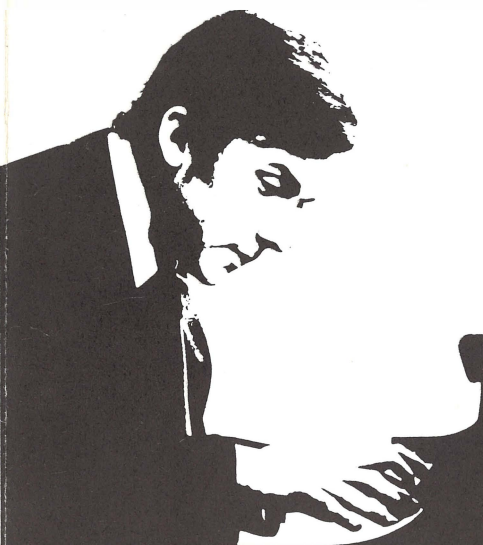


Emile Naoumoff

Piano

Sunday, April 20th, 1986
Queen Elizabeth Playhouse

6th Season 1985—1986



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Meet the Artist

EMILE NAUOMOFF

Emile Naoumoff, pianist and composer, was born in Sofia, Bulgaria in 1962, and began to study piano at the age of five. When he was nine years old, he became a protege of the late Nadia Boulanger, and studied with her at the American Conservatory at Fontainebleau and at the Ecole Normale de Musique in Paris from 1971 until her death in 1979. In 1975 he entered the National Conservatory of Music in Paris and, in 1978 at the age of sixteen, he received First Prize in both Piano and Chamber Music categories. From 1979 to 1981 he studied conducting with Pierre Dervaux.

Naoumoff began to compose music when he was only six, and when he was ten, he published his first piano concerto, "March of the Birds" for piano and string orchestra, which was subsequently performed under the direction of Yehudi Menuhin with Naoumoff at the piano. In 1973 and 1977 he received the Prix de Composition in Paris; he was awarded the medal at the International Robert Casadesus competition in 1974, and he was awarded prizes in composition in Sofia in 1974 and 1977.

Additional prizes for piano and chamber music performance as well as for composition followed. In 1981 he became the youngest composer to have his works published by the prestigious publisher, Schott, in Mainz, Germany.

Emile Naoumoff has appeared as piano soloist with major symphony orchestras including the Bulgarian Philharmonic in Sofia, the East Berlin Symphony Orchestra, the Bolshoi Opera Orchestra in Moscow, the Lamoureux Orchestra in Paris, and the Halle Orchestra in Magdeburg. He has appeared under the baton of Yehudi Menuhin in addition to other major conductors. Recital tours have taken him to Paris, Fontainebleau, Bonn, Rome, Budapest, Vienna, Toronto, Varna; in 1983 he toured Russia, and in 1984 he made his United States debut in Utica, New York, followed by an appearance at the Carmel Bach Festival in California.

Emile Naoumoff's recent accomplishments include his having been named "Young Composer of 1983" by the Academy of Fine Arts; a recording of his own piano transcription of Stravinsky's "Firebird" backing performance of the work by the Vienna Symphony under Sawallisch on the Orfeo label; and his debut as soloist with the Ensemble Orchestral de Paris in the Concerto by Tailleferre (the woman composer who was a member of France's famous "Les Six").

Most recently, Emile Naoumoff made his debut with the San Francisco Symphony during their 1985 Mostly Mozart Festival, to great acclaim.

Tonight's performance marks the Vancouver debut of Emile Naoumoff.

