

Programme Notes



Prokofiev and Rachmaninoff

Fri 17 March 2023 • 20.15

Sun 19 March 2023 • 14.15

PROGRAMME

conductor **Lawrence Renes**
violin **Kristóf Baráti**

Sofia Gubaidulina (1931)
Fairy-tale Poem (1971)

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)
Violin Concerto No. 1 in D major,
op. 19 (1915-17)
• Andantino
• Scherzo: Vivacissimo
• Moderato – Allegro moderato

intermission

Sergei Rachmaninoff
(1873-1943)
Symphony No. 2 in E minor,
op. 27 (1906-07)
• Largo – Allegro moderato
• Allegro molto
• Adagio
• Allegro vivace

*Concert ends at around
22.10 / 16.10*

Most recent performances by our orchestra:

*Gubaidulina Fairy-tale Poem:
first performance
Prokofiev Violin Concerto No. 1:
Sep 2014, violin Lisa Batiashvili,
conductor Valery Gergiev
Rachmaninoff Symphony No. 2:
Jan 2018, conductor Stanislav
Kochanovsky*

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

*Cover: Photo Wolfgang
Hasselmann*

Composers in exile

Restrictions on freedom have a long history in Russia. Violence and repression compelled Sergei Prokofiev and Sergei Rachmaninov to pack their backs and leave; Sofia Gubaidulina escaped on an internal journey.



Sofia Gubaidulina, Turin 1991.

Once upon a time an ordinary stick of blackboard chalk sees the light. Literally, because it is taken from its box and set out next to the blackboard. The chalk dreams of making beautiful drawings, but sadly the blackboard is in the wrong classroom. Day in, day out, the chalk is used to write out complicated arithmetic. It sadly dawns on the chalk that it will just get shorter and shorter till one day it will get thrown out. And then everything turns black when a young boy slips the

magical white wand of chalk into his pocket, and does not take it out till he is outdoors. A world opens up for the chalk as the young boy begins to draw with it. The chalk is so overjoyed that it fails to notice that the boy keeps drawing until there is nothing left of the chalk but a short stump.

Caged fantasy

Originally Sofia Gubaidulina set this fairy tale to music as a commission from a children's radio programme. However, the

theme touched her so deeply that she reworked her music for the concert hall. She recognised in the story a metaphor for her own situation; in the Soviet Union her creative spirit would never be allowed to reach its full potential. Out of necessity, the composer shifted her focus to internal development. For as long as she – just like the chalk – was unable to give her fantasy free rein, there was no other choice. A feeling of repression can be sensed in the almost whispered



Photo Marcello Mencarini

tones of the miniatures that Gubaidulina wrote in those Soviet times. By filtering and paring down the sound she was able to find her own voice. In this musical fairy tale the time that the chalk spends in the boy's trouser pocket is the longest and most important episode. It begins with fear: piano chords portraying a pounding heartbeat. But soon muted and plucked strings and the reedy sounds of a vibraphone and harp create a new world, ready to be discovered. In 1992 Gubaidulina made a definitive choice for freedom and settled in Germany, where she still lives.

In Paris Prokofiev learned that his Moscow apartment had been plundered and all his papers burned.

On the run

In his diary, Sergei Prokofiev describes how during the February Revolution of 1917 there was shooting on the streets; the Mariinsky Theatre remained half empty because so few people dared to venture outside their homes. Prokofiev himself preferred to stay indoors and work on his *First Violin Concerto*. Once things calmed down a bit in spring, he rented a place in the countryside to work on the orchestration of the concerto. He continued this work during a boat trip along the Volga, and even in the waiting room of the office where he had to report for service: the First World War was raging all around and German troops were advancing. When in the autumn of that year the German

army occupied Riga, Prokofiev took the precaution of packing a case with his musical scores and diaries. Weighing over thirty kilos, it was hardly a practical case for someone on the run, but he was able to pass it to conductor Serge Koussevitzky for safekeeping. Following a trip to America, Prokofiev settled in Paris, where many of his compatriots had sought refuge. From them he had learned that his Moscow apartment had been plundered and all his papers burned. But Koussevitzky informed him that he had safely arrived in France himself, with Prokofiev's case. The manuscript of Prokofiev's violin concerto was in the hands of his mother, who had reached Marseilles in 1920 by boat via Greece. It was not until 1923 that the music was first heard in Paris, performed by Koussevitzky's orchestra, with its concert master performing as soloist.

Relative calm

In 1905 a demonstration on the steps of the Winter Palace in St Petersburg was brutally crushed. It was this event that signalled the start of a violent revolution which rapidly spread to Moscow. Sergei Rachmaninov, at that time the conductor of Moscow's Bolshoi orchestra, cancelled all his commitments there and fled the tumult along with his family. In the latter half of 1906 he rented a house in Dresden. There he found the peace to complete in sketch form his *Second Symphony* – music that had been gestating for years. The following summer he began the orchestration of this work in his summer residence in Ivanovka, several hundred kilometres from turbulent Moscow. In January 1908 the symphony finally had its premiere in St Petersburg; a week later it was performed in Moscow.

After a hiatus of eighteen months, Rachmaninov was back in full force as composer, pianist, and conductor at a concert entirely dedicated to him. To his enormous relief, the emotive melodies – especially in the slow third movement – were met with great success. It was as though his stay in Dresden, far removed from his beloved Russia, had enabled him to give sound to his most emotional memories, such as the ringing of the church bells in the final movement. Due to the considerable length of the symphony (it spans almost a full hour) cuts were made in the score until far into the last century; entire passages were dropped in concert performances. Rachmaninov hated this. 'It's like tearing pieces from my heart', he wrote to the American conductor Eugene Ormandy.

