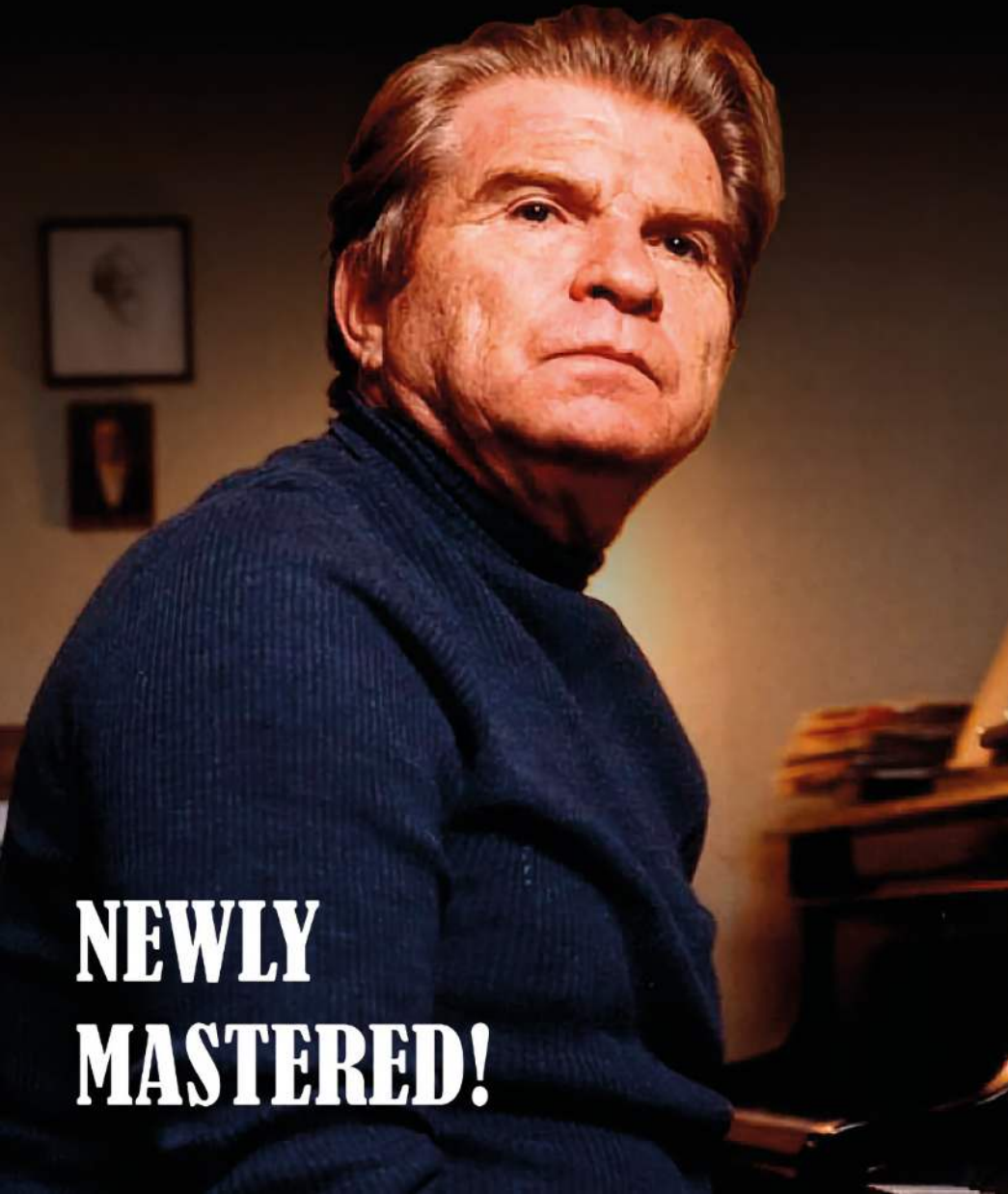
