

NAXOS

RACHMANINOV

Symphony No. 2, Op. 27

Vocalise, Op. 34, No. 14

Detroit Symphony Orchestra • Leonard Slatkin



Sergey Rachmaninov (1873-1943)

Symphony No. 2 in E minor, Op. 27 · Vocalise, Op. 34, No. 14

The Russian composer and pianist Sergey Rachmaninov was born in 1873, the son of aristocratic parents. His father's improvidence, however, led to a change in the fortunes of the family when increasing debts necessitated the sale of one estate after another, followed by removal to an apartment in St. Petersburg. It was there that Rachmaninov, at the age of nine, entered the Conservatory on a scholarship. The subsequent separation of his parents and his own failure in general subject examinations brought about his move to Moscow, where he was accepted as a pupil of Nikolay Zverev, a pupil of John Field's pupil Dubucque and of Adolf von Henselt. Rachmaninov lodged in Zverev's house, where the necessary discipline was instilled, providing him with the basis of a subsequently formidable technique. In 1888, he entered the Conservatory as a pupil of his cousin Alexander Ziloti, a former pupil of Zverev and later of Liszt. Rachmaninov's other teachers at the Conservatory were Sergey Taneyev, a former pupil of Nikolay Rubinstein and Tchaikovsky, with whom he studied counterpoint, and Rimsky-Korsakov's former pupil Anton Arensky, Rachmaninov's teacher for fugue, harmony and free composition. In Moscow, as time went on, he won considerable success, both as a performer and as a composer, after graduating in the piano class of the Conservatory in 1891 and in composition the following year.

The Revolution of 1917 brought many changes. While some musicians remained in Russia, others chose temporary or permanent exile abroad. Rachmaninov took the latter course and thereafter found himself obliged to rely on his remarkable gifts as a pianist to support himself and his family, at the same time continuing his work as a conductor. Composition inevitably had to take second place and it was principally as a pianist, one of the greatest of his time, that he became known to audiences. Concert-tours in America proved lucrative and he established a

publishing enterprise in Paris, where he lived for some time, before having a house built for himself and his family at Hertenstein, near Lucerne. In 1939 he left Europe, finally settling in Beverly Hills, California, where he died in 1943.

Among the most popular of Rachmaninov's shorter works is the *Vocalise, Op. 34, No. 14*, its final version dated 21st September 1915. Originally, as its title suggests, a wordless song, the last of a set of fourteen songs, the piece has appeared in various guises, including, as here, in the arrangement for orchestra made by the composer.

Rachmaninov's *Symphony No. 1 in D minor, Op. 13* (1895), his second attempt at the form, had proved a great disappointment. At its first performance two years later in St. Petersburg, with the encouragement of the publisher and now most effective patron of Russian music, Belyayev, the work was conducted badly by Glazunov, allegedly drunk at the time, and was savagely reviewed by César Cui, who described it as a student attempt to depict in music the seven plagues of Egypt. This public failure, after earlier success with his *First Piano Concerto* (1892) and *Morceaux de Fantaisie* (1892), which includes the famous *Prelude in C sharp minor*, diverted Rachmaninov from composition and he took a position as conductor with the Mamontov Opera, apparently unable to return to composition. It was a successful course of hypnotherapy with Dr. Nikolay Dahl in the first months of 1900 that brought a measure of relief and his first work on a second piano concerto, dedicated to Dr. Dahl and completed and performed the following year.

A new symphony had been promised Alexander Ziloti, now conductor of the Moscow Philharmonic Society concerts, as early as 1902. In October 1906 Rachmaninov settled in Dresden, returning for the summer to Ivanovka, an estate belonging to his wife's family that he later purchased. The symphony was sketched out in rough by 1907 and during the summer



he set to work on the orchestration. The work went slowly and the symphony was only completed in January 1908, to be performed successfully in St. Petersburg under the composer's direction towards the end of the same month, as part of a concert season under Ziloti. Its American première was given in January 1909 by Leonard Slatkin's great-uncle, Modeste Altschuler, with the Russian Symphony Orchestra of New York. The symphony was dedicated to Sergey Taneyev.

Rachmaninov's *Symphony No. 2 in E minor, Op. 27*, is an extended work, dominated by strong lyrical feeling that has brought it a high degree of popularity. Underlying the work is the composer's recurrent *idée fixe*, the *Dies irae*, the sequence of the Latin Requiem Mass, a musical allusion to death at least since its use by Berlioz in 1830. The symphony starts with a slow introduction and a motto motif heard first in the lower strings. The step-wise outline of the motif suggests the melodic outline of much of the material that is to follow. A cor anglais leads to the main body of the movement, a sonata-allegro in which the first subject, in E minor,

expanded in the central development, leads to a more lyrical G major second subject, which, in turn, forms the substance of the recapitulation. The C major second movement *Scherzo*, skilfully orchestrated, has a *molto cantabile* secondary theme and a central *fugato* introduced by the second violins, followed by the first and then the violas, developed before the recapitulation. The A major third movement, the epitome of romantic longing, is introduced by a violin theme that leads to an extended clarinet melody. This last is to return with the first violins and an accompanying use of the first theme, which finally triumphs, followed by an allusion to the opening motif of the symphony. The last movement starts with a vigorous dance, leading to a secondary theme that suggests and then directly quotes the opening of the slow movement. The first theme is developed in a more sinister dance, with accompanying hints of the *Dies irae* and references to the opening motif. The second theme is heard again before the emphatic closing section.

