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## **Sample program**

### ***Dmitri Bortniansky (1751-1825)***

#### *Concerto for Chorus #16*

*This program begins with one of the most wonderful pieces by Ukrainian composer Dmitri Bortniansky. Upon his graduation of conservatory in Italy in 1779 he started working as a singer, and later the director and the conductor of court chorus. He created numerous operas in Italian, as well as in French. But the most essential part of his creative work was the spiritual chorus music. Being the master of chorus composition "A Kapella", Bortniansky created a new form of Russian Chorus singing - 32 chorus concertos. This particular form of concerto was way beyond the traditional spiritual singing.*

### ***Sergei Taneyev (1856 – 1915)***

#### *Evening*

#### *Look at this darkness*

*Taneyev was a pupil of Tchaikovsky at the Moscow Conservatory, studying the piano with the director of the Conservatory, Nikolay Rubinstein. He was the soloist in first Moscow performance of Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1, a rôle he repeated in later works by Tchaikovsky for piano and orchestra. He gradually assumed fuller responsibility at the Conservatory, of which he became director in 1885. His pupils included Scriabin and Rachmaninov.*

### ***Peter Tchaikovsky (1840 – 1893)***

#### *Fragments from Liturgy*

*Tchaikovsky's fame, as both conductor and composer, spread as the result of a series of international tours, which brought him to the United States in 1891. He continued to compose -the ballets *Sleeping Beauty* (1889) and *Nutcracker* (1892), the *Fifth* (1888), *Sixth* (1893), and *Manfred* (1885) symphonies, and three final operas, including the powerful and theatrical *The Queen of Spades* (1890). Younger composers emulated him, among them Mikhail Ippolitov-Ivanov and, later, Sergei Rachmaninoff. On Nov. 6 (N. S.), 1893, a few days after conducting the premier of his *Sixth Symphony*, Tchaikovsky died in Saint Petersburg. Although it was reported that he died of cholera, some scholars now believe that his death was in fact a suicide, the result of a threat to reveal his liaison with a young Russian nobleman.*

**Anton Bruckner (1824 – 1896)**

*Locus Iste*

*Ave Maria*

*Austrian composer and organist, highly regarded for his immense, original symphonic works was born in Ansfelden to a peasant family. Bruckner's early musical education consisted of organ instruction from his father, music theory from his godfather, and general music lessons at the Saint Florian abbey near Linz. Because he was a self-proclaimed follower of German composer Richard Wagner, anti-Wagnerian musicians and critics in Vienna opposed his works. In his final years, however, Bruckner was greatly honored in Austria, receiving decorations and a salary and pension from the government.*

*Bruckner wrote a Te Deum, settings of various Psalms, (including Psalm 150 in the 1890s) and various motets such as *Ave Maria*, *Ecce Sacerdos Magnum*, *Locus iste*, etc.*

**Alfred Schnittke (1934 – 1998)**

*Choral Concert, 2<sup>nd</sup> movement*

*Postmodernist Russian composer who created serious, dark-toned musical works characterized by abrupt juxtapositions of radically different, often contradictory, styles, an approach that came to be known as “polystylism.”*

*A choral masterpiece, Schnittke's Choir Concerto is a setting of words from "The Book of Lamentations" by Grigor Narekatsi (951-1003). Written in 1984/5, it is scored for very large choir.*

----- Intermission -----

**Sergey Rachmaninov (1873-1943)**

*Liturgy “Saint Iohanna Zlatousta”*

*Rachmaninov was one of the most talented composers of 19th -- 20th centuries. He was world famous as a conductor, pianist and a composer. Especially important was the fact that being away and detached from his homeland, he remained, always, genuinely Russian, deeply, emotionally involved with everything Russia represented. True Russian soul, he created incredible music, praised Russian nature and spirituality of his own people.*

**Dmitri Bortniansky (1751-1825)**

*Concerto for Chorus #32*

*This program begins with one of the most wonderful pieces by Ukrainian composer Dmitri Bortniansky. Upon his graduation of conservatory in Italy in 1779 he started working as a singer, and later the director and the conductor of court chorus. He created numerous operas in Italian, as well as in French. But the most essential part of his creative work was the spiritual chorus music. Being the master of chorus composition “A Kapella”, Bortniansky*

*created a new form of Russian Chorus singing - 32 chorus concertos, many of which were designated for two chorus groups. This particular form of concerto was way beyond the traditional spiritual singing. His music is closer to early Classical European style, yet has elements of Russian - Ukrainian songs.*

***Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)***

*Fragments from All-Night Vigil*

*All during his life, and for many decades after his passing, Sergei Rachmaninoff was regarded as - at best - an anomaly, a throwback to the 19th century, as his music always expressed itself through an unabashedly Romantic language. . True Russian soul, he created incredible music, praised Russian nature and spirituality of his own people.*

*Russian chorus writing, with its' depth, as well as brilliant expression of unique style. The All-Night Vigil is comprised of texts for the services of Vespers, Matins and Prime. Composed in 1915, it was probably intended for concert performance rather than for liturgical use, although Rachmaninoff did not specify. However, from the time of its premiere up to the present day, it has been heard almost exclusively in concert settings*

***Nikolai Sidelnikov (1930 – 1992)***

*Spiritual Concerto*

*Sidelnikov was a prolific composer, penning three operas, six symphonies, three oratorios, and a great number of choral and chamber works. Among his early successes was Russian Fairytales, which won honors at the UNESCO Composers' Tribune in Paris. His works have been performed throughout Europe, as well as in Beijing and New York—with two major premiers at Merkin Hall, including a chamber symphony commissioned and performed by Mstislav Rostropovich.*