

13.3. AT 19:00
HELSINKI MUSIC CENTRE

JUKKA-PEKKA SARASTE
CONDUCTOR

ELENA PANKRATOVA
SOPRANO

MIKHAIL PETRENKO
BASS

Dmitri Shostakovich:

Symphony No. 14, Op. 135 52 min

1. Adagio. *De profundis*
2. Allegretto. *Malagueña*
3. Allegro molto. *La Loreley*
4. Adagio. *Le suicidé*
5. Allegretto. *Les attentives I*
6. Adagio. *Les attentives II*
7. Adagio. *À la Santé*
8. Allegro. *Réponse des Cosaques Zaporogues au Sultan de Constantinople*
9. Andante. *O Delvig, Delvig!*
10. Largo. *Der Tod des Dichters*
11. Moderato. *Schluß-Stück*

INTERVAL 20 MIN

Pyotr Tchaikovsky:

Symphony No. 6 in B Minor, Pathétique, Op. 74 45 min

1. Adagio – *allegro non troppo*
2. Allegro con grazia
3. Allegro molto vivace
4. Finale: Adagio lamentoso

Interval at about 20:00. The concert will end at about 21:15, the late-night chamber music at about 22:00. Broadcast live on Yle Radio 1 and Yle Areena. The concert will be shown in two parts on Yle Teema on 17.5. and 24.5. with repeats on Yle TV 1 on 23.5. and 30.5.

THE LATE-NIGHT CHAMBER-MUSIC

*will follow in the Concert Hall after an interval of about 10 minutes.
Those attending are asked to take (unnumbered) seats in the stalls.*

HANNU VASARA

VIOLIN

2

J. S. Bach:

Partita No. 2 in D Minor BWV 1004 30 min

- 1. Allemanda*
- 2. Corrente*
- 3. Sarabanda*
- 4. Giga*
- 5. Ciaccona*

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH: SYMPHONY NO. 14, OP. 135

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–1975) completed his Symphony No. 14 for soprano and bass soloists, strings and percussion in 1969. It consists of settings of eleven poems (by Garcia, Lorca, Apollinaire, Küchelbecker and Rilke) divided into five movements. The symphonic song cycle *Das Lied von der Erde* by Gustav Mahler may be regarded as something of a model. The 14th symphony is dedicated to Benjamin Britten and has a certain affinity with that composer's *Nocturne* song cycle.

The introduction, Federico Garcia Lorca's *De Profundis*, tells of a hundred dead lovers slumbering deep in the dry Andalusian soil. In *Malagueña*, death travels from tavern to tavern as the soprano delivers a fiery, ironic *danse macabre*.

In *La Loreley*, which resembles a scene from an opera, the bewitching maid with the golden hair struggles in the grips of her persecutors. Strings and percussions accompany the bass as he drives her to suicide. At the end, the ethereal sound of a xylophone and vibraphone mingle with the death knell.

The slow movement continues the suicide theme as the soprano, accompanied by a cello, tells of three lilies on a grave without a cross. The tender lullaby gradually degenerates into a nightmare vision. After the death knell, the song is heard again in an echo, abandoned and distraught.

There is a certain lack of pity in the descriptions of war and death by Guillaume Apollinaire, who was wounded in the First World War. Shostakovich matches the words with tin soldiers marching to their

fate. The story of *Les Attentives I* about a soldier dying in a trench is ironic, and the irony continues in *À la Santé*, in which the bass courteously tries to persuade the soprano to pick up his broken heart.

The bass's monologue in the *Santé* prison is, in its hallucinatory tone, the focal point of the symphony. Loneliness, and being stripped of clothing, self and mind make the prison an antechamber to death.

Shostakovich does not prettify death, but the symphony does not end without some resistance. *The Zaporozhian Cossacks' Answer to the Sultan of Constantinople* is a painting by Repin and would have been familiar to contemporary Russian audiences. The breezy style addressed at all murderers has its roots in Shostakovich's 13th symphony.

