

Season 2016-2017


Thursday, December 1,
at 8:00
Friday, December 2,
at 2:00
Saturday, December 3,
at 8:00

The Philadelphia Orchestra


Yannick Nézet-Séguin Conductor
Yefim Bronfman Piano

Prokofiev Piano Concerto No. 2 in G minor, Op. 16
I. Andantino—Allegretto—Tempo I
II. Scherzo: Vivace
III. Intermezzo: Allegro moderato
IV. Allegro tempestoso—Meno mosso
(Moderato)—Allegro tempestoso

Intermission

Shostakovich Symphony No. 4 in C minor, Op. 43 
I. Allegretto poco moderato—Presto
II. Moderato con moto
III. Largo—Allegro

This program runs approximately 2 hours, 5 minutes.

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The Philadelphia Orchestra

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music Director



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LiveNote was funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation with additional support from the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Jeffrey Griffin



The Philadelphia Orchestra is one of the preeminent orchestras in the world, renowned for its distinctive sound, desired for its keen ability to capture the hearts and imaginations of audiences, and admired for a legacy of imagination and innovation on and off the concert stage. The Orchestra is inspiring the future and transforming its rich tradition of achievement, sustaining the highest level of artistic quality, but also challenging—and exceeding—that level, by creating powerful musical experiences for audiences at home and around the world.

Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin's connection to the Orchestra's musicians has been praised by both concertgoers and critics since his inaugural season in 2012. Under his leadership the Orchestra returned to recording, with two celebrated CDs on the prestigious Deutsche Grammophon label, continuing its history of recording success. The Orchestra also reaches thousands of listeners on the radio with weekly Sunday afternoon broadcasts on WRTI-FM.

Philadelphia is home and the Orchestra continues to discover new and inventive ways to nurture its relationship with its loyal patrons at its home in the Kimmel Center, and also with those who enjoy the Orchestra's area performances at the Mann Center, Penn's Landing, and other cultural, civic, and learning venues. The Orchestra maintains a strong commitment to collaborations with cultural and community organizations on a regional and national level, all of which create greater access and engagement with classical music as an art form.

The Philadelphia Orchestra serves as a catalyst for cultural activity across Philadelphia's many communities, building an offstage presence as strong as its onstage one. With Nézet-Séguin, a dedicated body of musicians, and one of the nation's richest arts ecosystems, the Orchestra has launched its **HEAR** initiative, a portfolio of integrated initiatives that promotes **Health**, champions music **Education**, eliminates barriers to **Accessing** the orchestra, and maximizes

impact through **Research**. The Orchestra's award-winning Collaborative Learning programs engage over 50,000 students, families, and community members through programs such as Play!Ns, side-by-sides, PopUP concerts, free Neighborhood Concerts, School Concerts, and residency work in Philadelphia and abroad.

Through concerts, tours, residencies, presentations, and recordings, The Philadelphia Orchestra is a global ambassador for Philadelphia and for the US. Having been the first American orchestra to perform in China, in 1973 at the request of President Nixon, the ensemble today boasts a new partnership with Beijing's National Centre for the Performing Arts and the Shanghai Oriental Art Centre, and in 2017 will be the first-ever Western orchestra to appear in Mongolia. The Orchestra annually performs at Carnegie Hall while also enjoying summer residencies in Saratoga Springs, NY, and Vail, CO. For more information on The Philadelphia Orchestra, please visit www.philorch.org.

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music Director



Carmina burana

Cristian Măcelaru Conductor

Olga Pudova Soprano

Nicholas Phan Tenor

Stephen Powell Baritone

Philadelphia Symphonic Choir

Joe Miller Director

The American Boychoir

Fernando Malvar-Ruiz Music Director

Beethoven Symphony No. 2

Orff *Carmina burana*

The Philadelphia Orchestra's own Cristian Măcelaru leads a lusty performance of Orff's heart-pounding and tantalizing tale of drinking and debauchery, plus Beethoven's ebullient and life-affirming Second Symphony.

These concerts are LiveNote enabled. 

