



RACHMANINOV | GUBAIDULINA | TCHAIKOVSKY | SCRIBIN

YULIA CHAPLINA
piano

Produced & Engineered by Richard Sutcliffe
Edited & Mastered by Richard Sutcliffe

Recorded on 5th–7th August 2013 in the Music Room, Champs Hill, West Sussex, UK
Photographs of Yulia by Joe Murtagh
Executive Producer for Champs Hill Records: Alexander Van Ingen
Label Manager for Champs Hill Records: John Dickinson



I FOREWORD

My acquaintance with music began before I can remember. My mother, a Russian concert pianist and a professor at the Rachmaninov Conservatoire in Rostov-on-Don, continued giving recitals until shortly before I was born. As a child, playing itself was not as interesting for me as dancing to my mother playing Chopin waltzes in our living room. But when my mother asked me whether I wanted to play the piano or the violin, I answered “the piano”. It seemed less painful both to the fingers and the ears!

The further I progressed with my piano playing, the more I fell in love with music in general. Music talks directly from the heart and it is a language that needs no translation. Now, as a performer, I feel I am talking directly to the composer and connecting with their lives, whether their moments of deepest regret or greatest joy.

In particular, I have always been drawn to Russian music. Being Russian myself gives me an instinctive freedom in its interpretation and I am able to express my sorrows and joys, successes and failures very naturally through Russian music. Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninov in particular have always felt like old friends; indeed, I have known their names for as long as I can remember.

I have chosen the programme for this recording to demonstrate the beauty and variety in Russian piano music. The pieces are well-known and popular in the piano repertoire. But I feel I have something new and personal to say with each piece. I hope you enjoy my interpretation. I would like to thank Mary and David Bowerman and Champs Hill Records, without whom this project would not have become a reality.

Yulia Chaplina

TRACK LISTING

SERGEY VASILYEVICH RACHMANINOV (1873-1943)

PIANO SONATA NO.2, OP.36 (1931 version)

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|------|
| 1 | Allegro agitato | 8'44 |
| 2 | Non allegro – Lento | 6'21 |
| 3 | L'istesso tempo – Allegro molto | 5'47 |

PIOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840-1893)

- | | | |
|---|---|------|
| 4 | LULLABY, NO.1 OP.16 (Author's transcription for piano solo) | 3'13 |
| 5 | ANDANTE MAESTOSO from THE NUTCRACKER SUITE (arranged for piano by Mikhail Pletnev) | 6'03 |

SOFIA ASGATOVNA GUBAIDULINA (1931-)

- | | | |
|---|-----------------|------|
| 6 | CHACONNE | 9'51 |
|---|-----------------|------|

ALEXANDER NIKOLAEVICH SCRIBIN (1872-1915)

SONATA NO.9, OP.68

- | | | |
|---|--|------|
| 7 | Moderato quasi andante, Molto meno vivo, Allegro molto, Alla marcia, Allegro, Presto, Tempo primo | 9'04 |
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SERGEY VASILYEVICH RACHMANINOV

VARIATIONS ON A THEME OF CORELLI OP.42

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------|------|
| 8 | Theme. Andante | 1'00 |
| 9 | Variation 1. Poco piu mosso | 0'37 |
| 10 | Variation 2. L'istesso tempo | 0'37 |
| 11 | Variation 3. Tempo di Minuetto | 0'42 |
| 12 | Variation 4. Andante | 0'53 |
| 13 | Variation 5. Allegro (ma non tanto) | 0'23 |
| 14 | Variation 6. L'istesso tempo | 0'23 |
| 15 | Variation 7. Vivace | 0'27 |
| 16 | Variation 8. Adagio misterioso | 1'04 |
| 17 | Variation 9. Un poco piu mosso | 1'09 |
| 18 | Variation 10. Allegro scherzando | 0'38 |
| 19 | Variation 11. Allegro vivace | 0'26 |
| 20 | Variation 12. L'istesso tempo | 0'36 |
| 21 | Variation 13. Agitato | 0'37 |
| 22 | Intermezzo | 1'27 |
| 23 | Variation 14. Andante (come prima) | 1'07 |
| 24 | Variation 15. L'istesso tempo | 1'34 |
| 25 | Variation 16. Allegro vivace | 0'34 |
| 26 | Variation 17. Meno mosso | 1'05 |
| 27 | Variation 18. Allegro con brio | 0'35 |
| 28 | Variation 19. Piu mosso. Agitato | 0'30 |
| 29 | Variation 20. Piu mosso | 0'57 |
| 30 | Coda. Andante | 1'38 |

