

Sunday, February 16, 2020



National Symphony Orchestra *of* Ukraine



Volodymyr Sirenko,
Chief Conductor



Natalia Khoma,
Cellist

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National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine
Volodymyr Sirenko, Artistic Director and Chief Conductor

Natalia Khoma, Cello

PROGRAM

Langsam

Victoria Poleva

Cello Concerto No. 1 in E-flat Major, Op. 107

Dmitri Shostakovich

Allegro

Moderato

Cadenza –

Allegro con moto

Natalia Khoma, Cello

- INTERMISSION -

Symphony No. 4 in D Minor, Op. 120

Robert Schumann

Ziemlich langsam (Moderately slow) – Lebhaft (Lively)

Romanze: Ziemlich langsam (Moderately slow)

Scherzo: Lebhaft (Lively)

Langsam (Slowly) – Lebhaft (Lively)

PROGRAM SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Columbia Artists

5 Columbus Circle @ 1790 Broadway, New York, NY 10019

www.columbia-artists.com

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

By Aaron Grad

Langsam [1994]

VICTORIA POLEVA

Born September 11, 1962 in Kyiv Ukraine

Victoria Poleva (or Poliova) studied composition at the Kyiv Conservatory, following the career path of her father. Once she abandoned the avant-garde orthodoxy of her generation's academic composers, she developed a musical language imbued with spiritual resonance and harmonic purity that puts her in a class with the Europe's so-called "holy minimalists," including Estonia's Arvo Pärt and Poland's Henryk Gorecki. Championed on both sides of the Atlantic by the likes of violinist Gidon Kremer and the Kronos Quartet, Poleva stands as a leader among Ukrainian composers today.

Describing the break between her early and mature styles in an interview with the journal *Music & Literature*, Poleva explained, "I wrote

compositions comprising huge layers of dark, rather ambiguous matter. I wanted to recreate the forces of chaos. I felt how they passed through me, and I enjoyed that. Then I felt a need for purity, ... a need to let go of the tumults of life, to soothe myself." She composed *Langsam* in 1994, near the end of her post-graduate studies, and this transitional work exhibits both aspects of her musical personality, forming an organic arc that navigates from pure triads at the beginning and end through surprising harmonic collisions during a thick climax. Taking its title from the German tempo marking that means "slowly," this expansive slow movement brings to mind the spiritual yearnings that Gustav Mahler channeled into his symphonies a century earlier.

Cello Concerto No. 1 in E-flat Major, Op. 107 [1959]

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH

*Born September 25, 1906 in Saint Petersburg, Russia
Died August 9, 1975 in Moscow, Soviet Union*

Born in Saint Petersburg in the twilight of the Russian Empire, Dmitri Shostakovich came of age during the early years of the Soviet Union. He entered the Petrograd Conservatory at the age of 13, excelled in his piano and composition studies (while also working on the side as a piano accompanist for silent films), and graduated from the renamed Leningrad Conservatory at 19. Performances of his First Symphony made him a star, and he was riding high as the top Soviet composer before his 30th birthday. Then everything changed when Joseph Stalin walked out of Shostakovich's new opera in 1936, and an official party newspaper delivered a frightening critique warning that such "formalist" music amounted to "a game of clever ingenuity that may end very badly."

Shostakovich rebounded from that sobering rebuke as well as a second crackdown in

1948, and he learned to bury any controversial tendencies in his music under a veneer of state-sanctioned approachability and realism. Still, even after the grip on Soviet artists loosened slightly following Stalin's death in 1953, Shostakovich never fully shed the self-protective cloak that had become integral to his musical expression.

Shostakovich composed the First Cello Concerto in 1959 for the cellist Mstislav Rostropovich, sixteen years after they first met when the teenaged Rostropovich enrolled in Shostakovich's composition class at the Moscow Conservatory. After debuting the concerto together in Leningrad, they traveled to London in 1960 for a momentous international premiere. (One stunned witness was the English composer Benjamin Britten, who struck up lasting friendships with both Russians). Shostakovich went on to write a

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second concerto for the cellist in 1966, and after Rostropovich's exile from the Soviet Union in 1974, he remained a powerful advocate for Shostakovich in the West, both on the cello and from the conductor's podium. The first movement of the Cello Concerto

No. 1 is a cheeky *Allegretto* built around a distinctive four-note motive. Those four notes also return at crucial points later in the work, which travels through a somber slow movement and an extended solo cadenza before reaching the thunderous finale.

