

Russian Masters

Sunday, February 5, 2012 • 3:00 PM
Meany Hall

Orchestra Seattle
Seattle Chamber Singers
Eric Garcia, conductor



DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH (1906–1975)
Festive Overture, Op. 96

SERGEI PROKOFIEV (1891–1953)
Suite from *Lieutenant Kizhe*, Op. 60

Kizhe's Birth
Romance
Kizhe's Wedding
Troika
Kizhe's Burial

Charles Robert Stephens, baritone

—Intermission—

ALEXANDER BORODIN (1833–1887)
Polovtsian Dances from *Prince Igor*

*Introduction—Gliding Dance of the Maidens—Wild Dance of the Men—General Dance—
Dance of the Boys and Second Dance of the Men—Gliding Dance of the Maidens (reprise)—
Dance of the Boys and Second Dance of the Men (reprise)—General Dance*

IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882–1971)
Suite from *The Firebird* (1919 version)

Introduction—The Firebird's Dance—The Firebird's Variation
The Princesses' Khorovod
Infernal Dance of King Kashchei
Berceuse—Finale

Please disable cell phones and other electronics. The use of cameras and recording devices is not permitted during the performance.

Guest Artists

Eric Garcia currently serves as assistant conductor for both the Seattle Symphony and the Eastern Music Festival. He formerly served as director of orchestral activities and professor of conducting at the University of Evansville and music director of the Evansville Philharmonic Youth Orchestra. He has also served as music director at St. Xavier University in Chicago, where he held several conducting positions and appeared as guest conductor with numerous orchestras. Among these, he guest-conducted the Northwest Festival Orchestra of Illinois, working with members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and Civic Orchestra of Chicago.

As a doctoral student at Northwestern University, he conducted performances with the Contemporary Music Ensemble, Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra and Philharmonia. A frequent conductor of contemporary music, Mr. Garcia has worked directly with composers including John Adams, George Crumb, Frank Ferko, David Lang, Lowell Lieberman and Jay Alan Yim.

Mr. Garcia has attended the American Academy of Conducting at the Aspen Music Festival and School, working with such eminent conductors as Nicholas Kraemer, Murry Sidlin, Leonard Slatkin and David Zinman. At Aspen, he worked with the American Academy of Conducting Orchestra, the Susan and Ford Schumann Center for Composition Studies, and the Aspen Opera Theatre Center. His principal conducting teacher is Victor Yampolsky. Additional conducting teachers include Peter Bay, Dan Lewis and Larry Rachleff. He received a Doctor of Musical Arts and Master of Music in orchestral conducting from Northwestern University under the mentorship of Victor Yampolsky, and a Bachelor of Music degree in music theory from the University of Texas.

Baritone **Charles Robert Stephens** has enjoyed a career spanning a wide variety of roles and styles in opera and concert music. At New York City Opera, he sang the role of Prof. Friedrich Bhaer in the New York premiere of Mark Adamo's *Little Women*, and was hailed by *The New York Times* as a "baritone of smooth distinction." He has sung on numerous occasions at Carnegie Hall in a variety of roles with Opera Orchestra of New York, the Oratorio Society of New York, the Masterworks Chorus and Musica Sacra, as well as with ensembles throughout the Pacific Northwest.

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Program Notes

Dmitri Shostakovich

Festive Overture, Op. 96

Shostakovich was born September 25, 1906, in St. Petersburg, and died in Moscow on August 9, 1975. He composed this overture during the week preceding its November 6, 1954, premiere, scoring it for triple woodwinds (including piccolo and contrabassoon), 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, percussion and strings.

After the death of Joseph Stalin in 1953, the Soviet musical establishment relaxed its disapproval of composer Dmitri Shostakovich, allowing the Bolshoi Theater to hire him as an artistic consultant. Each autumn, in commemoration of the 1917 October Revolution, the Bolshoi mounted a performance featuring a newly commissioned work. Mere days before the 1954 concert, a Bolshoi official arrived at Shostakovich's residence, pleading with him to write an overture on very short notice.

Shostakovich acquiesced, inviting his friend Lev Lebedinsk to keep him company as he composed. Lebedinsk later recalled: "The speed with which he wrote was truly astounding. Moreover, when he wrote light music he was able to talk, make jokes and compose simultaneously, like the legendary Mozart. He laughed and chuckled, and in the meanwhile work was under way and the music was being written down. Two days later the dress rehearsal took place. I hurried down to the [Bolshoi] and I heard this brilliant effervescent work, with its vivacious energy spilling over like uncorked champagne." Shostakovich derived the work's opening fanfare from a simple piano piece he had composed for his daughter a decade earlier—his ability to work so quickly may have been aided by similar borrowings from unpublished sketches. Early the next year he drew inspiration from the overture for a cue in his film score for *The Gadfly*.