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Photo: Jessica Griffin

Soloist

Dario Acosta



Pianist **Yefim Bronfman** made his Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 1977 and has appeared regularly with the ensemble ever since, most recently in February 2016. Widely regarded as one of the most talented virtuoso pianists today, he has won consistent critical acclaim for his solo recitals and orchestral engagements. In addition to these current performances, highlights of the 2016-17 season include the end of a residency with the Staatskapelle Dresden with an appearance at Suntory Hall and concerts with the Israel Philharmonic and Zubin Mehta for both the Philharmonic's season opening and its 80th birthday celebrations. He also returns as a guest to the orchestras of New York, Los Angeles, Boston, Cleveland, Chicago, San Francisco, St. Louis, Houston, and Dallas. A cross-country series of recitals culminates in the spring with a program at Carnegie Hall. In Europe he tours extensively in recital and with orchestras in cities including Berlin, Vienna, Rome, Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Brussels, and Leipzig.

Mr. Bronfman appears with violinist Pinchas Zukerman, a longstanding partner, in Copenhagen, Milan, Naples, Barcelona, Berlin, and St. Petersburg. Always keen to explore chamber music repertoire, his partners have also included pianist Martha Argerich, mezzo-soprano Magdalena Kožená, flutist Emmanuel Pahud, and many others. Summer engagements have regularly taken him to the major festivals of the U.S. and Europe. Widely praised for his solo, chamber, and orchestral recordings, Mr. Bronfman recently released both Brahms piano concertos on DVD with Franz Welser-Möst and the Cleveland Orchestra. Other releases include the 2014 Grammy-nominated recording of Magnus Lindberg's Piano Concerto No. 2, commissioned for him and performed by the New York Philharmonic conducted by Alan Gilbert on the Da Capo label.

Born in Tashkent in the Soviet Union in 1958, Mr. Bronfman immigrated to Israel with his family in 1973 and became an American citizen in 1989. In 1991 he gave a series of joint recitals with Isaac Stern in Russia, marking his first public performances there since leaving the country at age 15. That same year he was awarded the prestigious Avery Fisher Prize. He is also a 2015 recipient of an honorary doctorate from the Manhattan School of Music.

Framing the Program

Parallel Events

1913

Prokofiev

Piano Concerto *The Rite of Spring*
No. 2

Music

Stravinsky
The Rite of Spring

Literature

Mann
Death in Venice

Art

Sargent
Portrait of Henry James

History

Balkan War

1936

Shostakovich

Symphony
No. 4

Music

Barber
Symphony No. 1

Literature

Auden
On This Island

Art

Mondrian
Composition in Red and Blue

History

Spanish Civil
War begins

This program features two eminent 20th-century Russian composers, Sergei Prokofiev and Dmitri Shostakovich, uneasy rivals whose lives were buffeted by political circumstances in their country.

Prokofiev began composing his Second Piano Concerto at the age of 21 and was soloist at its premiere in a resort town outside of St. Petersburg in 1913. At the time he was viewed as a young radical and the fiery piece shocked many conservative Russians. Like other prominent composers hailing from similarly privileged backgrounds, notably Igor Stravinsky and Sergei Rachmaninoff, Prokofiev left Russia after the 1917 October Revolution. He lived in America and Europe for nearly 20 years, only to return permanently to the Soviet Union in 1936. When he fled in 1918 he left some of his compositions behind, among them the Second Concerto, which he later reconstructed from memory and reintroduced at a Paris concert in 1924.

Shostakovich, 15 years younger than Prokofiev, never lived abroad and his entire roller-coaster career was shaped by Soviet policies. The low point came in 1936 when his opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* was officially condemned. At the time he was composing his bold Symphony No. 4, which he withdrew at the very last minute as the massive piece was being rehearsed for its premiere. While his Symphony No. 5 brought Shostakovich back into the government's good graces, at least for a while, the Fourth Symphony remained unperformed until after Stalin's death. It was first heard in the Soviet Union in 1961 and just over a year later The Philadelphia Orchestra gave its American premiere.

The Music

Piano Concerto No. 2



Sergei Prokofiev
Born in Sontsovka,
Ukraine, April 23, 1891
Died in Moscow, March 5,
1953

Just four months after the Parisian uproar that greeted Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* in May 1913, Sergei Prokofiev's Second Piano Concerto was treated to a similarly chaotic premiere in the Russian resort town of Pavlovsk. The Concerto left the listeners "frozen with fright, their hair standing on end," in the hyperbolic description of one observer. In order to understand how this work's tame tonalities could cause such a furor, one must consider the conservatism of Russian audiences of the day, which were attuned to the pleasantries of Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov. Ironically, when the Concerto was performed in France a decade later, in a reconstructed version, it was greeted with virtual indifference by the Parisians, who claimed that the work "wandered between the old and the new." By then the French had grown inured to the far more shocking modernisms of Stravinsky.

