



'The profundity of her emotions impresses much more than her technical perfection.
Her performance connects virtuosity, energy and passion' – *Rheinische Post*, Germany

'She demonstrates an extraordinary musicality, a strong expression and an absolutely perfect
technique' – *Kölner Klassik*

'A sensation ... No-one can compete with her extraordinary musicality' – *Adresseavisen*, Norway

'Amazing performance' – *Austria Today*



YOON-HEE KIM PLAYS KHACHATURIAN & TCHAIKOVSKY VIOLIN CONCERTOS

YOON-HEE KIM **VIOLIN** • BARRY WORDSWORTH **CONDUCTOR**

ARAM KHACHATURIAN (1903–1978)

Violin Concerto in D minor (1940)

- I. Allegro con fermezza
- II. Andante sostenuto
- III. Allegro vivace

PYOTR TCHAIKOVSKY (1840–1893)

Violin Concerto in D Op.35 (1878)

- I. Allegro moderato
- II. Canzonetta: Andante –
- III. Finale: Allegro vivacissimo

Few composers encapsulate the life of a Soviet musician more poignantly than Aram Khachaturian. Even though he was creatively attuned to the propagandist ideals of Socialist Realism, which became official state policy in 1932 under Joseph Stalin, he still found himself in hot water with the authorities on several occasions.

Khachaturian was virtually self-taught as a composer (his degree was in biology) and a comparative late-starter – he was already 26 when he began studying with Nikolai Miaskovsky at the Moscow Conservatory. Yet he possessed a highly vivid creative imagination, flavoured by the distinctive, Oriental harmonies of his Armenian homeland. In later life he recalled that ‘Old Tiflis was a city of sounds. If you wandered away from the main street you were quickly plunged into a world of vivid musical sounds from a variety of sources.’

Having won Prokofiev’s enthusiastic support during the early 1930s, Khachaturian’s compositions began emerging in print, including a brilliant *Toccata* for piano that became a popular virtuoso encore. However, it was his First Symphony (1935) that established his early reputation, with its ravishing orchestral colours, rhythmic élan and highly scented, pedal-pointed harmonies.

By the early 1940s Khachaturian was riding on the crest of a wave of popular success. His Piano Concerto (1936) and Violin Concerto (1940) established him, alongside Prokofiev and Shostakovich, as one of Russia’s most celebrated composers. His stunning incidental music to Lermontov’s *Masquerade* appeared in 1941 and the following year his epic ballet score *Gayeneh* was written, which included the ever-popular whirlwind ‘Sabre Dance’.

‘I wrote the music as though on a wave of happiness; my whole being was in a state of joy, for I was awaiting the birth of my son. And this feeling, this love of life, was transmitted to the music.’ So saying, Khachaturian set the seal on his gloriously inspired Violin Concerto, composed over two months during the idyllic summer of 1940. ‘I worked without effort,’ he recalled. ‘Sometimes my thoughts and imagination outraced the hand that was covering the stave with notes. The themes came to me in such abundance that I had a hard time putting them in some kind of order.’

While working on the Concerto, Khachaturian benefitted enormously from the friendly help and advice of Russia’s leading violinist, the legendary David Oistrakh, who gave the world première in Moscow on 16 November as part of a ten-day festival of new Soviet music. Such was its impact that within just a few months it had been taken up by several leading virtuosos, including Leonid Kogan who described it as ‘opening a new page in violin music’.

‘My whole life, everything that I have created, belongs to the Armenian people,’ Khachaturian declared passionately shortly after completing the Violin Concerto. Experiencing the headlong forward momentum of the opening movement one can hear exactly what he meant, from the hurtling dynamism of the soloist’s very first entry to the second theme’s exotic, folksong-inflected musings. Khachaturian’s composer colleague Dmitri Kabalevsky described it as encapsulating ‘the captivating rhythmic diversity of dances of the peoples of Transcaucasia and the inspired improvisations of the Ashugs [Armenia’s native bards].’

The slow movement gently unfolds like an inspired extemporisation, its delicately-spiced colours and harmonies emerging as though from some distant desert encampment. All

cares are swept aside by the bracing finale, an extrovert dance of celebration that sweeps the listener along on a magic carpet ride of exhilarating dance rhythms and exultant virtuosity.

Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto reflects just as intensely its Russian origins, only in his case its more cosmopolitan Muscovite heritage, spiced by the uncontrollable rhythmic surge of the Ukrainian Cossacks.

Recuperating in the picturesque Swiss resort of Clarens following the unmitigated disaster of his recent marriage, Tchaikovsky's recovery was considerably enhanced by the arrival of his violinist friend, Josef Kotek, with whom he spent many hours playing through the classics of the violin repertoire – most notably, Lalo's *Symphonie espagnole*. This so inspired Tchaikovsky that he immediately set to work on his own Concerto, writing excitedly to his publisher, Jurgenson, in March 1878, that he had 'hit upon an idea quite by chance, was carried away, and in no time my sketch was nearly finished'. The 'sketch' to which he referred was the initial draft of his only Violin Concerto, completed in just two weeks.

Elated by the spectacular return of his creative urge, Tchaikovsky chose to dedicate his new masterwork to the great violin virtuoso and pedagogue, Leopold Auer – but without first gaining his permission. In the event, Auer was decidedly underwhelmed by the piece, complaining that 'despite its intrinsic value, the Concerto calls for a thorough revision, since in various parts it is quite unviolinistic.' In fairness, Auer continued to persevere with some of the more finger-crippling passages, but eventually pulled out of the planned March 1879 Moscow première, complaining that the piece was simply 'too awkwardly written'.

Two years passed before Tchaikovsky was approached by the gifted violinist, Adolf Brodsky, with a view to performing the Concerto. Delighted by Brodsky's scintillating playing during rehearsals – and clearly still smarting from Auer's earlier rejection – Tchaikovsky re-dedicated the piece to Brodsky, inscribing a personal photograph 'To the recreator of the Concerto deemed impossible, from the grateful Pyotr Tchaikovsky'.

However, the 1881 Vienna première of Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto under Hans Richter was nothing short of a catastrophe. In the middle of the performance a dispute broke out in the audience between rival conservative and modernist factions, the latter in support of the Concerto. The influential pro-Brahms critic, Edward Hanslick, gleefully stuck the knife in, dismissing the finale as 'trivial and barbarous Cossack music', and most notoriously of all as 'bringing us face to face for the first time with music that we can actually hear stink'. From such inauspicious beginnings this glorious work quickly established itself as one of the most popular of all concertos.

Tchaikovsky's genius can be heard working at full stretch throughout the first movement. This is not due to any groundbreaking structural innovation, although his positioning of the solo cadenza *before* the recapitulation clearly had an impact on Khachaturian. Where Tchaikovsky excels is in the sheer quality of his ideas, their scintillating presentation, and his profound instinct for emotional timing that imparts a sense of compelling musical narrative throughout.

The original slow movement – a lengthy, brooding *Méditation* that has become a popular work in its own right – was quickly discarded by Tchaikovsky and replaced by the wistfully nostalgic *Canzonetta*, an intermezzo-like miniature of heart-rending sincerity. A sudden orchestral call to arms links straight into the Cossack-dance finale, during which the scampering semiquavers of the bravado main theme are superbly offset by the swaggering, drone-accompanied secondary material. The breathtaking coda finds the soloist and orchestra virtually falling over one another in their excitement to get to the end.

Notes by Julian Haylock



YOON-HEE KIM VIOLIN

Yoon-Hee Kim began playing the violin at the age of three and within a year she was already performing in public concerts. She was admitted to the Vienna University for Music at the age of four as their youngest student ever, studying with Profs. Eugenia and Juri Polatschek, Prof. Gerhard Schulz

and Prof. Elisabeth Kropfisch. She made her orchestral début with the Savaria Orchestra of Hungary in 1996 at the age of just five years old.

Born on the South-Korean island of Jeju, which is renowned as one of the 'New 7 Wonders of Nature', Yoon-Hee Kim is now an Honorary Ambassador for Jeju and was awarded the prize for 'The Young Artist of the Year' in 2011 from the Ministry of Culture in Korea, being the youngest ever recipient of this title.

