



Philharmonic of Poland



The State Theatre in New Brunswick, NJ welcomes you to the performance of the Philharmonic of Poland.

These *Keynotes* provide information to help you take in the performance with a well-informed ear and eye. We hope that the 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 Opole Philharmonic of Poland has been the pride of its nation for more than 50 years. American audiences will be hearing the orchestra for the first time during its current transcontinental debut tour of the United States.

The orchestra was founded in 1947, in the wake of the turmoil of World War II. Five years later, the city of Opole built a major performing arts center to serve as the orchestra's permanent home. Since its inception, the orchestra has performed with some of the world's most acclaimed pianists, violinists, and vocalists. They have participated in major musical events, including the Festival of Contemporary Music in Wroclaw, the Chopin Festival in Duszyniki, Poznan Musical Spring, and the International Festival of Oratorio and Cantata Music in Wroclaw. Over the years, the ensemble has toured to Spain, France, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Italy, South America, and China. In 1969, Poland's Ministry of Culture awarded the Opole Philharmonic the Józef Elsner State Award for Arts Excellence.

In 1999, Boguslaw Dawidow became music director and principal conductor of the Philharmonic of Poland. Under his leadership, the orchestra has performed with world-renowned musicians, including winners of international piano, violin, and conducting competitions. In 2000, the orchestra was honored to perform at the gala concert in Rome celebrating the 80th birthday of Pope John Paul II.

Under Maestro Dawidow, the Opole Philharmonic of Poland has released a number of recordings, including Brahms' symphonies, overtures, and concertos; Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, and the Szymanowski violin concertos.

Learn more about the Philharmonic of Poland at their [website](#).



OPOLE

A city of about 125,000 people in southern Poland, on the Oder River (which runs from the Czech Republic into the Baltic Sea).





Conductor Boguslaw Dawidow was born in Sopot, Poland and studied conducting under Bohdan Wodisczko and Krzystof Missona. He continued his musical education in Vienna and Italy.

In the 1980s, Maestro Dawidow founded the Chopin Chamber Orchestra in Krakow, Poland; he continues to tour with the group throughout Europe. Since the early 1990s, he has served as resident conductor of the Polish Chamber Orchestra and artistic director and principal conductor of the Russian National Academic Symphony Orchestra.

Maestro Dawidow was appointed music director and general manager of the Opole Philharmonic of Poland in 1999. Since then, he has been actively working towards building the orchestra's international status. He credits his special joy in sharing great music with a variety of audiences to the influence of American composer and conductor Leonard Bernstein. "We want to share our passion for music with not only European and Asian audiences, but also American audiences," Dawidow says.

Evgeni Mikhailov was born into a Russian family of musicians in 1973. He entered the Kazan State Conservatoire after finishing college in his home town, and then took a post-graduate course at the Moscow State Conservatoire. His training led to winning various awards, including piano competitions in Russia, California, and Italy. Mikhailov has performed over four hundred concerts around the world, from the Civic Auditorium in Los Angeles to City Hall in Hong Kong and makes regular appearances at international music festivals. As a soloist, he has performed with the Deutsche Symphonie Orchester Berlin, the Russian National Orchestra, St. Petersburg Academic Philharmonic, Mexico City Philharmonic, and the Buenos Aires Philharmonic.

Mikhailov is considered a master of the "Silver Age" of Russian music that includes artists like Medtner, Scriabin, and Rachmaninoff. His performances across the country have become a tradition in Russia and have been praised by international press and he has released two CDs on a Russian label.

Evgeni Mikhailov has served on the juries of both national and international piano competitions. He returned to his alma mater, Kazan State Conservatoire, in 1996 as a professor and has conducted seminars and master classes in Russia, the United States, South Korea, and Sweden. In 2006, Mikhailov was invited to lecture at the World Piano Pedagogy Conference, held in the United States.



The Romantic Era

JMW Turner, "Chichester Canal" (1828)



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ROMANTIC

1. displaying or expressing love or strong affection.
2. ardent; passionate; fervent.
3. imbued with or dominated by idealism, a desire for adventure, chivalry, etc.
4. (usually initial capital letter) pertaining to or characteristic of a style of literature and art that subordinates form to content, encourages freedom of treatment, emphasizes imagination, emotion, and introspection, and often celebrates nature, the ordinary person, and freedom of the spirit (contrasted with classical).
5. of or pertaining to a musical style characteristic chiefly of the 19th century and marked by the free expression of imagination and emotion, virtuosic display, experimentation with form, and the adventurous development of orchestral and piano music and opera.
6. fanciful; impractical; unrealistic.
7. imaginary, fictitious, or fabulous.

