

# CONCERT PROGRAM

## February 20-21, 2015

Juraj Valčuha, conductor  
André Watts, piano

**RACHMANINOFF**  
(1873-1943)

Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor, op. 18 (1900-01)

Moderato  
Adagio sostenuto  
Allegro scherzando

André Watts, piano

INTERMISSION

**TCHAIKOVSKY**  
(1840-1893)

Symphony No. 6 in B minor, op. 74, "Pathétique" (1893)

Adagio; Allegro non troppo  
Allegro con grazia  
Allegro molto vivace  
Finale: Adagio lamentoso

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

These concerts are part of the Wells Fargo Advisors series.

These concerts are presented by the Thomas A. Kooyumjian Family Foundation.

These concerts are sponsored by Thompson Coburn LLP.

Juraj Valcuha is the Daniel, Mary, and Francis O'Keefe Guest Conductor.

André Watts is the Bruce Anderson Memorial Fund Guest Artist.

The concert of Friday, February 20, is underwritten in part by a generous gift from Mr. and Mrs. Jerry E. Ritter.

The concert of Friday, February 20, features coffee and doughnuts provided through the generosity of Krispy Kreme.

The concert of Saturday, February 21, is underwritten in part by a generous gift from Barbara Liberman.

Pre-Concert Conversations are sponsored by Washington University Physicians.

Large print program notes are available through the generosity of Link Auction Galleries and are located at the Customer Service table in the foyer.

# FROM THE STAGE

Susan Gordon, viola, on André Watts: “I’ve known André for a long time. I’ve played many chamber concerts with him, along with his concerts with the orchestra. A rehearsal or a concert with André is relaxed. He’s a laid back guy. He’s a friend, both a personal friend and a friend of the symphony. Whenever he comes it’s nice to see him, and it’s wonderful to play music with him.”



André Watts has performed regularly with the St. Louis Symphony since 1964.

# RUSSIAN ROMANTIC MASTERS

BY PAUL SCHIAVO

## TIMELINKS

1893

**TCHAIKOVSKY**

Symphony No. 6  
in B minor, op. 74,  
"Pathétique"

Ibsen's *The Master Builder*  
premieres in Berlin

1900-01

**RACHMANINOFF**

Piano Concerto No. 2 in  
C minor, op. 18  
Russian forces invade  
Manchuria

The two composers represented on the program for this concert are the greatest exponents of what is, for many listeners, a singularly appealing style of music: Russian Romanticism. The first, chronologically speaking, is Pyotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky, whose sixth and final symphony we hear after intermission. One of Tchaikovsky's triumphs was his ability to bring drama and deep personal expression to classical forms such as the symphony. "I write," he once declared, "so that I may pour my feelings into my music." This is a singularly Romantic attitude toward the art of composition, and it goes far in explaining the enduring appeal of Tchaikovsky's work. Whether conveying tragic sentiments or joyous ones, melancholy or dreamy rapture, desperate struggle or triumphant exultation, Tchaikovsky brought an extraordinary intensity of feeling to his music. In his Sixth Symphony, the expression of pathos is especially moving.

Tchaikovsky's musical heir, who carried Russian Romanticism into the 20th century, was Serge Rachmaninoff. Rachmaninoff was just a student at the St. Petersburg Conservatory when he came to Tchaikovsky's notice, but the older composer openly proclaimed the younger's genius. Like Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff used the concerto and symphony as vehicles for some of his most successful music. Like him, also, he upheld the essential tenet of Russian Romanticism: that music should serve, above all, to convey emotion.

## SERGE RACHMANINOFF

Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor, op. 18

**CURE BY HYPNOSIS** Few musical careers started so hopefully but stalled so suddenly as that of Serge Rachmaninoff. An extraordinary youthful prodigy, Rachmaninoff entered the St. Petersburg Conservatory at age nine and wrote his first orchestral composition when he was fourteen. The years that followed saw him progress quickly and steadily in his creative endeavors. By the time he was 20, Rachmaninoff had completed a piano concerto; an opera, *Aleko*, which was triumphantly produced at the Bolshoi Theater; several tone poems and chamber pieces; and a number of keyboard works, including the famous Prelude in C-sharp minor. The stage seemed set for a lifetime of rich musical accomplishment.

