

LEIF OVE ANDSNES

PIANO

ALEXANDER VUSTIN

(1943-2020)

Lamento

LEOŠ JANÁČEK

(1854-1923)

Piano Sonata I.X.1905, "From the Street"

Presentiment

Death

VALENTIN SILVESTROV

(b. 1937)

Bagatelle, Op. 1, No. 3

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

(1770-1827)

Sonata No. 31 in A-flat Major, Op. 110

Moderato cantabile molto espressivo

Allegro molto

Adagio ma non troppo - Allegro ma non troppo

INTERMISSION

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

(1841-1904)

Poetic Tone Pictures, Op. 85

Twilight Way

Joking

In the Old Castle

Spring Song

Peasant's Ballad

Reverie

Furiant

Goblins' Dance

Serenade

Bacchanale

Tittle-Tattle

At a Hero's Grave

On the Holy Mountain



LEIF OVE ANDSNES

LEIF OVE ANDSNES, PIANO

The *New York Times* calls Leif Ove Andsnes “a pianist of magisterial elegance, power, and insight,” and the *Wall Street Journal* names him “one of the most gifted musicians of his generation.” With his commanding technique and searching interpretations, the celebrated Norwegian pianist has won acclaim worldwide, playing concertos and recitals in the world’s leading concert halls. An avid chamber musician, he is the founding director of the Rosendal Chamber Music Festival, was co-artistic director of the Risør Festival of Chamber Music for nearly two decades, and served as music director of California’s Ojai Music Festival in 2012. He was inducted into the *Gramophone* Hall of Fame in July 2013, and has received honorary doctorates from New York’s Juilliard School and Norway’s Universities of Bergen and Oslo.

This season, Andsnes performs Dvořák’s often neglected piano cycle *Poetic Tone Pictures*, both on a new Sony Classical release and on recital tours of Europe and North America, with dates at New York’s Carnegie Hall, London’s Wigmore Hall, and Hamburg’s Elbphilharmonie. Among other 2022-23 highlights, Andsnes gives lieder recitals with baritone Matthias Goerne, with whom he recently received his eleventh Grammy nomination.

During 2019-22, Andsnes collaborated with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra on “Mozart Momentum 1785-86,” a multi-season project exploring a seminal period of Mozart’s career through concert and festival performances on three continents and a Sony Classical recording in two volumes. He has been nominated for eleven Grammys and awarded many international prizes, including six Gramophone Awards. Now recording exclusively for Sony Classical, Andsnes’s earlier discography comprises more than 30 discs for EMI Classics—solo, chamber, and concerto releases that span repertoire from Bach to the present day.

Andsnes has received Norway’s distinguished honor, Commander of the Royal Norwegian Order of St. Olav, and in 2007, he received the prestigious Peer Gynt Prize, awarded by members of parliament to honor prominent Norwegians for their achievements in politics, sports, and

culture. In 2004-05, he became the youngest musician (and first Scandinavian) to curate Carnegie Hall's "Perspectives" series, and in 2015-16 he was the subject of the London Symphony Orchestra's Artist Portrait Series. Having been 2010-11 Pianist-in-Residence of the Berlin Philharmonic, he went on to serve as 2017-18 Artist-in-Residence of the New York Philharmonic and 2019-20 Artist-in-Residence of Sweden's Gothenburg Symphony. He is the recipient of the Royal Philharmonic Society's Instrumentalist Award and the Gilmore Artist Award.

Leif Ove Andsnes was born in Karmøy, Norway in 1970 and studied at the Bergen Music Conservatory under the renowned Czech professor Jiří Hlínka. The Belgian piano teacher Jacques de Tiège also greatly influenced his style and philosophy of playing. He is an Artistic Adviser at Prof. Jiří Hlínka Piano Academy. Today Andsnes lives with his partner and their three children in Bergen.

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NOTES

Mr. Andsnes has graciously provided the following introduction to his recital. Laurie Shulman's program notes follow.

