Czech Philharmonic

Semyon Bychkov, 
Chief Conductor and Music Director

Kirill Gerstein, Piano

WHEN: SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2018 7:30 PM
VENUE: BING CONCERT HALL
Program

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893):
Piano Concerto No. 1 in B-flat minor, op. 23 (version 1879)
   Allegro non troppo e molto maestoso
   Andantino simplice
   Allegro con fuoco

—Intermission—

Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904):
Symphony No. 9 in E minor, “From the New World,” op. 95 (1893)
   Adagio
   Largo
   Scherzo: Molto Vivace
   Allegro con fuoco

The Czech Philharmonic would like to extend special thanks and sincere gratitude
to its U.S. tour partner, the Karel Komárek Family Foundation.

Karel Komárek Family Foundation

PROGRAM SUBJECT TO CHANGE. Please be considerate of others and turn off all phones, pagers, and watch alarms. Photography and recording of any kind are not permitted. Thank you.
About the Program

Piano Concerto No. 1 in B-flat minor, Op. 23
PIOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY
Born May 7, 1840, in Votkinsk, Russia
Died November 6, 1893, in St. Petersburg

Tchaikovsky’s First Piano Concerto, with its grand opening chords, is one of the most recognizable and popular pieces in the classical music repertoire. Van Cliburn’s recording of the concerto, made after his victory at the First International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow at the height of the cold war, became the first classical album to go triple platinum, and the first LP that many classical music lovers owned. For many, the concerto is the sound of classical music. Yet the piano’s famous opening chords are not, in fact, what Tchaikovsky wrote at all. The actual musical text of the composition, as Tchaikovsky notated and conducted it on numerous occasions, has been distorted by interventions almost certainly introduced after his death. In 2015—both the 175th anniversary of Tchaikovsky’s birth and the 140th anniversary of the concerto’s premiere—the Tchaikovsky Museum and Archive in Klin, Russia published a new scholarly edition of the First Piano Concerto, a text that enables us to hear for the first time the version of the composition that Tchaikovsky himself conducted.

A Note from the Conductor

On October 28, 2018, the Czech Republic celebrated 100 years of independence. The significance of its liberation from the Austrian Empire’s domination is a source of inspiration not only to its own people, but to all nations that have experienced political, economic and cultural repression. The courage and determination shown by the Czech people in the fight to preserve their national identity is a reminder that nothing and no one can ever conquer the human spirit when it refuses to surrender.

In the last 100 years the Czech people have lived the entire gamut of different conditions: from the pride and prosperity that came with independence, to the Western betrayal inflicted by the Munich Agreement; from destruction in World War II, to the decades of Soviet domination. Exactly 50 years ago on August 21, 1968 when the Soviets rolled their tanks all the way to the streets of Prague, they proved yet again that the strong have no shame and stop at nothing to bring down those who are unable to defend themselves. Yet in spite of the adversity—and quite possibly because of it—the nation lived on to welcome the Velvet Revolution of 1989 and once again to become a free and independent member of the world community, this time hopefully forever.

The Czech Philharmonic shared its country’s destiny and with equal determination preserved the uniqueness of the Czech musical tradition which they offer to the world. It was true 100 years ago. It remains true today. How fitting is it then, that in the very year that the Czech nation celebrate the Centennial of its Independence, its beloved orchestra will be performing Mahler’s Second Symphony ‘Resurrection’ in Prague and New York, and bringing Smetana and Dvorak to London and various U.S. cities. Born in Bohemia, Mahler tells us that we are here for a reason, that nothing ever dies. The Czech Republic and its Philharmonic Orchestra are the living proof of this idea.

—Semyon Bychkov
There are three versions of the concerto. Tchaikovsky himself was responsible for the two versions of the piece dating from 1875 and 1879. The third version was published posthumously after 1894. It is this third version that has been most commonly performed for over a century—for instance, this is the version that Van Cliburn performed—and it varies significantly from the two earlier versions. But the question of whether Tchaikovsky authorized the changes, or if they were the work of other musicians or editors, has until now gone largely unanswered.

