



The  
Philadelphia  
Orchestra

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music Director

Chopin and  
Shostakovich

November 9, 2022

2022-23  
SEASON

# The Philadelphia Orchestra

Wednesday, November 9, at 8:00

On the Digital Stage

**Kensho Watanabe** Conductor

**Sergio Tiempo** Piano

**Skoryk/arr. Gryniv** Melody, for solo violin and string orchestra

*David Kim, violin*

**Chopin** Piano Concerto No. 1 in E minor, Op. 11

I. Allegro maestoso

II. Romanze: Larghetto

III. Rondo: Vivace

**Shostakovich** Symphony No. 5 in D minor, Op. 47

I. Moderato—Allegro non troppo

II. Allegretto

III. Largo

IV. Allegro non troppo

This program runs approximately 1 hour, 40 minutes.

# The Philadelphia Orchestra

**Yannick Nézet-Séguin**

Music Director

*Walter and Leonore Annenberg Chair*

**Nathalie Stutzmann**

Principal Guest Conductor

*Ralph and Beth Johnston Muller Chair*

**Gabriela Lena Frank**

Composer-in-Residence

**Austin Chanu**

Conducting Fellow

**Tristan Rais-Sherman**

Conducting Fellow

**Charlotte Blake Alston**

Storyteller, Narrator, and Host

*Osage and Losenge Imasoge Chair*

**Frederick R. Haas**

Artistic Advisor

*Fred J. Cooper Memorial Organ Experience*

## First Violins

David Kim, Concertmaster

*Dr. Benjamin Rush Chair*

Juliette Kang, First Associate

Concertmaster

*Joseph and Marie Field Chair*

Christine Lim, Assistant Concertmaster

Marc Rovetti, Assistant Concertmaster

Barbara Govatos

*Robert E. Mortensen Chair*

Jonathan Beiler

Hirono Oka

Richard Amoroso

*Robert and Lynne Pollack Chair*

Yayoi Numazawa

Jason DePue

*Larry A. Grika Chair*

Jennifer Haas

Miyo Curnow

Elina Kalendarova

Daniel Han

Julia Li

William Polk

Mei Ching Huang

## Second Violins

Kimberly Fisher, Principal

*Peter A. Benoliel Chair*

Paul Roby, Associate Principal

*Sandra and David Marshall Chair*

Dara Morales, Assistant Principal

*Anne M. Buxton Chair*

Philip Kates

Davy Booth

Paul Arnold

*Joseph Brodo Chair, given by Peter A. Benoliel*

Boris Balter

Amy Oshiro-Morales

Yu-Ting Chen

Jeoung-Yin Kim

## Violas

Choong-Jin Chang, Principal

*Ruth and A. Morris Williams, Jr., Chair*

Kirsten Johnson, Associate Principal

Kerri Ryan, Assistant Principal

Judy Geist

Renard Edwards

Anna Marie Ahn Petersen

*Piasecki Family Chair*

David Nicastrò

Burchard Tang

Che-Hung Chen

Rachel Ku

Marvin Moon

Meng Wang

## Cellos

Hai-Ye Ni, Principal

Priscilla Lee, Associate Principal

Yumi Kendall, Assistant Principal

*Elaine Woo Camarda and A. Morris Williams, Jr., Chair*

Richard Harlow

*Orton P. and Noël S. Jackson Chair*

Kathryn Picht Read

Robert Cafaro

*Volunteer Committees Chair*

Ohad Bar-David  
John Koen  
Derek Barnes  
Alex Veltman

### **Basses**

(position vacant), Principal  
*Carole and Emilio Gravagno Chair*  
Gabriel Polinsky, Associate Principal  
Joseph Conyers, Assistant Principal  
*Tobey and Mark Dichter Chair*  
David Fay  
Duane Rosengard  
Nathaniel West  
Michael Franz  
Christian Gray

*Some members of the string sections voluntarily rotate seating on a periodic basis.*

### **Flutes**

Jeffrey Khaner, Principal  
*Paul and Barbara Henkels Chair*  
Patrick Williams, Associate Principal  
*Rachelle and Ronald Kaiserman Chair*  
Olivia Staton  
Erica Peel, Piccolo

### **Oboes**

Philippe Tondre, Principal  
*Samuel S. Fels Chair*  
Peter Smith, Associate Principal  
Jonathan Blumenfeld  
*Edwin Tuttle Chair*  
Elizabeth Starr Masoudnia,  
English Horn  
*Joanne T. Greenspun Chair*

