

SHOSTAKOVICH

The Human Comedy • The Nose • The Shot



Malmö Opera Chorus and Orchestra
Mark Fitz-Gerald

INCLUDES PREMIERE RECORDINGS

Dmitry
SHOSTAKOVICH
(1906–1975)

**The Shot – Incidental music to a verse comedy
by Aleksandr Bezymensky, Op. 24 (1929)**

14:55

Reconstructed from piano sketches by Mark Fitz-Gerald [1](#)–[4](#) [6](#)–[8](#) [9](#) (bars 1 to 13) [11](#)

Text: Aleksandr Bezymensky (1898–1973),
edited by Anastasia Belina and Mark Fitz-Gerald [1](#) [13](#) [16](#)

1	Workers' Song of Victory – Moderato	2:32
2	Moderato	0:17
3	Andantino	0:12
4	Marziale	0:22
5	Moderato (dynamics added by Mark Fitz-Gerald)	0:10
6	Marcia – Vivo	0:33
7	Moderato	1:18
8	Entry and Exit of the Heads of Departments – Marziale	0:28
9	Bored Workers' Song of Protest – Marziale	2:19
10	Episode 4 – Con moto	0:21
11	Exit from the Factory – Marziale	0:29
12	Episode 7. Entry of the Technical Secretaries – Tempo ad libitum	0:44
13	Episode 9 – Allegro	2:06
14	Episode 10 – Allegro	0:10
15	Episode 11 – Allegro – Allegretto	0:16
16	Dun'dya's Lament (Romance) – Allegro moderato (ed. Edward Stewart and Mark Fitz-Gerald, based on the piano score)	2:38

**Recorded: 5–7 March 2024 at the Malmö Opera House, Sweden and 4 April 2024
on the Orgelbau Goll organ (Lucerne, Switzerland) at the Fagerborg Church, Oslo, Norway [40](#)**

**The Human Comedy – Incidental music to a play
adapted from Balzac by Pavel Sukhotin, Op. 37 (1933–34)**

28:21

Text: Anastasia Belina, Mark Fitz-Gerald ¹⁹

¹⁷	No. 1. Introduction	1:23
¹⁸	No. 2. Overture	1:06
¹⁹	No. 3. The Students' Song	0:55
²⁰	No. 4. Waltz	0:57
²¹	No. 5. Elegy	2:55
²²	No. 6. March	2:18
²³	No. 7. Merry Paris	1:08
²⁴	No. 8. The Theatre	0:50
²⁵	No. 9. Act II – Finale	0:15
²⁶	No. 10. The Theme of Paris	1:19
²⁷	No. 11. Cruel Paris	1:08
²⁸	No. 12. Gavotte and Trio	3:25
²⁹	No. 13. Flourish	0:32
³⁰	No. 14. The Panorama of Paris	0:56
³¹	No. 15. Panic on the Exchange	0:30
³²	No. 16. Barrel Organ	1:06
³³	No. 17. Scene (The Bank of the Seine)	2:49
³⁴	No. 18. Casket with Diamonds	0:46
³⁵	No. 19. Broken Box (arranged for string quartet by Mark Fitz-Gerald)	0:45
³⁶	No. 20. Police March	1:15
³⁷	No. 21. Flourish	0:21
³⁸	No. 22. Sarabande	1:19
³⁹	No. 23. Scandal (Hullabaloo)	0:24

**The Nose, Opera in Three Acts, Op. 15 –
Discarded versions of two interludes and the opening of Act III (1927–28)**

10:33

⁴⁰	Act I: Entr'acte before Scene 4 'Kazan Cathedral' (first version, ed. Mark Fitz-Gerald)	3:47
⁴¹	Act III: Introduction to Scene 7	2:58
⁴²	Act II: No. 10a. Entr'acte (after Scene 5)	3:48

**⁴³ The Vyborg Side – Film Music, Op. 50 –
March of the Anarchists (1938)**

1:46

(reconstructed from original soundtrack by Mark Fitz-Gerald)

Dmitry Shostakovich (1906–1975)

The Shot • The Human Comedy • The Nose

The Shot – Incidental Music, Op. 24 (1929)

In the autumn of 1929, the very young Shostakovich was hired to write music for the Leningrad branch of the experimental theatre, TRAM (Teatr Rabochei Molodyozhi – ‘Theatre of Working Youth’). This was still a time of fervid avant-garde experimentalism in the Soviet arts, and Shostakovich would already have known many of the young people involved and been familiar with their amusing if unsubtle modernist aesthetic which favoured shocking and preposterous effects designed to outrage traditional audiences.