Perhaps the brilliance of Rachmaninoff's early career made the effect of his initial public failure the devastating event it proved to be. In 1897, his First Symphony failed dismally at its debut performance, in St. Petersburg. César Cui, a respected composer and critic, likened it to the product of "a conservatory in Hell." Other commentators were scarcely more kind.

Rachmaninoff was crushed. He retreated from the capital, staying with friends and relatives in the countryside, but was unable to overcome his depression or resume composing. Eventually he managed to secure a conducting post and performed some piano recitals, but despite his promise to produce a new piano concerto for a concert tour to England, he composed nothing during the next three years and became so despondent that his friends worried for his health.

Finally, in 1900, Rachmaninoff was persuaded to visit Nicolai Dahl, a doctor specializing in treatment by hypnosis. In his memoirs, the composer recalled the treatment this way: "Day after day I heard the same hypnotic formula while I lay half asleep in Dahl's armchair: 'You will begin to write your concerto. You will work with great ease. The music will be excellent.' Incredible as it may sound, this cure really helped me."

Dahl's work must be counted as the greatest psychiatric success in the history of music. In a short time Rachmaninoff was again composing,



### Born

April 1, 1873, Novgorod, Russia

### Died

March 28, 1943, Beverly Hills, California

### First Performance

November 9, 1901, in Moscow, the composer was the soloist, and Alexander Siloti conducted the Moscow Philharmonic Society Orchestra

### STL Symphony Premiere

March 12, 1915, Ossip Gabrilowitsch was soloist, with Max Zach conducting

### Most Recent STL Symphony Performance

April 29, 2012, Stephen Hough was soloist during a Rachmaninoff Concerto Marathon Weekend, with Hans Graf conducting

### Scoring

solo piano  
2 flutes  
2 oboes  
2 clarinets  
2 bassoons  
4 horns  
2 trumpets  
3 trombones  
tuba  
timpani  
bass drum  
cymbals  
strings

### Performance Time

approximately 33 minutes

completing his long-delayed Second Piano Concerto. This work was enthusiastically received when the composer performed it in Moscow, in 1901, and he dedicated the score gratefully to Dr. Dahl.

**OPULENT ROMANTICISM** Although the Second Piano Concerto was only the first of a steady stream of works the fully cured Rachmaninoff brought forth in the early years of the last century, it has proved among the most popular. With the exception of only the Prelude in C-sharp minor, it became the most frequently performed of Rachmaninoff's compositions and the principal agent of his fame during his lifetime. The composer's passing had little impact on the work's success, and it remains a perennial favorite of both pianists and audiences more than a century after it was written.

The enduring popularity of this composition is no mystery, for it embodies Russian musical Romanticism at its most opulent. It is a supremely melodious work, so much so that several of its themes have been used for popular songs. (The concerto itself has served as the soundtrack to several motion pictures.) The first of Rachmaninoff's captivating melodies is heard in the strings following a brief introduction of pensive chords in the piano. It is marked by a distinctly Russian soulfulness, which is contrasted and complemented by the poetic tenderness of the second theme, set forth by the solo instrument. Both these melodies are varied and transformed during the impassioned first movement.

The ensuing Adagio opens on a note of almost religious tranquility, after which the piano provides delicate accompaniment to a dream-like melody set forth by flute and clarinet. Toward the end of the movement there is a flurry of keyboard activity, culminating in a brief cadenza solo for the pianist, but the music soon returns to the gentle reverie of the opening.

A march-like introduction in the orchestra and glistening figuration in the piano precede the statement of the first theme of the finale, an energetic subject in the spirit of Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Scherzo. But Rachmaninoff has saved his trump card: a sensuous melody soon stated by the orchestra. This theme, which in the 1940s became familiar to millions as the hit song "Full Moon and Empty Arms," returns after an extensive development of the first subject to bring the concerto to an ecstatic close.

