

The 155th Tokyo Opera City Subscription Concert
Fri. June 23, 2023, 19:00 at Tokyo Opera City Concert Hall

The 986th Orchard Hall Subscription Concert
Sun. June 25, 2023, 15:00 at Bunkamura Orchard Hall

The 987th Suntory Subscription Concert
Tue. June 27, 2023, 19:00 at Suntory Hall

Tadaaki Otaka, conductor

Masaya Kamei, piano

Kaoru Kondo, concertmaster

Atsutada Otaka: Image for orchestra (ca. 10 min)

<The 150th anniversary of Rachmaninov's birth>

Rachmaninov:

Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor, Op. 18 (ca. 35 min)

- I. Moderato
- II. Adagio sostenuto
- III. Allegro scherzando

— intermission (ca. 15 min) —

Rachmaninov:

Symphony No. 1 in D minor, Op. 13 (ca. 44 min)

- I. Grave - Allegro ma non troppo
- II. Allegro animato
- III. Largetto
- IV. Allegro con fuoco

Presented by Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra
 Subsidized by the Agency for Cultural Affairs Government of Japan |
 Japan Arts Council (June 27)
 In Association with **Bunkamura** (June 25)



- ♪ All seats are reserved. Late admittance will be refused during the live performance. If you enter or reenter just before the concert or between movements, we may escort you to a seat different from the one to which you were originally assigned.
- ♪ Exiting during the performance will be tolerated. If you do not feel well, please exit or enter as you need. However, please mind the other listeners so that they will be minimally disturbed.
- ♪ Please refrain from using your cellphone or other electronic devices during performance.
- ♪ Hold applause please. Please cherish the "afterglow" at the end of each piece for a moment before your applause.

Artist Profile



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Tadaaki Otaka, conductor

Conductor Laureate of
the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra

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Born in 1947, OTAKA studied at Toho Gakuen School of Music under Hideo SAITO, a professor known for teaching Seiji Ozawa and Hiroshi Wakasugi. He then moved to Vienna to study with Hans Swarowsky and Spannagel. As Japan's leading conductor, OTAKA conducted all major Japanese Orchestras. He is also a popular figure throughout the world particularly in the UK, where he is invited as Guest Conductor to the London Symphony, London Philharmonic, BBC Symphony etc. He made his Proms debut with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales in 1988. He also received invitations to the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, Bamberg Philharmonic and many others. In 1993, the Welsh College of Music and Drama conferred an Honorary Fellowship on OTAKA. He also holds an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Wales. In 1997, he was awarded the CBE, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to British musical life. He is also the first Japanese to receive the Elgar Medal in 1999, for his continuous efforts at spreading the works by Elgar outside the UK. In 2021, he received the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette.



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Masaya Kamei, piano

Born in 2001. Started playing the piano at the age of four. He has won many prizes at national and international competitions including 1st Prize and Audience Award at Long-Thibaud International Competition in France in 2022. He won the third prize at the Maria Canals International Piano Competition and was a semifinalist at the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition. 1st Prize and Audience Award at the 88th Japan Music Competition Piano Category, 43rd PTNA Piano Competition Special Grade Grand Prix and Received Audience Award, Minister of Education, Steinway Award, 9th Yasuko Fukuda Award, and others. Performed with the NHK Symphony Orchestra, Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo City Philharmonic Orchestra, Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra, New Japan Philharmonic Orchestra, Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, Japan Philharmonic Orchestra, Osaka Symphony Orchestra, Kansai Philharmonic Orchestra, Kyoto Symphony Orchestra, Central Aichi Symphony Orchestra, Nagoya Philharmonic Orchestra, etc. He has studied under Mayuko Aoki, Hideo Sugiura, Hisako Ueno, Michiko Okamoto, and Shoichi Hase. After working at the Music Department of Meiwa High School in Aichi Prefecture, he entered Toho Gakuen University as a special student for admission. He graduated from Toho Gakuen School of Music in March 2023 at the top of the class.

