

## **Matinée with Rachmaninoff Award winner**

**Kiron Atom Tellian**

Sunday, August 17, 2025, 12:15 p.m.

**Alexander Nikolayevich Scriabin (1872–1915)**

Piano Sonata No. 2, Op. 19

Étude Op. 65, No. 1

Étude Op. 65, No. 3

Étude Op. 42, No. 1

Étude Op. 42, No. 3

Étude Op. 42, No. 4

Étude Op. 42, No. 5

Étude Op. 42, No. 8

Étude Op. 8, No. 10

Étude Op. 8, No. 12

**Robert Schumann (1810–1856)**

Symphonic Etudes, Op. 13

**Kiron Atom Tellian on**

**RACHMANINOFF'S GRAND PIANO**

Austrian pianist and composer Kiron Atom Tellian is currently completing his bachelor's degree at the Juilliard School in New York with Maestro Sergei Babayan. He is

the proud recipient of the prestigious Kovner Scholarship, which covers all costs for the entire duration of his studies.

Tellian grew up in Vienna and began studying piano at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (MDW) at the age of seven. He made his debut with an orchestra at the age of nine.

Tellian has won numerous first prizes at national and international competitions for piano, chamber music, and composition in Austria, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Italy, Slovakia, Russia, England, the USA, and Japan.

In the fall of 2024, Tellian won the Young Concert Artists Susan Wadsworth International Auditions. He has also been awarded eight special prizes, including the Friends of Music Concerts Performance Award, the Hayden's Ferry Chamber Music Series Prize, the Liliane Questel Recital Award, the Serge Rachmaninoff Foundation Prize, the Alexander Kasza-Kasser Concert Prize, the Paul A. Fish Memorial Prize, and the Stern Young Artist Development Award.

Among his other prizes, the first prize and the Haydn Prize at the renowned 17th International Piano Competition in Ettlingen (Germany), the Grand Prize and special prizes at the Xth Savshinsky International Music Competition in Saint Petersburg (Russia), and three first prizes in three different categories at the Fifth Rosalyn Tureck International Bach Competition in New York City (USA) are particularly noteworthy.

Tellian won the Grand Prize, the Alexei Sultanov Memorial Discovery Prize, and the prizes for best mazurka and best etude at the International Chopin Competition in Nashville. Shortly thereafter, Tellian won first prize at the Borderland Chopin International Competition.

As a composer, Tellian's work encompasses various instruments and ensembles, with many of his compositions winning first prizes in composition competitions. This season, he was commissioned to write a piece for orchestra to be performed at the Vienna Musikverein.

Highlights of the past season included concerts with conductor and violinist Emmanuel Tjeknavorian, including duo recitals at the shoe factory in Cyprus as part of the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Festival in Germany, broadcast live on NDR, and

at the Viotti Festival in Italy. Tellian played Chopin recitals at the opening of the renowned Kulturfest music festival at Walpersdorf Castle, as well as at the Blaibach Concert Hall and the Vienna Konzerthaus, and performed with orchestras such as the WKO Heilbronn. Another highlight was his invitation to the Verbier Festival, where he performed both as a soloist and in chamber music ensembles.

Recent and upcoming highlights include recitals at the Vienna Konzerthaus, the Viotti Festival, and the Vienna Musikverein, with the El Paso Symphony and the San Diego Symphony in August 2025. A special moment will be Tellian's debut with the Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano, where he will perform Chopin's First Piano Concerto.

Among the special moments of the coming season is Tellian's appearance at Villa Senar at the invitation of the Rachmaninoff Foundation. He will make his debut with the San Diego Symphony Orchestra and perform a solo concert at Carnegie Hall.

### **What particularly moves you about Rachmaninoff's music?**

For me, Rachmaninoff's music embodies exactly what music should be in the deepest sense: the combination of a unique depth of feeling with tremendous musical expressiveness and consummate mastery of compositional technique. His music touches you directly — regardless of how much you know about music or how close you are to it. Everyone in the audience feels addressed; Rachmaninoff's music reaches everyone. His works can evoke ecstatic joy as well as deepest sadness — so it's no surprise to me that he is one of the most popular composers. For me, Rachmaninoff is ultimately a feeling that cannot be put into words, but only experienced — every time his music is played.

### **When did you first come into contact with Rachmaninoff's music?**

I basically grew up with Rachmaninoff's music. Born in Vienna, music was a natural part of my life from the very beginning — it's impossible to pinpoint exactly when it started. Rachmaninoff was always present. I remember well how, even as a child, I desperately wanted to play his music on, even though my hands were still too small to reach some of the passages. Nevertheless, this music fascinated me immediately. Major milestones such as his piano concertos were always familiar and something I longed for. So I was all the happier when I was able to perform his Third Piano Concerto for the first time last spring — a very special moment for me.

**What is your personal favorite piece by Sergei Vasilievich and why?**

To be honest, I find it very difficult to name just one favorite piece by Rachmaninoff. Of course, his piano concertos are at the forefront for me. The third, which I had the privilege of performing for the first time in April, but also the second, which I am particularly looking forward to performing in the coming season, are absolute highlights. But regardless of whether they are large works or miniatures, they all contain an incredible richness that reveals new facets time and again. One work that is particularly close to my heart is his cello sonata, which I have played many times and which simply captivates with its perfection of form and emotionality. With Rachmaninoff, I discover something new every time, no matter how long I have been studying his works. He challenges you, pushes the boundaries of what is possible – both in terms of playing technique and composition – but always remains anchored in emotion.

**How does it feel, how was the anticipation for this concert?**

I am filled with great joy to be here. A lot has changed for me since my great success at the two YCA Susan Wadsworth International Auditions in New York last fall. When I found out that I had been invited to Villa Senar and the Rachmaninoff Foundation, I began to feel a very special anticipation – this concert is certainly a highlight of my summer. It is also an atmospheric start to the new season for me. And I would like to add: as wonderful as it is to play in large concert halls, it is often the smaller, more intimate venues where the greatest magic unfolds. Here, a closeness develops between the artist and the audience that makes the shared experience of this magnificent music even more intense.