

Ravishing Romanticism

May 3, 2025

Sponsored by Westminster Oaks
and Merrill Lynch

Yaniv Dinur, Conductor
Alexander Korsantia, Piano

Lili BOULANGER
(1893–1918)

D'un matin de printemps

Sergei RACHMANINOFF
(1873–1943)

Piano Concerto No. 1 in F sharp minor, Op. 1
Vivace
Andante cantabile
Allegro scherzando

INTERMISSION

Pyotr Ilyich TCHAIKOVSKY
(1840–1893)

Symphony No. 4 in F minor, Op. 36
Andante sostenuto – Moderato con anima
Andantino in modo di canzona
Scherzo: Allegro
Finale: Allegro con fuoco



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MEET THE MAESTRO Yaniv Dinur

Yaniv Dinur is the winner of the 2019 Sir Georg Solti Conducting Fellow Award and Music Director of the New Bedford Symphony Orchestra. He is lauded for his insightful interpretations and unique ability to connect with concertgoers of all ages and backgrounds, from season subscribers to symphony newcomers.

In New Bedford, he has brought star soloists such as Yefim Bronfman, Pinchas Zukerman, Karen Gomyo and Vadim Gluzman to play with the orchestra. Under his leadership, the New Bedford Symphony has been nationally recognized for its bold, engaging programming and artistic quality, leading to the League of American Orchestras selecting the orchestra to perform at the 2021 League Conference.

Dinur served as Resident Conductor of the Milwaukee Symphony from 2015–2023. During this period, he conducted 372 concerts, including 144 performances for youth and children. Recognizing his leadership and impact, the Milwaukee Business Journal selected him as a 40 Under 40 honoree, an award for young professionals making a difference in the community.

Dinur's recent and upcoming guest conducting highlights include subscription debuts with the symphonies of San Diego, Edmonton, Tulsa, Sarasota, Fort Worth, Illinois, Present Music in Milwaukee, Orchestra Haydn in Italy, and Filarmonica de Madrid. He made his conducting debut at the age of 19 with the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, which led to multiple return engagements. Since then, he has conducted orchestras around the world, including the Israel Philharmonic, Jerusalem Symphony, Houston Symphony, Louisiana Philharmonic, Detroit Symphony, New World Symphony, San Antonio Symphony, Portugal Symphony Orchestra, Sofia Festival Orchestra/Bulgaria, State Orchestra of St. Petersburg, Torino Philharmonic, and the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa.

An accomplished pianist, Dinur established a chamber music series at the Villa Terrace Museum in Milwaukee, where he performs with musicians from the Milwaukee Symphony. Recent concerto performances include Brahms' First Piano Concerto with the New Bedford Symphony and Mozart's D Minor Concerto with the Milwaukee Symphony, for which he received critical acclaim for his "fluid, beautifully executed piano passages" and "deeply musical playing" (*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*).

Dinur is the winner of numerous awards, among them the 2017 and 2016 Solti Foundation U.S. Career Assistance Awards, 2nd Prize at the 2009 Mata International Conducting Competition in Mexico, and the Yuri Ahronovitch 1st Prize in the 2005 Aviv Conducting Competition in Israel. He is also a recipient of the America-Israel Cultural Foundation and the Zubin Mehta Scholarship Endowment.

Born in Jerusalem, Dinur began studying the piano at the age of six with his aunt, Olga Shachar, and later with Prof. Alexander Tamir, Tatiana Alexanderov, Mark Dukelsky, and Edna Golandsky. He studied conducting in Israel with Dr. Evgeny Zirlin and Prof. Mendi Rodan, and holds a Doctorate in Orchestral Conducting from the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre & Dance, where he was a student of Prof. Kenneth Kiesler.

Lili Boulanger (1893–1918) was the first female to win the Prix de Rome, awarded for her cantata, *Faust et Hélène*. She was not quite 20 when she followed in the footsteps of her father, Ernest Boulanger, who was 77 when Lili was born. He had won the prize in 1835 at age 20, and subsequently became a teacher at the Paris Conservatoire, where he met and married one of his students, a Russian princess 52 years his junior. When Lili was only two, she had her first bout of pneumonia, and she was chronically ill most of her life, dying at 24 of intestinal tuberculosis. Her final work, which she was unable to finish, was an opera, *La Princesse Maleine*, based on the play and approved by Maeterlinck. Symbolist poetry and some of the techniques of Impressionist music influenced Boulanger's *oeuvre*, which includes a symphonic poem, numerous pieces for voice and/or choir with instrumental ensembles, several works for violin and piano or solo piano, *Pie Jesu* (possibly written to be part of a full Requiem), and tonight's work, one of the last that she completed. In addition to the orchestral version, *D'un Matin de Printemps* exists in several other arrangements such as for piano trio. Strings and soloistic winds, with minimal input from the brass section, paint the program implied by the work's title. Light and airy, the music employs repetitive motives, occasional parallel chords, and a splash of pentatonicism, traits shared in many of the works by her countryman, Claude Debussy, who died ten days after Boulanger. [Lili's older sister Nadia, who had the advantage of living to the age of 92, unsuccessfully entered the Prix de Rome competition four times. She ultimately became famous as the first woman to conduct several American orchestras, such as the Boston Symphony in 1938, and she was a renowned pedagogue of a vast number of musicians, including Aaron Copland,

Burt Bacharach, Quincy Jones, and Phillip Glass. She declined to teach Gershwin.]

