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PRESENTS

**EUGENE SKOVORODNIKOV**

Piano

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Piano Tuning by Steinway Concert Piano Technician Thomas Lowell

In consideration of those who may be allergic to heavy scents, we ask

that you please refrain from wearing strong perfume or cologne.

**2017-2018 SOU Tutunov Piano Series**

**Andrey Ponochevney– November 17th, 7:30 pm**

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October 20th, 7:30 pm

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## Biography

**Eugene Skovorodnikov** Audiences throughout Europe, Canada, U.S., Latin America, Asia and former Soviet Union recognize Eugene Skovorodnikov for his stylistic interpretation and his technical brilliance. Born in Ukraine, he is a prize winner of "N. Lisenko" National Piano Competition (Ukraine). Eugene Skovorodnikov took his post-graduate course at the St. Petersburg conservatory (Russia) where he remained teaching until 1990 when he left the country. In 2006 he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Musical Arts by Kharkov State University of Arts, Ukraine for his achievements in performance and teaching. "Extraordinary performance...represented all the impressive characteristics of the Grand School...incomparable elegance and enchanting power..." " Il Ponte", Italy He was invited to perform in famous concert halls of the world such as Great and Small Philharmonic Halls (St. Petersburg, Russia), Chan Centre for Performing Arts (Vancouver, Canada), Theatre Bibiena (Mantova, Italy), Grand Theatre (Shenzhen, China), Xinghai Concert Hall (Guangzhou, China), Centre for the Performing Arts (Kfar-Saba, Israel), Ghione Theatre (Rome, Italy), Kharkov Philharmonic Hall (Kharkov, Ukraine), Schwartz Centre for Performing Arts (Atlanta, USA). "...His performance of the "Wanderer" Fantasia by Schubert hypnotized us...Mr. Skovorodnikov's powerful inspiration and sovereign technique allowed him to create perfection and beauty of the real sound image" " Musica e Scuola", Italy "... Eugene captured attention of the audience with his perfect mastery and polished sense of style, full of life and romanticism... he played with the power and colours of symphony orchestra, with fluent and flawless virtuosity", "Nevsky Times", Russia " ...Skovorodnikov returned to Rome after a three year absence, but his long awaiting fan audience was treated to an absolutely outstanding performance; this level of artistic quality has been rarely heard in the past few musical seasons in Rome..." "Musica e Scuola", Italy "... A sturdy Russian-Canadian pianist, Eugene Skovorodnikov, played with thunderous firmness a difficult Russian programme: four works by Tchaikovsky, Miaskovsky's Sonata No. 2, six Shostakovich Preludes and two "Moments musicaux" by Rachmaninov. Interesting and illuminating, this was in the Chopiniana series" "Tribuna Musical", Argentina EUGENE SKOVORODNIKOV, piano [www.eugeneskovorodnikov.com](http://www.eugeneskovorodnikov.com) Eugene Skovorodnikov is concertizing extensively as solo pianist and as chamber performer with such artists as Italian virtuoso flautist Stefano Maffizzoni; Russian violinist Alexandre Brussilovsky; internationally acclaimed clarinetist Julian Milkis; world renowned cellist Mischa Maisky; and with symphony orchestras. He was invited and re-invited to perform with such symphony orchestras as " Sinfonia" (Canada), "West Coast Symphony" (Canada), Kharkov Philharmonic, L'vov Philharmonic, Donetsk Philharmonic (Ukraine), Irkutsk Chamber Orchestra, St. Petersburg Philharmonic, "Hermitage" Chamber Orchestra (Russia), Mexican State Orchestra, Monterrey Symphony Orchestra (Mexico), Grosseto Symphony Orchestra (Italy) and

## WALTZES, OP. 64 (1846-47)

Chopin wrote his final waltzes for this Op. 64 set. **Op. 64 no. 1**, with its misunderstood nickname *Minute Waltz*, "refers to the French word for tiny, not the unit of time" (Chopin scholar Peter Gutmann). Chopin sets the delightful D-flat Major piece in A B A form, and it is still one of his most popular waltzes. However, **Op. 64 no. 2** remains the most popular of them all. Chopin once again explores the D-flat Major / C-sharp Minor relationship found in the Op. 27 nocturnes. This C-sharp Minor waltz extends that even further, with two tunes in that key, but a middle section in D-flat Major. He opens with a languid theme in moderate tempo, followed by the more rapid arpeggiated theme in the same key. The slower D-flat Major section provides contrast with continuous syncopations as well as the "disconcertingly modern chromatic harmony of his last pieces" (Rosen).

