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RACHMANINOV

SYMPHONY NO.1

LIVE IN CONCERT
VLADIMIR ASHKENAZY



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RACHMANINOV

SYMPHONY NO. 1

LIVE IN CONCERT

Symphony No. 1 in D Minor, Op. 13

1	I. Grave – Allegro ma non troppo	12.39
2	II. Allegro animato	8.57
3	III. Larghetto	9.24
4	IV. Allegro con fuoco	12.20

Total timings: 43.23

PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA

VLADIMIR ASHKENAZY CONDUCTOR

Recorded live at Royal Festival Hall, UK, on 17th November 2016
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SERGEI RACHMANINOV 1873-1943

Symphony No. 1 in D minor, Op. 13

Grave – Allegro ma non troppo
Allegro animato
Larghetto
Allegro con fuoco

Rachmaninov composed the first of his three symphonies between January and August 1895, when he was 22 and had a teaching post at the Mariinsky Institute for Girls in Moscow; it was his third orchestral work. He submitted the score to the Society of Russian Symphony Concerts in St Petersburg, and it was accepted, subject to a few revisions. The first performance was given in St Petersburg on 27 March 1897 (five days before Rachmaninov's 24th birthday), with Glazunov conducting. It was disastrous. Glazunov apparently conducted in an utterly 'deadpan' manner, as though he were directing a class in elementary orchestration, and Rachmaninov finally left the hall in fury and disgust – only to attend, later the same evening, a dinner arranged in his honour by the publisher Belyaev, at which all the important musical personalities

in St Petersburg were present. 'How could a great musician like Glazunov conduct so badly?' he wrote to a friend after the performance. 'It is not even a question of stick-technique, though his is poor enough, but of musicianship: he beats time as if he has no feeling for music whatever.' The press (who were in any case prejudiced against the Moscow school) were highly abusive: Cui accused Rachmaninov of 'morbid distortion of harmony and sickly addiction to sombre moods', and declared that 'if there were a conservatoire in hell and one of its students had been asked to compose a symphony on the subject of the seven plagues of Egypt and had written a symphony like Rachmaninov's, he would have won a prize for it'. No wonder Rachmaninov tore up the score and refused to allow the work to be published. However, the orchestral parts came to light during the Second World War in the Conservatoire in Leningrad (formerly, of course, St Petersburg) and, with the aid of these and of the composer's own reduction for piano duet, the score was carefully reconstructed by Soviet musicologists, and the resuscitated symphony was given its first performance for nearly 50 years in the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatoire on 17 October

1945, by the USSR State Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Alexander Gauk.

The irony of the affair is that, despite its obvious – and understandable – debts to Borodin and Tchaikovsky, the D minor Symphony is in many respects superior in construction to Rachmaninov's two other symphonies. Its first movement opens with a short slow introduction whose initial upward-sliding motif is to act as a 'motto', reappearing at the beginning of each succeeding movement (and elsewhere). The main theme of the *Allegro* is an extension of the theme propounded in this introduction, and the second subject, Tchaikovsky-like, is a combination of three ideas announced in quick succession and in slower tempo. The development (beginning like that of the first movement in Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony with a *fortissimo* explosion) starts off with a fugal discussion of the first subject and reaches its climax in a broad, chorale-like transformation of it, which suggests that the theme was derived from a chant of the Russian Orthodox Church. The second movement (in F major) is a *scherzo* of great resource and subtlety, notable for the economy of its scoring and for its

vacillation between wistfulness and an almost ghostly eeriness. The 'motto' reappears about half-way through, and we may also detect a veiled reference to the 'Dies Irae' theme that Rachmaninov was to use so effectively elsewhere.

The *Larghetto* in B flat major, also lightly scored for the most part, is in effect a rhapsodical meditation on a long, winding theme initiated by the first clarinet; there is a brief middle section derived from a dramatic incursion of the 'motto'. The finale, basically and finally in D major, is anything but lightly scored: indeed Rachmaninov unleashes here a whole welter of orchestral sound. The movement could loosely be described as being in sonata form, but its episodic nature imparts a strong feeling of rondo design. The exuberant first subject (a transformation of the first movement's main theme) and the soaring second subject are in strong contrast to one another, and there are numerous subsidiary ideas, including references to the 'motto'. The movement ends with an expansive coda.