Symphony No. 4 in D Minor, Op. 120

ROBERT SCHUMANN

Born June 8, 1810 in Zwickau, Germany

Died July 29, 1856 in Endenich, Germany

The Symphony No. 4 in D Minor that Schumann worked on late in 1851 was actually a revision of a work he had composed a decade earlier as his Second Symphony. 1841 had been the year of Schumann's symphonic breakthrough, but he saw fit to revise much of the orchestral music from that year, such as the "Symphonette" that became the Overture, Scherzo and Finale, and the one-movement Fantasy for piano and orchestra that grew into the Piano Concerto.

In its original form, the D-minor Symphony was a marvel of interconnectedness and unification, but in the 1851 revision Schumann went even further by linking the movements together without pauses and reorganizing some of the motives. The 1851 edition has become the standard choice for performance, but the original version has had its champions over the years, including Brahms, who insisted on publishing it in 1891.

The symphony begins with an introduction of long-held tones and slow-spinning melodies that build tension like a coil preparing to spring. With a taste of the music to come, a gradual quickening leads smoothly to the *Lebhaft* (lively) section and its kinetic theme in D minor. The slow *Romanze* extends the continuity, emerging out of the first-movement's final cadence and subtly migrating to a new home key. The sustained tones and stepwise melody

that enter after the initial thematic statement reveal this movement's kinship to the opening introduction.

When the *Romanze* closes softly on a dangling chord, it prepares the leap up to start the Scherzo. That ascending jump continues as a central motive in this rollicking third movement, answered by distinctive downward leaps on off-beats. The Scherzo's central section has the violins dancing around a languorous melody, an idea recycled from the middle of the *Romanze*.

An abbreviated slow section provides a ramp directly to the finale, which commences its festive music with three chords that are familiar from the first movement, but now recast in D major. After so much taut and interwoven music, this movement adds a dose of reckless exuberance, with thundering brass, crescendos resembling Hollywood sound effects, and an accelerated ending.

Not long after his revision of this symphony, Schumann's perennially fragile mental health began to falter once again, until he was eventually forced out of his conducting job. After throwing himself into the Rhine River in a suicide attempt in 1854, Schumann lived out his remaining years in an insane asylum, where he died at the age of 46, leaving this symphony as his last entry in a genre he reinvented for the generations to come.

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Biography

Formed by the Council of Ministers of Ukraine in November of 1918, the **National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine** is considered to be one of the finest symphony orchestras in Eastern Europe. Its first conductor was Oleksander Horilyj. Natan Rachlin was the Artistic Director of the Orchestra from 1937 until 1962. Stefan Turchak, Volodymyr Kozhuchar, Fedir Hlushchenko, Igor Blazhkov and Theodore Kuchar consequently conducted the Orchestra as its Principal Conductors. Other conductors who worked with the NSOU include Leopold Stokowski, Igor Markevitch, Kurt Sanderling, Evgeny Mravinsky, Kiril Kondrashin, Evgeny Svetlanov, and Gennady Rozhdestvensky. Soloists who performed with the NSOU include Artur Rubinstein, Yehudi Menuhin, Isaac Stern, David Oistrakh, Sviatoslav Richter, Mstislav Rostropovich, Emil Gilels, Leonid Kogan, Gidon Kremer, Oleh Krysa, Monserrat Caballe, Jose Carreras, and Juan Diego Flores.

The NSOU was entrusted with the premier performances of the works of the following composers: Sergei Prokofiev, Dmitri Shostakovich, Aram Khatchaturian, Boris Lyatoshynsky, Valentyn Silvestrov, Myroslav Skoryk, and Evgen Stankovych.

The Orchestra has gained international recognition over a remarkably short period of time. After an appearance in Moscow, Dmitri Shostakovich commented: "This orchestra has as distinguished a group of performers as one would be likely to find anywhere. The ensemble of the orchestra is of the highest level. In addition, the various soloists and instrumental groups within the Orchestra play exceptionally and complement each

other beautifully – as would the greatest of the world's symphony orchestras."

Since 1993, the NSOU has released more than 100 sound recordings which include both Ukrainian and international repertoires. Most of these recordings have received the highest international acclaim. In 1994, the Australian Broadcasting Company (ABC) rated NSOU's recording of Boris Lyatoshynsky's Symphonies No. 2 and No. 3 as "The Best Recording of the Year." The CD of Silvestrov's "Requiem for Larissa" was nominated for a Grammy Award in 2005. The CD of Bloch and Lees' Violin Concertos was nominated for a Grammy Award four years later.

