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LOUISVILLE  
ORCHESTRA



# TCHAIKOVSKY CONCERTO #1

Friday, March 29, 2019 at 11 am

Francesco Lecce-Chong, Guest conductor

Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 1 in B-flat Major, Op. 23

Andrew von Oeyen, piano

Shostakovich Symphony No. 10 in E minor, Op. 93

(select movements)

# TCHAIKOVSKY CONCERTO #1

According to Gerard McBurney in a [2006 article](#) for *The Guardian*: “At the heart of both Tchaikovsky's and Shostakovich's music is superlative technique and fluency, coupled with a pronounced fondness for mixing highbrow contexts, ideas and tunes with a sometimes startlingly lowbrow flavor (scraps of operetta, pop tunes, cheap marches and barrel-organ noises). This combination of highbrow and kitsch is not theirs alone, of course. Many composers have joined in the fun, including Mozart, Schubert and Mahler. But Tchaikovsky and Shostakovich certainly shared a particularly distinctive addiction to brazen melodrama. In Tchaikovsky's case, this is rooted in his love of the popular boulevard operas of his day; Shostakovich looked to the equivalent art form in his own time, cinema. Their fondness for such material is often counterbalanced by suggestions of scorn, evasion or frustration”.

## The Composers

### Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840—1893)



Pyotr Tchaikovsky

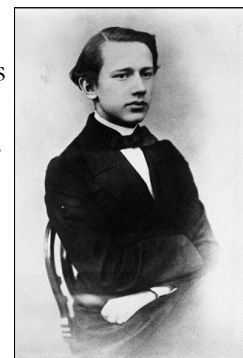
**Pyotr Tchaikovsky** was born on May 7, 1840 in Votkinsk, Russia, the second son of Ilya and Alexandra. Ilya was a mine inspector and this was the second marriage for Ilya whose first wife Mariya had died leaving him with a young daughter, Zinaida. At the time, Votkinsk (about 600 miles south-east of Moscow) was

famous for its ironworks and Ilya had considerable authority as the factory manager of the Kamsko-Votkinsk Ironworks. Both Ilya and Alexandra had interests in the arts and had purchased an orchestrion (a type of barrel organ that could simulate orchestral effects) after moving to the remote Votkinsk. Tchaikovsky was particularly entranced by the instrument that played works of Mozart as well as the Rossini, Donizetti, and Bellini. Tchaikovsky soon began picking out the melodies on the family piano. His earliest attempts at composition came at age 4 along with his younger sister Alexandra (aka Sasha) who wrote a piece for their mother entitled “Our Mama in St. Petersburg”. At this same time Fanny Dürbach, a French governess hired by the Tchaikovskys to teach French and German to Tchaikovsky's oldest brother Nikolay and cousin Lidiya, became a fixture in young Tchaikovsky's life. He begged to study with Nikolay and Lidiya and once permission was given, rapidly became the star pupil. By age five, Tchaikovsky was taking piano lessons and quickly surpassed his teacher. In 1848, Ilya retired but still needed to work so the family moved between Moscow and St. Petersburg before settling in Alapayevsk (300 miles east of Votkinsk) in 1849. It meant a parting with Dürbach who recounted later in life that these four years with the Tchaikovsky family were some of the happiest in her life. The same would be true for young Tchaikovsky.

While in St. Petersburg, Tchaikovsky studied briefly at the Schmelling School, received piano lessons and attended the opera and ballet. After



The Tchaikovsky family in 1848



Tchaikovsky in 1863

the family settled in Alapayevsk, Tchaikovsky and his mother returned to St. Petersburg where he was enrolled in the preparatory class of the prestigious Imperial School of Jurisprudence. At the age of ten, Tchaikovsky faced the second traumatic parting from an important woman in his life with the departure of his mother; it would be two years before he would see her again and unfortunately, in 1854 Tchaikovsky's mother contracted cholera and died, leaving Tchaikovsky distraught. Ilya was alone with four young children at home so he sent Sasha and Ippolit to boarding schools (Nikolay and Pyotr were already away). Ilya could now manage the four year old twins Modest and Anatoly. Soon Ilya's brother and his family came to live with Ilya and it turned out to be a beneficial living arrangement for all concerned.



