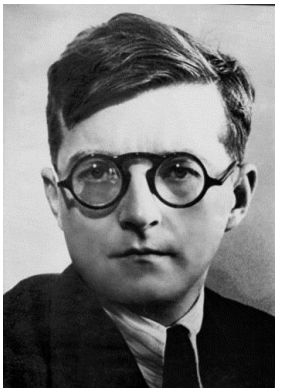
Beaverton Symphony Orchestra

Travis Hatton, Music Director

Winter Concert:
The Romance of Russia



7:30pm Friday, January 19, 2018
3:00pm Sunday, January 21, 2018

beavertonsymphony.org
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Our guest Soloist

Dr. Julia Salerno serves as professor of Violin and Viola at Eastern Washington University. Ms. Salerno has been a featured soloist with many orchestras, including the Northwest Philharmonia, Spokane Symphony, Ann Arbor Symphony, and the Walla Walla Symphony. Julia also appeared with the Czech Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra in Prague and presented a recital for their International Diplomat Series.

Early accomplishments include winning first prize and the festival medal in the 2000 Seattle Young Artists Music Festival; national finalist for the String division of the 2001 MTNA collegiate competition; and String Division Young Artist Winner of Musicfest Northwest in 2004. Salerno has also served as concertmaster of many orchestras, including three years at the University of Michigan. During their 2004 season, the UM orchestra made the GRAMMY Award winning recording of William Bolcom's Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience, conducted by Leonard Slatkin. Julia was concertmaster and a violin soloist in that recording.

While residing in Los Angeles, Ms. Salerno enjoyed a diverse musical experience, including a small appearance in the 2009 movie *The Soloist*, the 2009 Academy Awards Governors Ball Orchestra, a PBS Documentary honoring Ella Fitzgerald, and performances with musicians like Stevie Wonder and Natalie Cole. She also participated in chamber performances with principal musicians from the Los Angeles Philharmonic and performed on the popular Classical Underground chamber music series with her USC piano trio.

Julia began Suzuki violin lessons at age two. Her teachers have included Kathleen Spring, Margaret Pressley, Stephen Shipps, Lyndon Johnston-Taylor, and Martin Chalifour. Julia was a scholarship student at several summer festivals including the Encore School for Strings, Indiana University Summer String Academy, and the Meadowmount School of Music. Julia graduated with a DMA in Violin Performance from the University of Southern California in May 2010. She was awarded major scholarships for music study at the University of Michigan and University of Southern California, where she received her B.M. and M.M., respectively, in violin performance *summa cum laude*.

Julia enjoys collaborating with colleagues for frequent chamber performances around the Northwest, including several appearances at the Walla Walla Chamber Music Festival. She also performs around the US in the violin duo SEEING DOUBLE along with violinist Sarah Whitney of Sybarite5. Julia enjoys teaching a wide range of students and has a large private studio spanning Spokane to Walla Walla. Julia serves as co-director of the Walla Walla Suzuki Institute, and also enjoys teaching in Vermont at the Green Mountain Suzuki Institute each summer.

Beaverton Symphony Orchestra

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Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)

Festive Overture, Op. 96 (1954)

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)

Violin Concerto No. 1, Op. 19 (1915-1923)

Andantino
Scherzo: Vivacissimo
Moderato – Allegro moderato
Julia Salerno, violin

Intermission

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)

Symphony No. 2 in E minor, Op. 23 (1906-7)

Largo – Allegro moderato
Allegro molto
Adagio
Allegro vivace

Program Notes *by Hugh Ferguson*

Dmitri Shostakovich and his *Festive Overture*

Dmitri Shostakovich came of age as the Russian Revolution was going through its birth pangs. Born in 1906 into a family of the bourgeois intelligentsia, his adolescence was marked by exposure to civil upheaval and Tsarist brutality. But his mother had begun teaching him the piano when he was nine, and it was music, not politics, that consumed him. At 13, he was admitted as the youngest student in the Petrograd Conservatory. At 19, his First Symphony was premiered by the Leningrad Symphony Orchestra. Within the year it had been performed under Bruno Walter in Berlin and Leopold Stokowski in New York.

Meanwhile, the Tsarist Russian Empire had crumbled, replaced by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

At the turn of the twentieth century, Russia had been a hotbed of artistic exploration. The early 1900s were the prelude to revolutions in art, architecture and music. The *avant garde* among Russian musicians were experimenting with whole-tone music, serialism and microtones.

Lenin, the Soviet Union's first leader, objected. He denounced Expressionism, Futurism, Cubism and other "isms," as elitist. "Art," he insisted, "belongs to the people." But he was too busy consolidating power to get involved. But Stalin, who succeeded him, began in the '30's to put serious effort into controlling Soviet artists. He did this through the promulgation of "Socialist Realism," which demanded that art portray Soviet life as more joyous, happier in the "glorious potential of life under Communism."