### **Clarinets**

Ricardo Morales, Principal  
*Leslie Miller and Richard Worley Chair*  
Samuel Caviezel, Associate Principal  
*Sarah and Frank Coulson Chair*  
Socrates Villegas  
Paul R. Demers, Bass Clarinet  
*Peter M. Joseph and Susan Rittenhouse  
Joseph Chair*

### **Bassoons**

Daniel Matsukawa, Principal  
*Richard M. Klein Chair*  
Mark Gigliotti, Co-Principal  
Angela Anderson Smith  
Holly Blake, Contrabassoon

### **Horns**

Jennifer Montone, Principal  
*Gray Charitable Trust Chair*  
Jeffrey Lang, Associate Principal  
*Hannah L. and J. Welles Henderson Chair*  
Christopher Dwyer  
Chelsea McFarland  
Ernesto Tovar Torres  
Shelley Showers

### **Trumpets**

(position vacant), Principal  
*Marguerite and Gerry Lenfest Chair*  
Jeffrey Curnow, Associate Principal  
*Gary and Ruthanne Schlarbaum Chair*  
Anthony Prisk

### **Trombones**

Nitzan Haroz, Principal  
*Neubauer Family Foundation Chair*  
Matthew Vaughn, Co-Principal  
Blair Bollinger, Bass Trombone  
*Drs. Bong and Mi Wha Lee Chair*

### **Tuba**

Carol Jantsch, Principal  
*Lyn and George M. Ross Chair*

### **Timpani**

Don S. Liuzzi, Principal  
*Dwight V. Dowley Chair*  
Angela Zator Nelson, Associate Principal

### **Percussion**

Christopher Deviney, Principal  
Pedro Fernández, Associate Principal  
Angela Zator Nelson

### **Piano and Celesta**

Kiyoko Takeuti

### **Keyboards**

Davyd Booth

### **Harp**

Elizabeth Hainen, Principal

### **Librarians**

Nicole Jordan, Principal

### **Stage Personnel**

Dennis Moore, Jr., Manager  
Francis "Chip" O'Shea



Jessica Griffin

The world-renowned Philadelphia Orchestra strives to share the transformative power of music with the widest possible audience, and to create joy, connection, and excitement through music in the Philadelphia region, across the country, and around the world. Through innovative programming, robust education initiatives, a commitment to its diverse communities, and the embrace of digital outreach, the ensemble is creating an expansive future for classical music, and furthering the place of the arts in an open and democratic society. In June 2021 the Orchestra and its home, the Kimmel Center, united to form The Philadelphia Orchestra and Kimmel Center, Inc., reimagining the power of the arts to bring joy, create community, and effect change.

Yannick Nézet-Séguin is now in his 11th season as music director of The Philadelphia Orchestra. His connection to the ensemble's musicians has been praised by both concertgoers and critics, and he is embraced by the musicians of the Orchestra, audiences, and the community.

Your Philadelphia Orchestra takes great pride in its hometown, performing for the people of Philadelphia year-round, in Verizon Hall and community centers, in classrooms and hospitals, and

over the airwaves and online. In response to the cancellation of concerts due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Orchestra launched the Digital Stage, providing access to high-quality online performances, keeping music alive at a time when it was needed most. It also inaugurated free offerings: HearTOGETHER, a podcast on racial and social justice, and creative equity and inclusion, through the lens of the world of orchestral music, and Our City, Your Orchestra, a series of digital performances that connects the Orchestra with communities through music and dialog while celebrating the diversity and vibrancy of the Philadelphia region.

The Philadelphia Orchestra's award-winning education and community initiatives engage over 50,000 students, families, and community members of all ages through programs such as PlayINs; side-by-sides; PopUP concerts; Our City, Your Orchestra Live; School Concerts; the School Partnership Program and School Ensemble Program; and All City Orchestra Fellowships.

Through concerts, tours, residencies, and recordings, the Orchestra is a global ambassador and one of our nation's greatest exports. It performs annually at Carnegie Hall, the Mann Center, the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, and the Bravo! Vail Music Festival. The Orchestra also has a rich touring history, having first performed outside Philadelphia in its earliest days. In 1973 it was the first American orchestra to perform in the People's Republic of China in 1973, launching a five-decade commitment of people-to-people exchange.

