

April 23, 2022

UNITY WITH *Ukraine*



Unity with Ukraine

Saturday, April 23, 2022 • 7:30 PM

Peoria Civic Center Theater

Peoria Symphony Orchestra

George Stelluto • Conductor

James Giles • Piano

Ukrainian National Anthem "Shche ne vmerla Ukrainia"

Mykhailo Verbytsky

(1815 - 1870)

Arranged by Keith Terrett

Carmen McCarthy • Vocals

Concerto No. 4 in G Major for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 58

Allegro moderato

Andante con moto

Rondo. Vivace

Ludwig van Beethoven

(1770 - 1827)

James Giles • Piano

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 2 in C Minor, Op. 17

Andante sostenuto - Allegro vivo

Andantino marziale quasi Moderato

Allegro molto vivace

Moderato assai - Allegro vivo

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky

(1840 - 1893)

Concert Sponsors & Underwriters



The Meredith Foundation

This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.



James Giles • Piano

James Giles regularly delights audiences in important musical centers around the world. Known for his probing and charismatic performances, Giles's interests range from Beethoven to Bernstein, and from Romantic staples of the repertoire to new music written specifically for him. The 2019-2020 season featured a tour of Denmark and recitals in Toronto, Paris, Naples, Budapest, and Manchester, England. Recent U.S. dates included recitals in Atlanta, Dallas, Tampa, Des Moines, Bloomington, IN, and Chicago.

In an eclectic repertoire encompassing the solo and chamber music literatures, Giles is equally at home in the standard repertoire as in the music of our time. He has commissioned and premiered works by William Bolcom, Stephen Hough, Lowell Liebermann, Ned Rorem, Augusta Read Thomas, and Earl Wild. Most of these new works are featured on Giles's Albany Records release entitled "American Virtuoso." His recording of solo works by Schumann and Prokofiev is available on England's Master Musicians label. He recorded John Harbison's Horn Trio with the Chicago Chamber Musicians and recently released a recording with the St. Petersburg Chamber Philharmonic.

His Paris recital at the Salle Cortot was hailed as "a true revelation, due equally to the pianist's artistry as to his choice of program." After a recital at the Sibelius Academy, the critic for Helsinki's main newspaper wrote that "Giles is a technically polished, elegant pianist." And a London critic called his Wigmore Hall recital "one of the most sheerly inspired piano recitals I can remember hearing for some time" and added that "with a riveting intelligence given to everything he played, it was the kind of recital you never really forget."

He has performed with New York's Jupiter Symphony (Alkan and Czerny); the London Soloists Chamber Orchestra in Queen Elizabeth Hall (Mozart and Beethoven); the Kharkiv Philharmonic in Ukraine (Prokofiev and Rachmaninoff); and with the Opera Orchestra of New York in Alice Tully Hall (Chopin). After his Tully Hall solo recital debut, critic Harris Goldsmith wrote: "Giles has a truly distinctive interpretive persona. This was beautiful pianism — direct and unmannered." Other tours have included concerts in the Shanghai International Piano Festival; St. Petersburg's White Nights New Music Festival, Warsaw's Chopin Academy of Music; Chicago's Dame Myra Hess Series, Salt Lake City's Assembly Hall Concert Series, and in Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, the Musikhalle in Hamburg, and the Purcell

Peoria Symphony Orchestra

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George Stelluto • Conductor

Conductor Podium Endowment
Robert E. Gilmore - Caterpillar Inc.
Directors Charitable Award Program

Violin 1

Marcia Henry Liebenow, Concertmaster
Courtney Silver, Assistant Concertmaster
Margaret FioRito
Fiona Brickey
Chenoa Murphy
Lisa Merrill
Miguel Aguirre
Ashley Fitzwater
Owen Ruff
Hannah Cartwright
Karen Nelson
Cathy Schmidt

Violin 2

Kina Ono, Principal
The Frederick Family Endowment
Leslie Koons
Rosemary Ardner
Molly Wilson
Hyo-Jung Chun
Abigail Schneider
Viktor Kuru
Karen Martin
Ana Colakovic