At the end of 1874, Tchaikovsky showed a final draft of the first version of his piano concerto to his supporter, one of the foremost Russian musicians of the time, the pianist Nikolai Rubinstein. Not a concert pianist himself, the composer wanted to consult on the playability and effectiveness of the piano writing in the concerto. Rubinstein was scathing about both. Tchaikovsky describes this occasion in a letter to his patron, Nadezhda von Meck, and recalls Rubinstein telling him that the concerto was unacceptable, full of clumsy, trivial passages, and many stolen ideas. At the end of the meeting, Tchaikovsky wrote, Rubinstein said that if within a limited time I reworked the concerto according to his demands, then he would do me the honor of playing my piece at his concert. “I shall not alter a single note,” I answered, “I shall publish the work exactly as it is!” This I did.

Tchaikovsky completed this first version in February 1875 and dedicated the concerto to the great German pianist Hans von Bulow, an admirer of his music. Von Bulow responded to the concerto with great enthusiasm and premiered it in Boston in October 1875. A student of Tchaikovsky’s, the pianist and composer Sergey Taneev, gave the first performance in Moscow in December 1875 with the now less doubtful Rubinstein on the podium.

Shortly after these early performances Tchaikovsky decided to make some alterations to the piano part, making it more sonorous and playable while leaving both the musical material and the overall structure intact. With these changes incorporated, the second version of the concerto was printed by his publisher, P. Jurgenson, in 1879. From then on, it was this 1879 version that Tchaikovsky conducted, right up until his very last performance in St. Petersburg on October 28, 1893, days before his death.

It is impossible to know for certain just who is responsible for the posthumous version. The name of Alexander Siloti, a student of Tchaikovsky’s, is most commonly mentioned in association with the changes in Tchaikovsky’s text. Siloti is quoted by Olin Downes in a New York Times article of October 13, 1929:

Sometime after the first and second editions had appeared, Mr. Siloti informs us, he ventured to speak to Tchaikovsky about these matters. The young musician played the opening chords on the piano. “That’s what you want, isn’t it?” “Why, yes,” replied the composer, astonished, “it’s what I’ve written, isn’t it?” “No. That’s just the point. It’s what I’ve played.” Siloti had transposed the chords of the right hand an octave higher than Tchaikovsky had written them—transposed them as they stand today. Siloti suggested other changes, and a short cut in the last movement.

There is documentary evidence that Siloti and Tchaikovsky discussed a proposed cut in the last movement, and that some further changes to the concerto were contemplated. However, the existing correspondence between them does not mention changing the opening chords, nor other alterations that actually ended up in the posthumous version.

Siloti’s New York Times interview contains a number of inaccuracies relating to the history of the concerto.
Siloti mentions the third edition of the concerto being published by P. Jurgenson during Tchaikovsky's lifetime and claims he was not credited as the editor because he was so young at the time. Yet the publishing house's records show that, following the second version of 1879, no updated edition of the concerto was brought out by Jurgenson until 1894, a year after Tchaikovsky's death. And it is hard to believe Siloti's boastful claim that Tchaikovsky had not noticed the changed opening chords.

One can only speculate about the reasons why the posthumous edition became the prevalent one in the twentieth century. It was probably due to a confluence of factors, among them: the limited number of copies in the early printings of the concerto; the fact that additions and alterations by virtuoso performers was an accepted practice of the time; a widespread but unfounded view among pianists that Tchaikovsky did not know how to write "pianistically"; and Siloti's claims that the changes were authorized by the composer himself.

Doubts about the authenticity of the third version surfaced early on. As the Russian pianist Konstantin Igumnov is quoted in a 1979 Russian book Pianists Speak:

The third version ... introduces significant changes to the original text. The chordal accompaniment of the opening theme is altered (thicker voicing, increased dynamics and introduction of solid chords instead of the arpeggiated ones in the original). The range of the final restatement of finale's secondary theme is changed, and a cut in the development of the third movement is made...We are convinced that the composer, and not his editors, is right.

