

CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

HANS LANGE.....ASSOCIATE CONDUCTOR

The Thursday-Friday Concerts

THIRD PROGRAM

OCTOBER 29, AT 8:15 — OCTOBER 30, AT 2:15

1942

*TRAGIC OVERTURE, Opus 81.....*BRAHMS

*SYMPHONY NO. 7, Opus 60.....*SHOSTAKOVICH

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lowed by the principal subject in the strings. The theme is taken up by the full orchestra, and a passionate episode follows. The opening notes of the first subject are worked over, and a syncopated episode in the strings leads to the more tranquil second theme put forward in F major by the violins. A vigorous dotted figure follows, and the first four notes of the second subject are developed. The Recapitulation opens with the two *fortissimo* chords, as before, and the principal theme is again heard in the strings, but now shortened. *Molto più moderato*. A section partly new and partly, or rather subtly, based on the opening material of the overture is now introduced; to Sir George Grove it suggested a funeral march. There is further working out of the principal theme, and the second subject is repeated in D major, this being followed by a resumption of the passionate material heard in the earlier portion of the work, and of a further development of the principal subject.

Symphony No. 7,
Opus 60.

Dimitri Shostakovich.
Born Sept. 25, 1906, at St. Petersburg
(now Leningrad).

Shostakovich outlined his career thus for the Paris
Revue Musicale in 1936:

"My musical leanings became manifest in 1915, and I began to study music at that time. In 1919 I entered the Conservatory at Leningrad, finishing my course in 1925. I worked there under the direction of L. Nikolaiev (piano and the theory of composition), of Professor M. Sokolov (counterpoint and fugue), and of Professor M. Steinberg (harmony, fugue, orchestration, and practical composition). My studies at the Conservatory complete, I continued to attend the class in Composition directed by Professor Steinberg. I began to compose at that time. My symphony (No. 1) which has made the round of almost all the world's orchestras, was the product of my culminating studies at the Conservatory.

"I was then absorbing with enthusiasm, and quite uncritically, all the knowledge and finesses that were being taught to me. But once my studies were completed, there came the necessity of assorting a large portion of the musical baggage which I had acquired. I grasped that music is not merely a combination of sounds arranged in a certain order, but an art able to express by its own power the most diverse ideas or feelings. This conviction did not come to me without travail. Let it suffice that during the whole year of 1926 I did not write a single note, but from 1927 I have never stopped composing."

Although Shostakovich did not mention his name among the list of his teachers, Alexander Konstantinovich Glazounov informed the editor of this program

PROGRAM NOTES—Continued

book that Shostakovich was his student at the Conservatory of St. Petersburg. The tendency to exploit the modernistic qualities of the newer music—qualities that were regarded with distaste by Glazounow—became pronounced as Shostakovich became older and more experienced as a composer.

Shostakovich has composed seven symphonies; concerto for piano, trumpet and strings; two pieces for string octet; sonata for piano; twenty-four preludes for piano; string quartet; piano quintet; suite for jazz orchestra. Operas: "The Nose," based on Gogol's tale of the same name (the opera was completed in 1928), opera, "Lady Macbeth of Minsk" (this was based on a novel with the same title by Nikolai Leskov. It was produced at Leningrad in 1934 under the direction of Samossoud. A performance was given by Artur Rodzinski at Cleveland, Ohio, January 31, 1935), ballet, "The Bolt"; ballet, "The Golden Age"; ballet, "The Limpid Stream."

Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony was begun at Leningrad in July, 1941, at the time in which the city was being besieged by the Germans. He became a volunteer fire guard, and, as he was particularly concerned for the safety of the Conservatory in which he had studied, and in which he was then a teacher, Shostakovich joined a brigade of its professors and students, and he moved from his own house to quarters near the Conservatory, so that he might better protect it.