Viola

David Beytas, Guest Principal
Sharon and John Amdall Endowment
Sharon Chung
Mary Heinemann
Allison Montgomery
Lowell Koons
Samantha Peng

Cello

Emily Munn-Wood, Acting Principal
Parker Endowment in memory of H.H. Block
Yunjin Ro
Brian Gaona
Christine Chicha
Richard Hughey
Rachel Schuldt

Bass

Austin Vawter, Principal
Peoria Symphony guild and Friends Endowment in memory of Norbert Cieslewicz
Patrick Aubryn
Kristina Lee
Mike White
Richard Wagon

Flute

Yukie Ota, Principal
Augusta Foundation Endowment in the name of E.C. Heidrich
Denise Cooksey
Kimberly Tegg

Oboe

Sam Waring, Guest Principal
Mrs. Thomas Foster Endowment
Jeremy Curtis

Clarinet

Roger Garrett, Principal
Eric Ginsberg

Bassoon

Michael Dicker, Principal
Terry Maher

Horn

Amy Krueger, Principal
Mrs. Trenchard French Endowment
Luck Berkley, Guest Assistant Principal
Sarah Younker
Devin Cobleigh Morrison
David Snyder

Trumpet

Sarah Carrillo, Principal
David Nakazono

Trombone

Stephen Parsons, Acting Principal
Corey Sansolo
Chris Darwell

Tuba

Terry Solomonson, Principal

Timpani

TBA
Eugene and Donna Sweeney Endowment

Percussion

Peggy Bonner, Principal
Endowment in memory of Jane and William Reid and Carolyn Reid Sisney
Jeremy Clark

Room at London's South Bank Centre. He has given live recitals over the public radio stations of New York, Boston, Chicago, and Indianapolis. As a chamber musician he has collaborated with members of the National and Chicago Symphonies and with members of the Escher, Pacifica, Cassatt, Chicago, Ying, Chester, St. Lawrence, Essex, Lincoln, and Miami Quartets, as well as singers Aprile Mollo and Anthony Dean Griffey.

A native of North Carolina, Dr. Giles studied with Byron Janis at the Manhattan School of Music, Jerome Lowenthal at the Juilliard School, Nelita True at the Eastman School of Music, and Robert Shannon at Oberlin College. He received early career assistance from the Clarisse B. Kampel Foundation and was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to study in Italy with the legendary pianist Lazar Berman.

Maestro's Message

While Tchaikovsky's Symphony #2 "Ukrainian" uses folk melodies from Ukraine, many people don't realize that the influence on this piece, and its composer, run much deeper. Tchaikovsky was of Ukrainian descent! This was pointed out to me several times by prominent Ukrainian musicians I worked with in Kyiv. Ukraine has given world culture a lot of great figures who enriched other people's cultures with theirs. Tchaikovsky knew and loved Ukrainian folklore very much and used it in many of his musical works. Ukraine returned his affection by naming its national conservatory the Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music.

Until recently, publications on Tchaikovsky mentioned very briefly, if at all, his Ukrainian origin. Researchers would usually say that he used to travel to Ukraine, where he not only worked but also relaxed and relished nature, which inspired him to create musical masterpieces. This is only partly true. The excessively ideologized communist era tended to extol everything that the great "Russian" people had accomplished but the communist regime often appropriated the culture of the countries it subjugated when it was convenient.

The composer's paternal great-grandfather was Ukrainian. Revealing Tchaikovsky's Ukrainian roots shows an even deeper more subtle, subversion that took place historically regarding Ukraine's culture and puts the current situation in a greater perspective.

And what about Beethoven's Ukrainian connection? The sons of Chernihiv, Ukraine-born Rozum became influential nobles under the name Razumovsky at the court of Tsarina Elisabeth. One of Beethoven's great patrons was Prince Razumovsky and Beethoven dedicated many works to him. I discover this when I conducted it in Chernihiv.

So you see, Ukraine's positive influence goes back centuries even further than Beethoven. The PSO has performed Haydn symphonies that also include Ukrainian folk melodies! Thank you, Ukraine!

