

FORT GREENE ORCHESTRA



Clair de Lune

*A piano concert
dedicated to the moon*



THE ARTISTS



PIANO

Vladimir Remyantsev

Steinway Artist

HOST

Daniel Zinn

Artistic Director, Fort Greene Orchestra

THE CONVERSATIONAL CONCERT

Developed by Daniel Zinn, the conversational concert goes beyond program notes. Between pieces, the host sits down with the artist and asks the questions the audience would ask: who a piece was written for, what was happening in the composer's life, and what it takes to play it. There's no script. You leave knowing every piece on the program a little better than when you came in.

PROGRAM



BEETHOVEN

Adagio sostenuto

from Piano Sonata No. 14 in C-sharp minor,
Op. 27, No. 2, "Moonlight"

CHOPIN

Nocturne in D-flat major

Op. 27, No. 2

RAVEL

Gaspard de la Nuit

Ondine · Le Gibet · Scarbo

DEBUSSY

Clair de Lune

from *Suite bergamasque*

TCHAIKOVSKY

Lullaby, Op. 16, No. 1

arr. Sergei Rachmaninoff

TCHAIKOVSKY

"Rose Adagio"

from *The Sleeping Beauty*

arr. Vladimir Rumyantsev

VLADIMIR RUMYANTSEV *piano*

DANIEL ZINN *host*

PROGRAM NOTES



Music for the Night

EVERY piece on tonight's program was written for the hours after dark. None of it stays loud for long. Most of it was written for one person at one piano, for a small room of friends, and sometimes for no one at all.

Vladimir and I will talk between the pieces, so these notes are here for the things we won't have time to say.



LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Adagio sostenuto

from the "Moonlight" Sonata

1801

BEETHOVEN never called this piece the Moonlight Sonata. He published it in 1802 as a *Sonata quasi una fantasia*, a

PROGRAM NOTES

Beethoven · “Moonlight” Sonata



sonata in the manner of a fantasy, and dedicated it to Countess Giulietta Guicciardi, a young piano student of his with whom he was, for a while, in love. The nickname came from the poet and critic Ludwig Rellstab, who said some years after Beethoven's death that the first movement reminded him of moonlight on Lake Lucerne. It stuck so well that most people know the name before they know the music.

What made the piece strange in its day is the order. A sonata was supposed to open with its fast, argumentative movement. Beethoven starts with the slowest one: a steady rocking of triplets, a bass line that moves as little as it can, and a melody that barely rises above a few repeated notes. At the top of the page he asked for the whole movement to be played very delicately and with the dampers raised, so the sound is left to ring and blur.

PROGRAM NOTES

Beethoven · “Moonlight” Sonata



He wrote it in the same year he first admitted, in letters to close friends, that he was losing his hearing. I'm careful about reading a piece of music as a diary entry. But it's hard to listen to this movement and not hear someone thinking alone, late at night, with no intention of being overheard.



FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN

Nocturne in D-flat major

Op. 27, No. 2

1835

THE nocturne wasn't Chopin's invention. The Irish pianist John Field wrote the first ones, and Chopin took the name and the basic idea: a singing melody in the right hand over a wide, rolling accompaniment in the left. What Chopin added was the voice. He loved Italian opera, Bellini above all, and his nocturnes are full of

PROGRAM NOTES

Chopin · Nocturne in D-flat



long vocal lines that ornament themselves the way a great singer would on the second verse.

He wrote this one in 1835, at twenty-five. He had left Warsaw five years earlier, and after the failed uprising against Russian rule he never went home. In Paris he taught the daughters of aristocrats and played mostly in salons rather than concert halls, which he disliked. This is salon music in the best sense, written for a room of thirty people, not three thousand.

Listen for the melody when it comes back. Each time, the right hand dresses it up a little more, a turn here, a run of tiny notes there, until near the end the tune is doubled in sixths and thirds, as if two voices were singing it together. It's one of the most tender things he wrote, and he never raises his voice once.



PROGRAM NOTES

MAURICE RAVEL

Gaspard de la Nuit

1908

GASPARD de la Nuit is the dark side of tonight. Ravel based it on three prose poems by Aloysius Bertrand, a French poet who died poor and young in 1841, a year before his only book was published. Bertrand pretended the poems were the work of a mysterious stranger, Gaspard of the Night, who may have been the devil himself.

Ondine is a water nymph. She sings at a man's window and begs him to marry her and become king of the lakes. He tells her he loves a mortal woman. She sulks, weeps a little, bursts out laughing and vanishes in a shower of spray. Ravel writes the water as a shimmer that never stops moving, the right hand trembling on the same few notes for pages at a time.

