

## MEMORIAL TO DAVID FERRÉ AND ANDRÉ TCHAIKOWSKY

The Karlskrona International Piano Festival (October 13-16, 2022) included events memorializing André Tchaikowsky and David Ferré. Here is my (Robert Ferré) personal review of the event.

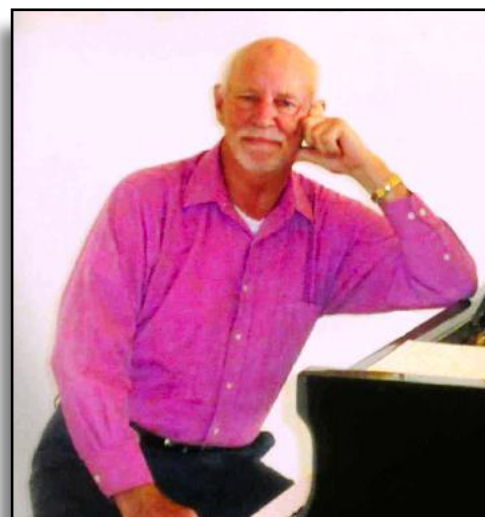
David was the first person to begin gathering information about André Tchaikowsky shortly after André died forty years ago (1982). His archives, this website, and knowledge helped many others to express their interest in André's performances, life, and compositions. One of those people was Dr. Anastasia Belina, who wrote the book *A Musician Divided: André Tchaikowsky in his Own Words* (see: <https://www.amazon.com/Musician-Divided-Andr%C3%A9-Tchaikowsky-Musicians/dp/0907689884>) and had a large part in the full-length documentary, *Rebel of the Keys* ([www.rebelofthekeys.com](http://www.rebelofthekeys.com)).

When David passed away in September, 2020, I discovered Anastasia had married concert pianist Peter Jablonski and moved to Karlskrona, Sweden, Peter's hometown. Her impresario talents led to the founding of the Karlskrona International Piano Festival several years ago. When we discussed an appropriate way to memorialize David, Anastasia offered the vehicle of the



piano festival. Hence the location.

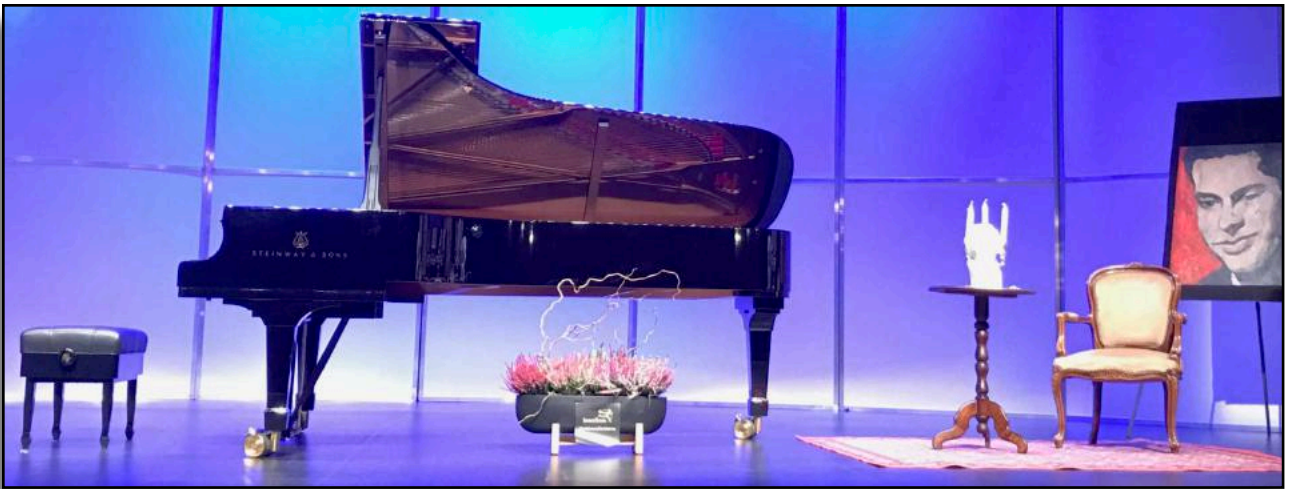
There is another connection, however, since our father immigrated to the United States from Sweden in 1922.



Above: David Ferré

Left: Anastasia Belina and Peter Jablonski

The evening of October 14th began with the showing of the documentary, *Rebel of the Keys*, with commentary by Anastasia. The second part of the evening included the performance of André's piano *Inventions* by pianist Jack Campbell (UK). Jack, it turns out, had a large role in the festival which included performing three times. He had studied with Peter Jablonski at the Royal College of Music in London prior to Peter's move to Sweden. Jack was the winner of the Keyboard Category prize and Walter Todds Bursary in the BBC Young Musician Competition 2016. He graduated from the Royal College of Music in London in 2022. His musical interests are broad and diverse (see [www.jackcampbell.uk](http://www.jackcampbell.uk)).



*Above: The stage at the Concert Hall with a portrait of André Tchaikowsky*

It was a long evening, as the film and commentary took almost two hours. We had not yet met Jack Campbell and were intrigued by the fluidity and calm confidence of his play. The attendance was dwarfed by the size of the concert hall. I predict within a few years as the festival becomes better known seats will become a premium.

The 15th of October proved to be a glorious day of sunshine and warm temperatures. Our small family group consisted of me (David's brother), Linda Ricketts (my wife), Kathy Childs (David's widow), Corinna Ferré (David's daughter), and Diane, a friend and traveling companion of Corinna.