*И. и А. Рубинштейн.*

Anton and Nikolai Rubinstein

Young Tchaikovsky graduated in 1859 with a degree in civil service and gained employment at the Ministry of Justice. That same year, the Russian Musical Society (RMS) was founded by the Grand Duchess Elena Pavlovna and her protégé, composer and pianist **Anton Rubinstein**, as a way to educate and encourage native talents. In 1861, Tchaikovsky took classes at the RMS in theory and by 1862, enrolled in the newly founded St. Petersburg Conservatory (he continued to hold his civil servant position until 1863). But despite his intelligence and passion for music, Tchaikovsky did not have an easy time composition. Tchaikovsky studied harmony, counterpoint, composition and instrumentation, and graduated in 1865. **Nikolai Rubinstein** (Anton's younger brother) offered Tchaikovsky a position as a Professor of theory and harmony at the new Moscow Conservatory, a position he held until 1878 (in 1940 the school was renamed the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory). It was here that Tchaikovsky's [Symphony No. 1 in G Minor](#) "Winter Daydreams" was created and it received a warm reception in Moscow in 1868. It was also here that Tchaikovsky had his first nervous breakdown due to the stress of composing. Tchaikovsky suffered from intense headaches, insomnia and even hallucinations. So much so that he vowed never again to compose at night and with the exception of his [Violin Concerto](#), he kept that vow.

Tchaikovsky also had difficulties with the criticism that he received at the hands of other Russian composers, particularly a group of young St. Petersburg composers that became known as "**The Five**". This group consisted of **Mily Balakirev**, **César Cui**, **Modest Mussorgsky**, **Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov** and **Alexander Borodin**. They were ultra-nationalistic and believed that any and all music must be fiercely patriotic and drew their material from the vast supply of Russian folk music. A majority of The Five attacked Tchaikovsky's unaffected manner and compositional style with the exception of Rimsky-Korsakov. Tchaikovsky balanced his teaching life with the demands of a music critic, composer and conductor. His first compositional success came in 1869 with [Romeo and Juliet, an Overture-Fantasy](#) based on the Shakespeare play. He collaborated with Mily Balakirev (of the Big Five) and though the piece was re-worked several times before becoming part of the standard repertoire, it opened doors to publishers and highlighted Tchaikovsky's compositional talent. Over the next ten years, Tchaikovsky composed concertos (piano and violin), symphonies (2-4), ballet ([Swan Lake](#)), opera ([Eugene Onegin](#)) and orchestral works ([Francesca de Rimini](#), [Marche slave](#), [1812 Overture](#)). But his personal life was in turmoil.

Most biographers agree that Tchaikovsky was gay and he lived as a bachelor most of his adult life. In a letter to his brother, Tchaikovsky states "I am aware that my inclinations are the greatest and most unconquerable obstacle to happiness; I must fight my nature with all my strength. I shall do everything possible to marry this year." And he did but it was disastrous. He married former student Antonina Milyukova on July 6, 1877. Within a month, he decided that were incompatible and spent the next few months staying away from his new wife. He also made a failed attempt at suicide by walking into the Moska River with the hopes of catching pneumonia. Fortunately, two months prior to the marriage, another woman whom he would never meet



Tchaikovsky and Antonina

Another woman whom he would never meet





Nadezhda von Meck

would become his patron and confidante until 1890; the wealthy widow **Nadezhda von Meck**. The stipend she provided allowed Tchaikovsky to leave his teaching position and devote himself to composing. Their correspondence allowed them the opportunity to have honest conversations, and today gives us insight into the composer and von Meck. By 1880, Tchaikovsky seemed in a more stable position and began simultaneously composing the [1812 Overture](#) and the [Serenade for Strings](#).

In 1884 Tchaikovsky was granted the Order of St. Vladimir by Tsar Alexander III, his works were being produced at the Bolshoi and he essentially became the premiere court composer. He was an in-demand conductor and teacher and received numerous honors and awards.

In 1889, Tchaikovsky began to compose his second ballet [The Sleeping Beauty](#) after the Perrault fairy tale.