A Lost Concerto Reconstructed Prokofiev was a 21-year-old student at the St. Petersburg Conservatory when he began working on the Second Concerto, which he completed the following year amidst travels to England, France, and Switzerland. It was one of several important pieces he composed on the eve of World War I, which also included piano works such as the *Toccata*, Op. 11, and *Sarcasms*—compositions intended for his own concerts as one of Russia's most promising new keyboard virtuosos. With the Second Concerto Prokofiev outdid even his own brilliant but melodic First Piano Concerto, producing a work of such ferocious pianistic difficulty that even he had to practice the solo part for several months before performing it.

When Prokofiev fled Russia in 1918 to escape the revolutionary chaos that followed World War I, he left a number of scores behind in his St. Petersburg (or Petrograd) apartment, among them the only existing manuscript of the Second Piano Concerto. According to rumor, the manuscript was burned by refugees occupying the house during the civil war, "used as fuel," Prokofiev reports, good-naturedly, "with which to cook an omelet." During the ensuing decade, which the composer spent mostly in the United States and Europe, he was increasingly in demand as pianist. In 1923 he decided to reconstruct the lost Second Concerto from memory, leaving

Prokofiev composed his Second Piano Concerto from 1912 to 1913. He reconstructed it in 1923.

Arthur Fennimore was the soloist in the first Philadelphia Orchestra performance of the Concerto, on a Senior Student Concert in March 1962, with William Smith on the podium. The first subscription performances of the piece were in February 1967, with Jerome Lowenthal as soloist and Eugene Ormandy conducting. Most recently on subscription Yuja Wang performed it in October 2009, under Charles Dutoit's baton.

The Orchestra recorded the work in 1974 for BMG, with pianist Tedd Joselson and Ormandy.

The score calls for solo piano, two flutes (fl doubling piccolo), two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, side drum, tambourine), and strings.

Running time is approximately 31 minutes.

the work's essential form intact—as he later described the process—but increasing the contrapuntal texture of the accompaniment, and making the structural divisions less clear-cut. The result was the work we know today, the product of two different periods of the composer's career, fused in an unusual blend of maturity of design with the (no doubt imperfect) memory of the youthful fervor of the work's original version.

A Closer Look The Concerto is cast in a somewhat atypical four-movement design. An opening slow movement (**Andantino**) built from a tuneful subject announced by the soloist sandwiches a stomping **Allegretto** between its lyrical outer sections. The concluding cadenza is as harrowing for the soloist as that of the first movement of Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto, and ultimately, more thrilling. The racing **Scherzo** is a perpetual-motion piece of unrelenting drive and good-natured interplay between soloist and orchestra, followed by an **Intermezzo** of alternately cool and heavy-footed march rhythms. The finale, **Allegro tempestoso**—complete with a brilliantly fluid cadenza bearing similarities to that of the first movement—brings the work to a tumultuous close.

—Paul J. Horsley

The Music

Symphony No. 4



Dmitri Shostakovich
Born in St. Petersburg,
September 25, 1906
Died in Moscow, August 9,
1975

“This game could end badly.” No artist likes getting a bad review, but in January 1936, when Dmitri Shostakovich read those words at the end of an article attacking his widely acclaimed opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*, he realized he was dealing with more than mere aesthetic criticism. This amounted to an official warning that he had to take deadly seriously. The article was entitled “Muddle Instead of Music” and appeared in *Pravda*, the official newspaper of the Communist Party. Although unsigned, the composer knew that Stalin had walked out of a performance of *Lady Macbeth* a few days earlier and he immediately understood that this attack was written at Stalin’s behest.

Criticism in Dangerous Times For the brilliant 29-year-old composer, whose fame had risen steadily over the previous decade, the *Pravda* article, which was soon followed by another one criticizing his ballet *The Limpid Stream*, was a bitter personal and professional blow. The horrors of the Stalinist era were becoming ever more evident and such matters were literally ones of life and death. Associates and friends of Shostakovich disappeared or died under mysterious circumstances. As the fate of such prominent writers as Maxim Gorky, Osip Mandelstam, Isaak Babel, and of the celebrated theater director Vsevolod Meyerhold makes clear, no one, no matter how famous, was safe.