PROGRAM NOTES

Ravel · Gaspard de la Nuit



Le Gibet, the gallows, is the opposite: stillness. A single B-flat tolls through the entire movement like a bell from a distant town, while a hanged man sways against the sunset. Ravel marked it to be played without hurrying or slowing down until the end. It's one of the loneliest pieces of piano music I know.

Scarbo is a goblin, a small malicious creature that appears at night, spins around the room, grows huge, and disappears. Ravel said he wanted to write something harder than Balakirev's *Islamey*, then considered the most difficult piece in the piano repertoire. Most pianists will tell you he succeeded. His childhood friend Ricardo Viñes gave the premiere in Paris in January 1909.



PROGRAM NOTES

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CLAUDE DEBUSSY

Clair de Lune

from Suite bergamasque

c. 1890, published 1905

THIS is the piece the evening is named after, and probably the reason some of you are here, which is a perfectly good reason.

Debussy started the *Suite bergamasque* around 1890, in his late twenties, and then left it unpublished for fifteen years. By the time it came out in 1905 he was a different composer. He had written the opera *Pelléas et Mélisande* and was finishing *La Mer*, and he wasn't keen on having such early music in the world. He revised it and let it go anyway.

The title comes from a poem by Paul Verlaine. Masked revelers play lutes and dance in the moonlight, but they don't quite seem to believe in their own happiness, and

PROGRAM NOTES

Debussy · Clair de Lune



the moonlight itself is “calm, sad and beautiful.” To me that line is the whole piece. It’s gorgeous and it’s a little sad, and it never decides which one it is.

Notice how little happens at the start: a few soft chords, falling slowly, with a lot of air between them. Debussy is famous for music about light and water, but what he’s really working with here is time, how long a sound can hang before the next one arrives.



PROGRAM NOTES



TCHAIKOVSKY, ARR.
RACHMANINOFF

Lullaby

Op. 16, No. 1

1872 · arranged 1941

TCHAIKOVSKY wrote this lullaby as a song for voice and piano in 1872, setting a poem by Apollon Maykov. A mother sings her child to sleep and tells him how his nannies for the day, the wind, the sun and the eagle, have all gone home for the night.

Almost seventy years later, Sergei Rachmaninoff, living in America and more than twenty years away from Russia, turned the song into a piece for solo piano. It was

PROGRAM NOTES

Tchaikovsky · Lullaby



one of the last things he wrote. He died two years later in Beverly Hills.

Rachmaninoff owed Tchaikovsky a great deal. Tchaikovsky noticed him as a teenager, encouraged him, and helped get his first opera onto the stage of the Bolshoi. So this is less an arrangement than a thank-you note, written by an old man to a mentor who had been gone for almost fifty years. You'll hear Tchaikovsky's simple tune, and around it Rachmaninoff's harmonies, thicker and darker, like a song remembered from childhood.



PROGRAM NOTES



TCHAIKOVSKY, ARR. RUMYANTSEV

“Rose Adagio”

from The Sleeping Beauty

1890

WE close in the theater. *The Sleeping Beauty* premiered at the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg in January 1890, with choreography by Marius Petipa, and the Rose Adagio is its most famous scene. It's Princess Aurora's sixteenth birthday. Four princes have come to court her, and each offers her a rose. She dances with each of them in turn, and the scene is built around a feat of balance: Aurora stands on the point of one foot while the princes take turns holding her hand and letting go.

PROGRAM NOTES

Tchaikovsky · Rose Adagio



Tchaikovsky gives the scene one long melody that keeps climbing, with the full orchestra behind it. Getting all of that into two hands is Vladimir's own project. He has spent the past few years working with dancers, touring the world with Twyla Tharp Dance and making his own evenings of piano and dance with Skylar Brandt of American Ballet Theatre, and this arrangement comes out of that work. It's the one piece on tonight's program you won't hear anywhere else.

Daniel Zinn



THE ARTISTS



PIANO

Vladimir Rumyantsev

Vladimir Rumyantsev is an internationally acclaimed pianist known for his virtuosity and the depth of his interpretations. A prodigy, he made his debut at the age of seven in the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory, where he won Moscow's Glinka Competition. He has since performed at Carnegie Hall, Covent Garden, the Mariinsky Theatre, the Kennedy Center, the Moscow Philharmonic and the Bolshoi Theatre.

He trained at the Gnessin Moscow Special School for Music under Mikhail Khokhlov and at the Moscow Conservatory with Sergey Dorensky, Alexander Bakhchiev, Elena Sorokina, Pavel Nersessian and Nikolai Lugansky. He earned his advanced degrees at the Mannes School of Music in New York under Pavlina Dokovska and is completing his Doctor of Musical Arts at The Hartt School with José Ramos Santana.

