



NAXOS

**Sergey Mikhaylovich
LYAPUNOV**

**Piano Concertos
Nos. 1 and 2**

**Rhapsody on
Ukrainian Themes**

**Shorena Tsintsabadze,
Piano**

**Russian Philharmonic
Orchestra**

Dmitry Yablonsky



Sergey Mikhaylovich Lyapunov (1859–1924)

Piano Concertos Nos. 1 and 2 • Rhapsody on Ukrainian Themes

Born at Yaroslavl in 1859, the son of a mathematician and astronomer, Sergey Mikhaylovich Lyapunov had his early music lessons with his mother. On the death of his father, he moved with his mother to Nizhny-Novgorod and in 1873 began study at the local branch of the Russian Musical Society there. In 1878 he entered the Moscow Conservatory, where he was a composition pupil of Sergey Taneyev and briefly of Tchaikovsky, before the latter's resignation, when his place was taken by Nikolay Gubert. His piano lessons were with Pabst and with Liszt's pupil, Klindworth, an important influence on his subsequent career. After completing his studies of composition and piano and a brief period earning his living by teaching, he moved to St Petersburg where he became associated with Mily Balakirev, the self-appointed leader of the Russian nationalist group of composers. The effect of this tended to isolate Lyapunov not only from the rival circle of Belyayev, but also from younger composers who were now exploring very different musical territory. In 1893 he was commissioned, with Balakirev and Lyadov, to collect folk-songs in the Vologda, Vyatka and Kostroma regions, a project that resulted in a collection of three hundred songs, for thirty of which Lyapunov provided a piano accompaniment. From 1894 to 1902 he served as deputy director of the imperial chapel, his tolerance tested finally beyond endurance by Arensky, who had succeeded Balakirev as director in 1894, and from 1905 was director of Balakirev's Free School of Music. He undertook the completion of the last movement of Balakirev's unfinished *Piano Concerto in E flat major* after the latter's death in 1910. The following year he gave up his position at the Free Music School, which had been dwindling in importance for some time, and joined the staff of the St Petersburg Conservatory, where he taught until 1917. In 1919 he joined the State Institute of Art, but his attempts, after the Revolution, to adapt to the ways of the new regime proved unsuccessful. After time partly spent abroad, in 1923 he settled definitively in Paris. Until his sudden death a year later he directed a music school there for Russian émigrés.

Lyapunov belonged to that second generation of Russian nationalist composers able to benefit from the professional training offered by the Conservatories and from the Russian sources of inspiration explored by Balakirev and his associates. His close association with Balakirev allowed the latter to exercise an influence that was not always for the best, and after Balakirev's death Lyapunov was able to experience a brief period of freedom as a composer. His orchestral compositions include two symphonies, symphonic poems, two piano concertos, a violin concerto and a *Rhapsody on Ukrainian Themes* for piano and orchestra. Other works include songs and piano music, genres in which his achievement is more considerable.

Lyapunov's *Piano Concerto No. 1 in E flat minor, Op. 4*, was written in 1890 and published two years later. It was first performed in 1891 at a Free Music School concert, conducted by Balakirev, to whom it is dedicated, and in November 1904 was among the works awarded the Glinka Prize, established by the will of Belyayev and his executors, Rimsky-Korsakov, Lyadov and Glazunov. The other works receiving the award were Arensky's *Piano Trio in D minor*, Rachmaninov's *Second Piano Concerto*, Scriabin's *Piano Sonatas Nos. 3 and 4* and Taneyev's *Symphony in C minor*. Two years earlier Rimsky-Korsakov had suggested that Lyapunov's music, though very noble, was almost completely lacking in originality, sometimes Balakirev and sometimes Glazunov. Balakirev certainly had a part to play in the composition of Lyapunov's *Piano Concerto No. 1*, both in the suggestions he made to the composer while the work was being written and even in final adjustments. The concerto, like Liszt's *Second Concerto*, is in one movement. Marked *Allegro con brio*, the orchestra starts with a well defined and very Russian theme in E flat minor, proclaimed in octaves and followed by a second thematic element that modulates to the relative major of G flat. This material is developed before the entry of the soloist, *Capriccioso*, with a version of the first thematic element, leading to an expanded version of the second more lyrical theme, with the initial