Despite financial hardships in his youth, Shostakovich’s career to this point had seemed charmed. Prodigiously talented as a pianist and composer, he had come to international attention in his late teens with his graduation project from the Leningrad Conservatory: the First Symphony. Premiered when he was 19, it made Shostakovich famous overnight and extended his renown far beyond the Soviet Union as Bruno Walter, Wilhelm Furtwängler, Arturo Toscanini, and other leading conductors championed the youthful work. (Leopold Stokowski gave the American premiere with The Philadelphia Orchestra in 1928.) His next two symphonies followed soon thereafter.

Throughout his career Shostakovich was intimately involved with music for the screen and stage. He wrote

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music Director

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Photo: Jessica Griffin

his modernist first opera, *The Nose*, in 1927-28 and completed *Lady Macbeth* four years later. The great popular success of the latter in the Soviet Union, as well as abroad, led to a new production in December 1935, which sparked the *Pravda* rebuke. At that time Shostakovich was halfway through composing a symphony, his first in nearly six years, a work that had been long in the planning. After various false starts, Shostakovich had finished the first two movements by the beginning of January, some three weeks before Stalin attended the fateful *Lady Macbeth* performance.

The sustained criticism in the press and elsewhere that followed had the practical consequence of curbing presentations of Shostakovich's works and of chances to perform himself, therefore cutting off much of his income at a time that he was expecting his first child. Immersion in composition proved his salvation—as he informed his friend Isaak Glikman: "Even if they chop my hands off, I will still continue to compose music, albeit I have to hold the pen in my teeth."

An Aborted Premiere Shostakovich finished the Fourth Symphony—his longest to date and orchestrally the largest he ever composed—in April and by the end of the year conductor Fritz Stiedry was rehearsing the Leningrad Philharmonic in preparation for the scheduled premiere on December 11. The concert never took place. A press announcement appeared that day stating the composer had withdrawn the work "from performance on the grounds that it in no way corresponds to his current creative convictions and represents for him an outdated phase."

The real reasons for the cancellation are still unclear. Some have questioned the competence of the conductor, stating that poor rehearsals discouraged Shostakovich. By other accounts the composer was approached by officials who requested that he withdraw the score. Given all the attacks against him, his precarious situation, and the recent birth of his daughter, Shostakovich certainly had every reason to be cautious. In any case, the Fourth was not heard in public, although it enjoyed some underground reputation through keyboard arrangements that allowed intimates to get to know it. The existence of the work was too widely acknowledged for Shostakovich to bury it completely and so when he wrote his next symphony—the famous Fifth—it bore the appropriate number. That symphony, which remains his most often performed, rehabilitated him.

The Fourth Symphony was finally premiered 25 years later, on December 30, 1961, with Kirill Kondrashin leading the Moscow Philharmonic to resounding applause. By this time Shostakovich had written 12 of his 15 symphonies and allegedly told Glikman, "It seems to me that in many respects the Fourth is better than my most recent symphonies." The work was soon taken up abroad, with Eugene Ormandy leading the Philadelphians in the American premiere in 1963.

A Closer Look The Fourth Symphony is certainly different from Shostakovich's earlier ones and no doubt would have sparked considerable controversy if it had been performed in 1936. Surely the length and massive size of the Fourth, as biographer Laurel Fay has noted, "would have been construed as the epitome of formalism, an act of arrogant defiance of the Party's benevolent guidance." After the brash and brilliant First Symphony, and the more problematic Second and Third, this was the symphony in which Shostakovich both pointed to his maturity but also hinted at directions he did not take or only did so more privately. A potent influence on the piece is Gustav Mahler, whose works were becoming ever more important to the composer at this time. His closest friend, the brilliant musicologist Ivan Sollertinsky, had recently written a book on Mahler and the two pursued deep study of his music.

The Symphony is in three movements, two long outer ones lasting nearly a half hour each frame a much shorter central one. The first movement (**Allegretto poco moderato**) immediately announces the boldness and intensity that characterize much of the work. Some aspects of its musical language, such as the use of fugal and ostinato techniques, recall instrumental sections of *Lady Macbeth*. The brief **Moderato con moto** serves as a sort of intermezzo, in this case one calling upon a Mahlerian dance.