Program Notes

Text by Robert Markow

Atsutada Otaka: Image for orchestra

Until his death two years ago, Atsutada Otaka enjoyed the position of being one of Japan's most highly acclaimed living composers. He came from a family of musicians – his mother was a pianist, his father Hisatada too was a composer, and his brother Tadaaki is one of Japan's busiest conductors. Otaka studied first at Tokyo University of the Arts (Geidai), where he learned composition from Akio Yashiro, Tomojiro Ikenouchi, and Akira Miyoshi, and piano with Kazuko Yasukawa. In 1966 the Japanese government granted him a scholarship to continue his training in Paris at the Conservatoire national supérieur de musique. There he studied with Maurice Duruflé, Marcel Bitsch, Jean-Claude Henri, and Henri Dutilleux. After returning to Japan he became a professor at Geidai, where he taught until 2011. His students included Jun'ichi Hirokami, who recorded the work on this program (*Image*) with the Malmö Symphony Orchestra in Sweden. The Tokyo Philharmonic has also recorded *Image* with Tadaaki Otaka conducting.

Atsutada twice won the Otaka Prize established by his father, who, in 1941, became conductor of the orchestra that would eventually morph into the NHK Symphony Orchestra. The Orchestra annually awards the Otaka Prize for a Japanese orchestral work. In Atsutada's case, these prizes went to his *Image* in 1982 and *Beyond Time* in 2012.

Images was commissioned by the concert association Min-on (full name Minshu Ongaku Kyōkai), which gave the first performance at the Min-on Contemporary Music Festival on May 30, 1981. The composer's brother Tadaaki, to whom *Image* is dedicated, conducted the Tokyo Philharmonic. The ten-minute work begins with a *fortissimo* “rap” for (nearly) full orchestra, but thereafter the music dissolves into subtly shifting diaphanous blocks of sound from the string section. Luminous, shimmering inflections from woodwinds, marimba, piano, and harp begin

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to color the image, one that might at this point easily be taken to represent a painting by Monet, Seurat, or Signac. The orchestration becomes denser, brass and timpani spatter the score with violent outbursts, and we soon arrive at the first climax. Following a pause the music moves into a new phase characterized by greater rhythmic urgency, greater volume of sound, and kaleidoscopic orchestration. Tension grows, leading to the main climax, the only moment when Otaka uses the entire orchestra all at once. A brief, quiet epilogue brings *Image* to its conclusion.

ATSUTADA OTAKA: Born in Tokyo, March 10, 1944; died in Tokyo, February 16, 2021

Work composed: 1980-81 **World premiere:** May 30, 1981 at The Tokyo Bunka Kaikan, by Tadaaki Otaka and Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra

Instrumentation: 3 flutes (3rd doubling on piccolo), 3 oboes, 3 clarinets, 3 bassoons, (3rd doubling on contrabassoon), 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, percussion (snare drum, bass drum, suspended cymbal, tam-tam, vibraphone, marimba), harp, celesta, piano, strings

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Rachmaninov: Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor, Op. 18

This concerto, one of the most popular and unabashedly romantic in the repertory, had a strange genesis. The harrowing experience of the utter failure of Rachmaninov's First Symphony in 1897 (see below) had plunged the composer into deep melancholy, and he shunned both the social and musical worlds. He finally consented to see a Dr. Nicolai Dahl, who had acquired a reputation for successfully treating nervous disorders through hypnosis and auto-suggestion. By inducing Rachmaninov to repeat over and over phrases such as "You will begin to write your concerto ... You will work with great facility ... The concerto will be of excellent quality ..." while in a hypnotic daze, the young composer's creative impulses were recharged. The second and third movements were ready for performance late in 1900, and the first complete performance took place about a year later. On both occasions, Rachmaninov was the soloist, and the conductor was his cousin and former teacher Alexander

Siloti. The score bears a dedication to the man who had made it all possible, Dr. Dahl.

The opening chords for the soloist have been described as a summation of all that is most noble in the piano. The violins give forth the broadly flowing first theme with the piano as accompaniment. The piano presents the warmly lyrical second theme in E-flat major. The second movement begins with sustained harmonies in the muted strings. As in the first movement, Rachmaninov is not averse to allowing the orchestra to present the first theme, here initiated by the flute, then carried on by the clarinet. The third movement, dramatic and colorful like the first, moves inexorably to its final pages and ends in a blaze of virtuosity.

SERGEI RACHMANINOV: Born at Oneg (an estate near Novgorod), April 1, 1873; died in Beverly Hills, California, March 28, 1943

Work composed: 1900-01 **World premiere:** November 9, 1901 in Moscow, conducted by Alexander Siloti with composer as the soloist.