Total playing time: **68'14**

Success as a pianist and conductor placed heavy burdens on Sergey Rachmaninov. The composer's crowded concert schedule during the autumn and winter of 1912 certainly offered little space for rest or recovery. Exhaustion temporarily checked the flow of his demanding career that December. He cancelled the last in a series of conducting engagements in Moscow and travelled soon after with his wife and daughters to Switzerland for a month's holiday and on to Rome. The change of scene and release from performance commitments supplied Rachmaninoff with ideal conditions for creative work, the energy of which he channelled into the sketches for a new choral symphony, *Kolokola (The Bells)*. When both his daughters contracted typhoid fever in Italy, Rachmaninoff took them to Berlin in search of expert medical help and remained there until the girls were well enough to make the journey to his country estate, Ivanovka, around 250 miles south east of Moscow.

'My children are now, thank God, quite well,' he wrote to the poet Marietta Shaginyan in July 1913. 'As for myself, I have been able to work [at Ivanovka] the whole day for the last three months. Whenever this work is too much for me, I get into my car and fly about 50 versts [one verst = 0.66 mile] from here to the open air of the highway. I breathe the air and bless freedom and the blue sky. After such an air bath I feel bolder and stronger.' Life's full intensity was mirrored in *The Bells* and flowed into the score of Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Sonata. The composer completed the sonata's opening at Ivanovka in August and set the seal on its two companion movements following his return to Moscow in September.

Four days after conducting the first performance of *The Bells* in St Petersburg on 30 November, Rachmaninoff gave the premiere of his new sonata in Moscow. One hostile critic, a partisan supporter of modern developments in music, declared that the work 'has no interesting or profound ideas, and exterior pianistic virtuosity dominates its musical potential ...' He did, however, commend the 'fresh, and for

Rachmaninoff, rather unusual harmonies and counterpoint'. Even the composer found fault with his work in later life, declaring dissatisfaction 'with the setting' and comparing it unfavourably with Chopin's celebrated B minor piano sonata. 'Chopin's sonata lasts nineteen minutes and all has been said,' he confessed to the musicologist Alfred J. Swan in the early 1930s. Rachmaninoff returned to his original score in 1931 and systematically revised its contents, trimming extended virtuoso passages, thinning textures and reducing the composition's overall length by 120 bars. Much of the revision process involved condensing existing material, although Rachmaninoff also deleted long passages in the first and final movements and compressed more than twenty bars of the slow movement into the space of thirteen. It left a taut work, still romantic and technically demanding but more focused in form than its predecessor of 1913.

Strong echoes of *The Bells* sound in the Piano Sonata in B flat minor, clearly so in the bell-like descending scales present in its *Allegro agitato*. The opening movement's main theme, with its emphatic introductory iamb rhythm (da-dum) and yearning melodic line, supplies rich material for the elegiac second subject and generally serves as a unifying force throughout the work. Rachmaninoff makes good use of counterpoint to develop his thematic material, building dramatic intensity as the movement progresses toward its chiming climax. A tender melody, marked *Non allegro*, meanders and modulates its short course from the second movement's opening to the statement of its *Lento* theme in E minor, source of a wonderfully fluent set of variations. The movement closes with a return of material based on the first movement's main theme, cast here as a languid melody that fades away to leave the final say to its gentle E major accompaniment. The seven-bar *Non allegro* melody surfaces again as the finale's introduction, modulating to C major to provide the launch pad for a spectacular B-flat major *Allegro molto*. Rachmaninoff develops

aspects of his *Non allegro* and *Allegro molto* themes, interweaving them with other ideas before crowning his work with a thrilling *presto coda*.

Within days of Rachmaninoff's arrival in New York in November 1918 as an exile from Bolshevik Russia, the Viennese violinist Fritz Kreisler arrived at the Sherry-Netherland Hotel on Fifth Avenue to greet his famous Russian colleague. The two men went on to become good friends, performing and recording together and reflecting their mutual appreciation in transcriptions of each other's compositions. In May 1931, having revised his Second Piano Sonata, Rachmaninoff began a set of variations for solo piano. It appears likely that Kreisler supplied the work's theme, complete with its false attribution to the virtuoso violinist and influential composer Arcangelo Corelli (1653–1713). Rachmaninoff in return dedicated his new score to Kreisler. The *Variations on a Theme of Corelli*, completed on 19 June 1931 at the composer's rented holiday villa in Clairefontaine-en-Yvelines, to the south west of Paris, opens with an unadorned statement of the first sixteen bars of Corelli's Sonata No.12 in D minor, Op.5, itself based on the anonymous 'folia' melodic and harmonic framework.

