

## Eastside Symphony

Eastside Symphony provides an opportunity for adult amateur musicians to share their musical interests and develop their skills in a relaxed and enjoyable setting. Through our public concerts, we give the community a chance to hear classical music presented in an informal and accessible manner. Rehearsals are held on Thursday evenings in Redmond. Interested musicians should contact Maureen Stone at eastsidesymphony@gmail.com.

### Special Thanks!

Andy Robertson  
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We would like to give an additional special thanks to  
Paul Covert  
for contributing the cost of the Symphonic Dances parts  
and for his program notes!

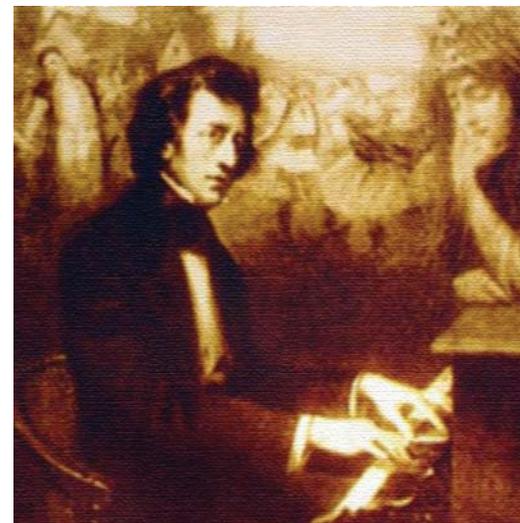


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*and, of course, all of our musicians!*

*Thank you all!*



Romantics Early and Late

Saturday, May 21, 2011

**Redmond Performing Arts Center**



### Alexei Girsh

Alexei Girsh has conducted the Eastside Symphony since 1992. Born and educated in Russia, he attained his Bachelor's Degree at Glinka Conservatory in Novosibirsk and Master's Degree-Conductor of Symphony and Opera-from the Mussorgsky Conservatory in Ekaterinburg. In Russia, he was highly acclaimed as principal conductor of the Radio-Television Symphony of Vladivostok, Music Director of the St. Petersburg Youth Symphony and a professor at the Institute of the Arts in St. Petersburg. Since moving to the United States, he has been Music Director of the Washington Wind Symphony (Redmond, 1993-96), the Youth Philharmonic Northwest (Redmond,

1994-96), and the Bellevue Ballet Orchestra (1996-99). He is currently Music Director and conductor of the Eastside Symphony, Music Director of the Renton Youth Symphony orchestra, Artist and Music Director of the Concert Opera of Seattle, and conductor of the Boeing Concert Band. In 2000 he was honored with the city of Redmond's Patron of the Arts Award. Along with these activities, his portfolio includes a number of published arrangements and recordings.

### Natalya Ageyeva



Natalya Ageyeva has dazzled audiences throughout the United States and internationally, including Italy, Austria, and Israel, as well as on tour in her native Russia. Her performances have also been broadcast several times locally on KING-FM and televised in Moscow and Chicago. She has appeared at a broad range of venues, from the Governor's Mansion in Olympia to the Rachmaninoff Hall in Moscow. Her pianism prompted one reviewer to write "Immediately apparent was a tremendous technique at the command of a sharp musical intelligence and fingers of steel. For more information, visit <http://www.natalyapiano.com/>.



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Eastside Symphony, 15717 - 154th Ave. N.E., Woodinville, WA 98072



