

State TheatreNJ.org
Keynotes

Warsaw Philharmonic

THE NATIONAL ORCHESTRA OF POLAND

ANTONI WIT
CONDUCTOR



The State Theatre in New Brunswick, NJ welcomes you to the performance of the Warsaw Philharmonic, the National Orchestra of Poland. Their program features works by Polish composer Mieczysław Karłowicz as well as two giants of classical music: Liszt and Tchaikovsky.

These *Keynotes* provide information to help you take in the performance with a well-informed eye and ear. We hope that the materials in this guide will add to your understanding and enjoyment of the concert and inspire you to continue exploring the rich world of classical music.



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The State Theatre, a premier nonprofit venue for the performing arts and entertainment.

Meet the Orchestra

The Warsaw Philharmonic has been since its inception and remains today Poland's leading musical institution. The orchestra made its debut on November 5, 1901. The outbreak of World War II brought a halt to its activities. The concert hall was bombed and partially burnt in September 1939 and completely destroyed by the end of the war. The orchestra lost 39 of its 71 players.

In 1950 Witold Rowicki was appointed director and principal conductor of the Warsaw Philharmonic. He set about rebuilding the ensemble. On February 21, 1955 the rebuilt Philharmonic Hall was opened. On that day the Warsaw Philharmonic received the status of the National Philharmonic of Poland. Three years later, the orchestra launched the First International Festival of Contemporary Music.

Kazimierz Kord was appointed the orchestra's artistic director and principal conductor in 1977, serving until the end of the centenary celebrations in 2001. Under his leadership, the ensemble's repertoire expanded to include oratorio and opera. Maestro Kord holds the position of the Honorary Director of the Warsaw Philharmonic and maintains a close association with the orchestra.

Antoni Wit became General and Artistic Director of the Warsaw Philharmonic in 2002. Today the orchestra enjoys worldwide popularity, having completed over 100 tours on five continents. The ensemble is regularly invited to appear at the world's major festivals and musical venues, among them Carnegie Hall, Chicago Symphony Hall, Berliner Philharmonie, Royal Festival Hall, Suntory Hall, La Scala, and La Fenice in Venice. The orchestra regularly takes part in the International Festival of Contemporary Music "Warsaw Autumn" as well as the final rounds of the Chopin International Piano Competitions.

At present the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra has 110 instrumentalists and the Choir has 95 members. Each season the Philharmonic presents over 80 symphony concerts, more than 50 chamber concerts and a special series of concerts for children, featuring the orchestra as well as guest symphony orchestras and chamber ensembles both Polish and foreign. In the 2007/2008 season the orchestra will tour for the first time in Brazil and Argentina and will return for a 15-concert tour of the United Kingdom.

The Warsaw Philharmonic has made numerous award-winning recordings of works by Polish and other composers. Their recording of Krzysztof Penderecki's *Seven Gates of Jerusalem* and Roman Maciejewski's *Requiem - Missa pro defunctis* were world recording premieres. The orchestra also records for the Polish Radio and Television, as well as for film.



Antoni Wit, one of the most highly regarded Polish conductors, is the General and Artistic Director of the Warsaw Philharmonic. He studied conducting with Henryk Czyż and composition with

Krzysztof Penderecki at the Academy of Music in Cracow, continuing his studies with Nadia Boulanger in Paris.

Between 1983 and 2000 Maestro Wit was the director of the National Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra in Katowice, the longest-standing director in the history of the ensemble. He has conducted the Berlin Philharmonic, Staatskapelle Dresden, the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome, the Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra, Tokyo Symphony, Jerusalem Symphony, Orquesta Nacional de España, and in London the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, and London Philharmonic Orchestra.

He has recorded nearly 100 albums, most of them for the Naxos label, and specializes in the works of Polish composers such as Henryk Gorecki, Wojciech Kilar, Krzysztof Meyer, Witold Lutoslawski, and Krzysztof Penderecki. Wit received a Cannes Classical Award for his album of Olivier Messiaen's *Turangalila Symphony*, and high acclaim has also been granted to his recording of Bedřich Smetana's *Má vlast* cycle. In 2004 he was nominated for a Grammy® for his recording of Penderecki's *St. Luke Passion*, with another nomination the following year for Penderecki's *Polish Requiem*.