Under Yannick's leadership, the Orchestra returned to recording with 12 celebrated releases on the Deutsche Grammophon label, including the GRAMMY® Award-winning *Florence Price Symphonies Nos. 1 & 3*. The Orchestra also reaches thousands of radio listeners with weekly broadcasts on WRTI-FM and SiriusXM.

For more information, please visit [www.philorch.org](http://www.philorch.org).



Irina Belashov

Emerging onto the international stage, **Kensho Watanabe** is fast becoming one of the most exciting and versatile young conductors to come out of the United States. He was assistant conductor of The Philadelphia Orchestra from 2016 to 2019. He made his critically acclaimed subscription debut in April 2017 with the Orchestra and pianist Daniil Trifonov, stepping in for his mentor, Yannick Nézet-Séguin. He conducted four more subscription concerts with the ensemble in 2019, debuted at the Bravo! Vail Music Festival, and led numerous concerts at the Mann Center and in Saratoga. From 2013 to 2015 he was an inaugural conducting fellow at the Curtis Institute of Music, under the mentorship of Mr. Nézet-Séguin.

Mr. Watanabe was recently recognized with a 2021 Career Assistance Award from the Solti Foundation U.S. Other recent career highlights include debuts with the London Philharmonic, the Tokyo Philharmonic, the Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, the Rhode Island Philharmonic, and the Jyväskylä Sinfonia in Finland. He has also enjoyed collaborations with the Houston Symphony, the Detroit Symphony, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, the Brussels Philharmonic, the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, the Orchestre Métropolitain in Montreal, and the Seiji Ozawa Matsumoto Festival. In addition to these current performances, highlights

of the 2021–22 season included a return to the San Antonio Symphony and debuts with the Charlotte Symphony and the Turku Philharmonic in Finland. He also made his Polish debut with the Szczecin Philharmonic and his Suntory Hall debut with the Tokyo Philharmonic conducting Beethoven's Symphony No. 9. Equally at home in both symphonic and operatic repertoire, he has led numerous productions with the Curtis Opera Theatre, most recently Puccini's *La rondine* in 2017 and *La bohème* in 2015. Additionally, he served as assistant conductor to Mr. Nézet-Séguin on a new production of Strauss's *Elektra* at Montreal Opera.

An accomplished violinist, Mr. Watanabe received his Master of Music degree from the Yale School of Music and served as a substitute violinist in The Philadelphia Orchestra from 2012 to 2016. Cognizant of the importance of the training and development of young musicians, he has previously served on the staff of the Greenwood Music Camp in Cummington, Massachusetts, as the orchestra conductor. He is a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, where he studied with distinguished conducting pedagogue Otto-Werner Mueller. He also holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Yale College, where he studied molecular, cellular, and developmental biology.





Sussie Ahlburg

Pianist **Sergio Tiempo** is making his Philadelphia Orchestra debut with these performances. Born in Caracas, Venezuela, he began piano studies with his mother, Lyl Tiempo. He made his professional debut at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw at age 14. While at the International Piano Academy in Lake Como, Italy, he worked with pianists Dmitri Bashkirov, Fou Ts'ong, and Murray Perahia and baritone Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau. Mr. Tiempo continues to receive frequent musical guidance and advice from pianist Martha Argerich and performs regularly with fellow countryman and friend Gustavo Dudamel.

Mr. Tiempo's recent performance highlights include return visits to the Los Angeles Philharmonic to perform Beethoven's Triple Concerto, Tchaikovsky's Concerto No. 1, Chopin's Concerto No. 1, and the world premiere of Esteban Benzecry's new piano concerto, *Universos Infinitos*, with Mr. Dudamel. The work was also performed at Lincoln Center in his debut with the New York Philharmonic. Further orchestral collaborations include the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France; the Brussels and Buenos Aires philharmonics; the Simón Bolívar, Singapore, St. Petersburg, Phoenix, Stavanger, BBC, and City of Birmingham symphonies; the Auckland Philharmonia; and the Zurich Chamber Orchestra. He has worked alongside such

eminent conductors as Claudio Abbado, Myung-Whun Chung, and Thierry Fischer. Mr. Tiempo was artist-in-residence in 2018 with the Queensland Symphony. A committed recitalist, he has appeared at Queen Elizabeth Hall, the Vienna Konzerthaus, Wigmore Hall, the Berlin Philharmonie, the Edinburgh International Festival, the George Enescu Festival, the Martha Argerich Festival, the Oslo Chamber Music Festival, the Warsaw Chopin Festival, Brussels Chopin Days, Music Days in Lisbon, and on recital tours in China, Korea, Italy, and South America.