"In the first hot July days," wrote Shostakovich in an article that was printed in the *Boston Herald*, "I started work on my seventh symphony, conceived as a broad musical embodiment of my majestic ideas of the patriotic war. The work engrossed me wholly. Nothing could hinder the flow of ideas—neither savage raids, German planes, nor the grim atmosphere of a beleaguered city. I worked with an inhuman intensity I have never reached before. I could stop to compose small pieces, marches, film pieces and songs; attend to my organizational duties as chairman of the Leningrad Composers Association, and return to my symphony as though I had never before left it."

Three movements of the new work were finished, and the fourth was in process of composition, when Shosta-



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PROGRAM NOTES—Continued

Shostakovich, at the order of the Soviet government, left Leningrad with his wife and two children to go to Moscow. Rehearsals for the symphony were held by the orchestra of the Bolshoi Theater, Moscow, at Kuibyshev, the composer having been present to confer with Samuel A. Samossoud, the conductor. The performance took place March 1, 1942, in the Hall of Columns of the Palace of Rest and Culture, Kuibyshev, forty rehearsals having been held in preparation for it. The success of the work was remarkable, the composer having frequently been called and recalled to the stage by the listeners, who included Soviet officials, diplomats and a multitude of music-lovers who in many instances came from far-distant places to be present at the production.

The orchestra for which Shostakovich composed his symphony is a large one. It comprises two flutes, bass flute, three oboes, English horn, two ordinary clarinets, one small E flat clarinet, bass clarinet, three bassoons, double bassoon, six horns, six trumpets, six trombones, tuba, kettledrums, three side drums, bass drum, cymbals, triangle, tambourine, gong, xylophone, two harps, piano and strings.

The first performance of the seventh symphony in America was given at a radio concert of the National Broadcasting Company, New York, July 19, 1942. Arturo Toscanini was the conductor. The first concert production was given at the Berkshire Music Center, Tanglewood, Lennox, Mass., at a performance given as a benefit for the Russians, and was directed by Sergei Koussevitzky. The symphony was conducted by Frederick Stock at a concert for the benefit of the Russian War Relief, Ravinia Park, August 22, 1942.

That Shostakovich is a believer in the profound significance of Slavic music in the art of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, may be believed by his own utterances concerning it. "It is a long time," he said "since the fable to the effect that the musical culture of the Slavonic nations represents a secondary branch of European music has been utterly refuted. In the course of many centuries, particularly the eighteenth and nine-

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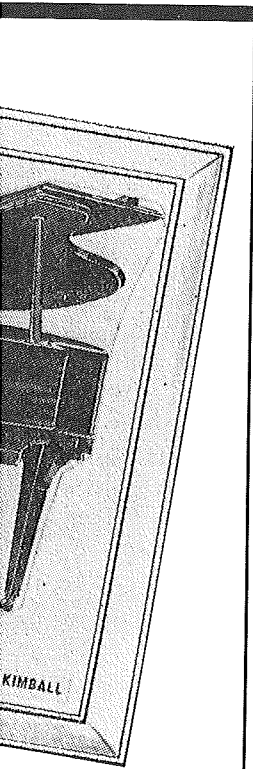
teenth, Slavonic musicians proved the right of their art to claim permanent historic significance. In Russia the independent rôle of Slavonic music was asserted by Glinka, Moussorgsky, the composers of the 'Five'"— Shostakovich was referring collectively to Balakirew, César Cui, Borodin, Moussorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakow—"Tschaikowsky; in Poland by Chopin, in Bohemia by Smetana. They created schools of music, distinguished by profound originality and which left an imprint on the entire development of the art of music of the last 100 to 150 years."

Having paid tribute to the influence of Chopin upon piano music, which Shostakovich declares is so great "that there is hardly any composer who has not felt it," the creator of the Seventh Symphony addressed himself to the art of Tschaikowsky. "Personally," he said, "I am thoroughly convinced of the exceptional significance Tschaikowsky's scores have had upon modern orchestral thought. Unlike Rimsky-Korsakow, Tschaikowsky did not leave behind for the instruction of posterity any fundamental pedagogical work such as the well-known 'Principles of Orchestration.'"* But every opera, every symphony composed by Tschaikowsky represents a true repository of wisdom of the highest model of how the means of the symphony orchestra should be used."

