



SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Presents

Nathalie Joy, violoncello
Dr. Michael Bukhman, piano

April 25 2021

7:00

PepsiCo Recital Hall

Program

Pezzo Capriccioso

Piotr I. Tchaikovsky
(1840-1893)

Cello Concerto in B minor Op. 104

I. *Allegro*

II. *Adagio ma non troppo*

III. *Allegro moderato*

Antonín L. Dvořák
(1841-1904)

Le Grand Tango

Astor Piazzolla
(1921-1992)

This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Degree
in Major. Nathalie Joy is a student of Dr. Jesús Castro-Balbi.

The use of recording equipment or taking photographs is prohibited.
Please silence all electronic devices including watches, pagers, and phones.

**Piotr Tchaikovsky, (Kamsko-Votkinsk, Vyatka province, 25 April/May 7, 1840 - St Petersburg, 25 Oct/Nov 6, 1893)
Pezzo Capriccioso Op. 62**

Tchaikovsky was a pupil of Anton Rubinstein at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory, a teacher at the Moscow Conservatory and the representative of the great Russian musical tradition. Most of his works are among the world's most popular classical music pieces. His ballets *Swan Lake*, *The Nutcracker* and *Sleeping Beauty*, his operas *Eugene Onegin* and *The Queen of Spades*, his piano concerti and his Violin Concerto, his six symphonies etc...

Tchaikovsky's popularity is mainly linked to the emotional appeal of his music, and for half a century, Western aesthetes considered his music as vulgar, they would say it lacked philosophy and elevated thought. Then, there was a shift of ideas about many taboos through the sexual liberation movement of the 1960s to 80s and Tchaikovsky's life was caught up in a discourse. Scholars started to link his music with his sexuality, an indignity that would have caused the composer unspeakable humiliation back then. When historical factors were brought into play – especially Freud's pathologizing of homosexuality – specialist opinions of Tchaikovsky's music changed accordingly, and dubiously slanted assessments of his music followed suit.

Besides being a composer, Tchaikovsky had a very fond relationship with words. We know this thanks to reports by his governess Fanny Dürbach. Dürbach, noted Pyotr's sensitivity to words, calling him 'le petit Pouchkine' (in reference to Alexander Pushkin the Russian poet, playwright, and novelist of the Romantic era), and that at six he read in French and German. Tchaikovsky wrote in French, on secular and metaphysical topics precocious for any child and remarkable for a seven-year-old living in rural Russia at mid-century. As a consequence of his love for writing, Tchaikovsky kept diaries from 1873 to 1891, which was something among the societies fashions of his time. His brother Modest explained:

Life was precious to Tchaikovsky. This was noticeable in many ways, among others in his passion for keeping a diary. Every day had great value for him, and the thought that he must bid eternal farewell to it, and lose all trace of its experiences, depressed him exceedingly. It was consoling to save something from the limbo of forgetfulness, so that in the time to come he might recall to mind the events through which he had lived. In old age he believed it would be a great pleasure to reconstruct the joys of the past from these short sketches and fragmentary jottings which no one else would be able to understand. He preferred the system of brief and imperfect notes, because in reading through the diaries of his childhood and youth, in which he had gone more fully into his thoughts and emotions, he had felt somewhat ashamed. The sentiments and ideas which he found so interesting, and which once seemed to him so great and important, now appeared empty, meaningless and ridiculous, and he resolved in the future only to commit facts to paper

without any commentary. Disillusioned by their contents, he destroyed all his early diaries.

Parts of Tchaikovsky's diaries, especially those that refer to music, were first reproduced between 1900 and 1902 by his brother Modest in his biographic book *The Life of Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky*.