The first play he scored there was *The Shot* by Aleksandr Bezymensky. Bezymensky, already well known as a ‘revolutionary poet’, was busy at this period cultivating the approval of Stalin, and had written this ‘comedy’ in support of Stalin’s strident declaration the year before:

The consequent task of the Soviet Communist Party today is the **merciless fight against bureaucratism, the organisation from below of criticism by the masses, and the actioning of that criticism in the form of the liquidation of our failings.**

[In other words, bureaucratic officials are always the best ones to blame for everything that goes wrong in the ‘Workers’ Paradise’!]

Accordingly, the play is set in a city tram-yard, where counter-revolutionary obstruction is rife and leads to suicide (the ‘shot’ of the title), and the baddies are the corrupt bureaucratic officials who run the place, and the goodies are of course the workers and their Communist Party organisers and representatives.

Hardly a barrel of laughs, you might suppose, but Bezymensky’s text is actually a mildly witty production in the spirit of the much greater avant-gardist writers and theatre-makers of the time like Mayakovsky and Meyerhold, with both of whom Shostakovich had worked a few months earlier on *The Bedbug*, his *Op. 19*.

As it happened, Shostakovich had already encountered Bezymensky; in 1927 he used a poem by him for the choral peroration of his *Symphony No. 2* (Naxos 8.572708), at which time he told a friend that the poet’s words were ‘disgusting’, so one imagines he wasn’t mad about this play either.

However, when production began, things got more interesting: to the intense anxiety of the ‘revolutionary’ author, the directors, Mikhail Sokolovsky and Rafail Suslovsky, decided to jazz things up. They took the end – a funeral procession for the unhappy suicide – and stuck it at the beginning, with the entire company opening the show by carrying the ‘corpse’ through the audience and on to the stage (thereby, as the author protested, deliberately spoiling the shape of his drama). They had lots of other tricks too: they insisted – for comic effect – on a full brass band onstage at one moment, and an entire ensemble of balalaikas (played by ‘a group of empty-headed puffed-up young men’) at another, in the latter case to accompany – and ridicule – the appearance of the ‘Executive Secretary’ of the tram-workers’ political cell.

Meantime, to the audience’s delight, the semi-serious character Dun’ya (another party-cell official, whose name already suggests a ‘provincial windbag’), played by one of the theatre’s leading actors, appeared dressed sometimes in a red-coloured clown outfit, sometimes as an undertaker’s man, and sometimes as a pre-revolutionary aristocratic servant. Worse still, he and another semi-serious character Ozol’ (secretary of the local cell of the communist party youth organisation, the Komsomol – his name suggests ‘donkey’) were – quite contrary to Bezymensky’s text – required to step out of the drama from time to time and declaim political commentary from the edge of the stage for the edification (or amusement) of everyone in the theatre.

Bezymensky was extremely upset, and wrote a whining letter to Stalin disclaiming all responsibility for these irreverent changes. Stalin wrote back saying not to worry, it was a nice play and he wasn’t to fuss about it.

Stalin and Bezymensky notwithstanding, the audience enjoyed the result, and judging by his work, Shostakovich had fun as well. This recording includes all the surviving music, much of which has never been heard before, and quite a few episodes which Mark Fitz-Gerald has reconstructed from the original piano sketches, as the full scores no longer exist.

The result is highly colourful and brings the raucous life of the experimental youth theatre in Leningrad in the late 1920s vividly to life. Most of the music is in the noisily comical style of Shostakovich’s other theatrical scores of this period. What impresses most is that some of it is quite difficult to play, and that says something about the TRAM musicians, many of whom were also the actors and who, as photographs show, played onstage and from memory.

