



World-beating musicianship from Sergej Krylov in Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto

★★★★★ ?

By David Truslove, 02 March 2018

As part of the [London Philharmonic Orchestra](#)'s ongoing exploration of the life and works of Igor Stravinsky this latest concert juxtaposed Tchaikovsky's sunlit Violin Concerto with two works associated with the Ballets Russes, now heard more often in their concert versions. By any standards this was an attractive programme, but what made the evening so special was the inspirational presence of [Vasily Petrenko](#) (Chief Conductor of the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra and Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra) and the astonishing playing of [Sergej Krylov](#).



The rapport between these two Russians was evident throughout Tchaikovsky's *Violin Concerto in D major*, given a well-paced account that just glowed from start to finish. One could only marvel at the freshness and spontaneity of **Krylov's playing** – there was iron and sweetness in his tone and everything else in between. Technique and intonation were faultless, runs were immaculately executed and his capacity to transform a simple phrase into gold

with such subtlety of dynamic shading and adjustment of colour was fabulous. Under Krylov, Tchaikovsky's opening movement traversed wistful dreaminess to aristocratic grandeur and his tonal control was beyond reproach. So enthralled was I by his virtuosity I barely noticed the orchestral support. That said, Petrenko's tempi were just right and climaxes were perfectly shaped – especially when urging the players forward just before the cadenza.

Azure skies of the affecting *Canzonetta* were given further lustre by Timothy Lines' eloquent clarinet and Krylov who seemed to pour his heart and soul into every bar, his rapt attention bringing out every nuance of tone that was mesmerising. The *Finale: Allegro vivacissimo* was exactly that – an adrenalin-fuelled tempo that brought seat-of-the-pants exhilaration and boundless joy. One could almost sense unrestrained delight from Krylov as his bow-wielding constantly refuted the claim by the work's dedicatee

Leopold Auer that it was "unplayable". At thirty-four minutes this performance would also have dismissed Edward Hanslick's assertion that the work was "long and pretentious". Further virtuosity followed in the shape of Paganini's *Caprice no. 24 in A minor*.

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Belvedere Road, London, Greater London, SE1 8XX, United Kingdom

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The evening opened with Stravinsky's *Pulcinella Suite*, his first major brush with Baroque idioms, and a bewildering *volte face* that contemporary audiences in 1920 must have found disorienting after his pre-war Russian ballets. From the start, and with a quintet of solo strings surrounding the podium, this was an account that fully underlined Stravinsky's chamber sonorities, beautifully rendered by solo and tutti instrumental exchanges in the opening Sinfonia. The Serenata drew mellifluous playing from Ian

Hardwick's oboe and pairs of horns added warmth of line in the Scherzino. Petrenko's Tarentella had a wonderful lightness of touch, yet rhythmically taut, and the Toccata exuded brilliance from brass and woodwind. The Gavotta too brought many felicitous details as did the *Vivo* with its distinctive and playful solos from double bass and fruity trombone – Stravinsky's tongue here firmly in his cheek. Petrenko coaxed picture book vividness from the LPO, all contributing to the work's witty cocktail of ideas with superb precision.

Following the interval, this ballet-themed concert continued with Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé* (Suite 1 and 2). With the stage now swamped with players, including nine percussionists, thoughts drifted back to the change in Stravinsky's style and orchestral use. But for Ravel's languor and sumptuous harmonies his music could have been mistaken for Stravinsky's *Firebird*. But with Petrenko's firm control there was no possibility of detail becoming submerged under instrumental weight. The whole felt as lean and fluid as *Pulcinella* had been earlier, eight double basses now providing a firm but not unwieldy foundation. Everything gelled from the finely opening Nocturne via the gloriously controlled *Lever du jour* through to the closing bacchanale of the *Danse Générale*. This was a meticulously prepared account, with balance, pace and brilliance of articulation combining to stunning effect.

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