



CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

FRITZ REINER, CONDUCTOR

WALTER HENDL, ASSOCIATE CONDUCTOR

TWENTIETH PROGRAM

THURSDAY EVENING, MARCH 5, 1959, AT 8:15

FRIDAY AFTERNOON, MARCH 6, 1959, AT 2:00

ROSALIND ELIAS, *Soloist*

CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA CHORUS

Margaret Hillis, *Director*

"THE WALTZ," A CHOREOGRAPHIC POEM RAVEL

POÈME DE L'AMOUR ET DE LA MER, Opus 19 . . . CHAUSSON

LA FLEUR DES EAUX. INTERLUDE.

LA MORT DE L'AMOUR.

(First performance at these concerts)

INTERMISSION

ALEXANDER NEVSKY, Opus 78 PROKOFIEFF

RUSSIA UNDER THE MONGOLIAN YOKE.

SONG ABOUT ALEXANDER NEVSKY.

THE CRUSADERS IN PSKOV.

ARISE, YE RUSSIAN PEOPLE.

THE BATTLE ON THE ICE.

FIELD OF THE DEAD.

ALEXANDER'S ENTRY IN PSKOV.

(First performance at these concerts)

Old Symphony*; Moussorgsky:

Kije and Stravinsky: Song of

the Fire; drawing, suitable for framing,



The Chicago Symphony Orchestra uses the BALDWIN Piano

Patrons are not admitted during the playing of a composition. Considerate persons will not leave while the orchestra is playing. Ladies will please remove large hats. The performance of the final composition on this program will require about forty minutes.

Advance Programs on Pages 29-31-32.

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PROGRAM NOTES—Continued

the NBC Symphony Orchestra with Leopold Stokowski conducting. This is the first performance of *Alexander Nevsky* by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

After Prokofieff returned to Moscow in 1934—he had come to America in 1918 and eventually had settled in Paris—he set about consciously “to create for the people, for the broad masses of music-lovers,” as Israel V. Nestyev described it in his book on the composer (1946). In time, his attention was turned toward events in Russia’s history, and the opera, *Semyon Kotko* (1939), and *Alexander Nevsky* were the creative results. The timeliness of these works is described by Nestyev with the following: “Both these works at the same time revealed an amazing foresight on the part of the artist. Long before the Germans attacked the U. S. S. R., and even before the war in Europe, he wrote two compositions permeated through and through with fierce hatred for German barbarism. The Teutonic knights in *Alexander Nevsky* who trample the Russian wheat fields and put Russian towns to fire and sword and the repulsive faces of the German invaders who plunder and lay waste flourishing Ukrainian villages in *Semyon Kotko* are all reproduced as graphically and convincingly as if the author had already personally witnessed the horrors of

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PROGRAM NOTES—Continued

German fascist atrocities. There is no doubt that future generations will regard these works as the most striking musical chronicle of the sanguinary events that were later to take place during the Soviet-German war.

“In *Alexander Nevsky* the composer wrote on a major patriotic theme for the first time in his life, bringing to it all the resources of his musical palette. Notwithstanding the historical nature of the theme, the cantata had a direct, topical appeal for Soviet Russia: it was a clarion call to self-sacrificing defense of the homeland.”

The cantata begins with an instrumental prelude called, “Russia under the Mongolian Yoke.” This musical picture refers to the subservient condition of the various Russian principalities to the Asiatic Tartars. It was in 1240 that the great center, Kiev, finally fell to the Mongolian onslaughts led by the Mongol Batu, nephew of Genghis Khan. For some two hundred years the country was dominated by the Tartars and the Russian princes paid tribute to them.

During this period, the Russian princes had an additional enemy, the peoples to the west and north, the Swedes and Lithuanians, the Poles and the Germans. In particular, Alexander Nevsky, the ruler of the Novgorod

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PROGRAM NOTES—Continued

area, the northerly section of the country south of Leningrad and the Karelian Isthmus, was continually battling the Germans, Swedes and Lithuanians over the key cities of Novgorod and Pskov. Nevsky's name itself derives from his battle on the banks of the Neva, near Leningrad, when he defeated the Swedish general, Birger Jarl, on July 15, 1240. Two years later Alexander defeated the knights of the Teutonic Order in a bloody battle on the frozen Lake Peipus (Chudskoye is the Russian name). It is this "Battle on the Ice" that Prokofieff has described musically in the cantata. The grand Khan rewarded Alexander with titles and more extensive power, and eventually discontinued the payment of tribute and abolished the required military service rendered to the Tartars. Alexander was canonized by the Orthodox Church.

