

# ILYA YAKUSHEV

## PIANIST

Special programs celebrating Rachmaninoff's 150th Birthday and the 100th Anniversary of Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" in 2024!

"Mr. Yakushev can do just about anything he wants."

—**NEW YORK TIMES**

**"TOP 10 CLASSICAL  
MUSIC EVENTS OF  
THE YEAR**

An astounding triple debut as part of the San Francisco Symphony's Prokofiev Festival, playing the First Concerto, the Fourth Concerto and the Seventh Sonata with vigor and virtuosity."

—**SAN FRANCISCO  
CHRONICLE**



"An exuberantly outsized performance . . . a winning blend of rapturous lyricism and dramatic flair."

—**SAN JOSE MERCURY NEWS (California Symphony)**

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**E**lectrifying . . . [in Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No 2] Yakushev pounced on his instrument like a wild Siberian tiger, his thundering opening chords crisp and exact . . . impressive tonal range and ability to turn on a kopeck between imperative gesture, that invokes the music's dramatic passion, and delicate lyricism . . . The third section Allegro con fuoco teems with life and joy. So, too, did Yakushev who, as an innate showman, clearly enjoys performing this work. His animated delivery included playing—pun intended—with the orchestra as they traded short musical riffs back and forth. At the end of his performance . . . the audience immediately leapt to their feet.”

—WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

“IN FAMILIAR MUSIC, A PIANIST SHOWS WHAT HE CAN DO [HEADLINE] . . . superb control, bringing the music to the brink of hysteria and the piano's capacity for noise making, without ever letting it get away from him.”

—NEW YORK TIMES

“This is not the first time Yakushev has filled in on short notice. Fans may recall a similar scene in 2008 when, with 24 hours' notice, he played Prokofiev's 'Third Piano Concerto' under Keith Lockhart . . . His interpretation was lively without being manufactured and precise without losing style.” —DESERET NEWS (Salt Lake City)

“We heard things that are usually lost, with interplay between orchestra and piano that sounded like fine chamber music. Yakushev, whose playing shares a spiritual quality with his mentor, Vladimir Feltsman, alternated power with a silken touch; his eloquent playing ranged from the cataclysmic to the poetic, with many passages of extreme beauty. The audience . . . leaped to their feet at the last notes. Yakushev played a Bach piece, like a prayer, as an encore.”

—READING (PA) Eagle

“Mr. Yakushev . . . cultivates a fiery, impetuous persona . . . [he played Prokofiev's first and second sonatas] with both energy and brash humor, and in Schumann's 'Carnaval' collection, he was febrile, ready to pounce but delicate in the gently fluttering 'Reconnaissance.’”

—NEW YORK TIMES

### SPECIAL PROGRAM OPTION:

*Pictures at an Exhibition* with Multi-Media — an unforgettable grand finale to a concert!

Performances of Mussorgsky's masterpiece, *Pictures at an Exhibition*, accompanied by a video (operated by Mr. Yakushev himself from the keyboard), portraying the paintings described by the music, along with Mr. Yakushev's enlightening commentary.

“A wonderful combination of delicacy and fire . . . dizzying vigor . . . an exuberant coda.”

—MORNING CALL (Reading, PA)



“Yakushev moved through the 24 variations of the [Rachmaninoff] Rhapsody with some good-natured showmanship and enviable ease, leaving himself enough time to make eye contact with audience and orchestra every now and then. His pianism was energetic, witty and playful and the contrasts he created between the lighter and gloomier variations were profound . . . he rewarded the audience with a dreamy encore piece by Chopin.” —SAN FRANCISCO CLASSICAL VOICE

“Without a doubt, the most engaging portion of the evening was Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No 1, featuring Ilya Yakushev . . . Yakushev's performance was charismatic and energetic, and he held these disparate parts together with great humor, even across some fiendishly difficult passages. Yakushev also carried the other crowd-pleaser of the evening, Gershwin's 1924 Rhapsody in Blue. Here again he showed a talent for milking the piece for all of its expressive twists and turns . . .”

—MADISON.COM

“The Maestro built this program with a showman's sensibility, saving the best for last with Yakushev's passionate embrace of [Rachmaninoff's 2nd Concerto]. Usually, it is preferable to be seated where you can watch a piano soloist's hands. But it was a pleasure to be facing Yakushev and witnessing how absorbed he was, not only in the piano challenge the composer presented him, but also in the work the orchestra was doing behind him.” —COPIOUS NOTES

“When Ilya Yakushev began [Rachmaninoff's Second Concerto] the rumbling passion that issued from the keyboard and infused the orchestra came as a relief . . . a beautiful performance [that] brought to mind Elton John.” —TIMES UNION (Schenectady, NY)

“Musical pyrotechnics reached stratospheric heights [in] Mendelssohn's hyper-virtuosic Piano Concerto No.1 . . . Ilya Yakushev generated clouds of notes at a stunning rate, yet each run, cascade, torrent seemed perfectly articulated . . . everything leaned forward to the madcap sprint in the final movement with Yakushev fire-walking up and down the keyboard and ultimately yanking the audience to a standing, cheering ovation.” —THE TELEGRAM (Worcester, MA)