Mr. Tiempo has made a number of acclaimed recordings. On EMI Classics, he recorded Musorgsky's *Pictures from an Exhibition*, Ravel's *Gaspard de la nuit*, and Chopin nocturnes for the Martha Argerich Presents series. On Deutsche Grammophon he has several discs with cellist Mischa Maisky, including works by Rachmaninoff. Along with his sister Karin Lechner he recorded *Tango Rhapsody*, a new work for two pianos and orchestra by Argentinean composer Federico Jusid, commissioned for the duo and the RSI Lugano, also performed with the Queensland Symphony and Alondra de la Parra. Other recordings with Ms. Lechner include a disc of French music released on Avanti Classics, a label with which Mr. Tiempo recorded his latest disc, *Legacy*. Future plans include a duo recording with Ms. Argerich.

Ukrainian composer Myroslav Skoryk, who died two years ago at age 81, originally composed the haunting Melody for a 1981 film called *The High Mountain Pass*. Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine the piece has become something of an unofficial national and spiritual anthem. The brief work was included in a video depicting the war's devastation that was shown when Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky virtually addressed the United States Congress in March.

Frédéric Chopin was born near Warsaw to a French father and a Polish mother. His dazzling skills as a pianist and composer captivated audiences in his homeland, where as a teenager he wrote both of his piano concertos. At age 21 he moved to Paris and spent the rest of his relatively short life there. The Concerto No. 1 in E minor became his musical calling card, first in his native land, then in Vienna, in Germany, and finally in France.

Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony was a key work in the composer's career. During his 20s Shostakovich rapidly emerged as the great genius of Soviet music, but in 1936 he was brutally attacked in the official Communist press, which put both his professional and private life in peril. He withheld the premiere of his Fourth Symphony for more than a quarter century and wrote the magnificent Fifth Symphony, which helped restore his reputation at home while also achieving classic status internationally.

The Philadelphia Orchestra is the only orchestra in the world with three weekly broadcasts on SiriusXM's *Symphony Hall*, Channel 76, on Mondays at 7 PM, Thursdays at 12 AM, and Saturdays at 4 PM.



**1830**

**Chopin**

Piano Concerto No. 1

**Music**

Berlioz

*Symphonie fantastique*

**Literature**

Tennyson

*Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*

**Art**

Delacroix

*Liberty Guiding the People*

**History**

Indian Removal Act signed into law



**1937**

**Shostakovich**

Symphony No. 5

**Music**

Orff

*Carmina burana*

**Literature**

Steinbeck

*Of Mice and Men*

**Art**

Picasso

*Guernica*

**History**

Japan invades China

## Melody

(arr. by Roman Gryniv)

### Myroslav Skoryk

Born in Lviv, Ukraine, July 13, 1938

Died there, June 1, 2020



The tragic situation in Ukraine since the Russian invasion on February 24 is being felt not just in myriad human, political, and economic ways but in the cultural sphere as well. Artists and arts organizations internationally have tried to raise awareness and help.

Russian and Ukrainian musical spheres have long overlapped. Tchaikovsky had Ukrainian roots on his father's side, spent a lot of happy and productive time there, and wrote operas and other pieces on Ukrainian topics. Some of the most prominent Ukrainian-born composers trained, and sometimes settled, in Russia, usually in Moscow or St. Petersburg. The events of the past year have made performers as well as audiences more aware of Ukrainian composers who are rarely played in American and European concert halls, figures such as Mykola Lysenko, Mykola Roslavets, and Valentyn Silvestrov.

A piece much performed recently, and one that has become almost an unofficial national and spiritual anthem, is *Melody* by Myroslav Skoryk, perhaps the most prominent contemporary Ukrainian composer, who died two years ago. The brief work was included in a video depicting the war's devastation that was shown when Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky addressed the United States Congress virtually last March. The Kyiv Symphony Orchestra recently played it on a European tour and many other orchestras and chamber ensembles have done so as well.

