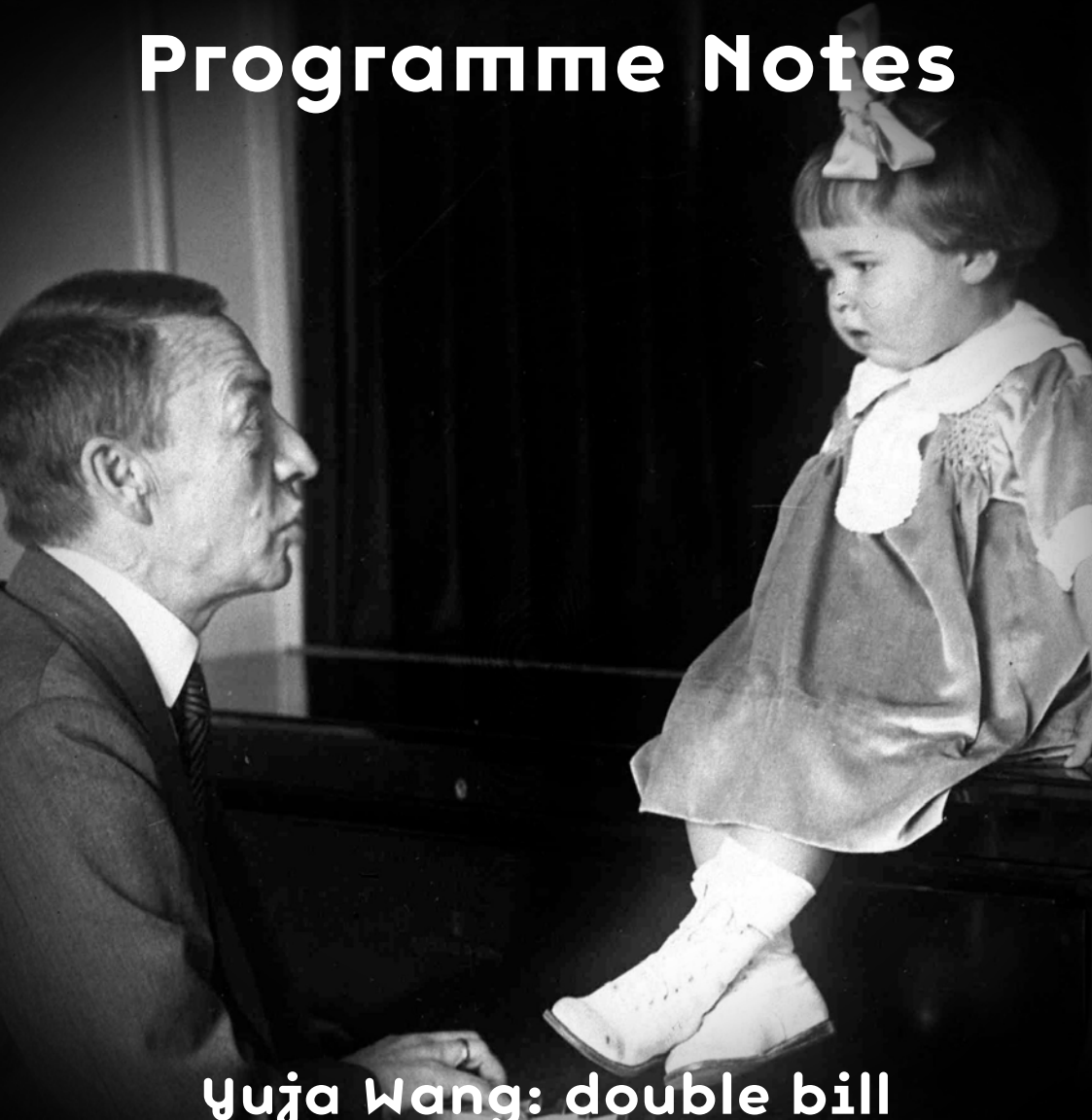


# Programme Notes



**Yuja Wang: double bill**

Thu 19 May 2022 • 20.15

Fri 20 May 2022 • 20.15

## PROGRAMME

conductor **Tarmo Peltokoski**  
piano **Yuja Wang**

**Sergei Rachmaninoff** 1873-1943  
Piano Concerto No. 1 in F-sharp  
minor, op. 1 (1890-91; rev. 1917)  
• Vivace  
• Andante cantabile  
• Allegro vivace

**Sergei Rachmaninoff**  
Rhapsody on a Theme of  
Paganini in A minor, op. 43 (1934)  
for piano and orchestra

### *Interval*

**Jean Sibelius** 1865-1957  
Symphony No. 2 in D major,  
op. 43 (1902)  
• Allegretto  
• Tempo andante, ma rubato  
• Vivacissimo  
• Finale. Allegro moderato

