

BARD CONSERVATORY ORCHESTRA

# THE NUTCRACKER



FISHER  
CENTER

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2022  
SOSNOFF THEATER

Bard

## **BARD COLLEGE CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC**

Bard College Conservatory of Music expands Bard's spirit of innovation in arts and education. The Conservatory, which opened in 2005, offers a five-year, double-degree program at the undergraduate level and, at the graduate level, programs in vocal arts, conducting, and instrumental performance, as well as Chinese music and culture. Also at the graduate level, the Conservatory offers an Advanced Performance Studies program and a two-year Postgraduate Collaborative Piano Fellowship. The US-China Music Institute of the Bard College Conservatory of Music, established in 2017, offers a unique degree program in Chinese instruments. The Bard Conservatory Orchestra has performed twice at Lincoln Center, and has completed three international concert tours: to China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan; Russia and six cities in Central and Eastern Europe; and three cities in Cuba.

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## **BARD COLLEGE**

Founded in 1860, Bard College is a four-year residential college of the liberal arts and sciences located 90 miles north of New York City. With the addition of the adjoining Montgomery Place estate, Bard's campus consists of nearly 1,000 parklike acres in the Hudson River Valley. It offers bachelor of arts, bachelor of science, and bachelor of music degrees, with majors in nearly 40 academic programs; graduate degrees in 13 programs; eight early colleges; and numerous dual-degree programs nationally and internationally. Building on its 162-year history as a competitive and innovative undergraduate institution, Bard College has expanded its mission as a private institution acting in the public interest across the country and around the world to meet broader student needs and increase access to liberal education. The undergraduate program at the main campus in the Hudson Valley has a reputation for scholarly excellence, a focus on the arts, and civic engagement. Bard is committed to enriching culture, public life, and democratic discourse by training tomorrow's thought leaders. For more information about Bard College, visit [bard.edu](http://bard.edu).

## **Bard College Conservatory of Music**

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Frank Corliss, *Director*

Presents

# **CARPATHIAN RHAPSODY**

## **MYROSLAV SKORYK**

**Luosha Fang '11, violin**

# **THE NUTCRACKER**

## **PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY**

## **A SYMPHONIC PERFORMANCE**

## **BARD CONSERVATORY ORCHESTRA**

**Leon Botstein, Music Director**

## **BARD CONSERVATORY PREPARATORY DIVISION CHORUS**

Sosnoff Theater

Fisher Center for the Performing Arts

Bard College

Saturday, December 3, 2022

8 pm

# PROGRAM

## ***Carpathian Rhapsody (2005)***

Myroslav Skoryk (1938–2020)

Luosha Fang '11, *violin*

## ***The Nutcracker, Op. 71 (1892)***

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–93)

### **Act I**

Miniature Overture

No. 1: Scene (The Christmas Tree)

No. 2: March

No. 3: Children's Gallop and Dance of the Parents

No. 4: Dance Scene (Arrival of Drosselmeyer)

No. 5: Scene and Grandfather Waltz

No. 6: Scene (Clara and the Nutcracker)

No. 7: Scene (The Battle)

No. 8: Scene (A Pine Forest in Winter)

No. 9: Waltz of the Snowflakes

### **Intermission**

### **Act II**

No. 10: Scene (The Magic Castle in the Land of Sweets)

No. 11: Scene (Clara and the Nutcracker Prince)

No. 12: Divertissement

a. Chocolate (Spanish Dance)

b. Coffee (Arabian Dance)

c. Tea (Chinese Dance)

d. Trepak (Russian Dance)

e. Dance of the Reed Flutes

f. Mother Ginger and the Polichinelles

No. 13: Waltz of the Flowers

No. 14: Pas de deux

a. Intrada (Sugar Plum Fairy and Her Cavalier)

b. Variation I: Tarantella

c. Variation II: Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy

d. Coda

No. 15: Final Waltz and Apotheosis

# NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

Any concerns about Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's "cancellation" due to the present-day Russian war of aggression against Ukraine should be quelled by now, as the winter holiday season commences, and we find Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker* as ubiquitous as ever. But these concerns were always disingenuous (not least because our established canons are so entrenched as to be immovable), and serious challenges to them are almost always voiced from the margins—in this case, by Ukrainian voices historically marginalized by the dynamics of Russian, and then Russocentric Soviet, imperialism. An enchanting winter story, *The Nutcracker's* sumptuous melodicism and seductive exoticisms summon warm feelings among much of the listening public.

