

Prolouge

A few days after Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, Anna Fedorova called Simon Reinink with the idea to organize a benefit concert. He immediately replied that they must make it happen. Seven days later, Het Concertgebouw Amsterdam was completely sold out and the stage was filled with prominent musicians. Together with cellist Maya Fridman, percussionist Konstantyn Napolov, members of the Concertgebouworkest and many others, they performed an unforgettable and very emotional concert. The audience held their breath while many tears were shed over the horrific new reality of war in Ukraine. This evening, on March 6th, 2022, a total sum of € 110.000,00 was raised and donated to humanitarian aid organizations.

Anna Fedorova did not stop there. She has performed countless benefit concerts since. Donated her own fee of regular concerts to humanitarian aid organizations. She continues to raise funds for the scholarships of 12 young talented Ukrainian refugees who are now able to continue their music studies at the Davidsbündler Music Academy. And last but not least, she was the soloist in the Ukrainian Freedom Tour with the Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra under Keri-Lynn Wilson over the summer of 2022. During this tour, they also performed an unforgettable and emotional concert at Het Concertgebouw Amsterdam.

Her live recording of Rachmaninoff's 2nd Piano Concerto at Het Concertgebouw Amsterdam has over 37 million views on YouTube and is highly acclaimed by critics and world-renowned musicians. Nicknamed the 'house pianist' (Telegraaf) of Het Concertgebouw, Anna Fedorova has so far given over 45 concerts in the concert hall, often live broadcasted.

As a pianist and activist, Anna Fedorova has shown to be an extraordinary musician. Millions around the world viewed her recordings of Rachmaninoff's Second Piano concerto in the Royal Concertgebouw (YouTube). As an activist she managed – among many other activities - to organize an unforgettable benefit concert at the Concertgebouw only a week after the Russian invasion in Ukraine. Also, she performed as soloist with the Ukraine Freedom Orchestra, that toured in Europe and the United States.

Simon Reinink

Director of Het Concertgebouw Amsterdam

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Since the 24th of February, 2022, the world as I had known it was turned upsidedown. Unimaginable, inhumane terror is ongoing in Ukraine and is becoming crueler and more terrifying every day. It was hard to function during the first weeks of the war as the shock and despair were too strong, but the urge to do something, to help the suffering people in Ukraine in any way possible, was much stronger. war. I look back at playing over 20 benefit concerts for Ukraine in the Netherlands, Romania, Spain, Poland and Germany, which altogether raised over 500,000€ for various humanitarian aid organizations. During this time, together with my husband Nicholas Schwartz, I've started a nonprofit Foundation, under the auspices of the Davidsbündler Music Academy, which helps musicians who have fled to the Netherlands. We have helped dozens of refugees to find instruments, housing and are currently providing music lessons for them free of charge.

The war is making the world black and white, blinding people with hatred and pain. In times like this I think it's very important to hold on to our humanity and not to judge people by their passports but by their actions, their values and what they stand for. The same goes for Russian composers. They cannot be the ones to blame for the actions of the government of Russia. They should be looked at as individual people and their personal stories have to be told. In fact, many of them were suffering and suppressed by the former Soviet regime and many were forced to emigrate and live the rest of their lives in exile. Nowadays I feel that playing Rachmaninoff is even more relevant than ever. He himself was a victim of the Russian government as he was forced to flee his homeland together with his family during the Revolution in 1917 and he spent the rest of his life living in the US.

Playing the 2nd Piano Concerto, makes me think of a phoenix. It represents rebirth and resurrection of the spirit, hope and light. Something we all need so much nowadays.

I believe that the music of Rachmaninoff has an enormous emotional power that gives hope, raises the spirit and gives us strength to go on. It is full of humanity and belongs to all of us in the world.

Anna Fedorova

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