### Crossing Borders

Skoryk was born in Lviv, now in Ukraine but in 1938 part of Poland. His parents—father a historian and mother a chemist—had trained at the University of Vienna and were amateur musicians. His great-aunt was a famous opera soprano who

recognized his musical talents early. Skoryk began training at the Lviv Music School in 1945 but two years later, victims of Stalinist repressions, the family was deported to Siberia. Only in 1955, after Stalin's death, could he return (without his parents) to study at the Lviv Conservatory.

In the early 1960s Skoryk studied at the Moscow Conservatory with Dmitri Kabalevsky, among others. In addition to being a prolific composer of orchestral music, concertos, ballets, and opera, he wrote the scores for dozens of films, which is relevant to the work we hear today. While some of his contemporaries were drawn to avant-garde compositional styles, Skoryk generally took a more traditional approach much influenced by Ukrainian folk music. Active as a composer, performer, and musicologist, Skoryk became an important professor of composition, first at Lviv Conservatory and then at Kyiv Conservatory. In the late 1990s he moved to Australia, where he got citizenship, but returned to Ukraine for his last years.

### A Closer Look

Skoryk composed *Melody in A minor* in 1981 for the propaganda film *Vysokyy pereval* (The High Mountain Pass) about a divided peasant family in Western Ukraine in which a fervent Communist mother, upholding the Soviets, is pitted against her son and daughter, who support Ukrainian resistance. The children are negatively portrayed as fascists, much as Vladimir Putin depicts Ukrainians today. Skoryk originally scored the work for flute and piano, but arranged it for violin and piano, as well as for orchestra. On this concert we hear it in an arrangement for solo violin and string orchestra by Roman Gryniv.

The melancholy piece unfolds in a series of six eight-measure sections built on a haunting melody that opens the work. A second statement brings out countermelodies, and a third offers rapid modulations leading to the work's climax with a reprise of the opening now in a higher register.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

*Melody was composed in 1982.*

*The Philadelphia Orchestra first performed the piece on March 24, 2022, led by Yannick Nézet-Séguin and played in honor of Ukraine.*

*This arrangement calls for solo violin and strings only.*

*Performance time is approximately three minutes.*



## Piano Concerto No. 1

### Frédéric Chopin

Born in Żelazowa Wola (near Warsaw), March 1, 1810

Died in Paris, October 17, 1849

In what turned out to be a successful bid to boost his professional career in his native Poland, the teenage Chopin did what had worked for Mozart, Beethoven, and many others before him: He decided to write pieces for piano and orchestra that he could play at public concerts. In this way he would display his gifts as both instrumentalist and composer and prove that he was more than simply a pianist.

Chopin had already written dozens of solo keyboard pieces, but they were generally aimed for domestic consumption, not for concerts where audiences expected grander orchestral and vocal fare, usually presented in a pleasing mixed variety. In fact, at the premiere of the Concerto we hear today, an aria and chorus were performed in between the first and second of its three movements, a not uncommon practice at the time. In addition to the two concertos Chopin wrote in 1829–30, he produced other somewhat less familiar works for piano with orchestra, including Variations on Mozart's "Là ci darem la mano," a Grand Fantasy on Polish Airs, and *Krakowiak*. The Mozart Variations won Robert Schumann's enthusiastic support in a famous review that stated: "Hats off, Gentleman, a genius!"

### Two Youthful Concertos

Due to the order of their eventual publication, the chronology of Chopin's E-minor and F-minor concertos is actually reversed, although in any case both were written within the space of less than a year. (The numbering of Beethoven's first two piano concertos is similarly switched.) Chopin began composing the "Second" Concerto in F minor, Op. 21, in the fall of 1829, upon returning from triumphant appearances in Vienna, and gave its premiere at the National Theater in Warsaw on March 17, 1830. The immediate success the work enjoyed—as well as acclaim for Chopin's playing—led to a repeat performance five days later and prompted the composer to start writing the Concerto in E minor, Op. 11.

By the end of the summer the new concerto was finished and ready for its premiere at the same venue in October. The concert proved to be Chopin's farewell to his native Poland; he never played there again, although he had no way of knowing that at the time. He once more scored a great success, as he described in a letter the next day: "I did not have the slightest trace of stage fright and I played as if I were alone. Everything went well. The hall was full. The first piece was the symphony by Görner. Then came yours truly with the Allegro in E minor [the first movement]; on the Streicher grand piano it seemed to play itself. Ear-splitting 'Bravos.'" After the aria with chorus came the last two movements of the Concerto.