With **Marius Petipa**, the ballet master of the Imperial Ballet, as choreographer, the ballet received a favorable response but was not the overwhelming success Tchaikovsky had hoped for and neither was their second collaboration [The Nutcracker](#) (1892). In 1893, Tchaikovsky completed his final symphony; [Symphony No. 6 "Pathétique."](#)



First *The Sleeping Beauty* cast 1890

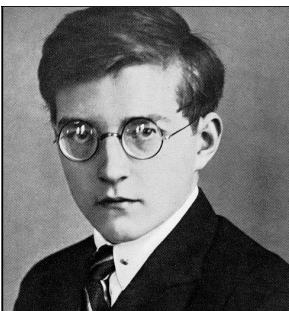
The response was rather apathetic. He would not live to see all of his this symphony or his ballets go on to the overwhelming international success they enjoy today. By most accounts, Tchaikovsky drank an unfiltered (unboiled) glass of water, contracted cholera and died on November 5, 1893.

There has been speculation that his death ranged from a suicide to a poisoning to prevent a scandal but nothing has been proven one way or the other. Eight thousand mourners attended his funeral and Tchaikovsky was buried at St. Petersburg's Alexander Nevsky Monastery. For more on Tchaikovsky, BBC Radio 3's [Discovering Tchaikovsky](#).



Marius Petipa

## Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)



**Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)** was born in Saint Petersburg, Russia to Dmitri Boleslavovich, an engineer who worked with Dmitri Mendeleev, and his wife Sofiya. Young Shostakovich began studying piano with his mother at age nine and at thirteen began studying at the Petrograd Conservatory under Alexander Glazunov. He wrote his *First Symphony* as his graduation piece but struggled to meet the political ideology of the Soviet era (a problem that would plague much of his career). His [First Symphony](#) was championed by Bruno Walter and Leopold Stokowski such that Shostakovich spent most of his time composing (rather than performing unless it was his own work). During the 1920s and early 1930s, Shostakovich composed three more symphonies as well as two operas and it would be his opera [Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District](#), based on the novel by Nikolai Leskov, which would prove to be his undoing with Joseph Stalin.

Though initially hailed as written in the best tradition of the Soviet culture, after Stalin and his Politburo attended a *Lady Macbeth* production in 1936, an article appeared in Pravda condemning the opera as being vulgar. Stalin's Great Terror or Purge began in 1936 and many of Shostakovich's friends and family were either killed or imprisoned. Even though Shostakovich was well on his way to completing his [Fourth Symphony](#) when the first of the Pravda articles came out, he opted to lay low and not release the Fourth but rather composed more film music. In 1937, Shostakovich premiered his [Fifth Symphony](#) in Leningrad to great acclaim. The success of this symphony seemed to redeem him in the eyes of the Soviet authority.

During World War II, Shostakovich tried to remain in Leningrad but was forced to evacuate with his family to Kuybyshev (now Samara) and eventually to Moscow. During this time, Shostakovich completed his [Seventh Symphony](#); a piece that became hailed as true Soviet art and perhaps inspired by the siege of Leningrad. His [Eighth](#) and [Ninth](#) Symphonies did not fare as well and in 1948 was again denounced (along with many other composers) by the Soviet authorities (he lost his position at the conservatory and his works were banned). The following year he was sent to New York as an emissary of Soviet culture but was publically humiliated by having to tow the party line. The death of Stalin in 1953 was a turning point for Shostakovich and his [Tenth](#) Symphony reflected the change in his life. In 1957, Shostakovich composed his [Eleventh](#) Symphony, nicknamed “1905” in reference to the Bloody Sunday massacre (January 1905) and the Russian Revolution. Shostakovich completed another four symphonies in his lifetime (for a total of 15) as well as numerous chamber works and film scores including Russian adaptations of Shakespeare’s [Hamlet](#) (1964) and [King Lear](#) (1971). During his final years Shostakovich suffered from ill health and died of lung cancer on August 9, 1975.



Prokofiev, Shostakovich and Khatchaturian

Shostakovich’s music continues to generate discussion about whether or not it solely espoused the party line or if Shostakovich was able to convey hidden meaning and emotion through his compositions. His large body of work spanning multiple genres gives us a window into this remarkable composer’s journey from the early excitement and innovation of revolution to the hard truths of life under Stalin. For more on Shostakovich, check out [BBC Music](#).

## The Artists

### Francesco Lecce-Chong, guest conductor



A captivating presence on the podium, American conductor Francesco Lecce-Chong has garnered acclaim for his dynamic performances, commitment to innovative programming, and passion for community engagement. Mr. Lecce-Chong begins his post as Music Director & Conductor of the Eugene Symphony in the 2017-2018 season, following in the path of renowned predecessors including Marin Alsop and Giancarlo Guerrero. In addition, he currently holds the positions of Associate Conductor of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and Principal Conductor of the Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra. Active as a guest conductor, he

has appeared with orchestras around the world including the National Symphony Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, St. Louis Symphony, and Hong Kong Philharmonic.