motif never far away. A modulation to B minor leads to an *Andantino*, followed by a D major *Adagio non tanto*, the equivalent of a slow movement, with a related melody. A modulation to B flat brings back the more lyrical element of the first thematic material, now *Allegro moderato e maestoso*, followed by the well defined opening thematic element, eventually re-establishing for the moment the key of E flat minor, before a shift in key and the return of the soloist's entry, *Capriccioso*. The *Adagio non tanto* returns and a short cadenza leads to the return of the orchestral *Allegro con brio* opening. The second thematic element, now *Poco meno mosso, Grandioso*, brings the awaited modulation to E flat major and a triumphant conclusion.

Lyapunov's *Piano Concerto No. 2 in E major, Op. 38*, was completed in 1909 and published the following year. The principal theme of what is broadly a sonata-form movement is heard at once from the orchestra, with the direction *Lento ma non troppo*, to be ornamented by the delicate tracery of the soloist, who moves on to a further version of the theme. The first of a number of cadenza-like passages in this single-movement concerto leads to a shift of key from E major to an *Allegro molto ed appassionato* with a further cadenza and a romantic third thematic element, an F flat major *Allegro moderato*, with the soloist's melody coupled with gentle comments from the cellos. An elaborate cadenza is followed by an orchestral *Allegro molto*, the material developed by the soloist and

modulating back to E major. The piano adds virtuoso embellishment to the returning principal theme in a *Lento ma non troppo*, now in D flat major, shifting back to E major and the return of the *Allegro molto*. A piano cadenza is succeeded by a return of the *Allegro moderato*, now in E major, with a further cadenza followed by the return of the *Allegro molto* and an exciting final section, bringing spectacular double glissandos for the soloist and the conclusion of a work that well deserves a place in the canon of romantic concertos.

The *Rhapsody on Ukrainian Themes, Op. 28*, was completed in 1907, to be published the following year, and was first performed in 1909 with the composer as soloist. It is dedicated to Ferruccio Busoni and reflects, as in the concertos, the influence of Liszt, particularly in the virtuoso piano writing, a feature embodied in Lyapunov's *Douze études d'exécution transcendante*. In the form of a rondo, the *Rhapsody*, which is in F sharp minor, starts with a gentle theme marked *Andantino pastorale*. A brief cadenza leads to the second theme, *Allegretto scherzando* and starting in B flat minor. The *Andantino pastorale* returns, to be followed by the third theme, a Cossack dance, an F sharp major *Allegro giocoso*. The opening theme eventually makes its way back, presented now in a more grandiose form, as the work comes to an end.

Keith Anderson

Russian Philharmonic Orchestra

The Russian Philharmonic Orchestra is firmly rooted in Russia's rich musical traditions, and has achieved an impressive and outstanding musical quality by drawing its musicians from the highest ranks of Russia's most famous orchestras such as the Moscow Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Russian National Orchestra and the State Symphony Orchestra. The Russian Philharmonic Orchestra was originally formed as a recording ensemble and has gone on to receive high acclaim also for its concert performances. In addition to regular recordings for leading international companies, the orchestra has undertaken tours to Turkey, Austria, Germany, China, Taiwan, Finland and elsewhere. Dmitry Yablonsky was appointed Music Advisor to the orchestra in 2003. In 2006 the orchestra won a *Gramophone Prize* for their recording of Shostakovich on Deutsche Grammophon