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals), strings

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Rachmaninov: Symphony No. 1 in D minor, Op. 13

Imagine for a moment that you are a highly gifted, 21-year-old composer flush with numerous early successes, brimming with confidence, already being published, proud possessor of the rarely conferred Great Gold Medal from the Moscow Conservatory, and enjoying the enthusiastic support of some of the most eminent colleagues in your profession. Your First Symphony, the work that will lend significant further luster to your name, is scheduled for its world premiere. This is the position in which Sergei Rachmaninov found himself in St. Petersburg on March 27, 1897. Then the bombshell dropped.

The performance was a disaster, and the symphony became what biographer Patrick Piggott called “one of music’s shipwrecks.” The composer Sergei Taneyev wrote that its “melodies are flabby, colorless –

there is nothing that can be done with them.” To another leading composer of the time, César Cui, “this music leaves an evil impression with its broken rhythms, obscurity, and vagueness of form, meaningless repetition of the same short tricks ...” Even Rimsky-Korsakov was heard to say, “Forgive me, but I do not find this music at all agreeable.”

Was the symphony really that bad? In a word, no. So what went wrong? From reports of the event, the orchestra was under-rehearsed, the score was riddled with cuts and errors, and it was led by an inebriated conductor, Alexander Glazunov. Adding to the problem of a disgraceful performance were novelties aplenty in this first symphony, music that strained to break out of the mold in which the genre had been steeped for over a century. Rachmaninov wove into this 45-minute, four-movement work an entire network of interrelated motifs. Each movement incorporates and further develops in new guises thematic material of previous movements. Another unusual aspect of the symphony is the prevalence of thematic material that sounds like chants taken from the Russian Orthodox liturgy.

Following the performance in St. Petersburg, Rachmaninov left the orchestral parts on the music stands and returned to Moscow with only the score. Although he always intended to revise the symphony and give it another chance, he never found the time to do so, effectively sending the work into hibernation for nearly half a century. When the composer left Russia in 1917, never to return, the score remained behind and has never been located. However, the orchestral parts did survive. They were discovered in 1945, collecting dust in the library of the Leningrad Conservatory, and from them a new score was assembled. On October 17, 1945, the second performance of Rachmaninov’s First Symphony was heard, 48 years after the premiere, in the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory with the USSR State Symphony Orchestra conducted by Alexander Gauk.

The symphony opens with a quick inverted turn of four notes, a unifying motif that will introduce all three succeeding movements as well and that will be heard frequently in all movements but the second. Immediately afterwards comes the heavy tread of the entire string section proclaiming the principal theme of the movement. This leads a moment later into the main *Allegro* section, where the theme becomes airborne

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in the clarinet and afterwards subjected to developmental procedures. The solo clarinet takes the lead in announcing the second subject as well (“languorously chromatic and exotic,” in Piggott’s words). The development section takes off with a furious fugal treatment of the first theme, while the recapitulation brings back both themes in recognizable form though differently scored.

The second movement is characterized by an almost feathery lightness, much like the Scherzo of Tchaikovsky’s First Symphony (*Winter Dreams*) or the “Waltz of the Snowflakes” from *The Nutcracker*. Here, the portentous, chant-like main theme of the previous movement gives rise to a very different treatment of its general melodic outline – music of flowing grace and gossamer delicacy. A three-note horn call sounds frequently.

Over repeated reminders of the inverted turn, the *Larghetto* slowly unfolds with the solo clarinet (how Rachmaninov loved this instrument!) singing a long, lyrical melody of the kind that was later to become a hallmark of some of his most famous works, especially the Second and Third Piano Concertos and the Second Symphony.

The finale is predictably boisterous, imbued with vigorous dancelike rhythms and filled with the style of brilliant orchestration that looks forward to many later works. The movement also features another of Rachmaninov’s early examples of a long, rapturously soaring, intensely passionate melody for the violins. Fragments of melodic material from all the previous movements take part in a fiery display of orchestral splendor, a fitting conclusion to a young composer’s first essay in the genre.

Work composed: 1895 **World premiere:** March 27, 1897 in St. Petersburg, conducted by Aleksandr Glazunov

Instrumentation: 3 flutes (3rd doubling on piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (tambourine, snare drum, bass drum, triangle, cymbals, tam-tam), strings

Formerly a horn player in the Montreal Symphony, **Robert Markow** now writes program notes for orchestras as well as for numerous other musical organizations in North America and Asia. He taught at Montreal’s McGill University for many years, has led music tours to several countries, and writes for numerous leading classical music journals.

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