The finale is in two sections, beginning with a funereal **Largo**, also reminiscent of Mahler, which leads to an **Allegro** filled with more dances and marches, often of a grotesque character. The conclusion of the Symphony is one of the most remarkable of any in the repertory. In the final minutes the evocative orchestration, using celesta, and the gradual building of dissonance is quiet, tragic, and haunting. It surely would have proved dangerous at the time.

Shostakovich's next symphony, the popular Fifth with its perhaps exaggerated affirmations at the end, was more

The Fourth Symphony was composed from 1935 to 1936.

Eugene Ormandy and The Philadelphia Orchestra gave the United States premiere of Shostakovich's Fourth Symphony in February 1963, one of many American premieres the Orchestra has given of the composer's works. The most recent performances were in October 2010, with Charles Dutoit conducting.

The Orchestra recorded the Symphony in 1963 with Ormandy for CBS and in 1994 with Myung Whun Chung for Deutsche Grammophon.

The work is scored for two piccolos, four flutes, four oboes (IV doubling English horn), four clarinets, E-flat clarinet, bass clarinet, three bassoons, contrabassoon, eight horns, four trumpets, three trombones, two tubas, two timpanists, percussion (bass drum, castanets, cymbals, glockenspiel, snare drum, suspended cymbal, tam-tam, triangle, wood block, xylophone), two harps, celesta, and strings.

Performance time is approximately 60 minutes.

what the authorities wanted. He later made a remark to the conductor Boris Khaikin: "I finished the [Fifth] Symphony *fortissimo* and in the major. Everyone is saying that it is an optimistic and life-affirming symphony. I wonder, what would they be saying if I had finished it *pianissimo* and in minor?" That is what he had in fact done in the Fourth, although few knew it at the time.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

The Philadelphia Orchestra

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Musical Terms

GENERAL TERMS

Cadenza: A passage or section in a style of brilliant improvisation, usually inserted near the end of a movement or composition

Chord: The simultaneous sounding of three or more tones

Contrapuntal: See counterpoint

Counterpoint: A term that describes the combination of simultaneously sounding musical lines

Dissonance: A combination of two or more tones requiring resolution

Fugue: A piece of music in which a short melody is stated by one voice and then imitated by the other voices in succession, reappearing throughout the entire piece in all the voices at different places

Intermezzo: A) A short movement connecting the main divisions of a symphony. B) The name given to an independent piece, often solo piano, that is predominantly lyrical in character.

Meter: The symmetrical grouping of musical rhythms

Modernism: A consequence of the fundamental conviction among successive generations of composers since 1900 that the means

of musical expression in the 20th century must be adequate to the unique and radical character of the age

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.

Ostinato: A steady bass accompaniment, repeated over and over

Perpetual motion: A musical device in which rapid figuration is persistently maintained

Scherzo: Literally "a joke." Usually the third movement of symphonies and quartets that was introduced by Beethoven to replace the minuet. The scherzo is followed by a gentler section called a trio, after which the scherzo is repeated. Its characteristics are a rapid tempo in triple time, vigorous rhythm, and humorous contrasts.

Sonata form: The form in which the first movements (and sometimes others) of symphonies are usually cast. The sections are exposition, development, and recapitulation, the last sometimes followed by a coda. The exposition is the introduction of

the musical ideas, which are then "developed." In the recapitulation, the exposition is repeated with modifications.

Toccata: Literally "to touch." A piece intended as a display of manual dexterity, often free in form and almost always for a solo keyboard instrument.

Tonic: The keynote of a scale

THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)

Allegretto: A tempo between walking speed and fast

Allegro: Bright, fast

Andantino: Slightly quicker than walking speed

Con moto: With motion, speed, movement

Largo: Broad

Meno mosso: Less moved (slower)

Moderato: A moderate tempo, neither fast nor slow

Presto: Very fast

Tempestoso: Stormily, passionately

Vivace: Lively

TEMPO MODIFIERS

Poco: Little, a bit

DYNAMIC MARKS

Fortissimo (ff): Very loud

Pianissimo (pp): Very soft

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