Three weeks later Chopin left Poland on his way to Vienna, where he performed the E-minor Concerto, before eventually settling in Paris, the city in which he would spend the rest of his life. He played the E-minor Concerto in Breslau, Vienna, Munich, and on various occasions in France in the 1830s.

### Critical Debates

Loved from the start by pianists and audiences, both of Chopin's concertos have suffered some in critical assessment. The charge is that these are early works by a composer not yet fully comfortable handling large-scale forms or orchestration. Hector Berlioz's reaction was typical: "In Chopin all the interest is concentrated on the piano part; the orchestra in his piano concertos is merely a cold, almost superfluous accompaniment."

While there is some justice to this criticism (the orchestra tends to do rather little when the piano is present and otherwise asserts itself mainly in loud tutti passages), it may not be entirely appropriate to judge Chopin either by the standards of Beethoven's earlier symphonic concertos or by the later Romantic essays of his great contemporaries, such as Schumann and Liszt. Orchestral parts had to be fairly simple to accommodate traveling virtuosos who often had little (or even no) rehearsal with local orchestras. Chopin's model and competition in 1829–30 would have been the virtuoso fare of pianist/composers like Friedrich Kalkbrenner (to whom Chopin dedicated the E-minor Concerto), Ignaz Moscheles, and Johann Nepomuk Hummel, figures who are barely remembered today and whose concertos Chopin himself played.

### A Closer Look

The opening **Allegro maestoso** uses the so-called double exposition typical of Classical concertos in which the orchestra first presents



the thematic material and the soloist waits some time before re-presenting it. In fact, Chopin has the soloist wait such a long time that conductors occasionally abridge the orchestral section. (This rarely happens any longer, but if one listens to the 1937 recording by Arthur Rubinstein, for example, the opening tutti is cut from about four minutes to just one.) Chopin's coloratura keyboard writing, reminiscent in some respects to the vocal style of Vincenzo Bellini's operas, is already apparent in this movement.

Of the second movement (**Larghetto**), Chopin wrote to his friend Tytus Woyciechowski that "it was not meant to create a powerful effect; it is rather a Romance, calm and melancholy, giving the impression of someone looking gently toward a spot that calls to mind a thousand happy memories. It is a kind of reverie in the moonlight on a beautiful spring evening. Hence the accompaniment is muted; that is, the violins are muffled by a sort of comb that sits over the strings and gives them a nasal and silvery tone. I wonder if that will have a good effect. Well, time will tell."

The finale (**Vivace**), as in the F-minor Concerto, is a Polish dance, in this case the *krakowiak*. During rehearsals, Chopin remarked, "The Rondo, I think, will go down well with everyone." And so it does.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

*Chopin composed his E-minor Concerto in 1830.*

*Ossip Gabrilowitsch was the soloist in The Philadelphia Orchestra's first performance of the work, in December 1902; Fritz Scheel conducted. The Concerto's most recent appearance on subscription was in March 2022, with Sergio Tiempo as soloist and Kensho Watanabe on the podium. Many of the great pianists have performed the piece with the Philadelphians, including Josef Hofmann, Arthur Rubinstein, Claudio Arrau, Emil Gilels, Van Cliburn, Garrick Ohlsson, Murray Perahia, and Emanuel Ax.*

*The Philadelphia Orchestra has recorded Chopin's First Piano Concerto five times, all with Eugene Ormandy: in 1952 with György Sándor, 1961 with Alexander Brailowsky, and 1964 with Gilels, all for CBS; and in 1969 with Cliburn and 1980 with Ax, both for RCA.*

*The score calls for solo piano, two flutes, two clarinets, two oboes, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, trombone, timpani, and strings.*

*The First Concerto runs approximately 40 minutes in performance.*



## Symphony No. 5

### Dmitri Shostakovich

Born in St. Petersburg, September 25, 1906

Died in Moscow, August 9, 1975

The life and career of Dmitri Shostakovich were in a perilous state when he began writing his Fifth Symphony in April 1937. The 30-year-old composer had recently experienced a precipitous fall from the acclaim he had enjoyed throughout his 20s, ever since he burst on the musical scene at age 19 with his brash and brilliant First Symphony. That work won him overnight fame and extended his renown far beyond the Soviet Union. Bruno Walter, Wilhelm Furtwängler, Arturo Toscanini, and other leading conductors championed the Symphony and Leopold Stokowski gave its American premiere with The Philadelphia Orchestra in 1928. Shostakovich's Second Symphony followed the next year and was entitled "To October—A Symphonic Dedication." It included a chorus praising Lenin and the Revolution, and the Third Symphony, entitled "The First of May," also employed a chorus to make a political statement. Despite their ideological baggage, his musical innovations continued, especially the opening of the Second Symphony.

