

An illustration in a woodcut style showing a group of men in revolutionary attire. In the foreground, two men with beards and caps are prominent; one holds a red flag. Behind them, several other men are visible, some looking upwards. The background is a bright, hazy yellow.

**CHANDOS**

# SHOSTAKOVICH

SYMPHONIES NOS 1 AND 3 'THE FIRST OF MAY' • TWO SCHERZOS

An illustration in a woodcut style showing a cityscape with a ship. In the foreground, there are large, dark, angular shapes that look like ruins or debris. In the background, a city with a ship is visible under a hazy sky.

**BBC**  
Philharmonic  
Orchestra

**HALLÉ CHOIR**  
**JOHN STORGÅRDS**





Portrait by Boris Mikhaylovich Kustodiev (1878 – 1927) / Vidimages / Alamy Stock Photo

**Dmitri Shostakovich, 1923**

## Dmitri Shostakovich (1906 – 1975)

<b>1</b>	<b>Scherzo, Op. 1</b> (1919) in F sharp minor • in fis-Moll • en fa dièse mineur [Allegretto] – Meno mosso – [Tempo I]	<b>5:00</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Scherzo, Op. 7</b> (1923 – 24) in E flat major • in Es-Dur • en mi bémol majeur for Orchestra P.B. Rjasanow gewidmet / Dedicated to P.B. Ryazanov Allegro – Più mosso – [Tempo I] – Presto	<b>4:02</b>
	<b>Symphony No. 1, Op. 10</b> (1924 – 25) in F minor • in f-Moll • en fa mineur Dedicated to Mikhail Kvadri	<b>33:13</b>
<b>3</b>	I Allegretto – Più mosso – Allegretto – Allegro non troppo	9:13
<b>4</b>	II Allegro – Meno mosso – L'istesso tempo – Allegro – Meno mosso	5:01
<b>5</b>	III Lento – Più mosso – Largo – [Lento] – Più mosso – [Lento] –	9:30
<b>6</b>	IV Allegro molto – Lento – Allegro molto – Meno mosso – Allegro molto – Molto meno mosso – Adagio – Largo – Più mosso – Presto	9:26

**Symphony No. 3, Op. 20 'The First of May' (1929)\* 32:50**  
in E flat major • in Es-Dur • en mi bémol majeur

<b>7</b>	Allegretto $\text{♩} = 100$ - Più mosso -	2:59
<b>8</b>	Allegro $\text{♩} = 104$ -	2:04
<b>9</b>	Più mosso - Meno mosso $\text{♩} = 80$ -	1:54
<b>10</b>	Allegro $\text{♩} = 92$ -	4:35
<b>11</b>	Andante $\text{♩} = 138$ - Meno mosso - $\text{♩} = 116$ - Meno mosso $\text{♩} = 108$ - Lento -	5:30
<b>12</b>	Allegro $\text{♩} = 76$ - $\text{♩} = 126$ - Poco meno mosso - Allegro molto $\text{♩} = 160$ -	7:04
<b>13</b>	Andante $\text{♩} = 84$ - Largo $\text{♩} = 96$ -	4:06
<b>14</b>	Moderato $\text{♩} = 88$ - $\text{♩} = 100$ - $\text{♩} = 132$ - $\text{♩} = 108$ - $\text{♩} = 132$ - $\text{♩} = 100$	4:34
		<b>TT 75:06</b>

**Hallé Choir\***

Matthew Hamilton choral director

**BBC Philharmonic Orchestra**

Zoë Beyers leader

**John Storgårds**



© Marco Borggreve

John Storgårds

## Shostakovich: Symphonies Nos 1 and 3 / Scherzos

### The compositional appeal of scherzos

For trainee composers, the attractions of composing a scherzo are obvious. It invites immediacy rather than profundity, imaginative variety rather than consistency of texture. And it demands strong contrast of character for a central, or 'trio', section. It then poses interesting questions of craftsmanship, such as how to fashion artful transitions and returns. More generally, it opens up potential pathways from music as play to music as art. It should not be surprising, then, to find that scherzos loom large in the early output of Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–1975), as they do in that of Stravinsky, Bartók, and others.

