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**2017-2018 SOU Tutunov Piano Series**

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April 20, 2018 Tutunov and Friends: Season Finale

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## SEASON FINALE

Alexander Tutunov

with special guest

Madeline Abel-Kerns

Music Recital Hall

May 12, 2017

7:30 pm

**OREGON**  
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AT SOUTHERN OREGON UNIVERSITY

## Biography

Named the “mezzo-toned soprano” (*Frankfurter Allgemeine*) with a “warm and expansive voice” (*Cool Cleveland*), who “filled the house with thrilling sound” (*San Francisco Chronicle*), **Madeline Abel-Kerns** has garnered awards in every genre in which she sings.

In January 2016, she joined SOU as an instructor of voice for the Oregon Center for the Arts. Last May, she and Dr. Rhett Bender performed “I Never Saw Another Butterfly,” a song cycle for soprano and saxophone composed by Lori Laitman, with text from children of the Terezin Concentration Camp. Tonight, Ms. Abel-Kerns is thrilled to perform Sergei Prokofiev’s “The Ugly Duckling” with Dr. Alexander Tutunov at the piano. It has been twenty years since these two artists have collaborated, and long overdue!

Opera and oratorio credits include soprano roles in Aida, Albert Herring, Beethoven’s 9th, Carmen, Cavalleria, Creation, Die Walküre, Der Rosenkavalier, Madama Butterfly, Messiah, Siegfried, Tosca, and the Mozart, Rutter, & Verdi Requiem with the Bahamas Music Society, Cologne Chamber Orchestra, Frankfurt Alte Oper, Heidelberg Opera, Hessische-Rundfunk Orchestra, National Chorale, NY Choral Society, Opera Orchestra of NY, Sacramento Opera, SF Choral Society and SF Opera, among others. Concert and theatre credits include opera, sacred music, musicals, cabaret, dinner theatre and original works in the Bahamas, Germany, and throughout the U.S. in Arizona, California, New York, Oregon, Ohio, Utah, Virginia and Washington.

She has taught voice, breath, acting, and physical conditioning at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Hebrew Union College, Holy Names College, James Madison University, Mary Baldwin College, Southern Oregon University and New York University, and has presented master classes and workshops around the country, in the Bahamas, and abroad.

Supplementing professional training in California, Germany, Oregon and New York, Ms. Abel-Kerns earned her Bachelor’s Degree in Vocal Performance, *summa cum laude with Distinction*, at Mary Baldwin University in 2013. She is a long-time union member in good standing of AEA, PWSA, and SAG-AFTRA.

SONATA no. 7 in B-FLAT MAJOR, Op. 83 (1942)

After 18 years abroad, Prokofiev’s 1936 return coincided with the *Pravda* edict that year. So he “turned to the genres favored by official Soviet cultural policy” (New Grove). Finally in 1939 he began to tackle the major genres of sonata and symphony again. His new piano sonatas nos. 6, 7, and 8 all reflect the “freely tonal harmonies, melodic and thematic wealth of ideas and lyrical expressivity of the mature Prokofiev – qualities that established these works firmly in the international repertory” (New Grove).

The first movement of Sonata 7 creates “some of the most dissonant and aggressively percussive music Prokofiev ever wrote” (critic Harry Haskell). A powerful and pounding opening theme leads to a gentler Andantino section. After a dramatic development section, Prokofiev reverses the order of those two themes in the recap. He sets the *Andante Caloroso* (“Warm”) second movement in A B A form. The peaceful tranquility of the “A” sections frame a forceful and contrasting “B” section. Prokofiev’s years abroad also coincided with the international prominence of George Gershwin. The third movement drives relentlessly (*Precipitato* – “Headlong”) to the final bar, but its frequent, repeated-pitch motives not surprisingly fashion an occasionally syncopated, jazz-oriented style as well.

*Program notes by Ed Wight*

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of the Romantic sonata repertory.”