As a soloist, she began performing with many of the world's leading orchestras at a very young age, among them the Stuttgart Philharmonic, Monte Carlo Philharmonic (at the age of 16), Norway's Trondheim Symphony (at the age of 13), Spain's Radio Television Orchestra (RTVE) under Maestro Walter Weller, Slovak Philharmonic, Bayer Philharmonic, Prague Radio Philharmonic, Ukraine National Symphony, National Kiev Chamber, Dohnanyi Symphony, Transylvanian, Catalunya, Janáček Philharmonic, Katowice Philharmonic, Radio Symphony Orchestra in Romania, Salzburg Kammer Philharmonic and Korea-Austria Philharmonic orchestras. In Korea, Yoon-Hee Kim has performed with the KBS Symphony, Seoul Symphony, Korean Symphony, Euroasian Philharmonic, Busan, Daejeon, Daegu, Gwangju, Jeonju and Jeju Symphony orchestras. Recently she performed with Royal Philharmonic Orchestra with great success in London.

Yoon-Hee Kim has performed alongside numerous internationally acclaimed conductors, including: Walter Weller (who is the Music Director of Belgium National Orchestra),

Alexander Rahbari, Roman Kofman, Claus Peter Flor, Cristian Mandeal, Barry Wordsworth, Philippe Auguin, Petr Altrichter, Leoš Svárovský, Rastislav Stur, Erwin Aadland, Othmar Mága, Rainer Koch, Damian Iorio, Iosif Ion Prunner and Keiko Mitsuhashi.

She has won several international music competitions, including the International Violin Competition 'Andrea Postacchini' in Fermo (Italy), Prima la Musica Competition in Austria, Concorsi International Di Musica in Stresa (Italy), Rovere d'Oro Bartolomeo al Mare in Italy and Fidelio Competition in Austria. She was also awarded the Special Prize and Scholarship of the Hebert von Karajan Foundation and the Robert and Lina Thyli-Duerr Foundation of Switzerland.

Yoon-Hee Kim has given concert performances at many of the world's renowned classical concert halls, such as the Musikverein (Golden Hall), Wiener Konzerthaus, Walt Disney Hall in LA (when she appeared with 16-time Grammy-nominated R&B artist Brian McKnight), Cadogan Hall in London, Lieder Halle in Stuttgart, Auditorium Rainier III Hall in Monte Carlo, Smetana Hall and Rudolfinum in Prague, International Palace of Arts and Obecinitum in Budapest, Atheneum in Bucharest, RTVE Teatro Hall in Madrid, Odd-Fellow Palace in Copenhagen, Olavshallen in Trondheim (Norway) and at the Seoul Art Center.

She was invited to play at the 35th Belgrade Music Festival (BEMUS), 'Rising Star' concert series in Cologne, a recital at the Wiltz festival in Luxembourg, New Year concerts in both Trondheim, (Norway) and at the Samobor Festival in Zagreb, Seoul Art Center's 'Orchestra Festival' and at a KBS New Year concert.

Forthcoming concert performances in her busy schedule include concerts with the Royal Philharmonic, Berliner Symphonie, Gorge Enesco Philharmonic, Prague Philharmonic, Czech Radio Philharmonic, Slovak Philharmonic and Antalya National orchestras.

In addition to CNN's special introduction of Yoon-Hee Kim as a violinist on *Genius*, there has also been a television programme broadcast about her on TF1 TV entitled *L'Enfant Prodige* (featured in their series *Les 30 Histoires les Plus Mystérieuses*).

Yoon-Hee Kim has previously played several famous instruments, the Stradivarius

'The Red Diamond' 1732 and 'Da Vinci' 1725, and she now plays a Lorenzo Storioni Violin (Cremona 1780), loaned by a private collector.



BARRY WORDSWORTH CONDUCTOR

Barry Wordsworth is Music Director of the Royal Ballet Covent Garden, having also previously held the position from 1990-1995. In 2006 he became Conductor Laureate of the BBC Concert Orchestra, having served as its Principal Conductor since 1989. He is also Principal Conductor of the Brighton Philharmonic and Music Director Laureate of the Birmingham Royal Ballet.

He has appeared with many of the world's leading orchestras both in the UK and overseas, including the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra, Royal

Concertgebouw Orchestra, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra and the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra.

In a long and distinguished career with the BBC, Barry Wordsworth has made many appearances at the BBC Proms, and in 1993 he conducted the famous Last Night of the Proms concert with the BBC Symphony Orchestra. In his 17 years as Principal Conductor of the BBC Concert Orchestra, he has toured extensively with the group, including to Japan, the United States and, in July 2013, to China.

