SEGERSTROM CENTER FOR THE ARTS
Samueli Theater
3:00 p.m.

2011–2012 CAFÉ LUDWIG CHAMBER SERIES

ORLI SHAHAM • PIANO AND HOST  |  RAYMOND KOBLER • VIOLIN  |  BRIDGET DOLKAS • VIOLIN
ROBERT BECKER • VIOLA  |  CAROLYN RILEY • VIOLA  |  TIMOTHY LANDAUER • CELLO
KEVIN PLUNKETT • CELLO  |  BENJAMIN LULICH • CLARINET  |  ALAN CHAPMAN • NARRATOR

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH
(1906–1975)  Preludes, Op. 34
#12 G-sharp minor
#2  A minor
#15 D-flat major
#5  D major
Orli Shaham

SERGE PROKOFIEV
#10 March
#2  Promenade
#3  Historiette
#4  Tarantelle
Orli Shaham

PIOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY
(1840–1893)  Album pour Enfants, Op. 39
#5  The Toy Soldier’s March
#7  Dolly’s Funeral
#8  Waltz
#11 Russian Song
#22 The Lark’s Song
#13 Kamarinskaja
Orli Shaham

IGOR STRAVINSKY
(1882–1971)  Suite from L’Histoire du Soldat
(The Soldier’s Tale)
Marche du soldat (The Soldier’s March)
Petits airs au bord du ruisseau (Airs by a Stream)
Pastorale
Marche royale (The Royal March)
Petit concert (The Little Concert)
Trois danses (Three Dances):
Tango, Valse, Ragtime
Danse du Diable (The Devil’s Dance)
Grand choral (Great Chorale)
Marche triomphale du Diable
(Triumphant March of the Devil)
Orli Shaham
Raymond Kobler
Benjamin Lulich
Alan Chapman

INTERMISSION

PIOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY
(1840–1893)  Souvenir de Florence • Op. 70, TH 118
Allegro con spirito
Adagio cantabile e con moto
Allegro moderato
Allegro vivace
Raymond Kobler
Bridget Dolkas
Robert Becker
Carolyn Riley
Timothy Landauer
Kevin Plunkett
Piano Selections from Children’s Albums

Why does piano music for children take such a special place in the world of grownup soloists and listeners? Perhaps because of its deceptive difficulty. In music, as in life, nothing is harder than true simplicity; and for Tchaikovsky, whose craftsmanship is complex and layered, his musical idol Mozart was a reminder of this rule of thumb — as he is for all musicians. In Mozart’s music, as the saying goes, “there is no place to hide.”

But in composing their piano pieces for children, Tchaikovsky and Shostakovich were influenced even more strongly by another European composer: Robert Schumann. Though both were 20th-century composers (Prokofiev was born in 1891), Russian composers from the 19th century through the Soviet era worked with a sense that they were inventing a classical heritage for the nation, and studied the works of European masters for their place in cultural history as well as their esthetic content. In Schumann’s Kinderszenen, piano sketches of scenes from childhood, they heard something compelling and new: highly evocative piano pieces that were simple and brief yet intensely emotional — compositionally sophisticated, but tender and introspective rather than showily virtuosic. Russian culture, with its rich folkways and appreciation of the picturesque, offered rich possibilities for similar pieces — “children’s piano music for adults.”

It appears that Tchaikovsky began thinking along these lines no later than January of 1878, a time in his career when he was actively composing ballet scores and piano music. During a trip to Florence in February of that year he wrote to his friend Petr Jurgenson of his intention “to write a number of easy pieces, like Kinderstück,” (“child’s piece”), a reference to Schumann’s Kinderszenen of 1838. After returning to Russia he wrote in a similar vein to his patron, Mme. von Meck, “A while ago I thought that it would not be a bad idea to make a small contribution to the stock of children’s musical literature, which is very modest. I want to create a series of individual pieces just for children, and with an attractive title, like Schumann’s.”

Tchaikovsky’s “Album pour enfants,” translated “Children’s Album,” was completed and published by the end of that same year, dedicated to his favorite nephew, 7-year-old Vladimir Davydov — two dozen colorful pieces, most of them 30 to 50 bars long, taking less than a minute to play. Many are written on familiar Russian subjects: Kamarinskaja (a traditional folk dance), Russian Song, Nanny’s Story, The Old Witch (from legends of Baba Yaga); others depict foreign scenes: Italian Song, Neapolitan Song, German Song, Old French Song. “Tell Bobik (Vladimir) that the music has been printed with pictures, that the music was composed by Uncle Petia, and that on it is written ‘Dedicated to Volodia Davydov,’” Tchaikovsky told the boy’s father.