Sheet music resurfaces

In 1917, the year in which Prokofiev completed his violin concerto, Rachmaninov left his homeland for good, after one last visit to his beloved, but now plundered, estate at Ivanovka. He had already lost the manuscript of his *Second Symphony*: It became lost in the period when he travelled backwards and forwards between Dresden and Ivanovka. Fortunately, however, his publisher had already engraved the work. If it had not, we wouldn't have got to hear this symphony until 2004. The manuscript was discovered in the estate of a collector in Switzerland and then offered for sale by auction at Sotheby's. Rachmaninov's descendants succeeded in thwarting the public auction and the manuscript is now held in the British Library.

Carine Alders

Lawrence Renes - conductor

Born: Den Helder, The Netherlands

Education: violin at the Sweelinck Conservatory Amsterdam, conducting at the Royal Conservatory The Hague

Awards: first prize NOS international conducting course 1992, Elisabeth Everts Award 1992

Breakthrough: 1995, replacing Riccardo Chailly at the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra

Subsequently: chief conductor of Het Gelders Orkest (1998–2002), Bremer Philharmoniker (2001–2006), Royal Swedish Opera (2012–2017), guest appearances with Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, Bamberger Symphoniker, Philharmonia Orchestra, Orchestre National de Lyon, Tokyo Metropolitan Orchestra and Mahler Chamber Orchestra, opera at the San Francisco Opera, Dutch National Opera, English National Opera and La Monnaie, Brussels

Debut Rotterdam Philharmonic: 1996



Photo: Claudine Grin

Photo: Marco Borggreve



Kristóf Baráti - violin

Born: Budapest, Hungary

Education: first violin lessons with his mother, lessons with Vilmos Tátrai; study at the Budapest Franz Liszt Conservatory, and in Paris with Eduard Wulfson

Awards: Gorizia Competition 1995, Long-Thibaud-Crespin Competition 1996, Queen Elisabeth Competition 1997, International Paganini Competition Moscow 2010, Kossuth-award 2014

Breakthrough: debut Verbier Festival 2016
Subsequently: solo appearances with Los Angeles Philharmonic, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, Budapest Festival Orchestra, Bavarian Radio Orchestra, Mariinsky Orchestra

Instrument: Kristóf Baráti plays the 1703 'Lady Harmsworth' Stradivarius, by kind arrangement with the Stradivarius Society of Chicago

Debut Rotterdam Philharmonic: 1998

Agenda

Sat 25 March 2023 • 21.00

Sev'n

conductor **Frans-Aert Burghgraef**

spoken word **YMP**

gospel choir **G-roots**

Sun 26 March 2023 • 10.30

Music for Breakfast 4

with **Julien Hervé (Clarinet)**, **Noëmi**

Bodden (Violin), and colleagues from
the orchestra

*Chamber Music by Ravel, Fauré and
Debussy*

Thu 6 April 2023 • 19.30

Fri 7 April 2023 • 19.30

Sat 8 April 2023 • 19.30

conductor **Peter Dijkstra**

soprano **Jeanine De Bique**

countertenor **Maarten Engeltjes**

tenor (Evangelist) **Maximilian**

Schmitt

tenor **Fabio Trümpy**

baritone **Thomas Oliemans**

bass (Christ) **Thomas Stimmel**

chorus **Laurens Collegium, Nationaal**

Kinderkoor

Bach *St Matthew Passion*

Thu 20 April 2023 • 20.15

Fri 21 April 2023 • 20.15

Sun 23 April 2023 • 14.15

conductor **Maxim Emelyanychev**

harp/sichord **Jean Rondeau**

Debussy *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un
faune*

Poulenc *Concert Champêtre*

Rossini *Overture 'Il barbiere*

di Siviglia'

Mendelssohn *Symphony*

No. 4 'Italian'

Sun 30 April 2023 • 10.30

Music for Breakfast No. 5

with **Marieke Blankestijn (Violin)**,

Robert Franenberg (Double Bass),

and colleagues from the orchestra

Chamber Music by Boccherini,

Händel and Corelli

Musicians

Chief Conductor

Lahav Shani

Honorary Conductor

Yannick Nézet-Séguin

Principal Assistant Conductor

Bertie Baigent

First Violin

Igor Gruppman,
leader

Marieke Blankestijn,
leader

Quirine Scheffers

Hed Yaron Meyerson

Saskia Otto

Arno Bons

Mireille van der Wart

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

Wim Ruitenbeek

Babette van den Berg

Melanie Broers

Viola

Anne Huser

Roman Spitzer

Galahad Samson

Kerstin Bonk

Lex Prummel

Janine Baller

Francis Saunders

Veronika Lénártová

Rosalinde Kluck

León van den Berg

Olffe van der Klein

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

Flute/Piccolo

Beatriz Da Baía

Oboe

Remco de Vries

Karel Schoofs

Anja van der Maten

Oboe/Cor Anglais

Ron Tjhuis

Clarinet

Julien Hervé

Bruno Bonansea

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

Alex Elia

Simon Wierenga

Jos Verspagen

Trombone

Pierre Volders

Alexander Verbeek

Remko de Jager

Bass Trombone

Rommert Groenhof

Tuba

Hendrick-Jan Renes

Timpani

Danny van de Wal

Percussion

Ronald Ent

Martijn Boom

Adriaan Feyaerts

Harp

Charlotte Sprenkels