By Robin Golding

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Photo: Felix Broede

PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA

The Philharmonia Orchestra is one of the world's great orchestras. Widely acknowledged for its pioneering approach to the role of an orchestra in the 21st century, the Philharmonia leads the field for the quality of its playing and its innovative work with residencies, music education, audience development and the use of

new technology to reach a global audience. Together with its relationships with the world's most sought-after artists, most importantly its Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor Esa-Pekka Salonen, the Philharmonia is at the heart of British musical life.

The Philharmonia performs more than 160 concerts a year, as well as recording music for

films, video games and commercial audio releases. The Orchestra's home is Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall in the heart of London, where the Philharmonia has been resident since 1995 and performs 40 concerts a year. Under Esa-Pekka Salonen a series of flagship, visionary projects at Royal Festival Hall – distinctive for both their artistic scope and supporting live and digital content – have been critically acclaimed. Projects including *City of Light: Paris 1900-1950* (2015), *City of Dreams: Vienna 1900 -1935* (2009), Bill Viola's *Tristan und Isolde* (2010) and *Infernal Dance: Inside the World of Béla Bartók* (2011) were followed in 2016 by the major, five-concert series *Stravinsky: Myths & Rituals*.

The Orchestra is committed to presenting the same world-class, live music-making in venues throughout the country as it does in London, especially at its UK residencies, where up to seven concerts each season are complemented by a wide-ranging education and audience development programme. The Orchestra's UK residencies are at Bedford's Corn Exchange (since 1995), De Montfort Hall in Leicester (since 1997), the Marlowe Theatre in Canterbury, Three Choirs

Festival and The Anvil in Basingstoke, where it has been Orchestra in Partnership since 2001.

A busy international touring schedule takes the Orchestra all over the world. Projects in 2016/17 included a major West Coast US tour (October 2016) and a tour to Japan and Taiwan (spring 2017), both with Esa-Pekka Salonen. Other highlights include the 2016 Festival International d'Art Lyrique d'Aix-en-Provence, where the Orchestra and Esa-Pekka Salonen were in residence, performing two Stravinsky programmes and Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*, directed by Katie Mitchell.

Central to the Philharmonia and Esa-Pekka Salonen's work in London, the UK and internationally are their digital projects, all of which are designed to communicate the thrill of the experience of a live orchestra to audiences outside the concert hall. In September 2016, in partnership with Southbank Centre, the Orchestra presented *The Virtual Orchestra*, a free two-week series in the public spaces of Royal Festival Hall, culminating with a specially programmed concert at the venue. The project featured *360 Experience*, the first major Virtual

Reality presentation from a UK symphony orchestra, and giant audio-visual installation, *Universe of Sound: The Planets*, first premiered at the Science Museum in spring 2012.

Both *Universe of Sound* and its predecessor *RE-RITE* (2010, based on Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*) toured internationally and were at the heart of a major two-year audience development and education initiative, *iOrchestra* (2014-15), which took place in South-West England and engaged over 120,000 people. The project also featured a pop-up interactive digital music installation, *MusicLab*, which used the latest technologies to create a series of hands-on musical games and interactions. The Orchestra has won four Royal Philharmonic Society awards for its digital project and audience engagement work.

The Philharmonia Orchestra was formed in 1945 by Walter Legge. It has been a self-governing orchestra since 1964 and is owned by its 80 members. During its first seven decades, the Orchestra collaborated with most of the great classical artists of the 20th century. Conductors associated with the Orchestra include

Furtwängler, Richard Strauss, Toscanini, Cantelli, Karajan and Giulini. Otto Klemperer was the first of many outstanding Principal Conductors, and other great names have included Lorin Maazel (Associate Principal Conductor), Sir Charles Mackerras (Principal Guest Conductor), Riccardo Muti (Principal Conductor and Music Director), Kurt Sanderling (Conductor Emeritus) and Giuseppe Sinopoli (Music Director).

As well as Esa-Pekka Salonen, Principal Conductor & Artistic Advisor since 2008, current titled conductors are Jakub Hrůša and Santtu-Matias Rouvali (Principal Guest Conductors) Christoph von Dohnányi (formerly Principal Conductor, now Honorary Conductor for Life) and Vladimir Ashkenazy (Conductor Laureate). Also a central figure in today's Orchestra is composer and Artistic Director of the long-running *Music of Today* series in London, Unsuk Chin. A second strand of free, early-evening programming was added to the London season in 2015 with a chamber music recital series, programmed and performed by members of the Orchestra, many of whom perform widely as solo and chamber musicians.