Maestro Wit currently teaches at the Fryderyk Chopin Academy of Music in Warsaw.

Meet the Soloist

A native of Kiev, Valentina Lisitsa began playing the piano at age three and presented her first solo recital at the age of four. After her studies—first at the Lysenko School of Music and then at the Kiev Conservatory—she moved to U.S. and eventually became an American citizen. It was at the Kiev Conservatory that Valentina met her future husband and duo-piano partner, Alexei Kuznetsoff. In 1991 they won first prize in the Murray Dranoff Two Piano Competition, considered the foremost competition of its kind. Valentina has also won the Concertino Prague, the Lysenko Piano Competition, the Paris Chamber Music Competition, and the Ukrainian Chamber Music Competition.

Since making her New York debut in 1995 at the Mostly Mozart Festival at Lincoln Center, Valentina Lisitsa has maintained an active international schedule in recital and with orchestras and festivals. Career highlights include her performances of all the Rachmaninoff concerti with various American and European orchestras, a U.S. recital tour (both solo and duo with Alexei Kuznetsoff), a performance of Rachmaninoff's Second Concerto with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, and the world premiere of Schubert-Liszt's *Schwanengesang* at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, which was broadcast live. International appearances include recitals in the Seoul Arts Center in South Korea and concerts in Russia, Italy, the United Kingdom, and Germany.

Among her recent collaborations have been tours with São Paulo Symphony, the New Zealand Philharmonic, Warsaw Philharmonic, and Prague Chamber Orchestra. An avid chamber music player, Valentina has performed with Lynn Harrell, Cho-Liang Lin, Roberto Diaz, and Ida Haendel, to name a few. Her most important musical partnership has been with violinist Hilary Hahn. They toured together in 2007 with extensive tours planned for 2009 in Europe, North and South America, and Japan.

Valentina Lisitsa has released eight recordings (on the Audiofon label) and 3 independently-released DVDs, including her best-selling set of Chopin's 24 etudes which held coveted #1 spot on Amazon.com's music video list. The pianist has also recorded a one hour music special for television, *Valentina in Miami*, produced and presented by PBS. She was recently featured in a segment of the CBS News program *Sunday Morning*.

The pianist makes her home in rural North Carolina, where she finds refuge from her hectic travel schedule. She shares her home with four concert-grand pianos, two cats, a three-year old son, and husband Alexei Kuznetsoff. On rare occasions when she has some free time home, she enjoys organic gardening, restoring her historic mansion, and cooking Italian food. Most of her so-called "free" time, however, is devoted to practicing and learning new pieces.



Visit Valentina Lisitsa's website:
www.valentinalisitsa.com



Decoding the Program

The program book (or playbill) contains helpful information about the performance. It lists the pieces the orchestra will play in the order they will play them. It tells you the name of each piece, the name of the composer, and the movement headings. If you're not familiar with a piece, the program will help you keep track of what's going on and know when the piece is finished. The program page for the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra looks like this:

The **OPUS NUMBER** indicates where the piece falls in the catalogue of the composer's published works. The lower the number, the earlier it was published. Opus is a Latin word meaning "work."

A **MOVEMENT** is a section within a musical piece (like a chapter in a book). Each movement is usually referred to by the tempo marking that the composer has written at the beginning of the section. There is usually (but not always) a brief pause between movements, during which the audience should remain silent. Today's concert etiquette dictates that you hold your applause until the entire piece is finished.

TEMPO is an Italian word meaning "time." In music, it is the term used to indicate the speed at which music is played. The tempo markings are also traditionally in Italian. Here are the ones you'll encounter in this program:

- Allegro maestoso:
Fast and majestic (dignified)
- Quasi adagio:
Somewhat slow
- Allegretto vivace - Allegro animato:
Rather fast and lively - Fast and animated
- Allegro marziale animato
Fast, with an animated military feeling
- Adagio - Allegro non troppo
Slow - Fast, but not too fast
- Allegro con grazia
Fast and graceful
- Allegro molto vivace
Fast and very lively
- Finale: Adagio lamentoso
Ending: Slow and mournful

Fri, November 14, 2008 at 8pm

Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra

Antoni Wit, *General & Artistic Director*
Valentina Lisitsa, *Piano*

PROGRAM

Serenade, Op. 2 Karlłowicz

Piano Concerto No. 1, E-flat Major Liszt
Allegro maestoso
Quasi adagio
Allegretto vivace - Allegro animato
Allegro marziale animato } **movements**

Valentina Lisitsa, *Piano* ← **soloist**

—Intermission—


Symphony No. 6, Op. 74, B Minor ("Pathétique") Tchaikovsky
Adagio - Allegro non troppo
Allegro con grazia
Allegro molto vivace
Finale: Adagio lamentoso


The 2008 US tour of the Warsaw Philharmonic has been generously sponsored in part by the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.

