

PROGRAM

ONE HUNDRED TWENTIETH SEASON

Chicago Symphony Orchestra

Riccardo Muti Music Director

Pierre Boulez Helen Regenstein Conductor Emeritus

Yo-Yo Ma Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant

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Thursday, October 28, 2010, at 8:00

Friday, October 29, 2010, at 8:00

Jaap van Zweden Conductor
Measha Brueggergosman Soprano

John Luther Adams

Dark Waves

First Chicago Symphony Orchestra performances

Mahler

Songs from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*

Rheinlegendchen

Verlorne Müh'!

Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen

Urlicht

MEASHA BRUEGGERGOSMAN

INTERMISSION

Shostakovich

Symphony No. 8 in C Minor, Op. 65

Adagio—Allegro non troppo—Adagio

Allegretto

Allegro non troppo—

Largo—

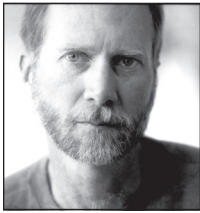
Allegretto

ComEd Classical Tapestry is sponsored by ComEd.

This program is part of the citywide festival *The Soviet Arts Experience*.

Steinway is the official piano of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

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John Luther Adams

Born January 23, 1953, Meridian, Mississippi.

Dark Waves for orchestra and electronic sounds

In the 1980s, John Luther Adams played timpani in the Fairbanks Symphony, which was led by composer-conductor Gordon Wright; they became close friends, at one point living near each other in the Alaskan wilderness. In February 2007, Wright was supposed to pick Adams up at the Anchorage airport; when he didn't show, Adams called Wright's neighbors, who found his body lying under the birch tree outside his cabin. A few days later, the Anchorage Symphony played the premiere of *Dark Waves*, a powerful work for orchestra and electronics that Adams decided to dedicate to Wright. In its majesty, weight, and raw simplicity, *Dark Waves* is a twenty-first-century counterpart to the music by Bruckner that Adams and Wright once listened to as they drove into the Alaskan mountains. Like much of Adams's work, it is also a portrait of a landscape that

Adams, a Southern boy who moved to Alaska in 1978 at the age of twenty-five, has come to cherish. He remembers flying out of Alaska one morning and looking down over Mount Hayes, "and all at once I was overcome by the intense love that I have for this place—an almost erotic feeling about those mountains."

Most of Adams's works, from the haunting *Qilyaun* for four bass drums played last March on a MusicNOW concert—the thunderous seismic waves of the drums coming from the four corners of the concert hall—to the recent *Dark Waves*, the work for orchestra and electronics performed this week, convey the powerful and vast landscape of Alaska. Nearly all his mature compositions, including *The Place Where You Go to Listen*, the sound-and-light installation piece he wrote after flying over the peaks of the Alaska Range, are attempts

COMPOSED

2007

These are the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's first performances of music by John Luther Adams

INSTRUMENTATION

two piccolos, two oboes, two clarinets and bass clarinet, two bassoons and contra-bassoon, two horns, two trumpets, three trombones and tuba, celesta, piano, bass

drum, suspended cymbal, orchestra bells, vibraphones, strings, electronics

APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME

12 minutes

“to hear the unheard,” as Adams puts it, “to somehow transpose the music that is just beyond the reach of our ears into audible vibrations.”

John Luther Adams first came to music as a drummer in rock bands. It was a line by visionary French-born composer Edgard Varèse—“The present-day composer refuses to die!”—that he spotted on the jacket of Frank Zappa’s album *Freak Out!* that inspired him to delve deeper into a world of music he didn’t know. After finding out who Varèse was (and how to pronounce his name), he began to listen to a variety of post-WWII composers, including György Ligeti and John Cage. In 1971, Adams moved to Los Angeles, where he studied at CalArts with the composer James Tenney. He was strongly attracted to the outsiders and classic eccentrics Harry Partch, who made his own instruments from found objects; Conlon Nancarrow, who wrote oddball pieces for player piano; Lou Harrison, whose music evoked the Indonesian gamelan; and Morton Feldman of the unearthly quiet, glacial musical landscapes. And finally, after a long fallow period—during which, ironically, his friend, the California-born John (*Nixon in China*) Adams was becoming a household name, leading to frequent and sometimes amusing cases of mistaken identity—he discovered the music he alone was meant to write. “Richard Serra,” Adams says, speaking of one of the visual artists he admires, “talks about the point at which all your influences are assimilated and then your work can come out of the