*Concert ends at about 22.25*

### **Most recent performances by our orchestra:**

**Rachmaninoff** *Piano Concerto No. 1: Sep 2015, piano Alexei Volodin, conductor Valery Gergiev*

**Rachmaninoff** *Rhapsody: Mar 2020, piano Denis Kozhukhin, conductor Vasily Petrenko*

**Sibelius** *Symphony No. 2: Nov 2019, conductor Jukka-Pekka Saraste*

*One hour before the start of the concert, Kees Wisse will give an introduction to the programme, admission €5. Tickets are available at the hall, payment by debit card. The introduction is free for 'Vrienden'. The introduction is in Dutch.*

*Cover: Sergei Rachmaninoff and his granddaughter Sophie, New York, November 15, 1927*

# Alpha and omega in music

The beginning and the end: we will hear Rachmaninoff's first work for piano and orchestra, as well as his last composition for the piano. The melancholy Finn, Sibelius – 'melancholy' in the way that Rachmaninoff was too – presents himself in a lighter vein.

It is all right to doubt. In life you are expected to appear certain and determined, even though it may be precisely from the seeds of doubt and indecision that something beautiful grows. Take Rachmaninoff, for example. Frequently filled with doubt. In fact in 1917, aged 44, he was still ruminating on his opus 1, the First Piano Concerto he had composed and even premiered (at least its first movement) way back in his eighteenth year. No small feat for such a young man. A fresh, spontaneous work with melodies that would herald his later genius. However, its orchestration was rather uninspired and flat, the piano part 'heavy' and traditional, the harmony was in parts rather static, and the structure could be improved. When after 1901 Rachmaninoff could lay claim to the composition of his successful Second Piano Concerto,

he regarded his First as 'terribly' inferior, which he forbade to be performed again in its then current form. However, he did not destroy the work completely; there was something glowing in its embers that refused to die. Revisions were planned, although these came to nothing. Until the autumn of 1917. Lacking inspiration for a new work, he decided to take another look at the First Piano Concerto. He actually changed little in terms of themes and musical ideas. But the new, brilliant instrumentation sounded much more convincing. And he played around quite a lot with the structure. He expanded the development of the first movement, whilst truncating the coda to comic effect. And the last movement received a drastic rewrite. A lifeless opening passage was consigned to the bin, to be replaced by a fiery fortissimo. The second theme, initially in the

Rapallo - advertising poster for the seaside resort where  
Sibelius found inspiration for his Second Symphony



**RAPALLO** (GENOVA)  
RIVIERA DI LEVANTE

key of F-sharp minor, related to the D-major key, was transposed to the key of E flat, a much fresher sound. Most strikingly, Rachmaninoff scrapped 39 bars towards the end of the concerto. A return of the main theme, marked *maestoso* with the aim of creating a climax, in fact slowed things down and died away; in its new version the music keeps momentum, rushing towards the final note like a happy young man sighting his beloved. And now we are switching within the lifetime of the composer from the ages of 18 and 44 to 61.

### Welcome

As a refugee, things could have been worse. When in 1917, the year in which he rewrote his *First Piano Concerto*, Rachmaninoff fled a tumultuous Russia as a political refugee, he was immediately welcomed in the United States. He had, after all, intended his *Third Piano Concerto* for New York. 'Come here and stay', they said. 'You are our idol'. And he would indeed remain there till his death in 1943, giving around 175 concerts per year. However, for years on end he did not compose a single note. A fact that speaks volumes. He had the feeling of living in isolation, of being uprooted, and therefore cut off from himself. To be able to compose you must be completely at one with yourself – something difficult to achieve for this serious Russian in a wild, energetic and brash America. His first attempt at composition there, the *Fourth Piano Concerto* dating from 1926, which he had already sketched out back in Russia, was a worry from the start. And then: another long period of silence. And yet... Perhaps this would be the calm before the storm, a paving of the way for something new. A more

modern, more concise style? It doesn't suddenly turn silent in the head of a composer. The turnaround did not come till the thirties, with works including the *Corelli Variations*. In 1933 the Rachmaninoffs built a villa in Switzerland. Here, on Lake Lucerne, they would spend the summers. A hideaway, a beautiful place in Europe, closer to old Russia. The villa comprised a large studio containing a wonderful grand piano, a gift from Steinway & Sons. On 1 July 1934 Rachmaninoff sat down here, at his writing desk, and as soon as he put pen to paper, it all happened quickly: the *Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini*, a series of variations for piano and orchestra on the theme from Paganini's *24th Violin Caprice*, grouped into three movements. He composed like a man possessed, shut himself away from almost any other person, and worked around the clock. He eagerly telephoned the pianist Vladimir Horowitz almost every day to play him each new variation down the line. The score was completed in seven weeks.

