



Sunday, February 15, 2015, 3pm
Hertz Hall

Olli Mustonen, *piano*

PROGRAM

Pyotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893) Album for the Young, Op. 39 (1878)

1. Morning Prayer
2. Winter Morning
3. Mummy
4. Hobbyhorse
5. The Wooden Soldier's March
6. The New Doll
7. The Doll's Illness
8. The Doll's Funeral
9. Waltz
10. Polka
11. Mazurka
12. Russian Song
13. Farmer Playing on the Accordion
14. Kamarinskaja
15. Italian Song
16. Old French Song
17. German Song
18. Neapolitan Song
19. Nanny's Tale
20. Baba-Jaga
21. Sweet Dream
22. The Lark's Song
23. The Organ-Grinder Sings
24. At Church

- Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849) Mazurka in A minor, Op. 59, No. 1 (1845)
Mazurka in A-flat major, Op. 59, No. 2 (1845)
Mazurka in F-sharp minor, Op. 59, No. 3 (1845)
Mazurka in B major, Op. 56, No. 1 (1843)
Mazurka in C major, Op. 56, No. 2 (1843)
Mazurka in C minor, Op. 56, No. 3 (1843)

INTERMISSION

Olli Mustonen (b. 1967) Sonata, “Jehkin Iivana” (2004/2006)
in five movements

Aleksandr Scriabin (1872–1915) Sonata No. 10, Op. 70 (1913)
in one movement

Scriabin Vers la flamme, Op. 72 (1914)

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2014–2015 Koret Recital Series, which brings world-class artists to our community.*

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Piotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)
Album for the Young, Op. 39

Composed in 1878.

After his disastrous marriage in the summer of 1877, Tchaikovsky fled from Moscow to his brother Modeste in St. Petersburg, and then tried to bury his misery in a spate of anxious wandering about Europe—Clarens, San Remo, Florence, Clarens again. He found comfort in work, however, and completed the Fourth Symphony, *Eugene Onegin*, and the Violin Concerto during those months of emotional distress. In February 1878, he explained to his publisher, Jurgenson, that he would like to rest after the rigors of creating these large works, but would be bored and made over-anxious by complete idleness, so he proposed to write “a series of easy pieces, a *Children’s Album*. It would be pleasant for me, and for you even profitable, i.e., relatively. What do you think about this? Tell me in general what small-scale compositions you’d like to have. I’m strongly disposed just now to take on any small-scale work by way of relaxation.”

At that same time, Tchaikovsky’s patroness, Nadezhda von Meck, was concerned with the effect his marital misfortune might have on his creativity, and invited him to spend a solitary holiday recuperating at her estate at Brailov in the Ukraine while she was summering in Moscow. He accepted, and arrived in mid-May at Brailov, where he was pampered unreservedly by Mme. von Meck’s servants, who always had a carriage ready for his junkets and would bring him a splendid tea wherever his afternoon journey took him. He developed a passion for collecting mushrooms during his retreat, and particularly enjoyed partaking in the religious services at a local nunnery, whose fine choir, he carefully noted, was capable of reading music and was well directed. In one of his daily letters to Mme. von Meck, he wrote, “I continue to be very pleased with Brailov.... Everything is perfect, and the house is more like a town house, large, luxurious, and very comfortable.

I like the garden more and more. Today I climbed over the wall and on the other side found a small square wood which I immediately explored. It happens to be what is left of a garden which had been planted by Catholic monks who had a monastery here until 1840. Of the walls that surrounded the monastery only the ruins of the gates are left; the trees are old and large, the grass thick and luscious. Of all I have seen here I like this charming little wood the best. Plenty of scope for imagination....” It was at Brailov that he fulfilled his promise to Jurgenson for an album of piano miniatures of varied suggestive characters, composing the 24 pieces of *Album for the Young* in just four days.

Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849)
Selected Mazurkas

The *mazurka* originated in Chopin’s home district of Mazovia sometime during the 17th century. Rather a family of related musical forms than a single set type, the *mazurka* could be sung or danced, performed fast or languidly, and, when danced, given many variations on the few basic steps of the pattern. By the 18th and 19th centuries, when its popularity spread throughout Europe, the *mazurka* was characterized by its triple meter, frequent use of unusual scales (often giving the music a slightly Oriental quality), variety of moods and occasional rhythmic syncopations. Of Chopin’s 56 *Mazurkas*, 41 of which were published during his lifetime, G. C. Ashton Jonson wrote, “In his hands, the *mazurka* ceased to be an actual dance tune, and became a tone poem, a mirror of moods, an epitome of human emotions, joy and sadness, love and hate, tenderness and defiance, coquetry and passion.” The expressive range of the *Mazurkas* is wider than that of any other group of his compositions; it is said that he never played any of the *Mazurkas* the same way twice. They contain Chopin’s most intimate thoughts, and are moving reminders that this famous Polish émigré lived virtually his whole adult life away from his native soil.

