. The first part has an abundance of themes that Rachmaninov derived from those of the first movement. The relationship is further strengthened in the second section, where both earlier themes are recalled in slow tempo. The pace again quickens, and the music from the first part of the finale returns with some modifications. A brief solo cadenza leads to the coda, a dazzling final stanza with fistfuls of chords that leads to the dramatic closing gestures.

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