Dmitry Yablonsky

Dmitry Yablonsky was born in Moscow into a musical family. His mother is the distinguished pianist Oxana Yablonskaya, and his father Albert Zaionz has for thirty years been principal oboist in the Moscow Radio and Television Orchestra. Dmitry began playing the cello when he was five and was immediately accepted by the Central Music School for gifted children. When he was nine he made his orchestral debut as cellist and conductor with Haydn's *Cello Concerto in C major*. In Russia he studied with Stefan Kalianov, Rostropovich's assistant, and Isaak Buravsky, for many years solo cello of Bolshoy Theatre Orchestra. Before immigrating to the United States he performed on many occasions in Moscow and many cities of the former Soviet Union. He was finally able, in 1977, to obtain a visa that allowed him and his mother to move to New York, where he became a pupil of Lorne Munroe at the Juilliard School of Music. In 1979, at the age of sixteen, he participated in the Marlboro Music Festival in Vermont, the youngest to do so that summer. In 1980 he met Aldo Parisot, distinguished cellist and professor at Yale University, where he spent four years, at

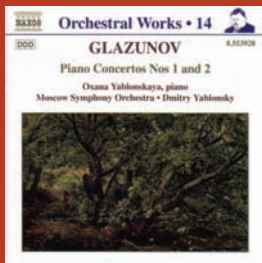
the same time furthering his interest in conducting. After graduating from Yale, he spent two years in the artist diploma programme at the Juilliard School with Zara Nelsova. Dmitry Yablonsky made his debut as a conductor in Italy at the age of 26, when he stepped in to replace another conductor at the last minute. As a cellist he has played in major concert halls throughout the world, and in chamber music has collaborated with distinguished colleagues. For four years he has been Principal Guest Conductor of Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra and has conducted many other orchestras, including the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, collaborating with leading soloists. Dmitry Yablonsky has made more than seventy recordings, many of them prize-winning, as conductor and cellist for Naxos, Erato-Warner, Chandos, Belair Music, Sonora, and Connoisseur Society. He has organized international festivals, including the Wandering Stars Festival, which takes place in different countries each year. He is Co-Artistic Director of Qabala Music Festival in Azerbaijan. In 2009 he became an academician of the Independent Academy of Aesthetics and Liberal Arts in Moscow, and also professor of cello at the Baku Academy of Music.



Shorena Tsintsabadze

Shorena Tsintsabadze was born in Moscow into a family of musicians. She studied with professors Z. Ignatyeva and S. Dorensky at the Moscow Conservatory, where she has continued as a postgraduate student since 2010, after a period of study in the United States with Oxana Yablonskaya. She was a prize-winner in a number of international competitions, including the Classical Heritage Association International Competition (Moscow, 1999), the Grand International Piano Competition (Paris, 1999) and the Ibla Grand Prize (Italy, 2000). She commands a wide repertoire and has appeared in broadcasts and on television in Russia, Georgia, France and Italy.

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Russian Nationalist Sergey Mikhaylovich Lyapunov was strongly influenced by Mily Balakirev, leader of the 'Mighty Handful' of composers, to whom he dedicated his Glinka Prize-winning *Piano Concerto No. 1*. Lyapunov's *Piano Concerto No. 2* deserves a place among the great Romantic piano concertos, while the *Rhapsody on Ukrainian Themes* bears the imprint of Liszt's virtuosic pianistic style. The young Georgian pianist Shorena Tsintsabadze, a graduate of Moscow's Tchaikovsky Conservatory, joins the Russian Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Dmitry Yablonsky, whose Naxos discography includes many acclaimed albums of Russian and Romantic repertoire.

Sergey Mikhaylovich
LYAPUNOV
(1859–1924)

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|---|---|-------|
| 1 | Piano Concerto No. 1 in E flat minor, Op. 4 | 22:16 |
| 2 | Piano Concerto No. 2 in E major, Op. 38 | 19:27 |
| 3 | Rhapsody on Ukrainian Themes, Op. 28 | 16:35 |

Shorena Tsintsabadze, Piano
Russian Philharmonic Orchestra
Dmitry Yablonsky



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