LEIF OVE
ANDSNES, PIANO

In 2019 I invited composer Alexander Vustin, then 70 years old, to the Rosendal Chamber Music Festival in Norway. It was only his second time traveling outside Russia and he was clearly affected by having lived for so many years under the oppressive regime there. I found it very touching, not only to get to know him and his music, but also to see him listening with his whole being to festival performances of Shostakovich. Later I was deeply saddened to learn that Vustin passed away during Moscow's first wave of Covid infections, in April 2020.

I follow Vustin's *Lamento* with Leoš Janáček's Piano Sonata 1.X.1905, "From the Street." Paying tribute to a worker killed in a demonstration on October 1, 1905, the sonata is still chillingly relevant today. As I write these lines in late

September 2022, young Iranian demonstrators are being killed in the streets of Tehran, and brave Russians are out voicing their resistance to the devastating war that threatens their lives. Janáček's sonata is full of the anger and sadness we feel as we confront the meaningless war in Ukraine. As an epilogue, I follow it with one of the Bagatelles by Ukrainian composer Valentin Silvestrov. The Bagatelles are dreamy fragments that seem to evoke memories of times past, or perhaps hopes of something better.

Vustin's *Lamento* anticipates the "Song of Lamentation" ("Klagender Gesang") in Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 31, Opus 110. A most profound operatic aria, the song represents the heart of this compact sonata, in which Beethoven juxtaposes the "high art" of the last movement's spiritual arias and fugues with the "low art" of the scherzo's child-like folk songs.

The theme of "high and low" also runs through the 13 programmatic pieces of Dvořák's *Poetic Tone Pictures*, Opus 85. Poetic short stories like "Twilight Way" and "At the Old Castle" rub shoulders with the triviality of "Joking" and "Tittle-Tattle." There is intimacy in "Reverie," drama in "At A Hero's Grave," wild virtuosity in "Bacchanal," and a "Serenade" that develops into the most touching of love songs. The pandemic gave me the chance to study this strangely neglected cycle at last. It has been a most wonderful discovery, for this is life-affirming music of the greatest invention and imagination.

– Leif Ove Andsnes, October 2022

ALEXANDER VUSTIN: *LAMENTO*

IN BRIEF

BORN: April 24, 1943, Moscow, Russia

DIED: April 19, 2020, Moscow, Russia

MOST RECENT FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC

PERFORMANCE: Tonight marks the first performance of this work on our series.

DURATION: 3 minutes

Born in Moscow while World War II was raging, Alexander Vustin initially studied composition with Grigory Frid at a regional music school, then matriculated

at the Moscow Conservatory, where his principal teacher was Vladimir Ferè. He is reputed to have received encouragement from both Edison Denisov and Sofia Gubaidulina— both significant figures in Soviet-era classical music and beyond— but retained a striking individuality in his own works.

Vustin is best known for the opera *The Devil in Love*, a giant project on which he labored for fifteen years. It was premiered at the Moscow Drama Theatre in February 2019. Vustin composed with the twelve-tone method (a method developed by Arnold Schoenberg by which the music is organized by a particular order of the twelve tones in a chromatic scale), but treated it freely, adjusting it to suit his needs. Critics have categorized his music as “post-serial” and often sounding chromatic, modal, or even tonal. That is the case for *Lamento*, which opens with strong implications of B minor in a left hand *ostinato* pattern that is a somber dirge. Vustin was inspired by the unexpected sound of birdsong during the funeral of a friend. Apparently the bird continued singing for the duration of the ceremony. Warbling in the keyboard’s upper register, the right hand is almost— but not quite— independent. Its restless travel contrasts with the mesmerizing static of the harmonic underpinning.

IN BRIEF

BORN: July 3, 1854, Hukvaldy, Czechia

DIED: August 12, 1928, Ostrava, Czechia

FIRST PERFORMANCE: January 27, 1906 in Brno, Czechia

DEDICATION: To the memory of a student killed 1.X.1905

MOST RECENT FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC

PERFORMANCE: February 20, 2019, Sir András Schiff, piano

DURATION: 13 minutes

LEOS JANÁČEK:
PIANO SONATA
I.X.1905, “FROM
THE STREET”

Janáček is certainly not among the first names that come to mind when one thinks about the virtuoso keyboard repertoire. The sonata on this evening’s program is a refreshing surprise, especially placed among such a collection of better-known classics. The most important Czech composer in the generation that succeeded Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904),

Janáček considered his operas to be his greatest works, but he earned his reputation with instrumental compositions. He was over 50 when he composed this sonata. Still it is considered to be relatively early, because Janáček's gifts flowered so richly in his later years.

