



Mariinsky in Chapel Hill

Kate Dobbs Ariail

November 1, 2012

Two evenings with St. Petersburg's Mariinsky Orchestra left me punchy drunk on music. It's easy to forget, when one lives mainly on small group and solo performances, how exhilarating the ride can be with a huge orchestra, a fascinating conductor and excellent soloists. Each of the [Carolina Performing Arts](#) programs was well constructed; together they were brilliant. Both included new works from 2012. Both included pieces by Dmitri

Shostakovich, which occupied a middle ground between old and new—work that sounds “modern” but that isn't really radical. Monday night's big piece, played in memory of the late William C. “Bill” Friday, long-time president of the consolidated University of North Carolina, was Richard Strauss' 1898 *Ein Heldenleben* (*A Hero's Life*). On Tuesday, it was, of course, Igor Stravinsky's 1913 *The Rite of Spring*—source and subject of this year's *The Rite of Spring* at 100 series and the associated academic conference, *Reassessing The Rite*.

Monday's opener, Matthias Pintscher's *Chute d'Etoiles* ([described here](#)) fascinated me aurally and as an indicator of artistic conditions. I would very much like to hear it again—but this music is like so much contemporary visual art being made today. It's made for the museum, for the exhibition hall, for the concert auditorium. And, it's made for a very small number of people out of a small audience—it's not the kind of thing you want to take home and listen to repeatedly. You certainly wouldn't be whistling a few bars. It's *difficult*, like the Anselm Kiefer construction for which it is named. It's not the people's music, and in that sense, was the piece most analogous to the Stravinsky in the two nights' programs. Its difference in method and purpose from the Strauss is enormous, and the clash between them was quite exciting—even with Shostakovich there in the middle, buffering the encounter. When the Strauss isn't syruping off into sentiment, it does make a fitting honor to Dr. Friday, who really was a hero: a builder and rescuer. Yes, I cried a little at the music's sweetness and valor, but more from wondering if the age of heroes is past, like the grand sweeping strains of the Belle Epoque.

Tuesday's new work, *Cleopatra and the Snake*, by Rodion Shchedrin, struck me as far more predictable and...old-fashioned. Its narrative flow, with some wonderful twinings and swoopings, is punched up by rhythmic martial passages and the whole provides a clear path for the vocalizing of the story, but nothing in it surprised. Soprano Ekaterina Goncharova's pliant clear voice was beautiful throughout, even in the most contorted passages. The text was in Russian (Boris Pasternak, based on Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*), but Cleopatra's anger, pride, suffering and determination came clearly through the voice. It was the feeling, the passion, which made it lead well into *The Rite*.

The Rite. Huge, glorious, blood-racing. The bassoon! The complex massings and overlays of sound. The freaking percussion—really great. It seemed to me that conductor Valery Gergiev had the orchestra zipping along a little fast at first, and things were somehow both too neat and too blurry, but mid-way he slowed the tempo and all the strands came into better focus. The ending was fantastic: frantic—diminishing energy—renewed frantic effort—collapse. I was danced to death in my seat.

As for Shostakovich, placing him in juxtaposition to these other composers gave me a fresh appreciation for him. I could have left happy after the galloping, almost jubilant, conclusion to his Symphony No. 6 in B Minor, Op. 54 (1939), which opened the program on Tuesday. His Piano Concerto No. 1 in C Minor, Op. 35 (1933) played on Monday was completely delightful following the Pintscher. Denis Matsuev brought out an unsuspected latent lyricism, and a bubbling joy in the jazzy sections, with his flashy technique. At times, he seemed to be literally snatching the music out of the piano, flinging it into our greedy ears.



<http://thefivepointsstar.com/2012/11/01/mariinsky-in-chapel-hill-part-2/>

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

The Tough Get Going

Pia Catton

November 4, 2012



People in the arts throw the word "community" around a lot. But in the past week, they've backed it up. Every branch of the arts in the city was impacted by Sandy, though some will feel the results longer than others. In response, artists and those around them have shown what makes their communities function. As audience members and arts consumers, we don't often see what it takes to bring a production to fruition—or what happens when that process is thwarted. So here's a look behind the scenes at a few ways in which Sandy affected life in the arts and how the troops rallied.