Also trained as a pianist and composer, Mr. Lecce-Chong champions the work of new composers and the need for arts education. As Associate Conductor of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra (MSO) from 2011-2015, he curated and presented the works of both active and lesser-known composers, including two works commissioned by the orchestra, as well as two U.S. premieres. He also helped create the first MSO Composer Institute, providing performance opportunities for young American composers. Mr. Lecce-Chong has complemented his programming with a strong commitment to arts education for all ages. In Milwaukee, he provided artistic leadership for the MSO’s nationally lauded Arts in Community Education program – one of the largest arts integration programs in the country. His dedication to connecting orchestras and communities continues in Pittsburgh where he gives preconcert talks, conducts concerts for school audiences, and leads specially designed sensory-friendly performances.

Mr. Lecce-Chong is a native of Boulder, Colorado, where he began conducting at the age of sixteen. He is a graduate of the Mannes College of Music and Curtis Institute of Music, where he studied with Otto-Werner Mueller. He has worked with many internationally celebrated conductors including Bernard Haitink, David Zinman, Edo de Waart, and Manfred Honeck.

## Andrew von Oeyen, pianist



Andrew von Oeyen Pianist  
Photo: Marco Borggreve

Hailed worldwide for his elegant and insightful interpretations, balanced artistry and brilliant technique, ANDREW VON OEYEN has established himself as one of the most captivating pianists of his generation.

Since his debut at age 16 with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Esa-Pekka Salonen, Mr. von Oeyen has excelled in a broad spectrum of concerto repertoire — Bartok, Barber, Beethoven, Brahms, Chopin, Debussy, Fauré, Liszt, Gershwin, Grieg, Mendelssohn, Mozart, Prokofiev, Rachmaninoff, Ravel, Schumann, Shostakovich, Tchaikovsky — with such ensembles as the Philadelphia Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, National Symphony, Detroit Symphony, Saint Louis Symphony, Seattle Symphony, Atlanta Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony, Mariinsky Orchestra, Berlin Symphony Orchestra, New Japan Philharmonic, Singapore Symphony, Grant Park Orchestra, Ravinia Festival Orchestra, Vancouver Symphony, Utah Symphony, Orchestre Symphonique de Marseille, Geneva Chamber Orchestra, Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra, Slovenian Philharmonic and Slovak Philharmonic. As both soloist and conductor he has led concerti and orchestral works by

Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Ravel and Kurt Weill. On July 4, 2009, von Oeyen performed at the U.S. Capitol with the National Symphony in “A Capitol Fourth,” reaching millions worldwide in the multi-award winning PBS live telecast.

Mr. von Oeyen has appeared in recital at Wigmore Hall and Barbican Hall in London, Lincoln Center in New York, the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., Boston’s Symphony Hall, Zürich’s Tonhalle, Moscow’s Tchaikovsky Hall, St. Petersburg’s Philharmonia, Dublin’s National Concert Hall, Royce Hall in Los Angeles, Herbst Theater in San Francisco, Sala São Paulo, Teatro Olimpico in Rome, in Mexico City, Hanoi, Macau, and in every major concert hall of Japan and South Korea. Festival appearances include Aspen, Ravinia, Grant Park, Mainly Mozart, Saratoga, Spoleto, and the Mariinsky’s “Stars of the White Nights” in St. Petersburg.

Mr. von Oeyen’s 2017/2018 engagements include, among others, his Vienna debut in the Wiener Konzerthaus performing Leonard Bernstein’s Age of Anxiety, appearances with The Mariinsky Orchestra, The Dallas Opera Orchestra, Prague Philharmonia, Memphis Symphony, Sarasota Orchestra, Slovenian Philharmonic, Slovak Philharmonic, Sacramento Symphony, Pasadena Symphony, and recitals throughout Europe and the US. He will also return to the Royal Opera House, Muscat, for the Sultanate of Oman’s New Year’s Eve Gala. Other 2018 engagements include concerts with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Teatro La Fenice Orchestra, and Jerusalem Symphony.