Chopin published only eight waltzes during his lifetime, less than half of the seventeen he wrote. Chopin scholar Peter Gutmann writes that on his deathbed, Chopin apparently told his publisher Pleyel "to destroy all his unpublished work. Fortunately for posterity, Pleyel didn't."

Program notes by Ed Wight

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His early polonaises often reflect a simple ternary or *da capo* form, and the Opus 26 set is the last to do so. John Palmer writes that "Forceful, almost violent gestures open the **C-sharp Minor Polonaise**...the aggressive rhythm and bare octaves, played fortissimo." The trio section - a slower, lyrical episode - thus provides true contrast before the *da capo* repetition. Chopin sets the **E-flat Minor Polonaise** in ternary form, and once again it reflects the greater drama he brings to genre. Peter Schaaf writes that is "defiant and upright, with its ominously dark opening figure leading to a dancing second motif in a more triumphant major key."

NOCTURNES, OP. 27 (1835)

While Chopin's 21 examples represent "the apogee of the pianistic nocturne" (2001 New Grove Dictionary), it was Irish composer and pianist John Field who established this 19<sup>th</sup>-century keyboard genre. Chopin's earliest nocturnes (Op. 9, 1832) already moved beyond that style however, enriching it "with more drama and a greater intensity" (Chopin scholar David Rowland). The **C-sharp Minor Nocturne** opens ambiguously. Chopin delays the third of the chord - the pitch which identifies the mode - until the third bar. The next note is only a half-step above, which could indicate the major mode instead. These bars establish a dark mood ("the gloomiest and grandest of Chopin's moody canvasses" says James Huneker), relieved momentarily by the more active contrasting episode in the middle. And the coda in fact closes in C-sharp Major.

This provides the perfect link to the **D-flat Major Nocturne** which follows. Both the wide, 2-octave arpeggios in the left-hand accompaniment and the five, six, seven, and eight-note arabesque figuration signal departures from Field's style. Unlike the A B A form of the first nocturne, this one is through-composed with two main themes. Chopin scholar Jim Samson writes "Taken together, the two themes represent Chopin's ornamental melody at its finest. The opera house was one obvious influence; Mozart another."

BALLADE NO. 2 in F Major, Op. 38 (1839)

How many composers invent a new genre? Earlier musical ballades were short vocal works with text, but Chopin's abandon such programmatic associations with four untitled, non-programmatic ballades of great length. In addition, Chopin provides a new, free-form structure for the ballades. Like sonata form, he provides two main themes in different keys or modes - but the resemblance ends there. Ballade no. 2 opens in *Andantino* tempo, with a wonderfully gentle, folk-like theme in F Major. He follows this with a dramatic *fortissimo* theme (marked *Pres-to con fuoco*) of challenging 16<sup>th</sup>-note sextuplets in A Minor. One example of Chopin's sophisticated approach to long-range form: he anticipated this new key within the opening theme. Both themes later return in the tonic F Major. He then writes an extensive coda based on new material. The final phrase returns to the gentle opening theme - but now in the key and mode of the second theme (A minor). This remarkable gesture of structural unity also means that Ballade no. 2 ends in a different key than it began, an early example of progressive tonality.