### Scherzo in F sharp minor, Op. 1

The orchestral Scherzo in F sharp minor, Op. 1, which Shostakovich composed in 1919 at the age of thirteen and fine-tuned over the next two years, is dedicated to Shostakovich's composition teacher, the Rimsky-Korsakov pupil (and son-in-law) Maximilian Steinberg (1883–1946). In its lightness of touch, it sounds like a spin-off from almost any ballet in the Delibes / Tchaikovsky tradition. In terms

of construction, however, it already shows considerable ingenuity in the contrapuntal combination of themes. In particular, it features a remarkably sophisticated retransition, in which the climax of the central trio section and the return of the scherzo are deftly telescoped into each other. Shostakovich may or may not have realised it, but this kind of synthesis already contained the germ of the 'dialectical' approach to structure that he would later extol, claiming (perhaps disingenuously) that he had not been guided towards it by his teachers. The instrumentation has an astonishingly professional look for one so young. The heavy brass instruments are added with discretion, and the greater part of the outer sections could be notated entirely in the treble clef (in the manner of the 'Overture miniature' to Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker*). Doubtless the fine-chiselled orchestral detail reflects the careful guidance of Steinberg, some of whose interventions can be seen in the manuscript. Still, Shostakovich would hardly have put his name to the piece, or assigned his first definitive opus number to it, had the essence not been his alone. And he evidently thought

highly enough of the opening theme to reuse it, twenty-five years later, in the 'Clockwork Doll' movement of his cycle of piano pieces *Children's Notebook*, Op. 69.

#### **Scherzo in E flat major, Op. 7**

Such displays of ingenuity are, in a way, their own critique, as they give the impression of being an end in themselves, aimed at getting high marks in class. It need not, therefore, necessarily be taken as a weakness that the Op. 7 orchestral Scherzo, composed in 1923–24, is far less subtle – it compensates by having more to say. Formally, it is no advance on Op. 1; rather the opposite, for the return after the trio section is little more than copy-and-paste routine. Yet, the thematic invention is bursting with energy. For the first time in his compositional career, we find here the kind of malicious glee with which Shostakovich would soon underpin the polkas, galops, and cancons in his music for stage and screen. Stravinsky's *Les Noces* (first performed 1923) is godfather to the rhythmic games of the outer sections, while the full orchestra seizes upon the sly chromatic slitherings of the trio with the kind of raucousness that one might trace to Jacques Ibert's once-popular *Divertissement*, were it not for the fact that Ibert's work post-dates Shostakovich's by six years. The prominent piano part is at once a

homage to Stravinsky's *Pétrouchka* (1911, an obsession of Shostakovich's at the time) and the most obvious pointer ahead to the First Symphony. As in the case of Op. 1, material from the Op. 7 Scherzo was destined for recycling, this time in Shostakovich's first film score, *The New Babylon* (1928–29).

#### **Symphony No. 1 in F minor, Op. 10**

Shostakovich had been born into a relatively well-off family, which nevertheless suffered its share of privations in the early Bolshevik era. When his father died, of pneumonia, in February 1922, his mother had to take up typing, and his sister gave private piano lessons. From October 1924 the aspiring student composer began to earn pin-money playing the piano for silent films. Ever a sickly child, he developed tuberculosis of the lymph glands, and in the spring of 1923, he had to have an operation. He continued work on the Op. 7 Scherzo and began to sketch ideas for what would eventually become the First Symphony, before being sent for a cure at a summer sanatorium at Gaspra, in the Crimea. There he met Tatyana Glivenko, daughter of a well-known Moscow philologist and, according to some commentators, the greatest love of his life. He composed his single-movement Piano Trio, Op. 8 with his feelings for Glivenko very

much in mind. Its languorous, late-romantic idiom finds an echo in the third movement of the First Symphony. For premonitions of the symphony's other three movements, we need look no further than the two orchestral scherzos.