First among these, Sergei Prokofiev, is well known to Western listeners for his “Peter and the Wolf” suite — another children’s work loaded with adult charm and craft. So it can be surprising to note that his “Music for Children,” a dozen piano miniatures intended both as educational exercises and as music to be enjoyed by adults, was written at a time when Prokofiev was known as something of a musical bad boy in Russia and beyond.

Although Prokofiev’s position in the forefront of modern music conferred prestige on the Soviet Union, the government’s feelings about it — and his own — were not unmixed. He had been traveling extensively in the West and living as an expatriate, mainly in Paris, from 1918 through the mid 1930s. This kind of cosmopolitanism was always suspicious to Soviet authorities. Some densely difficult compositions that missed the mark critically, most notably his second symphony, contributed to his reputation as a bad boy of the avant garde, and to his own self-doubts as a composer. He wanted to return to Russia and change his image as a composer; in 1935, while establishing permanent residence in Moscow, “Musique d’Enfants,” translated “Music for Children,” became one of his first musical projects.

With its disciplined simplicity, Prokofiev’s “Music for Children” opened a new direction for his music — one of greater clarity and lyricism. But the pieces are a bit longer in duration than some of those in Tchaikovsky’s “Children’s Album,” allowing for melodies to be restated after the introduction of secondary melodic material. The suite opens with a reticent song entitled “Morning,” followed by “Promenade” — a jaunty, brisk walk far removed from the solemn promenades of Mussorgsky’s “Pictures at an Exhibition.” The gaiety of the “Tarantella” movement provides practice in rapid fingerwork in the bass line, while the somber “Repentance” movement, often translated as Regrets, offers the young pianist a chance to develop and sustain the architecture of a longer movement (it lasts about three minutes).

Most of all, the suite is distinguished by sprightly, engaging musical sketches of picturable scenes: a quirky “Parade of the Grasshoppers;” “Rain and Rainbow,” with its arching melody; “Tag,” a breezy scherzo. The mischievous “March” is more suggestive of children at play than soldiers at war; and “Evening” gives way to “Moonlit
“Rite of Spring” was enough to do that. In one of the strangest se-
raged listeners at its P aris prem iere in 1913 that the audience becam e a
The world was already on notice regarding the m agnitude of Stravinsky’s
like anything else. “Lieutenant K ije” or G ogol’s “The Inspector G eneral.” 2. It is not
dint of the notes alone. We associate his m usic w ith the sardonic
hum or , harsh irony and even sarcasm  it som etim es expresses —  perhaps
because these qualities are so rare in the standard repertory. H is
best-known work to Western audiences, the Sym phony N o. 5 , is now
accepted both as an overwhelming testament to the horrors of World
War II and the Siege of Leningrad and as a veiled yet vehement
protest against Soviet totalitarianism.

But as “A Child’s Exercise Book” shows us, Shostakovich was also
capable of great tenderness. Though this side of his musical personality
is less well known, “A Child’s Exercise Book” proves it is there; it
sounds like Shostakovich, and like no one else. Com posed toward the
end of World War II, the “Exercise Book” contains thematic ele-
ments that are recognizable to those who know Shostakovich’s work
well. These include quotations from “The Limpid Spring,” the “Jazz
Suite,” and his score for the film “The New Babylon.”

Children’s piano music by Dimitri Shostakovich? The very idea is al-
most shocking. No other composer’s music is closer to an X-rating by
 dint of the notes alone. We associate his music with the sardonic
humor; harsh irony and even sarcasm it sometimes expresses — perhaps
because these qualities are so rare in the standard repertory. His
best-known work to Western audiences, the Symphony No. 5, is now
accepted both as an overwhelming testament to the horrors of World
War II and the Siege of Leningrad and as a veiled yet vehement
protest against Soviet totalitarianism.

L’Histoire du Soldat

T wo things Stravinsky’s “L’Histoire du Soldat” is not:
  1. It is not one of those charming Russian picaresque tales
about a soldier tweaking the bureaucracy, in the manner of
“Lieutenant Kije” or Gogol’s “The Inspector General.”
  2. It is not like anything else.