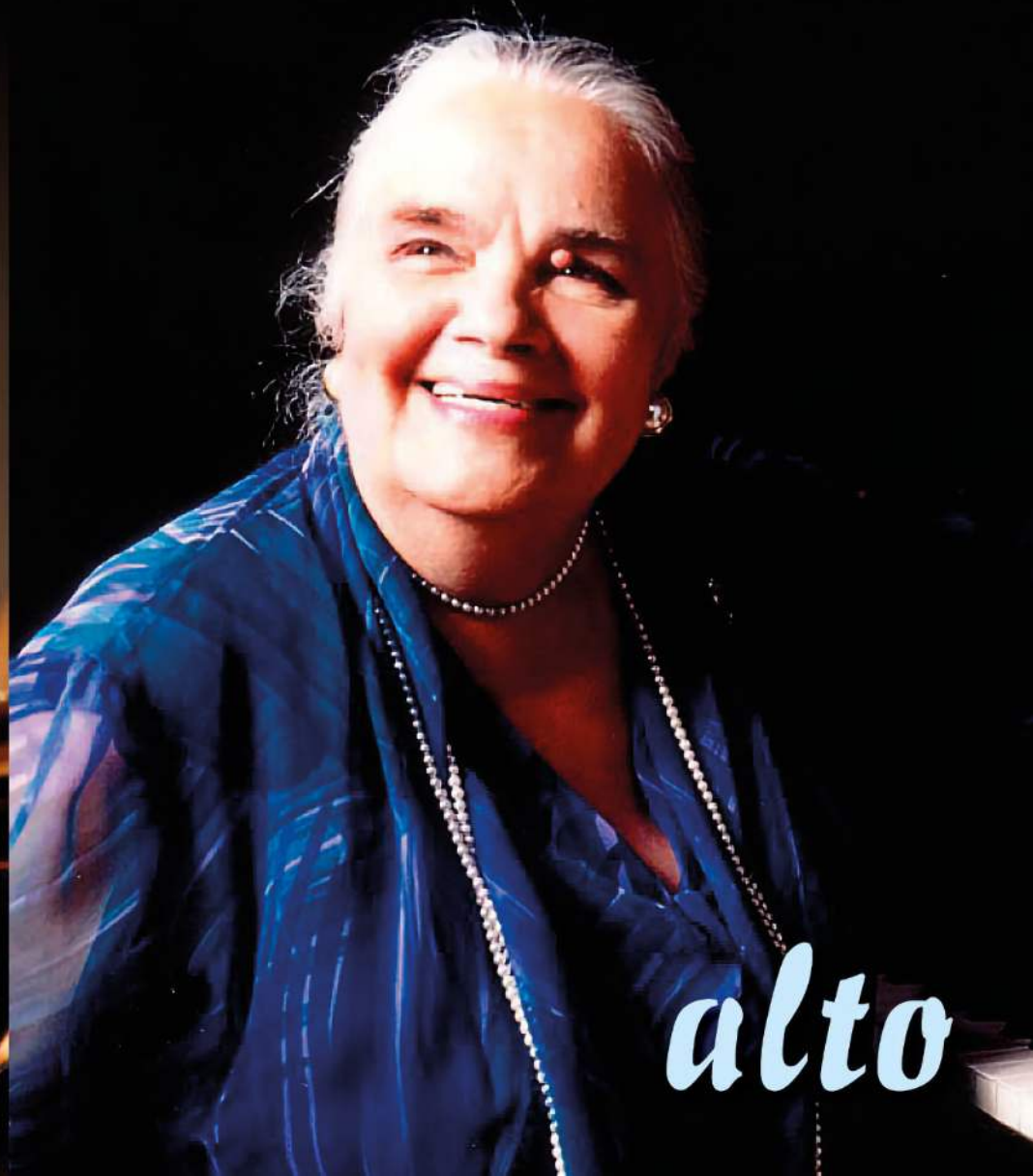