Sergey Taneev, in addition to giving the concerto's first performance in Moscow, helped in the preparation and copying of its score and orchestral parts, and was one of the early exponents of the piece. In a letter to his brother, Tchaikovsky described how gloriously Taneev played his concerto. Thus, Taneev's 1912 letter to Igumnov, expressing his disbelief in the authenticity of the third version, is particularly significant:

The [opening] chords sound excellently on the piano (I remember them in N. Rubinstein's performance) and why one should prefer the ideas of "editors" to what the composer himself wrote is beyond me...If in addition to all else, one adds the extremely quick tempi that go beyond the limits of what is indicated in the composition (for example listening to the middle part of the andantino movement one could think that it is a prestissimo, when indicated is only an Allegro vivace assai), my dissatisfaction with the performance of the concerto will be quite understandable. I believe it is necessary to return to the author's text, to forget what overzealous editors put in the composition on their own, and to perform it according to the author's intentions.

The editorial team of the Tchaikovsky Museum and Archive, led by its senior researcher, Dr. Polina Vaydman, has examined what is to date the most complete set of materials relating to the concerto: all extant autograph manuscripts as well as numerous copies of the printed score dated pre and post Tchaikovsky's death. Of special significance among the studied sources is Tchaikovsky's own conducting score with handwritten performance markings that he used in his last public performance on the 28th of October, 1893. The fact that this score of the 1879 version was the one from which Tchaikovsky conducted just before his death further suggests that the third version was not executed with Tchaikovsky's participation, and that he did not definitively authorize further changes for publication.
Comparing the 1879 version with the posthumous one, I find the editorial changes in the third version add a superficial brilliance to the piece, while at the same time detracting from its genuine musical character. Many examples of differing dynamics, articulations, and tempo indications in Tchaikovsky’s version point to a more lyrical, almost Schumannesque conception of the concerto. The arpeggiated chords and softer dynamics in the opening do not threaten to overpower the theme in the strings and allow the melody more metric flexibility and differentiation. Restoring the measures traditionally cut in the middle section of the finale enables us to hear harmonically and contrapuntally adventurous combination of several motivic strands. The extended middle section allows for an introduction and deeper immersion in a new mood. In the posthumous version, this section of the finale is so short that the new mood introduced always seemed a jarring miscalculation. It would now appear that this miscalculation was not the author’s, but his editor’s.

Tchaikovsky said that composing was a lyrical process for him, and the First Piano Concerto in his own version shows a strong lyrical and noble vein that the better-known posthumous version negates.

—Kirill Gerstein

Symphony No. 9 in E minor, Op. 95 ("From the New World")

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

Born September 8, 1841, in Nelahozeves, near Kralupy

Died May 1, 1904, in Prague

At the invitation in June 1891 of Jeanette Thurber, the founder of the National Conservatory in New York, Antonín Dvořák took leave of his position at the Prague Conservatory and came to New York City the following year in order to serve as the Director of the National Conservatory. Dvořák was enticed to leave his homeland with the offer of a salary nearly twenty-five times that which he was being paid at the Prague Conservatory as well as a yearly four-month vacation and the opportunity to conduct the conservatory orchestra for ten concerts each year. The composer was to hold this position for the next three years. During this time, Dvořák composed some of his most successful works, notably the “New World” Symphony, Op. 95, the String Quartet in F major, Op. 96 and the Concerto in B minor for Cello and Orchestra, Op. 104.

Dvořák wrote his Symphony in E minor, Op. 95 in 1893; it was subtitled “From the New World.” In explaining this subtitle, the composer stated that it signified “Impressions and Greetings from the New World.” While various American musical influences are in evidence in the Ninth Symphony, it remains, nonetheless, fundamentally Czech music. Dvořák himself attested to this fact as he stated, “The influence of American music can be felt by anyone who has a nose”; yet in his own estimation, the symphony remained “genuine Bohemian music.”