In the autumn of 1924, the Petrograd Conservatoire stipulated a symphony as the graduation test for its composition class. Shostakovich had already been a student there for five years, making giant strides in his parallel studies as a pianist. But he was still not quite eighteen, and he would wrestle with the task of composing the symphony for nearly two years. Even so, the work he eventually produced was an instant success, marking him out as a Boy Wonder among Soviet composers.

The first movement is dominated by the marionette idiom of his beloved *Pétrouchka*. The introduction, comically but anxiously searching for the home key, is followed by a toy-soldier march on the clarinet and a puppet-ballerina waltz on the flute. These three elements are worked over in a structure remarkable for its concision and for its violent throwing together of march and waltz.

The second movement starts with a prank at the expense of the double-basses, which 'fail to keep up' with the cellos. We are then taken to the movies: a Keystone-Cops-style

chase, followed by a mock-solemn pilgrims' procession. These elements are in due course superimposed, in a kind of musical split-screen effect, before peremptory chords on the orchestral piano bring the movement to a laconic close.

At this stage in the composition, Shostakovich was considering the subtitle 'Symphony-Grotesque'. But his slow movement is suddenly warm and humane. Is this genuine emotional warmth or mere role-play? The not knowing may be part of the movement's fascination. At any rate, the oboe's yearning lyricism is soon met by a summons of Fate (the repeated-note tattoo first heard on trumpets and side drum). A mournful lament, initially also given to the oboe, returns on muted trumpet towards the end of the movement, superimposed on the first theme, now in cellos and basses.

Like the first movement, the finale is prefaced by an introduction exploring various options of key, theme, and texture. The main theme then begins as a hectic scramble on clarinets and piano and proceeds in the direction of anarchy, until an apparently new idea (in fact, artfully derived from the slow movement) is screamed out in woodwind, violins, and violas, as if to call the music to order. This idea and the slow movement's 'Fate' motif are scheduled to reappear, reining



in the urge to unbridled exuberance and provoking a tensely ambivalent outcome. In its laconicism the conclusion is true to the quick-wittedness with which the symphony had begun. Here, and elsewhere in this astonishing work, the precocious Shostakovich did not fail to observe the rules of symphonic decorum but, rather, rewrote them.

The First Symphony scored a famous triumph at its première, under Nikolay Malko, on 12 May 1926 in the Grand Hall of the Leningrad Philharmonic, the anniversary of which the composer would commemorate for the rest of his life. Steinberg noted in his diary that evening: 'A memorable concert. Tumultuous success for Mitya's symphony: they encored the scherzo.' The symphony was taken up by Bruno Walter (Berlin, 1927), Leopold Stokowski (Philadelphia, 1928), Robert Hager (1928), and Arturo Toscanini (from 1931). Congratulatory messages came from figures as geographically and artistically distant as Berg in Vienna and Milhaud in Paris.

**Symphony No. 3 in E flat major, Op. 20  
'The First of May'**

Having passed the newly required examination in Marxist ideology in December 1926, Shostakovich contrived to extend his registration as a postgraduate student at the

Leningrad Conservatoire until New Year 1930. Fulfilling requirements, he submitted his Third Symphony, composed in the summer of 1929, along with the explanation that it 'expresses the festive spirit of peaceful construction'. In this early phase of Stalin's first Five-Year Plan, Shostakovich was evidently learning the art of political spin that would become ever more crucial to his creative survival.

