



ondine

SHOSTAKOVICH
CELLO CONCERTOS

TRULS MØRK

OSLO PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

VASILY PETRENKO



TRULS MØRK

Shostakovich's Cello Concertos were inspired by the artistry of Mstislav Rostropovich (1927–2007), who first met the composer while at the Moscow Conservatoire. Almost four decades after Shostakovich's death, both of these concertos have become firmly established in the concert hall, yet they are highly contrasted in matters of form and also expression.

Rostropovich had long hoped Shostakovich would write a concerto for him, but was apparently taken by surprise when, on 6th June 1959, the composer announced that such was to be his next major work. The full score was completed on July 20th – Rostropovich receiving it on August 2nd and having already learnt it when he and his pianist Alexander Dedyukhin played it through to the composer four days later. Following a hearing at the Composers Union on 21st September, its official premiere took place in Leningrad on 4th October with Rostropovich accompanied by Yevgeny Mravinsky and the Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra; the Moscow premiere, with Alexander Gauk and the Moscow Philharmonic, occurred five days later. Its Western premiere came on 6th November in Philadelphia, with Rostropovich partnered by Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra – these artists then going on to make the first recording.

While very different in its style and conception, the **First Cello Concerto** was inspired by the Symphony-Concerto that Prokofiev had earlier written in collaboration with Rostropovich – not least its ending with a timpani stroke which Shostakovich duly increased sevenfold. Also notable is its modesty of orchestral forces – double woodwind (with piccolo and contrabassoon) and one horn with timpani, celesta and strings – and that it was the composer's only mature conducting assignment when he conducted it (along with the *Festive Overture*) in Gorky on 12th November 1962 with Rostropovich and the Gorky Philharmonic, though an increasing weakness in his right hand ruled out any future ventures.

The first movement opens with a lively march-like theme in which the soloist is complemented by laconic comments on woodwind then strings, before heading into an equally animated theme with woodwind now taking the lead. A compact development is announced by horn sounding out the first theme, whereupon elements of both themes are made the basis of an intensive dialogue between soloist and orchestra – the horn eventually launching a modified reprise in which the soloist now claims the second theme. The brief coda brings a sudden hush while the first theme is restated by the soloist against anxious phrases on woodwind, before a peremptory allusion to the second theme brings about the decisive close.

The other three movements proceed without pause. The Adagio begins with a hymn-like theme on strings and continues with a wistful theme for the soloist against undulating strings. The first theme is recalled, the soloist then engaging with rocking woodwind gestures as the music gradually builds in emotional intensity toward a climactic restatement of the first theme. This subsides into a recollection of the second theme shared between the soloist's ghostly harmonics and disembodied phrases on celesta, the former being underpinned by lower strings and timpani in a fateful conclusion. The third movement is allotted to an extensive cadenza that initially unfolds in sombre paragraphs, marked off by detached pizzicato chords, which allude to both themes from the Adagio as they slowly gain in momentum and culminate in the heightened restatement of the first theme from the opening movement. Brusque chords from the orchestra lead into the finale, which opens with a sardonic folk tune (apparently beloved of Stalin) on woodwind then passes into a hectic dance theme made more so by hectic syncopation. The return of the first theme is followed by a rhythmic idea for strings then the soloist, in which elements of the work's initial theme can be detected on horn then woodwind. This latter theme brakes free as the finale's first theme is recalled and the strenuous interplay is rounded off by a volley of timpani strokes.

The next seven years saw various important works – including the *Twelfth* and *Thirteenth Symphonies*, the cantata *The Execution of Stepan Razin* and the String Quartets Nos. 7–11. The very different nature of the **Second Cello Concerto** can be gleaned from Shostakovich's remark on 16th February 1966 that he had begun work on his *Fourteenth Symphony*, only to announce just over a month afterwards this had mutated into a cello concerto. Despite problems with the finale, the piece was finished on 27th April while he was staying near Yalta; Rostropovich, who advised on certain technical aspects, rehearsing it there with the composer in May. Despite his having suffered a heart attack, Shostakovich attended its premiere in Moscow on 25th September – Rostropovich joined by Yevgeny Svetlanov and the USSR State Symphony Orchestra. The Leningrad premiere took place during November with Nikolai Rabinovich conducting the Conservatoire orchestra, and the Western premiere in London on 5th October 1967 with Colin Davis in charge of the BBC Symphony.

