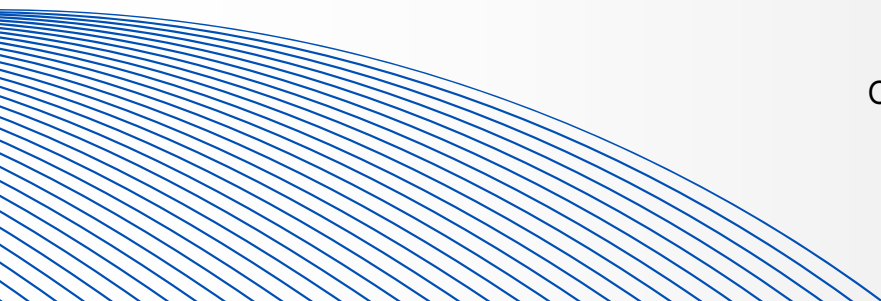


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MUSIC

# ALEXANDER MALOFEEV

PIANO

OCTOBER 22, 2023



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# FROM THE DIRECTOR OF PIANO & FRIENDS

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The Piano & Friends Committee welcomes you to its first concert of the 2023-2024 season. Since its first days, Piano & Friends' purpose has been to present young performers with exceptional talent who are at the start of their careers. The recent winner or a recent finalist in an established music competition is a prime candidate for this series.

The Piano & Friends series consists of three Sunday afternoon concerts. Today's concert is our first and features pianist, Alexander Malofeev. Alexander is exactly the type of young performer Piano & Friends wants to present. In addition to his 1st prize at the Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians at age 13 in 2014, he has won numerous awards and prizes at international competitions and festivals, including the Grand Prix of the I International Competition for Young Pianists Grand Piano Competition, the Premio Giovane Talento Musicale dell'anno 2017 (Best Young Musician of 2017). Also in 2017, Alexander became the first Young Yamaha Artist.

The violin duo of brothers Nikki and Timothy Chooi will perform just after the start of the year. Saxophonist, Stephen Banks, and pianist, Xak Bjerken, will round out the season in February.

We hope you enjoy these performances. We find the enthusiasm of the young artists on this series to be contagious and invigorating. We want you to be part of the experience.

**BRYAN DAUM**

*Piano & Friends Director*





Alexander Malofeev, *piano*

“Alexander Malofeev manifests the piano mastery of the new millennium in itself”

IL GIORNALE

ALEXANDER MALOFEEV

---

The young “Russian genius” (Corriere della Sera) came to international prominence when, in 2014, he won the International Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians at age thirteen. “Contrary to what could be expected of a youngster ..., he demonstrated not only high technical accuracy but also an incredible maturity. Crystal clear sounds and perfect balance revealed his exceptional ability” (Amadeus). Malofeev has quickly established himself as one of the most prominent pianists of his generation. His performances have garnered high praise from critics, with publications such as Der Standard declaring his debut at the Musikverein as “a world piano revolution”.

For the 2023-2024 season, highlights include Malofeev’s return to the Bournemouth Symphony for a multi-concert residency, solo tour in China, and European tour with Filarmonica della Scala and Riccardo Chailly, as well as performances at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Munich Isarphilharmonie, Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg and Carnegie Hall in New York, continuing to perform with the best orchestras: National Symphony Orchestra, Lucerne Festival Orchestra, Frankfurt Radio Orchestra, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra under Kent Nagano and Orchestre de la Suisse Romande under Marin Alsop and many others.

Maestro Riccardo Chailly said about the pianist: “I first heard Malofeev when Valery Gergiev performed with him at the Teatro alla Scala three years ago. He was only 14, and he amazed me with his talent. Because that is not just a child prodigy: he is very young, but already possesses depth and technical abilities, and also musical and mnemonic, which makes him an excellent interpreter of the 3rd Concerto of Rachmaninov, which is a problem for many pianists in the world.” (Corriere della Sera).



