



The German Society of Pennsylvania

proudly presents

EStrella Piano Duo



Sunday, May 12, 2019 at 3:00pm

The German Society of Pennsylvania
www.germansociety.org

611 Spring Garden Street
Philadelphia, PA 19123

Calendar of Events

May 2019

- Thu. May 16 Brown Bag Lunch Presentation with DAI Saarland, 12:00pm
- Fri. May 17 Friday Film Fest: *3 Tage in Quiberon*, 6:30pm
- Sat. May 18 500 Years of Lager Brewing: German Tradition and the American Dream, 2:00pm
- Sat. May 18 Frankfurt in May, 3:00pm
- Thu. May 30 Lecture by Petra Goedde: *The Politics of Peace. A Global Cold War History*, 6:00pm

June 2019

- Sun. June 2 Annual Members Meeting and Elections, 3:00pm
- Sat. June 8 Konversationsabend: Wandertag, 10:30am
- Sat. June 8 Buchclub: *Holzfällen* by Thomas Bernhard, 1:30pm
- Sat. June 8 Philly Bikes!, Time TBA
- Sat. June 29 *Hiwwe wie Driwwe* Movie Night, Time TBA

Save the date for our next “Wister and More!” concerts:

- Sun. Sept. 22 Amici Music Trio
The Trio will perform Dvořák's *Dumky Trio*, Piazzolla's *Four Seasons*, and Schoenfield's *Café Music*.
- Sun. Oct. 27 Karlsruhe Konzertduo
This piano and cello duo will present a diverse program of music from Schumann, Brahms, Kapustin, Rachmaninoff, Martinů, and more.
- Sun. Nov. 24 The Wister Quartet
This beloved ensemble will perform string quartets from Haydn, Mozart, and Debussy.
- Sun. Dec. 15 Ephrata Cloister Chorus
Come and enjoy Ephrata Cloister chorales, early American music, and holiday selections.

All of our events are open to the public.

We welcome members and non-members alike.

Most events require tickets. Please call or email the office to inquire about purchasing:
215.627.2332 | info@germansociety.org

ESTrella Piano Duo
PROGRAM

Tales from the East
Stories of Romance, Adventure and Magic

Vocalise, Op. 34, No. 14

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)
Arr. G. Anderson

From *Sketches*
Imitation of Antiquity
Waltz

Valery Gavrilin (1939-1999)

From *Liebeslieder Waltzes*, Op. 52a,
No. 1, 2, 6, 10, and 11

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Three Movements from *Petrushka*
Russian Dance
Petrushka's Room
Shrovetide Fair

Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)
Arr. Composer/V. Babin/ESTrella Duo

- Intermission -

From *Scheherazade*, Op. 35
IV. *Festival in Baghdad. The Sea. The Ship Breaks against a Cliff Surmounted by
a Bronze Horseman*

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908)

From *Foreign Lands*
Russia
Germany
Spain

Moritz Moszkowski (1854-1925)

Polovetsian Dances from *Prince Igor*
Andantino
Allegro vivo
Presto

Alexander Borodin (1833-1887)

There will be one 15-minute intermission. Refreshments can be purchased at the bar during that time. Your ticket to our concert also invites you to a complimentary reception with the artists in the Ratskeller (downstairs) following the performance.

Program Notes

This program celebrates music that tells stories - of romance, adventure, and magic. Let us take you to a Persian court where Scheherazade weaves her tales, to a Russian village market where a puppet comes to life, to a ballroom where two strangers' eyes meet for the first time...



Sergei Rachmaninoff's most famous song, *Vocalise*, has no words, inviting each listener to create their own. This masterpiece of hypnotic beauty has become irresistible to performers of other genres, and now exists in numerous versions for various instruments. The transcription we offer, by Greg Anderson, goes far beyond simply transferring the notes of the original to the piano, but also paraphrases, comments, embellishes and enchants.



Well-respected in Russia for his profound melodic gift and the ability to absorb folkloric elements organically into his compositional style, Valery Gavrilin deserves to be heard far more often in West. His music is a treasure trove of neo-Romanticism. The witty and ironic *Imitation of Antiquity* hides modernist rhythms and harmonies beneath the facade of a courtly ancient dance. The *Waltz*, part of a ballet based on Anton Chekhov's *Anna around the Neck*, continues a long and glorious tradition of the 20th century Russian waltz.



The Waltz is equally at home in a grand ballroom and a humble drawing room, but its most beautiful examples portray the tenderness, the intimacy, and the wonder of lovers dancing in each other's arms. **Johannes Brahms' *Liebeslieder***, accompanied by texts from Georg Friedrich Daumer's *Polydora*, are inspired, like all his loveliest works, by his love for Clara Schumann, the wife of the great composer Robert Schumann.



No dance could be further from the sweet elegance of Brahms' waltzes than **Igor Stravinsky's** revolutionary ballet *Petrushka*, which premiered in Paris in 1911. The libretto depicts the Shrovetide Fair, a traditional part of the pre-Lenten Carnival festivities in Russia. The first movement of the suite, the energetic, angular *Russian Dance*, depicts the joyful scene. A group of puppets, in a Russian version of *commedia dell'arte*,

comes magically to life to entertain the revelers. Petrushka is the clown; his role in the puppet show is to be the object of endless abuse from fellow puppets, his master, and the heartless crowd. *Petrushka's Room* opens with a drum roll, as a foot kicks him onstage. He curses to the sound of the famous "Petrushka chord", the most celebrated early use of bi-tonality. The music turns more lyrical as Petrushka thinks of his love for a fellow puppet, who, alas, loves him not. The much longer final movement is a series of dances by the personages who come to the fair - the coachmen, the nurses, the grooms, a trained bear, even the devil himself. The piano 4-hands version we play is a combination of Stravinsky's own simplified arrangement, the famously knuckle-breaking solo masterpiece written by the composer for Arthur Rubinstein, and the equally impossible 2-piano setting by Victor Babin.