Despite the warm reception of these performances and appreciation by other composers (not least Benjamin Britten), the *Second Cello Concerto* – which has double woodwind (three bassoons) and two horns alongside timpani, a sizable percussion section and string (two harps) - long remained

in its predecessor's shadow. The first studio recording did not take place until November 1975, with Rostropovich partnered by Seiji Ozawa and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, while performances and recordings only latterly became more frequent. At the present time, however, the concerto's formally and expressively more oblique qualities have commended themselves to a wider and more sympathetic audience.

The first movement is an extensive Largo which opens with the soloist in musing soliloquy, strings then woodwind gradually entering as the music takes on a greater emotional fervour and culminates in a forceful outburst from horns and woodwind. The soloist's impassioned interjection brings a more subdued, even confessional manner that is underpinned by strings and harps, which is at length broken by a sardonic idea on woodwind and percussion that soon rouses the soloist to a lively response. This increasing animation rapidly draws in the whole orchestra, leading to a climax where the soloist's vehement protestations in (a mixture of bowed and pizzicato phrases) are summarily cowed by brutal strokes on bass drum – a graphic gesture that was not lost on early audiences. Having retreated, the soloist resumes its confessional manner as the music recollects earlier themes while gradually returning to the sombre depths from which it had emerged.

The remaining movements, both marked Allegretto, might be thought a formal as well as expressive unity. The first is a brief scherzo, opening with stuttered gestures from the soloist that coalesce into a capricious and folk-like theme which draws the orchestra into an increasingly heated dialogue and whose culmination brings a vaunting fanfare on horns and side-drum that marks the start of the finale. This fanfare passes to the soloist and tambourine, subsiding onto an eloquent cadence-like gesture that serves as a refrain over the movement as a whole. There follows a haunting theme for the soloist and flutes over rocking strings, then a quizzical idea for the soloist against a syncopated percussion pattern (recalling the *Fourth Symphony's* second movement and anticipating the *Fifteenth Symphony's* finale). The fanfare idea is recalled on horns; these various elements gradually building to a visceral climax on the second movement's opening theme with horns and percussion to the fore. It tails off as the soloist wearily recalls the confessional music from the first movement, but this is succeeded by a spectral interplay between soloist and percussion – with the former having the mordant final word.

Richard Whitehouse

Truls Mørk's reputation as a cellist of fierce intensity and grace has been built on performances throughout the world. He has appeared with orchestras including the Orchestre de Paris, Staatskapelle Dresden, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony, Philharmonia, Chicago Symphony and Cleveland orchestras amongst others. Conductor collaborations include Myung-Whun Chung, Mariss Jansons, Esa-Pekka Salonen, David Zinman, Gustavo Dudamel, Sir Simon Rattle, and Christoph Eschenbach.

Truls Mørk is a committed performer of contemporary music and gave the UK premiere of Rautavaara's *Towards the Horizon* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra. Other premieres have included Pavel Haas' Cello Concerto with the Wiener Philharmoniker (under Jonathan Nott), Krzysztof Penderecki's Concerto for Three Cellos with the NHK Symphony Orchestra (Charles Dutoit) and Haflíði Hallgrímsson's Cello Concerto, co-commissioned by the Oslo Philharmonic, Iceland Symphony and Scottish Chamber orchestras.

Rautavaara's *Towards the Horizon* was recorded for Ondine with the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra under John Storgårds and nominated for a Grammy Award; It also won the Gramophone and ICMA Awards. Mørk's recording of the highly acclaimed C.P.E. Bach Cello Concerti disc for Virgin Classics with Les Violons du Roy under Bernard Labadie was awarded a 2011 ECHO Klassik Award. Other recordings include the Brahms Double Concerto with the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig and Riccardo Chailly and Vadim Repin on Deutsche Grammophon, and Haflíði Hallgrímsson's works for cello and orchestra for Ondine. For Virgin Classics, amongst others he has also recorded Schumann's Cello Concerto with Paavo Järvi and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, the complete Bach Cello Suites as well as the Britten Cello Suites, which won a Grammy Award in 2002.

Initially taught by his father, Truls Mørk continued his studies with Frans Helmerson, Heinrich Schiff and Natalia Schakowskaya. His numerous awards include the Norwegian Critics' Prize in 1991 and the 2010 Sibelius Prize. Truls Mørk plays on the rare 1723 Domenico Montagnana 'Esquire'.

The **Oslo Philharmonic** can trace its roots back to the 1870s, Edvard Grieg and Johan Svendsen, and was established under its present name in 1919. At its home venue, Oslo Concert Hall, the orchestra is annually giving 60–70 concerts, most of which are broadcast by Norwegian National Radio. The concert programme has a high international profile, as for the repertory as well as the performing artists. The orchestra also has school and outreach programs, outdoor concerts in Oslo drawing up to 25,000 listeners, and nationwide touring programs.

