

**AARHUS
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA**

**DMITRY
MATVIENKO**



QUESTIONS OF ETERNITY

At first glance, the choice of composers for this recording seems like an odd match: one cultivated a harsh, expressive musical language, while the other was a proponent of introspective soundscapes. One piece ends in an explosion, while the other offers us meditative contemplation.

We also have an apparent clash of nationalities: Prokofiev was Russian, (b. Sontsivka, Ukraine) Silvestrov is Ukrainian, and conductor Dmitry Matvienko is Belarusian.

However, there is a point to what initially seems like madness. In Dmitry Matvienko's mind, there are several similarities between the two composers. "In the words of Silvestrov: 'Only melody makes music eternal'," says Dmitry Matvienko, who was instrumental in choosing the Silvestrov piece for this recording. To him, there is a clear connection between the two composers: "Both composers were incredible melodists. Despite the fact that the nature of their melodism is very different, their view of melody as the main ingredient in any music, of any genre, remains unshakeable, no matter the avant-garde developments of the 20th century".

From Matvienko's point of view, these two pieces are both dictated by the realities of their time. "Prokofiev's symphony is a work written in the post-war era, illustrating the catastrophe of World War II and anticipating an even greater catastrophe in the future," Matvienko says. "Silvestrov's Quiet Music was written in 2002, long before the tragic events of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Of course, Prokofiev could not even in his wildest dreams have imagined what kind of catastrophe would happen between the two brotherly nations 70 years after his death (and that's not even the point). But we can see how the nature of evil has its own cyclical nature. Shortly before writing the symphony, Prokofiev wrote the music for Eisenstein's film *Ivan the Terrible*. In this film, Eisenstein shows the paranoia of the Tsar, who is completely insane and ruins his nation. Stalin correctly read this portrayal as an allusion to himself and criticised the film. Today, we see that history repeats itself in our time, and the devil chooses more and more sophisticated forms. Silvestrov's Quiet Music is a kind of consolation, where any person of any nationality and religion can come, like to his beloved wise grandmother, to seek solace and forget all his sorrows."

PROKOFIEV: SYMPHONY NO. 6

Prokofiev's Sixth Symphony is very much a piece dictated by the reality of its time. "Now we enjoy the victory we have achieved, but each of us has our own unhealed wounds: one has lost loved ones, another has lost his health... This should not be forgotten," Prokofiev said about this symphony. It is very clear to Dmitry Matvienko that this is lived experience for Prokofiev: "Despite the fact that the symphony has no definite program, we absolutely feel its connection to the war and the difficult experiences of the past years," he says.

During the rehearsal period, Prokofiev told his wife Mira that the finale of the symphony was "a question dropped into eternity", which is a description both fascinating and thought-provoking. Unfortunately, Prokofiev's overall description of his symphony isn't quite as enlightening: "The first movement is agitated, at times lyrical, at times austere; the second movement, 'Largo', is brighter and more tuneful; the finale, rapid and in a major key, is close in character

to my Fifth Symphony, save for reminiscences of the austere passages in the first movement." A very factual description – but it hardly brings the listener any closer to understanding the music.

Yuri Weinkop (a contemporary musicologist) described the beginning of the symphony as the scrape of a rusty key turning in a door lock, before revealing a "world of warmth, affection, and beauty" – a description which Prokofiev greatly appreciated. The searching theme of the beginning is dark and sombre, only to be followed later on by an innocent, lyrical theme. The apparent contradiction showcases a common conundrum when listening to Prokofiev, namely the question of irony and intention: it can be really hard to decipher whether this composer is toying with a Mahlerian use of irony, or whether he is deeply and mercilessly sincere. What we do know is that this movement begins in e-flat minor and ends in E-flat major: from darkness to light.



The second movement begins with a scream in the woodwinds, only to be contrasted with a lyrical theme in the deep strings. This lyrical theme reminds us that this is also the composer of *Romeo and Juliet*. *But the Prokofiev of the Sixth Symphony is never sentimental, and the idyll disappears like water running through our fingers, like elusive memories, impossible to retain.*

The ambiguity continues in the last movement. One moment we think the music to be light-hearted, only to hear the march of war the very next moment. We're in E-flat major, but despite the (normally upbeat) major key, the message in this movement is complicated, and the ending of the symphony is tonally ambiguous, far from that satisfying ending we're yearning for. Prokofiev's words about "a question dropped into eternity" once again come to mind.