CULTURE

# Eastside Symphony

Conducted by Maestro Alexei Girsh

<b>Violin I</b>		
Deborah Wade – Concertmaster	Bradley Bartos	Jessie Sinclair-Nixon
Amanda Ambrosio	Jeffrey Ferman	Lilly Tao
Hugh Anderson	Rachel Harris	
<b>Violin II</b>		
Valentina Giovannetti *	Christina Lechlitner	Michael Tanksley
Noriko Evans	Valerie Monsey	Debi Wagner
Christopher Girsch	Beth Puryear	Sandy Wells
David Harwood	Nathan Reed	
<b>Viola</b>		
Paul Covert *	Dayna Hall	Lyle Wilcox
Jeff Evans	Rebecca Putnam	
<b>Cello</b>		
Marshall Winget *	Noah Moskat	Tamara Wierks
Katie Ault	John Perlic	
Esther Kelly	Clayton Townley	
<b>Bass</b>		
Alan Karlak *	Todd Hammersberg	Amy Roney
Kathleen Anderson		
<b>Flute</b>		
Lisa Hedley *	Wendy Pappas	Kathy Forgrave (piccolo)
<b>Oboe</b>		
Maureen Stone *	John Vasko	Susan Jacoby (english horn)
<b>Clarinet/Saxophone</b>		
Julie Shankland *	Nick Kosuk (bass)	Cory Maccarrone (sax)
Chris Peterson *		
<b>Bassoon</b>		
Eric Shankland *	Penny Bugni	
<b>Horn</b>		
Bruce Kelley *	Andy Rich	Ryan Roberts
Stephanie Reed		
<b>Trumpet</b>		
Peter Pawlak *	Mark Baker	Matt Danaher
<b>Trombone</b>		
Gregg Hirakawa *	Pam Lindner (bass)	Donn Shankland
Dick Simonson		
<b>Tuba</b>		
Jeff Taylor *		
<b>Harp</b>		
Carolyn Tanksley *		
<b>Piano</b>		
Ron Traficante *		
<b>Percussion/Timpani</b>		
Doug Wyatt *	Scott Binette	Stella Perlic

\* denotes section principal, bass = bass clarinet, bass trombone, etc.

## Program

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<b>Chopin</b>	<i>Piano Concerto No. 2</i> Natalya Ageyeva Piano
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Short Intermission	
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<b>Rachmaninov</b>	<i>Symphonic Dances</i>

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We would like to thank  
**Max and Jan Hunt**  
of Woodinville for their  
sponsorship of tonight's concert!

For up-to-the-minute information about Eastside Symphony  
visit our web site:  
**EastsideSymphony.org**

Program design: Bruce Kelley  
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# Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943): Symphonic Dances, Op. 45 by Paul Covert

Sergei Rachmaninoff was 23 years old when he wrote his first symphony. The first performance was a horrible experience, and the memory of it remained with him all his life—even when he wrote his final composition, the *Symphonic Dances*, at the age of 67.

It is common, in speaking of many composers, to refer to their “early,” “middle,” and “late” works. But this distinction is more valid for Rachmaninoff than for any other major composer. His early and middle works were separated by the debacle of the *First Symphony*, which left him severely depressed and unable to compose for about four years. He finally recovered with the encouragement of his hypnotist, Dr. Nikolai Dahl, and began his middle phase with the *Second Piano Concerto*, which remains his most popular work (it regularly makes the top 10 on KING-FM’s list). But then came the Russian Revelation of 1917, after which Rachmaninoff spent the rest of his life in exile, living at various times in America and in Switzerland, supporting himself as a traveling piano virtuoso (he was one of the greatest pianists of all time). During his exile, he wrote nothing at all for the

first several years, and then made a partial comeback with a small handful of “late” works, concluding in 1940 with the *Symphonic Dances* (so named because they were originally planned as ballet music).

Rachmaninoff came on the scene near the end of the “Romantic era.” His music, especially from the middle period, is regarded as one of the last examples of 19th-century Romanticism. Like Verdi, he’s highly regarded for his melodies, although Verdi’s tunes are more “lyrical” while Rachmaninoff’s are more “lush.” He was considered a bit old-fashioned for his time, as in the early 20th century most major composers were experimenting with more complex harmonies, and eventually with the leaner textures of “neo-classicism.” Even today, although Rachmaninoff’s reputation has improved over the last 50 years, some writers regard him as not being a true 20th-century composer. But, for whatever it’s worth, his later works do show a shift toward the witty neo-classical approach; this can be heard in his popular *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* (1934), and also in his final work, the *Symphonic Dances*.

Beginning of *Symphonic Dances*: Ticking 1st violins... fragments from English horn, clarinet, bassoon

Middle of First Movement: Saxophone melody (later on 1st violins)

The *Symphonic Dances* begin with some very lean, “neo-classical” scoring indeed (although there will also be some of the Romantic lushness later on). We hear only the note C, quietly on the first violins, like an irregularly ticking clock. The violas and second violins join in and fan out to other pitches, while various woodwinds play fragments of a theme to come. This theme turns out to be something like a march, occurring in several forms (I like the part where the piano and basses take it town to a very

low A flat). In the middle of the first movement, something very different happens: the bass clarinetist switches to alto saxophone and plays a new, haunting melody (this is the old-school Romantic-era lushness that I told you about), which then gets taken up by the first violins. Eventually the march-like music comes back (this first movement is in sort of an A-B-A form, with the saxophone melody being the “B”), but it ends with a new and special twist.