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Written by Michael Allsen ©2022

The Peoria Symphony Orchestra closes the season with a program we are calling "Unity with Ukraine". Pianist James Giles joins us for the passionate and virtuosic piano concerto of Beethoven. We then present Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 2, a work that the composer crafted from Ukrainian folk melodies.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Concerto No. 4 in G Major for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 58

Beethoven's fourth piano concerto was composed in 1805-06. Beethoven was the soloist in the first performance, in Vienna on December 22, 1808. Duration: 33:00.

Background

Concertos were the favorite genre of Beethoven's Vienna audience, and like Mozart before him, Beethoven saw public performances of his piano concertos as a ready source of cash. And he needed cash in late 1808 when he was wrapped up in the lengthy process of reworking the opera *Fidelio*. His fourth piano concerto was performed for the first time at an Akademie, a concert staged for Beethoven's benefit.

**"YOUR BATTLES INSPIRED
ME - NOT THE OBVIOUS
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THOSE THAT WERE FOUGHT
AND WON BEHIND YOUR
FOREHEAD." - JAMES JOYCE**

The program for this landmark event also included the premieres of his fifth and sixth symphonies, excerpts from his *Mass in C* and the concert aria "Ah, perfido", together with premieres of two works with Beethoven himself at the piano, the hastily-composed *Choral Fantasy*, and the *Piano Concerto No. 4*. The concerto was apparently received with some reservation by the audience, perhaps due to its radical deviations from Classical concerto forms. (Or perhaps due to its place near the end of a four-hour December concert in a poorly-heated theater!) The fourth piano concerto is one of the products of the period known as Beethoven's "heroic decade" and it has the same musically adventurous spirit as *Fidelio* and the fourth through sixth symphonies.

What You'll Hear

From its opening bars (Allegro Moderato), this concerto goes beyond the Classical norms that Beethoven followed in his three earlier piano concertos. Common practice was to provide an extended orchestral exposition before the soloist's first entrance, but the fourth concerto begins with a quiet statement by the piano which the orchestra answers in an immediate change of key. This allows Beethoven to set up an underlying harmonic tension that is not completely resolved until the final bars of the coda. Members of the audience at the first performance, where Beethoven was at the piano, reported that he played "impulsively and at a tremendous pace"—certainly a reference to the fiery passages that fill the transitions and development section of this movement, rather than its sublime thematic material.

The second movement (Andante con moto) is a dialogue for piano and strings. Contrasts abound in the Andante; between the rich harmonies of the solo instrument and the spare octaves and unisons of the strings, and between the almost harsh rhythms of the orchestra and the piano's more lyrical phrasing. Only near the end, after a brief cadenza, do the strings join the piano in the mood.

The final movement (Vivace) is set as a rondo, often considered to be the lightest of Classical forms: the main theme that alternates with contrasting material, but there is nothing insubstantial about this movement. All of the usual rhythmic energy of the rondo is here, but Beethoven employs harmonic complexity usually reserved for opening movements. Not content to set up the conventional polite conversation between main and contrasting themes, Beethoven also expands the form to provide extensive development of his musical ideas.

Tchaikovsky loved the folk music he heard in Kamenka, and almost immediately began to weave some of these Ukrainian tunes into symphonic works.

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)
Symphony No. 2 in C minor, Op. 17

Tchaikovsky wrote this symphony in the summer and fall of 1872. The first performance, conducted by Nicolai Rubinstein, was in Moscow on February 7, 1873. He revised the score extensively in 1880, and this version was premiered in St. Petersburg in 1881. Duration 32:00.

What's In a Name?

In the days of the Russian czars, Ukraine—from the cities of Kyiv and Kharkiv to the Black Sea—was known as “Little Russia.” The term is problematic today. “Little Russia” is still used by Russian leaders, including Mr. Putin, and by pro-Russian separatists within Ukraine who deny a separate Ukrainian identity and wish to see Ukraine absorbed into Russia. “Little Russia” is, not surprisingly, taken as offensive by many of today’s Ukrainians. This symphony, inspired by the music and landscape of Ukraine, is often known as the “Little Russian.” Tchaikovsky’s friend Nikolai Kashkin, a Moscow teacher and music critic, was responsible for the symphony’s well-known nickname. Tchaikovsky himself was not responsible for the nickname, and it is not used here.