## PYOTR IL'YICH TCHAIKOVSKY

Symphony No. 6 in B minor, op. 74, "Pathétique"

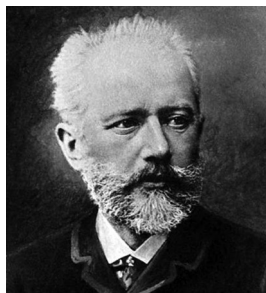
**SUCCESS AND DEJECTION** The story of Tchaikovsky's final years presents a poignant mixture of artistic triumph and personal anguish. By 1891 the composer had established himself as Russia's foremost musician, having been decorated by the Czar and cheered by audiences throughout his country, Western Europe, and in the United States. Yet despite his successes, Tchaikovsky suffered increasingly from fits of anxiety and depression. He complained of real and imagined ailments and was plagued by doubts about his abilities as an artist. Above all, his continuing struggle with his homosexuality and his failure to attain a much-desired domestic tranquility tormented the composer.

Tchaikovsky's feelings of pathos frequently found expression in his music, and it is not surprising that the symphony he began in the winter of 1891-92 was intended to express a grand program of life, disappointed love, and death. He soon abandoned this work, however, declaring it "an empty pattern of sounds without any inspiration." But sometime during the following year he apparently found the inspiration he needed, for in February of 1893 he wrote to his nephew, a favorite correspondent:

I had an idea for another symphony, one with a program, but a program which shall remain a secret—let them guess away at it ... it is purely subjective. ... There will be much that is novel in the form of this work. For one thing, the final movement will not be a noisy Allegro but a broad Adagio. You can't imagine what bliss it is to know that my time is not yet over, that I can still do good work.

Composition of the new symphony, Tchaikovsky's sixth, progressed quickly, and he directed its first performance on October 28, 1893, in St. Petersburg.

The "Pathétique" Symphony—its title was suggested by the composer's brother—crowns Tchaikovsky's orchestral music and, despite the



### **Born**

May 7, 1840, Kamsko-Votkinsk, Russia

### **Died**

November 6, 1893, St. Petersburg

### **First performance**

October 28, 1893, in St. Petersburg, Tchaikovsky conducted

### **STL Symphony Premiere**

November 5, 1909, Max Zach conducting

### **Most Recent STL Symphony Performance**

March 6, 2011, David Robertson conducting, in Amherst, Massachusetts, on an East Coast tour

### **Scoring**

3 flutes  
piccolo  
2 oboes  
2 clarinets  
bass clarinet  
2 bassoons  
4 horns  
2 trumpets  
3 trombones  
tuba  
timpani  
bass drum  
cymbals  
tamtam  
strings

### **Performance Time**

approximately 46 minutes

enigma of its program, tells a great deal about his inner life as well. Passion, delicacy, heroism, and tragedy all find a place in the work. At the same time, the composition is distinguished by a high level of musical invention and the most successful handling of symphonic form Tchaikovsky ever achieved.

**A SYMPHONIC REQUIEM?** The piece begins with an introductory Adagio whose brooding theme is carried over and developed in the succeeding Allegro, the main portion of the first movement. There the music is marked by searing harmonies, whirlwind figuration, and thunderous outbursts, particularly from the brass.

In contrast to the violence of this initial movement, the one that follows suggests an idealized dance. Its waltz-like themes are written in 5/4 meter, an unusual occurrence, and the fact that they flow so smoothly in this asymmetrical pattern testifies to Tchaikovsky's facility as a melodist. The third movement is as different in character from the second as that one was from the first. It is a triumphal march, and as such has many characteristics of a typical symphonic finale.

Between the exuberance of this movement and the elegance of its predecessor, the brooding and violent qualities of the symphony's opening chapter would seem to have been banished. Not so. With the first measures of the finale, a somber descending scale figure, the music plunges back into the despair intimated by the initial Adagio, and the movement that now unfolds, despite its lyrical second theme, proves one of the most sorrowful utterances in the symphonic literature.

Ironically, this dark music filled its creator with joy. Shortly before completing the symphony, Tchaikovsky wrote: "I swear that I have never felt such satisfaction, such pride, such happiness as I do now in knowing that I am the composer of this beautiful work. ... I love it as I have never loved any of my musical offspring."