### Sunshine

Sibelius would also learn what a change in environment could do. 'Travel to Italy. Head for the cheery sunshine. Find somewhere to compose in peace. Leave Finland behind, with all its hassles and rising tensions, the persistent oppression of the Russians unwilling to let our land become an independent nation.' So advised Axel Carpelan his good friend Sibelius. And in autumn 1900 the composer indeed took that advice. It wouldn't be easy to leave Finland for any longer period of time; here were his roots, and his music depicted 'the land of a

thousand lakes' in a way that had never been heard before. But he left, nevertheless, along with his young family. There was someone available to assume his tasks at the Conservatoire and Carpelan had amassed a sum of 5,000 Finnish marks from people willing to finance the enterprise of their national hero Sibelius. In February 1901 Sibelius could be found in the Ligurian resort of Rapallo. Would Italy indeed prove to be 'a country where one learns cantabile, balance and harmony, plasticity and symmetry of lines', as Carpelan had predicted for him? Sibelius made sketches for a *Don Juan*. He spent Easter in the beautiful city of Florence, where he took inspiration from Dante's *Divine Comedy*. However, at the back of his head the ideas for a new symphony were slowly taking form. His *Second*. Ultimately, whilst nothing comes of his *Divine Comedy* and *Don Juan*, he did sketch out his second symphony (which, in fact, includes an appearance by *Don Juan* in its second movement). And once returned to Finland, Sibelius completed the work. How much does it have a southern influence? The symphony is one of the composer's sunniest works, that's true. But still: this melancholy Finn is unable to shake off the shadows even on 'holiday'. Nevertheless, what the audience heard was a very positive-sounding work. The grandiose finale was interpreted as a victory on the Russian occupiers, and the work was unofficially dubbed the 'Symphony of Independence'. Sibelius himself, however, saw it a little differently: 'My second symphony is a confession of the soul.'

**Stephen Westra**

## Tarmo Peltokoski, conductor

**Born:** Finland

**Education:** Sibelius Academy with Jorma Panula, Hannu Lintu, Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Sakari Oramo for orchestra conducting; with Antti Hotti for piano

**Awards:** Young Musician of the Year Pro Musica Foundation (2018)

**Piano solo with:** Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Helsinki Philharmonic, Tampere, Oulu Symphony Orchestra

**Current position:** principal guest conductor Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen

**Guest conducting:** Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Helsinki Philharmonic, Tapiola Sinfonietta, Sinfonia Lahti, Orchestra Finnish National Opera

**Specialties:** music comedy and improvisation

**Festivals:** Turku Festival, Mikkeli Festival, Festival Septembre Musical Montreux-Vevey, Eurajoki Bel Canto Festival, Rheingau Musik Festival, Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival

**Debut Rotterdam Philharmonic:** 2022

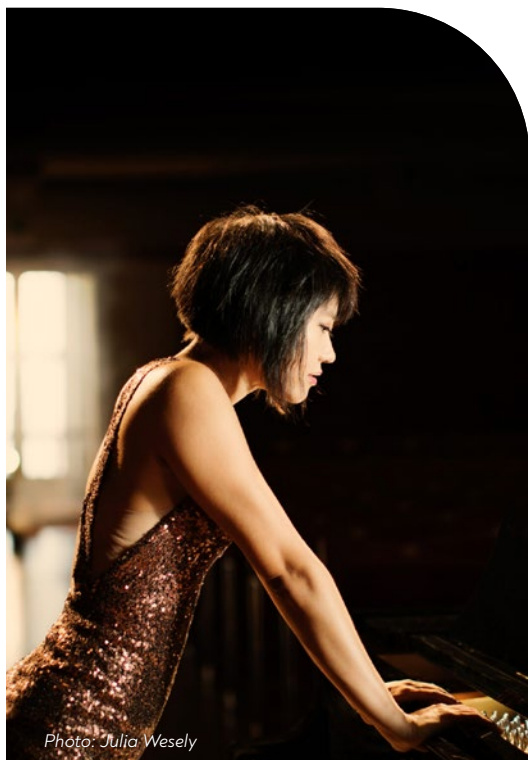


Photo: Julia Wesely



Photo: Peter Rigaud

## Yuja Wang, piano

**Born:** Beijing, China

**Education:** Conservatory of Music Beijing; Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia with Gary Graffman

**Awards:** Musical America's Artist of the Year 2017

**Debut:** 2003, with Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra conducted by David Zinman

**Breakthrough:** 2007, replacing Martha Argerich in Tchaikovsky's *First Piano Concerto*, with the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Charles Dutoit

**Soloist:** with the leading orchestras of Los Angeles, San Francisco, Philadelphia, Washington, New York, Staatskapelle Dresden, Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Munich Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra

**Artist in residence:** among others at Carnegie Hall New York, Konzerthaus Vienna, Philharmonic Orchestra Luxembourg; Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra in 2021/22