With Mariss Jansons, Music director 1979–2002, the orchestra achieved great international fame. Touring activities from 1982 and on included regular visits at most of the major venues in Europe, like festivals such as BBC Proms, Edinburgh, Lucerne and Salzburg and residency at Vienna Musikverein, as well as major venues in the Americas and East Asia. In 2002 Mariss Jansons was succeeded by André Previn, and in 2006 the orchestra signed a five years contract with Jukka-Pekka Saraste, later to be prolonged until 2013. With Maestro Saraste, now Conductor Laureate, the orchestra has had highly successful concerts for instance at the BBC Proms (RAH) and Barbican Hall in London, Vienna Musikverein, Berlin and Cologne Philharmonie and European festivals.

In February 2011 Vasily Petrenko was introduced as Chief conductor from the season 2013–2014. The appointment has received great national and international attention, and already in 2011 he and the orchestra did successful concerts in Berlin, Vienna, Bratislava and Paris. On the 2013–2014 touring schedule with Maestro Petrenko are BBC Proms and Japan.

As a recording orchestra the Oslo Philharmonic reached international fame during the 1980s, with their Tchaikovsky cycle on Chandos. In 1986 they signed the by then most extensive orchestra recording contract in the history of EMI. The present discography includes more than 100 titles within a wide range of repertory, and also DVD and Blu-ray releases.

www.oslofilharmonien.no

Vasily Petrenko was appointed Principal Conductor of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra in 2006 and in 2009 became Chief Conductor until 2015. He is also Chief Conductor of the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, Principal Guest Conductor of the Mikhailovsky Theatre of his native St Petersburg, and Principal Conductor of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain. He was the Classical BRIT Awards Male Artist of the Year 2010 and 2012 and the Classic FM/Gramophone Young Artist of the Year 2007. He is only the second person to have been awarded Honorary Doctorates by both the University of Liverpool and Liverpool Hope University (in 2009), and an Honorary Fellowship of the Liverpool John Moores University (in 2012), awards which recognise the immense impact he has had on the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and the city's cultural scene. He now works regularly with many of the world's finest orchestras, including the London Philharmonic, Philharmonia, Russian National, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, Philadelphia, Czech Philharmonic, Vienna Symphony, Sydney Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic and San Francisco Symphony Orchestras, the National Symphony Orchestra Washington, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, and the Rundfunk Sinfonieorchester Berlin. His wide operatic repertoire includes *Macbeth* (Glyndebourne Festival Opera), *Parsifal* and *Tosca* (Royal Liverpool Philharmonic), *Le Villi*, *I due Foscari* and *Boris Godunov* (Netherlands Reisopera), *Der fliegende Holländer*, *La Bohème* and *Carmen* (Mikhailovsky Theatre), *Pique Dame* (Hamburg State Opera) and *Eugene Onegin* (Opéra de Paris, Bastille). Recordings with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra include Tchaikovsky's *Manfred Symphony* (2009 Classic FM/Gramophone Orchestral Recording of the Year), an ongoing Shostakovich cycle, and Rachmaninov's *Symphonies*, *Symphonic Dances* and complete *Piano Concertos*.

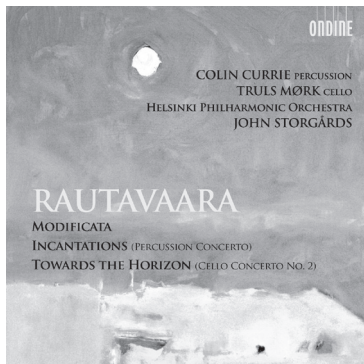


VASILY PETRENKO

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DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH (1906-1975)**Concerto for Cello and Orchestra No. 1 E flat Major, Op. 107 28:45**

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|---|---------------------|-------|
| 1 | I Allegretto | 5:59 |
| 2 | II Moderato | 11:41 |
| 3 | III Cadenza – | 6:13 |
| 4 | IV Allegro con moto | 4:52 |

Concerto for Cello and Orchestra No. 2 G Minor, Op. 126 36:10

- | | | |
|---|-----------------|-------|
| 5 | I Largo | 14:31 |
| 6 | II Allegretto – | 4:34 |
| 7 | III Allegretto | 17:05 |

TRULS MØRK, cello**OSLO PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA****VASILY PETRENKO**, conductor