And yet, one can hardly help but wonder if the mournful tone with which the "Pathétique" Symphony concludes may have indicated some premonition on the composer's part. Less than two weeks after the symphony's premiere, Tchaikovsky was dead. The circumstances of his passing remain uncertain despite many conjectures, which include both suicide and murder. Although we cannot know his intention, it does not seem too much to suggest that in his final work Tchaikovsky, knowingly or not, composed his own requiem.

## JURAJ VALČUHA

DANIEL, MARY AND FRANCIS O'KEEFE GUEST CONDUCTOR

Juraj Valčuha has been Chief Conductor of the Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI, Torino, since 2009.

In the 2011-12 season Valčuha debuted with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Berlin Philharmonic, Boston Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony, and led again the Staatskapelle Dresden, Pittsburgh Symphony, Munich Philharmonic, Orchestre de Paris, and Orchestra di Santa Cecilia. With his RAI Orchestra he made a tour primarily to the Musikverein Vienna, the Philharmonie in Berlin, and to the first Festival of Radio Orchestras in Bucharest.

In 2012-13 Valčuha made his debut with the New York Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, and Filarmonica della Scala in Milan. He also conducted the National Symphony in Washington, D.C., Orchestre de Paris, Swedish Radio, and Munich Philharmonic.

In the 2013-14 season his engagements took him to the Enescu Festival in Bucharest with OSN Rai, to the Bratislava Festival with the Orchestra di Santa Cecilia Rome, a debut with the NHK Tokyo on a tour of Japan, and conducting returns to the Pittsburgh Symphony, WDR Cologne, NDR Hamburg, Swedish Radio Orchestra, the Munich Philharmonic, as well as in opera productions (Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* and Prokofiev's *The Love for Three Oranges*) at the Maggio Musicale in Florence.

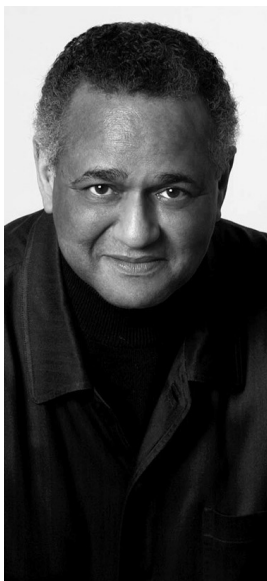
His engagements in 2014 and 2015 bring him back to the San Francisco, Cincinnati, and Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestras, Los Angeles and New York Philharmonics, National Symphony, Philharmonia at the Royal Festival Hall, Orchestre National de France, as well as Orchestra dell'Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome. He will have debuts with Orchestre symphonique de Montréal as well as the Wiener Symphoniker and the Konzerthaus Berlin.

He will conduct opera productions of *Turandot* at Teatro San Carlo Napoli and *Jenůfa* at Teatro Comunale Bologna.

In November 2014, he toured with his RAI Orchestra to Munich, Cologne, Dusseldorf, Zurich, and Basel.



Juraj Valčuha makes his St. Louis Symphony debut this weekend.



André Watts first performed with the St. Louis Symphony in 1964. Most recently he performed with the orchestra in October 2010.

## ANDRÉ WATTS

BRUCE ANDERSON MEMORIAL FUND GUEST ARTIST

André Watts burst upon the music world at the age of 16 when Leonard Bernstein chose him to make his debut with the New York Philharmonic in their Young People's Concerts, broadcast nationwide on CBS-TV. Only two weeks later, Bernstein asked him to substitute at the last minute for the ailing Glenn Gould in performances of Liszt's E-flat Concerto with the New York Philharmonic, thus launching his career in storybook fashion. More than 50 years later, André Watts remains one of today's most celebrated and beloved superstars.

Watts's extensive discography includes recordings of works by Gershwin, Chopin, Liszt, and Tchaikovsky for CBS Masterworks; recital CDs of works by Beethoven, Schubert, Liszt, and Chopin for Angel/EMI; and recordings featuring the concertos of Liszt, MacDowell, Tchaikovsky, and Saint-Saëns on the Telarc label. He is also included in the Great Pianists of the 20th Century series for Philips.