Mr. von Oeyen’s 2016/2017 engagements included a European and North American tour with the Prague Philharmonia (including performances as both soloist and conductor) and appearances with the Vancouver Symphony, Detroit Symphony, Jerusalem Symphony, Rochester Philharmonic, Calgary Philharmonic, Chicago’s Grant Park Music Festival Orchestra and the orchestras of Grand Rapids, Charlotte, Oklahoma City, and Wichita.

In June 2016 Mr. von Oeyen signed an exclusive recording contract with Warner Classics. His debut album under that label, including works for piano and orchestra by Saint-Saëns, Ravel and Gershwin, was released in 2017 to critical acclaim. In 2013 Mr. von Oeyen released an album of Debussy and Stravinsky piano works



under the Delos Label (including two pieces written for him by composer, David Newman), following his 2011 award-winning album of Liszt works under the same label. 2013 also saw the release of the Chopin-Debussy-Ravel digital album “Andrew von Oeyen: Live in Recital.”

Mr. von Oeyen, of German and Dutch origin, was born in the U.S. He began his piano studies at age 5 and made his solo orchestral debut at age 10. An alumnus of Columbia University and graduate of The Juilliard School, where his principal teachers were Herbert Stessin and Jerome Lowenthal, he has also worked with Alfred Brendel and Leon Fleisher. He won the prestigious Gilmore Young Artist Award in 1999 and also took First Prize in the Leni Fe Bland Foundation National Piano Competition in 2001. Mr. von Oeyen lives in Paris and Los Angeles.

## The Works

Tchaikovsky—Piano Concerto No. 1 in B-flat Major, Op. 23 (1874, rev. 1888)

“Not a single word, not a single comment! Rubinstein’s eloquent silence had tremendous significance. It was as though he was saying to me, ‘My friend, can I talk about details when the very essence of the thing disgusts me?’ I fortified my patience, and played on to the end. Again silence. I got up and asked ‘Well?’ It was then that there began to flow from Nikolay Grigorevich’s mouth a stream of words, quiet at first, but subsequently assuming more and more the tone of Jove the Thunderer. It appeared that my concerto was worthless, that it was unplayable, that passages were trite, awkward and so clumsy that it was impossible to put them right, that as composition it was bad and tawdry, that I had filched this bit from here and that bit from there, that there were only two or three pages that could be retained, and that the rest would have to be scrapped or completely revised. ‘Take this, for instance—whatever it is?’ (Rubinstein played a passage) ‘And this? Is this really possible?’ - and so on, and so on. I can’t convey to you the most significant thing—that is, the tone in which all this was delivered. In a word, any outsider who chanced to come into the room might have thought I was an imbecile, an untalented scribbler who understood nothing, who had come to an eminent musician to pester him with his rubbish. I was not only stunned. I was mortified by the whole scene.

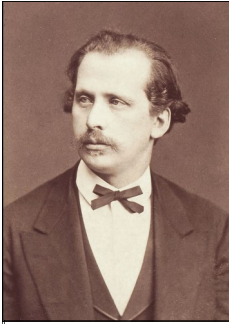
I left the room and silently went upstairs. I could say nothing, because of my agitation and anger. Rubinstein soon appeared, and noticing my distraught state, drew me aside into a distant room. There he told me again that my concerto was impossible, and after pointing out to me a lot of places that required radical change, he said that if by such-and-such a date I would revise the concerto in accordance with his demands, then he would bestow upon me the honor of playing my piece in one of his concerts. ‘I won’t change a single note,’ I replied, ‘and I’ll publish it just as it is now!’ And so I did!”

~ Excerpted from Tchaikovsky’s letter to his patroness Nadezhda von Meck about the initial reception of his first piano concerto by famed Russian pianist, composer and conductor **Nikolai Rubinstein**; *Tchaikovsky, The Man and his Music* by David Brown

That fateful meeting with Rubinstein took place at the Moscow Conservatory, where Tchaikovsky was a professor, on Christmas Eve of 1874. Incensed by Rubinstein’s stinging comments, Tchaikovsky sent the piece to German conductor and pianist **Hans von Bülow**. von Bülow was a supporter of Tchaikovsky’s music and as he was preparing for an American tour, von Bülow suggested that he premiere the work during the tour. The premiere took place in Boston, Massachusetts on October 25, 1875 with von Bülow as the soloist. That first audience loved the work so much that they insisted von Bülow repeat the finale but critics were not impressed (although to be fair, there were issues with the performance qual-



Hans von Bülow



Nikolai Rubinstein

ity at the time). Of course the concerto would go on to be one of Tchaikovsky’s best known and loved works but not the original version. In an about face from his remarks to Rubinstein that he would not change a single note, Tchaikovsky revised the concerto several times with the definitive version completed in 1889. And in another twist, Nikolai Rubinstein ultimately championed the work.