Apart from the famous Rococo Variations, Pyotr I. Tchaikovsky composed another work for solo violoncello: *Pezzo capriccioso, Opus 62* and thanks to these diaries we can account for the composition of the piece which began at Aachen after 8-20 August 1887. Around 12-25 August, Tchaikovsky noted in his diary: "Worked on a cello piece". From 14-26 August he noted: "Finished the cello piece in rough". The piece was dedicated to Anatoly Brandukov in a letter to him Tchaikovsky reported: "I have written a small cello piece, and would like you to look through it, and put the final touches to the cello part". He was unable to finish the piece back in Aachen since he was keeping company to his friend Nikolay Kondratyev who was seriously-ill with syphilis and when his friend died it had a hard impact on him. Tchaikovsky poured all the suffering of his loss to the music and around September, he wrote again to Brandukov "I did not manage to finish the piece at Aachen. I shall put it aside until I can confer with you in Saint Petersburg, or when we meet in Moscow". He added: "The piece seems to have turned out rather poorly."

This piece is written in B minor (the same as Symphony No. 6 "Pathétique" and the Dvořák Cello Concerto). Despite the contrast between the slow and fast sections of the piece, Tchaikovsky preserved the basic pulse and the sober mood throughout the piece.

**Antonín Dvořák, (Nelahozeves, nr Kralupy, Sept 8, 1841 - Prague, May 1, 1904)
Cello Concerto in B minor Op. 104**

Dvořák wrote this concerto from November 1894 to February 1895 when he was living in New York during his American period from 1892-1895. You might be asking yourself, what brought him to New York? Well, Jeannette M. Thurber (one of the first big patrons of classical music in the United States) established the National Conservatory of Music of America in 1885 (which is arguably the first conservatory that accepted BIPOC and women as students). Thurber invited Dvořák to serve as the Artistic Director and professor of composition of the conservatory in 1892 since she knew about his reputation as a great composer of Nationalistic style, she reached out to him in the attempt to incite him to create a national American style of art music. Dvořák accepted the offer and on 27 November 1892 he wrote to his friend Hlávka:

“The Americans expect great things of me. I am to show them the way into the Promised Land, the realm of a new, independent art, in short a national style of music!

... This will certainly be a great and lofty task, and I hope that with God's help I shall succeed in it. I have plenty of encouragement to do so."

In Dvořák's search for musical material of the American style he reached out to Henry Krehbiel (music critic) for the transcriptions of Native American melodies and Henry Thacker Burleigh. Burleigh was an African American voice student at the conservatory who also worked as Dvořák's copyist and played double bass and timpani at the conservatory's symphony orchestra. He was asked to sing *spirituals* (a religious song of a kind associated with black Christians of the southern US, and thought to derive from the combination of European hymns and African musical elements by black slaves) and *plantation songs* from the south (formerly sung by black slaves on American plantations) since Dvořák considered that the traditional elements of Native and African American music could be the foundations for the National American Style.

In 1893 the United States went through an economic depression set off by the collapse of the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad and the National Cordage Company (two of the largest employers in the USA at the time), followed by this a panic erupted in the stock market. It is important to mention this since it greatly affected the conservatory in which Dvořák was employed. Mrs Thurber relied on her husband's money as essential financial support for the National Conservatory, and he was now facing bankruptcy.

After spending the summer in Bohemia, he returned to the USA in the fall of 1894, he felt homesick and had difficulties with his creative work, specifically this cello concerto.

"If I could work with as few anxieties as I do in Vysoká, I would have been finished long ago. However, I cannot do it here – I have to teach on Monday – I have Tuesday free – but I am more or less busy on the other days of the week – in short, I cannot give so much time to my work – and if I could I would not feel like it – and so on. In short, it would be best to be back in Vysoká – I am refreshed there, I rest, I am happy. Oh, if only I were home again!"

In 1895 Dvořák and his wife returned to Bohemia and told Ms. Thurber (who still owed him money) that he was not returning to the USA to fulfill his contract with her and the conservatory.