The three Mazurkas of Op. 59 were composed at Nohant in 1845 and published without dedication the following January by Stern in Berlin. No. 1 (A minor) is based on a plaintive, modally inflected melody given simply at the outset. No. 2 (A-flat major) is an alluring number that the turn-of-the-century English composer, critic, and educator Sir William Henry Hadow chose as “perhaps the most beautiful of all the Mazurkas.” The third Mazurka of the Op. 59 set (F-sharp minor) stands at the pinnacle of Chopin’s achievement in the form. Daring in its harmony, quirky in its melodic leadings and subtle in its pianistic nuance, this Mazurka shows Chopin “at the summit of his powers,” wrote James Huneker. “Time and tune, that wait for no man, are now his bond slaves. Pathos, delicacy, boldness, a measured melancholy, and the art of euphonious presentment of all these, and many more factors, stamp this Mazurka as a masterpiece.”

The three Mazurkas of Op. 56, composed in 1843 and published by Breitkopf und Härtel in Leipzig in August 1844 with a dedication to the composer’s student Mlle. C. Maberly, usher in Chopin’s last and most masterful series of works in this form. No. 1 (B major) alternates two contrasting strains of music: one is a dotted-rhythm configuration, the other is an arching melody in quick, even notes which travels through some surprisingly distant keys. No. 2 (C major) is among the most folkish of Chopin’s Mazurkas. Its outer sections are built above a bagpipe-like drone bass which supports a jaunty theme with piquant chromatic inflections, while the center portion encompasses more flowing melodic material. Jim Samson wrote in his study of Chopin’s music that the harmonically daring third Mazurka (C minor) is “a powerful rhapsody whose textural intricacy and intensity of expression are only lightly grounded by folk elements. At times indeed we need to remind ourselves that this is a dance piece.”

Olli Mustonen (b. 1967)
Sonata, “Jehkin Iivana”

Composed for guitar in 2004; arranged for piano in 2006. Piano version premiered on July 21, 2006, at the Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival by the composer.

Olli Mustonen entered the world of music at age five through a somewhat unconventional portal: by playing Baroque works on the harpsichord—his first musical instruction was on that instrument; piano lessons followed two years later. Mustonen began composing when he was seven and showed such promise that he was accepted the following year as a private student by Einojuhani Rautavaara, one of Finland’s most distinguished composers. He began winning recognition as a composer soon after entering the Sibelius Academy in his native Helsinki in 1977. His *Divertimento for Piano and Orchestra* dates from 1979, his *Piano Concerto No. 1* from two years later.

Finnish music scholar Antti Häyrynen has written that “[c]omposing has remained an important part of Mustonen’s career alongside his distinguished international career as a concert pianist. He could not be described as a pianist-composer, though, since the piano does not dominate his output and often is not even in a prominent role in those works where it is included.

“As a composer,” Häyrynen continues, “Mustonen has been largely free of schools and styles, drawing on a number of techniques in idiosyncratic ways. A classical brand of clarity is one of the constant features of his writing, as is a powerful and diverse sense of rhythm. He typically examines things from different perspectives and likes to seek out the fundamental sources of art and human creativity. In recent years, he has shown an affinity with the *Kalevala*, the Finnish national epic, and the ancient folk tradition that underlies it.”

Among Mustonen's compositions are works for piano, cello, and three violins, numerous pieces for chamber ensembles and for solo piano, and a song cycle on poems by Finnish national poet Eino Leino—a contemporary and close friend of Sibelius and a distant relative of Mustonen. Mustonen has also composed two symphonies: His Symphony No. 1, for baritone and orchestra (2012), is based on Leino's well-known poem *Tuuri*. His Symphony No. 2, subtitled "Johannes Angelos" (2014), was inspired by a historical novel by Finnish author Mika Waltari which takes place in 1453, during the final days of Byzantine Constantinople.