The sequence here consists mostly of scene changes and transitions, but it opens with a *Workers' Song of Victory*, an amusingly sub-Mussorgskian mass-song in the typical style pushed in those days by the so-called 'Proletarian' composers, in which the workers proclaim that if everyone is dedicated to the task, they will spread the joyful song of victory across the world. The song can only be taken away from them if it is torn out along with their hearts. The next song is the *Bored Workers' Song of Protest*, in which the workers lament the loss of beauty in life, with boredom ruling. They have been seduced by the New Economic Policy instituted by Lenin in 1922 to introduce elements of free trade and capitalism into the Soviet economy (it was ended by Stalin in 1928), and the fight is over, dreams have shattered. The avant-garde *Episode 9* finds the workers back in a violently revolutionary spirit, literally shouting 'All power to us! Straight to battle without waiting for a mandate!' The work ends with a deliciously *petty bourgeois* café-style romance for the unhappy Dun'dya, in which the eponymous party official declares that society must prepare for war, and that the secretary has told him he must think for himself – but that is not for him. If only everything in the world were clearly arranged, with people standing in rows like cupboards, with all feelings appropriately shelved, and all thoughts correctly numbered! Shostakovich later adapted this piece as another equally soupy song in his 1931 music hall show *Hypothetically Murdered*, where it was memorably performed by the very young Klavdiya Shul'zhenko, later one of the best loved of all Soviet popular singers.

The Human Comedy – Incidental Music, Op. 37 (1933–34)

In 1934 Stalin had attended the first performance of Shostakovich's opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, and sat in a box that was located over the very loud percussion section. His reaction was to tell the composer that this music was unacceptable for the people of the USSR to hear. Under threat, Shostakovich had no choice but to comply with Stalin's demands. The first work he wrote after this episode was for the Vakhtangov Theatre's 1934 production of *The Human Comedy*.

By this time Soviet theatre had changed greatly from the youthful free-for-all and wild enthusiasm of the late 1920s. In April 1932, the Central Committee had issued a decree abolishing all independent arts organisations, and inaugurating the creation of arts 'unions': supposedly 'trade unions' to represent workers in the different areas of the arts, but actually top-down instruments of state control. This was also the period when the official aesthetic policy of 'Socialist Realism' was first developed and promulgated. There was definitely to be no more 'avant-gardist hooliganism' of the kind that had gone down a storm at TRAM only a few years earlier.

The Vakhtangov Theatre in Moscow was anyway always a different proposition from the Leningrad TRAM. It was founded in 1913 by the great actor and director Yevgeny Vakhtangov, who combined in his work the so-called 'method' of his mentor Stanislavsky, and the very different modernist innovations of his colleague Meyerhold. Vakhtangov's style was rich and inventive, but still essentially 'classical' and therefore 'acceptable'. After his death in 1922, Vakhtangov's distinctive way of working was continued under a collective of his protégés.

As its name suggests, *The Human Comedy* was not so much a play as a theatrical confection based on the famous novel-cycle *La Comédie humaine* by the great 19th-century French writer Honoré de Balzac. Balzac's distinctive manner of describing everyday society in the France of his era was frequently held up by the new ideologues of Socialist Realism as a suitable model for what Soviet writers should be attempting in a Soviet context. At the same time, Balzac's work carried a kind of escapist charm for Soviet readers which made it popular in the 1930s.

Rather than dramatising a single novel, the author, the poet and playwright Pavel Sukhotin took various prominent characters who feature in several parts of the Frenchman's cycle – the tragic social climber Lucien de Rubempré, who ends up killing himself; his more successful and ambitious counterpart, Eugène de Rastignac; and the criminal mastermind Vautrin, who spends time in prison and spectacularly avoids a death sentence – and wove them together into a dream-like fantasy which he subtitled *Scenes from Parisian life in five acts*.

The result, jointly directed by one of Vakhtangov's favourite pupils Alexander Kozlovsky and the distinguished Soviet actor Boris Shchukin (most famous for his cinematic portrayals of Lenin), was first performed on 1 April 1934 and was an immediate success, remaining in the theatre's repertory for many years. To the delight of audiences, it featured two brilliant young matinée idols of the period: Dmitry Dorliac as Lucien, and Vassily Kuza as Rastignac. The designs – all 19th-century frock coats and top hats, elegant furniture and beautiful street scenes – were by Isaak Rabinovich, and, together with Shostakovich's music, the whole effect was intended to evoke nostalgia for another time and another place.

The present writer remembers an elderly friend in Moscow in the 1980s fondly recalling the show which she visited several times: 'Oh those Parisian characters... and those streets and the river Seine! It was like going to France at a time when none of us could dream of such a thing!'