To Dmitry Matvienko, this symphony is very poignant: "The side theme, which is heard in the first movement of the symphony and returns to us in the finale after the cheerful patriotic music, is one of the most heartbreaking melodies and dramatic themes ever written. It is written in the style of a slow Russian folk song. It took us quite a while to find the right expression of this melody, because it's in the style of Russian folk songs and lament songs, without any cerebral or romantic aspects. It is something more ancient and natural."



It's also a deeply personal symphony to Matvienko: "For me, this symphony is about the nature of the world's evil, about how terrorism grinds human souls and dries them up. About the pain that doesn't let you breathe, and you choke on your own scream, deafened by the blast wave."

Dmitry Matvienko finds the ending of the symphony particularly interesting. He sees a connection with the atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, a period during which Prokofiev was working on the symphony: "Of course, this is only a hypothesis, but it is very difficult not to think about these facts when you hear the two catastrophic explosions in the very finale of the symphony and the howls of the entire orchestra, like the reaction to an atomic explosion. Here Prokofiev acts as an oracle, or Nostradamus, and says: 'People, be warned. The main catastrophe is yet to come. Don't let evil triumph.'"

SILVESTROV: QUIET MUSIC

From an explosion to nearly silence. Ukrainian composer Valentin Silvestrov (b. 1937) had a somewhat unconventional beginning to his career as a composer, in that he began his education at the Kyiv Civil Engineering Institute before switching to the Kyiv Conservatory. His early style was avant-garde and varied, leading to his music being suppressed and/or ignored in his own country. Over the years, though, his international acclaim grew, not least in the West.

Dmitry Matvienko sees a clear shift in Silvestrov's music with *Meditation for cello and chamber orchestra* in 1972, marking the beginning of a new style: "From this point forwards, his music is a reflection on time, on personality, on the creation of cosmos," Matvienko says, and points out how these characteristics are present in almost all of Silvestrov's subsequent works: the *Fourth* (1976) and *Fifth* (1982) Symphonies, *Silent Songs* (1977), *Cantata for a cappella chorus to a poem by T. Shevchenko* (1976), *Forest*

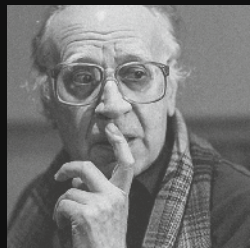
Music to a poem by G. Aiga (1978), *Simple Songs* (1981), *Four Songs to a poem by O. Mandelstam*.

During the last couple of decades, Silvestrov has left the avant-garde behind him altogether and is now working in a style he has named "metamusic" (short for "metaphorical music"). He considers this a universal style and a universal language, "a general 'dictionary' that belongs to no one but can be used by anyone in his or her own way," the composer says. "I believe that Music – even if it cannot be 'sung', is song nevertheless; it is neither philosophy nor a world view, it is the song of the world about itself, as it were a musical testimony to existence."

In Quiet Music ("Stille Musik" / "Tikhaya Musika"), infinite cadencing is used to create music incarnating a sense of "waiting".

It was very important to Dmitry Matvienko to include this piece in this recording:

SILVESTROV SAID IN ONE OF HIS INTERVIEWS 'I AM SO TIRED OF THE NOISE OF THIS WORLD', 'I UNDERSTAND THAT AND FEEL IT VERY DEEPLY. MORE AND MORE OFTEN I WALK AT NIGHT AND LISTEN TO HIS MUSIC; NOT IN HEADPHONES, BUT INSIDE. AND IT GIVES ME PEACE. I WANT THIS PIECE TO BE THERAPY AND SOLACE FOR OUR LISTENERS AS WELL.'



DMITRY MATVIENKO

Dmitry Matvienko is the Chief Conductor of the Aarhus Symfoniorkester since the 2024/25 season, marking a significant milestone in a career that has already established him as one of the most compelling conductors of his generation. Known for his artistic maturity and interpretive depth, he has led numerous renowned orchestras across Europe, Asia, and America.