The **first movement** (*Allegro non troppo e molto maestoso – Allegro con spirito*) opens with the very familiar B-flat minor chords followed by the first theme. This introduction has long stumped analysts and critics as it is not heard again in the remainder of



Désirée Artôt

the concerto, at least in the original form. A review by Eric Blom suggested “The great tune’s strutting upon the stage at the rise of the curtain, like an actor-manager in a leading part, and then vanishes suddenly and completely, leaves the hearer disconcerted and dissatisfied. He feels as if he were witnessing a performance of *Hamlet* in which the Prince of Denmark is killed by Polonius at the end of the first scene”. But if you listen closely, you will hear motivic if not melodic ties between each of the three move-



ments. For the opening melody, Tchaikovsky stated that he used a **Ukrainian folk melody** he heard at a market performed by blind beggar musicians in Kamenka (near Kiev) as inspiration.

There was another popular tune that Tchaikovsky incorporated into the first movement; a **French tune II faut s’amuser et rire** that was a favorite of Belgian opera singer Désirée Artôt’s repertoire (she had a brief affair with Tchaikovsky before marrying Spanish baritone Mariano Padilla y Ramos).



There has been speculation that there is a cipher contained within the work combining Tchaikovsky and Artôt’s names that led to some rather unusual features to the concerto—these could have been what led to Rubinstein’s initial objections.

The **second movement** (*Andantino semplice – Prestissimo – Tempo I*) is in 6/8 time and relatively short as compared to the first movement. After four bars of pizzicato chords in the strings, the flute enters with the first theme. The piano takes up the theme and modulates into a different key (F Major) before the cellos and eventually oboe return the theme to the original key of D-flat Major. The orchestration with this movement is decidedly lighter.

The **third movement** (*Allegro con fuoco – Molto meno mosso – Allegro vivo*) opens with a brief introduction before the second **Ukrainian folk melody** for the first time; this melody will be the heart and soul of the third movement. After a lyrical middle section, the movement races ahead to its triumphant conclusion.



In pop culture, the piano concerto was the inspiration for Freddy Martin’s [Tonight We Love](#) (1941) and has been used in numerous movies, radio and television as well as the modern Olympics held in Russia (Moscow in 1980 and Sochi in 2014).



## Shostakovich—Symphony No. 10 in E minor, Op. 93 (1953)



Dmitri Shostakovich  
Photo by Roger & Renate  
Rössing, credit Deutsche  
Fotothek

On March 5, 1953, the Soviet Union’s dictator **Josef Stalin** died. This was a huge relief to many including composer Dmitri Shostakovich who had been denounced twice under Stalin’s brutal regime. The first denunciation took place in 1936 after Stalin attended a performance of Shostakovich’s opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* (Stalin did not like the opera). Shostakovich lived in fear of exile or worse, and this was not an unfounded fear as many in his circle were imprisoned or killed as part of the Great Purge or Great Terror. Shostakovich regained his status in 1937 with the triumph of his [Symphony No. 5](#). The second denunciation came in 1948 with the Zhdanov decree that expected artists to conform with the prescribed ideals of Soviet culture (this decree also impacted composers Sergei Prokofiev and Aram Khachaturian as well as many other composers, artists, writers, etc.). Shostakovich lost his job at the Moscow Conservatory and returned to composing film music (a job that supported him through the first denunciation) as



Stalin in 1937

well as taking “official” jobs to “rehabilitate” himself in the state’s eyes. In the year prior to his dismissal, Shostakovich taught an Azerbaijani student named **Elmira Nazirova** who would play a central role in his Tenth Symphony. Shostakovich and Nazirova began a 3 1/2 year correspondence beginning in April 1953 and in his letters from that first year, Shostakovich reveals that in the **third movement** of the symphony, he has created a musical cryptogram composing a horn call using her initials twelve times (E-A-E-D-A or in a mix of French solfège and German, E La Mi Re A) as well as his D-S-C-H (D, E flat, C, B natural and is the German transliteration of his initials). Elmira’s theme has a similar sound to the beginning of *Das Lied von der Erde* (*The Song of the Earth*) by Gustav Mahler, a composer much admired by Shostakovich.