Sergei Prokofiev

Suite from Lieutenant Kizhe, Op. 60

Prokofiev was born in Sontsova (Ukraine), to Russian parents, on April 23, 1891, and died in Moscow on March 5, 1953. He composed his score for Lt. Kizhe between March and October of 1933 and the next year created this suite, which he conducted at its premiere on December 21, 1934. The suite calls for solo baritone, pairs of woodwinds (plus piccolo and tenor saxophone), 4 horns, cornet, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, percussion, harp, piano and strings.

Two decades before collaborating with Shostakovich on *The Gadfly*, Soviet filmmaker Alexander Faintsimmer directed his first picture, *Lt. Kizhe*, for which another great Russian composer, Sergei Prokofiev, provided music. At the time, the composer maintained his principal residence in Paris, but during a December 1932 journey to the Soviet Union he visited *Kizhe*'s sets at the Belgoskino studios in Leningrad, mapping out the film's musical requirements. He composed the score back in Paris, working from the screenplay and timings supplied by the filmmakers.

Based on a 1927 novella by Yuri Tinyanov, who also scripted the film, *Lt. Kizhe* unfolds during 1800 at the palace of Tsar Paul I. While the monarch naps, a military adjutant sneaks away for a dalliance with the lady-in-waiting to Princess Gagarina. The young woman pinches her paramour on the posterior, prompting an outburst that wakes the tsar, who vows to banish the man responsible to Siberia. Meanwhile, a military clerk erroneously transcribes the phrase (поручики же: "the lieutenants, however") as (Поручик Кижж: "Lieutenant Kizhe"), leading the tsar to inquire about the non-existent officer. The adjutant and his superior use the misunderstanding to their advantage, fixing blame for

the nap incident on Kizhe. Before long, the tsar experiences a change of heart and recalls Kizhe from Siberia. Onlookers express bewilderment as the invisible Kizhe receives a promotion, weds the lady-in-waiting and—finally—dies, ending the ruse before it unravels completely.

After the film's debut on March 7, 1934, Prokofiev fashioned a five-movement suite on commission from the Moscow Radio Symphony, retaining most of the score's material. The brevity of many of the film cues posed a challenge to the composer, who spent more time creating the suite—"searching for a form, re-orchestrating, polishing, and even combining themes"—than he had on the film score itself.

"Kizhe's Birth" collects several brief episodes from early in the picture: A solo cornet opens the film, yielding to fife-and-drum music for the tsar's soldiers and domestic staff going about their routines with military precision. Solo oboe introduces the theme for Kizhe when a slip of the pen brings the soldier to life, followed by brilliant brass fanfares as the tsar inspects his troops. The Kizhe motive returns when the half-mad monarch resolves to promote Kizhe to commander of the armed forces.

"Romance" combines two folk-like songs performed in the film by, respectively, Princess Gagarina (who accompanies herself on harp) and a male servant. Prokofiev here sets them both for solo baritone, creating an expansive and colorful orchestral accompaniment not heard in the film—even combining the tunes in counterpoint at one juncture. (Most performances and recordings of this suite use Prokofiev's alternate versions of the second and fourth movements, which replace the vocal soloist with saxophone, bassoon and various other instruments.)

The recession from "Kizhe's Wedding" opens the suite's central movement, after which solo cornet introduces a happy melody heard during the ensuing wedding reception, followed by the return of the Kizhe theme on tenor saxophone. Prokofiev expands and extends his film cue, which also underscores Kizhe's honeymoon later that evening.

"Troika" jumps back earlier in the story, when the tsar's adjutant travels to Siberia—using a three-horse sleigh known as a "troika"—to free Kizhe from prison. Upon arrival he imbibes large quantities of vodka, so on the return journey he and a similarly inebriated colleague sing a raucous duet accompanied by balalaika and the bells on the troika. In the suite, solo baritone sings the infectious melody, with piano, harp and pizzicato strings imitating a balalaika.

"Kizhe's Burial" combines two extended cues from late in the film as the funeral procession for the now-deceased soldier passes by the tsar's palace. Kizhe's theme features prominently, while material from "Romance" and "Kizhe's Wedding" returns as the mourners recall happy events from Kizhe's life. The music fades away as the cortège proceeds into the distance, and the suite—like the film—closes with a reprise of the opening cornet solo.