He rose to international attention after winning First Prize and the Audience Prize at the prestigious Malko Competition for Young Conductors. Prior to that, he was awarded both the Critics' Prize and the "Made in Italy" Prize at the Guido Cantelli International Conducting Competition. Matvienko has conducted many of the world's leading orchestras, including the DR Symfoniorkestret, Oslo-Filharmonien, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Rotterdams Philharmonisch Orkest, Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI, Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, and Radio-Symphonieorchester Wien. Additional engagements include the

Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte-Carlo, Orquestra Gulbenkian, Orchestre National de Lille, Göteborgs Symfoniker, Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, West Australian Symphony Orchestra, and numerous Italian institutions such as the Orchestra del Teatro Regio di Torino, Orchestra del Teatro Comunale di Bologna, Orchestra del Teatro La Fenice, Orchestra del Teatro Carlo Felice di Genova, and Orchestra del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino. He has also worked extensively with the Russian National Orchestra, the Svetlanov State Academic Symphony Orchestra, the National Philharmonic Orchestra of Russia, the Arktisk Filharmoni, the Helsingborgs Symfoniorkester, and the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra.

His operatic activity includes productions of Eugene Onegin at the Deutsche Oper am Rhein, the Italian premiere of Warlikowski's staging of From the House of the Dead at the Teatro dell'Opera di Roma,





and a new production of *Betrothal* in a Monastery at the Theater an der Wien. In the 2025/26 season, he will make his debut at the Opéra national de Paris with *Aida*.

Highlights of the 2025/26 season also include debuts with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Stuttgarter Philharmoniker, and Malmö Opera Orchestra

Born in Belarus, Matvienko began his music studies at the age of six. He studied choral conducting at the St. Petersburg Conservatory and later joined the Music Aeterna Choir under Teodor Currentzis. He then completed conducting studies at the Moscow Conservatory, taking part in masterclasses with Gennady Rozhdestvensky, Vladimir Jurowski, Teodor Currentzis, and Vasily Petrenko.

In 2017, he joined the conductor internship program of the National Philharmonic Orchestra of Russia under Vladimir Spivakov, and later assisted conductors including

Jurowski and Petrenko with the Svetlanov Symphony Orchestra.

He has conducted the Svetlanov Symphony Orchestra, NFOR, New Russia State Symphony Orchestra, and Musica Viva Moscow, leading revivals of operas such as *Prince Igor*, *Faust*, *Iolanta*, *La Traviata*, *The Tsar's Bride*, *The Firebird*, and Verdi's *Requiem* at the National Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre of Belarus.

He also served as musical assistant to Vladimir Jurowski for productions of *The Nose* (directed by Kirill Serebrennikov) and *War and Peace* (directed by Dmitri Tcherniakov) at the Bayerische Staatsoper.

Maestro Fabio Luisi has praised him as follows: *"Dmitry Matvienko is a complete musician with exceptional conducting skills. A superb technique, paired with a deep knowledge of the repertoire, makes him an exceptional conductor, both for opera and for symphonic projects."*



AARHUS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Aarhus Symphony Orchestra was founded in 1935 and resides in the award-winning Symphonic Hall at Musikhuset Aarhus. The orchestra employs 65 full-time musicians and is headed by Malko-winner Dmitry Matvienko as Chief Conductor. Former Chief Conductors include Marc Soustrot, Giancarlo Andretta, James Loughran and Jorma Panula.

Aarhus Symphony Orchestra attracts a large and diverse audience through weekly subscription concerts, family concerts, chamber concerts and large-scale collaborative concerts with festivals and concert halls throughout Denmark. In addition, the Orchestra maintains a permanent cooperation with the Danish National Opera (Den Jyske Opera) and has recorded a substantial amount of both Danish contemporary works and standard classical repertoire on CD.

Deeply invested in the community surrounding it, the Orchestra performs

social outreach concerts and arranges free school concerts, playing for more than 10.000 children annually.

In later years, the orchestra has expanded its roster of activities with new and shorter concert formats that put new audiences' needs front and center – by providing a space for relaxation and contemplation, or by facilitating a social setting with music.

