

WIGMORE HALL

Monday 6 February 2023
7.30pm

Zlatomir Fung cello
Benjamin Hochman piano

Yury Aleksandrovich Shaporin (1887-1966) 6 Pieces *arranged by Viktor Kubatsky*
Russian Song • Valse • Vocalise •
Elegia • Valse • Romance

Nikolay Aleksandrovich Sokolov (1859-1922) Romance Op. 19 (pub. 1894)

Leo Ornstein (1893-2002) 6 Preludes for cello and piano (1931)
Moderato sostenuto • Con moto •
Presto • Andante non troppo •
Non troppo (quasi improvisato) • Allegro agitato

Interval

Aleksandr Glazunov (1865-1936) Entr'acte from *Raymonda* Op. 57 *arranged for cello and*
piano (1896-7)

Dmitry Shostakovich (1906-1975) Cello Sonata in D minor Op. 40 (1934)
I. Allegro non troppo - Largo •
II. Allegro • III. Largo • IV. Allegro

CLASSIC *fm* Wigmore Hall £5 tickets for Under 35s supported by Media Partner Classic FM



This concert is part of the CAVATINA Chamber Music Trust ticket scheme, offering free tickets to those aged 8-25

Friends of Wigmore Hall – celebrating 30 years of friendship

Over the past 30 years, Friends have been providing transformational support for the Hall, ensuring this historic building remains a home for great music making. Enjoy the benefits of friendship by joining as a Friend today, and be a part of the Wigmore story. Visit: wigmore-hall.org.uk/friends | Call: 020 7258 8230

FRIENDS OF
WIGMORE HALL

30

Wigmore Hall is a no smoking venue. No recording or photographic equipment may be taken into the auditorium nor used in any other part of the Hall without the prior written permission of the management.

In accordance with the requirements of City of Westminster persons shall not be permitted to stand or sit in any of the gangways intersecting the seating, or to sit in any other gangways. If standing is permitted in the gangways at the sides and rear of the seating, it shall be limited to the number indicated in the notices exhibited in those positions.

Disabled Access and Facilities - full details from 020 7935 2141.

Wigmore Hall is equipped with a 'Loop' to help hearing aid users receive clear sound without background noise. Patrons can use this facility by switching hearing aids to 'T'.



Please ensure that watch alarms, mobile phones and any other electrical devices which can become audible are switched off. Phones on a vibrate setting can still be heard, please switch off.

The Wigmore Hall Trust Registered Charity No. 1024838
36 Wigmore Street, London W1U 2BP • Wigmore-hall.org.uk • John Gilhooly Director

Wigmore Hall Royal Patron HRH The Duke of Kent, KG
Honorary Patrons Aubrey Adams OBE; André and Rosalie Hoffmann; Louise Kaye; Kohn Foundation; Mr and Mrs Paul Morgan



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



The figure of Rostropovich so dominates our understanding of the Russian cello school that it can be easy to overlook the many other great musicians who have shaped that tradition. It is a tradition that goes back to Karl Davydov (1838-89), whom Tchaikovsky called 'the tsar of cellists'. As was so often the case in the 19th Century, many of Russia's leading musicians came from abroad, and it is to the German-born Wilhelm Fitzenhagen (1848-90) that we owe Tchaikovsky's *Variations on a Rococo Theme* (1877). One of Fitzenhagen's pupils at the Moscow Conservatory was Anatoly Brandukov (1858-1930), to whom Tchaikovsky dedicated his *Pezzo capriccioso* in 1887. Brandukov was best man at Rachmaninov's wedding in 1902, and Rachmaninov's Cello Sonata honours their personal and creative friendship. This evening's concert traces that story through into the 20th Century, examining the legacy of the imperial period for the development of Russian music in the Soviet era.

Born in the Ukrainian town of Hlukhiv in 1887, **Yury Shaporin** first studied philology in Kyiv and then law in St Petersburg. He enrolled in the St Petersburg Conservatory in 1913 and went on to become a prominent member in the city's artistic world after the October Revolution. He took up a professorship at the Moscow Conservatory in 1939, where he remained until his death in 1966. The *6 Pieces* heard this evening were arranged by **Viktor Kubatsky** (1891-1970), a former student of Brandukov. Kubatsky led the cello section of the Bolshoi Theatre orchestra for many years and was active in chamber music circles in the Soviet capital.