work.” Adams found that point, and beginning in the 1990s, he started to assemble a catalog of unique and unforgettable compositions. Adams has since become known as one of music’s few original thinkers and genuine experimentalists.

In April, Adams was awarded the Nemmers Prize in Music Composition by the Henry and Leigh Bienen School of Music at Northwestern University—a highly distinguished honor that previously has gone to Kaija Saariaho, Oliver Knussen, and, yes, the *other* John Adams. Unaccustomed to such high-profile attention—although his music has often been honored—Adams at first couldn’t bring himself to read the e-mail telling him of the award. (Finally, he asked his wife Cindy to read it.) “In the days that followed, I struggled to absorb the impact of this lightning bolt,” Adams later wrote. “For most of my musical life, I’ve worked in relative isolation. And I’ve always thought of myself as a musical outsider. The Nemmers Prize is a heartening sign that my music seems to resonate ‘out there’ in the larger world.” If such mainstream distinction undermines Adams’s outsider status, he knows he’s in good company: Nancarrow, Meredith Monk, and Ornette Coleman all have received MacArthur grants, and Steve Reich and David Lang have won Pulitzer prizes. “No matter where it comes from, no matter what it sounds like, when we make music and listen with open ears,” Adams continues, “we’re *all* insiders. Amid the vitality and diversity of music today, maybe there are no more outsiders.”

The composer comments on
Dark Waves:

In recent years, I've composed in mixed media, combining electronic sounds with acoustic instruments, both solos and small ensembles. But *Dark Waves* is the first time I've mixed electronics with the complex sonorities of the symphony orchestra.

I began with an impossible orchestra—large choirs of virtual instruments, with no musicians, no articulation, and no breathing—sculpting layer upon layer into expansive waves of sound. Then I added the human element.

The musicians of the real orchestra impart depth and texture, shimmer and substance to the electronic sounds. They give the music life. Their instruments speak in different ways. They change bow directions.

They breathe. They play at different speeds. They ride the waves.

Together, the orchestra and the electronics evoke a vast rolling sea. Waves of perfect fifths rise and fall in tempo relationships of 3, 5, and 7. At the central moment, these waves crest together in a tsunami of sound encompassing all twelve chromatic tones and the full range of the orchestra.

As I composed *Dark Waves*, I pondered the ominous events of our times: terrorism and war, intensifying storms and wildfires, the melting of the polar ice and the rising of the seas. Yet, even in the presence of our deepening fears, we find ourselves immersed in the mysterious beauty of this world. Amid the turbulent waves, we may still find the light, the wisdom, and the courage we need to pass through this darkness of our own making. ■



Gustav Mahler

Born July 7, 1860, Kalischt, Bohemia.

Died May 18, 1911, Vienna, Austria.

Songs from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*

In 1806, the year Napoleon crushed the Prussian army at Jena, two young poets in Heidelberg, Achim von Arnim and Clemens von Brentano (close friends who would soon become brothers-in-law), published the first volume of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*. A collection of old German folk poems (the title, *The Youth's Magic Horn*, comes from the first poem in the book), *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* reminded the German people of their great heritage at a time when the country desperately needed a strong sense of national identity. The collection, quickly followed by two more volumes, was dedicated to Germany's greatest living poet, Goethe, who correctly predicted that these simple texts would "gradually be carried from ear to ear and from

mouth to mouth," and that they would be returned "to the people, in the course of time, glorified and filled with new life."