All three works on the program are products of music's Romantic Era (roughly 1800-1910). The Romantic movement encompassed not only music, but architecture, visual art, literature, dance, theater, and philosophy as well.

The roots of Romanticism in music were in the preceding Classical Era, where 18th-century composers such as Mozart and Haydn perfected the musical expression of the Age of Reason. Their works emphasized clarity and proportion in both structural and harmonic language. In their orchestral works (as opposed to their operas), the music stood on its own, unconnected to ideas, images, drama, or other non-musical elements.

During the Romantic Era, music moved from the abstract into the realm of the representational. Now it might tell a story, conjure an image, stir emotions. The genre became known as "program music"—music that has an underlying narrative or non-musical meaning. The emotional content was typically intense. This was the era that gave us the operatic mad scene, the symphonic shipwreck, and the revolutionary *étude*. Besides love, popular subjects in Romantic music included nature, introspection, imagination, and the supernatural. Political revolutions in Europe during the 19th century created a wave of nationalism that was reflected in the music of the Romantic Era. Composers proudly integrated traditional music of their homeland into their works.

Looking for a broader palette with which to paint their musical pictures, Romantic composers loosened and expanded the formal conventions of the Classical Period, as applied to form, melody, harmony, tonal relationships, and instrumentation. They still wrote symphonies, concertos, sonatas, and the like, but they also created symphonic poems, program symphonies, fantasies, nocturnes, impromptus, mazurkas, song cycles and other new genres that expressed their aesthetic ideas.

"People often complain that music is ambiguous, that their ideas on the subject always seem so vague, whereas everyone understands words. With me it is exactly the reverse—not merely with regard to entire sentences, but also as to individual words. These, too, seem to me so ambiguous, so vague, so unintelligible when compared with genuine music, which fills the soul with a thousand things better than words."

—composer Felix Mendelssohn



Strauss: Don Juan

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"My Don Juan is no hot-blooded man eternally pursuing women. It is the longing in him to find a woman who is to him incarnate womanhood, and to enjoy in the one, all the women on earth, whom he cannot possess as individuals. Because he does not find her, although he reels from one to another, at last disgust seizes hold of him and this disgust is the Devil that fetches him."

—Richard Strauss

TONE POEM

Also called a symphonic poem. An orchestral piece in a single movement that evokes a story, a landscape, or other imagery without words.

The Hungarian composer Franz Liszt is generally credited as the father of the genre. His best-known work in this genre is *Tasso, Lamento e Trionfo*, based on Byron's epic poem. Without a doubt, the tone poem reached its zenith with Richard Strauss.

Among other well-known tone poems are Smetana's *Má vlast*; Mussorgsky's *Night on Bald Mountain*; Debussy's *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*; Sibelius' *Finlandia*, Respighi's *The Pines of Rome*, and Gershwin's *An American in Paris*.

The German composer and conductor Richard Strauss (no relation to Johann Strauss, the "Waltz King") was the last of the great Romantics. Born in 1864, he both followed and extended the high-powered, emotionally-charged style of musical expression of composers such as Franz Liszt and Richard Wagner.

Strauss' best-known works span several genres: the operas *Salome* and *Der Rosenkavalier*; *Metamorphosen*, a work for 23 solo strings; and the *Four Last Songs*. He is perhaps most celebrated for his tone poems, which include *Death and Transfiguration*, *Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks*, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (made more famous still as the theme from *2001 A Space Odyssey*), *Don Quixote*, *A Hero's Life*, and *An Alpine Symphony*.

Strauss began his musical studies at a very young age with his father, who was the principal horn player at the Court Opera in Munich. Richard's talent as a composer showed itself early. Premiering in 1888, Strauss' tone poem *Don Juan* was the 24-year-old composer's first important work. Written in just four months, it's a swashbuckling tale based on literature's most famous womanizer.

The composer's inspiration for the piece is somewhat unclear; while he claimed it came from Nikolaus Lenau's German verse play, it is worth noting that Strauss conducted Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (a.k.a. *Don Juan*) in Munich shortly before he began to work on his own *Don Juan*. Though he prefaced the score with three

quotations from Lenau's poem, he did not provide an explicit written narrative for the music. With *Don Juan*, Strauss demonstrated an ability to depict character, place, and action so vividly—and with a cinematic complexity—that words of explanation are really unnecessary.