I.X.1905 takes its title from an event that occurred in October 1905. A movement was afoot in Hapsburg-ruled Brno to establish a Czech-language university. The Austrian Emperor dispatched troops to suppress demonstrations. In the ensuing melee, a 20-year-old woodworker named František Pavlík suffered a bayonet wound at the hands of an Austrian soldier. Days later, Pavlík died. The incident had a profound effect on Janáček, who rapidly composed three movements as a memorial to the young man.

Janáček had already revised the sonata prior to its premiere by pianist Ludmila Tucková in January 1906. Shortly afterward, he burned the last movement. Shocked, Tucková had the first two movements secretly copied. It was fortunate for music history that she did, for in another fit of self-criticism, Janáček later threw his manuscript for the two remaining movements into the Vltava River. Not until the composer was 70 did Tucková reveal the existence of her secret copies. Fortunately Janáček felt more kindly toward the work then, and allowed its publication.

In its early version, the sonata was known as “From the Street” or “Street Scene,” with the movement subtitles “Presentiment” and “Death.” At publication, the composer simplified the title to the date alone: *I.X.1905*. As the movement subtitles imply, the piece has a narrative feel, with an early outburst in “Presentiment” depicting the eruption of violence in the streets. Although it does not adhere strictly to principles of sonata form, the musical material of both movements is closely related. Attentive listening to the opening measures will assist in illuminating the entire fourteen minutes of music. Janáček's sonata is evocative, romantic,

rhapsodic. It is also vocal, emulating the rhythms of speech, as if it were operatic recitative.

IN BRIEF

BORN: September 30, 1937, Kyiv, Ukraine

MOST RECENT FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC

PERFORMANCE: Tonight marks the first performance of this work on our series.

DURATION: 5 minutes

VALENTIN SILVESTROV: BAGATELLE, OP. 1 NO. 3

Valentin Silvestrov is Ukraine's most prominent composer. He was a relative latecomer to music, not commencing formal study until he was 15. He made rapid progress in private lessons and at the Stetsenko Adults Evening Music School in Kyiv. After earning a gold medal at that school, he enrolled in Kyiv's Institute of Construction Engineering, but continued his study of composition, harmony, and counterpoint at the Kyiv Conservatory. During the 1960s, his compositions began to garner performances and praise. He worked as a freelance composer in the Ukrainian capital from 1970 until last February, when he fled Kyiv after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. He now resides in Berlin.

Silvestrov has had a lifelong conflict between traditional tonality and modernist trends. He has said, "I do not write new music. My music is a response to and an echo of what already exists." In the 1970s he composed several pieces with the phrase "olden style" in their titles. These are consciously archaic pieces that embrace diatonic harmonies and the traditions of the 17th through 19th centuries in classical music. He has written several series of Bagatelles. This short form, which we may think of as a modern day iteration of Schubertian *Moments musicaux* (miniature pieces, modest in scale, and light in character), allows him to explore individual motives and moods. While these pieces may sound improvisatory, Silvestrov is precise in his notation, indicating nuances of dynamics and tempo. The deceptively simple Bagatelle No. 3 has a haunting, hypnotic character.

LUDWIG VAN
BEETHOVEN:
SONATA NO. 31
IN A-FLAT MAJOR,
OP. 110

IN BRIEF

BORN: December 17, 1770, Bonn, Germany

DIED: March 26, 1827, Vienna, Austria

MOST RECENT FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC

PERFORMANCE: February 2, 1994, Richard Goode,
piano

DURATION: 19 minutes

Beethoven's final three piano sonatas are a Mount Everest for pianists, the *ne plus ultra* of nobility, technique, craft, depth, and emotion fused into three great compositions. Yet he wrote them for the most mundane of reasons: the Berlin publisher Adolph Martin Schlesinger offered him the commission, and Beethoven perceived a way to make some money.