The transcription of Rimsky-**Korsakov's** orchestral suite *Scheherazade*, based on *The Arabian Nights*, which you will hear next, is also our own. As in all of our orchestral transcriptions, we do not strive to reproduce the sound of the orchestra, but rather to create a pianistic masterpiece. The original work has been beloved by audiences since its premiere in 1888, a work of melodic richness and rhythmic vitality. Rimsky wrote a brief introduction: "*The Sultan Schariar, convinced that all women are*

false and faithless, vowed to put to death each of his wives after the first nuptial night. But the Sultana Scheherazade saved her life by entertaining her lord with fascinating tales, told seriatim, for a thousand and one nights. The Sultan, consumed with curiosity, postponed from day to day the execution of his wife, and finally repudiated his bloody vow entirely."

The final set of waltzes on our program is **Moritz Moszkowski's** *From Foreign Lands*. Unabashedly romantic and tuneful, these miniatures paint irresistible pictures of Russia, Germany and Spain.



We conclude with **Alexander Borodin's** best loved work, his opera *Prince Igor*, which, although 18 years in the making was left unfinished at his death and later completed by Rimsky-Korsakov. The *Polovetsian Dances*, which are part of the second act, have fully entered popular culture, often used in movies, musicals and even commercials. In mood they run the gamut from the exquisitely melodic, to wildly boisterous.

About the Artists

"Svetlana Belsky and Elena Doubovitskaya are superb pianists on their own; together as the EStrella Piano Duo, they are doubly superb," raves John Puccio of *Classical Candor*.



The Duo burst onto the musical scene in 2011 with a series of concerts celebrating the great Russian masterpieces for piano duet. Their first performance evoked raves of "technical brilliance" and "infectious joy in music making". The second drew a standing-room-only crowd. Since then, they have performed widely to enthusiastic audiences and critical acclaim throughout the US, Canada and China.

In 2018 the Duo was awarded a Global Music Award Silver medal for their new CD, *Tales from the East*, featuring stories of adventure, magic and romance by Russian composers. Critics describe the album as "passionate, nuanced, rhythmically flexible, technically precise and replete with thunderous oration, delicate filigree, and dreamy sensuality;" "The achievement of conveying such busy textures in such an exciting way and yet remaining clarity throughout is astonishing." (*Fanfare Magazine*); "Anyone who thinks classical music is boring needs to check out *Tales From the East*" (*MainlyPiano*).

EStrella's repertoire includes, besides the usual favorites, many rarely-heard, fascinating works that most duos fear to touch. Their programs are always musically profound, but also virtuosic, often acrobatic, and occasionally humorous, always with introductions which draw the listeners into the music. EStrella's upcoming year will again take the Duo all over the United States, with numerous repeat engagements.

Elena Doubovitskaya and Svetlana Belsky are accomplished pianists in their own right. Between the two, they have been heard throughout Europe, Asia and the United States. Their concert credits include Carnegie (Weill) Hall, Kiev Philharmonic Hall, Chicago Symphony Center, St. Petersburg Rimsky-Korsakoff Museum, Baptist University of Hong Kong, Ravinia and Tanglewood Music Festivals, among many others. Critics praise them for "marvelous and extraordinary playing" and "confidence and élan". Elena and Svetlana are also accomplished teachers, who enjoy sharing their love for music with new generations of pianists.



Svetlana Belsky — Critically acclaimed as “a passionate pianist and scholar”, Dr. Svetlana Belsky is an in-demand recitalist and chamber pianist, noted for her remarkable rapport with audiences and stylistic versatility. She has appeared in Ukraine, Russia, Poland, China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, and throughout the United States. Her performance credits include Carnegie Recital Hall, Kiev Philharmonic Hall, Dame Myra Hess Series, Music in the Loft, countless university concert series, live recitals on Chicago's WFMT and New York's WQXR, and guest appearances with the University of Chicago Symphony, Southern Illinois Symphony, Chicago Chamber Orchestra, and the Tutti Orchestra. In addition to her multiple solo and chamber musical appearances, Dr. Belsky is a member of two Chicago-based groups: EStrella Piano Duo and Pianissimol!, a multi-piano group of four pianists. As a coordinator of Piano Studies at the University of Chicago, Dr. Belsky teaches students from four continents, among other academic responsibilities.



Elena Doubovitskaya — A native of Russia, Elena Doubovitskaya performed her debut piano recital in Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall in New York City, as a part of the Artists International series, followed by numerous engagements in the United States, Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, and Russia. Her accomplishments include awards from Artists International Presentations, the Seattle International Piano Competition, the IBLA Grand Prize Competition in Italy, and appearances in Chicago Symphony Center and Seiji Ozawa Hall in Massachusetts. She is the recipient of scholarships at various institutions, including the Tanglewood Music Festival, Northwestern University's Bienen School of Music, and the Manhattan School of Music. Dr. Doubovitskaya is a member of three Chicago-based chamber groups: EStrella Piano Duo, the contemporary music ensemble Lakeshore Rush, and a multi-piano group Pianissimo!, comprised of four pianists. In addition, Dr. Doubovitskaya serves as the Chair of the Piano Department at the Merit School of Music in Chicago.

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We also wish to acknowledge with thanks the generous support received from The Philadelphia Cultural Fund for this season of our music program.