



# MUSIC AT ST. PHILIP

## Liszt-Tchaikovsky Connection

In concert with Osip Nikiforov

*featuring solo piano music of  
Franz Liszt and Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky*

Sunday | March 29, 2024 | 3:00 p.m.

### PROGRAM

Sonetto 47 del Petrarca, from <i>Années de pèlerinage</i> II, S.161	Franz Liszt (1811 – 1886)
Tendres reproches, Op. 72	Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840 – 1893)
Danse caractéristique, Op. 72	Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky
Transcendental Étude No. 10 in F minor, "Appassionata", S. 139	Franz Liszt
Chant élégiaque, Op. 72	Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky
Un poco di Chopin, Op. 72	Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky
Scène dansante, Op. 72	Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky
INTERMISSION	
Romance in F Minor, Op. 5	Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky
Valse-blurette, Op. 72	Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky
Après une lecture du Dante. Fantasia quasi Sonata, from <i>Années de pèlerinage</i> II, S.161	Franz Liszt

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Osip Nikiforov is a Siberian pianist who studied under the tutelage of the world-renowned pianists-Alexander Braginsky, Yefim Bronfman, and Jon Kimura Parker. He is also a Third Prize winner of 2016 San Antonio International Piano Competition.

Born in the city of Abakan in Siberia to a family of musicians, Osip started studying piano with his father at age 6. While still living in Russia, Osip has participated and won numerous awards in national and international competitions, such as the Gold Medal at the Delphic Games in Astana, Kazakhstan, and Third Prize at the 1st International e-Piano Junior Competition in Minnesota, where at the age of fourteen he shared the prize with Jan Lisiecki. A year later, he was the winner of Dorothy McKenzie Award in New York City at the International Keyboard Institute and Festival Competition. At just 14 years of age, Osip performed Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 3 with the Minnesota Orchestra.

Since 2010, Osip Nikiforov has been residing in the United States. The highlights for 2026 include a Guanchez-Nikiforov Piano Duo performance at Orchestra Hall in Minneapolis and an appearance with the Austin Symphony Orchestra performing the Florence Price Piano Concerto. This year, Osip was also awarded a Minnesota State Arts Board Grant for a series of solo piano concerts in Minnesota dedicated to Tchaikovsky and Liszt's anniversaries. In 2024, he recorded a series of folk tale inspired piano pieces for children by the Ukrainian composer Aida Isakova, which was broadcast nationally on Minnesota Public Radio and is now available online as part of the "Folk Classics from Across the Globe" radio special. In 2020, he was awarded First Prize at San Antonio Young Artist Tuesday Musical Competition. Osip is regularly invited to perform at concert series as well as festivals, including the Minnesota Orchestra Summer Festival in Minneapolis, the Schubert Club Courtroom Concert Series in St. Paul, the Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concert Series in Chicago, the Memorial Classical Music Series in Houston, and the Mozart Festival Texas in San Antonio. Besides the United States, he has given solo recitals in Spain, Israel, South Africa, Russia, and Japan. Osip has also frequently collaborated with national and international orchestras, including the St. Petersburg State Academic Capella Symphony Orchestra, the Minnesota Orchestra, the Khakass Philharmonic Orchestra, the Incarnate Word Symphony Orchestra, and the Mississippi Valley Symphony Orchestra. In 2016 he became a recipient of the Adopt a Young Artist award, given to a young classical musician in Minnesota. He is also the Second Prize winner of 2014 Music Teacher National Association Competition in Young Artist Division in Chicago.

Osip Nikiforov has accepted a position as Assistant Professor of Piano at the University of Minnesota Duluth and will begin in August 2026. Previously, he was on the Piano and Keyboard Skills Faculty of Macalester College. Osip is a graduate of the University of Minnesota, BM '17; Manhattan School of Music, MM '19; and Rice University, DMA '23. He has also appeared on Minnesota Public Radio, Performance Today by YourClassical, WFMT Radio, GetClassical, Classical Connect, Star Tribune, Austin Daily Herald, and Houston Press. In Fall 2021 Osip's first piano solo album "Russian Elegie" was released by Orpheus Classical on all major digital platforms. Besides performing, Osip also enjoys making his own transcriptions for piano as well as playing solo jazz piano.