Keith Anderson

DETROIT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Leonard Slatkin, *Music Director*

Music Directorship endowed by The Kresge Foundation

Peter Oundjian, *Principal Guest Conductor*

Principal Guest Conductorship supported by the Mardjian Foundation

Michel Camilo, 2009-2010 *Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Jazz Creative Director Chair*

Neeme Järvi, *Music Director Emeritus*

First Violins

Emmanuelle Boisvert

Concertmaster

Katherine Trupl Chair

Kimberly A. Kaloyanides

Kennedy

Associate Concertmaster

Alan and Marianne Schwartz

and Jean Shapero (Shapero

Foundation) Chair

Hai-Xin Wu

Assistant Concertmaster

Walker L. Cisler/Detroit

Edison Foundation Chair

Laura Rowe

Assistant Concertmaster

Beatriz Budinszky*

Marguerite Deslippe-Dene*

Elayna Duitman*

Elias Friedenzohn*

Joseph Goldman*

Laurie Landers Goldman*

Eun Park*

Adrienne Rönmark*

Linda Snedden-Smith*

Greg Staples*

Ann Strubler*

LeAnn Toth*

Second Violins

Geoffrey Applegate†

The Devereaux Family Chair

Adam Stepniewski††

Alvin Score

Lilit Danielyan*

Ron Fischer*

Hong-Yi Mo*

Robert Murphy*

Lenore Sjoberg*

Bruce Smith*

Joseph Striplin*

Marian Tanau*

Kyoko Kashiwagi**

Velda Kelly**

Cristina Muresan**

Kristin Van Ausdal**

Melody Wootton**

Violas

Alexander Mishnaevski†

Julie and Ed Levy, Jr. Chair

James VanValkenburg††

Caroline Coade

Glenn Mellow

Shanda Lowery-Sachs

Hart Hollman

Han Zheng

Hang Su

Catherine Compton

John Madison**

Eva Stern**

Kathryn Votapek**

Cellos

Robert deMaine†

James C. Gordon Chair

Marcy Chanteaux††

Dorothy and Herbert

Graebner Chair

John Thurman

Victor and Gale Girolami

Cello Chair

Mario DiFiore

Robert Bergman*

Carole Gatwood*

Barbara Hall Hassan*

Haden McKay*

Una O'Riordan*

Paul Wingert*

Sarah Cleveland**

Andrew McIntosh**

Basses

Alexander Hanna†

Van Dusen Family Chair

Stephen Molina††

Maxim Janowsky

Linton Bodwin

Stephen Edwards

Craig Rifel

Marshall Hutchinson

Richard Robinson

Harp

Patricia Masri-Fletcher†

Winifred E. Polk Chair

Flutes

Philip Dikeman#

Women's Association for the

DSO Chair

Sharon Wood Sparrow

Jeffery Zook

Piccolo

Jeffery Zook

Oboes

Donald Baker†

Jack A. and Aviva Robinson

Chair

Shelley Heron

Maggie Miller Chair

Brian Ventura††

Treva Womble^

Geoffrey Johnson§§

English Horn

Treva Womble^

Shelley Heron§

Clarinets

Theodore Oien†

Robert B. Semple Chair

Douglas Cornelsen

PVS Chemicals, Inc./ Jim and

Ann Nicholson Chair

Laurence Liberson††

Shannon Orme

E-Flat Clarinet

Laurence Liberson

Bass Clarinet

Shannon Orme

Barbara Frankel and Ronald

Michalak Chair

Basoons

Robert Williams†

John and Marlene Boll Chair

Victoria King

Michael Ke Ma††

Marcus Schoon

Contrabassoon

Marcus Schoon



French Horns

Karl Pituch†
Bryan Kennedy
Corbin Wagner
Denise Tryon
Mark Abbott
David Everson††

Trumpets

Ramón Parcels†
Lee and Floy Barthel Chair
Kevin Good
Stephen Anderson††
William Lucas

Trombones

Kenneth Thompkins†
Nathaniel Gurin††
Randall Hawes

Bass Trombone

Randall Hawes

Tuba

Dennis Nulty †

Timpani

Brian Jones †
Daniel Bauch††^

Percussion

Ian Ding#
*Ruth Roby and Alfred R.
Glancy III Chair*
Daniel Bauch##^
Robert Pangborn
William Cody Knicely Chair
Keith Claeys**

Librarians

Robert Stiles†
Ethan Allen

Personnel Manager

Stephen Molina
*Orchestra Personnel
Manager*
Alice Sauro
*Assistant Orchestra
Personnel Manager*

Conducting Assistant

Charles Greenwell

Chairman of the Board

James B. Nicholson

President and CEO

Anne Parsons

Legend

† Principal

†† Assistant Principal

Acting Principal

Acting Assistant Principal

^ Extended Leave

* These members may voluntarily revolve seating within the section on a regular basis.