Chelsea Cleans Up

The far west portion of Chelsea took a direct hit when the overflowing Hudson rushed into every crevice of the area's art galleries, causing damage to art works and buildings. Galleries including Gagosian, David Zwirner, Marlborough and Stephen Haller, to name but a few, have spent the week mucking out, assessing damage and postponing shows.

Just south of the visual-arts corridor in the mid-20s is the multidisciplinary venue the Kitchen, where severe flooding ruined the stage surface. "A floor of Masonite turned into a floor of cardboard," said executive director and chief curator Tim Griffin, estimating the damage at \$500,000.

Since its birth in 1971 as a hub for experimental dance, visual art and film, the Kitchen has fostered deep relationships with its artists. Not surprisingly, then, many of them have shown up to help the venue salvage usable equipment and clean out the space.

"They came out of the blue," said Mr. Griffin. "We told them what we were doing, but they appeared on their own. The Kitchen is not in the habit of asking artists to clean out flood-damaged buildings. It goes to show how enmeshed we are in the idea of an artistic community."

Jazz Rescue

The Jazz Foundation of America was founded in 1989 to help elderly jazz and blues musicians in crisis. And Sandy brought crisis in every form. For one, the loss of power downtown meant canceled gigs, which meant the loss of vital income for many musicians. "A couple of hundred bucks is half the rent," said the foundation's executive director, Wendy Oxenhorn.

Her small staff relies on a network of musicians to find those in need or those who may not want to ask for help. "Jazz and blues musicians are very proud and self-sufficient," Ms. Oxenhorn said.

After the storm, her crew brought food and clothing to 73-year-old saxophone player Charles Gayle. He had paid his rent, but he was living on bread and Pepsi in a Lower East Side apartment without power following a canceled show.

On Staten Island, 57-year-old bass player Santi Debriano lost his home under six feet of water. The foundation is helping him and his family move into a new apartment, paying the first month's rent and the security deposit.

Dancing in the Cold

Possibly the worst thing that can be asked of a dancer is to rehearse in an unheated studio on a chilly day. Dancers fear the cold because it keeps muscles stiff and increases the risk of injury. But choreographer Robin Cantrell had little choice. She has less than a month before her new piece, "There Will Be Cake," goes up at the Williamsburg Art and Historical Center. She had already missed three rehearsals due to the storm, and so was forced to ask her nine dancers to come to the TriBeCa rehearsal space she had rented at Battery Dance Company studios, which was without power. There was no heat, but there was natural light, so the room was usable.

Knowing what was in store, the dancers made their way across the Manhattan and Williamsburg bridges, or down from 42nd Street, to practice the piece.

"It's a ton of work," Ms. Cantrell said. "It's hard to get everybody together at once because it's not a full-time job. [But] dancers have this beautiful work ethic. It's unlike anything else."

Tumbleweeds on Piano Row

The crumpled construction crane dangling some 1,000 feet above West 57th Street was at the center of what was once known as Piano Row, home to just about every major piano maker in the city. Few

remain there today, but the companies that manage the world's top classical musicians and singers are still clustered around the heart of it all: Carnegie Hall at 57th and Seventh Avenue.

The danger of the crane led the city to close 57th Street from Broadway to Sixth Avenue, as well as a portion of 56th Street, rendering this stretch of Manhattan a ghost town. Steinway & Sons, where pianists go to select pianos they'll use in concert, was inaccessible; Bach expert András Schiff was lucky that his favored piano was shipped to Washington, D.C., ahead of the storm—though that concert, too, was canceled and Mr. Schiff himself was stuck in New York. But the piano, freed from the lockdown on 57th Street, was shipped back from D.C. in time to join Mr. Schiff for post-storm engagements.

Carnegie Hall had to cancel, reschedule or move all of its concerts since last Sunday. And the work force that manages the travel of stars like pianist Lang Lang around the world was scattered at home offices. Douglas Sheldon, senior vice president of Columbia Artists Management Inc., called the week outside the office "vastly more work."