The professional critics in Russia have given consideration to the debt which Shostakovich may owe to Tschaikowsky. One of them wrote:

"Despite the difference of their socio-political roots, neither of the two has a trace of feudal dilettantism, which by virtue of some historical atavism has even affected some, if not many, Soviet composers. As a creative character, Shostakovich is far removed from the romantic ideal of an artist who works only when he is inspired, possessed, or plunged into the state of divine folly. Above all, he is a professional who has the command of the technique in any genre. He is even inclined to emphasize the artisan quality of the musical profession. He works a great deal and writes rapidly, often with-

*Shostakovich was referring to *The Foundations of Instrumentation* which, edited by his pupil, Maximilian Steinberg, was published in 1913. An English translation was made by Edward Adgate, and there are translations in French and German. Tschaikowsky published a text book on Harmony (1870) and he translated into Russian Gevaert's treatise on Instrumentation.



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PROGRAM NOTES—Continued

out rough drafts. He composes in full score, without preliminary sketches for piano. Like a trained chess player, who can play simultaneous games on several chess boards, Shostakovich can work on several musical compositions, at times on contrasting psychological planes."

Shostakovich's method of working, referred to in the matter quoted above, was interestingly enlarged upon by the composer's wife, Nina, in an article published in the program book of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, October 9, 1942.

"How does Dimitri work? Well, he demands no 'special' working conditions. He just sits down at his writing desk and writes—morning, noon, evening. At night he sleeps. If it isn't singing or shouting, noises don't affect him at all. The door of the room where he works is usually open, and often the children romp around in his room. Sometimes Galya climbs onto his knees while he is composing, but in such cases she sits quietly. While Dimitri was finishing the final bars of the Seventh Symphony, for instance, friends who had come in were chatting and joking in the room where he sat. He composes swiftly, writing the score straight through, usually without changes or deletions. Dimitri has a great capacity for work, and once having started a composition he is usually engrossed.

"Even during air raids he seldom stopped working. If things began looking too hot, he calmly finished the bar he was writing, waited until the page dried, neatly arranged what he had written, and took it down with him into the bomb shelter. Whenever he was absent from home during an air raid alarm he always phoned me asking me not to forget to take his manuscripts down into the shelter."

A description of Shostakovich's seventh symphony, officially inspired, was made by D. Rabinovich and S. Shilfstein, and for the greater understanding of its music is quoted in this place:

"The symphony was begun in July while Shostakovich was in Leningrad, and much of it was composed in the intervals of his duties as air raid warden, watching for incendiary bombs on the roof of the Leningrad Conservatory, and as a member of the Leningrad People's Guard Theater, which toured the front lines entertaining the troops. Shostakovich wrote several songs while working with this theater group.

"The composer has expressed a wish that the Seventh Symphony be performed in America soon after its début in the Soviet Union. Describing it, he said in a recent radio broadcast:

"The symphony is devoted to the events of 1941—war. This does not mean, of course, that it gives a naturalistic imitation of

PROGRAM NOTES—Continued

the war, but nevertheless it is an interpretation of the war. My Seventh Symphony is devoted to the ordinary Soviet citizens who have become heroes of this patriotic war. That is its fundamental theme.'

"In the immediate future, Shostakovich said, he plans to compose a series of satirical musical concert numbers and several songs and marches dedicated to the defense of the Soviet Union. Later he plans another major work, but said he was as yet undecided whether it will be a symphony, opera or ballet.

"The following review of this most recent contribution to the great Russian musical tradition, received from Moscow by radio," the two authors say, "was written by two well known Soviet music critics:

"The Symphony's 'biography' explains a great deal. This work was conceived during one of the tensest periods of the war, when the enemy was coming close to the gates of Leningrad. The three movements of this symphony were composed in a besieged fortress. In his daily life, in thought and in will, the composer was at one with those fighting on Pulkovo Heights, erecting barricades at Narva Gate, and under artillery fire forging weapons for the defenders of Lenin's city. It was from them Shostakovich drew the moral force which enabled him to create a work of art of overpowering beauty and humanity.