Background

It was a visit to Ukraine that gave Tchaikovsky the musical inspiration for his second symphony. During the summer of 1872, he visited his sister Alexandra and her husband at their estate in Kamenka, a village near Kyiv. Tchaikovsky loved the folk music he heard in Kamenka, and almost immediately began to weave some of these Ukrainian tunes into a symphonic work. The *Symphony No. 2* was completed later that year after he returned to Moscow. Tchaikovsky spent the Christmas holidays in St. Petersburg and showed the completed symphony to Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, and other members of the group known as the “Mighty Five.” They were enthusiastic about Tchaikovsky’s extensive quotation of folk songs in the new symphony, which they saw as a sign that Tchaikovsky was beginning to sympathize with their brand of musical nationalism. When the new symphony was performed in Moscow at the Imperial Music Society a few months later, the wildly enthusiastic audience demanded a repeat performance, and Tchaikovsky was awarded a laurel wreath and a silver goblet. He wrote to his brother Modeste that he considered it to be “my best work, with regards to the correctness of form, a quality for which I have so far not distinguished myself.”

Six years later, he was not quite so satisfied. A self-critical perfectionist, Tchaikovsky reworked many of his works after their premieres, even when they were apparently successful. In 1879, he wrote to his patron Nadezhda von Meck, expressing his relief that he had not published *Symphony No. 2* and noting that “only the last movement can be left intact.”

In the next few months, he completely reworked the opening movement and the second and third movements were also revised. When this published version was premiered in St. Petersburg in 1881, the reaction was every bit as enthusiastic as it had been in 1873. The symphony was quickly performed by orchestras throughout Europe and was played by the New York Philharmonic less than two years later.

What You'll Hear

The symphony opens with a slow introduction, marked by *Andante sostenuto*. The main theme of this passage, played first by the solo horn—a Ukrainian version of the Russian song “Down by the Mother Volga”—clearly establishes the character of this work. After this theme is passed among sections of the orchestra, the tempo quickens quite abruptly (*Allegro Vivo*), and the strings play an incisive theme that begins the exposition. The body of the first movement is set in an orderly sonata form—reflecting the “correctness of form” of which Tchaikovsky boasted to his brother. After the stormy main theme, the character shifts and brightens, and the oboe plays a lovely second theme. After bringing the agitated first theme back again, Tchaikovsky has a lengthy development section that focuses on this melody and the Volga theme from the introduction. The closing section of the movement is conventional, except for a long coda that closes with a return to the opening tempo and horn solo.

Tchaikovsky was a prolific, but sometimes unsuccessful opera composer. One of his flops was *Undine*, composed when he was only 29 years old. He destroyed most of this score but saved a few of the better bits to use in later compositions. One of these was recycled as the main theme of the second movement (*Andantino marziale, quasi moderato*). This unhurried march theme alternates with two other melodies. The first of these is a lyrical theme played by the violins. The second is a distinctly Ukrainian melody played by oboe and flute that recalls the tone of the first movement’s Volga theme.

Tchaikovsky once again uses a traditional form in his third movement. His scherzo (*Allegro molto vivace*) has the traditional three-part form that had been standard in symphonic third movements since the time of Haydn and Mozart. The opening section is blazingly fast, with violins weaving a furiously fast melody above forceful accents. The central trio changes both key (from minor to major) and character (to a less ferocious duple meter) for pastoral dance music from the woodwinds. There is an abbreviated return of the opening material, and Tchaikovsky hints briefly at the trio theme in the coda to this movement.

The main theme of the finale—another Ukrainian folk song, “The Crane”—emerges gradually (*Moderato assai*). When the body of the movement begins, this same theme is presented in its original form, a quick duple meter dance tune (*Allegro Vivo*), played by the strings. Tchaikovsky works intensively with this theme before introducing the second theme, a syncopated and whimsical melody played by the violins. In the development section, Tchaikovsky works with both main themes, often pitting one section of the orchestra—brass, woodwinds, or strings—against the others. In the recapitulation, Tchaikovsky brings back the second theme first and then uses the Crane melody to lead—after a dramatic crash from the gong—into a brilliant coda that closes the movement. ♦