Musicologist Susanna Välimäki describes Mustonen as "a postmodern composer of mystery, drawing on the expressive devices of Western classical music from the Baroque to Minimalism and from late Romanticism to the New Spirituality of the 21st century. Music serves as an expression of the mystery of life, as a stream of existence in sound. The theme is both age-old and topical; the music speaks of a way of experiencing that is often forgotten in technocratic contemporary society. The listener may hear an all-embracing nature experience and the rapture of holiness. The idioms of bygone days are windows on existence, on the spirit of life, on something that has always been there—just like the Renaissance paintings in the films of Andrei Tarkovsky. The everyday becomes sacred, the commonplace mystery, in the twinkling of an eye, a flicker of light, a single chord. Each work is an inner journey."

A *runo* ("rune") is a letter used in various ancient Germanic languages that was also thought to have mysterious, magic, or divinatory qualities. It is the alphabet in which the earliest evidences of Finnish mythology were preserved, and the individual poems of those extended tales came to be known as runes. In early Finnish cultures these runes were sung to the accompaniment of the zither-like *kantele*, and that vocal tradition was revived during the

19th century as part of the country's movement to forge a distinctive national identity at a time when it was ruled by Russia after centuries of being dominated by Sweden. Among the most important of the modern singers of Finnish runes was Jehkin Iivana, born in 1843 in the remote village of Suistamo, where some of the ancient traditions then still lingered, who performed his runic recreations throughout the country until his death in 1911. In 2004, Mustonen evoked both the bard and the savor of his ancient tales with his Sonata for Guitar, subtitled "Jehkin Iivana"; the following year he arranged the work for piano and gave its première on July 21, 2006, at the Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival in the Finnish interior. (There is also an arrangement for orchestra.) The Sonata is in several continuous sections that evoke the bard in mysterious, incantatory music at beginning and end, and in between suggest the fantastic stories—heroic, romantic, noble, tragic—that he shares.

Mustonen writes of this work: "*Jehkin Iivana* was originally composed for the guitar. Writing the piano version, I felt strongly as if it grew organically out of the original, without any conscious transcribing having to take place.

"The work is inspired by the numerous strangely fascinating descriptions I have read about the colorful life of the *runo* singer and *kantele* player Iivana Shemeikka (1843–1911). Known as Jehkin Iivana after his patronymic name, he was one of the last and greatest proponents of the ancient oral tradition of *runo* sung in Karelia. According to contemporary reports, he was a luminous and potent personality whose music, indescribable in words, possessed the power to transport the listener into the world of myths.

"In this version," he writes, "the role of the *kantele* is taken by the piano, in sorrow and in mirth. The journey, beginning in the *runo* singer's cottage, eventually returns to its origins, but not before taking the listener to many strange realms, even to the domain of Death."

Aleksandr Scriabin (1872–1915)
 Sonata No. 10, Op. 70
 Vers la Flamme, Op. 72

Composed in 1913 and 1914. Sonata premiered on December 12, 1913, in Moscow by the composer.

“The Muscovite seer”; “the Russian musical mystic”; “the clearest case of artistic egomania in the chronicles of music”: Aleksandr Scriabin was one of the most unusual of all composers. Living in the generation between Tchaikovsky and Prokofiev, he showed an early talent for music and trod the accepted path of lessons, conservatory training, and teaching. His visions, however, refused to be channeled into the conventional forms of artistic expression, and he developed a style and a philosophy that were unique.

Scriabin’s life was shaken by several significant changes around 1902, when he resigned from the faculty of the Moscow Conservatory to devote himself to composition and to rumination, and left his first wife to take up with another woman. From that time on, Scriabin bent his music ever more forcibly to expressing his dizzying world vision. He believed that mankind was approaching a final cataclysm from which a nobler race would emerge, with himself playing some exalted but ill-defined Messianic role in the new order. (He welcomed the beginning of World War I as the fulfillment of his prophecy.) As the transition through this apocalypse, Scriabin posited an enormous ritual that would purge humanity and make it fit for the millennium. He felt that he was divinely called to create this ritual, this “Mysterium” as he called it, and he spent the last twelve years of his life concocting ideas for its realization. Scriabin’s mammoth “Mysterium” was to be performed in a specially built temple in India (in which country he never set foot), and was to include music, mime, fragrance, light, sculpture, costume,

etc., which were to represent the history of man from the dawn of time to the ultimate world convulsion. He even imagined a language of sighs and groans that would express feelings not translatable into mere words. He whipped all these fantasies together with a seething sexuality to create a vision of whirling emotional ferment quite unlike anything else in the history of music or any other art. In describing *The Poem of Ecstasy* to his friend Ivan Lipaev he said, “When you listen to it, look straight into the eye of the Sun!”