Watts received a 2011 National Medal of Arts, given by the President of the United States to individuals who are deserving of special recognition for their outstanding contributions to the growth, support, and availability of the arts in the United States. In June 2006 he was inducted into the Hollywood Bowl of Fame to celebrate the 50th anniversary of his debut (with the Philadelphia Orchestra), and he is also the recipient of the 1988 Avery Fisher Prize. At age 26 Watts was the youngest person ever to receive an Honorary Doctorate from Yale University, and he has since received numerous honors from highly respected schools including the University of Pennsylvania, Brandeis University, the Juilliard School of Music, and his Alma Mater, the Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University.

Previously Artist-in-Residence at the University of Maryland, André Watts was appointed to the newly created Jack I. and Dora B. Hamlin Endowed Chair in Music at Indiana University in May 2004.

# A BRIEF EXPLANATION

You don't need to know what "andante" means or what a glockenspiel is to enjoy a St. Louis Symphony concert, but it's always fun to know stuff. For example, Paul Schiavo says Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2 has been used in many motion pictures. Such as?

## Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2, a selected filmography

- *Brief Encounter* (1945), directed by David Lean
- *I've Always Loved You* (1946), with Artur Rubinstein playing on the soundtrack
- *September Song* (1950), the concerto is sometimes mixed with Kurt Weill's "September Song"
- *Rhapsody* (1954), starring Elizabeth Taylor and Vittorio Gassman
- *The Seven Year Itch* (1955), directed by Billy Wilder, starring Marilyn Monroe
- *The World of Henry Orient* (1964), directed by George Roy Hill, starring Peter Sellers
- *Hereafter* (2010), directed by Clint Eastwood

And many in the audience may know Eric Carmen's 1975 hit, "All by Myself," but please don't sing along.

## PLAYING TCHAIKOVSKY:

SUSAN GORDON, VIOLA

"I won my job in the orchestra on this piece—an excerpt from the first movement. It's a very famous viola excerpt. I'm very happy that I'm in this orchestra thanks to this piece that I love so much.

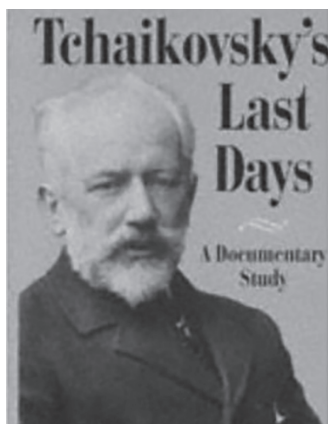
"Tchaikovsky's Sixth is a perfect storm of beautiful instruments. The second movement is so beautiful. The third starts softly and then ends with one of his greatest ideas. Who could write an ending better? It's one of the best 'ta da!' endings ever written. Many people stand and applaud at that point because they think the symphony is over. They should. The end of the third movement is so extra 'wow!'"



Susan Gordon

# YOU TAKE IT FROM HERE

If these concerts have inspired you to learn more, here are suggested source materials with which to continue your explorations.



**[rachmaninoff.org](http://rachmaninoff.org)**

A website devoted to Rachmaninoff and his music

**Tony Palmer, director, *Harvest of Sorrow*  
Kultur Video, DVD**

A film about Rachmaninoff, featuring excellent performances of his music and footage of the composer himself

**Alexander Poznansky, *Tchaikovsky's Last Days: A Documentary Study*  
Oxford University Press**

A well-researched examination of the controversy surrounding the composer's death

**[tchaikovsky-research.net](http://tchaikovsky-research.net)**

A website devoted to Tchaikovsky's life and work

Read the program notes online. Go to **[stlsymphony.org](http://stlsymphony.org)**. Click "Connect," then "Program Notes."

Learn more about this season of anniversaries with **videos and podcasts**. Click "Connect," then "10-50-135."

Keep up with the backstage life of the St. Louis Symphony, as chronicled by Symphony staffer Eddie Silva, via **[stlsymphony.org/blog](http://stlsymphony.org/blog)**.