"You end up with a phone glued to both ears," he said.

Mr. Sheldon represents Russian conductor Valery Gergiev and the Mariinsky Orchestra, which was in Chapel Hill, N.C., when Sandy hit. The orchestra was to fly up for a Carnegie Hall concert on Oct. 31, but the venue was closed. And their hotel in New Jersey was flooded, with no power. Even so, Mr. Sheldon and his team had to get 105 people on a plane, without knowing where those people would spend the night once they landed—in White Plains.

It's no great sacrifice to wind up at the Poughkeepsie Grand Hotel. But playing Carnegie Hall would have been better.

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204349404578099121160625196.html?mod=googlenews_wsj

Gergiev the Great: Celebrating Valery Gergiev's 25 years heading an invigorated Mariinsky Theatre

Jennifer Clibbon

November 5, 2012



The celebrated Russian conductor Valery Gergiev always has a million things on the go, but this coming year he's also celebrating 25 years as leader of one of Russia's most venerated cultural institutions: the Mariinsky Theatre, the roots of which date back to the era of Peter the Great and the birthplace of some of the world's great classical ballets and operas, by composers such as

Tchaikovsky, Mussorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakov.

Few artistic directors could have pulled off what he has in St. Petersburg in the past quarter-century. When he — at the age of 35 — took over as leader of the Mariinsky (then called the Kirov) in 1988, it was an underfunded institution that had been eclipsed by the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow.

By sheer force of personality and drive, Gergiev moved the Mariinsky into the post-Soviet era: winning massive new funding from the government, expanding its repertoire (but also highlighting great Russian

composers such as Mussorgsky, Prokofiev and Shostakovich) and setting out with his singers, musicians and dancers on a grueling schedule of international touring.

“All of this was a big responsibility and worry for me. But there was great potential to demonstrate to Russia and to the world how glorious was the Mariinsky tradition, if developed,” Gergiev told CBC News in his dressing room at Toronto’s Royal Conservatory recently, just ahead of a performance with his Mariinsky Theatre Stradivarius Ensemble.

An artistic home

Born in 1953, the year Stalin died, Gergiev is the son of a Red Army officer. His family is from the Caucasus and he spent his childhood there, away from the political pressures of Moscow. But his musical training was conducted in St. Petersburg at the Mariinsky. Though he studied piano initially, he was quickly steered into conducting because of his charisma and leadership qualities.

“I was 24 when I was asked to start at the Mariinsky. It was a great invitation for me. It was my artistic platform and my home,” he said.

Today, Gergiev is one of the most sought-after conductors in the world. He juggles two big jobs — principal director of the London Symphony Orchestra and artistic director of the Mariinsky — as well as countless other side commitments with festivals he has founded around the world. Gergiev is known for his passionate conducting style and his great charisma.

“The Russian orchestral performance is associated with emotionally big playing,” he said.

The global powerhouse is also famously patriotic. He uses his skills as a power broker to nourish Russia’s artistic talent, offer incentives to keep them in the country and build up the Mariinsky Theatre.

“There are so many things going on in the arts today in Russia.” he said.

“There are wonderful things happening in smaller cities. There are wonderful pianists, violinists and dancers. There are so many great Russian dancers. They are everywhere.

“We keep the best talent in Russia and the only way to do that is to offer interesting creative work and conditions they’ll find comfortable.”

Canadian-designed Russian theatre

With this in mind, Gergiev spearheaded the construction of a second opera and ballet theatre, the Mariinsky II. Designed by Toronto-based architectural firm Diamond and Schmitt, it sits next to the historic Mariinsky Theatre opened in 1860. Now completed, the new building will stage its first performances this coming spring.

“It was made by the same team that designed the Toronto opera house. The Mariinsky will have more space, but the same level of comfort and intimacy,” Gergiev said.

Making ambitious projects happen is no easy feat in Russia, but Gergiev is said to have a powerful ally in President Vladimir Putin, who has expressed a great interest in reviving Russia's prestige through institutions like the Mariinsky.

