



YUJA WANG & DUDAMEL

Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2 and Symphonic Dances

An Experience L.A. Event

Saturday, February 11, 2023
Walt Disney Concert Hall

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- Yuja Wang is a world-renowned pianist.
- Gustavo Dudamel is the music and artistic director of the LA Phil and a celebrated conductor.
- The program is two works by Rachmaninoff: Piano Concerto No. 2 and *Symphonic Dances*.

YUJA WANG

Yuja Wang is a world-renowned classical pianist. Born in Beijing, Yuja studied piano as a child in China, and then trained in Canada and at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. She became a soloist at the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 2007, and signed an exclusive contract with the prestigious classical



Yuja Wang

Photo: Kirk Edwards

music label Deutsche Grammophon in 2009. She has performed with the world's leading conductors, musicians, and ensembles, and in 2017 was named Artist of the Year by Musical America. In 2021/22, she was artist-in-residence at the Czech Philharmonic and the Rotterdam Philharmonic.

GUSTAVO DUDAMEL

Venezuelan-born conductor Gustavo Dudamel is one of the leading conductors of his generation. He is currently the music and artistic director of the LA Phil and the music director of the Opéra National de Paris and the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra.

Dudamel studied violin as a child and began conducting his youth orchestra at age 13. At 18, he became music director of the Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra of Venezuela. In 2009, at 27, he became the music director at the LA Phil. Inspired by his own experience in Venezuela's immersive musical training program El Sistema, Dudamel, along with the LA Phil and community partners, founded Youth Orchestra Los Angeles (YOLA) in 2007.

Dudamel has received Spain's Gold Medal for Merit in Fine Arts, a distinguished artist award from the International Society for the Performing Arts, the Gish Prize, the Americas Society Cultural Achievement Award, the Leonard Bernstein Lifetime Achievement Award for the Elevation of Music in Society, and many other honors. His 65 recordings include Grammy Award-winning LA Phil recordings on Deutsche Grammophon.



Gustavo Dudamel

Photo: Danny Clinch

LA PHIL

The Los Angeles Philharmonic was founded in 1919 and is known today as one of the most adventurous, contemporary-minded classical orchestras in the United States. The LA Phil performs canonical works of classical music and also commissions and premieres new works. In 2012, *New Yorker* critic Alex Ross called the LA Phil "the most creative, and, therefore, the best, orchestra in America." *New York Times* classical music editor Zachary Woolfe made a similar reflection five years later, calling the LA Phil "the most important orchestra in America. Period." The LA Phil's home venues are Walt Disney Concert Hall, the Hollywood Bowl, and The Ford.

RACHMANINOFF

Sergey Rachmaninoff (1873–1943) was a Russian composer in the Romantic tradition, a conductor, and a piano virtuoso.

Rachmaninoff is considered the last of the Russian Romantic composers, bringing into the twentieth century the emotional, dramatic tradition of the nineteenth-century Romanticism of Tchaikovsky (1840–1893).

Rachmaninoff was born into a Russian aristocratic family. He studied piano at the Moscow Conservatory and was a conductor at the Bolshoi Theatre when the First Russian Revolution happened in 1905. He left Russia the following



Sergey Rachmaninoff



Walt Disney Concert Hall



Sunday in the Park with George at Pasadena Playhouse



The Met in HD: Giuseppe Verdi's Falstaff

year for Dresden, Germany, where he wrote several of his major works, and toured the United States in 1909–10, before returning to Russia in 1910. After the Russian Revolution of 1917, Rachmaninoff once again left Russia, this time for Switzerland and the United States.

Rachmaninoff struggled with depression, which affected his ability to compose. His Piano Concerto no. 2 was written in 1900–01 after he used hypnotherapy to break through writer's block. It is a classic of piano repertoire.

Symphonic Dances (1940) was Rachmaninoff's final orchestral work, composed while he was living in the United States. You can hear more modernist influences in it, especially in rhythms inspired by the younger composers Stravinsky and Prokofiev.

Rachmaninoff died in Beverly Hills in 1943.

WALT DISNEY CONCERT HALL

Walt Disney Concert Hall is home to the LA Phil and the LA Master Chorale. Designed by star architect Frank Gehry, the building opened in 2003. It is one of the most acoustically sophisticated concert halls in the world, with walls of vertical grain Douglas fir, floor of red oak, and a stage made of Alaskan yellow cedar, the same wood often used for cellos and violas. The pattern in the carpet and upholstery was designed to evoke the garden of Lillian B. Disney, who made the lead gift of \$50 million to build the hall.

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

- ⦿ What do you notice about the interaction between the conductor and the pianist? The orchestra and the pianist?
- ⦿ The two pieces were composed decades apart. What through lines do you notice between them? What differences or changes?
- ⦿ Listen to a few different recordings of Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto no. 2. What do you notice in comparing them?

IF YOU LIKED THIS EVENT, YOU MIGHT WANT TO CHECK OUT:

- ⦿ Yuja Wang online | yujawang.com
- ⦿ Other performances by the LA Phil | laphil.com
- ⦿ Youth Orchestra Los Angeles
losangelesyouthorchestra.org
- ⦿ Courses and events at the USC Thornton School of Music
music.usc.edu
- ⦿ Upcoming Visions and Voices Events
3/2/23 [Experience LA: Sunday in the Park with George at Pasadena Playhouse](#)
3/18/23 [The Met in HD: Richard Wagner's Lohengrin](#)
4/1/23 [The Met in HD: Giuseppe Verdi's Falstaff](#)



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CHRISTINA SNIDER of the USC Libraries selected the following resources to help you learn more about this event. Electronic resources are accessible through the search bar on the USC Libraries homepage at libraries.usc.edu but may require the user to log in using their USC credentials.

BOOKS

- ⦿ Gil Garcetti and Frank O. Gehry, *Iron: Erecting the Walt Disney Concert Hall* (Los Angeles: Balcony Press, 2002).
- ⦿ Barrie Martyn, *Rachmaninoff: Composer, Pianist, Conductor* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1990).
- ⦿ Richard D. Sylvester, *Rachmaninoff's Complete Songs: A Companion with Texts and Translations* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 2014).
- ⦿ Tricia Tunstall, *Changing Lives: Gustavo Dudamel, El Sistema, and the Transformative Power of Music* (New York: Norton, 2012).

DATABASES

- ⦿ [Music Periodicals Database](#)
- ⦿ [Classical Music in Video](#)
- ⦿ [ProQuest Music & Performing Arts Collection](#)
- ⦿ [Oxford Music Online](#)
- ⦿ [Classical Music Reference Library](#)

JOURNALS

- ⦿ [Music Journal](#)
- ⦿ [Gramophone](#)
- ⦿ [21st Century Music](#)

STREAMING MEDIA

- ⦿ [jViva Maestro!](#) (Ro*Co Films, 2022).
- ⦿ [Through the Eyes of Yuja](#) (C Major Entertainment, 2015).