**Substitute Musicians

§ Interim position

§§ African-American Orchestra Fellow.

Made possible by the National Endowment for the Arts and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

Activities of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra are made possible in part with the support of the National Endowment for the Arts.

This recording was made possible in part by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Detroit Symphony Orchestra is an affirmative action, equal opportunity institution.

Detroit Symphony Orchestra



The internationally acclaimed Detroit Symphony Orchestra (DSO), the fourth-oldest symphony orchestra in the United States, is known for trailblazing performances, visionary conductors and collaborations with the world's foremost musical artists. The orchestra has earned awards and accolades for nearly 150 recordings since 1918. Past touring and residency destinations include Europe, the Lucerne Festival in Switzerland, Japan, the Hollywood Bowl, Florida, the Bravo! Colorado Festival and the State of Michigan. The DSO makes its home in historic Orchestra Hall, one of America's most acoustically perfect concert halls. In 2003, the hall reopened as part of the Max M. Fisher Music Center, an eighty-million-dollar performing arts facility encompassing two recital halls and

the Jacob Bernard Pincus Music Education Center. With an extensive music education program, the DSO trains over 700 young classical and jazz musicians weekly and serves as an educational partner to the adjacent Detroit School of Arts. In the 2008-09 season, conductor Leonard Slatkin became the twelfth Music Director of the DSO. Working in collaboration with Slatkin, Toronto Symphony Music Director Peter Oundjian serves as DSO Principal Guest Conductor. For more information visit the DSO website at www.detroitssymphony.com

Leonard Slatkin



Internationally renowned conductor Leonard Slatkin began his tenure as Music Director of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in the 2008-2009 season. Additionally, he became Principal Guest Conductor of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra in 2008-2009. He completed his twelfth and final season as Music Director of the National Symphony Orchestra in June 2008, and finished his three-year commitment as Music Advisor to the Nashville Symphony Orchestra in June 2009. Slatkin continues as Principal Guest Conductor of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Born in Los Angeles, where his parents, conductor-violinist Felix Slatkin and cellist Eleanor Aller, were founding members of the Hollywood String Quartet, he began his musical studies on the violin and studied conducting with his father, followed by training with Walter Susskind at Aspen and Jean Morel at the Juilliard School. After a successful tenure as Music Director of the Saint Louis Symphony from 1979 to 1996, he became Conductor Laureate. He served as Chief Conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra from 2000-2004 and Principal Guest Conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl from 2004 to 2007. His over a hundred recordings have brought seven Grammy Awards and more than sixty Grammy Award nominations. He has

received many other honours, including the 2003 National Medal of Arts, France's Chevalier of the Legion of Honour and the League of American Orchestras' Gold Baton for service to American music.



DDD

8.572458

Playing Time
60:43

© & © 2010 Naxos Rights International Ltd.
Booklet notes in English
Disc made in Canada. Printed and assembled in USA.
www.naxos.com

In the wake of his *First Symphony's* catastrophic première, Rachmaninov took a decade before commencing his *Second*, painstakingly revising it before conducting the triumphant première in 1908. Although haunted, like his *First*, by the *Dies irae* chant melody, the *Second Symphony* brims with Rachmaninov's revitalised assurance as a composer, from its brooding opening to the vigorous grandeur of its conclusion. Eric Carmen borrowed the third movement's poignant theme for his popular song *Never Gonna Fall In Love Again*, a tribute to the enduring power of Rachmaninov's Romantic genius.

Sergey
RACHMANINOV
(1873-1943)

Symphony No. 2 in E minor, Op. 27

- | | | |
|---|--|--------------|
| 1 | Vocalise, Op. 34, No. 14 | 6:38 |
| | Symphony No. 2 in E minor, Op. 27 | 54:05 |
| 2 | Largo – Allegro moderato | 18:10 |
| 3 | Allegro molto | 9:00 |
| 4 | Adagio | 13:32 |
| 5 | Allegro vivace | 13:23 |

Detroit Symphony Orchestra • Leonard Slatkin

Recorded at Orchestra Hall, the home of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Detroit, USA,
from 24th to 27th September, 2009

Producer: Blanton Alspaugh • Engineer and editor: David Lau

Booklet notes: Keith Anderson

Cover photograph of Orchestra Hall by David Krieger (kriegerphoto.com)

This recording was made possible in part by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.