The unifying trick of Shostakovich's score is an imitation 'French' melody, suggesting barrel organs and Parisian café musicians, on which he writes a whole series of simple and instantly recognisable variations – one of them is simply subtitled *The Bank of the Seine* – which were evidently used as dreamlike transitions between the different scenes of the fantasy. There was a student song (what story of 19th century Paris would be complete without carousing students?) to which the text is now lost (new words have been provided for this recording), and a jewel heist, complete with policemen in hot pursuit, and most memorably of all an elegant gavotte, which Shostakovich liked well enough to recycle in later years.

Overall, the musical effect is of gentle charm. No wonder the show was a success at a time when events in the real world just outside the theatre were far from being either gentle or charming.

The Nose, Op. 15 – Discarded versions of two interludes and the opening of Act III (1927–28)

Shostakovich's first serious work for the theatre was his opera *The Nose*, written when the composer was just 21 years old, and inspired by one of most darkly hilarious works in Russian literature, Gogol's 1836 absurdist tale of a nose that detaches itself from the face of the minor bureaucrat to whom it belongs, and walks around the city of St Petersburg causing mayhem. Later in life, Shostakovich is supposed to have said: 'In my youth, I was criticised for writing an opera about a nose that wanders around by itself. I was told it was unrealistic. What's unrealistic about that? I've seen a lot stranger things than noses wandering about!'

Already, at such a young age, the composer had a highly developed and alert sense of musical theatre, and of exactly how much time a musical moment needs to take in a drama. Presumably that is why he scrapped or rewrote three orchestral movements from this opera. But this discarded music is extraordinarily brilliant and well worth hearing. One might think of it as a three-movement orchestral suite which comments on the action of the story.

The first movement was intended for the middle of Act I, when the embarrassed anti-hero, Kovalyov, is chasing around the city after his nose, and sees the nose – in full uniform – crossing Nevsky Avenue and going into the Kazan Cathedral, a huge early 19th-century imitation of St Peter's, Rome. When Kovalyov follows him in, he finds his nose piously saying his prayers.

The final movement was meant to be the brilliant overture to Act III, but it was cut by Shostakovich, presumably so he could push the stage action on as quickly as possible.

The second movement, intended for Act II and subsequently replaced by another interlude, takes us from a busy newspaper office, where Kovalyov places a classified advertisement asking for his nose to be retrieved, to his private apartment where his servant, Ivan, is playing the balalaika and singing, while amusing himself by spitting at the ceiling.

The Vyborg Side – Film Music, Op. 50 – March of the Anarchists (1938)

While in his later career Shostakovich wrote very little further theatre music, the cinema was a deep interest of his from beginning to end: from his teenage years when he played piano in the silent-movie houses on Nevsky Avenue; through his very first film score in 1928–29, a live orchestral accompaniment to a silent epic, *New Babylon*; to his final score for *King Lear* in 1970.

Among the directors he worked most frequently with was the powerful duo of Grigori Kozintsev and Leonid Trauberg. In the 1930s, the three men collaborated on a trilogy, telling the story of a mythical revolutionary hero called Maxim. These films were hugely successful with the Soviet public and Shostakovich's music was much loved and frequently cited as a model of how Soviet film music should be.

The first part of the trilogy, *The Youth of Maxim* (1935), depicts the young man's political formation in the revolutionary underground of 1910–1911. The second part, *The Return of Maxim* (1937), takes the story up to the tumultuous events of 1914. The final part, *The Vyborg Side* (1939), tells of Maxim's heroic role in the February and October revolutions of 1917.

The stirring *March of the Anarchists* comes from part three of this trilogy, and Shostakovich's score for it does not survive. It was reconstructed from the soundtrack, especially for this recording, by Mark Fitz-Gerald. The piece is based on the *Kanonensong* from *Die Dreigroschenoper* ('The Threepenny Opera'). Shostakovich was clearly an admirer of the works of Brecht and Weill.

The Recording

At the start of 2020 all scores for this album were ready to be recorded – but it would not be until 2024 that the project came to fruition. On 20 March 2020, with the rapid spread of the Corona virus causing worldwide lockdown, all recording studios had to close until further notice. It was only after quite a while that the situation started to ease up. A suitable recording venue was eventually secured, and the Malmö Opera House chorus and orchestra booked.

Preparations were thorough, to avoid sight-reading and give the musicians a chance to play the music through so as to be at ease with these unfamiliar scores. A chorus rehearsal took place on 29 February, followed by a five hour read-through with chorus and orchestra on 1 March.

