

KREMERATA BALTICA

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10 / 7:30 PM

BING CONCERT HALL

PROGRAM NOTES

PHILIP GLASS (B. 1937), ARR. ANDREI PUSHKAREV (B. 1974)
ORPHEUS SUITE FOR STRINGS AND PERCUSSION (1991/2000/2016)

Orphée (1950) is the centerpiece of the Orphic Trilogy of films by French director Jean Cocteau, based on the classic Greek myth of Orpheus. American composer Philip Glass subsequently based a trilogy of operas on Cocteau's work, with *Orphée* (*Orpheus*) from 1991 again as the central work. The next stage in arriving at the work to be played tonight was the *Orphée Suite* for Piano, which Glass made in collaboration with American pianist Paul Barnes in the year 2000. Finally, Ukrainian composer Andrei Pushkarev, percussionist with Kremerata Baltica since 1999, orchestrated the seven-movement piano suite for strings and percussion last year. As in the Cocteau film, Glass' opera is set in contemporary Paris. The music in the suite focuses, as pianist Paul Barnes puts it, on "the most poignant aspects of the emotional world" that the opera characters inhabit and "the mystical interplay between the spiritual and the physical worlds. The disarming simplicity of Glass' musical idiom is especially suited to communicating the unique tension that exists between these two worlds."

Tonight's performance will not include movement 3: *Journey to the Underworld*.

GIYA KANCHELI (B. 1935)
CHIAROSCURO FOR VIOLIN AND CHAMBER ORCHESTRA (2010)

The music of Georgian composer Giya Kancheli has long been a part of the repertoire of Kremerata Baltica. *Chiaroscuro* was first composed for one soloist playing both violin and viola with orchestra in the composer's 75th year. It was subsequently reworked for solo violin and strings at the request of Gidon Kremer—and a version for string quartet also exists. Like much of his music, Kancheli's score is deeply spiritual and meditative, exploring extremes of musical expression in the way that Renaissance oil painting technique would contrast light and dark shading to highlight a subject. Slow-moving paragraphs of sound, luminous and highly expressive, are suddenly punctuated by explosive outbursts of violence. "My music is sad, rather than joyful," writes the Georgian composer, residing in Berlin and then Antwerp, Belgium, since the breakup of the USSR more than a quarter of a century ago. "You won't find any calls here to struggle, to equality, to a bright future. What's recorded here [in *Chiaroscuro*] is, rather, bitter sorrow over the imperfection of a society that cannot draw lessons from the most terrible historical examples. These thoughts are expressed in extremely simple language. I'd like to believe that listeners will not be left cold by my music and will not identify its deliberate simplicity with what I think is the most dangerous feeling: indifference."

ALEXANDER RASKATOV (B. 1953)
THE SEASONS' DIGEST FOR SOLO VIOLIN, STRINGS, PERCUSSION, AND PREPARED PIANO,
AFTER TCHAIKOVSKY'S THE SEASONS, OP. 37A (2001)

Tchaikovsky's monthly assignment to provide a piano piece appropriate to the month in which it was to appear in a musical-theatrical periodical provided the starting point for *The Seasons' Digest*. Russian composer Alexander Raskatov follows Tchaikovsky's sequence of 12 short piano pieces titled *The Seasons*, at one level, by simply arranging them for string orchestra. At another, though, he edits, amplifies, interprets, and comments upon Tchaikovsky's most popular piano collection, incorporating prepared piano and an eclectic array of percussion instruments. A chilling drone and icy shivers interrupt the cozy romantic warmth of January's *By the Fireside*, while a more satirical edge colors February's *Carnival*. The joyous harvest song of Tchaikovsky's July, now laboring under repetitive chords, a dragging bass line, pealing church bells, and chanting workers, seems transformed into a Soviet-era patriotic ode. A suggestion of the absurdist elements which color Raskatov's opera, *A Dog's Heart*, may explain the gleeful sliding Lotus flute in *Troika*—or, there again, is it recollections of a childhood lost, which is another theme present in Raskatov's writing? Either way, the Paris-based composer, a longtime collaborator with his violin soloist in *The Seasons' Digest*, offers a 21st-century perspective on Romantic piano music from his home country, coming full circle in December.

ASTOR PIAZZOLLA (1921–1992), ARR. LEONID DESYATNIKOV (B. 1955)
THE FOUR SEASONS OF BUENOS AIRES (1965–1969, ARR. 1991)

Argentine tango master Astor Piazzolla developed the four movements of *Las cuatro estaciones porteñas* over a number of years in the late 1960s. In 1970, it formed a highlight of the 10th-anniversary concerts of Piazzolla's *Quinteto Nuevo Tango*, an innovative group featuring violin, piano, electric guitar, bass, and Piazzolla's own instrument, the bandonéon. Echoes of Vivaldi can be heard in Piazzolla's score, albeit to a tango beat, particularly in the closing measures of *Invierno porteño*. Like Vivaldi, Piazzolla works his way through the four seasons, giving each movement a programmatic title, beginning with *Buenos Aires Summer*. Unlike Vivaldi, Piazzolla's main interest was not in the changing seasons themselves but in portraying the personality of the people of Buenos Aires through the year—their passion, susceptibility, sensuality, and more. In 1991, violinist Gidon Kremer asked his longtime collaborator Leonid Desyatnikov to bring the two works even closer together by casting Piazzolla's music as a violin concerto. The Russian composer further married the two works by casting each movement in Vivaldi's characteristic three sections and including quotations from Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*.

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**KREMERATA
BALTICA**

20th anniversary

Violin 1

Dzeraldas Bidva**
Madara Petersone*
Dainius Peseckas
Agata Daraskaite
Aliona Rachitchi
Mairead Hickey
Migle Serapinaite

Violin 2

Andrei Valigura*
Dainius Puodziukas*
Marie Helen Aavakivi
Lina Domarkaite
Konstantins Paturskis
Ieva Puodziuke

Viola

Santa Vizine*
Zita Zemovica
Vidas Vekerotas
Ingars Girnis

Cello

Giedre Dirvanauskaite*
Peteris Cirksis
Peteris Sokolovskis
Emma Bandeniece

Double Bass

Iurii Gavryliuk*
Kristaps Petersons

Percussion

Andrei Pushkarev*

Keyboard

Mykola Pushkarev

Violin solo

Gidon Kremer

**Concertmaster

*Group leaders