DID YOU KNOW?

Lili Boulanger had an asteroid named in her honor, 1181 Lilith, discovered by Russian-French astronomer Benjamin Jekhowsky in Algeria in February 1927.

Please refer to the October 2024 program for the biography of **Sergei Rachmaninoff** (1873–1943). The composer was only 17 when he wrote the first two movements of his first piano concerto, and the last movement and orchestration were completed the following year. Twenty-six years later, his revisions caused Rachmaninoff to say, "It is really good now. . . it plays itself so much more easily." [HA!] In the meantime he had composed two very popular piano concertos, "Rach Two" (1901) and "Rach Three" (1909) [performed by TSO in October 2024]. As a performing pianist in the tradition of Mozart, Beethoven, and Chopin, he was able to tweak the piano score to produce maximum drama, effect, and sentimentality. **Piano Concerto No. 1** begins with descending bravura passages similar to Grieg's piano concerto and Tchaikovsky's First. The Romantic tradition continues with the strings' introduction of the stepwise lyrical main theme, which is immediately repeated by the soloist. A big cadenza just before the conclusion of the first movement showcases the soloist's sensitivity and interpretative skills as well as her virtuosity. Solo horn introduces the primary theme of the **Andante cantabile**. The pianist delicately extends the mood with Rachmaninoff's characteristic interweaving of melodic and countermelodic notes. The melancholic atmosphere is one of the composer's most distinctive expressions. As

his countryman Igor Stravinsky famously noted, Rachmaninoff "is a six-foot scowl." Playful dialogue between orchestra and piano initiates the **Allegro scherzando**. An episodic movement full of pianistic gymnastics and declamatory orchestral statements, it is not always clear what the compositional reasoning behind the sequence of sounds is; however, the big picture shows a young composer shining forth with a multitude of ideas, both introspective and dramatic, while also revealing many of the elements that will be recognized in the future as characteristics of his own voice.

While Tchaikovsky was composing in Russia, a former Governor of Florida, David S. Walker, was working to create a public library in Tallahassee. University Library was established in 1883, Tallahassee's first library, and the now historic building is located at 209 East Park Ave. In 1976 it was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

At age twenty-one, **Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky** (1840–1893) quit law school to study composition and orchestration at St. Petersburg Conservatory. After graduating in 1865, he was hired to teach harmony at the Moscow Conservatory, where he remained until 1875, when severe depression led him to resign from teaching. Tchaikovsky, whose music was greatly influenced by the West, was often depressed and pessimistic, and much has been written about his (closet) homosexual angst. A wealthy widow, Madame von Meck, became his patron from 1876 until 1890, allowing Tchaikovsky the luxury of devoting himself to composing. In a letter to von Meck dated 27 May 1877, the composer indicated

that the rough draft of the Fourth Symphony was complete and he planned to orchestrate it by the end of the summer, but in July he was persuaded to marry a former student who was infatuated with him. Within weeks Tchaikovsky ran away. A September reunion with his bride resulted in his complete breakdown and attempted suicide. Upon his recovery he completed **Symphony No. 4** in January 1878, and it premiered the following month. It is dedicated to von Meck (at her request the title page reads only, "To my friend"). Tchaikovsky revealed, "Never before have any of my orchestral works cost me so much labor, but then never before have I felt such affection towards any of my compositions. . . Perhaps I'm mistaken, but it seems to me that this symphony is an exceptional piece and the best thing I've done up to the present." The composer indicated that this symphony and the Fifth in E minor were "about Fate."

