



Romeo and Juliet by Sir Frank Dicksee, 1884

CONCERT PROGRAM

PROKOFIEV ROMEO & JULIET

Wednesday, February 14, 2018
8:00pm

Thursday, February 15, 2018
8:00pm

Sir Andrew Davis
conductor

Heidi Van Hoesen Gorton
harp

Mily Balakirev
**Overture on the Themes of
Three Russian Songs**

Reinhold Glière
Harp Concerto in E-flat Major, Op. 74

- I. Allegro moderato
- II. Tema con variazioni
- III. Allegro giocoso

Intermission

Sergey Prokofiev/comp. Sir Andrew Davis
**Suite from *Romeo and Juliet*,
Opp. 64bis & 64ter**

- I. Montagues and Capulets
- II. The Young Juliet
- III. Masks
- IV. Romeo and Juliet
- V. Friar Laurence
- VI. Dance
- VII. Dance of the Antillian Maidens
- VIII. Romeo at Juliet's Tomb
- IX. Death of Tybalt

THE DETAILS

Mily Balakirev

Overture on the Themes of Three Russian Songs



Born: Nizhniy Novgorod, Russia, Jan 2, 1837

Died: St. Petersburg, Russia, May 29, 1910

Composed: 1858

The story of Russian music is the tale of a culture breaking away from European influences and looking inward to recognize and celebrate its own identity. The trail was blazed by Mikhail Glinka (1804–1857), the first Russian composer to incorporate his country’s folk tunes into music for the theatre and the concert hall. He passed the nationalist baton to five young friends based in St. Petersburg: Mily Balakirev, Alexander Borodin, César Cui, Modest Mussorgsky, and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov.

Balakirev’s most significant activity was to mentor and teach, not only his friends in the St. Petersburg circle but also the more cosmopolitan Tchaikovsky. He supervised Tchaikovsky closely on the creation of several pieces, including the *Romeo and Juliet Fantasy-Overture*.



Mily Balakirev, c. 1858

His own music earned only secondary importance, as attractive and colourful as much of it is. He composed piano pieces (including *Islamey*, a terrifyingly challenging set of variations on a Kabardian folk tune), songs, choral works, two each of piano concertos and symphonies, and a handful of overtures and symphonic poems for orchestra.

The three themes upon which he based this early overture are the melancholy tune “The Silver Birch” (he quoted it in the slow-tempo introduction, and reprised it in the tranquil epilogue), “In the fields stands a little birch tree” (which the woodwinds introduce as the first theme of the animated central section), and “There was at the feast” (a merry tune that serves as the contrasting second subject of the central panel).

“This overture had important repercussions in Russian music, which could not have been foreseen at the time of the first performance in January 1859,” musicologist Edward Garden has written, “nor was it appreciated then that it is not a mere potpourri of folk themes, but the earliest example of the successful reconciliation of Russian folk materials with sonata structure, something which Glinka had never achieved.”

Tchaikovsky quoted the overture’s second theme extensively in the finale of the Fourth Symphony (1877), and Stravinsky used the third melody in the ballet *Petrushka* (1911). Whereas those composers did little more than repeat the themes, Balakirev subjected them to significant variations and ingenious transformations.

Program note by Don Anderson

THE DETAILS

Reinhold Glière Harp Concerto in E-flat Major, Op. 74



Born: Kiev, now in Ukraine, Jan 11, 1875
Died: Moscow, Russia, Jun 23, 1956
Composed: 1938

Reinhold Glière carried forward the folk-based style of 19th-century Russian nationalist composers such as Mily Balakirev, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, and Alexander Borodin. After studying composition at the Moscow Conservatory with such major figures as Anton Arensky and Sergey Taneyev, he was appointed to that institution's faculty and taught there for more than 20 years. Among his earlier, private pupils was the brilliant composer Sergey Prokofiev.

The conservative, colourful, and melodious style that he maintained with little development throughout his career safeguarded him from the persecution that regularly befell the more adventurous and modernistic of his Soviet contemporaries such as Dmitri Shostakovich.

His catalogue of music includes three symphonies (the last of which retells in truly epic fashion the legend of the mighty warrior Il'ya Muromets), operas, ballets, various works for small instrumental forces, and concertos for

cello, horn, violin, and, unusually and intriguingly, for wordless coloratura soprano.

The Harp Concerto was his first piece for solo instrument and orchestra. Harpists have embraced it as a most welcome addition to the instrument's perpetually meagre concerto repertoire. It was inspired by harpist Ksenia Erdeli, Glière's faculty colleague at the Moscow Conservatory. During the creation of the concerto, he consulted with her closely and thoroughly on the technical makeup and the expressive personality of the harp. Her input proved so extensive that he offered to list her as co-composer, but she declined.

Appropriately for a piece that showcases the delicate voice of the harp, he called for a chamber-size accompanying orchestra. He limited the brass section, for example, to four horns, and dotted the score with brief passages for solo orchestral instruments (shades of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*).

The opening theme of the first movement has a fine, dramatic sweep, instantly conjuring the warm spirit of Russian romance. Solo clarinet introduces the lyrical second theme, which invites comparison with the music of Glière's contemporary, Sergey Rachmaninoff. The harp decorates it with delicate filigree support. A poetic cadenza lies at the movement's core. An appealingly wide-ranging set of variations on a contemplative theme makes up the second movement. The finale contrasts a joyously bouncy first theme with a sweet, yearning second.