It was not long before some of Germany's greatest composers, including Carl Maria von Weber, Felix Mendelssohn, and Robert Schumann, set several of these poems to music, giving *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* a new life beyond even what Goethe envisioned. It was Weber's own worn copy of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* that Gustav Mahler discovered one day many years later, in the Leipzig home of the composer's grandson Karl, with whose wife Marion Mahler had been carrying on a passionate affair. Mahler had known *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* since childhood, but the chance encounter with it that

COMPOSED

This week's selections: 1892 to 1898

FIRST PERFORMED

individually and in various groups, under the composer's direction at different times throughout his career

FIRST CSO PERFORMANCE

Selections, January 11, 1929, with Claire Dux

as soloist and Frederick Stock conducting

MOST RECENT

CSO PERFORMANCE

Selections, October 5, 2006, with Matthias Goerne as soloist and Paavo Järvi conducting

INSTRUMENTATION

two flutes and two piccolos, two oboes and english horn, two clarinets, two bassoons

and contrabassoon, four horns, two trumpets, percussion, harp, strings

APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME

17 minutes

CSO RECORDING

Selections, 1970, with Yvonne Minton as soloist and Georg Solti conducting for London

day in 1887 seems to have taken hold of him in a powerful way—and suggested a new direction for his still-young career as a composer. His love for Marion von Weber would soon fade, but, for the next dozen years or so, Mahler wrote little that was not in some way inspired by *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*.

Mahler began by setting nine *Wunderhorn* texts for voice and piano—a prelude, a kind of warm-up to the great outpouring of music that would soon follow. When he decided to set more *Wunderhorn* texts early in 1892, he composed them in versions for both piano and orchestra, leading him into largely unexplored territory, for the orchestral song was a novelty at the time. In fact, Mahler recognized that these works were so individual that he didn't even know what to call them at first.

Mahler's main output during his *Wunderhorn* years included three enormous, revolutionary symphonies—his second, third, and fourth—each containing a single *Wunderhorn* song, and twelve independent settings of poems from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*. Not even the briefest of the songs was less important to Mahler than his grandest symphony. In fact, all of these pieces—the songs and the various symphonic movements—were so inextricably linked in his mind at the time that they form one great magnum opus—a large, extended family of relatives, some close and others more distant.

From 1892 to 1901—the most concentrated period of *Wunderhorn* composition—Mahler's drafting of

symphonies and songs was interwoven in a way unprecedented in music. In 1892, Mahler composed his first four orchestral songs on *Wunderhorn* texts. The following year—when he established the routine of composing only during his summer holiday—he wrote three more songs and began work on his Second Symphony (a score that itself would ultimately include one *Wunderhorn* song as its fourth movement and a scherzo based on yet another). And so it went, year after year, as the trilogy of so-called *Wunderhorn* symphonies—each of which included a song as one of its movements—and the collection of orchestral *Wunderhorn* songs was gradually compiled. As Mahler worked simultaneously on these two oddly matched genres, each form benefited and learned from the other—the songs took on a nearly symphonic stature, while the symphonies borrowed ideas from neighboring songs. Mahler finished the last of the symphonies—the Fourth, in G major—in 1900, and then wrote one final song, “Der Tamboursg'ssell,” the following summer, just three months before he met Alma Schindler. By 1902, the year he and Alma married and had their first child, the *Wunderhorn* chapter was closed for good—ending as abruptly as it had begun.

Mahler clearly never thought of these songs, written over the span of a decade, as a cycle—a strictly ordered whole—despite their close relationship. He invited singers to pick and choose from

the collection, to perform songs in keys that suited them, and in whatever order they wished. “I ask at the very least that you determine the sequence of the songs yourself,” he wrote to the baritone Johannes Messchaert in 1906. Not all of the songs are suited to the same voice, and Mahler expected that some would be sung by men, others by women. But the recent fashion of performing the “dialogue” songs with two singers, each taking the part of a different character, was never sanctioned by the composer. Those *Wunderhorn* songs—including “Verlorne Müh!” performed on this week’s concert—are part of the great ballad tradition (Schubert’s “Erlkönig” is the most famous example) where a single narrator takes different roles. Moreover, for the most part, the *Wunderhorn* “dialogues” are imaginary—they take place only within the mind of the protagonist.