## Program

F. Chopin (1810-1849)

*3 Mazurkas, Op. 7*

*No. 1 in B flat Major*

*No. 2 in A Minor*

*No. 3 in F Minor*

*2 Etudes, Op. 10*

*No. 12 in C Minor "Revolutionary"*

*No. 3 in E Major*

*2 Polonaise, Op. 26*

*No. 1 in C sharp Minor*

*No. 2 in E flat Minor*

*2 Nocturnes, Op. 27*

*No. 1 in C sharp Minor*

*No. 2 in D flat Major*

*Ballade No. 2 in F Major, Op. 38*

*2 Valses, Op. 64*

*No. 1 in D flat Major*

*No. 2 in C Sharp Minor*

## Biography (continued)

many others. " ...Eugene Skovorodnikov played brilliantly. Unique virtuosity and beauty of tone were submitted to the spiritual criteria of interpretation. Concerto #1 by D.Shostakovich became a genuine revelation for the audience..." " Russian Youth", Russia Eugene Skovorodnikov was invited as a member of the juries to many piano international competitions, such as "Rome 1997", "Rome 2002", "Rome 2015", "S. Rachmaninov" in Morcone (Italy), "16th Rina Sala Gallo Piano International Competition" in Monza (Italy), "1st Benjamino Cesi Piano International Competition" (Italy), "Premio Fausto Zadra - Citta Abano di Terme" (Italy), "Franz Liszt" Piano International Competition in Weimar (Germany), "Sigismund Thalberg" Piano International Competition (Italy) Eugene Skovorodnikov is Artistic Director of "Music Encore Concert Society" (Canada). He is frequently invited to perform and give master-classes at the international festivals such as " Summit Music Festival " in New York, International Music Academy in St. Petersburg (Russia), Masters de Pontlevoy (France), "International Chamber Music Festival" in Positano (Italy) and Shanghai (China), "Kharkov's Assemblies" (Ukraine), "Burgos Music Festival" (Spain), "Schlern International Music Festival and Masterclass" (Italy), "Grand Nancy Music Academy" (France). From 1991 to 2011, Eugene Skovorodnikov has been teaching with the piano faculty at the University of British Columbia (UBC) in Vancouver, Canada. Many of his students became winners of national and international competitions. Eugene Skovorodnikov is a Steinway Artist.

## Program Notes

### MAZURKAS, Op. 7 (1830-32)

Mazurkas, a folk dance in his native Poland, remained central to Chopin's career. He wrote over fifty of them, far more than any other genre. However, musicologist Charles Rosen wrote "Chopin's mazurkas contain few if any Polish tunes...He uses only fragments of melody, Polish formulas, typical national rhythms, and combines them in his own way...They are the most eccentric and original of Chopin's works."

Orrin Howard of the Los Angeles Philharmonic writes about the Mazurkas of Opus 7. "They are early pieces, composed when Chopin was all of 20 or 21. They have stood the test of time, most being of beguiling freshness and featuring an ingenuity of rhythm, form, and harmonic color. **No. 1 in B-flat Major**, with three distinct melodies in as many keys, is by turns exuberant (melody 1), thoughtful (melody 2), and Slavic (melody 3, with its drone bass and exotic melody. **No. 2 in A Minor**, although brief, has four distinct sections. It begins with an elegant, inward melody and proceeds finally to a vitally rhythmic tune that dances haughtily. **No. 3 in F Minor**, the most extended of Opus 7 has an 8-bar introduction. It occurs again to announce the return of the main theme, an animated melody with a wide-spaced, rolled-chord accompaniment."

### ETUDES, OP. 10 (1829-32)

Chopin basically invented the modern concert etude by turning a formerly "dry technical exercise into a lively, emotional story...In this, the Op. 10 etudes are truly *Revolutionary*" (music critic Fred Yu). Chopin also tends to place the most dramatic piece of a set as the finale, and that is certainly the case with the **C Minor Etude** which closes Opus 10. Chopin himself provided none of the nicknames in this set, and no previous etude "contained such tragic force" (Robert Collett). The relentless 16<sup>th</sup>-note figuration in the left hand naturally draws most of the attention. But Chopin also focused on a range of legato effects, aiming for higher artistic standards which transcend mere technical passage-work.

The **E Major Etude** stands apart from most of Chopin's other etudes by its slow tempo, *Lento*. Chopin considered its main theme to be one of his best melodies, a view confirmed over the next two centuries by its continued popularity. The gentleness and restrained nature of the opening and closing sections present "as much an exercise for the pianist's ear as well as the hands" (Malcolm Kandzia). They enclose a fiery and passionate middle section.

### POLONAISES, OP. 26 (1835)

Along with the Mazurka, the Polonaise – a stately processional dance – provides another example of a Polish genre that remained a central feature of Chopin's career. It constitutes both his first compositions at age seven and his first published work, and he returned to the polonaise throughout his career. And while many composers of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century wrote them in a conventionally brilliant salon style, those of Chopin "reflected a more profound engagement with Polish folk and national dimensions...and a far wider emotional range" (New Grove).