Program note by Don Anderson



Harpist Ksenia Erdeli (1878–1971), with whom Glière consulted while composing his Harp Concerto. She was the first harpist to give solo concerts in Russia and was the founder of the Soviet harp school.

Sergey Prokofiev/comp. Sir Andrew Davis
Suite from *Romeo and Juliet*, Opp. 64bis & 64ter



Born: Sontzovka, Bakhmutsk region, Yekaterinoslav district, Ukraine, Apr 23, 1891
Died: Moscow, Russia, Mar 5, 1953
Composed: 1935–1936

In 1934, the Kirov Opera and Ballet Company of Leningrad commissioned Prokofiev to compose a ballet on the story of Romeo and Juliet. First the Kirov, then Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre, withdrew from the project; it finally saw the stage in Brno, Czechoslovakia, in December 1938. Today, it remains an international favourite and it may be Prokofiev's masterpiece. He never created a score that surpassed its overwhelming drama, beauty, and pathos. This performance will present a sequence of episodes compiled from two concert suites that he created from the full score.

I. Montagues and Capulets (Suite No. 2, No. 1)

This forceful portrait of the lovers' warring families comes from the ballroom scene at the Capulet home in Act I. The tranquil middle section shows Juliet Capulet dancing with her fiancé, Paris.

II. The Young Juliet (Suite No. 2, No. 2)

A portrait of the playful 14-year-old teasing her old, slow-moving nurse.

III. Masks (Suite No. 1, No. 5)

Romeo and his friends Mercutio and Benvolio arrive at the ball, in disguise.

IV. Romeo and Juliet (Suite No. 1, No. 6)

Leaving the ball during which he and Juliet first met, Romeo wanders into the Capulets' garden. Juliet appears on her balcony. Recognizing the love that has already taken root between them, they celebrate it in an ecstatic *pas de deux*.

V. Friar Laurence (Suite No. 2, No. 3)

A warm, gentle portrait of the monk who befriends the lovers.

VI. Dance (Suite No. 2, No. 4)

Part of the opening scene of Act II, this rhythmic, energetic dance consists of a jaunty main tune first piped by an oboe and a sinewy, sensuous melody later played by the violins.

VII. Dance of the Antillian Maidens (Suite No. 2, No. 6)

Violin and woodwind solos accompanied by maracas and tambourine define this dance performed when Paris presents a gift of pearls to Juliet.

VIII. Romeo at Juliet's Tomb (Suite No. 2, No. 7)

These are the ballet's intensely emotional final scenes. After Juliet's family has departed from her tomb, Romeo appears. He does not know that the poison she took brought her only a profound sleep. Believing her dead, he stabs himself. Awakening moments later and finding his lifeless body, she kills herself. The music evaporates gradually into silence, lamenting the tragic events with understated eloquence.

IX. Death of Tybalt (Suite No. 1, No. 7)

This is the finale of Act II. Accompanied by a shattering crescendo of dramatic sound, Romeo kills Juliet's cousin, in revenge for Tybalt's murder of Mercutio.

Program note by Don Anderson

THE ARTISTS



Sir Andrew Davis conductor

Sir Andrew Davis, now Conductor Laureate, served as TSO Music Director from 1975 to 1988.

Sir Andrew Davis is the Music Director and Principal Conductor of the Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Chief Conductor of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. Maestro Davis's career spans over 40 years during which he has been the musical and artistic leader at several of the world's most distinguished opera and symphonic institutions, including the BBC Symphony Orchestra (conductor laureate; chief conductor 1991–2004), the Glyndebourne Festival Opera (music director 1988–2000), and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra (conductor laureate; music director 1975–1988), where he has also been named Interim Artistic Director from 2018–2020. He also holds the honorary title of conductor emeritus from the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra.

Born in 1944 in Hertfordshire, England, Maestro Davis studied at King's College, Cambridge, where he was an organ scholar before taking up conducting. A vast and award-winning discography documents Sir Andrew's artistry; he currently records exclusively for Chandos Records. In 1992, Maestro Davis was created a Commander of the British Empire, and in 1999 he was designated a Knight Bachelor in the New Year Honours List.



Heidi Van Hoesen Gorton harp

TSO Principal Harp Heidi Van Hoesen Gorton joined the TSO in 2011.

Recently hailed by the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* as a performer who plays "with a flair that we are coming to know well," Heidi Van Hoesen Gorton has been described as one of the most outstanding solo, chamber, and orchestral musicians of her generation. She has been presented in solo recitals everywhere from New York to Los Angeles, Vancouver to Vienna, and has appeared as a guest artist with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and the Hartford Symphony Orchestra.

Ms. Van Hoesen Gorton earned two degrees in harp performance from The Juilliard School under the tutelage of Nancy Allen, and has studied with Gretchen Van Hoesen and Elizabeth Fontan-Binoche. Actively competing in domestic and international competitions, she has won many awards including first place in the Young Professional Division of the American Harp Society (AHS) National Competition in June 2009. Also active as a teacher, Ms. Van Hoesen Gorton is in the faculty at The Glenn Gould School at The Royal Conservatory, and has presented masterclasses in Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, New Orleans, Toronto, Charlotte, Denver, San Francisco, Syracuse, and Milwaukee.