Shostakovich prospered under the new regime, seemingly at one with its philosophy. He had subtitled his second and third symphonies *To October* (in reference to the 1917 Revolution) and *The First of May*. His opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*, depicting the unfairness of life under the Tsars, was a smash hit. By the close of 1935 it was playing in three different Moscow opera houses simultaneously.

Then, on January 26 1936, after some 200 performances, Stalin came to see it.

Stalin left before it was over, and two days later the official Communist Party mouthpiece, *Pravda,* savaged it: "Singing is replaced by shrieking… The music quacks, hoots, growls and gasps to express the love scenes… The ability of good music to enthrall the masses has been sacrificed on the altar of petit-bourgeois formalism."

"Formalism*"* was a severe pejorative in Stalin's Russia. It meant adherence to formulas that produced such things as such as dissonant harmony and bizarre orchestration. It was equated with pessimism. "Realism," on the other hand, was equated with optimism, characterized by euphony, diatonicism, and a concentration on subjects glorifying Soviet achievement.

Thus the *Pravda* article wasn't simply music criticism. Stalin had already begun the brutal purges that eventually obliterated any hint of opposition and gave him absolute power. Shostakovich knew that his life was in danger. Almost overnight, the opera's productions ceased, and from then until Stalin's death, Shostakovich's compositions were inextricably tied up with his safety. He was 29 years old.

Shostakovich walked a tightrope until Stalin's death in 1953, at which point a thaw

began, allowing more artistic freedom. Shostakovich would no longer need to eschew modern musical forms.

It's therefore puzzling that, in the following year, he created, in his *Festive Overture*, a piece that surely would have pleased Stalin. There's no dissonance, no "formalism," just good old-fashioned orchestral music that could be mistaken for something from the Nineteenth Century.

Perhaps there are clues in the fact that Shostakovich joined the Communist Party in 1960, and signed a letter denouncing Andrei Sakharov in 1973. At any rate, he created a rousing six-minute morsel of effervescence, which has enjoyed wide popularity ever since its conception.

Sergei Prokofiev's First Violin Concerto

Widely considered one of the greatest originals of the Twentieth Century, Sergei Prokofiev cultivated a sound — abrasive, angular, biting — that was all his own. Born in 1891 into an affluent family in the Ukraine countryside, Sergei wrote his first piano piece at five, played Beethoven sonatas at nine, and wrote two operas before he was eleven. At 13 he was enrolled — just as Shostakovich would be fifteen years later — in the St. Petersburg conservatory. At 24 he left the conservatory, having completed the composition, piano, and conducting courses with high honors.

It was 1914, the year Russia became embroiled in World War I. To distance himself from the conflict, Prokofiev retreated to a small village in the Caucasus, where he fell in love with a girl named Nina. Her family broke off the romance. But the romantic melody that opens his First Violin Concerto was written during those months.

He did not return to the Violin Concerto until 1917, just after the Revolution put an end to Tsarist rule. Then, on a long steamboat trip along the Volga and Kama rivers, he wrote and orchestrated most of the concerto. But it would still be years before its premier.

To escape the revolutionary upheaval, Prokofiev left Russia in 1918, and safely abroad, began building an international reputation for uncompromising modernism. In America he was "the Bolshevik pianist" who played as if he had "steel fingers, steel biceps, steel triceps". His opera, laced with fantasy and irony, *The Love of Three Oranges*, brought him fame with its Chicago premiere in 1921.

In 1923 he settled in Paris, and finally arranged for the belated premiere of the Violin Concerto No. 1. It was not a great success. Paris audiences at that time wanted their modern music to carry a certain shock value. The Violin Concerto was simply too Romantic.

The first movement opens with a dreamlike passage, perhaps the reason why one listener complained that it was "Mendelssohnian." Later movements bristle with virtuoso passages — harmonics, double and triple stops —that demand the utmost of the soloist. Yet one suspects that Prokofiev wanted to delight his listeners rather than stun them.

The concerto's popularity stems from the following year, when the incomparable Hungarian violinist Joseph Szigeti played it all over Europe and America. He was the first to play it with orchestras in the Soviet Union, and the Russians loved it.

Prokofiev meanwhile had become homesick for Russia. A visit in 1927 convinced him

that the Soviet regime would welcome him. Besides, state support would mean that he could compose without having to support himself by giving concerts. He began claiming that he was no longer "the *enfant terrible* of discord ... I have become simpler and more melodic".

And so he returned to Russia for good in 1936 — just as the great purges were beginning. (Shostakovich had just been denounced for his opera.) He believed that he could painlessly adjust his style to the demands of Stalin's "Social Realism," and at first he seemed to be succeeding, with the production of three of his most enduring pieces: the beloved children's work, *Peter and the Wolf*, his music for the film *Lieutenant Kije*, and the ballet *Romeo and Juliet*.

