

THE WFMT RADIO NETWORK IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE SERGE RACHMANINOFF FOUNDATION

PRESENTS

“SERGE RACHMANINOFF – THE PATH TO ETERNITY”

This two hour profile is the colourful, moving and often dramatic story of the life and music of the great composer, pianist and conductor Serge Rachmaninoff, revealed in the words of his grandson Alexander, his letters to close friends and relatives, comments from some of his most acclaimed interpreters and scholars, and a wide selection of extracts from his music including many inspired and highly original master-works that were little performed until relatively recently.

Some of Rachmaninoff's works, such as the Second and Third Piano Concertos, the Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, and the C sharp minor Prelude for Piano, were immensely popular in the composer's lifetime and have continued to be some of the most performed of all classical music. These celebrated works, however, represent only a small part of the many-sided genius of Rachmaninoff, whose fertile imagination and passionate musical creativity found inspired and highly original expression in a remarkably wide and varied array of orchestral, instrumental, chamber, opera, choral and solo vocal compositions. In all these often strikingly different works - some drawing on the fantasy of great literary writing the composer so deeply loved, others existing as expressions of feelings without specific connotations – there is the unmistakable voice of Serge Rachmaninoff: be it the voice of poignant longing, macabre drama, romantic passion, or luminous brilliance. It is the voice of a man who rarely spoke about himself in words, a man whose aristocratic refinement and reserve discreetly clothed a life of colour, excitement and drama, and an artistic personality of passion, heart and imagination. That life and personality were inextricably wedded to the beautiful landscapes, powerful traditions and indigenous peoples of the homeland Serge Rachmaninoff loved so deeply and lost so traumatically: the Russia of his childhood, youth and first half of his adult manhood, the country to which he was never able to return after the Revolution of 1917.

“Serge Rachmaninoff – The Path to Eternity” brings the breadth of the life and genius of Rachmaninoff alive with rare intimacy, vividness and authenticity as the composer's grandson Alexander and readings from Rachmaninoff's letters guide us through his experiences, and a stellar line-up of celebrated performers and scholars including Valery Gergiev, Antonio Pappano, Vladimir Jurowski, Gianandrea Noseda, Garrick Ohlsson, Dennis Matsuev, Sean Botkin, Nicolai Lugansky, Geoffrey Norris, and Welz Kauffmann give their insights into a wide range of the composer's creations. These include the three Symphonies, the orchestral tone poems *The Rock* and *The Isle of the Dead*, the Symphonic Dances, the *Vespers*, the cantatas *The Spring* and *The Bells*, the operas *Aleko*, *The Miserly Knight*, and *Francesca da Rimini*, the Russian songs, the four Piano Concertos, the Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, the Preludes for Piano, the *Etudes Tableaux* for Piano, the two Piano Sonatas, the *Corelli Variations*, and the Cello Sonata.

“Serge Rachmaninoff – The Path to Eternity” is a WFMT Radio Network production presented in association with the Serge Rachmaninoff Foundation, which is generously underwriting this documentary profile. The Executive Producers are Steve Robinson, Executive Vice President of the WFMT Radio Network, and Alexander Rachmaninoff, President of the Serge Rachmaninoff Foundation. The Program Producer is Jon Tolansky.

The duration of “Serge Rachmaninoff – The Path to Eternity” is two hours.