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Vladimir Tropp, piano

Department of Music, University of Richmond

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UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND



Vladimir Tropp

piano

Monday, November 28, 1988, 8:15 PM

Sarah Brunet Hall

Department of Music

University of Richmond, Virginia 23173 • (804) 289-8277

Vladimir Tropp was born in 1939 in Moscow to a musical family of physicians. His grandmother was a talented pianist; his great grandmother studied with Adolph Henzelt, a well-known pianist of the time. At an early age his parents placed him in the celebrated Gnessin music school where he studied with the distinguished Soviet pedagogue and pupil of the legendary Heinrich Neuhaus, Moisei Feigin. He was graduated in 1958 with the silver medal.

Mr. Tropp then entered the Gnessin Institute to study with Professor Theodore Gutman, himself a student and former assistant of Heinrich Neuhaus. Already as a student Mr. Tropp began to give solo concerts and to perform as a soloist with orchestras. Thanks to his successful studies, he was several times awarded the prestigious Rimskii-Korsakov Fellowship. In 1963 he graduated with distinction from the Institute and immediately began graduate work while teaching at the Gnessin Institute as Professor Gutman's assistant and later independently. He has since acquired a reputation as one of the finest pedagogues at this important educational institution: his students have been laureates at major international piano competitions.

In 1969 Mr. Tropp began regular concert activity in various cities of the U.S.S.R., and in 1970 he was a laureate of the International Enesco Competition in Bucharest. He has achieved particular success in performances of works by Medtner, Scriabin and, especially, Rachmaninoff. He has recorded works of Scriabin and Medtner. In addition to his solo recitals and orchestral engagements, Mr. Tropp has achieved a fine reputation as an ensemble player, travelling extensively in his own country as well as in Italy, Finland, West Germany, Holland, Czechoslovakia and Cuba.

Mr. Tropp has for many years collected material for a dissertation on the work and performance legacy of Rachmaninoff. Lecturing widely, he has published numerous articles, and assembled one of the largest collections of Rachmaninoff performance tapes in the Soviet Union. On Soviet radio he has presented a series of broadcasts on interpreters of Rachmaninoff's music, and has also devoted broadcasts to the performance art of Alfred Cortot, Vladimir Sofronitsky and Nikolai Medtner. He has written numerous articles for record jackets dedicated to the art of Busoni, Rachmaninoff as pianist, conductor and ensembler Josef Hoffman, Annie Fisher, Artur Rubinstein, and Glenn Gould.

Tributes to Mr. Tropp's achievement abound. Recently his colleague, the well-known international Soviet performer Lazar Berman wrote: "He is a singular and subtle artist. Sincerity and a poetic manner, improvisational freedom and rhythmic flexibility, a highly colored pianistic sound joined to a powerful and strongly willed conception -- these are the essential traits of the artistic persona of Vladimir Tropp. These very traits are at the same time essential elements of the works of late romantic Russian composers Scriabin, Rachmaninoff, and Medtner."

Mr. Tropp is Artist-in-Residence at Smith College for the fall semester 1988.

P R O G R A M

Three Pieces, Op. 31

Improvisation No. 1 in B-flat minor
Funeral March in B minor
Fairy Tale in G-sharp minor

Nikolai Medtner
(1880-1951)

Eight Etudes

Op. 2, No. 1 in C-sharp minor
Op. 8, No. 1 in C-sharp major
Op. 8, No. 5 in E major
Op. 8, No. 11 in B-flat minor
Op. 42, No. 5 in C-sharp minor
Op. 65, No. 1 (major ninths)
Op. 65, No. 2 (major sevenths)
Op. 65, No. 3 (perfect fifths)

Alexander Scriabin
(1872-1915)

I N T E R M I S S I O N

Waltz in A-flat major, Op. 38

A. Scriabin

Variations on a Theme by Corelli, Op. 42

Sergei Rachmaninoff
(1873-1943)

*This recital is a cooperative venture
of
The Music Department, International Studies, and Russian Studies*

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

The program is so constituted as to include Sergei Rachmaninoff's own works with those of his two contemporaries, colleagues and friends who with him made up the "great trinity" of Russian music in the first third of the twentieth century. It was these three composers who at that time held complete sway over the minds and hearts of Russian listeners.

Rachmaninoff truly delighted in and genuinely loved the music of Scriabin, especially that of his early and middle period. Shattered by Scriabin's early death, Rachmaninoff played his works in memorial concerts which he organized himself. He served also as a member of the commission established to preserve Scriabin's legacy.

Rachmaninoff was bound to Nikolai Medtner by a long and deep friendship, disrupted only by Rachmaninoff's death in 1943. In Medtner, Rachmaninoff found someone who thought as he did; the direction of Medtner's creative work was close and dear to him. Rachmaninoff always remained a true friend to Medtner, organizing a concert tour for him in the United States in 1924-25, and invariably including Medtner's works in his own concert repertoire. Indeed, in America he was known as "Medtner's champion."

The music of these three outstanding composers is each unique in melodic, harmonic and rhythmic language. Let me point out the refinement and subtle psychologism, the explosiveness and ecstatic quality of Scriabin's music; the broad melodic expanse that captures the dramatic and emotional incandescence of Rachmaninoff's works; and, the epic and fabulous qualities embodied so interestingly and distinctively in the melodies and rhythms of Medtner.

Let us not forget also that all three splendid composers were successful pianists, and that all three created most of all for the piano. It is indisputable that the creative work of these musicians constituted a unified artistic phenomenon in Russian musical art, a phenomenon very characteristic of Russia's entire artistic culture at that time.

V. M. Tropp

Next: University Choir, *Messiah*
James Erb, Conductor
December 4, 1988, 8:00 PM
Cannon Memorial Chapel