THE ARTISTS

Vladimir Rumyantsev



His performances of the Shostakovich and Stravinsky concertos led to collaborations with the Mariinsky Ballet under Valery Gergiev and Boris Gruzin. The New York Times called his Diabelli Variations “excellent,” The Wall Street Journal called his playing “potent,” and Gramophone praised his “virtuosity always informed by awareness of resourcefulness and ambiguity.”

In 2024 he recorded Sean Hickey’s *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* for solo piano on Sono Luminus. Most recently he toured the world as solo pianist with Twyla Tharp Dance for her Diamond Jubilee, and he produces his own concerts of piano and dance with Skylar Brandt, Principal Dancer with American Ballet Theatre.

Vladimir Rumyantsev is a Steinway Artist.



THE ARTISTS



HOST

Daniel Zinn

Daniel Zinn is an Israeli conductor and impresario based in Brooklyn, and the founder and Artistic Director of the Fort Greene Orchestra. Raised in Jerusalem in a house that was always full of guests, he learned early that how you receive people matters as much as what you offer them. He has run his concerts on that principle ever since.

He founded the Fort Greene Orchestra in 2023 and made its home at the Co-Cathedral of St. Joseph, where it has sold more than 50,000 tickets in its first three seasons. The concerts are short, plainly spoken, and exactingly staged, from the light design to the program notes to the greeting at the door—the details attended to so that the music can be heard the way it deserves.

Together with Steinway Artist Vladimir Rumyantsev, Zinn brought one of his signature concerts to Carnegie Hall's Stern Auditorium,

THE ARTISTS

Daniel Zinn



bringing the nearly full hall to its feet at the end.

He also runs New Audience Company, the in-house advertising operation that built the orchestra's audience and is now available to other classical organizations, and writes a weekly Substack recommending New York classical concerts to more than 10,000 subscribers.

Tonight he joins Vladimir onstage as host of Clair de Lune.



UPCOMING CONCERTS



Clair de Lune

Friday, October 9

6:30 & 8 PM · Brooklyn Music School

One more night with the moon. Vladimir Rumyantsev brings his evening of famous piano music inspired by the moon to Brooklyn Music School in Fort Greene, with Daniel Zinn hosting. If there's someone you wish had been sitting next to you tonight, bring them.

GET TICKETS

UPCOMING CONCERTS



Mozart's Requiem

Saturday, October 17

6:30 & 8 PM · Co-Cathedral of St. Joseph

Mozart's final masterpiece. Daniel Zinn conducts the Fort Greene Orchestra, the MACC Ensemble choir, and soloists Kristin Renee Young, Rocky Duval, Dimitri Pittas and Gocha Abuladze in the mystical turn of the season, as the abundance of summer gives way to the dark.

GET TICKETS

UPCOMING CONCERTS



Vivaldi's Four Seasons

Thursday, October 29

8 PM · Co-Cathedral of St. Joseph

Saturday, October 31

8 PM · Co-Cathedral of St. Joseph

Saturday, November 7

6:30 & 8 PM · St. Bartholomew's Church

Returning due to popular demand: one of music's most beloved masterpieces. The Fort Greene Orchestra, led by acclaimed violin soloist Giora Schmidt, brings Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* to life amid our signature musical light design.

TICKETS · BROOKLYN

TICKETS · PARK AVENUE

UPCOMING CONCERTS



Chopin & Champagne

Thursday, November 5

7:30 PM · The Kosciuszko Foundation

Friday, December 4

7:30 PM · The Kosciuszko Foundation

Fifty minutes of the music Chopin is loved for, told with the stories behind it, and a glass of Moët & Chandon in hand before a note is played. Vladimir Rumyantsev at the piano; Daniel Zinn hosts.

TICKETS · NOVEMBER 5

TICKETS · DECEMBER 4

UPCOMING CONCERTS



Mahler's Fifth Symphony

Thursday, November 12

8 PM · Co-Cathedral of St. Joseph

Saturday, November 14

8 PM · Co-Cathedral of St. Joseph

A lone trumpet, a funeral march, then the most beloved Adagietto ever written, and a final climb into blazing triumph, in one of Brooklyn's most beautiful churches.

GET TICKETS

UPCOMING CONCERTS



Handel's Messiah

Thursday, December 3

8 PM · Co-Cathedral of St. Joseph

Saturday, December 5

8 PM · Co-Cathedral of St. Joseph

Handel's beloved seasonal masterpiece comes to Brooklyn. Daniel Zinn conducts the Fort Greene Orchestra, the MACC Ensemble choir, and an international cast of soloists in selections from *Messiah*, from the prophecy of "Comfort ye" to the "Hallelujah" chorus.

GET TICKETS



*Thank you for coming.
I hope to see you again soon.*

— *Daniel Zinn*

FORTGREENE.LIVE

The orchestra's official website.

SUBSTACK

*A free weekly newsletter recommending the best classical concerts around
the city.*

THE REST OF THE SEASON

The official FGO ticketing page.