The cello concerto in B minor was the second cello concerto and the last concerto he wrote. Although it was composed in the USA it doesn't contain any of the Americanisms he was using for his other works such as the Symphony No.9 in E Minor, Op. 95, B. 178 "From the New World", String Quartet in F major No. 12 Op. 96 "American" and the String Quintet

in E ♭ op.97 B. 180. Even though the concerto was intended for the Czech virtuoso cellist Hanuš Wihan, Dvořák's original inspiration was Victor Herbert's Second Cello Concerto, op. 30. When Hanuš Wihan was unable to perform the work, Leo Stern was appointed by the Philharmonic Society to premiere the concerto in London (1896) and followed the traditional three movement structure. The first movement is very virtuosic and focuses on the richness of contrasts between themes. The second movement contains a quotation from the song *Lasst Mich Allein* Op. 82 No. 1 B. 157 which is a reference to his sister-in-law who died in march of 1895. After her death, he also added this reference into the finale of the third movement as well.

Astor Piazzolla, (Mar del Plata, March 11, 1921- Buenos Aires, July 5, 1992

Le Grand Tango

A tango is a latinamerican song and dance genre which, despite its many meanings, it primarily designates the most popular Argentine urban dance of the 20th century being the most expressive and nationalistic symbol of the Argentinian people. The tango is said to have developed in the *arrabal* or *orillas* (poor slum areas) on the outskirts of Buenos Aires. The arrabal or suburban culture consisted of elements introduced after 1870 by millions of frustrated European immigrants, and aspects of urbanized pampa (or gaucho) traditions. Gaucho musical traditions were especially represented by the *payada* and the *milonga*. The improvised song texts of the *payada* often referred to current events, and frequently voiced social protest. The *milonga*, a dance of alleged African origin in duple metre and syncopated rhythm, contributed to the rhythmic structure of the tango. Some of the best examples of tango-songs include Samuel Castriota's *Mi noche triste* (c1915), Julio César Sanders's *Adiós muchachos* (1928), Enrique Delfino's *Milonguita* (1920) and Aníbal Troilo's *Sur* (1948).

Around the 1950's and 60's the tango experienced a decline in its popularity but Astor Piazzolla innovated the genre and brought it back to life under large orchestral arrangements of tango with percussion instruments and other additional colours that appeared in the 1940s, breaking away from the *orquesta típica* arrangement (Vicente Greco is generally credited as the first to standardize this ensemble which he called 'orquesta típica criolla', and which initially included violin, flute, guitar and *bandoneón*), and in the 1960s he introduced the electric guitar in smaller ensembles, for example in his Quinteto '*Tango Nuevo*'.

Besides being a composer, Piazzolla was also a band director and an amazing bandoneón virtuoso. A bandoneón is a type of concertina -a free-reed instrument like the harmonica and the accordeon, originated in Germany and brought to Argentina by German and Italian immigrants and sailors. It looks very similar to a miniature accordion with keys and switches on both extremities of its body.

Piazzolla studied classical music with Alberto Ginastera and after writing a symphony for the

Partido Obrero de Buenos Aires he won a scholarship to study in Paris with Nadia Boulanger. Boulanger encouraged him to write tangos rather than concentrate solely on classical composition and thanks to her advice he started to experiment with the traditional tango. *Le Grand Tango* was written in 1982 and originally published in Paris, thus the french rather than spanish title. This piece was commissioned by Efraín Paesky, Director of the OAS Division of Arts, and dedicated to Mstislav Rostropovich, to whom Piazzolla sent the score. Slava had never heard of Piazzolla at the time and it took him 8 years to take the music seriously. After those years past, having looked at the music, he was “astounded by the great talent of Astor.” Slava decided he would include it in a concert but he made some changes in the cello part and wanted Piazzolla to hear them before he played the piece. The piece had its world premiere in New Orleans on April 24, 1990 with Sarah Wolfensohn as the pianist.

Although this piece is written in one movement it is composed by three broad sections: *Tempo di Tango* where the accented tango rhythms predominate, *Libero e Cantabile* (free and singing) which is an extensive and expressive dialogue between the piano and the cello, and *Giocoso* (humourous) which develops a more profound and exciting complexity in its emotional range.