The homespun *Wunderhorn* texts seem to have unlocked Mahler’s imagination in ways that more complex, sophisticated poetry could not. As he told Ida Dehmel, the wife of the poet Richard Dehmel, these poems were not complete in themselves, but blocks of marble waiting to be perfected. In fact, Mahler freely adapted the texts to suit his needs before he wrote a note of music (much as Arnim and Brentano had “improved” the folk poetry they published). “With songs,” he once explained to Natalie Bauer-Lechner, “you can express so much more in the music than the words directly say. The text is actually a mere indication of the deeper

significance to be extracted from it, of concealed treasure.”

Each of the *Wunderhorn* settings is a symphonic miniature, more closely related, in scope and scale, to movements from symphonies than to art songs. The orchestral writing is sharp and graphic throughout—a wondrously apt response to each line of text (even though Mahler later admitted to Anton Webern that he didn’t understand everything in the poems). The orchestra that Mahler calls for is never large—the instrumentation varies from song to song—and it is always used like a chamber ensemble, each strand exposed and indispensable. (When Mahler conducted the first performances, he intentionally chose small halls and modest-sized ensembles.) This week’s performances include one *Wunderhorn* setting better known as a symphonic movement, the hymnlike “Urlicht,” although it too was first conceived as an independent song and only later incorporated into the Second Symphony as the prelude to its finale.

Whatever the subject, from the seemingly trivial to life’s darkest sorrows, Mahler made something deeply personal of each song, elevating plain folk material to the realm of art—turning humble vignettes into unsettling revelations. In the end, Mahler brilliantly realized Goethe’s own sense of wonder on first reading the *Wunderhorn* poems, that “a limited situation reveals a particular happening to be part of an infinite whole, so that we believe that in that small space, we are looking at the whole world.” ■

SONGS FROM *DES KNABEN WUNDERHORN*

RHEINLEGENDCHEN

Bald gras' ich am Neckar,
bald gras' ich am Rhein;
bald hab' ich ein Schätzlel,
bald bin ich allein!
Was hilft mir das Grasene,
wenn d'Sichel nicht schneid't;
was hilft mir ein Schätzlel,
wenn's bei mir nicht bleibt!

So soll ich denn grasene
am Neckar, am Rhein;
so werf' ich mein goldenes
Ringlein hinein!
Es fließet im Neckar
und fließet im Rhein,
soll schwimmen hinunter
in's Meer tief hinein!

Und schwimmt es, das Ringlein,
so frisst es ein Fisch!
Das Fischlein soll kommen
auf's König's sein Tisch!
Der König tät fragen,
wem's Ringlein sollt' sein?
Da tät mein Schatz sagen:
„Das Ringlein g'hört mein!“

Mein Schätzlel tät springen
Berg auf und Berg ein,
tät mir wied'rum bringen
das Goldringlein fein!
Kannst grasene am Neckar,
kannst grasene am Rhein!
Wirf du mir nur immer
dein Ringlein hinein!

RHINE LEGEND

Now I mow by the Neckar,
now I mow by the Rhine;
now I have a sweetheart,
now I'm alone!
What good is mowing
if the sickle doesn't cut;
what good is a sweetheart,
if he doesn't stay with me!

So should I then mow
by the Neckar, by the Rhine;
then I will throw
my little gold ring in!
It will float in the Neckar
and float in the Rhine,
it shall swim right down
into the deep sea!

And when it swims, the little ring,
then a fish will eat it!
The fish will land
on the king's table!
The king would ask,
whose ring can it be?
Then my sweetheart would say:
“The ring belongs to me!”

My sweetheart would spring
up hill and down hill,
would bring back to me
the fine little gold ring!
You can mow by the Neckar,
you can mow by the Rhine!
You can always toss in
your little ring to me!

VERLORNE MÜH'!

Sie:

Büble, wir—
Büble, wir wollen auße gehe!
Wollen wir?
Unsere Lämmmer besehe?
Komm', lieb's Büberle,
komm', ich bitt'!