## PROGRAM NOTES

### **Franz Liszt (1811 – 1886): Sonetto 47 del Petrarca, from *Années de pèlerinage II*, S.161**

The second volume of *Années de pèlerinage* provides impressions of Italian artworks, originating from the surrounding architecture and the world of literature and poetry. Liszt was inexorably drawn to the poetry of Francesco Petrarca, a poet and scholar from Renaissance Italy. Petrarca gave up his vocation as a priest at the first sight of a woman called Laura de Noves who refused the advances of the poet for the simple reason that she was already married. The poet channeled his feelings into a series of love poems that created a new mode of prose called "Cathexis." It describes a fixation of desire that when harnessed, creates artful poetry. Franz Liszt famously produced two settings of the Petrarca Sonnet No. 47, one for piano solo and the other for voice and piano. Based on the same compositional seed, the two versions are strikingly dissimilar, yet nevertheless closely related.

### **Franz Liszt (1811 – 1886): Transcendental Étude No. 10 in F minor, "Appassionata"**

The Etude is a cornerstone of Romantic piano literature from Liszt's Twelve Transcendental Etudes finalized in 1852. It is often characterized as a "march of Titans" that balances turbulent, stormy arpeggios with profound, lyrical contrasts. The etude is in sonata form, featuring rapid octaves, complex, rapid-fire left-hand arpeggios, and a deeply passionate, dramatic tone. While not officially named by Liszt (but instead provided by Ferruccio Busoni), it is commonly called "Appassionata" due to its fiery nature and its structural similarities to the coda of the final movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 23 "Appassionata".

### **Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840 – 1893): Piano Pieces, Op. 72**

When Tchaikovsky straight away set to work on composing his Symphony No. 6, at around this time he also assembled materials which were to form the basis for a series of 18 Piano Pieces, Op. 72. Although some have their origins in earlier sketches, these compositions date from the last year of the composer's life. Despite his having written two full-scale piano sonatas, Tchaikovsky's limited fame as a composer of music for solo piano rests largely on collections of smaller works: *The Seasons* and on this present collection. These pieces are free-standing – that is, they lose nothing by being played without their companions – but together they comprise sort of a "musical diary" – simple melodies that might occur to one while out walking. The only connection among them is temporal; this is a grouping, not a cycle. Stylistically, they are salon music, albeit of a high quality.

*Tendres reproches* - set in C-sharp minor, it is in an expressive, agitated, and melodic character.

*Danse caractéristique* - a witty, playful "characteristic dance" similar to those found in Tchaikovsky's famous ballets.

*Chant élégiaque* - a lyrical piano work in ABA form, characterized as one of the larger, more emotional pieces in the set.

*Un poco di Chopin* - a piece of haunting and melancholy stylized in a Chopin-esque manner. Although, it is written in the style of a mazurka, the distinct spirit of Tchaikovsky remains, preventing this from becoming pastiche.

*Scène dansante* - the final piece of the set is a dazzling and energetic work in C major, titled "invitation to the trepak" (a Russian folk dance).

*Valse-blurette* - a charming and lighthearted "blue waltz" or "dainty waltz" featuring delicate melodic lines set in the style of Chopin.

### **Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840 – 1893): Romance in F Minor, Op. 5**

Tchaikovsky wrote the Romance for solo piano in the fall of 1868 in Moscow, and Nikolay Rubinstein gave the first performance at a charity concert in Moscow University in December 1868. The piece appears to date from the period of Tchaikovsky's relationship with the soprano Désirée Artôt, who sang in the 1868–69 season with the Italian Opera Company in Moscow. This is one of the first pieces that the composer wrote for solo piano, which already embodies his personal style that he would further continue developing.

*(Program Notes continue....)*

(...Program Notes continue)

**Franz Liszt (1811 – 1886): Après une lecture du Dante. Fantasia quasi Sonata, from Années de pèlerinage II, S.161**

Often referred to by pianists as the “Dante Sonata”, it is the closing piece in the second volume of the “Années de Pèlerinage”. In 1839, while under the spell of Dante’s “Divine Comedy”, Liszt had begun work on a “fragment dantesque”. He later incorporated the work in revised form into the volume “Italy” of his “Années de Pèlerinage”. The single-movement sonata has a free, sectional structure rather than a strict sonata form. The work is based on the Canto “Inferno” in Dante’s poem. It describes the wild ride of the soul into hell in an effective manner, finally closing with several forgiving chords in a kind of transfiguration one of the best examples of Liszt’s technical ingenuity and sound artistry.

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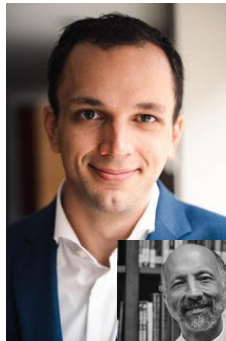


**SUNDAY, JULY 12**

**3:00 pm**

**Emily Amos**, Organist

**Featuring music by:**  
J.S. Bach, David Briggs,  
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others.



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**3:00 pm** Concert

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