

Marina Lomazov and Joseph Rackers, Piano Duo

Katzin Concert Hall
Guest Artist Concert Series
Tuesday, November 4, 2008 | 7:30 PM

Program

Hungarian Dances
No. 1 in G minor: Allegro molto
No. 3 in F major: Allegretto
No. 5 in F# minor: Allegro

Johannes Brahms
(1797-1828)

Ad Lucem (2007)

John Fitz Rogers
(b. 1964)

Variations on a Theme by Paganini
for 2 pianos (1941)

Witold Lutoslawski
(1913-1994)

Intermission

The Rite of Spring (for 2 pianos)

Igor Stravinsky
(1882 – 1971)

Part I: Adoration of the Earth

Introduction

The Augurs of Spring (Dances of the Young Girls)

Ritual of Abductions

Spring Rounds (Round Dance)

Ritual of the Two Rival Tribes

Procession of the Oldest and Wisest One (The Sage)

The Kiss of the Earth (Adoration of the Earth, or the Wise Elder)

The Dancing Out of the Earth

Part II: The Sacrifice

Introduction

Mystic Circle of the Young Girls

The Naming and Honoring of the Chosen One

Evocation of the Ancestors (Ancestral Spirits)

Ritual Action of the Ancestors

Sacrificial Dance (the Chosen One)



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Biography

The Lomazov/Rackers piano duo came to attention in 2005 as the Second Prize Winners of the Sixth Biennial Ellis Duo Piano Competition, the only national competition for piano duo in the United States. Since that time, they have performed as recitalists and in concert with orchestras throughout the United States and Europe, including performances on the "Summer Evenings in Kiev" concert series (Ukraine), Varna International Masterclasses in Piano (Bulgaria) and Moulin d'Ande Arts Festival (France), in addition to appearances in Arizona, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, New York, Oregon and South Carolina.

Recent and upcoming engagements include performances with the Chernigov Symphony Orchestra (Ukraine), Lukas Theatre in Savannah, Georgia, performances and Masterclasses at Arizona State University, the Music at Penn Alps Concert series in Maryland, the Augusta Symphony Orchestra Columbia County Concert Series in Georgia, the Central Oregon Symphony Concert Series, and performances as soloists with the University of South Carolina Symphony Orchestra.

As advocates for Twentieth and Twenty-First Century music, the Lomazov/Rackers duo has given more than twenty performances of Stravinsky's Rite of Spring across the United States since 2006. Critics have written that the duo "...really lit up the audience... demonstrated that nearly 100 years after it was written, this modernist touchstone can still sound modern." (Dan Cook, Columbia Free Times). In 2005, the duo gave the South Carolina premiere of Halleluiah Junction by John Adams and in 2008, they gave the World Premiere of Ad Lucem (Toward the Light) by composer John Fitz Rogers. Their performances have been described as "splendid" (Rochester, NY, WXXI radio), and a review of a recent performance of the Poulenc Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra said simply: "The soloists? Amazing." (The State, SC).

As a solo pianist, Marina Lomazov has performed throughout the United States as well as Europe, South America and the Far East. She has won prizes in the Bachauer, Cleveland, Hilton Head, Kapell and National Federation solo piano competitions and was the first pianist to be awarded the Artist Diploma at the Eastman School of Music in nearly two decades. Joseph Rackers has performed throughout the United States, Canada, China and Europe at important venues including the Shanghai and Sichuan Conservatories of Music (China), Sulzbach-Rosenberg International Music Festival (Germany) Banff Centre for the Arts (Canada), Yantai International Music Festival (China) and in twenty states in the U.S. He is the recipient of numerous awards including the Performer's Certificate and Excellence in Teaching Prize from the Eastman School of Music.

Ms. Lomazov and Mr. Rackers both hold the Doctor of Musical Arts Degree in Piano Performance and Literature from the Eastman School of Music and both currently serve on the piano faculty at the University of South Carolina School of Music.

Program Notes

The Rite of Spring - Igor Stravinsky (1882 – 1971)

After coming up with the idea of the piece in 1910 from a phantasy vision of pagan ritual encountered during the composition of The Firebird, Stravinsky began forming sketches and ideas for the piece, enlisting the help of archaeologist and folklorist Nikolai Roerich. Though he was sidetracked for a year he worked on Petrushka (which he intended to be a light burlesque as a relief from the orchestrally-intense work already in progress), The Rite of Spring was composed between 1912 and 1913 for Serge Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. Roerich was an integral part of the creation of the work, drawing from scenes of historical rites for inspiration; Stravinsky referred to the work-in-progress as "our child". After going through revisions almost up until the very day of its first performance, it was premiered on May 29, 1913 at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris and was conducted by Pierre Monteux.



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The Ballets Russes staged the first performance. The intensely rhythmic score and primitive scenario -- a setting of scenes from pagan Russia -- shocked audiences more accustomed to the demure conventions of classical ballet. Vaslav Nijinsky's choreography was a radical departure from classical ballet. Different from the long and graceful lines of traditional ballet, arms and legs were sharply bent. The dancers danced more from their pelvis than their feet, a style that later influenced Martha Graham.

The complex music and violent dance steps depicting fertility rites first drew catcalls and whistles from the crowd, and there were loud arguments in the audience between supporters and opponents of the work, and were soon followed by shouts and fistfights in the aisles. The unrest in the audience eventually degenerated into a riot. The Paris police arrived by intermission, but they restored only limited order. Chaos reigned for the remainder of the performance, and Stravinsky himself was so upset due to its reception that he fled the theater in mid-scene.

Although Nijinsky and Stravinsky were despondent, Diaghilev commented that the scandal was "just what I wanted". Although the music and dance were considered barbaric and sexual and are also often noted as being the primary factors for the cause of the riot, many political and social tensions surrounding the premiere contributed to the backlash as well. The work is now a standard of dance troupes around the world and has been choreographed by Pina Bausch and Sir Kenneth MacMillan.

The ballet completed its run of six performances amid controversy, but experienced no further disruption. Both Stravinsky and Nijinsky continued to work, but neither created pieces in this percussive and intense style again.

Stravinsky was continually revising the work for both musical and practical reasons, even after its premiere and well into the early 1920s. Stravinsky made a version of the score for piano four hands (that is, two people playing at one piano) and for two pianos four hands (two pianos, one person at each) that was preformed with Debussy; as he composed the Rite, as with his other works, at the piano, it is natural that he worked on the piano version of the work concurrently with the full orchestral score. It was in this form that the piece was first published (in 1913, the full score not being published until 1921). Due to the disruption caused by World War I, there were few performances of the work in the years following its composition, which made this arrangement the main way in which people got to know the piece; this version is still performed quite frequently, as it does not require the massive forces of the full orchestral version.

The same performers gave a production of the work in London later the same year. Its United States premiere was in 1924 in a concert (that is, non-staged) version.



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