The NSOU has performed in successful concert tours throughout Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Belarus, China, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, England, Hong Kong, Iran, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, the Netherlands, Oman, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Arab Emirates.

"... A program rich with energy and unusually adventurous placed the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine in a highly favourable light when it gave its only Sydney concert during its Australian tour on Friday. This is an orchestra with many virtues. Its strings can conjure up a vibrant songfulness; the woodwinds have a fruity, penetrating ripeness; the brass could endanger the walls of Jericho; the percussion might wake the dead..." - *The Sydney Morning Herald*

Since April of 1999, Volodymyr Sirenko has been the Artistic Director and Chief Conductor of the NSOU. Since June of 2006, Alexander Hornostai has been its Managing Director and Producer.

VOLODYMYR SIRENKO

Conductor

Born in the Poltava region of Ukraine, Volodymyr Sirenko has been compared to the international press to other brilliant conductors such as Esa-Pekka Salonen and Simon Rattle.

His conducting debut took place at the Kyiv Philharmonic Hall in 1983 with works by Stravinsky, Schoenberg and Boulez. In 1989 Sirenko graduated from the Kyiv Conservatoire where he studied conducting

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under Prof. Allin Vlasenko. In 1990, he was a finalist at the International Conducting Competition in Prague. A year later, he was appointed as Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the Ukrainian Radio Symphony Orchestra, a position which he held until 1999. During this period he made over 300 recordings that are kept in the funds of the Ukrainian Radio and include Mozart Symphonies Nos. 38 and 41, Beethoven Symphony No. 9, Brahms A German Requiem, Rachmaninov Bells, Dvorak Symphonies Nos. 7 and 9.

From 1999 he is the Artistic Director and Chief Conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine. Highlights among hundreds of programmes that he has performed with the orchestra since then were cycles Gustav Mahler Complete Symphonies, Bach all four Passions and Mass in B Minor, Lyatoshynsky Complete Symphonies.

He recorded over 50 compact discs and the CD of Silvestrov's Requiem for Larissa was nominated for a Grammy Award in 2005. He premiered many works by Ukrainian composers including Silvestrov's Symphonies No. 7 and 8, Stankovych's Symphony No. 6.

Sirenko has toured Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, the Czech Republic, Germany, France, Italy, Japan, Korea,

Lebanon, the Netherlands, Oman, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Slovakia, Spain, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. He has worked with many international orchestras including the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Moscow and the St. Petersburg Philharmonic, Sinfonia Warsovia, NOSPR (Katowice), the Svetlanov Symphony Orchestra, the Bratislava Radio Symphony, the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, the National Philharmonic of Russia, the Brooklyn Philharmonic.

Sirenko has appeared in numerous concert halls around the world, including Concertgebouw (Amsterdam), Brucknerhaus (Linz), Barbican Hall and Cadogan Hall (London), Theatre des Champs-Elysees and Opera Comique (Paris), Seoul Art Center, Palau de la Musica in Valencia and Centro Manuel de Falla in Granada, Filharmonia Narodowa (Warsaw), the Great Hall of Moscow Conservatory and the Great Hall of St. Petersburg Philharmonia, the Roy Thomson Hall (Toronto), the Tokyo City Opera and the Osaka Symphony Hall.

Volodymyr Sirenko is a People's Artist of Ukraine and laureate of the Taras Shevchenko National Prize, Ukraine's most prestigious award. He is Professor of the opera and symphonic conducting at the National Music Academy of Ukraine.

NATALIA KHOMA

Cellist

Natalia Khoma is an internationally renowned cellist. Since winning First Prize at the Lysenko Cello Competition, Khoma has won top prizes at the Budapest Pablo Casals International Competition, Markneukirchen Competition in Germany, and the Tchaikovsky International Competition in Moscow, as well as First Prize at the Belgrade International Cello Competition.

A native of Lviv, Ukraine, Ms. Khoma studied at Solomia Krushelnytska School for gifted children with Evhen Shpitzer, at the Moscow Conservatory with Natalia Shakhovskaya and in the United States, received an Artist Diploma from Boston University under the direction of Leslie Parnas.

The first and only Ukrainian cellist to become a laureate of the Tchaikovsky Competition, Natalia Khoma has since distinguished herself as a recitalist and soloist with orchestras throughout Russia, as well as the U.S., Canada, South America, Germany, Norway, Belgium, Italy, France, Spain, Switzerland, Eastern Europe, South Africa and the Middle and Far East.