The only problem we encountered was recording the *Kazan Cathedral* interlude from *The Nose*, which starts with a grand *fff* organ solo excluded from the definitive version of the opera. The electric organ was considered inadequate by all. The engineer and the organist agreed to record it on a proper cathedral organ separate from the above sessions on 4 April 2024 on the Orgelbau Goll organ at Fagerborg Church, Oslo. This is a rare example of Shostakovich's use of the organ in his *oeuvre*; the others are to be heard in the opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* (the organ version of the *Passacaglia* performed as a separate piece divorced from the stage production), and the film scores *Five Days and Five Nights*, *The Gadfly*, *The Girlfriends* and *The Golden Mountains*. The use of organ in the *Kazan Cathedral* interlude is somewhat facetious, as these instruments were traditionally not used in the Orthodox Church.

The Scores used on this Recording

The Shot – Incidental Music, Op. 24

The score as recorded on this album consists of 16 mainly untitled sections (*Exit of the Heads of Departments* was not recorded, as it is musically identical to *Entry of the Heads of Departments*, and it was therefore agreed that 8 could be titled *Entry and Exit of the Heads of Departments*). The only sections completed by Shostakovich were Nos. 5 5 (I simply added in appropriate dynamics, of which I believe he would have approved), 10 (final section only) 9, 11 10, and 13–16 12–15. For No. 17, *Dun'dya's Lament* 16 the guitar part was edited by Edward Stewart and Mark Fitz-Gerald.

The rest of the score was reconstructed by myself from untitled sketches and piano scores supplied by DSCH Publishers, with Dr Anastasia Belina editing the Russian text for *Workers' Song of Victory* (she and I also made minor edits to the other texts in order to make them fit the music).

Shostakovich had his own numbering system corresponding to the order in which he composed the separate sections for films, though this tends not to correspond not to the order used in performance or recording. For example, in his ordering of the sections for the film *Zoya*, the opening credits are the last on his list as number 31.

The order of the sections for *The Shot* became clear upon reading Bezymensky's play, with *Dun'dya's Lament (Romance)* coming at the end, followed by the off-stage suicide.

The Human Comedy – Incidental Music, Op. 37

The score for this work features the published music by Shostakovich, with the following additional sections:

19 No. 3. *The Students' Song* – as this movement was not published with the text, the original having been lost, Dr Belina and Mark Fitz-Gerald constructed something appropriate to what might have been used in the 1934 Vakhtangov production.

35 No. 19. *Broken Box* – arranged for string quartet by Mark Fitz-Gerald from an unorchestrated score provided by DSCH Publishers.

The Nose, Op. 15 – Discarded versions of two interludes and the opening of Act III

Volume 50 of *The New Collected Works of Dmitry Shostakovich* (DSCH Publishers) includes three versions of the *Kazan Cathedral* interlude, the 'official' published version and the two discarded versions, each with a different instrumentation, discovered by the musicologist Olga Digonskaya. The first of the rejected versions was chosen for this recording as it is the more compliant with the general orchestration. The organ solo part was edited by Mark Fitz-Gerald.

The Vyborg Side – Film Music, Op. 50

The score for this was all taken down by ear by Mark Fitz-Gerald from the sound track.

The Shot – Incidental Music, Op. 24 (1929)

As we are unable to reproduce the vocal texts due to copyright restrictions, additional explanatory notes can be found in the main booklet note.

With special thanks to Anastasia Belina

The Human Comedy – Incidental Music, Op. 37 (1933–34)

19 No. 3. The Students' Song

Ne tol'ko zdorovi' uspekhi v nashey uchobe,
No mi i luchshe vsekh
Provodim radostno vremya.
Mi sdali algebru,
Seychas idyom gulat'.
Potom mi budem prazdnovat' sdachu
Algebrī. Da, sdachu algebrī prazdnovat' budem!

We not only excel at every one of our studies,
But we are always the best,
The best at having great fun.
Our algebra is done.
We will go for a walk now,
And then we will celebrate passing our algebra exam.
Yes, we will celebrate passing our algebra exam!

*Не только здоровы успехи в нашей учебе,
Но мы и лучше всех
Проводим радостно время.
Мы сдали алгебру,
Сейчас идем гулять.
Потом мы будем праздновать сдачу
Алгебры. Да, сдачу алгебры праздновать будем!*

Text added by Anastasia Belina and Mark Fitz-Gerald.

