



# Daniil Trifonov

Wednesday Evening, October 25, 2017 at 7:30  
Hill Auditorium  
Ann Arbor

14th Performance of the 139th Annual Season  
139th Annual Choral Union Series

This evening's recital is supported by Diane and Gary Stahle and by Robert and Darragh Weisman.

Media partnership provided by WGTE 91.3 FM and WRCJ 90.9 FM.

The Steinway piano used in this evening's recital is made possible by William and Mary Palmer.

Special thanks to Tom Thompson of Tom Thompson Flowers, Ann Arbor, for his generous contribution of floral art for this evening's recital.

Mr. Trifonov records exclusively for Deutsche Grammophon.

Mr. Trifonov appears by arrangement with Opus 3 Artists.

In consideration of the artist and the audience, please refrain from the use of electronic devices during the performance.

The photography, sound recording, or videotaping of this performance is prohibited.

## **PROGRAM**

*Federico Mompou*

### **Variations on a Theme of Chopin**

- Theme: Andantino
- Variation 1: Tranquillo e molto amabile
- Variation 2: Gracioso
- Variation 3: Lento
- Variation 4: Espressivo
- Variation 5: Tempo di Mazurka
- Variation 6: Recitativo
- Variation 7: Allegro leggiero
- Variation 8: Andante dolce e espressivo
- Variation 9: Valse
- Variation 10: Évocation: Cantabile molto espressivo
- Variation 11: Lento dolce e legato
- Variation 12: Galope y Epílogo

*Robert Schumann*

### **Carnaval, Op. 9 (excerpt)**

Chopin

*Edvard Grieg*

### **Moods, Op. 73 (excerpt)**

Hommage à Chopin

*Samuel Barber*

### **Nocturne (Hommage to John Field), Op. 33**

*Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky*

### **Eighteen Pieces, Op. 72 (excerpt)**

No. 15: Un poco di Chopin

*Sergei Rachmaninoff*

**Variations on a Theme of Chopin, Op. 22**

Tema:	Largo	Variation 10:	Più vivo —
Variation 1:	Moderato	Variation 12:	Moderato
Variation 2:	Allegro	Variation 13:	Largo
Variation 3:	L'istesso tempo	Variation 14:	Moderato
Variation 4:	L'istesso tempo	Variation 15:	Allegro scherzando
Variation 5:	Meno mosso	Variation 16:	Lento
Variation 6:	Meno mosso	Variation 17:	Grave
Variation 7:	Allegro	Variation 20:	Presto
Variation 8:	L'istesso tempo	Variation 21:	Andante
Variation 9:	L'istesso tempo	Variation 22:	Maestoso — Tempo I Tema

**Intermission**

*Frédéric Chopin*

**Variations on “Là ci darem la mano” from *Don Giovanni*, Op. 2**

Introduction:	Largo — Poco piu mosso
Thema:	Allegretto
Variation 1:	Brillante
Variation 2:	Veloce, ma accuratamente
Variation 3:	Sempre sostenuto
Variation 4:	Con bravura
Variation 5:	Adagio and Alla Polacca

*Chopin*

**Sonata No. 2 in b-flat minor, Op. 35**

Grave — Doppio movimento
Scherzo
Marche funèbre: Lento
Finale — Presto — Sotto voce e legato

## VARIATIONS ON A THEME OF CHOPIN (1938–55)

Federico Mompou

*Born April 16, 1893 in Barcelona, Spain*

*Died June 30, 1987 in Barcelona*

UMS premiere: This piece has never been performed on a UMS concert.

### **Snapshots of History...In 1955:**

- Marian Anderson is the first African-American singer to perform at the Metropolitan Opera
- The Detroit Red Wings win the Stanley Cup for the seventh time in franchise history, but will not win again until 1997
- Hurricane Diane kills over 200 people in the northeastern US; Hurricane Hilda kills nearly 200 people in Mexico

The theme on which Catalan composer Federico Mompou wrote his variations is the A-Major prelude from Chopin's *24 Preludes, Op. 28*, a gem of only eight bars' length that has a particularly exquisite melody — gentle, wistful, and supremely elegant in its simplicity. Its compactness makes it particularly well-suited for variations, for it can give a composer many ideas for further development: its basic melodic shape can be dressed up in a seemingly endless number of costumes.