Rachmaninoff's First (beginning): Loud, strident, & minor in the original

*Symphonic Dances* (end of first movement): Threefold statement of first symphony theme, but soft, gentle, & in major key

The first movement has been more or less entirely in minor keys up to this point; but now, like a beam of sunlight coming through the

clouds at the end of a rainy day, we turn to C major for a new theme on the first violins. ... Or is it new? It tunes out to be a quotation

from the beginning of Rachmaninoff’s first symphony, occurring three times in succession (see the music I’ve quoted at the bottom of the previous page). But where the *First Symphony* theme had been harsh and strident in D minor, the quotation of it here is soft and gentle. The change in the theme’s character is so great that, even when I had heard that Rachmaninoff had quoted the first symphony somewhere here and was trying to listen for a quotation, I couldn’t find it until I read an essay by Michael Steinberg (program notes writer of the San Francisco Symphony) that told me where to look. When

*Symphonic Dances* (start of 2nd movement): Plucked strings waltz rhythm, Muted trumpets & stopped horns, English horn brings in waltz melody, Violin solo (later strings)

The second movement begins with a sound you don’t hear often. Rachmaninoff gives the introduction to the brass section (specifically, to the trumpets and French horns), but not played in the ordinary way. The trumpets play with mutes inserted to muffle their sound; while the horns mute their instruments by sticking their hands in the bells of their instruments (these are called “stopped” notes—and, incidentally, it’s quite a challenge to do this and stay on pitch). The introduction sounds rhythmically irregular (like it would be hard to dance to), until finally the

Rachmaninoff wrote the *Symphonic Dances*, he thought he had destroyed the *First Symphony* music, and so he presumably intended this as a private reference only; but the *Symphonic Dances* was reconstructed from orchestral parts found in Leningrad around the time of Rachmaninoff’s death, and now we can all appreciate it. The effect is as if Rachmaninoff were saying that, after all this time (43 years later), he had finally managed to accept the memory of the disastrous *First Symphony* premiere, and had learned to be at peace with it.

strings come in with plucked notes in a waltz rhythm. After a brief solo for the first violin, the English horn brings in the real main melody of the movement, sort of a mysterious waltz. (The second movement is, I think, the most dancelike of the three *Symphonic Dances*.) As we continue, the waltz goes on but is occasionally interrupted by the brass with their introductory music—sometimes muted, sometimes not. And finally it flitters away, with one last low G plunk from the strings.

Traditional Medieval Chant (used here by Rachmaninoff): Di-es i-rae, di-es il-la (Day of wrath, that day)

*Symphonic Dances*, 3rd movement (Main theme, after fragmentary intro): Di-es i-rae, di-es il-la (slight variation on traditional theme)

Second theme: flutes (+1 octave) | Third theme: violas & English horn

Di-es i-rae, di-es illa (resembles "Dies Irae," but now transformed (Another variation on traditional) into quote from from Rachmaninoff's "Vigil")

The third movement (and the longest, at about 15 minutes) makes heavy use of quotations from previous music. One theme it quotes is a traditional medieval tune, from the Roman Catholic Mass for the Dead. It goes with the words “Dies irae, dies illa” (“Day of wrath, that day,” from the Latin Vulgate translation of Zephaniah 1:15 in the Bible). Many composers (including Berlioz, in his *Symphonic Fantastique*) have used it to communicate a sense of impending doom. Rachmaninoff also does that here—but he doesn’t end it with the sense of doom. His first two themes are derived from the “Dies Irae”; but his third theme, although it resembles the “Dies Irae,” is actually a sympho-

nized version of a tune from his own Russian liturgical piece, the All-Night Vigil, going with the words Blagosloven yesi, Gospodi (Blessed art Thou, O Lord). The middle of the movement presents the same idea differently, going from a mournful theme with falling intervals to an uplifting theme with rising intervals. Finally, near the end, the brass blare out the threatening “Dies Irae” at full volume, but are optimistically answered by the Blagosloven yesi, Gospodi, culminating with the joyful declaration of “Alliluya, alliluya, alliluya—slava tebe, Bozhe!” (Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah—Glory to You, O God!)

Middle of 3rd movement: "Uplifting" theme (2nd violins & cellos) | Mournful, "falling" theme (violins) | Near end: Horns at full volume | Final triumph: "Alliluya" quote from "Vigil"

*ff* Di-es i-rae, di-es il-la! | Al-li-lu-ya, al-li-lu-ya, al-li-lu-ya, Slava tebe Bozhe! (Glory to You, O God)



Thank You!

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