"The Seventh Symphony is Shostakovich's first program piece. It speaks of the feelings and facts of today. It speaks of them with passion. It is a patriotic call to arms, with wrathful spirit of denunciation characteristic of an anti-fascist document. Two worlds are opposed to each other in the Seventh Symphony. One is a world of thought and feeling, of great passions and noble aspirations. It appears in the very first theme—straightforward and sturdy like the plain tanned faces of the millions of Soviet men and women who met on Sunday, June 22 amid a joyous and peaceful life. It is at the end of the exposition, in melody which is serenely happy and as radiant as a warm, boundless June sky. And it appears again in the recapitulation of the first movement, where the same music becomes a sorrowful and grand requiem of people mourning those who have laid down their lives for the freedom of their country.

"The other world is brutal, senseless and implacable. Against the background of constant drumming there are sounds of a martial theme, evil and in square rhythm. It is repeated twelve times, not developing, only growing in volume. At first it is executed by string instruments, *pizzicato*, and then it is taken up by the flutes, bassoons and trumpets. It tears furiously through blaring and howling brass, it looms even larger—it advances, yet there is something static in it. Cruel, like the mechanism of force, this music arouses a feeling of hatred, it calls for vengeance. It contains nothing of naturalistic imitations, 'war sounds'. It is a psychological portrait of the enemy, ruthless and denouncing.

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PROGRAM NOTES—Continued

"In the first movement of the symphony the composer uses a simple device of dramatic contrast. But he lends it force by a vast social generalization. The martial episode in the first movement takes the place of the usual allegro. How sinister this sounds after the pictures of a happy, peaceful life presented by the composer in the exposition! And what force of tragic expression there is in the requiem following it! Sorrow, the great sorrow of a people sounds in this music. But in that sorrow there is a courage and fortitude which no trials, however heavy, can break. At the end of the first movement the radiant first theme reappears. But how changed! There is now slow meditation in it, profound gravity of feeling. The people have become maturer, sterner and more self-sacrificing.

"The second movement—*scherzo*—is described by the composer himself as 'Memories'. The author's thoughts revert to the recent happy life. Here Shostakovich does not adhere to the usual treatment of the *scherzo*; there is no trace of wit or comedy, least of all sarcasm or grotesqueness. All there is of the *scherzo* in the second movement is a natural liveliness, but it is a liveliness of lyrical feeling rather than of sceptical thought. It is caressing and bears an uncommon warmth in its sounds. If we were to give the most concise definition of the emotions with which the remarkable music of the *scherzo* is replete, we should express it in the words 'Joy of Life'.

"The third movement—*largo*—is grand in its conception, stirring in its depth and force of expression, and brings to mind analogies with Beethoven's brilliant *largo* in his Sonata, Opus 106. It is not self-searching like the slow movement of the Fifth Symphony nor self-obliterating in the cosmos, as in the treatment of the *largo* of the Sixth Symphony. The music in the third movement is imbued with lofty fervor and contemplation. It represents the thoughts of a great contemporary artist who has absorbed the present day thoughts and feelings of many. Together with us, the composer ponders over 'fateful minutes for the whole world'; he sees the world with eyes like ours, but sharper; he listens to the world with a heart like ours, but perceives more profoundly and acutely. In his thoughts he addresses us. Hence an oratorical loftiness, a music active and manful, are qualities of this philosophically profound and lyrically penetrating *largo*. It also contains uncommon ecstasy for life. This is no chance element in Shostakovich's symphony, produced in wartime. For this war has given the people a particularly keen sense of life—its joys, poetry and beauty, everything against which fascism has raised its blood-dripping sword. The composer has conveyed the beauty of life by music perfect in its beauty, music which elevates the mind and ennobles our emotions, reminding us once again of what we are fighting for.