The Fourth Symphony's lengthy first movement, **Andante sostenuto—Moderato con anima**, announces itself with a fanfare for bassoons and horns, answered by trumpets and other winds. This Fate motto is characterized by a distinctive dotted rhythm. A subsequent descending, stepwise melody for violins and cellos is lyrical but brooding, and as it continues one can imagine a storm with flashes of lightning and thunder. Clarinet and bassoon create a clearing for an extended ritard that ushers in a contrasting, rhythmic theme in the clarinet. After a dramatic "closing" theme (it closes the exposition), the trumpets return with the opening fanfare, and the horns answer; this indicates the beginning of the development section. After the themes return in the recapitulation, rumbling timpani and the antiphonal fanfare conclude the movement. The **Andantino** "in the style of a song" begins with a

passionate oboe melody, soon repeated by the cellos and eventually bassoons. A dance-like middle section becomes increasingly fervent before the violins return to the opening melody decorated by woodwind filigree. After a poignant restatement of the theme by solo bassoon, the ABA "song form" ends quietly. **Scherzo** is described by the composer himself: "First of all only the strings play, and all the time pizzicato; in the trio the woodwinds enter and also play alone; they are followed by the brass group, again playing alone. At the end of the scherzo all three groups answer one another with short phrases. I think that this sound effect will be interesting." The fast and fiery (*con fuoco*) **Finale** employs scurrying strings and a main theme in the woodwinds that alternates with a theme of five descending, stepwise pitches, played first by oboe and bassoon. Varying orchestration alters the character of the theme as Tchaikovsky crafts his typical, dramatic, ballet-like finale, which includes a restatement of the first movement's fanfare. It is touching to read the composer's musings about his musical immortality: "Will [Symphony No. 4] remain alive long after its author has vanished from the face of the earth, or will it immediately fall into the gulf of oblivion? I really don't know; all I know is that at this moment I, perhaps with a parent's characteristic blindness, am incapable of seeing the faults of my youngest offspring."

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Dr. Akers has a Master of Music degree in Piano Performance from Indiana University and a Ph.D. in Historical Musicology from Florida State University

Open Rehearsals

FREE to attend!

Friday, Sept 13

12:00 pm - 2:30 pm

Rehearsing for the Sept 13th Season Opener: Joy!

Maestro Conner Gray
Covington

Friday, Oct 18

12:00 pm - 2:30 pm

Rehearsing for the Oct 18th concert: Dancing & Dynamite!

Maestro Daniel Black

Saturday, Jan 18th

10:00 am - 12:30 pm

Rehearsing for the Jan 18th concert: Sea & Sky

Maestro Wesley Schulz

Saturday, March 29th

10:00 am - 12:30 pm

Rehearsing for the March 29th concert: Nostalgia & Nature

Maestro Kellen Gray

Saturday, May 3rd

10:00 am - 12:30 pm

Rehearsing for the May 3rd Season Finale: Ravishing Romanticism

Maestro Yaniv Dinur



Alexander Korsantia is one of the leading pianists of our time. A “major artist” (*Miami Herald*) and a “quiet maverick” (*Daily Telegraph*), Alexander Korsantia has been praised for a “piano technique where difficulties simply do not exist” (*Calgary Sun*).

In the coming season Mr. Korsantia will be performing all over the world including with the Illinois Symphony, Israel Symphony and the Baltic Philharmonic orchestras. He also continues to serve on jury panels of major piano competitions, such as he has in the past for the Arthur Rubinstein, Cleveland International, Hilton Head, Nina Simone Festival and E-Competitions.

In recent seasons Mr. Korsantia performed with the Stuttgart Philharmonic, Boston Philharmonic, Xiamen Philharmonic, and Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra. With The Far Cry Chamber Group, he played Galina Ustvolskaya's Piano Concerto in Boston and Tbilisi.

Ever since winning the First Prize and Gold Medal at the Artur Rubinstein Piano Master Competition and the First Prize at the Sydney International Piano Competition, Korsantia's career has taken him to many of the world's major concert halls, collaborating with renowned conductors such as Christoph Eschenbach, Gianandrea Noseda, and Paavo Järvi, with such orchestras as the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Mariinsky Orchestra, Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI in Turin, Cincinnati Symphony, and Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.

Alexander Korsantia is a frequent guest in many of the world's leading concert series including in Warsaw, Boston, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Vancouver, Calgary, San Francisco, Lodz, St. Petersburg, and Blaibach, including major international festivals in Tanglewood and Verbier. A passionate chamber musician, he has collaborated with other leading soloists such as Vadim Repin, Miriam Fried, Kim Kashkashian, Sergei Nakariakov, and the Stradivari Quartet.

His award-winning recordings include works by Beethoven, Prokofiev, Rachmaninoff, and Copland. In 2020 his recording of Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2 was released to great critical acclaim (with Stuttgart Philharmonic under Dan Ettinger, at German label Hänssler). His solo piano transcription of Ravel's *La Valse* was published by Sikorski.

Born in Tbilisi, Alexander Korsantia began his musical education first with his mother, one of Georgia's most respected piano teachers. Later he became a pupil of Tengiz Amiredjibi, Georgia's foremost piano instructor. In 1992, he joined the famed piano studio of Alexander Toradze at Indiana University in South Bend, USA. He is the recipient of numerous accolades, including the Georgian Order of Honor, National State Prize and Shota Roustaveli Prize, and the Golden Wing Award. Korsantia resides in Boston where he is a Professor of Piano at the New England Conservatory.