Early in 1913, Scriabin gave a series of successful concerts in London that were capped by a performance of his *Prometheus: The Poem of Fire* conducted by Henry Wood (founder of the popular “Proms” concerts). The pianist-composer was back in Russia by spring, and spent the summer at a *dacha* in the countryside near Smolensk, west of Moscow, where he quickly composed the Sonatas Nos. 8, 9, and 10, his final works in the form. Each is in a single, highly compressed movement and exhibits remarkable control of virtuosic piano techniques, motivic development, and expressive direction, which the music critic Boris de Schloezer, the brother of Scriabin’s long-time companion, Tatiana, and a close friend, summarized as “languor, longing, impetuous striving, dance, ecstasy, and transfiguration.” Scriabin spoke to Leonid Sabaneyev, an influential critic and his first biographer, of the Sonata No. 10: “All plants and small animals are expressions of our psyches. Their appearance corresponds to movements of our souls. They are symbols, and oh! what symbols.... My Tenth Sonata is a sonata of insects. Insects are born from the sun...they are the sun’s kisses. How unified world-understanding is when you look at things this way.”

Though its emotional fervor suggests musical abandon, the Sonata No. 10 is anchored by traditional sonata form. The introductory section (*Moderato*) presents three motives: a dotted-rhythm idea in small falling leaps (*très doux et pur*); a turn-like triplet figure of close

descending intervals (in the third measure); and a phrase of rising half-steps (*avec une ardeur profonde et voilée* [veiled]) to which the turn-like triplet figure (*crystallin*) is appended. The sonata form proper begins with a new, faster tempo (*Allegro*) and the entry of the main theme, a melody of descending half-steps (*avec émotion*) supported by a widely spaced accompaniment in the low register. A series of trills and an echo of the triplet motive from the prologue lead to the second theme (*avec une joyeuse exaltation*), marked by a sweeping upward figure and an abundance of trills. Special prominence is given to the motives from the introduction in the development section, which culminates in a powerful passage

(*puissant, radieux*) of quickly repeated chords at the top of the keyboard. The main and second themes are recapitulated before the motives from the introduction are recalled in an ethereal postlude (*avec une douce langueur de plus en plus éteinte* [dying away]).

Vers la flamme ("Toward the Flame") of 1914 is one of Scriabin's last works and one of his most characteristic, with a harmonic language teetering on the precipice of atonality, a texture more dense than seems negotiable by merely two hands, an almost obsessive treatment of motives, and a rising line of expressive tension that builds to an eruptive climax.

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OLLI MUSTONEN occupies a unique place on today's music scene. Following the tradition of great masters such as Rachmaninoff, Busoni, and Enescu, Mr. Mustonen combines the roles of his musicianship as composer, pianist and conductor in an equal balance that is quite exceptional. Born in Helsinki, Mr. Mustonen began his studies in piano, harpsichord, and composition at age five. Initially learning with Ralf Gothóni, he subsequently studied piano with Eero Heinonen and composition with Einojuhani Rautavaara.

As a concerto soloist, Mr. Mustonen has worked with most of the world's leading orchestras, including the Berlin Philharmonic, Munich Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, and the Royal Concertgebouw, partnering conductors such as Vladimir Ashkenazy, Daniel Barenboim, Herbert Blomstedt, Pierre Boulez, Myung-Whun Chung, Charles Dutoit, Christoph Eschenbach, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Kurt Masur, Kent Nagano, Esa-Pekka Salonen, and Jukka-Pekka Saraste. Recent highlights have included complete cycles of the Bartók piano concertos with the BBC Scottish Symphony and of the Beethoven piano concertos with the Melbourne

Symphony. The latter resulted in a return invitation to curate the 2014 Metropolis New Music Festival, where Mr. Mustonen conducted the world première of his own Sonata for Violin and Orchestra. Other highlights of last season included a tour of the United States with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, concerts with Sakari Oramo at both the BBC Symphony and Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, and a return to the Orchestre de Paris to perform with Paavo Järvi. Mr. Mustonen was also invited to be soloist at the gala concert and closing ceremony of the Winter International Arts Festival in Sochi, performing with the Moscow Soloists Chamber Orchestra under Yuri Bashmet.