MUSICIANS

* contracted assistant | ** member of Lumbye Academy

PROKOFIEV: SYMPHONY NO. 6

Violin 1

Kirstine Futtrup*
Alexandru Radu*
Johanna Tolvanen
Tue Lautrup
Todd Cadieux
Katrin Djordjevic
Sønnichsen
Matthias von Niessen
Matthias Gahl
Nadia Kornilova
Hayato Ishibashi
Theophil Dan*
Karoliina Annukka Koivisto*
Krstýna Duchoňová*

Violin 2

Sarah Lucy Foldager
Marta Wisniowska-Mruk
Birgitte Bærentzen Pihl
Søs Nyengaard
Jens Astrup
Peter Clemson
Steensgaard
Lada Fedorova*
Amandus Lind*
Selma Trammitzke Milling*
Sonia Zajac*
Aleksandra
Hałaczkiwicz**

Viola

Luminita Marin
Zane Kalnina
Nikolaj Lind Pedersen

Lars Kvist
Eva Paulin
Morten Møller*
Kirsten Buus Szakacs*
Mikkel Schreiber*
Clara Davodeau**

Cello

Eugene Hye-Knudsen
Jens Lund Madsen
Ananna Lützhøft
Chiao-Hui Hwang
Fang-Yu Liang
Magdalena Cristea Popa*
Giovanni Landini**

Double Bass

David McIlfrack
Samuel Beck-Johnson
Christian Jørgensen
Frank Christensen
Aleksander Gorny**

Flute

Lena Kildahl Larsen
Judith Wehrle
Neus Signes Linares*

Oboe

Oliver Nordahl
Malene Bjerg Poulsen
Lisa Anna Gross

Clarinet

Mathias Vik Kjøller
Vibeke Kærsgaard
Lembcke
María Jimenez Pardo*
Leah Aksnes*

Bassoon

Maksim Karpinskii
Eric Beselin
Magnus Kongsmo Karlsen*

Horn

Flemming Aksnes
Lisa Maria Cooper
Jari Kamsula
Héctor Manuel Escudero
Luís Mota
Lena Westlund*

Trumpet

Jeppe Lindberg*
Kim Hansen
Sarah Owens*

Trombone

Fabrice Godin
Christian Tscherning
Larsen

Bass Trombone

Jens Vind

Tuba

Jonathan Borksand Hanke

Timpani

Nikolai Petersen

Percussion

Rasmus Clemens*
Malte Vendelby*
Christian Back Kirkegaard*
Anders Nørgård Sørensen*

Harp

Anastasiia Lisitsyna*

Piano

David Strong*

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Fang-Yu Liang

Double Bass

David McIlfrack



Recorded in Symphonic Hall, Aarhus, Denmark
Prokofiev: June 17-20, 2025
Silvestrov: August 22, 2025

Recording, edit, mix and master: Preben Iwan
Liner notes: Christina Blangstrup Dahl
Photo credit: Hanna Hrynkevich (Dmitry Matvienko),
Anders Bach (Aarhus Symphony Orchestra)
& Julie Lundblad (recording photos)
Executive producer: Lars Hannibal
Artwork: Toke Bjørneboe/Jes Vang

Recorded in the DXD audio format (352,8kHz).
Microphone main array: 5xDPA
4006TL. Pyramix DAW System with HAPI/HORUS converter/preamps
and Tango Controller. Monitored on B&W 802 Diamond speakers.

The recording is made possible by generous funding from
Augustinus Fonden and Aarhus Symfoniorkesters Venner (ASOV)



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OUR Recordings

DMITRY MATVIENKO

SERGEI PROKOFIEV (1891-1953): SYMPHONY NO. 6 (1945-47)

01	ALLEGRO MODERATO	14.32
02	LARGO	14.17
03	VIVACE.....	11.55

VALENTIN SILVESTROV (B. 1937): QUIET MUSIC (2002)

04	I WALTZ OF THE MOMENT.....	4.26
05	II EVENING SERENADE	3.20
06	III MOMENTS OF THE SERENADE	2.12
	TOTAL	50.54

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