In the absence of the original text, presumed lost, the words for this track have been adapted from those used in *March of the Pioneers* in *The Bedbug* (Naxos 8.574100 [11](#)).

Tor Lind



Photo: Martin Paulsson

Swedish tenor Tor Lind studied at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm (KMH) and the Royal Danish Opera Academy. Recent highlights include an award-winning production of Bernstein's *Mass* with the Odense Symfoniorkester (2018), and his debut as a tenor in Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* at Folkoperan, Stockholm in 2020. In 2024 he appeared in Verdi's *Giovanna d'Arco*, and the following year Strauss's *Salome*, both at Malmö Opera. Lind's discography includes the 2019 DVD release of Bo Holten's opera *Gesualdo – Shadows* (Dacapo), which was selected as an *American Record Guide's* Critic's Choice, and received two Opus Klassik award nominations. On this recording, Tor Lind's vocal range is extended to high baritone.

Kenny Staškus Larsen



Photo: Nikolaj Lund

Kenny Staškus Larsen (b. 1988, Copenhagen) has been the principal flautist of the Malmö Opera Orchestra since 2013. He holds Bachelor and Postgraduate degrees from The Royal Danish Academy of Music, and undertook additional studies at the Manhattan School of Music and Haute-École de Musique de Genève. He has won numerous awards, including the Victor Borge Music Prize, Carl Nielsen International Flute Competition and Léonie Sonning Music Prize. Staškus Larsen has performed with renowned orchestras such as Det Kongelige Kapel and Copenhagen Phil. As a founding member of The Carl Nielsen Quintet he has toured internationally and released two albums.

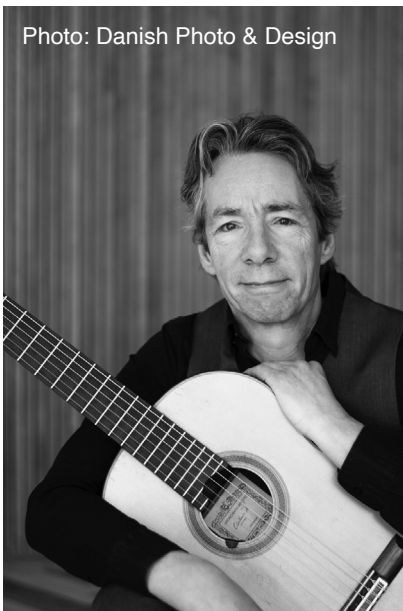
Allan Sjølin



Allan Sjølin (b. 1986) started playing the guitar when he was eleven years old. Today, he is one of the most active guitarists of the Danish classical music scene, playing approximately 150 concerts on average every year since his graduation from The Royal Danish Academy of Music in 2015. He mainly works with chamber music groups, opera singers and as an auxiliary plucked string player with symphony orchestras. Sjølin plays the balalaika on this recording.

www.allansjoelin.com

Jesper Sivebæk



Jesper Sivebæk completed his studies under the guidance of Jørgen Bjørslev (Danish National Academy of Music [SDMK]), Per-Olof Johnson (Malmö Academy of Music) and Alvaro Pierrri (Université du Québec à Montréal). Since 2007 he has been professor and head of the Classical Guitar department at The Royal Danish Academy of Music. A laureate of numerous international competitions, Sivebæk has appeared as a soloist with the DR Symfoniorkestret, Det Kongelige Kapel and Malmö SymfoniOrkester, among others. His discography spans eleven albums, including a release of songs by Kim Larsen transcribed for classical guitar that received a Silver Global Music Award and 2021 NativeDSD Album of the Year. Sivebæk plays the balalaika on this recording.

www.jespersivebaek.com

Edward Stewart



Photo: Benjamin Ealovega

Born in Dundee, Scotland, guitarist Edward Stewart's diverse list of studio credits includes projects for BBC Radio 4, Channel 4, Sky and EMI (Alexander O'Neal). Now based in London, he has appeared in venues across Europe. He is also a composer, and has directed ensembles at the Dundee Guitar Festival (now Ullapool). Stewart studied at the London College of Music, where he also served as head of the Junior College Guitar Department. A connoisseur of classical, rock, pop, Spanish, folk, country and film music guitar styles, Stewart is an accomplished and versatile session guitarist.