Mompou, an accomplished concert pianist who produced a recording of his complete works for the keyboard, spent many years in Paris like Chopin himself; it is there that he first began work on his homage to his great predecessor. Originally, he thought of scoring it for cello and piano, in what should have been a collaboration with his famous compatriot Gaspar Cassadó. These plans came to nothing, however, just like the projected ballet production in London for which this music was intended

at the beginning. Mompou first published four of the variations for piano solo separately; the complete set followed years later.

In its final form, the variations encompass a wide range of characters and often take their cues from other genres in Chopin's music such as the nocturne, the mazurka, or the waltz. The melody is almost always readily discernible in its original form or only slightly altered; Mompou's personal stamp is in the harmonies he applies to the melody — harmonies that add notes not normally part of the key in which the melody is set (and remains). Among the 12, the third variation stands out for being written for the left hand alone, and the 10th (titled "Évocation") for introducing a second quote from a work by Chopin, the middle section of the *Fantaisie-impromptu* (Op. 66). The final variation, a fast gallop, is followed by a nostalgic epilog in which the original melody returns, with, once more, some extra notes in the harmony.

## CARNAVAL, OP. 9 (EXCERPT) (1835)

Robert Schumann

*Born June 8, 1810 in Zwickau, Germany*

*Died July 29, 1856 in Eendenich, Bonn, Germany*

UMS premiere: Josef Lhèvinne; February 1912 in University Hall.

### **Snapshots of History...In 1835:**

- Charles Darwin arrives at the Galápagos Islands aboard HMS *Beagle*
- An assassination is attempted against US President Andrew Jackson
- Halley's Comet reaches perihelion, its closest approach to the sun

In his celebrated piano cycle *Carnaval*, Schumann offered an entire panorama of the characters populating his personal and artistic universe. That universe included girls who attracted him, great artists who inspired him, and the contradictory emotions — even conflicting personalities — that inhabited his soul. One of the personalities invoked in his piece was — not surprisingly — Chopin, whom Schumann (also one of the foremost German music critics of his time) famously greeted with the words: “Hats off, gentlemen, a genius!” (This happened to be the first review Schumann ever published; in his last, 22 years later, he welcomed another new genius, a young man named Johannes Brahms, in a similar way.) It is interesting that Chopin, far from being flattered by the homage, actually took offense at Schumann's music which he perceived as a parody.

## MOODS, OP. 73 (EXCERPT) (1901–05)

Edvard Grieg

*Born June 15, 1843 in Bergen, Norway*

*Died September 4, 1907 in Bergen*

UMS premiere: This piece has never been performed on a UMS concert.

### **Snapshots of History...In 1905:**

- Rotary International is founded
- Theodoore Roosevelt is sworn in for a full term as President of the US
- *Huckleberry Finn* and *Tom Sawyer* are banned from the Brooklyn Public Library for “setting a bad example”

One of Grieg’s final works, the seven-movement piano cycle *Stemninger* (Moods) revisits some of the topics familiar from the Norwegian master’s earlier (and much better-known) *Lyrical Pieces*. Many of the pieces are imbued with the influence of folk music, though some show Grieg as an heir of European Romanticism. In the movement “Hommage à Chopin,” the allusions to Chopin’s etudes are numerous and obvious, but Grieg cast the piece in the form of a song, with neatly separated sections (the first one repeated), a layout one would be more likely to find in Grieg’s own music than in the etudes of Chopin.





## NOCTURNE (HOMMAGE TO JOHN FIELD), OP. 33 (1959)

Samuel Barber

*Born March 9, 1910 in West Chester, Pennsylvania*

*Died January 23, 1981 in New York, New York*

UMS premiere: This piece has never been performed on a UMS concert.