In its broad outline of sophisticated instrumental first half and bombastic final chorus, the Third Symphony follows the same pattern as the Second and, in retrospect, it has a similar appearance of a fascinating but historically doomed balancing act. Admittedly, the idiom is now less conspicuously *avant-garde*, but the continuity is if anything more daringly spasmodic. Shostakovich wrote to his Moscow composer-friend Vissarion Shebalin that the Third was his attempt to compose a symphony without repetition of themes. The effect, accordingly, is of a phenomenally gifted improviser working within the faintly discernible confines of four-movements-rolled-into-one. As regards the choral final section, what Shostakovich seems to have been experimenting with is a response to the Beethoven centenary celebrations of 1927, viewed through a Soviet lens: his Third Symphony is in fact a symphony-ode, moving

from relative chaos to order, and thus very loosely modelled on the finale of Beethoven's Ninth. On the cusp between the pluralist 1920s and lock-step Stalinism, it represents an attempt to harness the flamboyance of free-wheeling individualism to the demands of monolithic, mass-orientated propaganda.

How does the bulk of the work relate to the tub-thumping final chorus? Hardly at all, in fact, or at least not in any detail, not least because most of it was composed before the text even existed. The encomium to the International Workers' Day, inaugurated in 1889, in Paris, was originally to have been supplied by the well-known agit-poet Demyan Bedny but was eventually penned by the minor Mayakovsky-imitator Semyon Kirsanov.

At its first performances, in January 1930, the Third Symphony was not unsuccessful, and Boris Asafyev, doyen of Soviet musicologist-critics, hailed the 'birth of the symphony out of the dynamism of revolutionary oratory'. But the impact of the piece was soon overshadowed by the fuss surrounding Shostakovich's first opera, *The Nose*, which was premièred in the same week and which, for the first time in Shostakovich's career, drew accusations of the dreaded 'formalism' (i.e. deference to Western-style modernism), to which category the Third Symphony would also soon be consigned.

As such, it was sidelined until the Thaw years, when performances in Latvia (1962) and Russia (1964) gave a new generation of audiences the chance to evaluate it.

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Founded alongside the Orchestra by Sir Charles Hallé in 1858, the internationally acclaimed **Hallé Choir** gives around fifteen concerts a year. It was proud to première James MacMillan's *Timotheus, Bacchus and Cecilia* at Sir Mark Elder's final concerts as Music Director of the Hallé in both Manchester and London. The 2024 / 25 season included performances of Lili Boulanger's Psalm 130, Mahler's Symphony No. 2, and Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, as well as the UK première of *America: A Prophecy* by Thomas Adès, all with the orchestra's Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor, Kahchun Wong. Recent highlights have included performances of Elgar's three great oratorios *The Dream of Gerontius*, *The Apostles*, and *The Kingdom* as the climax to the Hallé's 2022 / 23 season, Rachmaninoff's *The Bells* with the Hallé and Sir Mark Elder at the 2023 BBC Proms, and Fauré's Requiem with Kahchun Wong. As well as appearing with the Hallé, the Choir performs regularly with other orchestras at venues and festivals around the UK, including

the BBC Proms, Edinburgh International Festival, and York Minster. Made up of 200 singers from all over the north-west of England and from all walks of life, the Hallé Choir offers individual coaching and social events, as well as regular rehearsals.

Since 2015, **Matthew Hamilton** has been Choral Director at the Hallé, where he has been involved in large-scale choral projects, acclaimed recordings and broadcasts with both the Hallé and BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, and performances across the UK and abroad. He also holds the post of Director of Choirs and Singing at the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic. As a guest conductor, Matthew Hamilton has made appearances with the BBC Singers, Nederlands Kamerkoor, Chœur de Radio France, ChorWerk Ruhr, and many of the UK's symphonic choruses.

The **BBC Philharmonic Orchestra** is reimagining the orchestral experience for a new generation – challenging perceptions, championing innovation, and taking a rich variety of music to the widest range of audiences. Alongside a flagship series of concerts at Manchester's Bridgewater Hall, the Orchestra broadcasts concerts on BBC Radio 3 and BBC Sounds from venues across the North of England, annually at

the BBC Proms, and from its international tours. It also records regularly for Chandos Records and has produced a catalogue of more than 300 discs and digital downloads. Championing new music, it has recently given world and UK premières of works by Anna Appleby, Gerald Barry, Erland Cooper, Tom Coult, Sebastian Fagerlund, Emily Howard, Robert Laidlow, James Lee III, Grace-Evangeline Mason, David Matthews, Outi Tarkiainen, and Anna Þorvaldsdóttir, the scope of its output extending far beyond standard repertoire. Its Chief Conductor is John Storgårds, with whom the orchestra has enjoyed a long association. The French conductor Ludovic Morlot is its Associate Artist, Anna Clyne, one of the most in-demand composers of the day, its Composer in Association.