Dvořák listened to Black spirituals and Native American music with much interest, and regarding American influences in this Symphony the composer stated in an interview in the New York Herald when the work was about to be performed for the first time: “…I found that the music of the Negroes and of the Indians was practically identical. I therefore studied a certain number of Indian melodies that a friend gave me, and became thoroughly imbued with their characteristics—with their spirit in fact. It is this spirit which I have tried to reproduce in my new symphony. I have simply written original themes embodying the peculiarities of the Indian music, and using these themes as subjects, have developed them with all the resources of modern rhythm, harmony, counterpoint and orchestral color. He also stated in the
Dvořák Ninth Symphony opens with an Adagio introduction wherein the violas, cellos and horns foreshadow the first part of the main theme of the Allegro molto. The main theme enters a half a dozen bars later, presented by the horns in unison. It has a jaunty character, with the presence of syncopated rhythms and, although in the key of E minor, is heavily colored with the tones of a pentatonic scale. Several restatements of the theme occur with changing orchestrations and keys leading to the second theme, in G minor, presented first by the flute and then taken up by the violins. The second theme is remarkable on account of its more than casual resemblance to the melody of the Spiritual, “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot.”

The third movement, Scherzo, has the character of a ritual Indian dance. The flute and oboe present the lively, rhythmic main theme, with its interplay of duple and triple groupings, answered by the clarinet. The same instruments introduce the flowing second theme. After the return of the first theme, a transitional passage leads to the Trio section. This section contains two spirited Trios, the first in E major and the second in C major. They both have a rustic charming quality with exchanges of trills between the strings and woodwinds. A repeat of the Scherzo section follows which leads directly to the coda which reintroduces the principal theme of the first movement in the horns and then fades out.

The Finale begins with a fanfare of horns and trumpets presenting the principal theme against fortissimo chords for the orchestra. This eventually gives way to a dancing triplet theme heard in the violins. There follows a clarinet solo presenting a Romantic melody set against tremolo in the strings. Variants of themes from earlier movements are then interwoven with this material which culminates with the reappearance of the Largo movement’s opening chords. In the final coda, a tremendous climax is reached, Dvořák presenting in combination the opening themes of the first and last movements in the major key and scored for the brass. The effect creates an astringent harmony and a most brilliant ending to this monumental symphony.

—1994 Columbia Artists Management Inc.
The Czech Philharmonic, which debuted in 1896 under Antonín Dvořák, has an extraordinary legacy reflecting its place in the pantheon of the great European orchestras as well as its distinct embrace of both Eastern and Western European culture. The Orchestra resides in Prague at the Rudolfinum and proudly represents the Czech Republic internationally as an esteemed and cherished cultural ambassador.

Since its founding, the all-Czech orchestra has championed the music and composers of their homeland. Their past is inextricably woven to that of the Czech Republic, and one particularly potent symbol of that connection is Smetana’s Má vlast (My Homeland). Considered by many to be the country’s unofficial national anthem, Má vlast has been used by the Orchestra to exemplify the country’s perseverance and pride throughout its complicated and often turbulent political history: as an act of defiance during the Nazi occupation; in a ‘concert of thanks’ in 1945 for the newly liberated Czechoslovakia; to mark the country’s first free elections in 1990; and, this
year, to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Czech and Slovak independence in a new release from Decca Classics.

Acknowledged for its definitive performances of Dvořák, Janáček, Martinů, and Suk, the Orchestra is also recognized for its deep relationships to Brahms, Tchaikovsky and Mahler, who was of Czech origin, and whose Symphony No. 7 they premiered in 1908. Historic collaborations and premieres include a podium appearance by Edvard Grieg; Stravinsky conducting his Capriccio for Piano and Orchestra; Leonard Bernstein conducting Aaron Copland’s Symphony No. 3; Arthur Honegger conducting his own music; Darius Milhaud introducing his Music for Prague; and, Krzysztof Penderecki conducting his Concerto for Clarinet and Chamber Orchestra.