Elmira Nazirova

The **second movement** has long been thought to be a musical representation of Stalin; Shostakovich and later his son Maxim floated this idea (and they also denied it) so it’s hard to know if this is accurate. In his 1979 book *Testimony; The Memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich*, Solomon Volkov suggests that the interpretation of the second movement as Shostakovich’s portrayal of Stalin is accurate because the clues are in the music itself (and the author claims that Shostakovich told him this story directly). “But the main evidence that this interpretation is not his later invention but can be found, as usual, in the music of Shostakovich, the great master of hidden motifs and quotations and juxtapositions of rhythmic figures. The “Stalin” part of the Tenth Symphony is based in great part on Shostakovich’s music for the film *Fall of Berlin* (1949), in which the ruler was a prominent character”. In the **fourth movement** finale, Shostakovich uses his cryptogram DSCH in a battle with the “Stalin” theme and ultimately the DSCH theme is victorious. Shostakovich also borrowed musical material for the **first movement** from his 1951 work *Four Monologues on Verses by Pushkin* for *bass and piano*, Op. 91.

It’s understandable why Shostakovich would be reluctant to discuss the real motivations behind this symphony given his treatment under Soviet rule. The comment he did make was “Like my other works I wrote it very quickly. That is probably more of a defect than a virtue because there is much that cannot be done well when one works so fast”. Like most of Shostakovich’s works, we may never know the real motivations behind the composition.

# Russia



**Russia** is the largest country in the world, approximately 2 times the size of the United States and has 11 time zones. Its boundaries include China, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Kazakhstan, North Korea, Mongolia, Norway, Poland and the Ukraine. Russia has a number of boundary disputes inherited from the former USSR including sections with China, islands administered by Russia (but claimed by Japan), Caspian Sea Boundaries and an on-going issue with Ukraine (including Crimea) just to name a few. Due to its enormous size, Russia has a wide variety of climates but much of the country has a humid continental climate. Russia's natural resources include major deposits of oil, natural gas,

coal, other minerals and timber although climate, terrain and distance often make obtaining these resources difficult. Russia is the third largest grain producer in the world as well as a major world fish supplier.

81% of the population are considered ethnic Russians with the remaining 19% ethnicities including Tartars, Ukrainians and Bashkirs. There are more than 170 ethnic groups represented in Russia including Cossacks, Armenians, Yakuts, Inuits, etc. Moscow is the largest city with more than 12 million residents with St. Petersburg as the second largest city with more than 5 million residents. More than 70% of the population identifies itself as Russian Orthodox though Islam and Christian are represented as well.

The lands along the Neva River have belonged to the Ancient Russian state since at least the 9th century. However, throughout history these lands have had a mixed population of Slavs, Finns and other ethnic groups. This area was part of the Principality of Novgorod. Novgorod was an important center of international and domestic trade and craftsmanship. Novgorod merchants traded with Western and Northern Europe and later with the towns of the Hanseatic League. All that trade went through the Neva River and Lake Ladoga.



Alexander Nevsky

In 1240, when most of Southern and Central Russia was fighting the Mongol invasion, a Swedish force landed on the banks of the Neva River. The Novgorod troops of Prince Alexander went out to meet them and on July 15, 1240 fought the Battle of Neva. The Russians successfully launched a surprise attack and won. This battle became a symbol of Russia's dramatic fight for independence and Prince Alexander was given the name **Alexander Nevsky** ("Nevsky" meaning "of Neva"). Prince Alexander was declared a Saint of the Russian Orthodox Church for his efforts to protect Russia and its faith (in

the 18th century, he was proclaimed the patron saint of St. Petersburg). In the 16th century, Novgorod was subdued by Moscow and the lands along the Neva River became part of the centralized Russian state; Muscovite Russia. However at the beginning of the 17th century, serious unrest started in Russia after the last tsar of the Rurik dynasty (Fiodor Ioanovich—son of **Ivan the Terrible**) had died leaving no heirs to the throne.

