March 20-28, 2020
Woman’s Club of Wisconsin
813 E Kilbourn Ave, Milwaukee

Preludes
Music, Lyrics, Book & Orchestrations by Dave Malloy
Preludes was first Produced by LCT3/Lincoln Center Theater, New York City, 2015
Preludes is presented by special arrangement with United Talent Agency

Stage Direction by Jill Anna Ponasik
Music Direction by Ruben Piirainen

This project was supported in part by a grant from the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin and the National Endowment for the Arts.
I’ve admired All In Productions since their very early days. They produce pieces in Milwaukee that are hard to find at other theatres, they take chances on young performers, they create an environment that’s radically inclusive, and they approach their work with genuine exuberance. Plus, they’re really wonderful people. So, it was obviously just a matter of time before I would start bothering them about working on something with MOT.

When we met for the first of many, many coffees. We had a long list of pieces and possibilities to explore. Sitting quietly near the bottom was a weird little piece called Preludes, Dave Malloy’s musical fantasia on the life, work, and writer's block of Sergei Rachmaninoff.

At about this same time, I had the pleasure of attending a luncheon at the Woman’s Club. I was smitten with the building at my first footstep, but it wasn't until after lunch that I wandered upstairs and saw the ballroom. I looked at the piano, the arched ceiling, the windows and chandeliers, and thought, “Oooooohhh… Preludes.”

Since that day, it has taken all three of us working together to pull this thing off. I cannot thank the Woman’s Club enough for sharing your space with us, and All In Productions for your partnership. One of the greatest satisfactions of collaboration is the ability to make something together that none of you could do on your own. That’s certainly the case here.

Thank you for being here to share it with us,

Jill Anna

Fun Fact: The 1954 edition of the Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians dismissed Rachmaninoff’s music as “monotonous in texture… consist[ing] mainly of artificial and gushing tunes” and predicted that his popular success was “not likely to last.”

If the famous Prelude in C# minor catapulted nineteen-year-old Sergei Rachmaninoff to the heights of stardom, then his First Symphony plunged him to the depths of despair. Its composition was a grueling ordeal, written over ten arduous months in 1895, only to receive a disastrous premiere two years later. The brunt of the blame belongs to conductor Alexander Glazunov, who made a slew of nonsensical musical cuts, inadequately rehearsed the orchestra, and may have even been drunk on the podium! Predictably, the critical reception was scathing, with music critic César Cui viciously opining, “If there were a conservatory in Hell, and if one of its talented students were to compose a programme symphony based on the story of the Ten Plagues of Egypt, and if he were to compose a symphony like Mr. Rachmaninoff’s, then he would have fulfilled his task brilliantly.” Poor Rachmaninoff would never be the same.

Following this catastrophe, Rachmaninoff suffered a complete psychological breakdown, and entered a three-year period of depression during which he wrote virtually no new music. During this time, he compared himself to a “man who had suffered a stroke and for a long time had lost the use of his head and hands.” By 1900, composing became completely impossible, and he was referred to the physician (and amateur musician) Nikolai Dahl, who specialized in the emerging field of hypnotherapy. Through daily hypnosis over the course of three months, Rachmaninoff gradually began to shed his trauma and regain his confidence. In 1901, his treatment culminated in the triumphant success of his Piano Concerto No. 2, which marked the end of his depression and remains one his most enduring compositions. In gratitude for his assistance, Rachmaninoff dedicated the concerto to Dahl.
CAST

Rachmaninoff ............................................................................................................................................ Ruben Piirainen
Rach ..................................................................................................................................................................... Joe Picchetti
Dahl .............................................................................................................................................................. Jenny Wanasek*
Natalya ............................................................................................................................................................ Alaina Carlson
Chaliapin ....................................................................................................................................................... Gage Patterson
Chekhov, et al ..................................................................................................................................................... Bill Jackson
Natalya u/s ............................................................................................................................................... Megan McCarthy
Dahl u/s ................................................................................................................................................................ Katie Gruell

*Member of Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States, appearing under a Special Appearance Contract

CREATIVE TEAM

Stage Director .................................................................................................................... Jill Anna Ponasik
Music Director ..................................................................................................................... Ruben Piirainen
Lighting Designer ................................................................................................................... AntiShadows
Sound Designer ..................................................................................................................... Derek Buckles
Costume Designer ............................................................................................................... Lisa Quinn
Stage Manager .................................................................................................................... Allison Kasprovich