The year 2018 marks the beginning of a new era for the Czech Philharmonic as Semyon Bychkov becomes the orchestra’s fourteenth Chief Conductor and Music Director, taking up the mantle from luminary predecessors including Václav Talich, Rafael Kubelík, Karel Ančerl, Václav Neumann and Jiří Bělohlávek. Bychkov’s tenure opens in Prague with performances of Mahler’s Resurrection Symphony, Berio’s Sinfonia, and Dvořák’s Symphony No. 7. He and the Orchestra immediately embark on their inaugural international tour together to London, nine U.S. cities, a weeklong residency in Vienna, Belgium, and five cities in Germany.

**Semyon Bychkov,**
**Chief Conductor and Music Director**
Internationally recognized for an approach to music making that combines innate musicality with the rigors of Russian music pedagogy, Semyon Bychkov began his tenure as Chief Conductor and Music Director of the Czech Philharmonic at the beginning of the 2018-19 season.

Following early concerts with the Czech Philharmonic in 2013 that sparked their relationship, Bychkov initiated The Tchaikovsky Project, an intensive exploration of the venerated composer’s seminal works through a series of concerts, residencies and recordings for Decca Classics. The
Tchaikovsky Project culminates in 2019 with residencies in Paris and Vienna, and a box-set of Tchaikovsky’s complete symphonic repertoire. In addition to a nine-city tour of the U.S., Bychkov inaugurates his tenure with the Orchestra with concerts in London, Bruges, six cities in Germany, and a residency at Vienna’s Musikverein.

Bychkov conducts the major orchestras and at the major opera houses in the U.S. and Europe. In addition to his title with the Czech Philharmonic, he holds the Günter Wand Conducting Chair with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, with which he appears annually at the BBC Proms, and the honorary Klemperer Chair of Conducting at the Royal Academy of Music. He was named “Conductor of the Year” at the 2015 International Opera Awards.

Spanning four centuries, his repertoire is wide-ranging. The coming season brings two weeks of concerts with the New York Philharmonic, which includes the US première of Thomas Larcher’s Symphony No. 2, and the Cleveland Orchestra where he will conduct Detlev Glanert, Martinů and Smetana. In Europe, his concerts include performances with the Leipzig Gewandhaus, Munich and Berlin Philharmonic Orchestras, Accademia di Santa Cecilia, and the Royal Concertgebouw.

Bychkov was born in St. Petersburg, studied at the Leningrad Conservatory, and at age 20, won the Rachmaninov Conducting Competition. Denied the prize of conducting the Leningrad Philharmonic, he immigrated to the United States, where his first appointments as Music Director were with the Grand Rapids Symphony and the Buffalo Philharmonic. He went on to become Music Director of Orchestre de Paris, Principal Guest Conductor of the Leningrad Philharmonic, and Chief Conductor of both the WDR Symphony Orchestra Cologne and the Dresden Semperoper.

Kirill Gerstein
Pianist Kirill Gerstein’s curiosity and versatility has led to a powerful engagement with a wide range of repertoire and styles. From Bach to Adès, his playing is distinguished by its clarity of expression, discerning intelligence and virtuosity.

Highlights of his 2018-19 season include performances with the Cleveland and Philadelphia Orchestras, the Atlanta, Cincinnati, Detroit, St. Louis, and Toronto symphonies, and a California tour with the Czech Philharmonic. He premieres a new piano concerto by Thomas Adès’ with the Boston Symphony at Symphony Hall and Carnegie Hall, and plays two-piano recitals with Adès in Boston and at Zankel Hall. In Europe he performs with the Dresden Staatskappelle, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, London Symphony, NDR Hamburg Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France in Paris, Rotterdam Philharmonic, and the Vienna Symphony.

Gerstein has appeared with major orchestras including the Berlin, London, Los Angeles, Munich, New York, Oslo, and Vienna Philharmonics, the Bavarian Radio, Finnish Radio Minnesota, and Royal Concertgebouw Orchestras, and the Chicago, San Francisco, Pittsburgh, National, Dallas, Vancouver, and Houston symphonies. He has performed recitals in New York, Chicago, Washington DC, Seattle, Miami, Vienna, Paris, Prague, Hamburg, at London’s Wigmore Hall and Queen Elizabeth Hall, and at the Liszt Academy in Budapest, and He has also appeared at the Salzburg, Lucerne, and Edinburgh Festivals, at Verbier, the Proms in London, and the Jerusalem Chamber Music Festival.