Millions of people since 1945 have enjoyed their first experience of classical music through a Philharmonia recording, and today audiences engage with the Orchestra through video games, film scores and its award-winning portfolio of videos and documentary films. An app, *The Orchestra* for iPad, released in December 2012, has sold tens of thousands of copies.

Recording and broadcasting both continue to play a significant part in the Orchestra's activities, notably through its partnership with Signum Records, releasing new live recordings of Philharmonia performances with its key conductors. Since 2003 the Philharmonia has enjoyed a major partnership with Classic FM, as the Classic FM Orchestra on Tour, as well as continuing to broadcast extensively on BBC Radio 3.

The Philharmonia's Education work sits at the centre of the life and wider work of the Orchestra. The department's work falls into four distinct strands – Schools and Young People, Communities and Family, Insights, and the Emerging Artists programme, reaching tens of thousands of people every year. Recent projects include instrumental projects with Music Hub

partners; Key Stage 2 concerts *Orchestra Unwrapped*; intergenerational creative music-making community project *Hear and Now* in Bedford; a large-scale community commission to celebrate the discovery of King Richard III's remains in Leicester called *The Last Plantagenet*; a pioneering urban-classical project called *Symphonize* in Leicester; and *The Firebird*, an award-winning collaborative schools project working across Hounslow and Richmond boroughs.

The Philharmonia's Emerging Artists programme includes the *Composers Academy*, linked to *Music of Today*, and the Martin Musical Scholarship Fund, which has for many years supported talented musicians at the start of their careers. In 2016/17, the Orchestra relaunched the scheme as the Philharmonia MMSF Instrumental Fellowship Programme – an enhanced offer for young musicians, supporting instrumentalists seeking an orchestral career and connecting them to the wider life of the Philharmonia and the expertise within its membership.

The Philharmonia's Principal International Partner is Wuliangye.

1ST VIOLIN

Zsolt-Tihamér Visontay
Sarah Oates
Imogen East
Eleanor Wilkinson
Lulu Fuller
Eugene Lee
Karin Tilch
Soong Choo
Victoria Irish
Grace Lee
Erzsebet Racz
Peter Liang
Ewoud Mahler
Minsi Yang
Cassandra Hamilton
Anna Harpham

2ND VIOLIN

Tamás Sándor
Emily Davis
Fiona Cornall
Samantha Reagan
Nuno Carapina
Julian Milone
Helena Buckie
Jan Regulski
Sophie Cameron
Marina Gillam
Paula Clifton-Everest

Sarah Thornett
Gideon Robinson
Anna Giddey

VIOLA

Yukiko Ogura
Amanda Verner
Richard Waters
Bryony Gibson-Cornish
Michael Turner
Cheremie Hamilton-Miller
Gijs Kramers
Joseph Fisher
Lucia Ortiz Saucó
Peter Norris
Mariya Sotirova
Laurie Anderson

CELLO

Timothy Walden
Richard Birchall
Eric Villeminey
Ella Rundle
Anne Baker
Judith Fleet
Rosalie Curlett
Coral Lancaster
Sibylle Hentschel
Joe Zeitlin

BASS

Tim Gibbs
Michael Fuller
Adam Wynter
Simon Oliver
Jeremy Watt
Jakub Cywinski
Josie Ellis
Ivan Rubido Gonzalez

FLUTE

Samuel Coles
June Scott
Keith Bragg

PICCOLO

Keith Bragg

OBOE

Dominique Descamps
Timothy Rundle

CLARINET

Mark van de Wiel
Laurent Ben Slimane

BASSOON

Robin O'Neill
Shelly Organ

HORN

Phillip Eastop
Kira Doherty
Geremia Iezzi
Jonathan Maloney
Daniel Curzon

TRUMPET

Jason Evans
Mark Calder
Christian Barraclough

TROMBONE

Amos Miller
Philip White

BASS TROMBONE

Barry Clements

TUBA

Peter Smith

TIMPANI

Andrew Smith

PERCUSSION

Oliver Patrick
Peter Fry
James Bower
Sarah Hatch
Richard Cartlidge

VLADIMIR ASHKENAZY

One of the few artists to combine a successful career as a pianist and conductor, Russian-born Vladimir Ashkenazy inherited his musical gift from both sides of his family; his father David Ashkenazy was a professional light music pianist and his mother Evstolia (née Plotnova) was daughter of a chorus master in the Russian Orthodox church. Ashkenazy first came to prominence on the world stage in the 1955 Chopin Competition in Warsaw and as first prize-winner of the Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels in 1956. Since then he has built an extraordinary career, not only as one of the most outstanding pianists of the 20th century, but as an artist whose creative life encompasses a vast range of activities and continues to offer inspiration to music-lovers across the world.