Er:

Nährisches Dinterle,
ich geh dir holt nit!

Sie:

Willst vielleicht?
Willst vielleicht ä bissel nasche?
Hol' dir was aus meiner Tasch'!

Hol', lieb's Büberle,
hol', ich bitt'!

Er:

Nährisches Dinterle,
ich nasch' dir holt nit!

Sie:

Gelt, ich soll—
gelt, ich soll mein Herz dir schenke!?
Immer willst an mich gedenke!?
Immer!?
Nimm's! Lieb's Büberle!
Nimm's, ich bitt'!

Er:

Nährisches Dinterle,
ich mag es holt nit!
Nit!

LABOR LOST

She:

Laddie, we . . .
Laddie, we want to go out!
Shall we?
Look at our lambs?
Come, dear laddie!
Come, I beg you!

He:

Silly lassie,
I won't go with you at all!

She:

You want perhaps?
You want perhaps a little bit to nibble?
Fetch yourself something out of
my bag!
Fetch it, dear laddie!
Fetch it, I beg you!

He:

Silly lassie,
I'll nibble nothing of yours at all!

She:

You mean, I should . . .
You mean, I should give you my heart!?
Always will you want to think on me!?
Always!?
Take it! Dear laddie!
Take it, I beg you!

He:

Silly lassie,
I don't care for it at all!
Nothing!

WO DIE SCHÖNEN TROMPETEN BLASEN

Wer ist denn draußen und wer
klopft an,
der mich so leise wecken kann?

Das ist der Herzallerliebste dein,
steh' auf und laß mich zu dir ein!
Was soll ich hier nun länger steh'n?
Ich seh' die Morgenröt' aufgeh'n,
die Morgenröt', zwei helle Stern'.
Bei meinem Schatz da wär ich gern!
Bei meinem Herzallerlieble!

Das Mädchen stand auf und ließ
ihn ein,
sie heißt ihn auch willkommen sein.
Willkommen trauter Knabe mein!
So lang hast du gestanden!
Sie reicht' ihm auch die schneeweiße
Hand.

Von Ferne sang die Nachtigall,
da fängt sie auch zu weinen an!
Ach weine nicht, du Liebste mein!
Auf's Jahr sollst du mein Eigen sein.
Mein Eigen sollst du werden gewiß,
wie's Keine sonst auf Erden ist!
O Lieb' auf grüner Erden.

Ich zieh' in Krieg auf grüne Haid;
die grüne Haide, die ist so weit!
Allwo dort die schönen Trompeten
blasen,
da ist mein Haus,
mein Haus von grünem Rasen!

WHERE THE FAIR TRUMPETS SOUND

Who then is outside and who
is knocking,
that can so softly awaken me?

It is your dearest darling,
get up and let me come to you!
Why should I go on standing here?
I see the red of morn arise,
the red of morn, two bright stars.
I long to be with my sweetheart!
With my dearest darling!

The maiden got up and let him in,
she bade him welcome, too.
Welcome, my fine lad!
You have been standing so long!
She offered him too her snow-
white hand.

From far away the nightingale sang,
then began she, too, to weep!
Ah, do not weep, beloved mine!
After a year you will be my own.
My own you shall certainly become,
as is no other on earth!
O love on the green earth.

I'm off to war, on the green heath;
the green heath is so far away!
Where there the fair trumpets sound,
there is my home,
my house of green grass!

URLICHT

O Röschen rot!
Der Mensch liegt in größter Not!
Der Mensch liegt in größter Pein!
Je lieber möcht' ich im Himmel sein!

Da kam ich auf einen breiten Weg;
da kam ein Engelein und wollt'
mich abweisen.
Ach nein, ich ließ mich nicht abweisen!
Ich bin von Gott, und will wieder
zu Gott!
Der liebe Gott wird mir ein
Lichtchen geben,
wird leuchten mir bis an das ewig
selig' Leben!

ORIGINAL LIGHT

O little red rose!
Man lies in greatest need!
Man lies in greatest pain!
Even more would I rather be in heaven!