PROGRAM SUBJECT TO CHANGE

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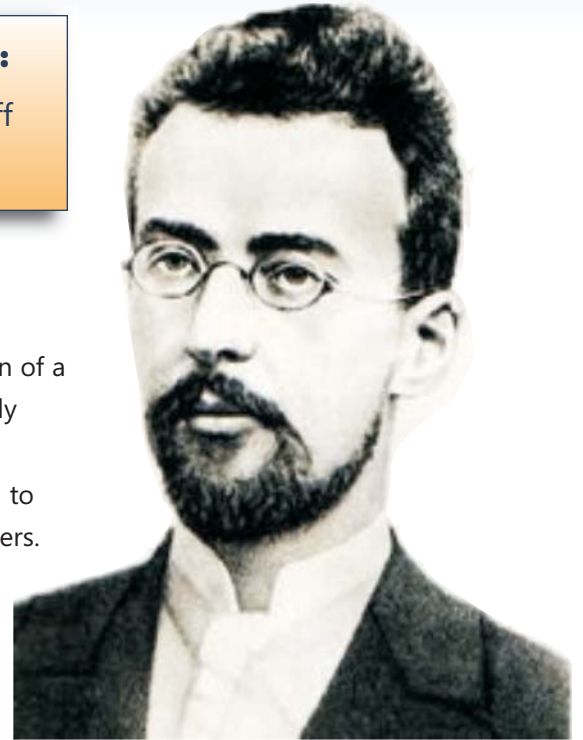
Karłowicz: Serenade

If Polish composer **MIECZYŚŁAW KARŁOWICZ** (1876-1909) is largely unknown today outside of Poland, it might be because he was killed in an avalanche while skiing in the Tatra Mountains before he had a chance to reach his full artistic maturity. Only 32 at the time of his death, he left behind a handful of works that showed great promise, especially the six symphonic “poems” he composed between 1904 and 1909.

How to Say It:

MYEH-che-swaff
KAR-wo-vich

Karłowicz was born in the Polish (now Lithuanian) province of Vilna, the son of a Polish historian, ethnologist, and musician. His father’s research took the family first to Heidelberg, then to Prague, and a year later to Dresden, and finally to Warsaw. Brought up in a music-loving environment, Karłowicz was introduced to the operatic and symphonic works of Bizet, Weber, Brahms, Smetana, and others. He started taking violin lessons at age seven and soon added classes in theory and composition. He later pursued music studies in Berlin. It was there, in 1897, that he wrote his *Serenade for Strings*, Op. 2, while he was a 20-year-old music student.



One of the truly individual voices of his generation, Karłowicz became part of the “Young Poland,” artistic movement, which was based on the idea of a unification of modern ideas and national traditions. He created a unique sound that blended traditional Polish music with influences of more cosmopolitan composers such as Tchaikovsky, Grieg, Wagner, and Richard Strauss to produce music that is dense, **CHROMATIC**, and intensely romantic.

Karłowicz’ youthful *Serenade for Strings* remains one of his most popular works. It is written for string orchestra and shows the composer’s mastery of chromatic harmony and unusual key relationships. The piece is in four movements:

I. *Allegro moderato – Tempo di Marcia – Trio: Meno mosso*

The markings for this opening movement, a sedate march, mean “Moderately fast — March Tempo — Trio: Slower.”

II. *Romance: Andante con moto*

The second movement, called a “romance,” is marked “Moderately slow, with movement.” Dreamy and poetic, it contrasts in mood and tempo with the opening movement.

III. *Waltz: Allegro moderato – Poco più mosso – Tempo I*

This elegant waltz is marked “Moderately fast — A little faster — Back to the first tempo.”