# PIANO & FRIENDS

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Alexander was born in Moscow in October 2001. Now residing in Berlin, he continues to give concerts in Concertgebouw (Amsterdam), where he opened the 30th anniversary concert of the renowned Meester Pianists series, Teatro alla Scala (Milan), Musikverein Wien, Kurhaus Wiesbaden (Germany), Alte Oper Frankfurt (Germany), Munich Herkulessaal (Germany), Tanglewood (USA), Philharmonie de Paris, Philharmonie Luxembourg, Theater of the Champs-Élysées (France), Auditorium Parco della Musica in Roma and Teatro Petruzzelli in Bari (Italy), Italy Queensland Performing Arts Centre (Australia), Davies Symphony Hall in San Francisco, Bunka Kaikan Theatre in Tokyo, Seoul Art Center, Shanghai Oriental Art Center, National Centre for the Performing Arts (Beijing), Royal Opera House Muscat in Oman.

Over the years, he has performed with renowned orchestras such as the Philadelphia Orchestra, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra of the National Academy of Santa Cecilia, Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra, Lucerne Festival Orchestra, Orchestra Filarmonica della Scala, RAI National Symphony Orchestra, Korean Symphony Orchestra, the Verbier Festival Orchestra, Orchestre National de Lille and many others.

Alexander Malofeev regularly appears with the most distinguished conductors on a stage today, including Riccardo Chailly, Mikhail Pletnev, Myung-Whun Chung, Charles Dutoit, Michael Tilson Thomas, JoAnn Falletta, Alain Altinoglu, Susanna Mälkki, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Lionel Bringuier, Alondra de la Parra, Kazuki Yamada, Vasily Petrenko, Juraj Valcuha, Kirill Karabits, Andris Poga, Fabio Luisi and others.

In addition to his 1st prize at the Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians, he has won numerous awards and prizes at international competitions and festivals, including the Grand Prix of the I International Competition for Young Pianists Grand Piano Competition, the Premio Giovane Talento Musicale dell'anno 2017 (Best Young Musician of 2017). Also in 2017, Alexander became the first Young Yamaha Artist.

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## PROGRAM

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### GEORG FRIEDRICH HANDEL (1685 – 1759)

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*Suite in B-flat major, HWV 434*

- I. Prélude
- II. Sonata
- III. Aria con variazioni
- IV. Minuet

### HENRY PURCELL (1659 – 1695)

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*Ground in C minor, ZD 221*

### GEORG MUFFAT (1653 – 1704)

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*Passacaglia in G minor from "Apparatus Musico-Organisticus"*

### JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685 – 1750)

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*Organ Concerto No. 2 in A minor (after A. Vivaldi), BWV 593*

- I. Allegro
- II. Adagio
- III. Allegro

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## INTERMISSION

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### MIECZYŚLAW WEINBERG (1919 – 1996)

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*Piano Sonata No. 4 in B minor, Op. 56*

- I. Allegro
- II. Allegro
- II. Adagio
- III. Allegro

### RICHARD WAGNER (1813 – 1883)

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*Tannhäuser Overture, S. 442*

## **BEST KNOWN FOR OPERAS AND**

**ORATORIOS** that enthralled the British Empire, Handel established his early career in Germany with music for keyboard. His Suite in B flat Major, written for harpsichord, appeared in the second printing of his immensely popular *Suites de Pieces* (1733) but was most probably composed in the previous decade. At publication HWV 434 included a Minuet finale that is often omitted in modern performance. The Suite gained attention in the nineteenth century after Brahms based his Opus 24 “Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Handel” (1861) on the third movement’s opening Aria.

The brief Prelude suggests an improvisatory warmup for the performer. It opens and concludes with a set of blocked chords marked “arpeggio” that delineate the work’s overall harmonic structure. Sonata, the rapid second movement, begins with short, repeated phrases that are developed with more elaborate figuration in its central section, a suggestion of early sonata form. Aria, the third movement, offers five variations on a melodious theme.