One of Shaporin's teachers at the St Petersburg Conservatory was **Nikolay Sokolov** (1859-1922). Sokolov was a member of the so-called Belyayev circle, a group of nationalist composers who gathered around the merchant patron, Mitrofan Belyayev. One of Belyayev's aims was to support the development of a native tradition of Russian chamber music, and Sokolov's *Romance* dates from 1894, part of an extensive body of agreeable turn-of-the-century instrumental music that is now little known, but which enjoyed great popularity with performers and audiences at the time.

Leo Ornstein was born in the Ukrainian town of Kremenchuk in 1893 and at the age of nine entered the St Petersburg Conservatory. Shortly afterwards, his family followed the journey undertaken by so many other Jews in the Russian Empire and emigrated to the United States. He continued his studies in New York, gaining a reputation as one of the most radical and experimental voices of the early 20th Century. After a concert in London in 1914, one reviewer declared him to be 'the sum of Schoenberg and Skryabin squared'. His style mellowed in the 1920s, and the *6 Preludes* from 1931, whilst containing a good deal of dissonance, also attest to a fertile gift for expressive melody.

Ornstein's piano teacher at St Petersburg was Anna Yesipova, who also taught Prokofiev, and there are certainly affinities in their percussive treatment of the

piano. Ornstein's composition teacher was **Glazunov**, another leading member of the Belyayev circle. Glazunov's ballet, *Raymonda*, opened at St Petersburg's Mariinsky Theatre in January 1898, with choreography by Marius Petipa, who had also staged Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty* and *The Nutcracker*. The *Entr'acte* is a characteristic example of late 19th-century Russian lyricism and has been adapted for a number of instrumental combinations by performers over the years.

The story of this evening's recital comes full circle in the Cello Sonata by **Shostakovich**. Born in St Petersburg in 1906, he was admitted to the city's conservatory by Glazunov, who kept a close watch over his young prodigy's progress. Shostakovich's teacher for counterpoint was none other than Sokolov. To begin with, Shostakovich was something of a radical, associating with leading members of the Russian avant-garde and positioning himself as the great hope of Soviet music. He wrote scores for experimental theatre productions, as well as acerbic piano pieces for himself to perform, and his early symphonies tested the limits of classical form.

By the mid-1930s, however, his style had begun to develop, showing a greater respect for the legacy of the past and seemingly addressing the call for Soviet artists to conform to the expectations of Socialist Realism. It was at this time that he turned to chamber music in earnest, composing his Cello Sonata for Kubatsky in 1934. The sonata was certainly inspired by Kubatsky's playing, yet it may have another inspiration too. In the summer of 1934, Shostakovich had fallen in love with a young student. He divorced his wife, Nina, only for the couple to remarry the next year when she became pregnant with their first child. Whether we can detect any of this turmoil in the sonata is open to question. When it was premièred on 25 December 1934, critics were struck by its many moments of neo-classical simplicity and lyrical sincerity, although there is still plenty of Shostakovich's characteristic wit and sarcasm.

The sonata's four movements show just how closely Shostakovich had studied the legacy of the pre-revolutionary era – not just the sonata of Rachmaninov, of course, but particularly those of Beethoven, whose centenary had been celebrated throughout the Soviet Union in 1827 and whose works were now held up as a model for Soviet composers to emulate. It was on a concert tour to the arctic city of Archangel with Kubatsky in January 1936 that Shostakovich opened a copy of *Pravda* to read a vicious denunciation of his opera, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, which had gripped audiences in Leningrad and Moscow for two years. Shostakovich never returned to opera again, other than to revise *Lady Macbeth* as *Katerina Izmailova* in 1962. By contrast, he turned ever more to chamber music to give voice to some of his most profound emotions.

© Philip Ross Bullock 2022

Reproduction and distribution is strictly prohibited.