



# Alexanderio Paley dovana gimtajai Moldovai – unikalus koncertų ciklas su Lietuvos valstybinio simfoninio orkestru

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Alexander Paley. D. Matvejevo nuotr.

(This TV interview has been translated from Lithuanian to English below)

Piano virtuoso Alexander Paley, together with the Lithuanian State Symphony Orchestra conducted by maestro Gintaras Rinkevičius, will begin a unique cycle on October 17, 2025, at the LVSO Concert Hall, in which all five piano concertos by the Jewish-born Moldavian pianist and composer Anton Rubinstein (1829–1894) will be performed. “This will be the first time not only in Lithuania, but also in general, because no one in the world has performed all five of A. Rubinstein’s concertos on one stage,” said A. Paley. The pianist does not hide that this cycle of virtuoso concerts is also his very personal gratitude to his native Moldova.

Alexander, first of all, I would like to ask why you chose to play A. Rubinstein? How did the idea of playing his entire cycle of piano concertos come about?

First of all, it is very important to me, because Anton Rubinstein – the most famous pianist and composer of the 19th century – was born in Moldova, just like me. He was a Moldovan Jew, and in Moldova his name is absolutely sacred. My parents were doctors, and the house where I was born and raised was next to the Medical University, where they studied. One of their professors had a piano that belonged to A. Rubinstein. It was an incredibly beautiful instrument, made by the now-defunct famous company “Becker”. It was given to A. Rubinstein as a gift – decorated with pearls, diamonds and other jewels. Currently, in the small village of

Vychvatinci, where the composer was born, there is an A. Rubinstein Music School. This piano is also kept there. This is the story of my fascination with A. Rubinstein.

I have read a lot about him – for example, all his letters to his mother were written in German, because that was the language they spoke at home. Later, he went to study in Vienna and became an absolutely exceptional, inspiring personality – a true ideal of mine since childhood. When it comes to this composer, there is only one problem – he created a huge amount of music: numerous piano works, operas, oratorios, but not all of them can be called masterpieces. There are particularly good works, but there are also real masterpieces, among them – the five piano concertos by A. Rubinstein. If we talk specifically about the piano concerto as a genre in which a pianist can reveal all his mastery, these five piano concertos by A. Rubinstein are indeed five masterpieces. The fourth concerto is most often performed, and all the others – very rarely. What we are going to perform with maestro G. Rinkevičius is a unique idea: no one in the world has done this before. This will be the first time not only in Lithuania, but also in general, because no one in the world has performed all five of A. Rubinstein's concert cycles on one stage. This was my big dream.

I also want to share that while still living in the Soviet Union, I visited the Ministry of Culture of Moldova and suggested that the Music Academy of Chisinau - my hometown, the capital of Moldova - should be named after A. Rubinstein. Because how many Rubinsteins are there in the world who came from Moldova? Not a single one. At first, everything was fine, but those were terrible Soviet times - years marked by fascist anti-Semitism. As soon as they heard the surname ending in "stein", the conversation ended there. It was a great pity, but A.

Rubinstein's name is still considered sacred in Moldova. With this concert cycle, among other things, I also express great respect for the country where I was born, where I learned to play the piano. For me, this is very personal. So I am extremely happy that maestro G. Rinkevičius agreed to take on this project. This is a truly exceptional idea – the first of its kind not only in Lithuania, but also in the world.

You mentioned that what you will perform on the stage of the LVSO concert hall will be a unique phenomenon. Why has no one undertaken to perform all five of A. Rubinstein's piano concertos until now?

Some of these works are performed, but this happens extremely rarely. First of all, as a musician I can say: these concertos are extremely complex. A. Rubinstein's approach to the piano was completely different from other composers. It is difficult to even imagine what kind of hands he had. This is extremely technically complex, unusual music, which has no analogues among the works of that time. It is precisely for these reasons that it is performed very rarely – it simply requires enormous work.

How would you describe A. Rubinstein's music to listeners? What can they expect when they come to listen to his concerts?

Let's start with the fact that this music is extremely masterfully composed for the piano, using a wide variety of techniques. It can be recognized by the influences of composers such as F. Mendelssohn, F. Chopin and, of course, F. Liszt. In addition to all this, I hope that it will be a very interesting experience for listeners, because they have probably never heard anything like it before.

Let's return to your native country for a moment. What kind of Moldova do you remember from your childhood and how do you see it today?

My childhood in Moldova was very happy. I was their whole life for my parents and grandparents. I had a wonderful first teacher, Madame Revzo. True, she is no longer with us for a long time, but, believe me, there is not a day that goes by that I don't remember her or think about her. Especially now that I teach students myself, I realize even more how wise and extraordinary she was. My first teacher was born in Paris and studied in Milan.

Secondly, Moldova is my homeland. I try to go there every year. I am very proud that last year, the President of Moldova, Maia Sandu, awarded me the country's highest art award – the title of "People's Artist". I went to the Presidential Palace to receive it. I must admit that I am usually a little skeptical about various awards, but this time my heart rejoiced, because this is my country. I studied here, I became who I am here. It was extremely important to me. Moldova is a wonderful country. I wish it all the best, because Moldovans are extremely hospitable, simple, hardworking and warm people. This is a typical southern country, and I am a true southerner. How long have you lived in Moldova?

I lived in Moldova until I was almost eighteen – my entire childhood passed there. I graduated from the Chisinau Music School, similar to your M.K. Čiurlionis Art School in Vilnius. Later I went to study in Moscow. After my studies I returned to Moldova for a short time, worked here for a while, and then, as you know, I fled to the United States of America. Since then, when I return to Moldova, my heart always beats joyfully, because here I know every stone, and the people know me. Also, there are still older people living in Moldova who remember my debut on stage with the orchestra and my mother. I am always very excited when I appear in this country, because the audience is quite demanding – they always compare how it was before and how it is now. I say this completely seriously. I am very happy to talk about Moldova, because it is very dear to me personally.

The first concert of the Anton Rubinstein concert series with pianist Alexander Paley and the Lithuanian State Symphony Orchestra will take place on 17 October 2025 at 7 pm, the second on 14 November 2025 at 7 pm in the LVSO Concert Hall. Conductor: maestro Gintaras Rinkevičius. Tickets are distributed by the LVSO Concert Hall box office and Bilietai.lt. The orchestra's general sponsor is Embank, and the patron is the law firm Cobalt.