**10** The new ruler, Vasily Shuisky, invited the Swedes to fight on his side. The Swedes realized that Russia was

weak and decided to occupy a significant portion of Northwestern Russia. Even after the new Romanov dynasty was established in 1613, Russia had to admit some territorial losses. A new border between Russia and Sweden was set by the Stolbovo Treaty of 1617 and for the remainder of the century, the Neva River area became part of Sweden; effectively cutting off trade from the Baltic Sea. **Peter the Great** wanted to regain access to the Baltic Sea and establish stronger ties to the West. In the hope of achieving these goals, Peter started the Northern War with Sweden (1700-21). In 1703, the Russian gained control over the Neva River and on May 16, 1703, St. Petersburg was founded.



Peter the Great

The rule of Peter the Great began the era of Imperial Russia starting in 1721 and



Nicholas II

continued into the reign of **Catherine II “the Great”** who ushered in the Russian Enlightenment. Russia’s borders continued to expand and subsequent explorations included settlements in Alaska and California. The end of the Romanov dynasty (and the end of tsarist rule in Russia) came about with the **February Revolution** of 1917. **Tsar Nicholas II** and his family were imprisoned and eventually executed in 1918. This ushered in the era of Communism and the Soviet Union led initially by **Vladimir Lenin, Leon Trotsky** and eventually **Joseph Stalin**.



Catherine the Great

The rule of the Soviets (aka the USSR) included a state mandated adoption of atheism that particularly devastated the Russian Orthodox Church. As a member of the Allies (with U.S., Britain and China as the big four), the USSR waged a multi-front war with Germany and Japan. In 1945, Stalin participated in the **Yalta Conference** with **Franklin D. Roosevelt** and **Winston Churchill** to discuss Europe post-war structure. After Stalin’s death in 1953, **Nikita Khrushchev** was a key figure as part of the **Cold War** between the USSR and the U.S. At the end of the Cold War, from 1985—91, **Mikhail Gorbachev** led the USSR into a new era of openness that led to the dissolution of the USSR in 1991. The current President is **Vladimir Putin** and the Prime Minister is **Dmitry Medvedev**.

## Connecting the dots

### How to use this concert experience in the classroom

High School Understandings (specific to World Civilizations History, 1500 A.D. to the Present)

- world civilizations (e.g., African, Asian, European, Latin American, Middle Eastern) can be analyzed by examining significant eras (Renaissance, Reformation, Age of Exploration, Age of Revolution, Nationalism and Imperialism, Technological Age, 21st Century) to develop chronological understanding and recognize cause-effect relationships and multiple causation.

High School Skills and Concepts

Students will

- demonstrate an understanding of the interpretative nature of history using a variety of tools (e.g., primary and secondary sources, Internet, timelines, maps, data):
  - investigate and analyze perceptions and perspectives (e.g., gender, race, region, ethnic group, na-



tionality, age, economic status, religion, politics, geographic factors) of people and historical events in the modern world (world civilizations, U.S. history)

- examine multiple cause-effect relationships that have shaped history (e.g., showing how a series of events are connected)
  - analyze how the United States participates with the global community to maintain and restore world peace (e.g., League of Nations, United Nations, Cold War politics, Persian Gulf War), and evaluate the impact of these efforts
  - research issues or interpret accounts of historical events in world history using primary and secondary sources (e.g., biographies, films, periodicals, Internet resources, textbooks, artifacts):
  - investigate how political, social and cultural revolutions (e.g., French, Industrial, Bolshevik, Chinese) brought about changes in science, thought, government, or industry and had long range impacts on the modern world
  - examine how nationalism, militarism, expansionism and imperialism led to conflicts (e.g., World War I, Japanese aggression in China and the Pacific, European imperialism in Africa, World War II) and the rise of totalitarian governments (e.g., Communism in Russia, Fascism in Italy, Nazism in Germany)
  - analyze the impact of the rise of both the United States and the Soviet Union to superpower status following World War II, development of the Cold War, and the formation of new nations in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East
- How did the Zhdanov decree affect Russian artists?
- What was the difference between Tchaikovsky and Shostakovich in terms of dealing with the Russian government (tsar/monarch vs. Soviet)?
- How did political situations affect the music of Tchaikovsky and Shostakovich?
- Was their music or fame co-opted by the government for propaganda? If so, how?