He worked on the sonatas – Opp. 109 in E, 110 in A-flat, and 111 in C minor – concurrently with the Ninth Symphony and the *Missa Solemnis*. The autograph score of Op.110 is dated 25 December 1821. Beethoven sent it to Schlesinger in February 1822 with the manuscript to Op.111. Although he would return to solo piano for the *Diabelli* Variations and the late *Bagatelles*, these works were his farewell to the solo sonata.

While sonata form is certainly recognizable in Op.110, the A-flat major sonata shows how freely Beethoven was now interpreting the conventional multi-movement structure. Indeed, pianists and musical scholars argue whether this work has three or four movements. The debate reflects the sonata's unusual structure.

Gentleness of spirit pervades the opening *Moderato cantabile*. Delicate, arpeggiated passage work alternates with chords to fill out the harmonies of Beethoven's limpid themes.

Beethoven instructs the pianist to play *con amabilità* – with loveliness, with amiability. His directive characterizes almost the entire sonata.

The exception to the prevailing serenity is the fiery scherzo, as terse and abrupt as the first movement was leisurely. Beethoven uses antiphonal dynamics, answering a pithy *piano* statement at the start with a *forte* bark in response. He punctuates the march-like music with unexpected accents, which creates rhythmic displacement that adds to the precipitous sense of instability. The trio section has wide leaps across the breadth of the keyboard, rapid eighth notes, and crossed hands, compounding its difficulty.

Musical scholars have identified two popular Austrian songs that Beethoven paraphrases in the scherzo: “Unsa Kätz häd Katzln ghabt” (Our cat has had kittens) and “Ich bin lüderlich, du bist lüderlich” (I’m a slob, you’re a slob). (If you speak the German titles aloud, you’ll recognize the initial rhythmic figure and another motive in the scherzo.) Beethoven’s incorporation of these common street tunes is quite remarkable in a work that dwells at an opposite aesthetic extreme.

The remainder of the sonata has a singular structure: pieced together in sections that alternate from chordal introduction to recitative, to a spectral *arioso dolente* (a doleful vocal style). They constitute an intensely expressive prelude to the mighty fugue that concludes the sonata – but midway through the fugue, the *Ariosio* music returns, leading to the discussion as to whether this finale comprises one or two movements. The form could be summarized as recitative, arioso dolente, fugue, second arioso, second fugue. Fused and commingled thus, they become codependent and inseparable. Collectively they give enormous weight to the finale, which comprises more than half the complete sonata.

Beethoven composed fugues his entire life. In the late works, they surface in the Opus 102 No.2 cello sonata, the *Hammerklavier* Sonata, and the *Grosse Fuge* for string quartet; there is also the substantial *fugato* in the finale to the Ninth Symphony. The Op.110 Sonata fugue is unusual in that its subject derives from the opening

measures of the sonata's first movement, lending a subtle tonal and intervallic unity.

After the interruption of the second arioso (and its conclusion in an astounding crescendo of repeated G major chords), the second fugue inverts the subject. Beethoven proceeds with even more dense counterpoint. His compositional technique is impeccable, but what we hear is not augmentation or diminution or a reintroduction of the fugue subject in the high register, though all those are present. Rather, we travel with the pianist on the swirl of Beethoven's notes as he propels us toward what is now inevitable: the satisfaction and fulfillment of arrival.

ANTONÍN
DVOŘÁK: *POETIC
TONE PICTURES*,
OP. 85

IN BRIEF

BORN: September 8, 1841, Nelahozeves, Czechia

DIED: May 1, 1904, Prague, Czechia

FIRST PERFORMANCE: Nov. 3, 1889 (nos. 1-4);
Nov. 20, 1889, (nos. 6, 11-13)

MOST RECENT FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC

PERFORMANCE: Tonight marks the first performance of this work on our series.