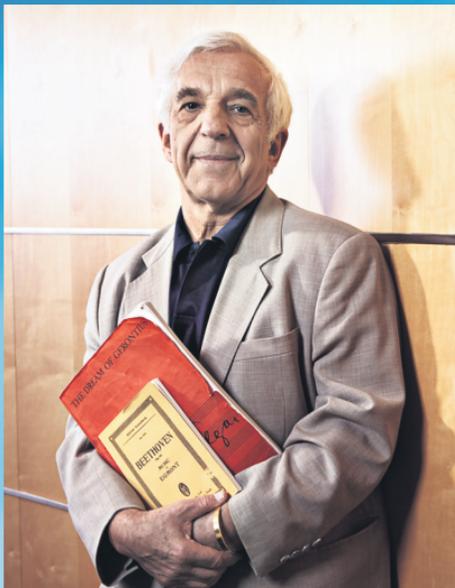


Photo © Keith Summers

Conducting has formed the larger part of Ashkenazy's activities for the past 30 years. He continues his longstanding relationship with the Philharmonia Orchestra, who appointed him Conductor Laureate in 2000. In addition to his performances with the orchestra in London and around the UK each season, and on countless tours with them worldwide, he has also developed landmark projects such as *Prokofiev and Shostakovich Under Stalin* (a project which he also took to Cologne, New York, Vienna and Moscow) and *Rachmaninoff Revisited* (which was also presented in Paris). Together, Ashkenazy and the Philharmonia have undertaken a major tour of China, a European tour with soloists Evgeny Kissin and Vadim Repin and a ground-breaking tour of Latin America with soloists Nelson Freire and Esther Yoo.

Ashkenazy is also Conductor Laureate of both the Iceland and NHK Symphony orchestras and Principal Guest Conductor of the Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana. He has recently stepped down from the Music Directorship of the EUYO, a post held with great satisfaction for 15 years. Previously he has held posts as Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor to the Sydney Symphony Orchestra (2009-13), and Chief Conductor of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra and Music Director of NHK Symphony Orchestra. He maintains strong links with other major orchestras including The Cleveland Orchestra (where he was formerly Principal Guest Conductor) and Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin (Chief Conductor and Music Director 1988-96). He regularly makes guest appearances with many other major orchestras around the world.

Ashkenazy maintains his devotion to the piano, these days mostly in the recording studio where he continues to build his extraordinarily comprehensive recording catalogue. This includes the Grammy award-winning album of Shostakovich's *Preludes and Fugues*, Rautavaara's Piano Concerto No.3 (a work which he commissioned), Bach's *Wohltemperierte Klavier*, Rachmaninov's

Transcriptions and Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations*, 'Ashkenazy: 50 Years on Decca' – a 50-CD box-set celebrating his long-standing relationship with the label, a milestone collection of Ashkenazy's vast catalogue of Rachmaninov's piano music, which also includes all of his recordings as a conductor of the composer's orchestral music. June 2016 saw the release of Shostakovich's Piano Trios Nos.1 and 2 and Viola Sonata on Decca.

Beyond his performing schedule, Vladimir Ashkenazy has also been involved in many television projects, inspired by his passionate drive to ensure that serious music retains a platform in the mainstream media and is available to as broad an audience as possible. He has collaborated extensively with legendary documentary-maker Christopher Nupen, and has been involved in programmes such as *Music After Mao* (filmed in Shanghai in 1979), and *Ashkenazy in Moscow*, which followed his first return to Russia since leaving the USSR in the 1960s. More recently he has developed educational programmes with NHK TV including the 1999 *Superteachers*, working with inner-city London school children, and in 2003-4 a documentary based around his *Prokofiev and Shostakovich Under Stalin* project.