As a recitalist, Mr. Mustonen plays in all the world's musical capitals, appearing in recent seasons at the Edinburgh International Festival, Chopin Institute Warsaw, Diaghilev Festival Perm, Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, New York's Zankel Hall, and Sydney Opera House. Among his recital partners are Pekka Kuusisto, with whom he toured in 2013 to include the world première of his own Violin Sonata, and Steven Isserlis, with whom he performed Mr. Mustonen's Cello Sonata in 2014. The current season sees a new collaboration with Barnabás Kelemen, with whom he appears at Slovenian Philharmonic Hall and Wigmore Hall. Solo recital engagements this season include Wigmore Hall, Tampere Hall, Flagey Piano Days in Brussels, Beethoven-Haus Bonn, Dresden Festival, and Ruhr Piano Festival, as well as a recital tour of the United States. Mr. Mustonen also gives a recital at the closing ceremony of Sviatoslav Richter's December Nights Music Festival in Moscow.

Among Mr. Mustonen's close connections with some of today's most illustrious musicians is his collaboration with Rodion Shchedrin, who dedicated his Piano Concerto No. 5 to Mr. Mustonen and invited him to perform at his 70th, 75th, and 80th birthday concerts. In 2013, Mr. Mustonen performed Shchedrin's Piano Concerto No. 4 at Stockholm's Baltic Sea Festival with the Mariinsky Theatre Orchestra under Valery

Gergiev. Mr. Mustonen's artistic collaboration with Mr. Gergiev is another significant musical relationship; in 2011, he had the honor of closing the Moscow Easter Festival at the personal invitation of Mr. Gergiev, in a performance that was televised all over Russia.

A strong exponent of Prokofiev's music, Mr. Mustonen embarks upon a major project this season, performing and recording all of Prokofiev's piano concertos with the Finnish Radio Symphony under Hannu Lintu, as well as performing two of the concertos at the Baltic Sea Festival. Mr. Mustonen also presents a full cycle of Prokofiev's piano sonatas, appearing at Helsinki Music Centre, Lille Piano Festival, and Singapore Piano Festival.

Other highlights this season include concerto performances with the Munich Chamber Orchestra, SWR Baden-Baden, and the Hungarian National Philharmonic, and playing-conducting engagements with the Royal Northern Sinfonia, Novaya Rossiya Symphony, Riga Sinfonietta, and Symphony Orchestra Giuseppe Verdi of Milan. Mr. Mustonen tours Germany with his own Quartet for Oboe, Violin, Viola, and Piano, and performs the world première of his new Piano Quintet at Festival O/Modernt in Stockholm.

Mr. Mustonen's life as a composer is at the heart of both his piano playing and conducting. Mr. Mustonen has a deeply held conviction that each performance must have the freshness of a first performance, so that audience and performer alike encounter the composer as a living contemporary. In this respect he recalls Mahler's famous dictum, that tradition can be laziness, yet he is equally suspicious of the performance that seeks only to be different. This tenacious spirit of discovery leads him to explore many areas of repertoire beyond the established canon.

In recent years, Mr. Mustonen has conducted the world premières of both of his large-scale orchestral works: Symphony No. 1, "Tuuri," with the Tampere Philharmonic in 2012; and Symphony No. 2, "Johannes Angelos," with the Helsinki Philharmonic in 2014. Under Mr. Mustonen's baton, the First Symphony has gone on to receive further performances with orchestras including the Melbourne Symphony, Tchaikovsky Symphony, Meiningen Court Orchestra, and Helsinki Philharmonic. Such is Mr. Mustonen's relationship with the Helsinki Philharmonic that in 2012–2013 he was invited to be Artist in Residence, featuring him in all three roles of conductor, composer, and soloist across a diverse range of concerts.

As well as all the major Finnish orchestras, Mr. Mustonen has conducted the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie, Staatskapelle Weimar, WDR Köln, Camerata Salzburg, Scottish Chamber, Estonian National Symphony, Orchestra della Toscana, Orchestra del Teatro Carlo Felice di Genova, Jerusalem Symphony, NHK Symphony, and the Queensland and West Australian symphony orchestras.

Mr. Mustonen's recording catalogue is typically broad-ranging and distinctive. His release on Decca of *Preludes* by Shostakovich and Alkan received the Edison Award and Gramophone Award for the Best Instrumental Recording. In 2002, Mr. Mustonen signed with the Ondine label, on which his most recent releases include Respighi's *Concerto in modo Misolidio* with Sakari Oramo and the Finnish Radio Symphony and a critically acclaimed disc of Scriabin's piano music. More recently, Mr. Mustonen released a highly acclaimed recording of his own Cello Sonata on the BIS label, for which he was joined by Steven Isserlis.