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The St. Louis Symphony is on



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Is the music fast or slow? Dewey Elementary students hold up the turtle sign during a Symphony sextet performance of *Winter* from *The Four Seasons*.

### **What are Energizer's philanthropic interests and priorities?**

The Energizer Trust fund exists in recognition of the fact that there are needs in the St. Louis community and other communities where we operate, which affect the company and the society as a whole. Energizer supports not-for-profit organizations that serve genuine charitable needs where the interests of the community and those of our shareholders intersect. We focus our support primarily on charitable programs that address the Educational needs of the disadvantaged in our communities.

### **How does Energizer's support of the STL Symphony fit into its giving strategy?**

The St. Louis Symphony education programming aligns well with the educational focus of our charitable giving. Bringing exposure to the arts through musicians and instruments of the symphony—either in the classroom or at Powell Hall—to students who would not otherwise have such an opportunity is an endeavor Energizer is proud to support.

### **Being that we are celebrating our 135th “birthday,” this season, what is your wish for the orchestra?**

Energizer would like to wish the orchestra a fantastic 135th birthday this year, and best wishes for another inspiring season in the St. Louis community and many more to come.

*To learn more about Energizer Holdings, please visit them online at [energizerholdings.com](http://energizerholdings.com).*

# CLASSICAL CONCERT: TCHAIKOVSKY SYMPHONY NO. 4

Ken Saxon



David Robertson

## **March 14-15**

The St. Louis Symphony and David Robertson are taking Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4 to Carnegie Hall. Hear it in the Symphony's home of Powell Hall. Also on the program, Debussy's *Nocturnes* with Women of the St. Louis Symphony Chorus, and James MacMillan's Violin Concerto, with Vadim Repin, whom Yehudi Menuhin described as "...simply the best and most perfect violinist that I have ever had the chance to hear."

## AUDIENCE INFORMATION

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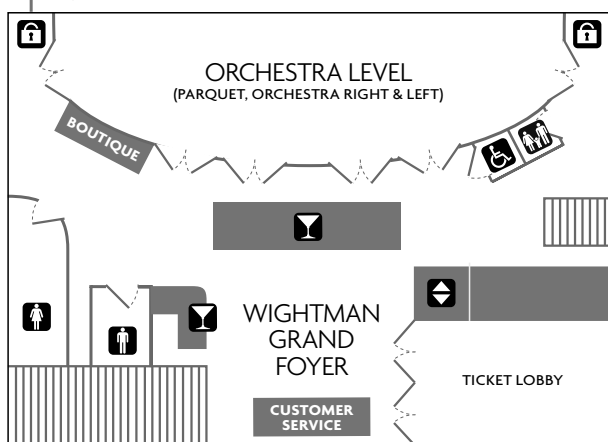
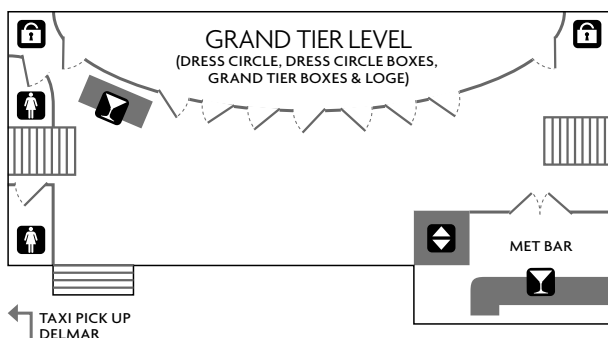
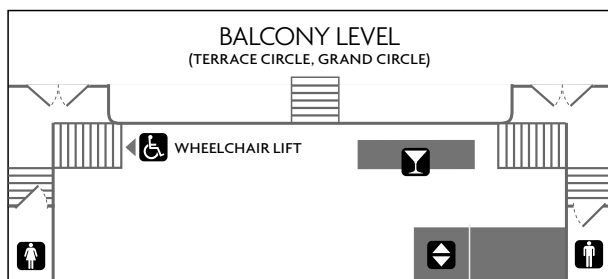
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