In May 2023 the Orchestra performed at the Eurovision Song Contest, both at a free concert with the previous Ukrainian winner, Jamala, and in the final itself with the Italian artist Mahmood for a rendition of John Lennon's *Imagine* during the Liverpool Songbook medley. The Orchestra continues to deliver a programme of engagement with children and young people. At the end of 2023 it released *Musical Storyland*, a major new ten-part series featuring the musicians of the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, which brings famous stories from around the world to life using

the power of music. This was the first time an orchestra has been commissioned to make a series of films for UK network television. Through all its activities, the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra is bringing life-changing musical experiences to audiences across Greater Manchester, the North of England, the UK, and around the world. [www.bbc.co.uk/philharmonic](http://www.bbc.co.uk/philharmonic)

Chief Conductor of the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra and Turku Philharmonic Orchestra, and Principal Guest Conductor of the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa, Canada, **John Storgårds** enjoys a dual career as a conductor and violin virtuoso; he is widely recognised for his creative flair for programming and his rousing yet refined performances. As Artistic Director of the Lapland Chamber Orchestra, a title he has held for more than twenty-five years, he has earned global critical acclaim for the ensemble's adventurous performances and award-winning recordings. He appears with such orchestras as the Berliner Philharmoniker, WDR Sinfonieorchester Köln, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, Orchestre philharmonique de Radio France, Orchestre national de France, Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI, BBC Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, and all major Nordic orchestras, including

the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra of which he served as Chief Conductor from 2008 to 2015. Further afield, he appears with leading orchestras in Australia, Japan, and the United States. He collaborates with soloists such as Yefim Bronfman, Seong-Jin Cho, Sol Gabetta, Kirill Gerstein, Håkan Hardenberger, Kari Kriikku, Gil Shaham, Baiba Skride, Christian Tetzlaff, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, and Frank Peter Zimmermann, as well as Soile Isokoski and Anne Sofie von Otter.

His vast repertoire includes all the symphonies by Sibelius, Nielsen, Bruckner, Brahms, Beethoven, Mozart, Schubert, and Schumann. He regularly performs world premières, many works, such as Per Nørgård's Symphony No. 8 and Kaija Saariaho's Nocturne for solo violin, having been dedicated to him. During the 2024 / 25 season he returned to the BBC Proms with the BBC Philharmonic, and also to the Bamberger Symphoniker, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, St Louis Symphony Orchestra, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, and Orchestre symphonique de Montréal.

Having studied violin with Chaim Taub, John Storgårds became concert master of the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra under Esa-Pekka Salonen, then studied conducting with Jorma Panula and Eri Klas. He received the Finnish State Prize for Music in 2002 and the Pro Finlandia Prize in 2012.



© Alex Burns / The Hallé

Hallé Choir





BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, with Ben Gernon, its former Principal Guest Conductor, 26 January 2019

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#### Pervomayskaya

V pervoye Pervoye maya,  
broshen v byloye blesk,  
iskru v ogon razduvaya,  
plamya pokrylo lesa.

Ukhom ponikshikh yolok  
vslushivalis lesa  
v yunyk yeshcho mayovok  
shorokhi, golosa.

Nashe Pervoye maya,  
v posvistye pul gorya,  
shtyk i nagan szhimaya,  
bralo dvorets tsarya.

Pavshii dvorets tsarya –  
eto yeshcho zarya maya,  
vperyod idushchevo,  
svetom znamyon gorya.