*SERGEI PROKOFIEV*

THE UGLY DUCKLING, Op. 18 (1914)

Biographer Harlow Robinson writes that throughout the Prokofiev’s career, his “childhood fascination with beasts... fairytales... and supernatural spirits never disappeared.” So it’s no surprise that the composer of *Peter and the Wolf*, and *Cinderella*, was attracted to Hans Christian Anderson’s story *The Ugly Duckling* in 1914. He wrote the first version for voice and piano, but it is not a song so much as a dramatic *scena*. He writes the challenging voice part in a declamatory idiom – “using it more as an instrument to produce “speech in song” and storytelling” (anonymous critic for Rise2). The voice part features “no melody or any memorable tune” (Robinson).

Opening in Summer, we hear the “witty depiction of events in the piano accompaniment ...the chattering of ducks and the rooster” (Gordon Kerry), as the barnyard totally rejects the unattractive young duckling, forcing him to flee into a lonely Winter exile on a frozen lake. Prokofiev also relies on some recurring motives to tell the tale. For example, “A specific chord progression is repeated whenever the theme of ugliness is brought up” (Rise2). In the Spring he lands among swans, and finds to his surprise that he is now as beautiful as they are. The “arpeggiated textures of the opening Summer music” (Rise2) return as Spring heralds the warmth of a truly new season.

10 PIECES from ROMEO & JULIET, Op. 75: no. 10, Romeo bids Juliet Farewell

The Bolshoi Ballet agreed to stage Prokofiev’s *Romeo and Juliet* in 1936. However, Prokofiev’s more complex 20<sup>th</sup> century style avoided much of the rich lyricism and regular phrasing of Tchaikovsky’s ballets. Not surprisingly, some members of the ballet troupe considered it ‘un-danceable.’ Then *Pravda* issued its famous denunciation of musical modernism in 1936. Taking no chances, the theater cancelled the ballet. In desperation, Prokofiev made two orchestral suites out of excerpts from the ballet, and in 1940 the Russian companies finally began performing it.

In 1937 Prokofiev also transcribed ten pieces from the ballet for piano. The final piece consists of a literal arrangement of “Romeo Bids Juliet Farewell” from the second orchestral suite. That piece was a collection of four different numbers from Act 3 of the ballet, including their waking after a night spent together, the plans to escape, and Juliet’s scene of using a sleeping potion to feign death.

**Program**

**Part I: Franz Liszt (1811 – 1886)**

*Franz Liszt*, the promoter/arranger  
Schumann-Liszt: “*Widmung*”(Dedication)  
Mozart-Liszt: “*Lacrimosa*”

*Franz Liszt*, the mystic  
“*Nuages Gris*” (Gray Clouds)

*Franz Liszt*, the poet  
Petrarch’s Sonnet 104  
“*Liebesträum*” (The Dreams of Love)

*Franz Liszt*, the philosopher  
Sonata in B minor, S. 178

Intermission

**Part II: Sergei Prokofiev (1891 – 1953)**

Prokofiev, the storyteller  
“The Ugly Duckling”, after Hans Christian Andersen  
with special guest, Madeline Abel Kerns, Soprano

Prokofiev, the romantic  
*Romeo Bids Juliet Farewell*, from Ten Pieces, Op. 75 No. 10

The amazing Prokofiev  
Sonata No. 7 in B-flat Major, Op. 83  
*Allegro inquieto*  
*Andante caloroso*  
*Precipitato*

*Ars longa vita brevis*

## Program Notes by Ed Wight

### FRANZ LISZT

#### WIDMUNG, S. 566

Liszt's operatic paraphrases and reminiscences were often free-form, challenging pieces based on themes or scenes from the opera. His vocal transcriptions, however, tended to be more exact and authentic representations of the original song. Liszt's 'Widmung' combines elements of both (based on the Schumann song of that title from his song cycle *Myrthen*). He follows Schumann's **A B A** structure of the song, but also adds extra repetitions of each "A" section.

The later return of the "A" section melody also features added 16<sup>th</sup>-note arpeggiations in the accompaniment, while the extra repetition features dense texture with full chords for both melody and accompaniment. Preserving the melody almost exactly (when present), Liszt nonetheless also turns the song into a virtuosic showpiece.