The world was already on notice regarding the magnitude of Stravinsky’s
genius by the time “L’Histoire” was premiered in Switzerland in 1918.
“Rite of Spring” was enough to do that. In one of the strangest se-
quences in all of cultural history, the “Rite”’s unfamiliar sound so en-
raged listeners at its Paris premiere in 1913 that the audience became a
violent mob, endangering Stravinsky’s life. What could account for the in-
tensity of their reaction?

The “Rite,” created for Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes and danced by
Nijinsky, did incorporate breathtakingly new musical elements: com-
plex polytonalities that give rise to intentional dissonances, densely
overlapping polyrhythms and foregrounded percussion. But its aes-
thetic unfamiliarity hardly seems to account for the crazed distress in
the audience, where elegantly dressed strangers turned on each other
with their fists. Perhaps even odder, it took just a year for the “Rite”
to earn cheers and bravos, making Stravinsky a hero of music. Today,
that fateful premiere and the musical revolution that followed it are
studied not only by music historians, but by psychologists.

If the artistic community in Europe and America knew that the young
Stravinsky was already a composer of historic importance, they also
knew that the new war in Europe was one like the world had never
seen before. Stravinsky composed “L’Histoire du Soldat” as the
war’s devastation revealed itself. It was another innovative theater
piece involving ballet along with acting, narration, and innovative
music, but he knew the war would limit the resources available for its
production, and — eager to maintain the impetus of “Rite of Spring”
scaled down the resources needed for “L’Histoire” in the hopes it
could be performed more widely. If the strategy did not succeed in
making the work more successful at the time of its composition, it did
result in a unique sound and character; combining three actors, a nar-
rator, a dancer, and a septet comprised of violin, double bass, clarinet,
bassoon, cornet (or trumpet), trombone and percussion — a precisely
chosen chamber ensemble proving Stravinsky was not only an innova-
tor in compositional technique, but also a colorist who was the equal
of his predecessor, Rimsky-Korsakov. “L’Histoire” also exists in
evocative arrangements for piano and for piano, violin and clarinet.

In addition to the horrors of World War I, “L’Histoire du Soldat”
was also affected by the Spanish Influenza epidemic in Europe and
the U.S. Its premiere in Lausanne, Switzerland — as a suite of five
numbers arranged for clarinet, violin and piano — was an artistic
success, but closed after its first night as part of the general move-
ment to curtail public assemblies.

Though rarely performed in its fully dramatized form, which lasts
about a hour, “L’Histoire” is fascinating theater, tracing a story that
is often compared to “Faust.” But while it does entail a deal with the
devil, it is not at all like Goethe’s Germanic tale of a disillusioned
scholar, weary and regretful; rather, it is much more in the mold of
European folk-tales about an unfortunate fool who encounters the
devil and, in the course of many reversals of fortune, eventually out-
wits him — only to be outwitted himself in the end. At stake are not
his everlasting soul, but the life-lessons he learns along the way.

If “Rite”’s innovations are mainly in rhythmic structure, “L’Histoire”
fascinates with a new way of creating and developing melodic subjects
— detached, almost abstract, yet oddly engaging. In works such as
“L’Histoire du Soldat,” Stravinsky showed how tonal music could be
modern.
Italy was a revelation to Tchaikovsky — the sunlight, the warmth, the beauty, the sheer pleasure of living. When we think of his affection for that country, we think first of his “Capriccio Italian,” which is like a lovingly detailed diary entry of a day at a Roman carnival. But there is much more of Italy in Tchaikovsky’s music. He wrote his passionate opera “Queen of Spades” in Florence in 1890, and during that visit he sketched one of the principal themes for the string sextet that would become the “Souvenir de Florence.” After composing and revising the rest of the four-movement sextet, he presented it to the St. Petersburg Chamber Music Society, acknowledging the Society’s awarding him honorary membership, in 1892. He died the following year at the age of 53.

Originally scored for two violins, two violas and two cellos, the Souvenir has been expanded in various arrangements for chamber orchestra as well as reduced for piano and strings. It opens with a spirited allegro that shows, perhaps, less Italian sun and more Russian brawn than we expect from Tchaikovsky’s Italian sketches. But this quickly gives way to a calmer, more southern sound. In the second movement, a romantic adagio, we hear the sunlit themes and playful pizzicato accompaniments we associate with Tchaikovsky’s Italian-inspired compositions.