Pervoye maya nashe –  
v budushchee parusa –  
vzvilo nad moryem pashen  
gulkiye korpusa.

Novyye korpusa – novaya polosa maya,  
ognyami byushchevo budushchemu v glaza,  
fabriki i kolonii,  
maiskii vzmyetnyom parad.

#### The First of May

On the very first May Day  
a torch was thrown into the past,  
a spark grew into a fire,  
and flames enveloped the forest.

With the ears of drooping fir trees  
the forest listened  
to the voices and noises  
of the new May Day parade.

Our May Day.  
In the whistling of grief's bullets  
sounding from bayonet and gun,  
the tsar's palace was taken.

The tsar's fallen palace –  
this was the dawn of May,  
marching ahead,  
in the light of grief's banners.

Our May Day –  
in the future there will be sails –  
unfurled over the sea of corn,  
and the resounding steps of the corps.

New corps – the new ranks of May,  
their eyes like fires looking to the future,  
factories and workers  
march in the May Day parade.

Zemlyu sozhmyom kolonnami –  
nasha prishla pora.  
Slushaitye, proletarii, nashikh zavodov  
rech,  
vam podzhigaya starorye, novuyu yav  
zazhech.

Solntse znamyon podnimaya,  
marsh, zagremi v ushakh.  
Kazhdoye Pervoye maya  
k sotsializmu shag.

Pervoye maya – shag  
szhavshikh vintovku shakht.  
V ploshchadi, revolyutsiya,  
vbyei millionnyi shag.

Semyon Isaakovich Kirsanov (1906 – 1972)

We will reap the land –  
our time has come.  
Listen, workers, to the voice of our  
factories:  
in burning down the old, you must kindle  
a new reality.

Banners rising like the sun,  
march, let your steps resound.  
Every May Day  
is a step towards Socialism.

May Day – the march  
of armed miners.  
Into the squares, revolution,  
march with a million feet!

Translator anonymous

Also available



Shostakovich  
Symphony No. 13 'Babi Yar'

Pärt  
De Profundis  
CHSA 5335

Also available



Shostakovich  
Symphony No. 14 • Six Verses of Marina Tsvetayeva  
CHSA 5310



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Shostakovich

Symphony No. 12 'The Year 1917' • Symphony No. 15

CHSA 5334

Also available



Shostakovich  
Symphony No. 11 'The Year 1905'  
CHSA 5278

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**Recording producer** Mike George

**Sound engineer** Stephen Rinker

**Assistant engineers** John Cole (Scherzo, Op. 7 and Symphony No. 1) and Carwyn Griffith (other works)

**Editor** Jonathan Cooper

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John Storgårds



SHOSTAKOVICH: SYMPHONIES NOS 1 AND 3, ETC. – Hallé Choir / BBC PO / Storgårds

**CHANDOS**  
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**CHAN 20398**

## DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH (1906 – 1975)

- |      |  |          |
|------|--|----------|
| 1    | <b>SCHERZO, OP. 1</b> (1919)<br>IN F SHARP MINOR · IN FIS-MOLL · EN FA DIÈSE MINEUR                          | 5:00     |
| 2    | <b>SCHERZO, OP. 7</b> (1923 – 24)<br>IN E FLAT MAJOR · IN ES-DUR · EN MI BÉMOL MAJEUR<br>FOR ORCHESTRA       | 4:02     |
| 3-6  | <b>SYMPHONY NO. 1, OP. 10</b> (1924 – 25)<br>IN F MINOR · IN F-MOLL · EN FA MINEUR                           | 33:13    |
| 7-14 | <b>SYMPHONY NO. 3, OP. 20 'THE FIRST OF MAY' (1929)*</b><br>IN E FLAT MAJOR · IN ES-DUR · EN MI BÉMOL MAJEUR | 32:50    |
|      |  | TT 75:06 |

### HALLÉ CHOIR\*

MATTHEW HAMILTON CHORAL DIRECTOR

BBC PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

ZOË BEYERS LEADER

JOHN STORGÅRDS

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