Over the span of twenty brief variations, Rachmaninoff evolves and gradually deconstructs his chosen theme using a dazzling array of melodic, harmonic and modal elaborations. 'All this mad running about is necessary in order to efface the theme,' he told Alfred J. Swan while playing his *Variations*. When he had finished he looked at his hands and said, "The blood-vessels on my fingertips have begun to burst; bruises are forming.' While Rachmaninoff suggested that the damage was probably the consequence of old age, many younger pianists have emerged wounded from close encounters with his *Corelli Variations*. The work's dashing display and pianistic fireworks emerge from four slow variations and are punctuated by the introspective meditation of Variation 8, the 'misterioso' nature of which flows from

its meandering chromatic bass line, and two *Andante* variations, the second of which is cast in the remote key of D-flat major. The *Coda*, noted Swan at first hearing, is 'neither a climax nor a return to the beginning'; rather, it transcends what has gone before, reconciling minor and major tonalities to create an atmosphere of calm concentration.

Rachmaninoff was only thirteen when he first met Tchaikovsky. The latter, an acclaimed composer among late Tsarist Russia's greatest cultural ambassadors, inspired in the youngster a lifelong devotion to the Romantic spirit of beauty and truth in music. In later life, Rachmaninoff made an exquisite recording of Tchaikovsky's *Lullaby* Op.16 No.1 for solo piano. The work was conceived in the winter of 1872–3 as a setting of Apollon Maykov's 'Cradle Song' for high voice and piano. Tchaikovsky soon made two arrangements of the song for solo piano – one in A-flat minor, the other in A minor – preserving the original's tender lyricism and compassion in both. Yulia Chaplina's interpretation takes its lead from the dream-like imagery of Maykov's poem:

CRADLE SONG (KOLYBEL'NAJA PESNJA)

Sleep, my baby, hushaby! sleep, hushaby!

Welcome sweet sleep:

Nannies three watch over you —

Wind, sun, and eagle.

The eagle flew home;

The sun hid over the water;

The wind, after three nights,

Comes racing to his mother.

His mother asked the wind:

"Where have you been hiding all this time?"

Were you playing battle with the stars?

Or just pushing waves around?"

"I wasn't pushing any sea waves around,

I didn't touch the golden stars;

I was keeping a baby safe from harm,

I was rocking a little cradle!"

Sleep, my baby, hushaby! sleep, hushaby!

Welcome sweet sleep:

Nannies three watch over you —

Wind, sun, and eagle.

Apollon Maykov (1821–1897)

The art of arrangement, cultivated by composer-pianists throughout the vast Russian empire before the Revolution of 1917, survived under the Soviet system of music education. Shortly after his triumph at the Tchaikovsky International Piano Competition in 1978, Mikhail Pletnev gave fresh life to the transcription tradition with his Concert Suite from Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker*. His virtuoso arrangement of the ballet's *Andante maestoso* retains the melancholy of the original composition while intensifying its spirit of heroic defiance.

Individual heroism is transcended in Sofia Gubaidulina's *Chaconne* to reveal deeper levels of individual and collective consciousness, beyond and beneath the limits of its venerable formal structure. The piece, a product of the composer's student years at the Moscow Conservatory, was completed in 1962. 'I really can't say that any radical shift has taken place in my work, or any unexpected change in my way of thinking...,' Gubaidulina recalled over three decades later. 'It seems to me that I have been travelling through my soul the whole time, in a definite direction, always further and further and further...'. The *Chaconne* was written for the Georgian pianist Marina Mdivani, first-prize winner at the 1961 Marguerite Long-Jacques Thibaud Competition in Paris and a star pupil of Emil Gilels. Gubaidulina's composition opens with an eight-bar chordal theme, presented in stately fashion and voiced in the key of B minor. Its note values are diminished in the variations that follow and its eight-bar frame gradually eroded until its reestablishment towards the work's close; the theme's melodic material, meanwhile, is reordered and freely repeated by Gubaidulina to give a 23-note tone row. The composer employs inversion, retrograde motion and other serial techniques to unleash storms of pulsating energy and deliver contrasting episodes of meditative reflection.