IV. *Finale: Allegretto non troppo*

The light and charming music of the closing movement has frequently been compared to that of Franz Lehár’s operetta, *The Merry Widow*. It is marked “Rather fast, but not too fast.”

The [Polish Culture website](#) has an in-depth profile of Mieczysław Karłowicz.



CHROMATIC is a term used in describing the harmonic structure of music. A chromatic scale consists of twelve pitches, each set a half-tone apart. (Think of playing both the black and white keys of a piano in order, without leaving any out.) In contrast, the major and minor scales used in a lot of traditional Western music have just eight notes; the intervals between the pitches are either a half-tone or a whole-tone apart.

Liszt: Piano Concerto No. 1

The Hungarian piano virtuoso and composer Franz Liszt (1811-1886) was a man of prodigious achievements. Considered by some the greatest pianist of all time, by others a flashy charlatan, he indisputably revolutionized piano performance by bringing to it a new level of showmanship and technical innovation. Having literally invented the solo piano recital, he toured extensively throughout Europe, igniting a blaze of "Lisztomania," especially in his female audiences.

Among Liszt's many achievements as a composer, he invented the symphonic poem and reconstructed the piano concerto. One of his ambitions was to transform the symphony and concerto into one seamless, extended whole, rather than a sectional work in separate movements. An example of this concept is his Piano Concerto No. 1, which he began sketching out in 1830, completed in 1849, revised in 1853, and published in 1857. The concerto received its first public performance on February 17, 1855, with Hector Berlioz conducting and Liszt himself as the soloist.

In the work, Liszt breaks with a number of solo-concerto conventions. To begin with, he wrote the work in four movements—like a symphony—instead of the conventional three one would expect to find in a concerto. The movements themselves flow freely into each other without pause and without the usual development. Liszt's boldest departure from the classical norm is in his unification of the "movements" by employing the same melodic material throughout the various sections.

Reaction to Liszt's innovations was mixed. Some early critics of the concerto seemed less interested in the originality of its structure than in the composer's novel use of percussion instruments—particularly the triangle—in the orchestration. The powerful and conservative critic, Eduard Hanslick, dismissed it as the "Triangle Concerto."

Liszt's Piano Concerto No. 1 opens with the strings stating the first theme, with interjections by the winds and brass. Allegedly, Liszt sang words to this theme: "Das versteht ihr alle nichts!" ("You will not understand any of this!") There follows an elaborate **CADENZA** for the solo piano. The piano introduces the second theme, then is joined by the clarinet in a serene duet, before a return to the main theme. Muted strings introduce the lyrical second section; their theme is then taken up by the piano. Dramatic bursts from the orchestra ensue, interspersed with piano passages. The tempo quickens, with flute and then oboe, clarinet, and horn taking up a new theme. The infamous triangle introduces the lighthearted third section. The piano develops the theme until a cadenza recalling the concerto's opening theme brings the section to an end. The final section opens with the piano. The various themes reappear, building into thunderous phrases and virtuosic passages for the piano. The concerto closes in the bravura style for which Liszt is celebrated.



CADENZA - an elaborate and showy solo performed near the end of an aria or a movement of a concerto. Originally, it was employed in opera to show off the singer's technical and improvisational skills. It was taken up in instrumental music, becoming a standard part of the concerto. During the 19th century, composers started writing out the cadenzas; these days it's rare to find a performer who will improvise in mid-concerto.

Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 6

In December 1892, the composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893) abruptly abandoned work on a symphony on which he had been struggling for some time. This failure left Tchaikovsky—a man of fragile temperament—despondent. Though he feared that his creative spark had died, within two months he had begun work on what would become his last and greatest work: the Symphony No. 6 in B minor. Renewed by the return of his inspiration, Tchaikovsky worked frantically on the new symphony. He sketched out the first movement in just four days. By the end of August, the entire work was completed.

Tchaikovsky himself conducted the premiere of his Sixth Symphony in St. Petersburg on October 28, 1893. Though the audience cheered the composer enthusiastically at the start of the concert, they gave a halfhearted response at the conclusion of this somber, pensive, uncharacteristic work. The morning after the premiere, Tchaikovsky's brother Modest suggested the title for the symphony: *Pathétique*, which in French means, not "pathetic," but touching, moving, or full of suffering and emotion. Tchaikovsky concurred, and wrote the title on the first page. Nine days after the symphony's premiere, Tchaikovsky was dead. There are many theories as to the cause and circumstances of his death, with quite a few ascribing it to suicide in one form or another.