ORCHESTRA

Piano ....................................................................................................................................... Ruben Piirainen
Synthesizer 1 .......................................................................................................................... Leticia Broetto
Synthesizer 2 ........................................................................................................................... Marty Butorac

SETTING

Moscow, 1900 / Rachmaninoff’s Mind

SCENES

Your Day
White Lilacs
Dahl
Chekhov
Blocked
Vocalise
Cactus
Subway
Alone
Music
Tchaikovsky
Natalya

(pause)

Loop
Not Alone
The Prelude
Tolstoy
The First Symphony
Audience with the Tsar
Hypnosis
The Second Piano Concerto
Payment
SPECIAL THANKS

Woman’s Club of Wisconsin, Or Matias, Mike Fischer, Lisa Schlenker, Skylight Music Theatre, Leah Potrykus, Joe & Lynn Scheurell, Chris Goode, Joseph Krohlow, Simone Tegge, Adam Qutaishat, Marty Butorac

ABOUT THE CREATORS

Dave Malloy (b. 1976) is a composer, writer, performer, and orchestrator. He has written thirteen musicals, including Octet, a chamber choir musical about internet addiction; Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812, an electropop opera based on a slice of Tolstoy’s War & Peace; and Preludes, a musical fantasia set in the hypnotized mind of Sergei Rachmaninoff. He has won two Obie Awards, a Smithsonian Ingenuity Award, a Theater World Award, the Richard Rodgers Award, an ASCAP New Horizons Award, and a Jonathan Larson Grant, and has been a MacDowell fellow and Composer-in-Residence at Ars Nova and the Signature Theatre.

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943) was born in Russia to a musical family. Educated at the Moscow Conservatory, Rachmaninoff found equal fame as a composer, conductor, and virtuoso pianist. In 1902, he married his cousin Natalia Satina, and in 1906, they moved from Moscow to Dresden. In the wake of the Russian Revolution of 1917, they emigrated to the United States, where Rachmaninoff’s demanding touring schedule significantly reduced the time he could devote to composition. Although he eventually returned to composing, his output from 1918 onward consists of only six pieces, including the Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini of 1934. In June of 1942, his failing health forced him to relocate to Beverly Hills, where he died nine months later of advanced melanoma, four days shy of his seventieth birthday.

WHO’S WHO

Alaina Carlson (Natalya) Performance highlights include MOT’s production of Carmina Burana, Nada (Svadba-Wedding, MOT) Dritte Dame (Die Zauberflöte, Lyric Opera Studio Weimar), Dr. Dulcamara (The Elixir of Love, Opera for the Young), Tessa (The Gondoliers, Madison Savoyards), Stephanie Necrophorous (Nine, Music Theatre of Madison), Cherubino (Le nozze di Figaro, UW Madison Opera), Nancy (Albert Herring, UW Madison Opera), and a season with the Chicago Symphony Chorus. She holds a B.A. from Lake Forest College and a M.M. from UW – Madison.

Bill Jackson (Chekhov, et al.) Bill’s first time with Milwaukee Opera Theatre was as the oldest of Richie’s in A Chorus Line. Highlights from his performance career include Pippin, Sweeney Todd, Little Shop of Horrors, Ain’t Misbehavin’, Once on this Island, The Tempest, Angels in America: Perestroika, Homebody/Kabul, and My Children, My Africa. In addition to performing, Bill also enjoys a directing, choreographing, and writing career. He founded the Creative Writing Department at Milwaukee High School of the Arts and has a Master of Arts from Alverno College.
Gage Patterson (Chaliapin) is a graduate of Carthage College where he received his BA in Music Theatre. He has been seen previously in In Tandem Theatre's Merry Chris-Mess, The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee (William Barfee) with All in Productions, Spring Awakening (Otto) with Three Brothers Theatre, Memories Ballroom’s It’s a Wonderful Life Live Radio Play, and Shrek the Musical (Shrek) with The Box Theatre Company. He can also be heard on the WAIP podcast in various segments.

Joe Picchetti (Rach) is thrilled to return after making his MOT debut as Zach in A Chorus Line. Other regional credits include Photograph 51 and Still (Renaissance Theaterworks), A Christmas Carol (Children’s Theatre of Madison), The Lion in Winter (Milwaukee Chamber Theatre), Twelfth Night and Comedy of Errors (Summit Players Theatre), Stones in His Pockets (Windfall Theatre), and A Number (Splinter Group). He would like to thank his family, friends, and Maddy for their never-ending love and support.