While Sergei Rachmaninoff's later years were conditioned by nostalgia for his homeland, those of Alexander Scriabin were directed by insatiable interest in metaphysics and mysticism. Scriabin's outlook, that of a universalist, reached far

beyond music to embrace the pre-Revolutionary aesthetics of such contemporary poets as the symbolists Konstantin Balmont and Vyacheslav Ivanov, the mystical philosophy of Vladimir Solovyov and the theosophy of Helena Blavatsky. The complexity of Scriabin's worldview embraced aspects of ancient eastern wisdom, albeit sketchily absorbed from equally sketchy early translations of Vedantic and Buddhist texts; it was also directly influenced by the occult ideas of Madame Blavatsky's magnum opus, *The Secret Doctrine* of 1888.

Scriabin's openness to the occult was, according to the Russian musicologist Leonid Sabaneev, central to the composer's work: 'Undoubtedly, the entire spiritual and creative physiognomy of [his] consciousness was conditioned by Satanism,' observed Sabaneev in his essay 'Scriabin and the idea of religious art'. The Taoist concept of universal harmony and ancient Russian mysticism, however, were arguably more influential on Scriabin's philosophy than western ideas of the fallen angel. Whatever the nature of the composer's interest in the occult, his Ninth Piano Sonata of 1912-13 projects a sinister, often troubling soundworld. Its opening motif, stated in the right hand and echoed by the left, is built from consecutive tritone intervals, the so-called 'Devil in music'. The work's chromaticism, its technical demands and unsettling fervour directed Scriabin's friend and fellow theosophist Alexey Podgayetsky to refer to it as a 'Black Mass', the dark-hearted antithesis of the Seventh Piano Sonata, which the composer had subtitled White Mass. Although the single-movement 'Black Mass' is sectional in form, with the opening motif returning at the midway point and for the work's conclusion, the music's restless anxiety consistently trumps any sense of structural stability.

Andrew Stewart

I YULIA CHAPLINA

Born in 1987 in Rostov-on-Don, Russia, Yulia gave her debut performance aged seven, performing Bach's Keyboard Concerto in F minor with the Rostov State Symphony Orchestra. Since then, she has performed extensively in Europe and Asia, most recently in Japan, Spain, Germany, Russia and Ukraine.

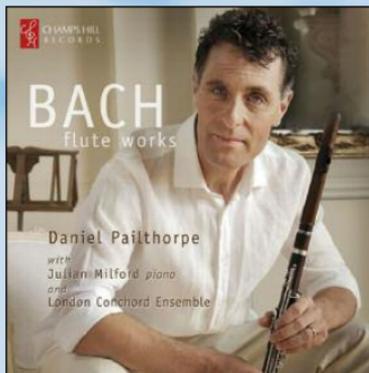
Since her first major competition win in Poland, aged nine, Yulia has won first prize in piano competitions in Paris, Andorra, Kiev, Kharkov and St. Petersburg.

After winning the first prize and gold medal in the junior Tchaikovsky International Competition, Yulia appeared as concerto soloist in Moscow, Dubrovnik, Busan, Tokyo and Montreal. She performed recitals in more than 15 countries all over the world.

Yulia's debut CD recording – of the solo piano works of Badarzewska – was made in Japan in 2007 and a subsequent documentary was made about her musical life by the Japanese Broadcasting Corporation. As well as recent concerto performances with the Hiroshima and Sendai Symphony orchestras, Yulia appeared as concerto soloist in the Philharmonie, Berlin. In Russia, Yulia studied with Naum Shtarkman before moving to Berlin in 2006 to study with Professor Klaus Hellwig at the Universität der Künste. In 2012 she completed Master of Music degree from Royal College of Music in London where she studied with Dmitri Alexeev. Yulia also had lessons with Andras Schiff, Mitsuko Uchida and Paul Badura-Skoda. Amongst numerous scholarships, she has received awards from the Menuhin and Hindemith Foundations in Germany and the Mstislav Rostropovitch Foundation in Russia. Yulia was a Mills Williams Junior Fellow at the Royal College of Music in 2012/2013.



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