

## Scriabin Resounds: Vasily Petrenko and Oslo Philharmonic launch the first instalment in complete cycle of Scriabin symphonies

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On 23 October 2015 the Oslo Philharmonic will launch the first release in a series of the complete symphonies of Alexander Scriabin. The orchestra and its Chief Conductor, Vasily Petrenko, offer the captivating coupling of the Russian composer's Symphony No.3 'Divine Poem' and *Le Poème de l'extase* ('The Poem of Ecstasy'), otherwise known as his Symphony No.4. Both works were recorded in Oslo in February. Orchestra and conductor will record Scriabin's Symphony No.2 in concert during the 2015-16 season and complete the cycle the following season with the composer's first and fifth symphonies.

The new album marks the start of a creative partnership between the Oslo Philharmonic and LAWO Classics, the Norwegian independent recording company critically acclaimed for its use of Digital eXtreme Definition or DXD sound. The recording was produced by John Fraser in collaboration with Arne Akselberg, both of whom have a long-standing relationship with the orchestra developed during Mariss Jansons' tenure as its Chief Conductor.

"I have recorded several albums with John and invited him to work with us quite simply because he is one of the best record producers in the business," notes Vasily Petrenko. "Of course he knows the Oslo Konserthus very well, the challenges of the hall and where to place microphones to get the best possible sound. He still has many friends in the orchestra and they enjoyed a happy reunion. LAWO is an impressive label, with some excellent chamber music recordings in its catalogue. They have fantastic recording equipment and it made good sense for us to work with them on our Scriabin project."

Scriabin's deep immersion in esoteric philosophy and related spiritual awakening became integral to his art. The Russian composer's initial conservative musical language evolved in the early 1900s and opened up to daring harmonic territories. His art was in part influenced by his reading of Helena Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine*, a syncretic blend of ancient wisdom, occult practices, mysticism, and critical reactions to Darwin and modern 'materialist' science. Vasily Petrenko is eager to programme and, if possible, record Scriabin's *Preparation for the Final Mystery*, part of a vast work left unfinished at the time of the composer's death in 1915. "Alexander Nemtin completed the *Final Mystery* from the surviving sketches after working on them for over 20 years," recalls the conductor. "This would be a great way to crown our work with Scriabin. At first the orchestra was a little unsure about his music, but they worked very hard on the *Symphony No.3* and the 'Poem of Ecstasy' and are now big enthusiasts for Scriabin."

Ingrid Røynesdal, the Oslo Philharmonic's Chief Executive Officer, underlines the value of recording to an orchestra's artistic development. "It remains one of the best ways of showcasing the fruits of a successful relationship between a conductor and orchestra to an international audience," she notes. "Vasily Petrenko is passionate about Scriabin. His music especially suits the Oslo Philharmonic, with its rich string sound, fantastic woodwind soloists and uniquely strong brass section."

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