Many scholars have noted that the fiery "Russian Dance" of *The Nutcracker* draws upon a vernacular dance-music form known as the *trepak* (in Russian), or the *tropak* (in Ukrainian). Yet Tchaikovsky names it, simply, the "Russian Dance." This decision can be interpreted in many ways. I will offer two. First, charmingly, Tchaikovsky melds into a new synthesis aspects of his own hybrid heritage (his paternal lineage stems from Zaporizhian Kozak warriors who conducted the first experiments in establishing an anti-imperial Ukrainian state). This kind of musical hybridization is an ordinary compositional achievement; but in Tchaikovsky's hands, and with the Russian PR machine behind him, it has come to exemplify some of the "greatness" of Tchaikovsky as a Russian composer par excellence.

But another, darker, possibility is that the erasure of distinction between Russian and Ukrainian is a standard settler-colonial technique of assimilation and elimination, that Tchaikovsky's was an appropriative act of "love and theft," an act that blurs the distinctions between the colonizer and the colonized. I realize this is a provocation, perhaps one especially unpalatable during the season of sugar plum fairies and holiday cheer, and perhaps more easily dismissed for being voiced by a scholar of Ukrainian music with a Ukrainian surname. Nevertheless, I suggest that as we bear witness to Russia's neoimperialist war currently escalating half a world away, we give some consideration to the second interpretation.

—Maria Sonevytsky, *Associate Professor of Anthropology and Music*, with gratitude to Teryn Kuzma VAP '23

## NOTE FROM THE MUSIC DIRECTOR

When it was announced that the Bard Conservatory Orchestra was planning to perform Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker* this December, Teryn Kuzma VAP '23, who has family and roots in Ukraine, raised with me the issue of whether this was appropriate, given Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the death and destruction the war has visited on that country and its population. I am grateful to Teryn for bringing up the matter. It sparked a dialogue of the kind that is needed and that should be integral to a community of learning defined by freedom, debate, and tolerance. As a result of her intervention, we decided to open the program with a piece by Myroslav Skoryk (1938–2020), a major Ukrainian composer, as a sign of our solidarity with Ukraine, and include in the concert program a note both from Professor Maria Sonevytsky, our distinguished colleague, and from me.

The questions Teryn poses are central to our work as performing artists. They are not new.

First, to what extent are writers, painters, and composers from the past—particularly from a more distant past (as in the case of Tchaikovsky, who died in 1893)—and their works (his *Nutcracker* is 130 years old) inevitably tarnished by the criminality and brutality of regimes and their supporters who represent the “same” nationality in the present? Furthermore, is Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker* really an emblem of Russia, Russian nationalism, or even Russianness? Has it ever been?

Second, what do we make of the widespread habit of composers throughout history to integrate disparate and foreign traditions into their music, including many composers (among them Mozart and Beethoven) who worked under regimes and for rulers and patrons possibly worse than the ones we have now? Should we, for example, walk away from one of the most famous pieces for cello, Max Bruch's *Kol Nidre*, because it uses the most sacred tune in the Jewish tradition and distorts it using a secular Romantic aesthetic? Bruch was not Jewish. He was a German Protestant who harbored anti-Semitic sentiments. He was favored by the state as a composer and musician in Wilhelmine Germany, where Jews suffered extensive and oppressive official and populist discrimination.

One can put the problem in even sharper focus. The Jewish victims of the Holocaust who were musicians and music lovers did not abandon Beethoven, Bach, Brahms, and other aspects of German musical heritage during World War II. As victims, they knew who was responsible for Auschwitz and the Final Solution. The composers who worked in German-speaking Europe well before 1933, and formed the European cultural heritage cherished by Jews, may have harbored anti-Semitic prejudices, but they were certainly not Nazis, and not complicit in the murder of six million innocent human beings.

These composers of the past did not write music to incite killing. Not even Wagner, who was an influential anti-Semitic polemicist, and who has been frequently cited as a precursor of the Nazis. The victims clung to the hope that art and culture

could resist the evils of nationalism and hate. Therefore, those who suffered the most asserted their connection to a great artistic heritage with exceptional pride as a sign of their shared humanity and dignity. The victims' advocacy of the “German” musical tradition became a necessary antidote to the Nazi regime's intensive effort to appropriate German musical and literary culture of the past on behalf of their ideology of hate, dictatorship, and violence.