### **Snapshots of History...In 1959:**

- Alaska and Hawaii are admitted as the 49th and 50th US states
- The US recognizes the new Cuban government of Fidel Castro
- Mattel's Barbie doll debuts in the US

Samuel Barber gave his *Nocturne* the subtitle "Homage to John Field," the Irish composer who is said to have invented the nocturne. Field (1782–1837) had been a major inspiration for Chopin, who in turn stood behind Barber's sole essay in the genre — an essay in which the American composer integrated 12-tone technique into a piece that is, in essence, fully tonal. The piece begins with a typical Chopin-esque texture with peaceful *arpeggios* (broken triads) in a pure A-flat Major. The clear tonality is soon inundated with chromatic notes taken from a tone row, only to alight, time and again, on pure major triads in different keys. After a more agitated middle section culminating in a virtuoso cadenza, the opening section returns — a formal outline familiar from many a Chopin nocturne.

The work was first performed by John Browning, the American pianist who was also the dedicatee of Barber's *Piano Concerto* (1962).

## EIGHTEEN PIECES, OP. 72 (EXCERPT) (1893)

Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

*Born May 7, 1840 in Kamsko-Votkinsk, Russia*

*Died November 6, 1893 in St. Petersburg*

UMS premiere: This piece has never been performed on a UMS concert.

### **Snapshots of History...In 1893:**

- Thomas Edison finishes construction of the first motion picture studio in West Orange, New Jersey
- The 1893 World's Fair, also known as the World's Columbian Exposition, opens to the public in Chicago; the first US commemorative postage stamps are issued for the Exposition
- New Zealand becomes the first country in the world to grant women the right to vote

If Grieg set out to write an etude and Barber a nocturne after Chopin, Tchaikovsky, in his final collection of works for the piano, turned to the mazurkas for inspiration. The Russian composer made a real effort to inhabit Chopin's world and produced a perfect mazurka, complete with a wistful opening theme, a more energetic second idea, and a middle section over a drone. Only the virtuoso flourishes of the middle section are not exactly typical of Chopin's mazurkas. Another unusual feature is the absence of a left-hand downbeat in the opening theme, which gives the work a certain floating quality. As a result, the dance character is somewhat attenuated, and one feels that the piece is, perhaps, more a dream or a memory of a mazurka than the reflection of a real ballroom experience.

## VARIATIONS ON A THEME OF CHOPIN, OP. 22 (1902–03)

Sergei Rachmaninoff

Born April 1, 1873 in Semyonovo, Russia

Died March 28, 1943 in Beverly Hills, California

UMS premiere: This piece has never been performed on a UMS concert.

### Snapshot of History...In 1903:

- Cuba leases Guantánamo Bay to the US “in perpetuity”
- Maurice Garin wins the first Tour de France bicycle race
- The first box of Crayola crayons is sold

It seems symbolic that it was precisely Chopin who gave the 29-year-old Rachmaninoff the inspiration to compose the largest solo piano piece of his career to date. After several collections of short works — preludes, nocturnes, and *moments musicaux*, many of which also showed Chopin’s influence — Rachmaninoff embarked, in the summer of 1902, on an ambitious set of variations based on one of the Chopin preludes. The piece he chose, the *Prelude in c minor, Op. 28, No. 20*, consists entirely of a stark chord progression without any ornaments; it is almost like a funeral march (an association reinforced by the key of c minor, which often carries tragic connotations). One of the most striking features of the theme is how it begins *fortissimo* and becomes softer and softer toward the end. The very austerity of the theme makes it a perfect theme for variations, and Rachmaninoff composed no fewer than 22 of them, providing a true encyclopedia of moods, techniques, genres, and styles.

The earlier variations tend to be shorter, their length limited to that of the theme itself, but as the

piece continues, they become more extensive and grow almost to self-contained compositions in their own right. The first variation — a single, sinuous melodic line in a slow tempo — becomes the accompaniment to the melody in the second variation, as the tempo speeds up considerably. The motion becomes more complex in the course of the next six, mostly very brief variations until the rhythm is consolidated in a powerful chordal episode (variation nine). The later variations are increasingly self-contained character pieces, culminating in a grandiose final statement, after which Mr. Trifonov repeats the *Prelude* in its original form.

