

SUMMER FESTIVAL

MONDAY, JULY 1, 2013

8:00 PM

SEATTLE
CHAMBER
MUSIC
SOCIETY

PROGRAM

BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ

La Revue de cuisine

Prologue (Allegretto)

Introduction (Tempo di marcia)

Danse du moulinet autour du chaudron (Poco meno)

Danse du chaudron et du couvercle (Allegro)

Tango (Danse d'amour. Lento)

Duel (Poco a poco allegro. Tempo di Charleston)

Entr'acte (Lamentation du chaudron. Allegro moderato)

Marche funèbre (Adagio)

Danse radieuse (Tempo di marcia)

Fin du drame (Allegretto)

Sean Osborn *clarinet* / **Seth Krinsky** *bassoon* / **Jens Lindemann** *trumpet* / **James Ehnes** *violin* /

David Requiro *cello* / **Inon Barnatan** *piano*

SERGEI PROKOFIEV

Sonata for Violin and Piano in D Major, Op. 94bis

Moderato

Scherzo: Presto

Andante

Allegro con brio

Jesse Mills *violin* / **Andrew Armstrong** *piano*

INTERMISSION

PIOTR TCHAIKOVSKY

String Quartet No. 3 in E-flat minor, Op. 30

Andante sostenuto—Allegro moderato

Allegretto vivo e scherzando

Andante funebre e doloroso, ma con moto

Finale: Allegro non troppo e risoluto

Ida Levin *violin* / **Stephen Rose** *violin* / **Rebecca Albers** *viola* / **Brinton Smith** *cello*

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BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ

(1890–1959)

La Revue de cuisine (1927)

Largely self-taught in composition, Bohuslav Martinů drew inspiration and influence from a number of 20th-century stylistic languages, including Bohemian and Moravian folk music, Stravinskian neo-Classicism, the music of Albert Roussel and Debussy, as well as early English madrigalists, Renaissance polyphonists, and a healthy dollop of 1920s jazz. His music attracts through its immediate coloristic appeal, rhythmic vitality, and a bracing neo-Classic economy of texture. Along with such composers as Darius Milhaud, Igor Stravinsky and Aaron Copland (among many others) he was smitten by the rhythms, colors and harmonic dislocations of jazz in the 1920s. One of the more delectable works to draw from that somewhat “disreputable” style was his ballet, *La Revue de cuisine*, appropriately characterized as a “jazz ballet.” Three years after its 1927 premiere he offered a four-movement suite drawn from the ten-number original score that is being heard in tonight’s performance.

Commissioned by Božena Neběská, Martinů fashioned a witty and often naughtily suggestive ballet originally called “Temptation of the Saintry Pot” before assuming its final title. Perhaps in a bid to Ravel’s *L’Enfant et le sortilege*, the stage is populated by animated objects, in this case cooking tools. Some may also notice a familial musical resemblance to Stravinsky’s *Soldier’s Tale* and Milhaud’s *Creation of the World*.

Martinů was evidently quite pleased with his ballet (one of only three such works in his enormous canon). *La Revue* was a great success though the complete ballet version virtually disappeared from the repertoire following the abridged 1930 suite.

The scenario by Jarmila Kröschlová centers on comedic travails attendant to the proposed marriage of Pot and Lid as other utensils use their wiles to disrupt the proceedings. After a series of mishaps the wedding couple kisses and make up and Twirling Stick and Dishcloth dance away to engage in amorous pursuits.

Martinů’s fascination with jazz is readily apparent

throughout the scintillating score, especially noticeable in frequent use of muted trumpet and pizzicato cello lines that assume a jazz ensemble’s deployment of a double bass.

A bright trumpet fanfare launches the animated *Prologue*, soon yielding to a stomping piano solo that itself launches the *Introduction* proper, a contrapuntal dance engaging the remaining instruments. A feverish clarinet solo opens the *Danse du moulinet autour du chaudron (Poco meno)* (“Dance of the twirling stick around the pot”) amidst swirling strings before the re-appearance of the perky trumpet and plucked strings.

An anxiously jumpy and brief *Danse du chaudron et du couvercle (Allegro)* (“Dance of the pot and the lid”) follows. A slow Tango emerges, set up by spare rhythmic thrusts on the piano and a dreamy cello solo enhanced by periodic upward arpeggios elsewhere. The muted trumpet spins a long melody against intermittent asides from the piano and pizzicato strings. Winds, then cello, join in to maintain the sultry ambience of this sensuous libidinal slow dance.

The following *Duel (Poco a poco allegro. Tempo di Charleston)* begins as a jaunty “conversation” before the speed ramps up for a vivacious Charleston with just enough “ragtime” to conjure mental images of *The Sting*.

Fluttering strings create immediate tension as the bassoon, piano and other winds build up tension in *Entr’acte (Lamentation du chaudron. Allegro moderato)*, which then relaxes into a quieter mood of reflection marked *Marche funèbre (Adagio)* gently intoned by the strings. Eventually the assertive trumpet spearheads an increase in tempo, dynamics and driving energy.

In the 20-second-long *Danse radieuse (Tempo di marcia)* the trumpet once again establishes the mock-military style before yielding to an active solo violin-generated closing *Fin du drame (Allegro)* that seems to mimic the aforementioned *Soldier’s Tale*. A brief reprise of the Charleston makes a short-lived appearance. This final movement abounds in quickly changing meters of 2/4, 3/8 and 4/8, emphasizing the ballet’s jazz-based elements.