**Chamber Music:** with Gautier Capuçon (cello) and Andreas Ottensamer (clarinet)

**Debut Rotterdam Philharmonic:** 2018

# Agenda

**Sun 29 May 2022 • 10.30**

Jurriaanse Hall  
violin **Eefje Habraken** and **Victor Andrey**  
viola **Rosalinde Kluck**  
cello **Daniel Petrovitsch**  
presentation **Milou Adjanga**  
**Ravel** Sonate for Violin and Cello  
**Debussy** String Quartet

**ICCR: Opera**

**Wed 1 June 2022 • 10.00 and 19.00**

conductors **Finalists ICCR**  
soprano **Kelly Poukens**  
mezzo-soprano **Claire Barnett-Jones**  
mezzo-soprano **Florieke Beelen**  
tenor **Anton Kuzenok**  
baritone **Raoul Steffani**  
choir **Laurens Collegium Rotterdam**  
**Bizet** Carmen (parts)

**ICCR: Symphonic**

**Fri 3 June 2022 • 10.00 and 19.00**

conductors **Finalists ICCR**  
**Tchaikovsky** Symphony No. 6 'Pathétique' (part III and IV)  
**Mahler** Symphony No. 4 (part I)  
**Roukens** Symphony No. 1 'Kaleidoscope' (part III)  
**Shostakovich** Symphony No. 5 (part I)

**Thu 23 June 2022 • 20.15**

conductor and piano **Lahav Shani**  
**Mendelssohn** Meeresstille und glückliche Fahrt  
**Mozart** Piano Concerto No. 23  
**Mendelssohn** Symphony No. 3 'Scottish'

**Fri 2 September 2022 • 20.15**

conductor **Lahav Shani**  
**Ligeti** Atmosphères  
**Pijper** Symphony No. 2  
**Mahler** Symphony No. 1

# Musicians

## Chief Conductor

Lahav Shani

## Honorary Conductor

Yannick Nézet-Séguin

## First violin

Igor Gruppman, concertmaster  
Marieke Blankestijn, concertmaster  
Quirine Scheffers  
Hed Yaron Meyerson  
Saskia Otto  
Arno Bons  
Mireille van der Wart  
Shelly Greenberg  
Cor van der Linden  
Rachel Browne  
Maria Dingjan  
Marie-José Schrijner  
Noëmi Bodden  
Petra Visser

Sophia Torrenga  
Hadewijch Hofland  
Annerien Stuker  
Alexandra van Beveren  
Koen Stapert

## Second violin

Charlotte Potgieter  
Cecilia Ziano  
Frank de Groot  
Laurens van Vliet  
Tomoko Hara  
Elina Staphorsius  
Jun Yi Dou  
Bob Bruyn  
Letizia Sciarone  
Eefje Habraken  
Maija Reinikainen  
Sumire Hara  
Wim Ruitenbeek  
Babette van den Berg  
Melanie Broers

## Viola

Anne Huser  
Roman Spitzer  
Maartje van Rheeden  
Galahad Samson  
Kerstin Bonk  
Lex Prummel  
Janine Baller  
Francis Saunders  
Veronika Lénártová  
Rosalinde Kluck  
León van den Berg

## Cello

Emanuele Silvestri  
Joanna Pachucka  
Daniel Petrovitsch  
Mario Rio  
Gé van Leeuwen  
Eelco Beinema  
Carla Schrijner  
Pepijn Meeuws  
Yi-Ting Fang

## Double bass

Matthew Midgley  
Ying Lai Green  
Jonathan Focquaert  
Robert Franenberg  
Harke Wiersma  
Arjen Leendertz  
Ricardo Neto

## Flute

Juliette Hurel  
Joséphine Olech  
Désirée Woudenberg

## Oboe

Remco de Vries  
Karel Schoofs  
Hans Cartigny  
Anja van der Maten

## Oboe/cor anglais

Ron Tjhuis

## Clarinet

Julien Hervé  
Bruno Bonansea  
Jan Jansen

**Clarinet/  
bass clarinet**  
Romke-Jan Wijmenga

## Bassoon

Pieter Nuytten  
Lola Descours  
Marianne Prommel

**Bassoon/  
contrabassoon**  
Hans Wisse

## Horn

David Fernández  
Alonso  
Wendy Leliveld  
Richard Speetjens  
Laurens Otto  
Pierre Buizer

## Trumpet

Giuliano  
Sommerhalder  
Alex Elia  
Simon Wierenga  
Jos Verspagen

## Trombone

Pierre Volders  
Alexander Verbeek  
Remko de Jager

## Tuba

Hendrik-Jan Renes

## Timpani/ percussion

Randy Max  
Danny van de Wal  
Ronald Ent  
Martijn Boom  
Adriaan Feyaerts

## Harp

Charlotte Sprenkels