## VARIATIONS ON “LÀ CI DAREM LA MANO” FROM DON GIOVANNI, OP. 2 (1827)

Frédéric Chopin

*Born March 1, 1810 in Żelazowa Wola, near Warsaw, Poland*

*Died October 17, 1849 in Paris, France*

UMS premiere: This piece has never been performed on a UMS concert.

### **Snapshots of History...In 1903:**

- John James Audobon begins publication of the 10-volume *The Birds of America*
- Joseph Smith begins writing *The Book of Mormon*
- Thousands line the streets of Vienna for the funeral procession of composer Ludwig van Beethoven

Chopin's variations on Zerlina and Don Giovanni's duet from Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni* was originally written for piano and orchestra, but the orchestra's role is rather limited and therefore it is possible to perform the work as a solo piano piece, making it even more difficult than it was before, as the pianist takes over the orchestral parts as well. There are editions even from Chopin's own time that presented the variations that way. The Mozart variation was Chopin's first work to be published outside his native Poland, and it launched the young composer's international career. In fact, it was the work that made the 21-year-old Robert Schumann exclaim in the very first music review he ever wrote: "Hats off, gentlemen, a genius!" One must add that Schumann had not heard the work performed, he had only seen the printed score.

Virtuoso variations on opera tunes were a fashionable genre at the beginning of the 19th century; they served not only to showcase

a performer's chops but also to popularize the tunes themselves. What makes Chopin's variations stand out from many similar sets are the sharply delineated characters he draws up, as well as the wide array of technical devices he uses without ever obscuring the melody. As was the custom at the time, the presentation of the theme was preceded by a free introduction (loosely based on the theme); the five variations are increasingly more and more brilliant until we get to the fifth one, which is slow and lyrical, and written in a minor key. This brief moment of melancholy then leads to the concluding section of the work, which brings the duet theme back to Chopin's homeland by turning it into a grand polonaise.

## SONATA NO. 2 IN B-FLAT MINOR, OP. 35 (1837–39)

Chopin

UMS premiere: Adele Aus der Ohe; March 1904 in University Hall.

### **Snapshots of History...In 1839:**

- Charles Goodyear vulcanizes rubber
- The first photograph of the moon is taken by Louis Daguerre
- The world's first commercial electric telegraph line comes into operation alongside the Great Western Railway line in England

Chopin did not count Beethoven among his favorite composers, but when it came to writing sonatas, he could hardly escape Beethoven's influence. The very opening of Chopin's sonata seems to echo the last movement of Beethoven's "Tempest"; the second theme is modeled on the parallel spot in the "Waldstein." Even the famous "Funeral March," the third movement (written two years before the rest of the work), is an obvious tribute to Beethoven's Op. 26 Sonata. Yet this is not to say that work is not original, even revolutionary: in its harmonic language, it pushes chromaticism to extremes never seen before. The technical demands made on the pianist are equally unprecedented.

This duality of Beethovenian tradition and a new Romantic sound creates a special tension in the agitated opening movement. The dark chromatic harmonies of the "Scherzo" are only temporarily relieved in the trio's intimate lyricism. For all its familiarity, the third-movement funeral march never ceases to astonish by its stark juxtaposition of two chords in defiance of all classical rules of harmony. Finally, the last movement

is a real tour de force: there are no chords and no rhythmic variety at all, only a whirlwind of unison octaves moving up and down in rapid eighth-note triplets, always soft in volume. Anton Rubinstein, the Russian pianist-composer, described it as "winds of night sweeping over churchyard graves" — perhaps the only thing that could have come after such a powerful funeral march.

*Program notes by Peter Laki.*

## ARTIST

Russian pianist **Daniil Trifonov** — winner of *Gramophone*'s 2016 "Artist of the Year" award — has made a spectacular ascent in the world of classical music as a solo artist, a champion of the concerto repertoire, a collaborator at the keyboard in chamber music and song, and a composer. Combining consummate technique with rare sensitivity and depth, his performances are a perpetual source of awe. *The Times* (UK) calls Mr. Trifonov "without question the most astounding pianist of our age."