Like the symphony he had abandoned, the *Pathétique* was **PROGRAMMATIC**, but, as Tchaikovsky wrote, "with such a program that will remain a mystery to everyone—let them guess if they can." He carried his secret with him to the grave. As we have learned more about Tchaikovsky's repressed homosexuality, it is tempting to read this symphony as the composer's heartbreaking confession of a painful secret life. Tchaikovsky himself admitted that it had something of the character of a requiem; in fact, the trombones in the first movement quote a Russian Orthodox chant for the dead.

The Sixth Symphony begins with the sound of a low solo bassoon over murky strings. The entire first movement sustains the mood, if not the tempo, of the opening. The soaring second theme, introduced by muted violins and cellos, is one of Tchaikovsky's most famous melodies, full of Romantic yearning. After this theme is tossed about in the stormy development section, it steals in—magically rescored—in the recapitulation.

The two middle movements are more relaxed. The second is a melancholy, songlike, completely undanceable waltz, set in 5/4 time. The third is a brilliant march that is undercut by hints of sadness.

The final movement begins with a cry of despair from the strings. Though a consoling second theme is begun by the violins, it, too, rises to a shout of anguish. In its last moments, the symphony graphically depicts the process of dying: a heartbeat gradually weakens, the orchestra drops to cellos and basses, then fades into silence.



PROGRAMMATIC in music describes a work that is meant to evoke a story, image, or idea. Program music was especially popular in the 19th century. Well-known examples include Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*, Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*, and the tone poems of Richard Strauss. Music that has no literary, dramatic, or pictorial associations is called **ABSOLUTE MUSIC**.

Are You Ready?

To Clap, or Not to Clap...

People who've never attended an orchestra concert are sometimes apprehensive about applauding at the wrong time. If you're one of those people, here are some general rules to guide you:

- Just before the concert begins, the audience will applaud the arrival onstage of the concertmaster (the first violinist, who acts as the leader of the musicians).
- They'll applaud again when the conductor and soloist(s) enter.
- If they've liked the performance, the audience will applaud at the end of each piece of music on the program.
- Applauding between the movements or sections of a piece is generally frowned upon, even if there's a long pause. Many people believe that applauding between movements breaks the spell or momentum of the piece. If you're not sure when a piece is finished, check the program to see how many movements there are, or applaud only when the conductor turns to the audience and bows.
- When a piece has ended, the conductor (and soloist, if there is one) may leave the stage and then return for curtain calls, depending on the level of applause.



Some Additional Tips Regarding Concert Etiquette

- All it takes is one ringing cell phone, noisy latecomer, or loudly whispered conversation to spoil a concert for the entire audience. Be sure to arrive on time and turn off phones, pagers, beepers, and other electronic devices before the performance begins. Hold your comments and conversation until intermission.
- Even if you're not making or receiving calls, those little squares of light are a visual distraction to anyone sitting near you; please refrain from texting, checking messages, etc. during the concert.
- Though concertgoers are doing it more and more these days, it's generally considered impolite to leave the hall while the audience is still applauding. And if you leave too soon, you'll miss the encore, if the orchestra plays one!

Resources

WEBSITES:

www.filharmonia.pl/start.en.html

The official website of the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra

www.classical.net

Learn more about classical composers and their works.

www.essentialsofmusic.com

The basics of classical music, with history, composer biographies, musical terms, and audio excerpts

BOOKS:

Classical Music for Dummies, by David Pogue and Scott Speck. 1997

Tchaikovsky: The Man and His Music, by David Brown. Pegasus Books, 2007

MUSIC:

Serenade for String Orchestra, Op. 2, by Mieczysław Karłowicz BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, Gianandrea Noseda, conductor. Chandos, 2004

Piano Concerto No. 1, by Franz Liszt. Martha Argerich, piano; London Symphony Orchestra; Claudio Abbado, conductor. Deutsche Grammophon, 1996

Symphony No. 6, by Pyotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky. Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Valery Gergiev, conductor. Philips, 2005