



EASTMAN
SCHOOL OF MUSIC
UNIVERSITY of ROCHESTER

Eastman School Symphony Orchestra

**Neil Varon,
Rebecca Bryant Novak,
and Yonatan Dvir,
conductors**

Katherine Cheng, violin

Wednesday, February 7, 2023
Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre
7:30 PM

~ PROGRAM ~
Eastman School Symphony Orchestra
Neil Varon, *conductor*

Russian Easter Overture, Op. 36 (1888)

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov
(1844-1908)
14'

Symphony No. 2, Op. 132 (Mysterious Mountain) (1955)

Alan Hovhaness
(1911-2000)
19'

- I. Andante con moto
- II. Double Fugue: Moderato maestoso - Allegro vivo
- III. Andante espressivo: Con moto

Rebecca Bryant Novak, conductor

*Symphony No. 2 by Alan Hovhaness presented under license from
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Concerto for Violin in A minor, Op. 82 (1904)

Alexander Glazunov
(1865-1936)
21'

- I. Moderato
- II. Andante sostenuto
- III. Allegro

Katherine Cheng, violin
Yonatan Dvir, conductor

~ PROGRAM NOTES ~

Russian Easter Overture

Composed concurrently with *Scheherazade* in 1888, the Russian Easter Festival Overture is indubitably among Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's best works. In it, the composer delves into the essence of Easter with a collection of themes from the Obikhod, an anthology of Russian Orthodox polyphonic musical liturgy.

Easter, referred to as "the bright holiday" in Russian tradition, serves then as the backdrop for Rimsky-Korsakov's musical celebration, blending Christian rituals with pagan exuberance. A marriage of themes symbolizing nature's triumphant rebirth after the somber hibernation of winter.

Rimsky-Korsakov's autobiographical insights shed light on the composition's profound layers. The *Andante lugubre* paints a vivid picture of the holy sepulchre, resonating with the ineffable light of Christ's resurrection. The subsequent *Allegro* captures the festive atmosphere of Christ's matins, with trumpet blasts, bell tolling, and the jubilant proclamation of "Christ is risen."

The Overture becomes a synthesis of ancient prophecy, gospel narrative, and a vivid portrayal of Easter services interwoven with pagan revelry. Rimsky-Korsakov aims to capture the transition from the mystical evening of Passion Saturday to the unrestrained pagan festivities of Easter Sunday, mirroring the solemn qualities of the Russian Obikhod.

In an interesting twist, Rimsky-Korsakov initially sought a poetic scenario from Count Golyenishchev-Kutuzov but found it too refined for the Overture's primitive energy. He took matters into his own hands, crafting a program rich in Old and New Testament imageries. The celebration crescendos into a verbal triumph, echoing the exultant concluding section of the music, as heavenly angels and priests proclaim "Resurrexit!" amid the resonance of archangels' trumpets, fluttering seraphim wings, incense clouds, and triumphant bells.

With the Russian Easter Festival, Rimsky-Korsakov invites listeners on a journey through ancient Easter traditions, seamlessly intertwining the sacred and the celebratory.

Symphony No. 2 (Mysterious Mountain)

Born 1911 to a Scottish mother and an Aremnian father, Alan Hovhaness' childhood was both musical and mystical. He was drawn to composing at an early age, despite the fact that his family found it "abnormal," and he had a deep love of nature - mountains in particular. His compositional career was inspired by a deep love of Sibelius at a time when the Finnish composer was hardly known in America.

He was championed by composers as forward-thinking as Lou Harrison and John Cage, but also praised by critics for the accessibility of his works in an American music scene that many audiences felt was increasingly dominated by the avant-garde. A flattering review of Hovhaness' Symphony No. 2 in the *Cleveland News* began with the tongue-in-cheek headline, "Found: A Composer Who Writes Music."

Hovhaness' Symphony No. 2 was a mix of his own creative impulses and the marketing savvy of conductor Leopold Stokowski, who became a champion of Hovhaness' works. Stokowski commissioned Hovhaness to write a work to be premiered with the Houston Symphony. When Hovhaness sent a fanfare, Stokowski asked for a symphony. When Hovhaness sent a three-movement symphony, Stokowski told him to give it a title and an opus number. Hovhaness conceded on the title - "Mysterious Mountain" - but responded that he wasn't cataloging his works with opus numbers. Stokowski told him to make something up - and so the work was arbitrarily assigned the opus number "132."