SERGEI PROKOFIEV

(1891–1953)

Sonata for Violin and Piano in D Major, Op. 94bis (1943)

While working on Sergei Eisenstein's epic film *Alexander Nevsky* in 1938, Prokofiev began jotting down ideas for a flute sonata, commenting, "This instrument had for a long time attracted me and it seemed to me that it had been made little use of in musical literature. I wanted this Sonata to have a classical, clear, transparent sonority." The completed Sonata for Flute and Piano in D Major, Op. 94, received its premiere in Moscow shortly before Christmas in 1943. The legendary Russian violinist David Oistrakh fell in love with the sonata and asked the composer to transcribe it for violin. Prokofiev and Oistrakh worked together on the collaboration.

Early in his career Prokofiev had drawn censure from conservative critics for his modernist tendencies, especially in such works as his aggressive and dissonant *Scythian Suite* (often called his "Rite of Spring" in reference to Stravinsky's landmark score of 1913). By the 1930s, however, he found fresh new life in Romantic-era melody. No surprise, then, that the Violin (or Flute) Sonata opens with a *Moderato* boasting two lyrical themes in the exposition. A new, rhythmically precise theme joins in during the development section, which heightens the expressive level and shows that the composer could reconcile up-to-date 20th-century musical notions with still-potent 19th-century ideas. The closing recapitulation and coda retreat to the calmer spirit of the exposition.

The following rondo marked *Scherzo: Presto* begins with a skittish, rollicking primary theme before positing a jovial second motive. In creating this boisterous lighthearted movement Prokofiev paid homage to the scherzo's original meaning: "joke." After reprising the first tune a marked slowdown leads to a central lyrical section punctuated by sudden outbursts. The first and second themes return before a coda that pits the two tunes against each other.

As in the opening movement, the *Andante* unites tonality and ingratiating melody. One notes the

beguiling simplicity of the opening section, followed by a central episode dominated by chromatic triplet alterations between the two instruments. While the violin maintains the triplet figuration, the piano revisits the opening theme. The movement ends gently and quietly.

The final *Allegro con brio* leaps forward with an energetic theme redolent of both his "Classical Symphony" and the opera, *The Love for Three Oranges*. A second theme consists of two ideas—a parodistic evocation of those endless Czerny exercises piano students must contend with, and contrasting ascending arpeggios. Eventually a new lyrical tune insinuates itself into the proceedings, adding poignancy and depth. Prokofiev ramps up the energy, bringing the popular sonata to an appropriately virtuosic conclusion.

PIOTR TCHAIKOVSKY

(1840–1893)

String Quartet No. 3 in E-flat minor, Op. 30 (1876)

By the mid-1870s Tchaikovsky's music was in full bloom. His Piano Concerto No. 1 (1874–75) and first ballet, *Swan Lake* (1875–76), were already in the public's consciousness and have become great audience favorites. Virtually simultaneous with those evergreens, his String Quartet No. 3 in E-flat minor did not acquire "instant recognition" status, partly because chamber music does not, in general, enjoy as vast an audience as large orchestral scores. Additionally, the elegiac/agitated emotional state of the third Quartet does not endear itself as quickly as many of Tchaikovsky's other chamber works, e.g. the sextet, *Souvenir of Florence* and the A-minor Piano Trio.

The Third Quartet's dark fervor reflects the score's dedication to the memory of his friend, violinist Ferdinand Laub, professor at the Moscow Conservatory who had died in March 1875. Laub, in fact, had performed in the premieres of Tchaikovsky's previous string quartets.

A mood of distraught sadness is established in the very opening moments of the *Andante sostenuto*

introduction to the first movement. The first violin intones a touching melody accompanied by plucked notes by other strings before the cello announces a darker-toned statement of the theme. The tempo and sense of agitation increase during the ensuing *Allegro moderato* section of the movement, particularly in the turbulent development animated by dotted (long-short) rhythms and a recurring triplet figure. One notes the conflict created by the contrast between the obsessive ardor of the main theme here and a sweeter tune. Tchaikovsky brings the movement to a close with a restatement of fragments from the *Andante sostenuto* introduction.

Marked *Allegretto vivo e scherzando*, the unease and sheer restlessness heard in the opening movement are forcefully maintained, interrupted by a relatively calmer Trio led by the viola.

It is the third movement, appropriately listed as *Andante funebre e doloroso, ma con moto* that goes deepest in expressing the mourning experienced by the composer over the passing of his friend. Solemn chords establish both pace and dirge-like mourning, finally presenting a passage strongly suggestive of Russian Orthodox chant, itself followed by an equally somber second theme. Increasingly the intensely Russian chant material colors the entire movement. Note that Tchaikovsky arranged the *Andante funebre* for violin and piano in 1877.

The rondo finale, *Allegro non troppo e risoluto*, quickly departs from the funereal tempo of the previous movement but in no way tries to replace it with anything remotely uplifting and positive. Other than a brief echo of the *Funebre e doloroso* Tchaikovsky hammers the music onward with heavy forcefulness.

Program Notes by Steven Lowe