"The idea of the finale of the symphony is defined by the composer in one word: Victory. And that is as it should be. That is demanded by the sorrowful requiem of the first part. It is demanded

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PROGRAM NOTES—Continued

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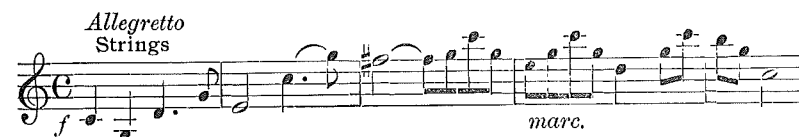
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by the idea of the entire symphony. It is demanded by the truth of life, for the sake of which Shostakovich created his work. This music of victory does not command at once. There is still a road to be traversed—a road marked by contemplation, suffering and struggle. But when at the very end of the finale, against a background of the powerful, solemn music of the entire orchestra, there again appears in the full pride of its beauty the indomitable initial theme of the symphony, we see before us the figure of victory. There it is—the desired and attained! There it is—the conquest of happiness by the plain people.”

The following is an analysis of Shostakovich's symphony made by Mr. Cecil Smith for the performance of the work at Ravinia Park, August 22, 1942. Musical illustrations have been added in order to make the analysis more complete:

“I. *Allegretto*, C major. The symphony opens with a broad theme, stated over fundamental harmony:

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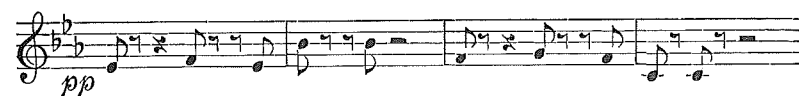
A bridge passage leads to the lyric second theme, given out softly by the first violins over a repeated drone bass figure in the accompaniment:

No. 2.



After considerable development of these materials, the tempo changes to *Moderato*, and a military rhythmic figure is introduced in the snare drum, with a *pizzicato* theme in the viola, violins doubling *col legno* (tapping the strings with the wooden part of the bow).

No. 3.



The theme and the drum figure are reiterated again and again throughout a constant *crescendo* lasting for many minutes and rising to a great climax. After the military theme has reached the peak of its development, the first theme returns. Its progress

PROGRAM NOTES—Continued

is interrupted by the return of the military theme in inverted form, which, however, soon gives way to development of the lyric second theme (see No. 2). The tempo changes to *Adagio*, and a solo bassoon presents a new melody of dirge-like character, derived somewhat from the second theme, in which the composer 'mourns the death of the heroes':

No. 4.



At the close of the dirge the first theme returns in slow tempo. Suggestions of the second theme lead to a final reminiscence of the military rhythm in the snare drum, and the movement ends quietly.

"II. *Moderato poco allegretto*, B minor. This movement, though large in scale, is cast in the three-part form characteristic of traditional symphonic scherzos. A jovial subject in 4-4 time, played by the second violins, opens the movement:

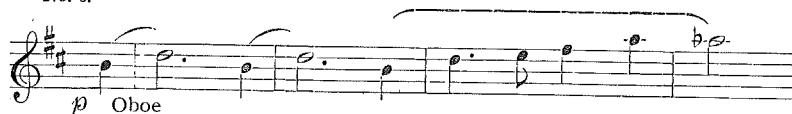
No. 5.

Moderato poco allegretto



Soon the first violins join, continuing the light, graceful mood. As the strings continue the theme and extend its rhythmic and melodic pattern into a figuration, a solo oboe states a melodic subject against a patterned accompaniment of the strings:

No. 6.