But whatever gimmicks were involved in its inception, *Mysterious Mountain* is a heartfelt work with a unique depth of sound and thoughtful orchestration. The first movement begins with a touching hymn in a lilting 10/4 rhythm. The lush string writing gives way to a long middle portion with flexible, ornamented wind solos evocative of Rimsky-Korsakov. The second movement, titled "Double Fugue" gives contrapuntal treatment to two distinct subjects - one lyrical, one energetic - before ingeniously layering them for a closing that is both grand and exciting. The final movement, like the first, invokes a hymn-like melody, but this one more solemn and sprawling, led by the mysterious tones of the horns and low brass section. When a sudden whirlwind of string tremolos and bell-like brass appears, it's impossible not to think of Hovhaness' compositional hero - Jean Sibelius. But the storm disappears as quickly as it began, returning to the somber opening hymn to conclude a work that is beautiful, accessible, but still leaves us with an enduring sense of mystery.

- Rebecca Bryant Novak

Concerto for Violin in A minor

Alexander Glazunov, a man of extraordinary musical gifts, embarked on a prolific career as a composer, performer, teacher, and music administrator during a period marked by significant musical transformations. Trained under Rimsky-Korsakov at the St. Petersburg Conservatory around 1880, Glazunov not only succeeded him as director but continued to shape his musical legacy well into the 1930s. Given the changing times, and perhaps due to a penchant for more traditional syntax compared to his contemporaries, Glazunov's work has often faced unjust dismissal.

Glazunov's musical language is deeply rooted in the romantic tradition, relying on tonality and drawing inspiration from nineteenth-century compositional techniques. Unlike the excesses of late romanticism, his style exudes warmth with emotional restraint, showcasing a mastery of orchestration inherited from Rimsky-Korsakov. However, Glazunov's compositions are not without quirks, featuring rapid shifts in color, dynamics, harmony, and melodic motifs, creating a rhapsodic architecture. His formal structures often surprise with innovative elements, challenging the expectations of audiences.

Premiered by Leopold Auer, the concerto follows the traditional concerto structure but with Glazunov's distinctive touch. The movements seamlessly flow without breaks, creating a challenge for listeners to discern their boundaries. The slow movement, usually a separate entity, is seamlessly woven into the first movement, adding a layer of complexity to the concerto's structure. Glazunov's lyrical prowess is evident in both sections, making it tricky for the audience to pinpoint the transition. Following the contrasting movement, the composer revisits the opening material, incorporating a challenging cadenza known for its fiendishly difficult double stops. The concerto then proceeds to the final movement without interruption, announced by trumpets and characterized by a lively, dynamic pace. Despite its unconventional structure, brief duration, and ambiguous syntax, Glazunov's Violin Concerto has stood the test of time, captivating audiences for over a century. Its enduring beauty, lyrical charm, virtuosic elements, and romantic appeal firmly establish it as a masterpiece, immune to debates about its alignment with the modernism of Glazunov's contemporaries.

Katherine (Kit Ying) Cheng is a New York-based violinist and grand prize winner at the New York Artists International Competition. She has appeared on stage at Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, and David Geffen Hall, and has performed as a soloist with the Binghamton Youth Symphony Orchestra, the Juilliard Pre-College Orchestra, the 92Y School of Music Orchestra, and the Bravura Philharmonic Orchestra. She was also the first prize winner of the Southern Tier Music Teachers Association Competition, 92Y Concerto Competition, and International Ming Classics International Online Music Competition. Katherine has performed in different orchestras, including the Metropolitan Youth Orchestra of Hong Kong, Binghamton Youth Symphony Orchestra, and Bravura Philharmonic Orchestra. She attended the Tanglewood Music Festival in 2019 and the Taipei Music Academy and Festival in 2022, and was selected as a fellow for the Green Mountain Chamber Music Festival last summer.

Katherine began her violin studies under her father's tutelage at age three. Before immigrating to the U.S. in 2010, she earned an associate and licentiate diploma from Trinity College London, as well as certificates from the Associated Board of the Royal School of Music and the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. Katherine attended the Juilliard Pre-College Division in 2012, where she studied with Elizabeth Chang. She was also a recipient of a Jerome L. Greene Fellowship at the Juilliard School, where she received her Bachelor of Music degree studying with Frank Huang. Later, she pursued her Master of Music degree at the Yale School of Music, studying with Tai Murray. She was also awarded the Malcolm L. Mitchell and Donald M. Robers Class of 1957 Prize for her outstanding achievements as a teaching artist. Katherine is currently working on her Doctor of Musical Arts degree at Eastman School of Music with Robin Scott. Katherine is passionate about discovering new music and enjoys collaborating with composers and performers.