Alexander Borodin

Polovtsian Dances from *Prince Igor*

Borodin was born November 12, 1833, in St. Petersburg and died there on February 27, 1887. He began composing his opera *Prince Igor* in 1869 and continued working on it until his death. The *Polovtsian Dances* date from the summer of 1875 and received their first performance on March 11, 1879, in St. Petersburg. In addition to chorus, the dances call for pairs of woodwinds (plus piccolo and English horn), 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, percussion, harp and strings.

The illegitimate son of a Russian nobleman, Alexander Borodin studied music from an early age, but took his formal aca-

demical training in the sciences. He earned a doctorate in chemistry and became a medical doctor, although he never practiced, focusing on a career as a research chemist. Borodin did important work in that field, counting among his colleagues Dmitri Mendeleev.

Throughout his life Borodin composed during his spare time, often setting aside works unfinished at the end of a vacation period. Despite these frequent interruptions, he managed to produce several contributions to the standard repertoire, including the 1880 tone poem *In the Steppes of Central Asia*, three symphonies and a pair of string quartets.

In 1869 Borodin began work on an opera that would occupy him intermittently for the remaining two decades of his life. Based on a narrative called *The Saga of Igor's Army* by his friend Vasily Stasov, the opera told the story of Prince Igor, whose city, Puitvil, was overrun in the year 1185 by the Polovtsi, a Mongol-like nomadic tribe led by Khan Kontchak.

The end of the opera's second act consists of a ballet sequence in which the male and female slaves of the Polovtsi dance to entertain Igor (held captive by the Polovtsi) and the Khan. These "Polovtsian Dances" were first performed separately, at the behest of Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov, who prodded Borodin along by assisting with the orchestration.

The dances achieved their first great success independent of the opera when Michael Fokine choreographed them for the Ballets Russes in 1909. The exotic melody of the first dance ascended to even greater popularity when the creators of the Broadway musical *Kismet* adapted it as the song "Stranger in Paradise."

Igor Stravinsky

Suite from *The Firebird*

Stravinsky was born June 17, 1882, in Oranienbaum (near St. Petersburg), and died April 6, 1971, in New York City. He composed *The Firebird* during 1909 and 1910. After the ballet's premiere in Paris on June 25, 1910, he fashioned three suites from the score, the second of which—dating from 1919—calls for pairs of woodwinds (with one flute doubling piccolo and one oboe doubling English horn), 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, percussion, piano, harp and strings.

After the successful 1909 debut of his *Ballets Russes* that included a production set to Borodin's *Polovtsian Dances*, impresario Sergei Diaghilev sought to create an all-new ballet based on Russian fairy tales for the following season. Anatoly Liadov initially signed on as the composer, but was unable to meet the deadline, so Diaghilev turned to a virtually unknown 27-year-old named Igor Stravinsky. His music for *The Firebird* became an instant success and his next two ballets for Diaghilev—*Petrushka* and *The Rite of Spring*—would change the course of music history.

The Firebird concerns Ivan, a young prince who—with the help of a fairy known as the Firebird—rescues a princess from the clutches of Kashchei, a green-taloned ogre. Stravinsky arranged three different suites from his *Firebird* score, with the second of these being the most often performed. It opens quietly with music from the lowest strings as Ivan wanders through a forest at night, becoming more animated as Ivan enters Kashchei's garden and encounters the Firebird, whose flight is mirrored by acrobatics from solo woodwinds. A group of captive princesses enchant Ivan as they dance a "Khorovod" (circle dance). Kashchei and his demons arrive on the scene with their "Infernal Dance," which unleashes a brutal orchestral fury. The Firebird returns to lull the monsters to sleep with a touching "Berceuse," introduced by bassoon. A noble horn solo opens the finale, leading to a jubilant conclusion as the princesses regain their freedom and Ivan weds his beloved.

—Jeff Eldridge

Orchestra Seattle | Seattle Chamber Singers

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Antonio Dowling
Dean Drescher
Linda Gagnier
Susan Herring
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Manchung Ho
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Texts and Translations

Suite from *Lt. Kizhe*

Стонет сизый голубочек, стонет он и день и ночь;
Его миленький дружочек отлетел далеко прочь.
Он уж больше не воркует, всё тоскует и тоскует.
С нежной ветки на другую перепархивает он.
И подружку дорогую, ждет к себе со всех сторон.
Полно, сердце, успокойся, полно бабочкой летать!
Ты попробуй и не бойся уголок другой достать,
Сердце начало искать.
Полно, сердце, успокойся, полно бабочкой летать.
Как же, сердце, ты решило, где мы будем летом жить?
Сердце бедное забилось и не знало, как нам быть.
Стонет сизый голубочек...