Emil Gilels & Tatiana Nikolayeva play Tchaikovsky

Piano Concerto No.2, Op.44 • Concert Fantasia, Op.56



**NEWLY
MASTERED!**



alto

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Piano Concerto No.2 in G Major, Op. 44

(edited by **Alexander Siloti**)

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------|
| 1 | I. Allegro brillante e molto vivace | 19:14 |
| 2 | II. Andante non troppo | 8:03 |
| 3 | III. Allegro con fuoco | 7:26 |

Emil Gilels, piano

Concert Fantasia in G Minor, Op. 56

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|-------|
| 4 | I. Quasi Rondo | 16:05 |
| 5 | II. Andante cantabile - Molto vivace | 13:58 |

Tatiana Nikolayeva, piano

USSR State Symphony Orchestra

Kiril Kondrashin, conductor

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

On 5 January 1875, in a classroom at the Moscow Conservatoire, **Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky** played through his newly-composed *piano concerto in B flat minor* to the Director of that institution, Nikolai Rubinstein. Tchaikovsky had been hoping for approval or at least some constructive criticism but, instead, Rubinstein claimed that the concerto was both 'worthless' and 'unplayable' and that until it had been radically revised he would not consider playing it at one of his concerts. Tchaikovsky's response was to say that he would not change a note but publish it as it then stood. In the event, Tchaikovsky did make a few changes and Rubinstein, once the concerto had started to prove popular with audiences, not only learnt the 'unplayable' solo part but also conducted performances of it given by other pianists.

In October 1879, Tchaikovsky was staying at his sister's home in the Ukraine but soon this period of relaxation gradually began to turn into boredom. However, as he both recognized the symptoms of his condition and understood its remedy, he set himself to work on a new composition. As he explained to his brother, Anatoly, 'I have started writing a piano concerto in a leisurely sort of way. I only work in the mornings before lunch but', he added, 'composition is something of an effort.' Nevertheless, by the time he left for Moscow at the beginning of November he had virtually completed the first movement. He continued to work at the concerto during subsequent visits to Paris and Rome and completed it in May 1880. Despite Rubinstein's initial condemnation of his *first concerto*, Tchaikovsky still felt the need to send the score of his second to him for comment. Sergei Taneyev, one of Tchaikovsky's pupils, studied it with him and was able to tell its composer that 'there was absolutely nothing to be changed'.

However, once Taneyev had performed the concerto in public he did express the view that the first two movements were too long and, in due course, Tchaikovsky agreed to three small cuts but they were nowhere near as drastic as those suggested by another of his pupils, Alexander Siloti. In January 1889, Tchaikovsky wrote to tell Siloti that, although he was extremely grateful for his concern and interest in the concerto, he could neither agree to the re-ordering of the material in first movement nor to the cuts he was proposing, mostly of which were the second. (In the composer's original version important parts for solo violin and cello in this movement had almost turned the work into a triple concerto.) Despite Tchaikovsky's strong views on the matter, when the concerto was printed in a second edition four years after his death, all of Siloti's cuts were observed and for many years this was the version preferred by most pianists, including **Emil Gilels**.

As Rubinstein, to whom the concerto was eventually to be dedicated, died in March 1881, it fell to Taneyev to give its first Russian performance but the world premiere was given, like that of the *first concerto*, in the USA when the

young English pianist, Madeline Schiller, played it in New York on 12 November 1881.

Some three years later, on 25 April 1884, Tchaikovsky wrote in his diary that he had 'got up late' found that it was 'still cold' and 'after drinking tea went to Lev who soon left'. [Lev was his brother-in-law on whose estate at Kamenka he was then staying.] Apparently, Tchaikovsky 'remained to strum and think up something new' and 'hit upon an idea for a *piano concerto*, but it turned out too weak and not new'. Three days later he wrote that in the afternoon he had tried to 'lay the foundations of a new symphony' but had realized while walking the garden that same evening that he had, in fact, 'sowed the seeds not of a future symphony but of a suite'. This suite, his third for orchestra, occupied him for the next few weeks until he completed it on 4 June. He meticulously chronicled its progress in his diary, where it alternates with descriptions of his regular walks, the numerous games of whist he played with his family and friends, and his concerns about 'X' and 'Z', that is to say, his homosexuality.