His recordings on myrios classics include The Gershwin Moment, Liszt's
Transcendental Études, Tchaikovsky’s Piano Concerto No. 1 in the composer’s final 1879 version, *Imaginary Pictures*, which pairs Mussorgsky’s *Pictures at an Exhibition* with Schumann’s *Carnaval*, and an album of works by Schumann, Liszt, and Knussen.

Born in Russia, Gerstein studied classical and jazz piano and moved to the U.S. at the age of 14 to attend Boston’s Berklee College of Music. Shifting his focus to the classical repertoire, he studied with Solomon Mikowsky in New York, Dmitri Bashkirov in Madrid and Ferenc Rados in Budapest. He received First Prize at the Arthur Rubinstein Competition in 2001, a Gilmore Young Artist Award in 2002, and an Avery Fisher Career Grant and the Gilmore Artist Award in 2010. Kirill Gerstein appears by arrangement with CM Artists.

**Upcoming Events**

**Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and Chorale**
- Philharmonic Fire
- Dec 5 • 7:30PM
- Bing Concert Hall

**Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir and the Tallinn Chamber Orchestra**
- Nov 14 • 7:30PM
- Bing Concert Hall

**Tickets and information:**
live.stanford.edu
Semyon Bychkov, Chief Conductor and Music Director

Violin I
Jiří Vodička, Concertmaster
Magdaléna Mašlaňová
Otakar Bartoš
Luboš Dudek
Marie Dvorská
Bohumil Kotmel
Viktor Mazáček
Pavel Nechvile
Zdeněk Starý
Jindřich Vácha
Milan Vavřínek
Miroslav Vilímec
Zdeněk Zelba
Marco Čaño
Anna Pacholczak

Violin II
Ondřej Skopový
Libor Vilímec
Zuzana Hájková
Petr Havlíč
Pavel Herajn
Jitka Kokšová
Milena Kolářová
Veronika Kozlovská
Jan Ludvík
Vítězslav Ochman
Jiří Ševčík
Markéta Vokáčová
Kateřina Jelinková
Marek Blaha

Violas
Jaroslav Pondělíček
Pavel Ciprys
Dominik Trávníček
Jiří Řehák
René Vácha
Pavel Hořejší
Jaromír Pávíček
Jan Šimon
Jan Mareček
Jiří Poslední
Lukáš Valášek
Radka Teichmanová

Cellos
Václav Petr, Concertmaster
Tomáš Hostička
Jan Holeňa
František Lhotka
Peter Mišejka
Marek Novák
Karel Stralczynský
Eduard Šístek
Dora Hájková
Aneta Šudáková

Double-basses
Jiří Hudec
Petr Ries
Ondřej Balcar
Jaromír Černík
Martin Hilský
Jiří Valenta
Jiří Vopálka
Daniele Radanovič

Flutes
Daniel Havel
Oto Reiprich
Jan Machat
Petr Veverka

Oboes
Jana Brožková
Vladislav Borovka
Jiří Zelba
Magdaléna Klárová

Clarinets
Tomáš Kopáček
Jan Mach
Jan Brabec
Petr Sinkule

Bassoons
Ondřej Roskovec
Jaroslav Kubita
Ondřej Šindelář
Martina Bádková

French Horns
Jan Vobořil
Kateřina Javůrková
Jiří Havlík
Jindřich Kolář
Zdeněk Vašina
Hana Sapáková

Trumpets
Jaroslav Halíř
Walter Hofbauer
Antonín Pecha
Jiří Šedivý

Trombones
Robert Kozánek
Jan Perný
Karel Kučera
Břetislav Kotrba

Tuba
Karel Malimánek

Percussion
Petr Holub
Michael Kroutil
Pavel Polívka
David Mareček, CEO
Robert Hanč, General Manager
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Tatiana Čudová, Tour Manager
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