The tone poem depicts Don Juan's search for the perfect woman. His virile theme is introduced at the beginning of the piece: a bold upward explosion followed by a leaping theme for the violins. Then a solo violin ushers in a sensuous, passionate theme for the strings: his first female conquest. After another burst of the opening theme, Don Juan embarks on his next quest for love. Cellos and violas introduce the second love theme, and the solo oboe sings a haunting and tender song. True to his character, Don Juan doesn't stick around for long. The horns call out a heroic new theme as he rushes off to a masked ball, depicted by a glittering glockenspiel. At the height of the festivities, the orchestra suddenly plunges into a dark abyss. The libertine's zest for life has vanished. Confronted by an angry opponent bent on vengeance, he summons his waning energy in a recapitulation of his violin and horn themes. In the middle of the duel, his will to live deserts him in a portentous musical pause. A dissonant note on the trumpets marks the fatal thrust. Quietly, without hope of redemption, he dies.

Liszt: Mazeppa, Symphonic Poem No. 6



Eugène Delacroix, "Mazeppa" (1828)

TEMPO MARKINGS

- I. Allegro agitato**
fast and restless
- II. Un poco più mosso, sempre agitato assai**
a little faster, always very restless
- III. Andante: Allegro**
a moderate tempo: fast
- IV. Allegro marziale**
fast, with a military air

THE REAL MAZEPPA

Ivan Mazeppa (1639–1709) was a Ukrainian nobleman who hatched a daring scheme to free his land from Russian interference. He and his allies were defeated at the Battle of Poltava. Mazeppa fled, dying soon afterwards.

In the 19th century, Mazeppa became the stuff of legend. The highly romanticized version of his story involves love, heroism in the face of death, and—ultimately—triumph. This story captured the imagination of many a 19th-century artist. Alexander Pushkin wrote a narrative poem that inspired the opera by Tchaikovsky, while Liszt's symphonic poem not only acknowledges a long, effusive ode by Victor Hugo, but also uses a brief extract from Lord Byron as an epigraph.

Hungarian composer and pianist Franz Liszt (1811-1886) was the world's first musical superstar, a larger-than-life personality who attracted crowds of adoring female fans more than a century before the Beatles. This globe-trotting ladies' man (he fathered three children with another man's wife) was also a religious mystic who in later life wore priestly robes and had a private audience with the Pope.

Liszt's reputation as an eccentric virtuoso and shameless showman often obscured the fact that he was the greatest pianist of his time as well as a serious, boldly original, and even revolutionary composer. During the 1830s and '40s, he wrote fiendishly difficult works for piano that showed off his amazing technique. But Liszt had larger musical ambitions. To the great dismay of his fans, he announced that he was giving up performing to devote himself full-time to composing.

Liszt's *Mazeppa* started out as a piano work, Transcendental Etude No. 4, written when he was just 15 years old and then revised three times over the next 26 years. He used the same subject for the symphonic poem, first performed in 1854. This larger work uses some of the musical material from the étude.

The narrative beneath Liszt's *Mazeppa*, Symphonic Poem No. 6 is this: Mazeppa's enemies have tied him—naked—to a horse, and then set the

animal off on a mad gallop that goes on for three days. Liszt's stirring score evokes the hero's state of mind as he faces certain death, then is triumphantly rescued just in the nick of time.

The music begins as the horse sets off on his terrifying flight. Following a brusque chord for wind, brass, and cymbals, the strings play whirling triplets, and then the entire orchestra takes up the chase. This gradually builds to the main theme, heard first in the trombones and strings. This is the 'Mazeppa' theme, depicting the unconquerable hero. The theme, with the storm music as accompaniment, is extended and developed.

Then comes a quieter passage, as the theme transforms into a lament. As Mazeppa continues his dramatic ride, the music once again becomes turbulent, with the lament now conveying a sense of his heroic character.

Quite suddenly, the horse falls dead and the gallop staggers to a halt. The music diminishes to ominous strokes on the timpani. For a moment, Mazeppa hovers between life and death, but trembling strings and brass fanfares herald his revival. As he is rescued by the Ukrainian tribesmen, a march theme starts gently, but soon swells with the force of the entire orchestra. The march combines with the Mazeppa theme, signaling the hero's triumph over death and his crowning as king,



Chopin: Piano Concerto No. 1 in E minor, Op. 11

*"Invention came to his piano,
sudden, complete, sublime."*

—George Sand

Frédéric Chopin, by Eugène Delacroix (1838)

Along with Franz Liszt, the Polish-born Frédéric Chopin invented the phenomenon of the celebrity composer-pianist. Both men wrote impossibly difficult virtuoso works that showed off their unmatched technical skills. Both were charismatic and enormously popular.