Unpretentious and hands-on

Though a skilful power broker and fundraiser, Gergiev appears to have retained his bohemian side. He is unpretentious, with a sense of humour. He's also refreshingly unconcerned about his appearance. Just 15 minutes before a black-tie concert, he sits relaxed in his dressing room, still in his street clothes, his face unshaven and hair sticking out in all directions. Along with me and my photographer, he has invited three elderly Russian émigrés, who are eager to chat with him.

I first met Gergiev a decade ago when he allowed a CBC News crew to film backstage at the Mariinsky during the rehearsals and performance of his experimental staging of *The Nutcracker*. He had a hands-on approach to the running of the Mariinsky, knew everyone and looked like he was having a lot of fun.

Now in Toronto many years later, he looks much the same, albeit a little more exhausted given his non-stop travelling and conducting.

At a rehearsal with his musicians, he gives directions in Russian — talking quietly, intimately, as with old friends. He conducts, as he sometimes does, using a toothpick. (He says he also sometimes uses a flower. "Why not?")

He welcomed some Canadian students to listen to the rehearsal and then, sitting in a chair onstage, he invited their questions afterwards, opening with a friendly "So, how is your life?"

They stare back, terrified. But then, one brave student raises his hand and asks about Shostakovich and interpreting him. Gergiev smiles warmly and then, leaning forward, offers a long and thoughtful explanation that leaves the student beaming.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/arts/story/2012/11/05/f-valery-gergiev-mariinsky.html>

Look for changes in Cinemark's Reel Classics Film Series

William Kerns

November 5, 2012

Cinemark already made one change in its Reel Classics series, substituting "The Sound of Music" for "Home Alone" on Nov. 28.

But Movies 16 has not been allowed to sell tickets for any of the six classics presently scheduled on Nov. 20 and 28, and on Dec. 5, 12, 19 and 26.

The reason, says Cinemark's corporate marketing manager in Plano, is that their film department will be forced to make more title changes soon. And as we do not know which of these announced films are sticking, and which may disappear, we will just hold off publicizing them further until we have confirmed titles and an on-sale date.

However, Movies 16 in Lubbock remains busy with extras.

Don't forget that Quentin Tarantino's "Reservoir Dogs" and "Pulp Fiction" will be shown on Dec. 4 and 6.

Much closer at hand, "To Kill a Mockingbird" will be screened twice on Nov. 15.

The second season of TV's "Star Trek: The Next Generation" will be celebrated with a screening of two episodes on Nov. 29.

The Mariinsky Ballet's performance of "The Nutcracker" arrives at Movies 16 on Dec. 3.

And for rock 'n' roll fans, you can check out an encore screening of Led Zeppelin's "Celebration Day" concert on Nov. 13 -- and see Bon Jovi's "Inside Out" concert on Nov. 27.

I'll mention two more specials at Movies 16, although I'm not at all sure what they are:

Nov. 17, UFC 154: St-Pierre vs. Condit And Dec. 11, 12 Gifts of Christmas.

http://lubbockonline.com/interact/blog-post/william-kerns/2012-11-05/look-changes-cinemarks-reel-classics-film-series#.UJmUFm_7K8A



VALERY GERGIEV NAMED HONORARY PROFESSOR OF THE ST. PETERSBURG CONSERVATORY

November 6, 2012

As part of celebrations marking one hundred and fifty years since the founding of Russia's first higher education music institution there was a ceremony at which maestro Gergiev was presented with a diploma and the cloak of Honorary Professor of the St Petersburg Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatory, the theatre's press service reports.