### A Fall from Grace

Shostakovich had also received considerable attention for his contributions to the screen and stage, including film scores, ballets, incidental music, and two full-scale operas: *The Nose* and *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*. The latter enjoyed particular popular and critical success in the Soviet Union and abroad after its premiere in January 1934, so much so that a new production was presented at the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow two years later.

And that is when the serious troubles began that changed the course of Shostakovich's life. Stalin attended *Lady Macbeth* on January 26, 1936, and left before the end of the performance.

A few days later an article entitled “Muddle Instead of Music” appeared in *Prauda*, the official newspaper of the Communist Party. The anonymous critic wrote that the opera “is a leftist bedlam instead of human music. The inspiring quality of good music is sacrificed in favor of petty-bourgeois formalist celebration, with pretense at originality by cheap clowning. This game may end badly.”

Those terrifying final words were life-threatening; this was not just a bad review that could hamper a thriving career. The article was soon followed by another in *Prauda* attacking Shostakovich’s ballet *The Limpid Stream*, and then by yet another. The musical establishment, with a few brave exceptions, lined up in opposition to the composer, who was working at the time on a massive Fourth Symphony, which went into rehearsals in December 1936. At the last moment, just before the premiere, the work was withdrawn, most likely at the insistence of the authorities. The impressive Symphony would have to wait 25 years for unveiling in 1961. (The Philadelphians gave the American premiere in 1963.)

### **Shostakovich’s Return**

Shostakovich, whose first child had just been born, was well aware of the show trials and mounting purges, as friends, family, and colleagues disappeared or were killed. He faced terrifying challenges in how to proceed after the sustained attacks on his music. He composed the first three movements of the Fifth Symphony with incredible speed—he later recounted that he wrote the Largo in just three days—although the finale slowed him down. The completion of his new symphony is usually dated July 29, 1937, but the most recent investigation for a new critical edition indicates that composition continued well into the fall.

The notable premiere took place on November 21 with the Leningrad Philharmonic under Evgeny Mravinsky, at that time a relatively unknown young conductor. In the words of Shostakovich biographer Laurel Fay: “The significance of the occasion was apparent to everyone. Shostakovich’s fate was at stake. The Fifth Symphony, a non-programmatic, four-movement work in a traditional, accessible symphonic style, its essence extrapolated in the brief program note as ‘a lengthy spiritual battle, crowned by victory,’ scored an absolute, unforgettable triumph with the listeners.”

The funereal third movement, the Largo, moved many listeners to tears. According to one account, members of the audience,

one by one, began to stand during the extravagant finale. Composer Maximilian Steinberg, a former teacher of Shostakovich, wrote in his diary: "The ovation was stupendous, I don't remember anything like it in about the last 10 years." Yet the enormous enthusiasm from musicians and non-musicians alike—the ovations reportedly lasted nearly a half hour—could well have been viewed as a statement against the Soviet authorities' rebukes of the composer—artistic triumphs could spell political doom. Two officials were sent to monitor subsequent performances and concluded that the audience had been selected to support the composer—a false charge made even less tenable by the fact that every performance elicited tremendous ovations.

### The importance of Art

It may be difficult for contemporary American audiences to appreciate how seriously art was taken in the Soviet Union. The attention and passions, the criticism and debates it evoked—dozens of articles, hours of official panels at congresses, and abundant commentary—raised the stakes for art and for artists. For his part Shostakovich remained silent at the time about the Fifth Symphony. He eventually stated that the quasi-autobiographical work was about the "suffering of man, and all-conquering optimism. I wanted to convey in the Symphony how, through a series of tragic conflicts of great inner spiritual turmoil, optimism asserts itself as a world view."