The last two movements, an allegretto and an allegro, have buoyant energy and folk-like melodies, but a more Russian sound than the opening movements do. Could that be because they were composed after Tchaikovsky’s return from Italy?

Michael Clive is editor-in-chief of the Santa Fe Opera and blogs as The Operahound for ClassicalTV.com.

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A consummate musician recognized for her grace, subtlety and vitality, Orli Shaham has established an impressive international reputation as one of today’s most gifted pianists. Hailed by critics on four continents, Shaham is in demand for her prodigious skills and admired for her interpretations of both standard and modern repertoire. The St. Louis Post-Dispatch recently praised her “wit, passion, delicacy and humor,” and London’s Guardian has called Shaham’s playing “perfection.”

Shaham has performed with most major orchestras in the United States, as well as with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Filarmonica della Scala, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Stockholm Philharmonic and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, among others. She is a frequent guest at numerous summer festivals from Mostly Mozart to Verbier, and has given recitals at Carnegie Hall, The Kennedy Center, Amsterdam’s Concertgebouw, and many more around the world. She has worked with many eminent conductors including Sir Neville Marriner, Sir Roger Norrington, Christopher Hogwood, David Robertson, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Leonard Slatkin, Robert Spano and Gerard Schwarz.

Shaham’s international performance schedule in 2011-12 includes the world premiere of a piano concerto written for her by Steven Mackey, with the St. Louis Symphony conducted by David Robertson. Shaham releases three new recordings in 2011-2012: a CD of Hebrew Melodies (Canary Classics), recorded with her brother, the violinist Gil Shaham; a recording of the Brahms Horn Trio and Schubert’s lied “Auf dem Strom” (Albany) featuring Richard King; and Saint-Saens’ “Carnival of the Animals” with pianist Jon Kimura Parker and the San Diego Symphony (San Diego Symphony). Also in 2011-2012, Shaham begins a new role as host of the public radio series America’s Music Festivals, a two-hour weekly program broadcast on more than 100 stations.

Shaham’s highly acclaimed classical concert series for young children, “Baby Got Bach,” continues in New York City and around the country. For preschoolers, “Baby Got Bach” provides hands-on activities with musical instruments and concepts and concert performances that promote good listening skills.

Driven by a passion to bring classical music to new audiences, Shaham maintains an active parallel career as a respected broadcaster, music writer and lecturer. In 2005, she began a collaboration with Classical Public Radio Network as the host of “Dial-a-Musician,” a feature she created especially for the radio network. Her program hosted over 60 guests including composer John Adams, pianists Emanuel Ax and soprano Christine Brewer. Shaham has taught music literature at Columbia University, and contributed articles to Piano Today, Symphony, and Playbill magazines and NPR’s Deceptive Cadence blog. Shaham has served as artist in residence on National Public Radio’s Performance Today.

Shaham was recognized early for her prodigious talents. She received her first scholarship for musical study from the America-Israel Cultural Foundation at age five to study with Luisa Yoffe at the Rubin Academy of Music in Jerusalem. By age 7, she traveled to New York with her family to begin study with Nancy Stessin, and became a scholarship student of Herbert Stessin at The Juilliard School a year later. She has also won the Gilmore Young Artist Award and the Avery Fisher Career Grant, two prestigious prizes given to further the development of outstanding talent. In addition to her musical education, Shaham holds a degree in history from Columbia University. Shaham lives in New York and St. Louis with her husband, conductor David Robertson, college-age stepsons Peter and Jonathan, and preschool twins Nathan and Alex.
Violinist Raymond Kobler was appointed concertmaster of Pacific Symphony in 1999. During his illustrious career he has appeared as soloist on numerous occasions with the Cleveland Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony, Zurich Chamber Orchestra, and San Francisco Symphony. Kobler occupies the Eleanor and Michael Gordon Chair.

Robert Becker, principal viola of Pacific Symphony since 1982, was recently appointed to the position of full-time director of string studies at Chapman University's Conservatory of Music. Internationally known as a pedagogue of the viola and chamber music and conductor, he is dedicated to the training of young violists and string players. He has served as principal viola of Pacific Symphony, the world’s principal viola, and continues his tenure as principal viola of Pacific Symphony. The world’s principal viola, he is dedicated to the training of young violists and string players for a lifetime career in performing, teaching chamber music and orchestral playing.