Сердца у женщин как трактир: прохожих целый мир.
От утра до утра, кто на двор, кто со двора.
И так от утра до утра.
Сердца у женщин как трактир...
Ах, подь сюды, да подь сюды,
Не бойсь со мной беды, и подь сюды, да подь сюды.
Кто холост иль не холост, или холост иль женат,
Кто робок иль не робок, или робок или хват.
Эй! Эй! Эй! Эй!
Так от утра до утра...

My gray dove is full of sorrow, he weeps day and night;
His sweetheart has flown far away.
He no longer coos, but only grieves.
From one branch to another he flutters,
Looking for the arrival of his beloved, awaiting her return.
Enough, my heart, be calm, don't flutter like a butterfly!
Don't be afraid to seek luck elsewhere,
To find a new beginning.
Enough, my heart, be calm, don't flutter like a butterfly.
Well, what has my heart decided? Where shall we rest in summer?
My heart began to beat in my breast and could answer nothing.
My gray dove is full of sorrow...

A woman's heart is like an inn: it has a whole world of guests.
From morn till eve, someone comes in, someone goes out.
And so it goes all day and night.
A woman's heart is like an inn...
Ah, come here, come here, I say,
Don't be afraid, come here, yes, come here.
Whether single or not, whether single or married,
Whether you're shy or not, whether shy or bold.
Hey! Hey! Hey! Hey!
So it goes all day and night...

Polovtsian Dances from *Prince Igor*

Улетай на крыльях ветра
Ты в край родной, родная песня наша,
Туда, где мы тебя свободно пели,
Где было так привольно нам с тобою.
Там, под знойным небом,
Негой воздух полон.
Там под говор моря,
Дремлют горы в облаках.
Там так ярко солнце светит,
Родные горы светом заливая,
В долинах пышно розы расцветают,
И соловьи поют в лесах зеленых,
И сладкий виноград растет.
Там тебе привольней, песня, ты туда и улетай.

Пойте песни славы хану! Пой!
Славьте силу, доблесть хана! Славь!
Славен хан! Хан! Славен он, хан наш!
Блеском славы солнцу равен хан!
Нету равных славой хану! Нет!

Чаги хана славят хана, хана своего!
Пойте песни славы хану! Пой!
Славьте щедрость, славьте милость! Славь!
Для врагов хан грозен, он, хан наш!
Кто же славой равен хану, кто?
Блеском славы солнцу равен он!

Славой дедам равен хан наш.
Хан, хан, Кончак!
Славой дедам равен он!
Грозный хан, хан Кончак.
Славен хан, хан Кончак!
Улетай на крыльях ветра...
Славой дедам равен хан наш...
Пляской вашей тешьте хана!
Наш хан Кончак!

Fly away on the wings of the wind
To our native land, you, our native song,
To that place where we sang to you so freely,
Where things were so idyllic for you and me.
There under the sultry sky,
The air is full of bliss.
There under the murmur of the sea
The hills slumber under the clouds.
There the sun shines so brightly,
Our native hills are flooded with light,
In the valleys splendid roses bloom,
Nightingales sing in the green forests,
And the sweet grape grows.
There you are free, dear song, fly away there.

Sing songs of praise to the Khan! Sing!
Praise the courage of the Khan! Praise!
Glorious Khan! He is our glorious Khan!
With a blaze of glory equal to the sun is our Khan!
There is no one equal in glory to the Khan. None!

Prisoners of the Khan, praise the Khan, their Khan!
Sing songs of praise to the Khan, Sing!
Praise his generosity, praise his kindness, Praise!
For his enemies he is terrible, our Khan!
Who can be equal in glory to the Khan? Who?
With a blaze of glory equal to the sun is he!

Equal to the glory of our forefathers is our Khan.
Khan, Khan Konchak!
Equal to the glory of our forefathers is he!
The Terrible Khan Konchak.
Glorious Khan, Khan Konchak!
Fly away on the wings of the wind...
Sing songs of praise to the Khan...
A dance for your pleasure, Khan!
Our Khan Konchak!



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Visit www.osscs.org to subscribe to our e-mail newsletter and follow OSSCS on Facebook, Google+ and Twitter. Follow us on social media by Friday, February 10, (or fill out an entry form in the lobby) to be eligible for a drawing for one of three beautiful composer mugs (on display in the lobby) created by artist Paul Helm, plus a pair of tickets to the remaining concerts in our 2011–2012 season!