Ruben Piirainen (Rachmaninoff/Music Director) is a Milwaukee-based pianist, music director, vocal coach, composer, teacher, and restaurant owner (Sabrosa Cafe & Gallery in Bay View). He was on the music staff of the Florentine Opera for six seasons and has also appeared with Skylight Music Theatre, Present Music, Brew City Opera, Theatre Gigante, and Opera for the Young, among others. Piirainen holds degrees in piano performance from the Lawrence University Conservatory of Music and Bowling Green State University.

Jenny Wanasek (Dahl) is thrilled to be in this production. Her previous MOT experience was A Chorus Line. She has acted and/or directed for Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Renaissance Theareworks, Chamber Theatre, Next Act, Great American Children’s Theatre and has appeared in many musicals at Skylight Opera Theatre, First Stage, the Marcus Center, and Northern Lights Summer Playhouse. Ms. Wanasek is a Co-Founder, with husband Mark Weinberg, of The Center for Applied Theatre which uses theatre techniques to enact social change.
AntiShadows (Lighting Designer) For more than the last decade, AntiShadows has consumed mass quantities of electricity at American Players Theatre, The Milwaukee Repertory Theater, The Milwaukee Ballet, First Stage Children's Theatre, Milwaukee Opera Theatre, Peninsula Players, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Renaissance Theaterworks, Next Act Theatre, Forward Theatre Company, and many others. Portfolio and information at www.AntiShadows.com

Derek Buckles (Sound Designer) is an award-winning sound designer/composer, audio engineer, and production manager currently based out of Milwaukee, WI. Derek has been a lifelong artist and technician, following in the footsteps of his musician parents. Some of Derek's professional appointments include: Resident Master Carpenter at Timberlake Playhouse, Changeover Deck Chief/Fly Captain/Carpenter at Texas Shakespeare Festival, and Production Manager/House Sound Engineer at the Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts, and Technical Director at All In Productions. dbucklesdesign.com

Leticia Broetto (Synthesizer 1) was born in Botucatu, Brazil and recently graduated from UW-Milwaukee with a Masters in collaborative piano. Her UWM Opera Theatre credits include Les contes d’Hoffmann, Die Already!, So, you think you can Opera? and La Clemenza di Tito, for which she served as rehearsal pianist and harpsichordist. Currently, Leticia works as a Studio Pianist at the Florentine Opera, playing for the company’s education tour and community engagement performances.

Marty Butorac (Synthesizer 2) has been performing in the Milwaukee area since coming to town in 1984 with degrees in Piano Performance and Composition from the Lawrence University Conservatory of Music (BM ’82) and Western Michigan University (MM ’84). Besides piano performance, Marty specializes in contemporary audio production, especially live sound reinforcement associated with new music. Marty was sound designer for MOT’s 2016 production of Song From The Uproar.

Allison Kaspovich (Stage Manager) is excited to work with MOT for the first time. Previous stage management credits include Milwaukee Fringe Fest, Hedwig and the Angry Inch (All in Productions), Chicago (Greendale Community Theatre), as well as ASM credits with Milwaukee Ballet (Ballet Beat, Nutcracker). She also stage manages the live podcast recordings of The Podcast Network. When not working in the theatre, she works in the Oak Creek-Franklin School District.

Jill Anna Ponasik (Stage Director) Now in her 11th season as producing artistic director of Milwaukee Opera Theatre, Jill Anna continues to find great joy in connecting artists and audiences through opera. Her work has been presented in parks and gardens, ballrooms and breweries, churches, classrooms, lobbies, recital halls, bookstores, masonic temples, and sometimes, in theatres. Jill Anna’s 2019-20 season includes Oklahoma!, Ruddigore, Cinderella, and the return of Doc Danger and the Danger Squad. She holds degrees in vocal performance from the University of Minnesota and Rice University.