*Above: Robert, Linda, Corinna, Diane. (Kathy took the photo.)*



David's memorial was held in the performance hall of the Marine Museum, which has glass walls looking out at the water. During the event we saw yellow car ferries, a cruise liner and other ships passing by. Earlier, Linda and I had spent two hours enjoying the museum, which is quite spectacular.



*Foreground: The Marine Museum. The concert hall is on the right (glass windows). A walkway surrounds the building so that walkers and joggers also passed by during the evening.*

The first piece of the evening was *Prelude for David*, a piece I commissioned for the event composed by Calin Huma and performed by Jack Campbell (right). In composing the piece, Huma became inspired to work on an entire piano concerto, scored for full orchestra, of which the Prelude will be part. That will be a wonderful lasting tribute to David, whereas the festival was a singular event.



As always, there are interesting synchronicities. Calin Huma was born in Iasi, Romania. He has worked in Britain for over two decades connecting business interests between the UK and Romania, composing on the side. In recognition of his work, the Romanian government has appointed Huma as an honorary consul. Meanwhile, Jack Campbell, who played *Prelude for David*, was a semifinalist in the George Enescu competition in Romania. (Georges Enesco was a Romanian composer, violinist, conductor and teacher regarded as one of Romania's greatest musicians.)

Wait, there's more. Peter Jablonski has for several years served as a judge for the Enescu Competition. Further, he has a close connection to André Tchaikowsky as Peter studied with Mihai Wesolowski, who was in relationship with André. Small world.

The interior of the Marine Museum concert hall is adorned with massive figureheads that once decorated the bows of sailing ships. In fact, the space is called Figurehead Hall. It contains the finest collection of figureheads in the world, several meters high, that once decorated the bow of Swedish warships. According to the museum website: *What is unique about these figureheads is that almost all of them have been involved in major battles, most in the years 1788-1790 when Sweden was at war with Russia.*

Figureheads served as icons with strong magical or religious meaning. I took the photo below while people were arriving and choosing seats.





I hope I'm not disclosing family secrets by adding an esoteric element to this review. A large body of evidence shows that those who have passed on sometimes make their presence known to those left behind. David was an electrical engineer. Kathy reports that, among other anomalies, lights in the house sometimes blink or turn on or off. At such times she feels David's presence. In the concert hall, each figurehead is lighted by a spotlight. For one of them, to our far right, the spotlight kept blinking on and off throughout the concert. Some of us feel that was an indication David was there. And why not?

The remainder of the program for the evening consisted of two very difficult piano trios (piano, violin, cello), one written by André Tchaikowsky and the other by the more famous Peter Tchaikowsky (no relation). It is certain that this was the first time ever for these two very demanding pieces to be played back to back. Quite an undertaking.



**Per Nyström** is a Swedish cellist, co-founder & artistic advisor of Old Ox Chamber Music, which in ten years has become one of the world's biggest platforms for classical festivals & master classes, attracting the most sought-after classical artists and professors. Per's cello is a Giuseppe & Antonio Gagliano of Naples from 1796 on which he recently started to record all the Bach suites for solo cello. He was awarded the 'Litteris et Artibus' medal by the Swedish King for his achievements as a cellist in 2013.

Swedish/Kurdish violinist **Brusk Zanganeh** leads an active performing career as soloist and chamber musician. Since making his concerto debut at age twelve, Brusk has performed as soloist throughout north/south America, the UK, Asia, Middle East and continental Europe. Today Brusk is violinist in Uppsala Kammarorkestern and Concertmaster in Uppsala Chamber Orchestra. Brusk plays on a Gennaro Gagliano kindly on loan from the Järnåkerfonden and a P. Westerlund Violin.

**Peter Jablonski** is an award-winning internationally acclaimed Swedish pianist. He is among the leading pianists of his generation, and during the last thirty years on international stages has performed with over 150 orchestras, given over 2000 concerts. (See: [www.peterjablonski.com](http://www.peterjablonski.com))

The final day of the festival, Sunday, October 16, was held at the Karlskrona Concert Hall, as were the programs on October 13 and 14. Frankly, I don't remember many details. Perhaps I was still in a daze from David's memorial, or maybe from our lunch at Gelato Cafe. Pardon me for my lapse of memory. Can I blame age? I'm 78, the same age as David when he died. On this website is a link to the full program which you can consult for more details. I do remember the pieces for two pianos played by Peter Jablonski and Jack Campbell. They looked like they were having fun up there.

And then the festival was over, our purpose fulfilled, two years of planning come to fruition, thousands of miles of travel and airports, taxis and hotels. And it was well worth the effort. The success called for a celebration, and so we did, at a reception at Anastasia and Peter's classic country house.

In both Denmark and Sweden we encountered Smørrebrød. Smørre means butter and brød means bread. These are open-faced sandwiches with an amazing selection of delicacies on top. Whole restaurants specialize in nothing but these sandwiches. The reception featured a Smörgåstårte, which is numerous Smørrebröds (with meat and cheese and other toppings) piled on top of each other, covered with frosting like a cake, and decorated with yet more toppings.



And so my review comes to an end. Now I have one more task with regard to David and André: finding a qualified and dedicated curator for this website. David used to work on it almost every day, sometimes for hours. His physical archives about André are now harbored at the University of Warsaw, in Poland. They have showed some interest in the website, but institutions move slowly. Perhaps an energetic individual or group would be the best solution. The technology is rather old (dozens of MP3 recordings, for example. and .htm files). There are more than 7,000 individual files. My list of the files, in small print and several columns, covers 40 pages. Perhaps a grant could be obtained to pay for the updating and modernizing of this important resource. I welcome all viable inquiries.

Robert Ferré

November, 2022