Focusing on Chopin in the current season, Mr. Trifonov releases *Chopin: Evocation*, his fourth album as an exclusive Deutsche Grammophon artist, which includes both works by Chopin himself and, marking Trifonov's first foray into a new repertoire, works of 20th-century composers who were greatly influenced by the Polish master, including Samuel Barber, Federico Mompou, and others.

Mr. Trifonov will give over 20 recitals on the same theme across the US, Europe, and Asia this season, including one in Carnegie Hall as part of a seven-concert, season-long Perspectives series which he curates. Three of the seven concerts are devoted to Chopin and his influence: the solo recital, and two all-Chopin programs with cellist Gautier Capuçon and the Kremerata Baltica chamber orchestra. Further concerts in the series include collaborations with baritone Matthias Goerne and Mr. Trifonov's teacher and mentor, Sergei Babayan, the latter capping a US tour that includes the world premiere of a Carnegie-commissioned work for two pianos

by Mauro Lanza; a performance of his own piano concerto with Valery Gergiev leading the Mariinsky Orchestra, again culminating a US tour; and a solo recital in Zankel Hall that includes a seminal piece from each decade of the 20th century.

Other season highlights include an Asian tour in the fall and European tours with violinist Gidon Kremer and Kremerata Baltica, the London Philharmonic, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, and the Teatro alla Scala Orchestra. Further orchestral appearances include Strauss's *Burleske* with the Spanish National Orchestra and Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra; the Schumann Piano Concerto with Lisbon's Gulbenkian Orchestra and the Berlin Philharmonic; Prokofiev with the Mariinsky Orchestra led by Gergiev and the Cleveland Orchestra led by Michael Tilson Thomas; Scriabin's Piano Concerto with the Seattle Symphony and Ludovic Morlot; a performance of his own piano concerto with the Detroit Symphony; and Rachmaninoff performances with Gergiev and the Munich Philharmonic, the Toronto Symphony led by Peter Oundjian, and the Philadelphia Orchestra under the baton of Yannick Nézet-Séguin.

Born in Nizhny Novgorod in 1991, Mr. Trifonov began his musical training at the age of five, and went on to attend Moscow's Gnessin School of Music as a student of Tatiana Zelikman before pursuing his piano studies with Sergei Babayan at the Cleveland Institute of Music. He has also studied composition and continues to write for piano, chamber ensemble, and orchestra.

## UMS ARCHIVES

This evening's recital marks **Daniil Trifonov**'s second performance under UMS auspices, following his UMS debut in March 2016 as soloist with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra and Maestro Kent Nagano in a performance of Prokofiev's *Piano Concerto No. 3* at Hill Auditorium.

TONIGHT'S VICTORS FOR UMS:



Diane and Gary Stahle

—

Robert and Darragh  
Weisman

*Supporters of this evening's recital by Daniil Trifonov.*

**MAY WE ALSO RECOMMEND...**

- 11/7 China NCPA Orchestra  
11/17–19 New York Philharmonic  
1/6 *What's In A Song* with Martin Katz

*Tickets available at [www.ums.org](http://www.ums.org).*

**ON THE EDUCATION HORIZON...**

- 11/1 UMS 101: Zakir Hussain and Dave Holland  
(Pioneer High School, 601 W. Stadium Boulevard, 5:30 pm)  
*Paid registration required; please visit [bit.ly/UMSClasses](http://bit.ly/UMSClasses) to register.*
- 11/7 Panel: Unraveling the Arab Spring: Egypt Since 2011,  
with Bassem Youssef  
(Weiser Hall 1010, 500 Church Street, 4:00 pm)
- 11/12 EXCEL Brunch with The Knights: Crossing Boundaries  
to Compelling Programming  
(EXCEL Lab, 1279 Moore Building, 1100 Baits Drive, 11:00 am)
- 11/18 UMS 101: New York Philharmonic Young People's Concert  
(Pioneer High School, 601 W. Stadium Boulevard, 12 noon)  
*Paid registration required; please visit [bit.ly/UMSClasses](http://bit.ly/UMSClasses) to register.*

*Educational events are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.*