Bridget Dolkas is the principal second violinist of Pacific Symphony, first violinist of the California Quartet, and performs in Pacific Symphony's popular chamber music series, Cafe Ludwig. She has attended the University of Southern California, the University of California, Los Angeles, the Manhattan School of Music, and now teaches on the faculty of Chapman University. In her spare time, Bridget works as a "professional organizer" for her family and friends. Her most recent passion has become property restoration, discovered while renovating four houses on five acres in Carlsbad, Calif.

Chair

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Raymond Kobler

Robert Becker

Bridget Dolkas
Carolyn Riley grew up in a small town in Virginia. After attending The Juilliard School and graduating from the Curtis Institute of Music, Riley accepted a viola position with Pacific Symphony. An active international performer, Riley has toured extensively throughout the United States, Europe, Russia, and Israel. Her chamber music performances have been heard in major venues such as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center’s Alice Tully Hall, and the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. As former principal violist of the National Repertory Orchestra, she soloed with the orchestra numerous times, including performances of “Don Quixote” by Strauss, and “Theme and Variations” by Alan Shulman. Riley also regularly plays with the Los Angeles Opera, the San Diego Symphony, the Pageant of the Masters and records for the Motion Picture Industry.

Pacific Symphony principal cellist Timothy Landauer was hailed “a cellist of extraordinary gifts” by The New York Times when he won the coveted Concert Artists Guild International Award in 1983 in New York. Landauer is the winner of numerous prestigious prizes and awards, among them the Young Musicians Foundation’s National Gregor Piatigorsky Memorial Cello Award, the Samuel Applebaum Grand Prize of the National Solo Competition of the American String Teacher’s Association and the 1984 Hammer-Rostropovich Scholarship Award. Landauer’s extensive engagements include his highly acclaimed recitals at Carnegie Recital Hall, the Ambassador Auditorium in Los Angeles, the Orford Arts Center in Montreal, the City Hall Theater in Hong Kong and in Hanover, Germany.

Kevin Plunkett is currently in his 19th season as assistant principal cellist of Pacific Symphony. Born and raised in Los Angeles, he studied at the New England Conservatory under Laurence Lesser, and at Northern Illinois University under Raya Garbousova. He has been a member of the Rochester Philharmonic, the San Francisco Symphony, as well as the Detroit Symphony. He has also held teaching positions at the Universities of Maine and Delaware, where he was a member of the Delos String Quartet. In his leisure moments Plunkett enjoys tinkering with computers, reading, hiking and various intellectual pursuits.
Benjamin Lulich was appointed principal clarinet of Pacific Symphony in May of 2007. He has also performed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, The Cleveland Orchestra, Kansas City Symphony and the IRIS Chamber Orchestra. An avid chamber musician, Lulich has appeared on Pacific Symphony's Café Ludwig series and has been a guest artist for chamber music at Azusa Pacific University, Chapman University, California State University Fullerton, and UCLA. Also interested in new music, Lulich was a member of the Second Instrumental Unit, a contemporary music ensemble based in New York City, where he took part in a concert honoring Milton Babbitt at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall. Lulich has won concerto competitions at the Cleveland Institute of Music, Interlochen Arts Academy, Marrowstone Music Festival and twice at Music Academy of the West. He has also performed for record albums and film scores, including Water for Elephants and The Tourist. Lulich occupies the Hanson Family Foundation Chair.

Alan Chapman, in addition to his weekday morning program on Classical KUSC, is also the host and producer of two weekend programs: Modern Times and Thornton Center Stage. Well known as a pre-concert lecturer, Chapman has been a regular speaker on the L.A. Philharmonic’s “Upbeat Live” series since its inception in 1984. He also works closely with the Los Angeles Master Chorale, Los Angeles Opera and Pacific Symphony. His lectures have been presented by virtually every major performing organization in Southern California. He is heard globally as programmer and host of the inflight classical channel on Delta Air Lines.

After receiving his undergraduate degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, he earned a Ph.D. in music theory from Yale University. He is currently a member of the music theory faculty of the Colburn Conservatory. He was a longtime member of the music faculty at Occidental College and has also been a visiting professor at UCLA and UC Santa Barbara. His analytical work has appeared in the Journal of Music Theory and in The New Orpheus: Essays on Kurt Weill, winner of the Deems Taylor Award for excellence in writing on music.