At one stage the first movement of the suite was to have been called 'Contrastes', but by 23 May its themes had become so repugnant to him that he decided to discard it altogether. Later in the year, however, he was to return both to this movement and to his earlier idea of a work for piano and orchestra when he started to compose what was to become his ***Concert Fantasy***. By then he had abandoned the idea of a full-blown concerto and had settled for a concert piece in two movements, the second of them based on the now presumably less 'repugnant' themes from the ill-fated 'Contrastes'. Soon after starting work on the *Fantasy*, Tchaikovsky heard the twenty-year-old, Glasgow-born pianist, Eugen d'Albert in Moscow. Greatly impressed by this young man's virtuosity, he proclaimed him to be the 'true successor of the Rubinsteins'. Although d'Albert had provided in large measure the inspiration for the work and although Tchaikovsky dedicated it to his friend, the composer and pianist Sophie Menter, it was in fact Sergei Taneyev who was chosen to give the first performance in Moscow on 6 March 1885 with the conductor Max Erdmannsdörfer to whom the *Third Suite* (ALC 1442) is dedicated. The audience was very enthusiastic, and the response was equally warm when Taneyev introduced the *Fantasy* in St Petersburg the following year with Hans von Bülow conducting.

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NOTES ON THE ARTISTS

Emil Gilels was born in 1916 in Odessa. His was a musically talented family and he began taking piano lessons at the age of five, made his debut aged twelve and in 1932 gained admittance to the Odessa Conservatoire. The same

year, and despite being too young to participate, he entered the All-Ukrainian Competition, and was awarded a scholarship.

His reputation in Soviet Russia was sealed in 1933, when he won the first All-Union Competition of Performers in Moscow. A nation-wide tour soon followed. In 1946 he was awarded the Stalin Prize and during the early 1950s he was one of the few Soviet artists to be given permission to perform in the West. His London debut was at the Royal Albert Hall in 1952, and, three years later, he became the first Soviet artist to tour the United States since the 1920s. By this time, he had already established an international reputation through recordings.

It was also in 1952 that he became a Professor at the Moscow Conservatoire and before long had become a respected teacher and judge at competitions. He was to maintain an active schedule of teaching, performing and recording up until 1981 when he suffered a heart attack following a recital at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam. He died in Moscow four years later.

Kiril Kondrashin was born in Moscow in 1914, into a family of musicians. At the age of fourteen he decided to become a conductor and went to study under Boris Khaikin at the Moscow Conservatoire before gaining conducting experience at the Malyi Opera Theatre in Leningrad. By 1943 he had been appointed permanent conductor at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, remaining there until 1956, and from 1960 until 1975, he was Principal Conductor of the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra. He was granted political asylum in the Netherlands while on tour in 1978. He died of a heart attack in Amsterdam in 1981 shortly after conducting a Mahler symphony.

– from notes by **Gavin Dixon**

Tatiana Nikolayeva was born at Bezhitsa on 4 May 1924. At the age of thirteen she enrolled at the Moscow Central School of Music where she studied the piano with Alexander Goldenweiser. She later studied composition with Evgeny Golubev. She graduated in 1950 and nine years later was to join the teaching staff at the Moscow Conservatoire, becoming a professor there in 1965.

She had in her repertoire some fifty piano concertos and would regularly give series of recitals containing all the Beethoven piano sonatas, Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* or Shostakovich's *Preludes and Fugues*. In her later years she visited Britain regularly and, in 1991, played at the Last Night of the Proms. It was while in Los Angeles, during a tour of the USA two years later, that she suffered a fatal cerebral aneurism. She was playing one of the Shostakovich *Fugues* at the time but managed to complete it before leaving the platform.

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Alto ALC1711

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Piano Concerto No. 2 recorded live in Moscow, 1962 –
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Concert Fantasia recorded in Moscow 1952 – first issued on
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