Structured in two repeated sections, the variations are decorated with figuration that creates a counterpoint to the serene theme. A gracefully decorated melody with simple accompaniment, the brief Minuet (G minor) has been a favorite encore piece.

**THE GROUND IN C MINOR**, written for harpsichord and attributed to Purcell, was most probably composed by his contemporary William Croft as part of his third keyboard suite. A popular baroque device, the ground is a repeating bass line that supports increasingly more ornate melodic variations. In ZB 221 the ground is seven measures long and repeats five times; two contrasting melodies alternate above it. The asymmetrical first theme moves with single notes that dovetail rhythmically with the ground to create a piquant effect. The songful second theme is augmented with thirds in its final statement for a sonorous conclusion.

## **ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT**

**COLLECTIONS** of seventeenth century organ music, Muffat’s monumental *Apparatus Musico-Organisticus* (1690) is a compendium of French, Italian, and German styles decorated with French ornamentation. Because of Muffat’s detailed performance instructions, the set became an important part of the organist’s training. The work originally consisted of twelve toccatas, but other components were added—including the Passacaglia in G minor, number 14 of the set. Cast in a single movement in  $\frac{3}{4}$  time, the stately Passacaglia suggests its origins as a Spanish courtly dance with continuously connected variations.

## **BACH SPENT NINE FORMATIVE YEARS**

at the culturally significant Weimar court (1708-1717), where he wrote much instrumental music for his patron, Duke Wilhelm Ernst. In 1711 he obtained a copy of Antonio Vivaldi’s recently published *L’Estro armonico* (The Harmonic Inspiration), a set of twelve concertos for string instruments and basso continuo, and his imagination was fired. To fully absorb the harmonic clarity and motoric energy of this newly discovered Italian style Bach embarked on a series of transcriptions for his own instruments, the harpsichord and organ—an influential experience for his continuing career. As a mutual benefit, the eventual publication of Bach’s transcriptions (1852) contributed significantly to Vivaldi’s reputation.

Vivaldi’s *L’Estro armonico* is considered the height of the baroque concerto grosso form, an interactive genre in which the solo instrument engages in dialogue with the larger ensemble. Bach modelled five solo organ concertos (BWV 592-6) on the set; for BWV 593 he chose Vivaldi’s Concerto in A minor (RV 522), a virtuoso showpiece scored for two violins, strings, and basso continuo. Bach’s manipulations of the two manuals and pedal suggest the varying densities of the concerto texture. He put his own stamp on RV 522 by enhancing its contrapuntal lines to create a uniquely solid and refined structure.

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## THE PROLIFIC BUT LITTLE-KNOWN POLISH-SOVIET COMPOSER

**MIECZYSLAW WEINBERG** (also known as Moishe Vainberg) was born into an artistic Jewish family in Warsaw and was trained as composer and pianist at its conservatory. At the outbreak of World War II he fled to the Soviet Union and became a close friend of Dmitri Shostakovich. The two composers enjoyed mutual inspiration – Weinberg motivated Shostakovich to explore Jewish musical idioms, and Shostakovich urged Weinberg to become prolific in a variety of genres. When Weinberg was arrested on dubious charges in the early 1950s, Shostakovich helped to secure his release. Because of political circumstances, Weinberg has been known only to a small circle of connoisseurs within the Soviet Union. Since reviewers have begun to praise him as the third great Soviet composer after Shostakovich and Prokofiev, his reputation is poised to grow.

Weinberg wrote six piano sonatas over the duration of his career. Piano Sonata No. 4 (1955) reveals clear and concise structures suggestive of Hindemith; each movement develops with fervent rhythms and mildly dissonant, impressionistic harmonic language. The opening Allegro is propelled by perpetual motion figuration in the left hand as the right hand articulates a restless theme. A slower central section calms the atmosphere, and the movement concludes with a quietly reflective passage.