In 2012 Russia's first conservatory, founded exactly one and a half centuries ago by the outstanding pianist and composer Anton Rubinstein, marked its anniversary amid great pomp. Since it was founded, Russia's oldest music institution has trained a plethora of internationally acclaimed musicians. Maestro Gergiev is the most prominent representative of the St Petersburg performing school and a worthy successor to the Conservatory's traditions; he was a pupil of the legendary Ilya Musin, a brilliant teacher and conductor. While still a student Valery Gergiev became a prize-winner at the extremely prestigious Herbert von Karajan International Conducting Competition, won the All-Union Conducting Competition in Moscow and was invited to join the Kirov (now the Mariinsky) Theatre, where, at the age of thirty-five, he was appointed Artistic Director of the opera company, becoming the theatre's Artistic and General Director in 1996.

On 3 November maestro Gergiev was the guest of honour at the prize-giving ceremony, which took place in the Small Glazunov Hall of the Conservatoire as part of the XXII festival International Conservatory Week commemorating this Russian music institution's anniversary. For his outstanding services to world culture, Valery Gergiev was awarded the title of Honorary Professor of the St Petersburg Conservatory. At the start of the evening the Mariinsky Theatre Brass Ensemble performed a brass instrument arrangement of Modest Mussorgsky's Dawn on the River Moskva. Mikhail Gantvarg, Rector of the St Petersburg Conservatoire, presented Valery Gergiev with the cloak of Honorary Professor. Following the ceremony the maestro conducted a performance of Richard Strauss' Metamorphosen with the Mariinsky Theatre's Stradivarius Ensemble. For their encore the musicians performed an extract from Edvard Grieg's suite From Holberg's Time.

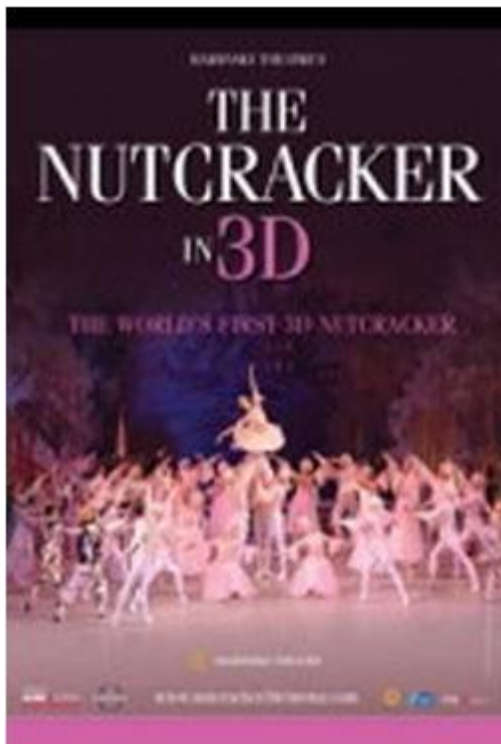
<http://www.ruskiymir.ru/ruskiymir/en/news/common/news8315.html>



The Nutcracker in 3D

November 7, 2012

Set in 1920's Vienna, "**The Nutcracker in 3D**" is a tale of a little girl, whose godfather gives her a special doll one Christmas Eve. Directed by Valery Gergiev and starring Alina Somova and Vladimir Shkylarov, this classical ballet by the [Mariinsky ballet](#) is released for Christmas 2012 in 3D stereoscopic format from December 3, 2012 in selected US theaters, including at the Cinemark Tinseltown in Jacksonville, FL, USA.



<http://www.stereoscopenews.com/hotnews/3d-movies/musicals/2761-the-nutcracker-in-3d.html>



Denis Matsuev (piano), Mariinsky Orchestra, Valery Gergiev (conductor)

November 2012

On November 10th, Russian conductor Valery Gergiev conducts the Mariinsky Orchestra, of which he is Artistic in General Director, in a powerful concert featuring Messiaen's *L'Ascension*, Rachmaninov's *Piano Concerto No. 3*, and Shostakovich's *5th Symphony*. The pianist in the Rachmaninov is Denis Matsuev, nicknamed "The Siberian Bear" and winner of the 1998 International Tchaikovsky Competition. Gergiev is one of the best conductors before the public today, and this all-Russian program surely could not receive a more authentic interpretation than these players are capable of achieving.

<http://www.kansaiscene.com/listing/denis-matsuev-piano-mariinsky-orchestravalery-gergiev-conductor/>