But then the state decreed that *Romeo and Juliet* should have a happy ending; production of that and other pieces was inexplicably delayed or cancelled; and in 1939 his favorite operatic director, Vsevelod Meyerhold, was arrested, charged with "artistic errors" and executed.

He composed an operatic version of *War and Peace* during World War II and revised it repeatedly, trying to meet demands that it be "more patriotic," yet he did not live to see it performed. His fifth and sixth symphonies were at first acclaimed, but in 1948, the Sixth was harshly criticized and removed from the repertoire.

Aging, ill, and in despair at his failure to reconcile artistic integrity with Soviet demands, Prokofiev began turning out feeble hymns to the state. Funding dried up nevertheless, and he was living in poverty as he composed his Seventh Symphony. When the final movement was judged too melancholy, he added an "optimistic" coda in order to receive a 100,000-ruble Stalin Prize. In March 1953, six months after the work's premiere, he died — a discouraged and broken man — on the same day as Stalin.

Sergei Rachmaninoff's Second Symphony

Whereas Shostakovich and Prokofiev coped with the consequences of the Russian Revolution from within their motherland, Sergei Rachmaninoff's strategy was to keep his distance. From the earliest rumblings of the revolutions that began in 1905, Rachmaninoff put space between himself and the turmoil, avoiding not only the armed conflicts, but also the police state that eventually followed. This strategy shaped his career. He was constantly on the move, leaving possessions behind and landing paying engagements to support himself. Despite all, this composer, pianist and conductor became, in the words of the *New Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, "one of the finest pianists of his day and, as a composer, the last great representative of Russian late Romanticism."

Born into an aristocratic family in 1873 (18 years before Prokofiev) he was nine when he entered the St. Petersburg Conservatory on scholarship, transferring to the Moscow Conservatory three years later. Taking his piano and composition finals a year early, he graduated with the highest possible honors.

Still only 19, he wrote what became his best-known composition, the piano prelude in C# minor. His opera *Aleko,* premiered at the Bolshoi the following spring, drew praise from Tchaikovsky and the critics.

Spurred by success, Rachmaninoff composed with ease during the following months, confidently beginning work on his First Symphony. But its premier in 1897 was a disaster. It was

likened to "a programme symphony on the Seven Plagues of Egypt." Rachmaninoff was so depressed that he wrote nothing of significance for three years.

In 1900 he consulted a psychiatrist who successfully treated him by hypnosis. Soon he began writing his most enduringly popular work, the Second Piano Concerto. He performed it at the premier in November 1901.

He was now writing steadily—piano pieces, songs, a cello sonata, two operas— and by the fall of 1906 (the year Shostakovich was born), he was a celebrity.

During the revolutionary year of 1905 he had signed a manifesto demanding basic reforms in the arts. But political unrest was now increasing, and his celebrity made him feel vulnerable. So he moved, with his wife Natalya and infant daughter, to Dresden.

There he at last began to compose his Symphony No. 2. He conducted its St. Petersburg premiere in January 1908, with great success. It won the Glinka Prize and quickly made the rounds of the world's major orchestras. It has since become the most popular of all his purely orchestral works.

In 1917, the Russian Revolution drove him and his family abroad. He was never to see his native country again.

After a brief stay in Copenhagen, where he began widening his piano repertory, he set out with his family for the United States, arriving in New York in November 1918, just as the Armistice was declared. He found an agent and accepted the gift of a piano from Steinway before giving nearly 40 concerts in four months.

For a time, as the Rachmaninoffs made their home in the United States, composing took a back seat to his piano concerts and recordings. From time to time he visited Europe, sojourning in Switzerland, where he had purchased a villa, but he never set foot in Russia.

He had usually avoided comment on the Soviet regime, but in 1931 he sent a letter to *The New York Times* criticizing Soviet policies. Moscow countered with a bitter attack and a ban on the performance and study of his works in Russia. (The ban was lifted two years later.)

In 1934, at his Swiss villa, he composed the *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* and, the following year, the Third Symphony. Still in Switzerland in 1939, as war threatened, he decided that they would be safer in the USA. By the autumn of 1940, they were making their home in Beverly Hills.

Nearing 70, after decades of exhausting tours, suffering from lumbago, arthritis and extreme fatigue, he intended his 1942-3 season to be his last. And after a concert at Knoxville early in 1943, he became so ill that he had to cut the tour short. Back home in Beverly Hills, the diagnosis was cancer. He died early on the morning of 28 March.