But there ends the resemblance. In contrast to the larger-than-life-sized Liszt, the diffident Chopin was a publicist's nightmare: he disdained the trappings of the concert world; saw no need for advertising, and disliked playing to large crowds in big concert halls. Once he settled in Paris, he rarely gave more than two public performances a year. His aloofness only seemed to increase his popularity.

Also unlike Liszt, Chopin had no ambition to write music for anyone other than himself; so of course, every one of his compositions includes the piano. All but a handful are for solo piano. He wrote his two piano concertos—one right after the other—when he was just 19. (The Concerto No. 1 was actually the second one he wrote, but since it was the first one published, it is designated No. 1.)

Chopin was born in Poland in 1810. Both his parents were talented amateur musicians, and Frédéric was immersed in music from the beginning. A child prodigy, he was composing at age seven, and at eleven performed before Tsar Alexander I of Russia. In 1829, upon graduating from the Warsaw Conservatory, Chopin made his debut in Vienna.

Returning to Warsaw, the composer, just turned 20, premiered his Piano Concerto No. 1 in E minor. He immediately became a national hero, in part because the work incorporated elements of Polish folk dance. Flush with success, Chopin set out on a European concert tour. While traveling from Vienna to Paris, he learned that the Russians had crushed an attempted revolution in Poland. Heartsick, he settled in Paris, never to return again to his beloved homeland.

The E-minor Piano Concerto follows the convention of a three-movement concerto. The opening movement, marked *Allegro maestoso*, presents the principal themes twice—first in the orchestra's long introduction, then a second time by the piano. The first theme is dramatic, the second lyrical, and both are touched with melancholy. Once the piano enters, it dominates the proceedings completely, except for occasional orchestral interludes that elaborate on the principal materials.

Chopin provided a description of the second movement, marked *Romanza*, in a letter to his friend Titus Woyciechowski. "The Adagio of my new concerto is in E major. It is not meant to create a powerful effect; it is rather a Romance, calm and melancholy, giving the impression of someone looking gently towards a spot that calls to mind a thousand happy memories. It is a kind of reverie in the moonlight on a beautiful spring evening."

The last movement, a rondo, is infused with the sound and spirit of Chopin's beloved Polish folk music. The principal theme alternates with contrasting episodes, in the classic rondo form, providing opportunities to display myriad facets of the pianist's art and even a bit of hearty stamping from the orchestra.

FOLLOW THE MOVEMENTS

I. Allegro
fast

II. Romanza
lyrical, dreamy, tender

III. Rondo
a form of composition
in which the first
section recurs between
contrasting sections: for
example:
A-B-A-B-A, or
A-B-A-C-A, etc.

Decoding the Program Page

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 Philharmonic of Poland looks like this:

A **MOVEMENT** is a section within a musical piece, like a chapter in a book. Individual movements are usually referred to by the tempo marking that the composer has written at the beginning of the section. During the concert, there is usually 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.

There are several ways that works of classical music can be identified. The system is not consistent from one composer to another.

- **NUMBER** - where the piece falls in the catalogue of the composer's works for a specific musical form (such as the Ninth Symphony or the Bassoon Concerto No. 2).
- **OPUS NUMBER** - where the piece falls in the entire catalogue of the composer's works, in the order they were published. The lower the number, the earlier it was published (but not necessarily when it was written). Opus is a Latin word meaning "work."

Sun, February 13, 2011 at 3pm

Direct from Opole, Poland

Philharmonic of Poland

Boguslaw Dawidow, music director and conductor

OPUS NUMBER (among all of Strauss' published works) → **Program**

NUMBER (among Liszt's symphonic poems) → **Program**

COMPOSER → R. Strauss
F. Liszt
F. Chopin

SOLOIST → Lygeni Mikhailov, piano soloist

what **KEY** the music starts in →

FUNDING CREDITS → Many arts institutions (including the State Theatre) are not-for-profit organizations; acknowledging donors and sponsors is an important part of staying in business. → Underwritten by The Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation

DIASPORA JERSEY ARTS **NEW JERSEY STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS**

This program is made possible in part through a grant by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts.

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 on 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 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!