The best-known remark about the work is often misunderstood. In connection with the Moscow premiere of the Symphony, Shostakovich noted that among all the attention it had received, one interpretation gave him "special pleasure, where it was said that the Fifth Symphony is the practical creative response of a Soviet artist to just criticism." This last phrase was subsequently attributed to the composer as a general subtitle for the Symphony. Yet as Fay has observed, Shostakovich never agreed with what he considered the unjust criticism of his earlier work, nor did he write the Fifth along the lines he had been told to do. Most importantly, he gave no program or title to it at any time. The work, which reportedly was one the composer thought particularly highly of in later years, went on to be one of his most popular and successful compositions and a staple of the symphonic repertory.

### A Closer Look

The first movement (**Moderato**) opens with the lower strings intoning a striking, jagged theme, somewhat reminiscent of the one Beethoven used in his "Great Fugue," Op. 133. It is immediately

imitated by the violins and gradually winds down to become an accompaniment to an eerie theme that floats high above in the upper reaches of the violins. The tempo eventually speeds up (**Allegro non troppo**), presenting a theme that will appear in different guises elsewhere in the Symphony, most notably transformed in the triumphant conclusion.

The brief scherzo-like **Allegretto** shows Shostakovich's increasing interest at the time in the music of Mahler, in this case the Fourth Symphony, which also includes a grotesque violin solo. The **Largo**, the movement that so moved audiences at the first performances, projects a tragic mood of enormous intensity. The brass instruments do not play at all in the movement but return in full force to dominate the finale (**Allegro non troppo**). The "over the top" exuberance of this last movement has long been debated, beginning just after the first performances. Especially following the effect of the preceding lament, some have found the optimistic triumphalism of the ending forced and ultimately false. Perhaps it is the ambiguity still surrounding the work that partly accounts for its continued appeal and prominence.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

*Shostakovich composed his Symphony No. 5 in 1937.*

*Leopold Stokowski led the first Philadelphia performances of the Symphony, in March 1939. Since then the Orchestra has performed the work many times at home, as well as on domestic and international tours, including performances in the Soviet Union under Eugene Ormandy in 1958. The most recent subscription performances were in October 2015, with Marin Alsop.*

*The Philadelphians have recorded the Symphony five times: in 1939 for RCA with Stokowski; in 1965 for CBS with Ormandy; in 1975 for RCA with Ormandy; in 1992 for EMI with Muti; and in 2006 with Eschenbach for Ondine.*

*Shostakovich scored the work for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, E-flat clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, orchestra bells, snare drum, tam-tam, triangle, xylophone), harp, piano (doubling celesta), and strings.*

*The Symphony runs approximately 45 minutes in performance.*

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**GENERAL TERMS**

**Aria:** An accompanied solo song (often in ternary form), usually in an opera or oratorio

**Chord:** The simultaneous sounding of three or more tones

**Coloratura:** Florid figuration or ornamentation, particularly in vocal music

**Harmony:** The combination of simultaneously sounded musical notes to produce chords and chord progressions

**Krakowiak:** Polish folk dance, from the Kraków region, characterized by syncopated rhythms in a fast duple meter

**Op.:** Abbreviation for opus, a term used to indicate the chronological position of a composition within a composer's output. Opus numbers are not always reliable because they are often applied in the order of publication rather than composition.

**Oratorio:** Large-scale dramatic composition originating in the 16th century with text usually based on religious subjects. Oratorios are performed by choruses and solo voices with an instrumental accompaniment, and are similar to operas but without costumes, scenery, and actions.

**Romance:** Originally a ballad, or popular tale in verse; now a title for epico-lyrical songs or of short instrumental pieces of sentimental or romantic nature, and without special form

**Rondo:** A form frequently used in symphonies and concertos for the final movement. It consists of a main section that alternates with a variety of contrasting sections (A-B-A-C-A etc.).

**Polyphony:** A term used to designate music in more than one part and the style in which all or several of the musical parts move to some extent independently

**Ternary:** A musical form in three sections, ABA, in which the middle section is different than the outer sections

**Tutti:** All; full orchestra

**THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)**

**Allegretto:** A tempo between walking speed and fast

**Allegro:** Bright, fast

**Larghetto:** A slow tempo

**Largo:** Broad

**Maestoso:** Majestic

**Moderato:** A moderate tempo, neither fast nor slow

**Vivace:** Lively

**TEMPO MODIFIERS**

**Non troppo:** Not too much