

## Alexander Melnikov as a guest of the Rachmaninoffs

Sunday, January 28, concert at 11:15 a.m. and  
Monday, January 29, 2024, master class at 10:15 a.m.

Report by Andrea Loetscher, Artistic and Managing Director of the Serge Rachmaninoff Foundation

Arrival on January 27, 2024 of Alexander Melnikov from Berlin via Zurich at Lucerne station on track 6 at 21:51. Andrea Loetscher picks up Alexander Melnikov and the excitement at Rachmaninoff's Villa Senar is palpable. On the journey to Weggis the next day, the nervousness, coupled with awe and slight joy at the days ahead, is present. During the drive, Alexander tries to convince Andrea that he can't actually play the piano. As a distraction, they talk about airplanes, why Alexander would have preferred to become a pilot, his affinity for airplanes, politics, powerlessness, family, the fact that he has just received a provisional rejection after applying to become a pilot for an airline.

As soon as he arrives at Rachmaninoff's Villa Senar, Alexander carefully approaches the piano with devotion. Yes, the pianist Melnikov has arrived, focused, the pilot Melnikov seems far away. There is a certain mystical atmosphere in the room.

The matinée on Sunday, a gray January morning, attracts a special audience. Having traveled from far and wide, the depth of Melnikov's piano playing is admired as soon as they arrive. Fans, respect, joy, humility and a passion for Rachmaninoff and the art of the piano fill the house.

Rachmaninoff's studio is well attended except for the chaise longue. A concentrated, special concert. Alexander Melnikov is beaming, smiling, delighted - and he only shares this feeling on special occasions and special moments. The students of the Lucerne School of Music, who are allowed to take part in the masterclass the following day - sponsored by the Serge Rachmaninoff Foundation - take away an unusual amount of input from Alexander Melnikov.

The young pianist, composer and arranger Pavel Stöckmann from Biel, who approaches the interpretations with great sensitivity, intelligence and enthusiasm and also quickly absorbs Alexander Melnikov's suggestions, was particularly striking. A real discovery. Pavel Stöckmann also integrates Rachmaninoff's grand piano into the interpretation, playing it with great feeling.

"Dear Andrea, here it is "officially" - I am so grateful for the last 48 hours. It felt like I could breathe again. I also thank you personally for your hospitality, care and intelligence. I know we can make a good recording in July 2024 - and I'm really looking forward to it." Alexander Melnikov, private WhatsApp message, January 2024

Ticket price 75 CHF.

The Serge Rachmaninoff Foundation covered the remaining costs for this event in full: travel expenses, overnight stay at the Campus Hotel Hertenstein, piano tuning, catering, programmes, marketing, ticketing, organization, sep- sons, on-site presence of Managing & Artistic Director Andrea Loetscher, 2 employees for ticket control and security, use of infrastructure, cleaning. Alexander Melnikov approached the Foundation as a donation and an opportunity to get to know the piano before the recording. The Serge Rachmaninoff Foundation is very grateful to Alexander Melnikov.  
Lump sum CHF 8000.

At [www.rachmaninoff.ch](http://www.rachmaninoff.ch) you will find coverage, an archive of the 2023 events, the link to social media as well as news and events in 2024.