The oboe subject (No. 6) is taken over by the English horn, and then dropped; but the first theme continues on in the strings. The time changes to 3-8, and the sharp tone of the high E flat clarinet introduces the theme of the middle section, against a counter-theme in the bassoon and bass clarinet:

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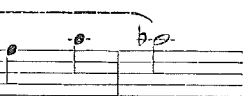
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PROGRAM NOTES—Continued

The rhythm takes on a suggestion of waltz movement. Soon repeated notes are introduced in the brass; these become the center of expanding orchestral treatment, which ultimately brings the material of the middle section to a great climax. Following the climax, a *diminuendo* leads to a recapitulation of the first theme (No. 5). A coda of unusual instrumental texture presents the second subject, originally stated by the oboe at the beginning of the movement (No. 6), in the bass clarinet, with a flutter-tongue accompaniment by two flutes and a bass flute. The movement ends with a soft reiteration of the rhythmic pattern of the first theme played by the strings, with quiet notes on the harp.

"III. *Adagio*, D major. A hymn-like introduction, scored for woodwinds, horns and two harps, precedes the main material of the movement. The tempo changes to *Largo*, and a quasi-Handelian subject—the principal theme—is stated by the first violins:

No. 8.



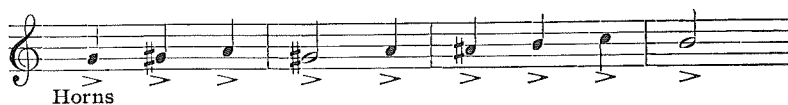
The *Adagio* introduction recurs in its original scoring, and the Handelian theme (No. 8) is repeated without essential change. A third appearance of the introductory material serves as a bridge passage to a new theme, played by a solo flute:

No. 9.



This theme is remarkably long, requiring sixty-four bars to complete itself. The 'cellos, and then the first violins, take over the flute theme. The Handelian subject (No. 8) is heard again, with very thin scoring. It serves as a transition to an entirely new section, *Marcato risoluto*, in which a forty-two-measure theme is presented over a syncopated accompaniment. Soon the horns introduce a majestic passage, above a pulsating, Verdi-like accompaniment in the strings:

No. 10.



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PROGRAM NOTES—Continued

The forty-two-measure *Marcato* theme is shortened, and reiterated until a large climax is attained. As the climax approaches, still another new theme is added above the continuing rhythmic repetition of the *Marcato* theme. After the climax, the Handelian subject from the first part of the movement (No. 8) returns in its original scoring. The second theme (No. 9), which originally had been awarded to the flute, is now played by the violas. An extensive coda employs the hymn-like passage from the introduction in alternation with the Handelian theme. A final peaceful statement of the hymn-like material in two clarinets, bass clarinet and double-bass, ends the movement.

"IV. *Allegro non troppo*, G major. The finale begins with a portentous pedal point, a sustained G in the 'cellos, basses and kettledrums. A broad introductory theme is introduced somewhat mysteriously in the first violins:

No. 11.



Its progress is broken by a dotted figure in the bass, which will play an important part in later development:

No. 12.



Working over of the broad theme (No. 11) and the dotted figure provides a transition to the real first theme of the movement, a strongly rhythmic subject of somewhat Bach-like nature:

No. 13.



The dotted figure from the introduction (No. 12) is combined with the Bach-like subject. With characteristic reiteration, these materials are treated with cumulative force, and with constantly increasing orchestral sonority. From this point forward the movement becomes exceedingly free and rhapsodic in structure, and a series

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PROGRAM NOTES—Continued

of new ideas is introduced. A new hymn-like melody is briefly presented, leading shortly to a dance-like section in 7-4 time. This material lasts for only twenty-one measures, making way for a ten-measure clarinet melody, which dies away into a *diminuendo* in the violas. A quick *crescendo* prepares for the final peroration of the symphony. A bold and animated theme in 3-4 time creates great dynamic energy:

NO. 14.



Eventually the horns shout forth another brilliant theme. This is taken over by the rest of the orchestra, treated reiteratively, and built into a heroic affirmation for the full orchestra. A great *crescendo* leads to a majestic return of the original key of C major. Against an amplification of the heroic, affirmative material, the first theme of the opening movement (No. 1) is sounded by three trombones in unison. The symphony closes spaciously upon a great C major chord."

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