This is a challenge we face today. Tchaikovsky is not to blame for Putin's policy and is not responsible for Putin's effort to distort his musical achievement so that it might appear to support the violent and racist aims of the current Russian government. *The Nutcracker* was based on a German literary text by E. T. A. Hoffmann, mediated by the French writer Alexandre Dumas. Tchaikovsky may have enjoyed the patronage of a cruel czarist Imperial regime and its aristocracy that oppressed minorities and exploited its Russian subjects, but he wrote a work of uncommon beauty that has captivated the public as few works have.

*The Nutcracker* has escaped the historical prison of its creation. Furthermore, its success is not an emblem of “Russianness.” Rather, it has become a treasured possession of dance and music lovers worldwide for generations. The special potential of instrumental music is that its original historical context is easier to shed, allowing it to gain unexpected meanings.

This has happened with *The Nutcracker* and, in fact, with a great deal of Tchaikovsky's music. He was invited to open Carnegie Hall in 1891 not because he was “Russian” but because he was considered, if not the greatest living composer in the world, one of the top two or three. In my opinion, his music in this score reveals no “theft,” as my friend and colleague Maria Sonevytsky suggests, any more than Bruch's use of the Yom Kippur liturgy was “theft.” Most of the cross-cultural borrowings throughout the history of music were actually acts of love.

At the same time, it is right that we remember the colonial attitude toward and cruel treatment of Ukraine in Russian history. Uncomfortable truths that link past and present ought not to remain hidden. But it is equally right to resist condemning those long dead for the crimes of the present, and judging them by today's criteria. Let us concentrate on fighting back tyrannical governments and authoritarian regimes today that wage war on others and oppress minorities. In that struggle we must defeat the hijacking of historic cultural traditions or works of art in the service of a violent and exclusionary nationalism. A work that has moved the hearts of millions all over the world for more than a century deserves a better fate.

I wish to thank Teryn, Maria, and all my colleagues at the Conservatory, particularly the members of the Bard Conservatory Orchestra.

I wish everyone a happy and healthy holiday season.

—Leon Botstein, *Music Director, Bard Conservatory Orchestra*

### **Carpathian Rhapsody (2005)**

by Myroslav Skoryk

Born in Lviv, Ukraine (then Lwów, Poland), 1938

Died in Kyiv, Ukraine, 2020

Myroslav Skoryk's biography is a case study of the geographical and political upheavals Ukraine had to endure during the course of the 20th century. His hometown of Lviv was part of Poland at the time of his birth, and was attached to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1939, when the composer was one year old. As a child, he was deported with his family to Siberia, where they remained until Joseph Stalin's death. First educated in his hometown, Skoryk completed his musical training under Dmitri Kabalevsky in Moscow. He became a citizen of independent Ukraine in 1991 and, after a few years spent in Australia, returned home to resume teaching at the Kyiv Musical Academy as a distinguished professor. He also served as the artistic director of the Kyiv Opera for five years.

Deeply attached to Ukrainian culture, Skoryk was inspired by the rich folk traditions of his country. The melodies of the present rhapsody were modeled after those of the Carpathian region in western Ukraine, which borders on Hungary and Romania. Several ethnic subgroups live in this area, including the Hutsuls, whose special musical language exerted a particularly strong influence on Skoryk.

In composing this rhapsody, Skoryk explicitly acknowledged his debt to Franz Liszt, but his piece does not follow the typical slow-fast pattern of the *Hungarian Rhapsodies*. Rather, it consists of several sections, each based on a different dance form from the region. Skoryk did not use any indigenous folk songs in the work but wrote his own melodies in folk style instead. A slow introduction in an improvisatory mode evoking the technique of a "Gypsy" fiddler (as Roma musicians are often called) is followed by the main tune, which would not be out of place in the repertoire of a Jewish klezmer band. After several other dance strains, first the main tune and then the slow introduction return, before the piece concludes with a brief and fiery coda.

—Peter Laki, *Visiting Associate Professor of Music*

### **The Nutcracker, Op. 71 (1892)**

by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Born in Kamsko-Votkinsk, Russia, 1840

Died in St. Petersburg, Russia, 1893

One of the leading figures of German literary Romanticism (also a composer and a music critic), E. T. A. Hoffmann wrote his story "Nutcracker and Mouse King" in 1816–17, and published it with his own illustrations. It is a complex tale, one that children may enjoy but only adults can fully appreciate. It contains a story within a story, and is told with a subtle irony that was often lost in subsequent arrangements.