There I came upon a broad path;
there came an angel and wanted to turn
me away.
Ah no, I would not be turned away!
I am from God and want to return
to God!
The loving God will give me a little of
the light,
will illuminate me to the eternal
blessed life!



Dmitri Shostakovich

Born September 25, 1906, Saint Petersburg
(now Leningrad), Russia.

Died August 9, 1975, Moscow, Russia.

Symphony No. 8 in C Minor, Op. 65

Music and war were linked in Shostakovich's mind from early childhood. At an age when other precocious composers were cutting their teeth writing piano pieces, Shostakovich wrote a revolutionary symphony and the Funeral March in Memoriam to the Fallen Heroes of the Revolution. Shostakovich was only eleven when the czar was overthrown; ten years later, when he had a deeper understanding of both political unrest and music's incalculable power, he dedicated his Second Symphony to the October Revolution.

The triumph and tragedy of war have inspired a number of musical works through the ages, including Haydn's dramatic *Mass in Time of War*, the noisy heroics of Beethoven's *Wellington's Victory*, and, more recently, Britten's *War*

Requiem and Sir Michael Tippett's *A Child of Our Time*. But it's the wartime symphonies by Dmitri Shostakovich that most powerfully tell of individual anguish amid mass devastation—that reveal personal grief and the victories of the soul against the big, messy backdrop of combat. Perhaps, in Shostakovich's case, we know so much about his own personal political battles that we read too generously between the lines, placing an unnecessary burden on the music. But in the Seventh (*Leningrad*) and Eighth symphonies—both written at the height of World War II and in a tremendous, emotional white heat—the notes on the page carry a heavy weight. Both works were designed as public statements, intended to address big issues, and they're overwhelming in their sheer size and emotional range. Yet

COMPOSED

1943

FIRST PERFORMANCE

November 4, 1943, Moscow

FIRST CSO PERFORMANCE

October 5, 1972, Carlo Maria Giulini conducting

MOST RECENT

CSO PERFORMANCE

November 11, 2004, Semyon Bychkov conducting

INSTRUMENTATION

four flutes and two piccolos, two oboes and english horn, two clarinets, E-flat clarinet and bass clarinet, three bassoons and contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets,

three trombones and tuba, timpani, xylophone, snare drum, cymbals, bass drum, tam-tam, strings

APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME

62 minutes

CSO RECORDING

1989, Sir Georg Solti for London

despite their monumental scale, it's a solitary voice that lingers in the ear after the sounds of trumpets and drums have receded.

The conflict between public speech and private thought is the province of the modern Soviet artist. Certainly Shostakovich became its most famous victim and his Fifth Symphony the most astonishing apology ever written in the form of music. Throughout his life, the symphony was Shostakovich's public forum. Despite—and often because of—political tension, the composer maintained his public pose in these big works, leaving the darker, more personal thoughts for his string quartets. But even the symphonies betray him. For many listeners, the end of the Fifth Symphony, with its heroic cadences, sounds oddly hollow, as if Shostakovich could play the part no longer.

Shostakovich obviously understood the curious power of music, strangely tangible yet inexplicit—somewhere beyond words. Often this was, for him, its saving grace. “Words are not my genre,” he once told Yevgeny Yevtushenko, whose words he did set, in the Thirteenth Symphony, *Babi Yar*. “I never lie in music,” Shostakovich said. (And it was Yevtushenko's outspoken text, not Shostakovich's music, that caused trouble and had to be revised after the premiere.) Certainly Shostakovich's own words raise many questions, even today. The authenticity of *Testimony*, the “Memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich as related to and edited by Solomon Volkov” is still disputed. And so

we're left with the music. In his introduction to *Testimony*, Volkov quotes Ilya Ehrenberg, who said, when confronted with the Eighth Symphony, “Music has a great advantage: without mentioning anything, it can say everything.”