DURATION: 53 minutes

Dvořák was one of the 19th century's greatest symphonists. He also composed marvelous tone poems, concert overtures, and concertos for orchestra, as well as a significant quantity of chamber music. He was a string player, and the piano parts of his chamber music are notoriously unpianistic. That stated, he also composed a surprising amount of solo piano music. Though this repertoire is rarely performed, it contains many small jewels that are well worth discovering. The lion's share of his piano pieces are miniatures. Some are based on dance forms: the Czech *furiant*, waltzes, and mazurkas. Others adopt freer romantic types like Impromptu or Humoresque.

The *Poetic Tone Pictures* that close Mr. Andsnes's program are contemporary with Dvořák's joyous Symphony No.

8 in G Major, and share some of that work's spirit. A collection of 13 piano miniatures, Opus 85 has been likened to Schumann's *Waldszenen*. Dvořák's group are an early foray into program music – music with an extra-musical stimulus such as a poem, painting, or nature scene. (This type of illustrative music would dominate his later years, when he crowned his orchestral *oeuvre* with an extraordinary series of programmatic tone poems.)

While Dvořák's individual titles stimulate the imagination, these pieces hold their own musically. Most are episodic, either in ternary form or with more than one contrasting episode (A - B - A - C -A). Their magic lies in the textural variety he achieves, sometimes embellishing a melody in the alto or tenor range with decoration in the keyboard's upper register, elsewhere spinning elaborate figuration around a songful theme. Rich harmonic wanderings also hold the listener's attention. Striking mood changes remind one of Schumann, while other movements (such as No. 4, "In the Old Castle") invite comparison to Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

Several of the movements adapt popular dances. No. 5, "Peasant's Ballad" is appropriately *pesante*, crossing a German dance with the Czech *furiant*; Dvořák returns to the *furiant* in No. 7, a ferocious octave study with gentler episodes. The "Goblins' Dance" (No. 8) is cousin to Grieg's *In The Hall of the Mountain King*. Others are less visual: mood pieces such as the Serenade (No. 9) or the virtuosic *Bacchanale*. The concluding pair are a solemn funeral march for a fallen hero and, finally, a nod to the composer's devout Catholicism with the ruminative "On the Holy Mountain." Its delicate arpeggios remind one of the Schubert Impromptu, and the coda is appropriately heavenly. Individually and as a unified group, the thirteen diverse pieces of *Poetic Tone Pictures* ask that we re-think our perception of Dvořák as primarily a composer of orchestral and chamber works.

UPCOMING CONCERTS

SKRIDE PIANO QUARTET
SUN, FEB 5, 2023 | 4:00 PM
Gates Concert Hall



Photo: Marco Borrogreve

Making their debut on our series, the Skride Piano Quartet features like-minded musicians who have each achieved success at the highest levels. This “multinational chamber supergroup” (*Gramophone*) will perform works by Brahms and Bridge, and the rarely heard piano quartet by Countess Pejačvić, a Croatian composer and member of the Pejačvić noble family.

Tickets are \$40 each; \$15 for patrons under 30, and \$5 for current students (with ID).

LEILA JOSEFOWICZ, VIOLIN
JOHN NOVACEK, PIANO
WED, MAR 22, 2023 | 7:30 PM
Gates Concert Hall



Photo: Tom Zimmeroff

Winner of the 2018 Avery Fisher Prize, violinist Leila Josefowicz returns to perform on our Chamber Series. A passionate advocate for contemporary music, her diverse program features a recent work by Erkki-Sven Tüür, as well as the delightful Violin Sonata by Claude Debussy. Josefowicz will be performing with Grammy-nominated pianist John Novacek.

Tickets are \$40 each; \$15 for patrons under 30, and \$5 for current students (with ID).

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Sun, Feb 5, 2023 | 4:00 pm

Leila Josefowicz, violin

John Novacek, piano

Wed, Mar 22, 2023 | 7:30 pm

Pacifica Quartet

Anthony McGill, clarinet

Wed, Apr 26, 2023 | 7:30 pm

Imani Winds

Wed, May 10, 2023 | 7:30 pm

SPECIAL EVENTS

MUSIC IN THE GALLERIES

Lírios Quartet

Sun, Mar 12, 2023

11:00 am & 1:00 pm (identical concerts)

Clyfford Still Museum

1250 Bannock Street, Denver

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