*The Nutcracker* reached the ballet stage via a somewhat watered-down literary adaptation by Alexandre Dumas Sr., which in turn was adapted by Ivan Vsevolozhsky, director of the Imperial Theatres in St. Petersburg, and Marius Petipa, the famous French-born ballet master of the Imperial Opera. Asked to write the music for the new ballet in 1890, Tchaikovsky was less than enthusiastic at first, and warmed to the project only gradually. He had misgivings about the scenario; also, his trip to the United States in spring 1891 kept him from doing serious work on the ballet until later in the year. The premiere, at the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg on December 18, 1892, was far from an unqualified success. The reviewers deplored the lack of dramatic action. The protagonists of the story, who are children, were played by student dancers whose technical limitations placed obvious restrictions on the choreography. Worst of all, Antonietta Dell'Era, who danced the Sugar Plum Fairy, was described as "heavy, large, unpretty, ungraceful," her sole attraction apparently being her foreign name.

The only thing critics liked about the piece from the start was the music. And that is what has ensured *The Nutcracker's* place in the repertoire for 130 years, and is likely to keep it there as long as there is danced theater in the world. For who cares if the story is meager and has no drama in it, as long as we have the "Waltz of the Snowflakes," the "Waltz of the Flowers," and the great pas de deux? In fact, the appeal of the music is such that it has often been performed in concert, not only as the suite Tchaikovsky drew from the ballet but also in its entirety.

The ballet consists of two acts. Act 1 tells the actual story, and Act 2 is a single, long fairy fantasy.

#### **Act I**

We are invited to Christmas Eve in the Stahlbaum home. When the decoration of the Christmas tree is finished, the adults call in the children, Clara and Fritz. The famous march is played while the children take their places in the spacious parlor. The orchestra plays a lively gallop for the children and stately entrance music for the parents.

The children's godfather, Mr. Drosselmeyer, arrives—a rather mysterious figure who brings some elaborate toys that he himself has made. One present is a large cabbage that hides a doll, the other a giant pâté that conceals a soldier. The mechanical figures dance a brief waltz and a faster number filled with jumps, but then

they have to be put away as they are too fragile for the children to play with. To console them, Drosselmeyer gives them a third toy, a big nutcracker in the shape of a little man. The Nutcracker performs a comical dance, but then the two children get into a fight over him while the grown-ups begin the “Grandfather Waltz” (a traditional melody that Schumann had also used in his *Carnaval*). Fritz breaks the Nutcracker doll and Clara is devastated. She returns to the parlor after everyone has gone to bed. The clock strikes midnight, and a fantastic scene unfolds before Clara’s eyes: two opposing armies of mice and gingerbread soldiers appear, and the Nutcracker, grown to full human size, becomes the leader of the soldiers. A fierce battle begins, and with Clara’s help, the Nutcracker kills the Mouse King.

Clara suddenly finds herself in a vast pine forest with the Nutcracker, who is miraculously transformed into a handsome Prince. The Prince leads Clara through the forest as the snowflakes dance around them; he takes her to his magic castle in the beautiful Land of Sweets.

## **Act II**

In the Land of Sweets, Clara and her Prince are greeted by the Sugar Plum Fairy. Here Tchaikovsky wrote an elaborate part for the celesta, an instrument that had been invented only a few years earlier (1886) by Auguste Mustel in France. The composer made a special note in the score: “the musician who plays this part must be a good pianist”—quite true indeed.

The Fairy orders a grand festivity to entertain the young couple, and all the different kinds of candy and sweets begin to dance. The Spanish Dance of the Chocolate comes first; chocolate being of South American origin, its melody, played by the solo trumpet, is accompanied by castanets to give it a Spanish flair. The dance of the Coffee is Arabian (based, actually, on a Georgian folk song), that of the Tea Chinese, with a high-pitched flute solo accompanied by plucked strings and bassoons in their extreme low register.

A lively Russian *trepak* for full orchestra follows, whose melody is reminiscent of the finale of Tchaikovsky’s Violin Concerto, written in 1878. Then we hear a graceful “Dance of the Reed Flutes,” representing mirlitons (toy flutes or reed pipes). The international *divertissement* (entertainment) is rounded out by Mother Ginger and her children—a section based on two well-known folksongs. (Incidentally, the part of Mother Ginger was danced by a man, Nikolai Yakovlev, in the first performance.)