Lisa Quinn (Costume Designer) Lisa debuts as costume designer at Milwaukee Opera Theatre with Preludes. Lisa’s design credits include: Sunset Playhouse (Into The Woods, The Producers, Mary Poppins, Hairspray, Mamma Mia, and the upcoming Cabaret), Theater RED (Girard’s Nude), local high schools (Big Fish, Peter Pan, Pippin, Tarzan), UWM Dance, and Cardinal Stritch University (The Ugly Duckling, Tartuffe). Lisa has a BFA from UW Milwaukee and lives in Milwaukee.
“Your Day”
Music & Lyrics by Dave Malloy
Suggested by Rachmaninoff’s Piano Concerto no. 2 in C minor, op. 18, 1st Movement, opening phrase and Bach’s 2-Part Invention no. 9 in F minor, BWV 780

“Lilacs”
Music & Lyrics by Dave Malloy
Suggested by Rachmaninoff’s “Lilacs” from 12 Songs, op. 21, no. 5
Prelude in Bb major, op. 23, no. 2
by Sergei Rachmaninoff

“Ho-Ho”
Music & Lyrics by Dave Malloy

“Blocked”
Music & Text by Dave Malloy

“Vocalise,” from 14 Romances, op. 34, no. 14
by Sergei Rachmaninoff
Arranged by Dave Malloy
Étude-tableau in Bb minor, op. 39 no. 4
by Sergei Rachmaninoff

“Subway”
Music & Lyrics by Dave Malloy
Prelude in G# minor, op. 32 no. 12
by Sergei Rachmaninoff

Prelude in G minor, op. 23, no. 5
by Sergei Rachmaninoff

“Trepak” from Songs and Dances of Death
Music by Modest Mussorgsky
Lyrics by Arseny Golenishchev-Kutuzov

Piano Concerto no. 2 in C minor, op. 18, 1st movement, 1st theme
by Sergei Rachmaninoff

Moment Musical in Bb minor, op. 16, no. 1
by Sergei Rachmaninoff

“Tchaikovsky’s Child’s Song”
Music & Lyrics by Dave Malloy

“Natalya”
Music & Lyrics by Dave Malloy
Suggested by Rachmaninoff’s Piano Concerto no. 2 in C minor, op. 18, 2nd movement and Cello Sonata, op. 19, 2nd movement

“Loop”
Music & Lyrics by Dave Malloy
Suggested by Rachmaninoff’s Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, op. 43 and Piano Concerto no. 3 in D minor, op. 30

“Not Alone”
Lyrics by Dave Malloy
Music by Sergei Rachmaninoff
Moment Musical in Db major, op. 16, no. 5
Prelude in C# minor, op. 3, no. 2
by Sergei Rachmaninoff

“Fate” from 12 Songs, op. 21, no. 1
Music by Sergei Rachmaninoff
Lyrics by Aleksy Apukhtin
Suggested by Beethoven’s Symphony no. 5, op. 67

“The First Symphony”
Music & Lyrics by Dave Malloy
Suggested by Rachmaninoff’s Symphony no. 1, op. 13
Symphony no. 6 in F major, op. 68, 2nd movement
by Ludwig van Beethoven
Arranged for piano four hands by Selmar Bagge

“Blagoslovi, dushe moya, Gospoda”
from Vespers, op. 37, no. 2
by Sergei Rachmaninoff
Arranged by Dave Malloy

“Hypnosis”
Music & Lyrics by Dave Malloy
Suggested by Rachmaninoff’s Prelude in G minor, op. 23, no. 5, 2nd theme

“Mountains”
Music & Lyrics by Dave Malloy
Suggested by Rachmaninoff’s “I Came To Her” from 12 Songs, op. 14, no. 4
Piano Concerto no. 2 in C minor, op. 18, 1st movement, 2nd theme
by Sergei Rachmaninoff
ABOUT MILWAUKEE OPERA THEATRE

Milwaukee’s micro-brewery for opera, MOT proudly produces small batches of high-quality, local lyric theatre. Our award-winning productions can pop up in unexpected places, from sculpture gardens, to bookstores, to breweries. In our world, anyplace can be a theatre, and nearly any piece of theater can be an opera. In addition to 3-5 full productions we develop each season, we host monthly Voice Labs for singers, and make original operas inspired by social studies curriculum with Milwaukee sixth graders.

We are Milwaukee’s micro-brewery for opera, proudly producing small batches of high quality, local lyric theatre. We tell stories through music...unconventionally. milwaukeeproduceatre.org

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ABOUT ALL IN PRODUCTIONS

All In Productions was founded with the mission of providing affordable productions of, primarily, lesser known contemporary works for Milwaukee area audiences and creating paying opportunities for local and homegrown artists, celebrating our city’s vibrant performing arts community. AIP has mounted 12 full productions and creates a monthly podcast. allin-mke.com

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Accurately acknowledging our donors is important to us. If you see an error, please accept our apologies and contact us at milwaukeeoperatheatre.org so we can correct it.

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BOOK, MUSIC, AND LYRICS
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