#### LACRYMOSA, S. 550 no. 2 (1862)

The accuracy and effectiveness of the Liszt transcriptions of Beethoven symphonies remains legendary. The great English music historian Sir Donald Francis Tovey wrote that they "prove conclusively... that Liszt was by far the most wonderful interpreter of orchestral scores on the pianoforte the world is ever likely to see." Liszt turns that same exacting style to the orchestral and vocal Lacrymosa movement from the Mozart / Sussmayer *Requiem*. He renders the melody exactly, even down to the dynamics, while also adding some extra reinforcement in the accompaniment to create some striking pianistic effects.

#### NUAGES GRIS, S. 199 (1881)

The extraordinary influence of Liszt's harmonic and structural innovations continued into his last works. He became one of the first to experiment with bitonality (*Funeral Prelude & March*, 1885) and the absence of a tonal center (*Bagatelle sans Tonart*, 1885). These remarkable harmonic innovations also permeate *Nuages Gris* ("Grey Clouds") of 1881. The opening motive consists of six separate quarter-note pitches which establish no tonal center. Its chords include stacked fourths and a descending sequence of augmented triads. This soft, peaceful movement ends ambiguously, never establishing a tonal center. Though Liszt died in 1886 (and met Debussy that final year), these and other late innovations herald the musical Impressionism and Modernism of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

#### PETRARCH SONNET 10 S. 161 no. 5 (1846)

Liszt wrote his three settings of Petrarch sonnets for piano and voice in 1838-39. *Sonnet 104* ("I find no peace") is the most dramatic of

the three; love has left the author in a confused, contradictory state. "I fear, yet hope; I burn, yet am turned to ice." Liszt published separate piano versions of the sonnets in 1846, and eventually included them in his second book of *Années de Pèlerinage: Italie* in 1858. After a new introduction of considerable length for the piano version of 104, the pensive, melancholy melody opens like a nocturne, with an initially gentle left-hand arpeggios as accompaniment. Liszt fashions a far more flamboyant repetition, leading ultimately to "an ecstatic climax with dazzling roulades, chains of thirds and other pyrotechnics – then subsiding in an achingly tender coda reminiscent of the beginning" (Harry Haskell).

#### LIEBESTRAUME, S. 541: Liebestraum no. 3 (1850)

As with the Petrarch sonnets, Liszt also wrote a set of three Liebestraume ("Love's Deams"). And once again he wrote them originally as songs, then published them simultaneously as piano solo versions as well. However, the third song, and especially its piano solo version proved so popular that it is often simply called *Liebestraum*. Its gentleness – a simple, recognizable melody over complex and shifting harmonies – made it one of the most popular of all brief classical works.

The poem by Ferdinand Freiligrath deals with seeking mature love and its always potential loss. Liszt's piano version borrows freely from the two main melodies (A & B) in the song, but also adds some virtuoso pyrotechnics, especially in the new, Chopin-like cadenzas. He fashions three main sections: (A A B Cadenza); (A A B Cadenza); (A A Coda). The lovely opening theme (A) prevails throughout in what is still Liszt's best-known and beloved piece.

#### SONATA in B MINOR, S. 178 (1853)

Liszt settled on an unusual structure for this single-movement sonata. Its four main sections represent the four stages of Sonata Form: primary theme (*Allegro energico*), secondary theme (*Andante*), development section (*Fugato*), and recapitulation (*Allegro prestissimo*). And Liszt builds this sonata on a constant web of thematic transformation, a structure first pioneered in Schubert's *Wanderer Fantasy* of 1822. "Liszt was decades ahead of his time in his appreciation of Schubert" (music critic Phillip Huscher).

Listen for one theme in particular, the repetition of five consecutive 8<sup>th</sup> notes on the same pitch. It appears near the opening, and Liszt later transforms it into the secondary theme – "the tendency of all themes to turn into one another" (musicologist Charles Rosen). Keyboard scholar J. Barrie Jones writes that this monumental 1853 sonata, along with Chopin's sonata in the same key, represent the peak