Now the Fairy’s attendants pay tribute to Clara in the popular “Waltz of the Flowers,” which contains some of the most magnificent melodies Tchaikovsky ever wrote. The celebrated *pas de deux* follows, with the Prince joined by the Sugar Plum Fairy, since the student who danced Clara was too young and inexperienced to assume this challenging task. The *pas de deux* is in four sections. The Prince and the Fairy dance the opening section together, then each has a brief solo—a *tarantella* for the Prince, and a movement simply titled “Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy” for the female dancer. This section contains a celesta part that is as sweet as anything in the kingdom. Finally, the two dancers join together for a brilliant coda.

The entire corps de ballet brings the celebration to its high point with the “Final Waltz.” The concluding “Apotheosis” (elevation to a state of divine bliss) is expressed by a solemn recall of the magic-castle music that opened the act. Can we hope for a more perfect musical expression of “happily ever after”?

—Peter Laki

## BIOGRAPHIES

In addition to serving as music director of the Bard Conservatory Orchestra, **Leon Botstein** is music director and principal conductor of the American Symphony Orchestra (ASO), founder and music director of The Orchestra Now (TÖN), coartistic director of Bard SummerScape and the Bard Music Festival, and conductor laureate of the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, where he served as music director from 2003 to 2011. He has been guest conductor with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Aspen Music Festival, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, Mariinsky Theatre, Russian National Orchestra in Moscow, London Philharmonic, Taipei Symphony, Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra, and Sinfónica Juvenil de Caracas in Venezuela, among others.

Recordings include a Grammy-nominated recording of Popov's First Symphony with the London Symphony Orchestra, an acclaimed recording of Hindemith's *The Long Christmas Dinner* with ASO, and recordings with the London Philharmonic, Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, and TÖN, among others. He is editor of *The Musical Quarterly* and author of numerous articles and books, including *The Compleat Brahms* (Norton), *Jefferson's Children* (Doubleday), *Judentum und Modernität* (Böhlau), and *Von Beethoven zu Berg* (Zsolnay). Honors include Harvard University's Centennial Award, the American Academy of Arts and Letters Distinguished Service to the Arts Award, and Cross of Honor, First Class, from the government of Austria, for his contributions to music. Other distinctions include the Bruckner Society's Kilenyi Medal of Honor for his interpretations of that composer's music, Leonard Bernstein Award for the Elevation of Music in Society, and Carnegie Foundation's Academic Leadership Award. In 2011, he was inducted into the American Philosophical Society.

Violinist and violist **Luosha Fang '11** was in the first class of the Bard College Conservatory of Music when it opened in 2005, and returned as a faculty member in 2019. She has appeared as violin soloist with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Atlantic Symphony, Louisville Orchestra, and the American Symphony Orchestra, with whom she performed the US premiere of Grażyna Bacewicz's Violin Concerto No. 5. With the Albany Symphony Orchestra, she recorded George Tsontakis's double violin concerto "Unforgettable" for NAXOS Records. As a violist, she has soloed with the New Japan Philharmonic, Nagoya Philharmonic Orchestra, and Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra, among others. Fang has won international competitions, including the Classic Strings International Competition in Vienna and Tokyo International Viola Competition. She was a winner of Astral Artists' National Auditions and the S&R Foundation's Washington Award, as both violinist and violist.

Her chamber music appearances include the Marlboro, Kronberg, Ravinia, Bard Music, Caramoor, Aspen, and Incontri in Terra di Siena festivals. In 2021–22, Fang was violist of the Pavel Haas Quartet in Prague. She studied with Ida Kavafian and Arnold Steinhardt at the Bard Conservatory, where she was founding first violin of the Chimeng Quartet, which won the silver medal at the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition. She then attended the Curtis Institute of Music as a violin student of Ida Kavafian and Shmuel Ashkenasi, studied viola with Steven Tenenbom, and, at Escuela Superior de Música Reina Sofía in Madrid, with Nobuko Imai. She plays a 1734 Pietro Guarneri violin with a Dominique Peccatte bow kindly loaned by Dr. Ryuji Ueno. She plays the "Josefowitz" 1690 Andrea Guarneri viola.

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Luosha Fang  
Marka Gustavsson  
Brian Hong  
Honggang Li  
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Raman Ramakrishnan  
Peter Wiley

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Marc Goldberg

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Richard Cox  
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Ilka LoMonaco  
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