She has performed as a soloist with such leading ensembles as the Berlin Radio Orchestra, Moscow Radio Orchestra, Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra, Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra, Ukrainian National State Symphony Orchestra, Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra, Chamber Ensemble

of New York City Symphony Orchestra, Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra and has had solo recitals in Tchaikovsky Hall (Moscow), Carnegie Hall (New York), Jordan Hall (Boston), Schauspielhaus (Berlin), Palais des Beux Arts (Brussels), Amphitheatre Richelieu de la Sorbonne, Salons de Boffrand de la Presidence du Senat (Paris), Philharmonic Big Hall of Columns (Kyiv) and in a host of countries across the globe. She is often invited to appear at international festivals in Switzerland, Germany, Spain, Canada, Ukraine and the U.S. among others.

Natalia Khoma has been hailed around the world as “technically dazzling”, “intense, brilliant, and with perfect structure”. She also has been praised for “the precision of her executions, Slavic Zen, full warm cello tone....and, what a drive!” Natalia made her first public appearance on TV at age ten and performed her first concerto with orchestra at age thirteen.

Ms. Khoma has been a professor at the Lviv Conservatory in Ukraine, Roosevelt University College of Music in Chicago, Michigan State University and was a visiting professor of the University of Connecticut School of Music. In 2011 she was appointed

Artistic Advisor of the Music and Art Center of Greene County, New York.

Natalia Khoma is an Honorary Professor of Lviv State Academy of Music, Odesa State Music Academy and Tchaikovsky National Music Academy of Ukraine (Kyiv Conservatory).

In 2010 Natalia was featured on a Grammy nominated CD for the Dorian Sono Luminus label. She has also recorded for NHK-TV (Japan), Naxos, TNC/Cambria, Blue Griffin, IMP, Dorian, Centaur and Ongaku labels, as well as for Ukrainian, Russian, German, Spanish, Serbian, Israeli and Hungarian Radio and Television and has appeared on WNYC-FM in New York, WGBH-FM in Boston and CKWR in Ontario (Canada).

For several years she played on a famous Stradivarius cello.

In addition to her performing activities, Natalia is an Associate Professor of Cello at the College of Charleston in Charleston, SC and Director of the Charleston Music Fest.

Natalia serves as organizer of the Children and Music Foundation, which provides musical training, instruments and financial aid to young, gifted Ukrainian students in need.

National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine Volodymyr Sirenko, Conductor

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Markiyan Hudziy,
*Principal Associate
Concertmaster*
Vitalii Lieonov,
Associate Concertmaster
Sviatoslava Semchuk
Olena Pushkarska
Oleksandra Vasylieva
Roman Poltavets
Oksana Kot
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Bogdan Krysa
Olga Mykhailuk

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Svitlana Markiv
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Halyna Hornostai,
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Valentyna Petrychenko
Viktoria Ganapolska
Andriy Mazko
Oleksii Sechen
Ganna Fedchenko
Valentyna Voskresenska
Arsenii Poltavets
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Tetiana Nikonenko
Nadiya Novikova

Tetiana Pavlova
Vasyl Bakalov
Olena Litovchenko
Liudmyla Gulie

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Galyna Nemecek
Viktor Navrotskyi
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Olha Andriienko
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Andrii Aleksandrov
Tetiana Miastkovska
Vira Kornilova
Serhii Vakulenko
Ihor Yarmus
Yevhen Skyrpka
Olena Dvorska
Nataliia Subbotina
Mariia Mohylevska

DOUBLE BASS

Volodymyr Grechukh,
Principal
Oleksandr Neshchadym
Oleksandra Chaikina
Taras Butko
Volodymyr Kaveshnikov
Dmytro Golovach
Taras Pivniak
Oleksandr Yuzviak

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Nataliia Izmailova,
Principal
Yaroslavan Eklaieva

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Mykola Mykytei
Larysa Plotnikova

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Hennakii Kot,
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Yurii Litun
Viktor Mishchenko

CLARINET

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Principal
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Petro Zabolotnyi

BASSOON

Taras Osadchyi,
Principal
Oleksiiy Emelianov
Ihor Nechesnyi
Volodymyr Antoshyn

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Andrii Shkil,
Principal
Stepan Bebykh
Kostiantyn Sokol
Valentyn Marukhno
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Principal
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Viktor Davydenko
Dmytro Kovalchuk
Oleksandr Rehubov

TROMBONE

Andrii Holovko,
Principal
Danylo Sydorov
Renat Imametdinov
Andrii Zymenko

TUBA

Oleksii Li,
Principal
Oleksiiy Kobzist

PERCUSSION

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Principal
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Yevhen Ulianov
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