Shostakovich himself always maintained a curious silence regarding his Eighth Symphony, even though he had often spoken out about its predecessor and fellow war symphony, the *Leningrad*. These two works, for all their similarities, could hardly be more different. Unlike the Seventh Symphony, the Eighth has no title and it isn't about anything as concrete as the siege of Leningrad. The circumstances that inspired it are less sensational—the original score says only: “The composer worked on the symphony at the Ivanovo Home for Composers' Creative Work in the summer of 1943”—and the music less specific in its evocation. But, if anything, the Eighth is more deeply motivated. While the Seventh chronicles the horrors of war, the Eighth seeks understanding. And, where the Seventh limits its scope to the triumph of victory, the Eighth looks beyond the horizon, to true peace.

Shostakovich casts the work in an irregular arrangement of five movements, the last three linked in one powerful, unbroken sequence that's unparalleled in the symphonic literature. That span of music, lasting a full half hour, is balanced by a single movement, nearly as long and heavy with anger and sadness, at the start. A quick and savage

scherzo, marked simply *allegretto*, stands between.

A solitary strand of music, played by the cellos and basses, begins the symphony, *adagio* and *fortissimo*. Shostakovich moves soberly through slowly shifting music—dirgelike and contemplative, then angry, even explosive. A barely contained outburst gives way to a long passage of quiet reflection. Midway, the music slowly rises to its greatest climax and then breaks to reveal the mad galloping of the *Allegro non troppo*, capped by wild horn calls and a beating drum. Movement is halted, finally, by an explosion signaled by terrifying drum rolls—leaving us with the sound of an english horn, the lone survivor, and a nearly deafening silence. Shostakovich makes little of the shift from C minor to C major—the latter has rarely sounded so bleak—even though this is our first glimpse of our destination, still half an hour away.

Next comes the full force of the *Allegretto*—tremendous and irregular marching music characterized by the swagger of the brass band, striding tunes, high-flying piccolo squeals, and a banging drum. It's a harrowing vision of the military march. The music eventually disintegrates—at one point there's little left but the flute on top and the contrabassoon five octaves below—and then rears up for one last crash.

The last three movements are conceived as one: the climax of the *Allegro non troppo* becomes the beginning of the *Largo*; the crux of that movement, in turn, opens

onto the great vistas of the final *Allegretto*. This progression is calculated with a keen sense of drama and a master's command of the big picture. The *Allegro non troppo* is a terrifying piece of music, not only because of its menacing tone and dangerous pace, but also because it sounds inhuman, like the workings of a giant and sinister machine. It begins with rapid, even quarter notes that march relentlessly through every measure, starting in the violas and eventually invading the entire orchestra. Page after page brings no relief, only the occasional shrill cries of the winds or a crazed bugle call.

Suddenly, with a drum roll and a couple of grand, ceremonial chords from the full orchestra, a powerful unison theme is announced. And only then, when the music pulls back quickly from *fff* to a thread of sound, do we understand that the machine has stopped and that this noble new theme has swept us into the serene expanses of the *Largo*. That theme is the foundation for an expansive set of variations and it's repeated twelve times—always in the low strings—while ever-new ideas circle above it, including several rhapsodic solos. This solemn threnody, restrained and quiet (many pages don't rise above a *pianissimo*), is the calm after the storm, but while there's calm, there's not yet peace. That comes in a moment of extraordinary stillness—at the same time one of the quietest and most important moments in the score—when the three clarinets lead the music up into the pure radiance of a C major triad.

The final Allegretto, opened up by the discovery of C major, has an unexpected air of innocence. The music is simple and even playful—listen to the opening diatonic bassoon melody or to the jubilant piping of the piccolo a few bars later—and the scene is fresh and pastoral. Even though there are reminders of more troubled music midway through—the opening of the symphony breaks in at the climax—it’s a bold and provocative ending for a dark, tragic symphony. It also has proven controversial. Critics found the finale anticlimactic; the Soviet authorities, unable to

reconcile these few rays of sunlight falling on so much desolation, called it “an optimistic tragedy.” But optimistic is too unambiguous a word for the serene and dreamy, emotionally complex final pages. Shostakovich leaves it to each of us to hear this music, as inward and personal as anything in his symphonic output, in our own way. ■

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