Lars Notto Birkeland



Photo: Jeton Kaçaniku

Lars Notto Birkeland is among one of Norway's most prominent concert organists. He has performed as soloist with the Oslo-filharmonien as well as other orchestras and ensembles, and appeared at numerous festivals at home and abroad. Since 2014 he has held the position of organist at Akershus Castle Church, Oslo. Birkeland has released several recordings, among them a highly acclaimed double album featuring the complete organ works of Jehan Alain (Simax Classics).

Christian Einarsson



Christian Einarsson (b. 1957, Vadstena, Sweden) has become a well-known pianist and coach in Sweden and Denmark. After studies at the Musikkonservatoriet Falun, Göteborgs universitet and University of Cincinnati, he toured as a chamber musician for several years before moving into opera and musical theatre. He has become a popular coach for many musical theatre artists/singers, and is also a conductor. Einarsson has participated in numerous first performances of operas, including Ian McQueen's *Fortunato* and Hans Gefors' *Vargen Kommer*.

Elena Mitrevska



Photo: Liliya Namisnyk

Elena Mitrevska completed a degree in choral and orchestra conducting at the Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien. A member of the Arnold Schoenberg Chor for seven seasons, she has collaborated on operatic and concert repertoire with conductors such as Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Claudio Abbado, Bernard Haitink, Simon Rattle, René Jacobs and Cornelius Meister. Between 2012 and 2016, Mitrevska was assistant conductor and chorus master in the same choir for concert projects, and for opera productions at the Theater an der Wien. She has conducted the Jeunesses Musicales Macedonia chamber orchestra, Wiener Kammerorchester and Malmö Opera Orchestra, among others. She served as chorus master at the Ópera de Oviedo from 2016 to 2020, and was a guest chorus master at the Opéra National de Lyon in 2021. Since 2020 she has held the same position at Malmö Opera. Mitrevska has also been invited to work on several projects with the Danish National Radio Choir and Danish National Vocal Ensemble.

Malmö Opera Chorus

The Malmö Opera Chorus is a professional ensemble consisting of 36 singers handpicked from all over the world. The chorus actively participates in a wide array of music projects, ranging from classical and contemporary opera productions to musicals, dance performances and concerts. The choristers, many of them accomplished actors and dancers, are just as familiar with *Les Misérables* and *Evita* as they are with *La traviata* and *Wozzeck*. Alongside their work in the chorus, members also frequently appear in major solo roles.



Photo: Malin Arnesson

Malmö Opera Orchestra (Anton Lasine, Leader)

Malmö Opera Orchestra was founded in 1991. Consisting of 62 musicians, the orchestra is recognised for its ability to master a wide range of musical styles, from the classic operas to contemporary music dramas, musicals and ballet. Each season the orchestra performs symphonic programmes, gala concerts and chamber recitals alongside its core work as an opera orchestra. The orchestra has made several recordings which include symphonic music and operatic repertoire and performances. From 2015 to 2024 Leif Segerstam (1944–2024) was the orchestra's honorary conductor after previously serving as chief conductor. Patrik Ringborg is the orchestra's principal guest conductor since 2022, and the orchestra's director is Tecwyn Evans.

Mark Fitz-Gerald

Mark Fitz-Gerald studied at the Royal College of Music, where his professors included Norman Del Mar, winning all the major prizes for both orchestral and operatic conducting. It was during this time that Hans Werner Henze invited him to take part in the first Cantiere Internazionale d'Arte in Montepulciano, as a result of which he was invited regularly to Switzerland as guest conductor of the Basel Sinfonietta. From 1983 to 1987 he was artistic director of the RIAS Jugendorchester (West Berlin) where his innovative Filmharmonic Concerts received much acclaim, and were later made available as recordings. He returned there to continue the series with the Berlin Rundfunkorchester in 1992. Since then he has performed the very specialised task of accompanying silent films with live orchestra, with much success in many countries and festivals throughout the world.