In addition to his concert career, Barry Wordsworth has for over 40 years enjoyed a close association with the Royal Ballet in London, where as Music Director he is dedicated to expanding the repertoire of music for dance through the commissioning

and premièring of new work. He has toured extensively with the company including, most recently, performances at the Aldeburgh Festival with the Britten Sinfonia. His work with the company is also available on a number of DVDs including the world première production of Christopher Wheeldon's ballet *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (on Opus Arte label).

In recent seasons, he has also conducted ballet productions for the New National Theatre Tokyo, Leipzig Ballet, Christopher Wheeldon's company Morphoses, the ballet of the Opéra National de Paris, and Birmingham Royal Ballet.

Barry Wordsworth has conducted an extensive catalogue of recordings, and his most recent releases are discs of Tchaikovsky and Elgar with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. A recording entitled *Last Night of the Proms* with the BBC Concert Orchestra for Phillips Classics has achieved enormous popular success, as have his albums with Bryn Terfel and the London Symphony Orchestra for Deutsche Grammophon, the first of which won a *Grammy Award*.

Barry Wordsworth holds honorary doctorates from the University of Brighton and the University of Central England in Birmingham, and is an Honorary Fellow of Trinity College of Music in London.

'But the real engine powering the show is Joby Talbot's score, a storming piece of work spiced with exotic woodwind, James Bond brass, and an ironmongers-worth of percussion, deployed with thrilling climactic control, wonderfully played under Barry Wordsworth.'
The Independent
(Review for *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Royal Ballet)



Photo: Boyd Gilmour



ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Artistic Director and Principal Conductor: Charles Dutoit

Formed in 1946 by flamboyant maestro Sir Thomas Beecham, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (RPO) has enjoyed more than sixty-five years of success, giving first-class performances of a wide range of musical repertoire all over the world with artists of the highest calibre. Under the inspired leadership of Artistic Director and Principal Conductor Charles Dutoit, the Orchestra continues to flourish, maintaining and building on a demanding schedule of performances, tours, community and education work, and recordings.

Throughout its history, the Orchestra has been directed by an illustrious list of distinguished conductors including Rudolf Kempe, Antal Doráti, André Previn, Vladimir Ashkenazy and, more recently, Daniele Gatti. Today the Orchestra continues to enjoy the leadership of high-ranking conductors, with Artistic Director and Principal Conductor Charles Dutoit supported by Pinchas Zukerman as Principal Guest Conductor, Grzegorz Nowak as Principal Associate Conductor and Daniele Gatti as Conductor Laureate.

Central to the RPO's thriving concert schedule is its prestigious annual series at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall. At the Orchestra's home Cadogan Hall, the

intimate and luxurious surroundings provide the perfect concert atmosphere in an idyllic location. Completing the Orchestra's London programme of concerts, the iconic Royal Albert Hall provides the ideal setting for a varied series of monumental performances, ranging from large-scale choral and orchestral works to themed evenings of familiar repertoire. The Orchestra prides itself on a comprehensive regional touring programme, giving regular performances at venues across the UK and with established residencies in Croydon, Northampton, Lowestoft, Reading, Crawley, Ipswich, High Wycombe, Aylesbury and Dartford.

Internationally the Orchestra is in high demand, undertaking several major tours each season. Recent tours have included performances in the USA, Canada, China, Russia, Azerbaijan, Japan, Oman and throughout Europe, including an annual residency in Montreux, Switzerland. As an international orchestra, the RPO has toured more than thirty countries in the last five years.

The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra's vibrant community and education programme, RPO resound, is one of the most diverse and celebrated programmes in the UK. Since its inception in 1993, specially trained musicians from the Orchestra, alongside accomplished project leaders, have delivered hundreds of pioneering projects where music is used as a powerful and inspirational tool. With an emphasis on broadening access to and engagement with world-class music-making, RPO resound is unique in the breadth and range of participant groups with which it works – from homeless shelters to hospices, youth clubs to prisons, and early years to higher education.

Frequently found in the recording studio, the RPO has enjoyed a long partnership with the major record labels, recording with the most well-known artists of our day and featuring on many film and television soundtracks. The Orchestra also owns its own record label with an extensive catalogue.

'The strings are highly impressive ... the RPO offers muscular brass and first-class woodwinds. The rhythmic intricacies and sharp contrasts in mood and tempi were dextrously handled by Dutoit and the musicians delivered the music with fleet bravura.' *Chicago Classical Review*