The second movement Allegro continues the rhythmic energy of the opening; tension builds dramatically, and the movement concludes with strong rhythmic punctuation. The diaphanous Adagio unfolds with a steady rhythmic tread that underscores its subtle melancholy, lifted somewhat as the mode changes from minor to the major key. The fleet and dancelike Allegro finale develops with ever greater frenetic energy; a calmer new theme leads to a quiet and subdued conclusion.

“Weinberg motivated Shostakovich to explore Jewish musical idioms, and Shostakovich urged Weinberg to become prolific in a variety of genres.”

Once popular on piano recitals, Franz Liszt’s 1848 arrangement of Wagner’s overture to his opera *Tannhäuser* (1843-5) is a brilliant showpiece that deserves more performances. Although Liszt entitled the work a paraphrase, the work closely follows Wagner’s score. Developed with orchestral fullness, its three main parts—the reverent Pilgrim’s chorus; the hero’s fervent hymn to his goddess at the Venusberg; the ecstatic reflection on redemption—strive to convey Wagner’s intention to portray “God and Nature uniting in the atoning kiss of Hallowed Love.”

Notes by Nancy Monsman

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7:30 p.m.

**Michael Stephen Brown, *piano***  
Wednesday, November 8, 2023  
7:30 p.m.

**Isidore String Quartet**  
Wednesday, December 6, 2023  
7:30 p.m.

**Argus Quartet**  
Wednesday, January 17, 2024  
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**Chamber Music Society of  
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**Juilliard String Quartet**  
Wednesday, February 7, 2024  
7:30 p.m.

**Fauré Quartett**  
Wednesday, March 27, 2024  
7:30 p.m.

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**Alexander Malofeev, *piano***  
Sunday, October 22, 2023  
3:00 p.m.

**Nikki Chooi, *violin***  
**Timothy Chooi, *violin***  
Sunday, January 7, 2024  
3:00 p.m.

**Steven Banks, *saxophone***  
**Xak Bjerken, *piano***  
Sunday, February 18, 2024  
3:00 p.m.

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Argus Quartet  
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
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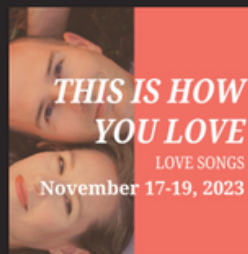
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**October 7 & 8** **Gershwin:** Overture to *Funny face*  
**Boyer:** *Rhapsody in Red, White & Blue*, with pianist Jeffrey Biegel  
**Rosauro:** Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra, with Dorothy Vanek  
Youth Concerto winner, Campbell Stewart (marimba)  
**Gershwin:** *Porgy and Bess* "A Symphonic Picture"  
arranged by Robert Russell Bennett

**November 11 & 12** **Lalo:** *Le roi d'Ys* Overture  
**Various:** Arias and duets from operas, with Renata Vari,  
Diana Peralta and Alonso Sicairos  
**Strauss:** *Serenade*, Op. 7  
**Tchaikovsky:** *Romeo and Juliet* Overture

**February 10 & 11** **Fernandez:** *Batuque* from *Reisado do Pastoreio*  
**Coleridge-Taylor:** Violin Concerto, Op. 80, with violinist Carissa Powe  
**Walker:** *Lyric for Strings*  
**Stravinsky:** Violin Concerto in D Major (movement 1), with  
Dorothy Vanek Youth Concerto winner, Rachel Gardner (violin)  
**Still:** *Symphony No. 1 (Afro-American Symphony)*

**March 16 & 17** **Asia:** *Gateways*  
**Dvořák:** Cello Concerto Op. 104, with cellist Zuill Bailey  
**Dvořák:** *Symphony No. 7* Op. 70

**April 27 & 28** *Guest conductor Giovanni Pompeo*  
**Verdi:** Overture to *I Vespri Siciliani*  
**Kalman:** Hudson Concerto, with pianist Alexander Frey  
**Rósa:** *Spellbound* Concerto, with pianist Alexander Frey  
**Sibelius:** *Symphony No. 5*, Op. 72

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