Described as 'one of the indispensable Shostakovich interpreters of our time' by the *DSCH Journal*, he has performed the Trauberg/Shostakovich classic *New Babylon* to great critical acclaim, in particular the Japanese premiere of the work (opening concert of the Tokyo Summer Festival in 2000) and at the Rotterdam Gergiev Festival 2001. With the help of Mrs Irina Shostakovich and Krzysztof Meyer he restored the complete score to another Trauberg/Shostakovich film, *Odna*, and conducted the world premiere (the first Shostakovich premiere for over 20 years) in Holland and later in Paris, with enormous success. He conducted the United Kingdom premiere at the Barbican centre in 2006 and his restoration is now published in the new complete edition of the composer's works. His critically acclaimed recording of *Odna* [8.570316] was followed by the no less successful *The Girlfriends* and other previously unrecorded works; these include the first version, albeit a fragment, of *Symphony No. 9* made at the personal invitation of Irina Shostakovich [8.572138]. In 2010 his accompaniment of the 1927 silent film *Wings* with Carl Davis's score at the 2010 Pordenone Silent Film Festival was so successful that it led to a permanent re-invitation by the festival's director, David Robinson. Carl Davis himself invited Fitz-Gerald to take over a series of concerts with the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra.

In 1986 Fitz-Gerald was appointed music director of Kentish Opera, with whom he has conducted many successful productions. He has assisted regularly at the Vienna Staatsoper, as well as the Vienna Kammeroper. In 1992 he made his debut at the Vienna Volksoper with *The Cunning Little Vixen*, and in 1994 conducted the world premiere of Mexican composer Victor Razgado's opera *Anacleto Morones* at Spoleto in conjunction with the Italian producer Luca Ronconi, and conducted *The Nutcracker* for the Vienna Festival Ballet in the same year. His career has brought guest engagements with orchestras throughout Europe, Malaysia and Japan. He has collaborated with Annetta Hoffnung in many major 'Gerard Hoffnung' concerts in London, as well as throughout Europe and Japan.

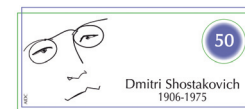
Fitz-Gerald has made guest appearances with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and Philharmonia Orchestra, among many others. In 2012 he made his debut with the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra, and conducted the Swiss premiere of Debussy's *The Fall of the House of Usher* with the Basel Sinfonietta. The following year he made his debut with the London Philharmonic Orchestra. At the 2016 Pordenone Silent Film Festival Fitz-Gerald conducted, to wide acclaim, his reconstruction of Mortimer Wilson's vast score for the Douglas Fairbanks film *The Thief of Bagdad*. In 2019 it received its German premiere with the hr-Sinfonieorchester Frankfurt, with the recording released by First Hand Records. The French premiere took place in 2022 with the Orchestre National de Lyon.



Shostakovich was known for his fun-loving attitude during his early years as a composer. The colourful incidental music for *The Shot* – reconstructed by Mark Fitz-Gerald from the original piano scores – vividly evokes the raucous life of experimental youth theatre in Leningrad during the late 1920s. This carefree world had changed dramatically by 1934 when Shostakovich completed his music for *The Human Comedy* – a work that creates a charming atmosphere of Parisian escapism. Discarded movements from his first opera *The Nose* form an entire orchestral suite. The programme concludes with Mark Fitz-Gerald's reconstruction of the *March of the Anarchists*, transcribed by ear from the film *The Vyborg Side*.



Dmitry
SHOSTAKOVICH
(1906–1975)



- | | | |
|--------------|---|--------------|
| 1–16 | The Shot – Incidental Music, Op. 24 (1929)* | 14:55 |
| 17–39 | The Human Comedy – Incidental Music, Op. 37 (1933–34)* | 28:21 |
| 40–42 | The Nose, Op. 15 – Discarded versions of two interludes and the opening of Act III (1927–28)** | 10:33 |
| 43 | The Vyborg Side – Film Music, Op. 50 – March of the Anarchists (1938)* | 1:46 |

***WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING **FIRST STUDIO RECORDING**

Tor Lind, Baritone 16 • Kenny Staškus Larsen, Flute 16

Allan Sjølin, Jesper Sivebæk, Balalaika 12 • Edward Stewart, Guitar 16

Lars Notto Birkeland, Organ 40 • Christian Einarsson, Piano 20 21

Malmö Opera Chorus 1 9 13 19 (Elena Mitrevska, Chorus Master)

Malmö Opera Orchestra 1–11 13–15 17–19 22–43 • Mark Fitz-Gerald

A detailed track list and recording details can be found inside the booklet.

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(courtesy of the DSCH Archive, Moscow)

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