The cantata is divided into seven parts:

1. "Russia under the Mongolian Yoke." This is an instrumental description of the period of domination by the Tartars. The movement is in C minor, 3-4 time, and is marked *molto andante*.

2. "Song about Alexander Nevsky." The music is in B flat major, 2-4 time. The text, sung by the chorus, follows:

Bertha Ott announces

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TUESDAY EVE., MARCH 17

PROGRAM

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|--|-----------|
| I. Prelude and Fugue in E major, Book 11, No. 9..... | Bach |
| Prelude and Fugue in B minor, Book II, No. 24..... | Bach |
| Toccata in D major..... | Bach |
| II. Sonata in C minor, K. 457..... | Mozart |
| III. Sonata in A major, Op. 120..... | Schubert |
| IV. Sonata in A-flat major, Op. 110..... | Beethoven |

Ticket Prices: Box Seats, each \$3.70 and \$5.00; Main Floor \$3.10, \$3.70;
Balcony \$2.50, \$3.10, \$3.70; Gallery \$1.55 (Tax Included) at Box Office now.

PROGRAM NOTES—Continued

into battle; nevertheless to the modern ear it sounded too cold and indifferent. I was therefore obliged to discard it and compose for the crusaders music more suited to the modern conception.”

The orchestra introduces a theme, perhaps suggesting some nationalist heroic aspirations, which is the subject of the sixth section of the cantata, “Field of the Dead.” This heroic melody is presented as a counter theme to the crusaders’ melody. The Latin text follows, the translation from Carla Ingersoll:

Peregrinus expectavi, pedes meos, in cymbalis est. (As a foreigner, I expected my feet to be with cymbals.) (He thought he would be conspicuous.)

4. “Arise, Ye Russian People.” This piece is in E flat, 2-2 time. The text, which represents Alexander Nevsky’s appeal to the people to rise and defend the land against the enemy, is given as follows:

Arise to arms ye Russian folk, in battle just, in fight to death,
Arise ye people free and brave, defend our fair, our native land.
To living warriors high esteem, immortal fame to warriors slain.
For native home, for Russian soil, arise ye people, Russian folk.
In our Russia great, in our native Russia no foe shall live.
Rise to arms, arise, native mother Russ.
No foe shall march ’cross Russian land,
No foreign troops shall Russia raid.
Unseen the ways to Russia are.

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land!

an instrumental depicting
Alexander's army. The brief

enemy perish!)

tata is for mezzo-soprano.
A Russian girl expresses
warriors. The text follows:

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PROGRAM NOTES—Continued

Shall be blest by my kiss on his dead eyes,
And to him, brave lad, who remained alive,
I shall be a true wife and a loving friend.
I'll not be wed to a handsome man:
Earthly charm and beauty fast fade and die,
I'll be wed to the man who's brave.
Hark ye warriors brave, lionhearted men!

7. "Alexander's Entry in Pskov." This music begins *moderato* and changes to *allegro ma non troppo*; the key is B flat major. This is a hymn of victory for Alexander and his army. The text follows:

In a great campaign Russia went to war,
Russia put down the hostile troops;
In our native land foes shall never live.
Foes who come shall be put to death.
Celebrate and sing, native mother Russ!
In our native land foes shall never live.
Foes shall never see Russian towns and fields.
They who march on Russ shall be put to death!
In our Russia great, in our native Russia no foe shall live!
Celebrate and sing, native mother Russ!
To a fete in triumph all of Russia came.
Celebrate, rejoice, celebrate and sing, our mother land!

SOLOIST AT THIS CONCERT

Rosalind Elias, *Mezzo-Soprano*



Miss Elias was born in Lowell, Massachusetts, of Lebanese-American ancestry. She began her singing lessons while still in high school and earned featured roles in school reviews and musical shows.

After high school she entered the New England Conservatory, achieving the role of Poppea in Monteverdi's "Coronation of Poppea." During this period she was contralto soloist with the Boston Symphony Orchestra in the "St. John Passion" under Charles Munch.

She became a member of the New England Opera and made her debut as Maddalena in "Rigoletto," receiving the first of three summer scholarships at Tanglewood.

Her favorite theatrical organizations are the Actors' Studio and the Metropolitan Opera, of which she has been a member since 1954. Her roles with the Metropolitan have included those of Erika in the Samuel Barber opera "Vanessa" and Olga in Tchaikovsky's "Eugene Onegin."

This will mark her first appearance as soloist with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at these concerts.