~ **PERSONNEL** ~

Eastman School Symphony Orchestra

Violin I

Amelia Posner-Hess,
concertmaster
Kaitlyn McLaughlin
Kaylynn Li
Karen Wang
Miyako Cornelius
Hagan Tran
Ingrid Buschkopf
Lisa Wang
Tiara Lai
Sanne Zwikker
Sedona Kmen
Erica Lin
Claire Chien
Kristina Kaye

Violin II

Madison Oh,
principal
Liliana Mahave
Simon Cheng
Sofia Grimes
Chloe Hyun
Victoria Zhao
Nicole Cheng
Lauren Edwards
Olivia Walberger
Kellen Mikesell
Leena Hocutt Duarte
Ellen Kim

Viola

Vivienne Lucier,
principal
Matthew Vu
Mack Jones
Brynn Cogger
Hide Shiotsu
Wyeth Minami
Keon Sagara
Israel Anselme

Violoncello

Catalina Wooldridge,
principal
Ryan Post
Anika Grieve
Haozheng Sun
Ariun-enerel Gantumur
Joseph Yang
Pyotr Alvarado
Audrey Cherwinski
Alex Tuan

Double Bass

Annaliese White,
principal
Samantha Liu
Austin Beck
Izzy Williams
Liz Young

Flute

Helen Freeman
Kaja Hammerschmidt
Hannah Wang

Oboe

Nathan Clarke
Carson Harth
Gus Smith
Samuel Suchta

Clarinet

Jay Kline
Adam Kolers
Andrew Robertson

Bassoon

Gabriel Cha
Alistair Picken
Samantha Webster

Horn

Mary Kimble
Aby Stumpf
Danica Tuohy
John Wellmann
Sam Wood
Claire Zhao

Trumpet

Jarett Jean Jacques
Cole Pringle
Yue Zhang

Trombone

Andrew Bianchi
Corey Bohler
Corey Hamm
Charley Hibschweiler

Tuba

Andrew Sieradzki

Timpani

Kai Gray
Aiden Hughes

Percussion

Izaiah Gonzales
Ben Landon
Sean McWilliams
Michael Smith

Harp

Catherine Caton

Keyboard

Jeongmin Ok

Upcoming Concerts

Events are free unless otherwise noted.

Friday, February 9

Eastman Philharmonia

Music of Prokofiev and Rachmaninoff
Neil Varon, conductor
Featuring Yiwen Cao, piano
Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre • 7:30PM

Tuesday, February 13

Eastman Jazz Ensemble

Christine Jensen, director
Kilbourn Hall • 7:30PM

Wednesday, February 14

Musica Nova

Music of Wu, Murail, Sclesi, and Lubman
Brad Lubman and Luke Poeppl, conductors
Kilbourn Hall • 7:30PM

Sunday, February 18

Eastman Repertory Singers & Treble Chorus

Music of Britten, Talma, Kačinskas, Peacock, Brahms,
Rutter, Tay, Gibbons, and Mozart
Philip Silvey, Colin Mann, and Jiabao Guo, conductors
Kilbourn Hall • 7:30PM

Wednesday, February 21

Eastman New Jazz Ensemble

Dave Rivello, director
Kilbourn Hall • 7:30PM

We acknowledge with respect the Seneca Nation, known as the "Great Hill People" and "Keepers of the Western Door" of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. We take this opportunity to thank the people whose ancestral lands the Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester currently occupies in Rochester, New York.

Information about upcoming Eastman concerts and events can be found at:

www.esm.rochester.edu/calendar

Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre fire exits are located along the right and left sides, and at the back of the hall on each level. In the event of an emergency, you will be notified by the stage manager. If notified, please move in a calm and orderly fashion to the nearest exit.

Restrooms are located on each level of Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre. Our ushers will be happy to direct you to them.

Please note: The use of unauthorized photo-graphic and recording equipment is not allowed in this building. We reserve the right to ask anyone disrupting a performance to leave the hall.

Supporting the Eastman School of Music:

We at the Eastman School of Music are grateful for the generous contributions made by friends, parents, and alumni, as well as local and national foundations and corporations. Gifts and grants to the School support student scholarships, performance and academic facilities, educational initiatives, and programs open to the greater Rochester community. Every gift, no matter the size, is vital to enhancing Eastman's commitment to excellence. For more information on making a gift, please visit www.esm.rochester.edu/advancement or contact the Advancement Office by calling (585) 274-1040. Thank you!