Rachmaninoff left us a body of work with, in the words of *Grove's,* "a highly individual, lyrical idiom … characterized by sincere expression and skillful technique." The length of his Second Symphony, which runs approximately 55 minutes, led many early performances to be cut, sometimes to as little as 45 minutes. When Rachmaninoff conducted it, it was always in its entirety, as it is in today's performance.

The Orchestra

Violin I
Rachael Susman*, Concertmaster*
David Abbott
Sarah Brody Webb
Anne Haberkern
Pamela Jacobsen
Susan Booth Larson
Jonathan Novack
Sarah Novack
Kris Oliveira
Spencer Shao
David Toffey
Sohyun Westin
Regan Wylie

Violin II
Heather Case, *Principal*
Barbara Baker
Kathy Boulton
Robin Erickson
Caroline Fung
Tom Lee
Margret Oethinger
Christina Reynolds
Andrew Shu
Nancy Vink

Viola
Bev Gibson, *Principal*
Jane Brown
Anjelica Furtwangler
Stephanie Gregory
Shauna Keyes
Lindsey Lane
Adele Larson
Isabelle Uhl

Cello
Marcy England, *Principal*
Kristin Dissinger
Holly Hutchason
David Keyes
Michelle McDowell
Jackson Ross
Janelle Steele

Bass
Veronika Zeisset, *Principal*
Marc Bescomd
Andrew Harmon
Elizabeth Pedersen

Flute
Ellen Berkovitz
Linda Hartig
Jerry Pritchard

Clarinet
Lea Anne Bantsari
Martin Sobelman

Bass Clarinet
Richard Boberg

Oboe
Sharon Ross, *Principal*
Lindsey Meyers

English Horn
Celeste Martinez

Bassoon
Tricia Gabrielson, *Principal*
Frank Kenny

French Horn
Kippe Spear, *Principal*
Jennifer Anderson
Greg Gadeholt
Heather Campbell

Trumpet
Mayne Mihacsi, *Principal*
Jason Bills
Norm Schwisow

Trombone
Paul Hanau, *Principal*
John Zagorski
Eric Olson

Tuba
Jay Klippstein

Percussion
Tom Hill, *Principal*
Brian Banegas
Yoshie Yamasaki

Harp
Denise Fujikawa

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Symphony Best Friend
Richard Aldrich
John A Bailey
Rachel Baskin
Mary Bercovitz
Lucy Brehm
Leslie Brenton
Esther Brown
Jane Brown
Bonnie Buckley
Patricia Campbell
Nancy & Chris Carter
L Chillian
Barbara Cone
Gerald Craig
Richard Crimi
Raiza Donis de Ambard
Patti Duthie
Kathleen Elston
Sharon Eng
Louise Feldman
Tom & Sun Flynn
Roxanne Goebel
Susan Newman &
Phil Goldsmith

Symphony Best Friend (cont.)
Daniel Guterman
Claudia Hutchison
Joyce Ito
Nancy Johnson
P D Johnston
Sean & Nina Kelley
Howard E Kronish
Dora Lan
Gerald Lindgren
Sharon Lindquist
Fay Littlefield
Shelah & Anton Lompa
Moreen Madson
James Main
Pepper McGranahan
Roy Metcalf
Mary Ann Miller
Richard & Jean Miyahira
Catherine Mock
Milt Monnier
Christine Myers
Ann Neuman
Mary O'Donnell
Frieda F Pardo
Gary & Gayle Powers
Joseph Koch & Allison Prosser
David Rohrback
Elaine Ruys
Mary Saunders
Chieko Schmauss
Dolores Schmidt
Lorinda Scott
Gail Sherman
Tom & Carol Sorensen
Jack & Catherine Stoltz
Aron Swerdlin
Mary Takayanagi
Mary Trump
Mitch Turbin
Janice Wargo
Helene Wilson
Deborah L Zita

Other levels
Kris Oliveira

In memory of my mother and sister
Nancy Vink
In memory of Terry Hu Culter
Don & Carole Anderson, Martha England
In memory of Mary Musa
Bev Gibson, Vicki Hilgers, Jodi Wells, Susan Donora, Marcia Kahn, Jackie Flynn
In honor of Conrad Brown
Robert Elgin
In memory of Leroy Steinmann
Sharon Ross
In memory of Peter Weis
Martha England
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Sunday March 18, 2018 at 3:00 pm

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Travis Hatton, Music Director

Travis Hatton's versatile conducting career spans a broad range of musical organizations around the world. He has led opera and ballet companies throughout Europe and America, and has appeared as a guest conductor with orchestras in Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and in Boston, Tennessee, Indiana, California, Alaska, Colorado, Washington, Oregon and Texas. He holds a Bachelors of Music degree (awarded Magna Cum Laude) in Music Theory and Composition from the University of the Pacific and a Masters of Music degree in Orchestral Conducting from the New England Conservatory of Music.

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