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PROGRAM

Preludes, Livre I, 1910; Livre II, 1913
(1862-1918)

Claude Debussy

Bruyères
La Puerta del Vino
Canope
Minstrels
La Fille aux Cheveux de Lin
Feux d'artifice

In his selection of Preludes by Debussy, Emile Nauomoff has chosen two well-known excerpts from Book I and several less familiar works from Book II. The pastoral *Bruyères* is uncomplicated and songlike. *La Puerte del Vino* is evocative and descriptive, thought to have been suggested by a postcard of the 13th century gateway to the Alhambra. *Canope* (Canopus was an ancient Egyptian city) conjures up antiquity with, in the view of Frank Dawes, a few side glances at

the early work of Erik Satie. *Minstrels*, the concluding segment of the First Book, has always been popular with its jaunty music hall allusions, as has *La Fille aux cheveux de lin*, also from Book I. The title refers to one of a group of “Chansons ecossaises” that were particular favourites of the composer. The concluding prelude from Book II, *Feux d’artifice*, has been chosen to complete the selection: here Lisztian pianistic fireworks imitate the more visual ones of the title.

Nocturne in E minor, Opus 72, #1 (1827)
Nocturne in F Major, Opus 15, #1 (1831)
Nocturne in C# minor, Opus 27, #1 (1835)
Nocturne in Db Major, Opus 27, #2 (1835)

Frederic Chopin
(1810–1849)

The four *Nocturnes* on this evening’s programme all date from the earlier stages of Chopin’s career. Though the Nocturne was more or less invented by the Irish born John Field, it was a genre Chopin was quick to make his own. Opus 72, #1 was written when the composer was 17 and was found among Chopin’s papers at the time of his death. Fortunately his musical heirs ignored his express instructions to destroy all his unpublished manuscripts, and thus the misleading high opus number of this early work. Opus 15, #1 dates from 1831 and shows, as English composer Lennox Berkely notes in his study of the Nocturnes, “material of deeper significance and a subtle control of form.” The final two Nocturnes comprise Opus 27, composed in 1835. Berkely characterizes the C# minor as “one of the most evocative of all the Nocturnes,” while he feels that the Dbmajor demonstrates “an elegance and charm that Chopin rarely surpassed.”

Impasse (1983)

Emile Nauomoff
(b. 1962)

Beyond Emile Nauomoff’s obvious accomplishments as a pianist, he is also very much in the long tradition of pianist-composers. Beginning that aspect of his career at a precocious age, he quickly came to international attention as both the youngest composer to have been published by the renowned German publishing house Schott in Mainz and as the last protege of the fabled French composition teacher Nadia Boulanger. Naumoff studied with Boulanger from 1971 until her death in 1979.

He has written extensively in virtually all major genres — chamber works, symphonic compositions including concerti, and opera, and, of course, several works for solo keyboard. *Impasse* is a recent composition for solo piano dating from 1983.

Intermission

Pictures at an Exhibition

Modest Mussorgsky
(1839–1881)

Promenade • The Gnome • Promenade • The Old Castle • Promenade •
In the Tuileries Gardens • Bydlo • Promenade • Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks •
Goldenberg & Schmuyle • The Market Place at Limoges • The Catacombs •
The Hut on Fowls’ Legs • The Great Gate of Kiev

The *Pictures at an Exhibition* are, in the orchestrated version by Maurice Ravel, one of the staples of the symphonic repertoire. The original version for solo piano is also popular though not without the attendant performance problems and musical enigmas that are found in all the extant music of the profoundly original and vexingly unprofessional Russian master, Modest Mussorgsky.

On one level *Pictures* resembles a nationalist version of Schumann’s *Carnival* — an anthology of short, quasi-descriptive sketches. But where the Schumann work is intricately crafted and subtly designed, the unquestionable strength of Mussorgsky’s work lies in its vivid descriptiveness and audaciously personal musical style.

More often than not Mussorgsky’s contemporaries were shocked (and embarrassed) by his cavalier indifference to the established “rules” of harmony and counterpoint. Even his friend Rimsky-Korsakov was at a loss to reconcile Mussorgsky’s “crude technique” with his unquestionable talent. It was only when Mussorgsky’s work was considered by a new generation of composers (prompted by Debussy in France) that it became possible to see Mussorgsky not as a gifted quasi-amateur but, in fact, as a great original in the history of composition and one of the major prophets of the 20th century style.

Program notes by David Duke.

Please ... and Thank you ...

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