The symphony becomes increasingly subjective towards the end. Setting the scene for the romantically tinged string writing is *O Delvig, Delvig!*, drawing on the poem by the 1820s Decembrist poet Wilhelm Küchelbecker bemoaning the fate of art in a world of villains. The poem forges a lasting link between servants of art from Küchelbecker to Shostakovich and Britten.

The death of the poet in Rainer Maria Rilke's *Der Tod des Dichters* is the fate that awaits us all. In the final *Schluß-Stück* (Rilke) death is the all-powerful tyrant dancing in our midst. He rudely stops the music.

Shostakovich wrote his 14th symphony in Russian, but he also accepted a multilingual version.

PYOTR TCHAIKOVSKY: SYMPHONY NO. 6 IN B MINOR, PATHÉTIQUE, OP. 74

Pyotr Tchaikovsky (1840–1893) was at the height of his career in the early 1890s. Completing his sixth symphony in August 1893, he told his friends and publisher that it was the best work he had ever composed. It marked a radical overhaul of the conventional four-movement format, dispensing with or rather updating that commonly applied until then in the first movement of a symphony. A solo bassoon presents the main theme in the gloomy introduction before the strings take it up in the quick main section. Tchaikovsky dramatizes the traditional sonata form, turning it into an operatic spectacle with extremes of dynamics signifying a state of mind rather than volume. The tempo changes and written-out rubatos (playing with expressive and rhythmic freedom) are designed to bring each stage alive as in a real-time event.

The trombones' comment after the first wave contains a musical quotation from the traditional Russian Requiem Mass, sung to the words "With thy saints, O Christ, give peace to the soul of thy servant". This would have been familiar to any Russian at the time and could be understood as a reference both to death and to spirituality. At the end of the movement, the main theme returns as a solemn funeral march.

The second and third movements are character pieces. The 5/4 time of the second looks ahead to the rhythmic thinking of Stravinsky. The centre of attention is nevertheless the middle section (marked *Con dolcezza e flebile*) and its falling melodic line against 'heartbeats' on the timpani and basses.

In the third movement Tchaikovsky plays with scherzo and march elements, the former gradually giving way to a resolute dotted march rhythm. By the end it has virtually swallowed up the latter, the triplets of which again echo in the closing bars.

The most radical thing about the sixth symphony is the slow finale, which follows the third movement without a break. The music both rises to the heights and plummets to the depths. A trombone chorale puts an end to the struggle and the low strings accompany the symphony to a closing whisper B minor.

LATE-NIGHT CHAMBER MUSIC

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH: PARTITA NO. 2 IN D MINOR BWV 1004

Death was for Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) both a natural end to life and a gateway to eternity. His acceptance of this is revealed in his numerous vocal works, cantatas and passions. Professor Helga Thoene of the University of Düsseldorf has, in the works for solo violin (BWV 1001–1006) he composed in Cöthen up to the year 1720, discovered references to chorale tunes that would later become familiar from both vocal works by him and from other church music of the period.

According to Professor Thoene, the metaphors in Bach's solo violin sonatas allude to the life of Christ, but Partita No. 2 in D Minor, and especially its *Chaconne* (*Ciaccona* – a set of 29 variations), would appear to be a more personal reckoning.

In the *Chaconne* variations Thoene has found well-known chorale tunes used by Bach. Luther's Easter hymn *Christ lag in Todesbanden* can be heard in the very first bars. Some of the chorale motifs are less obvious, while others, such as *Jesu, meine Freude*, are more easily recognisable. Another is *Auf meinem lieben Gott*.

The *Chaconne* is a monumental movement, and one the electric charge of which is enhanced by its references. A set of variations over a recurring figure in the bass, it demands absolute concentration in both listener and player alike.

The other movements are standard dance ones. The *Allemande* has a melodic line with accompaniment, the *Corrente* is dominated by dotted rhythms and sharp accents, the *Sarabanda* focuses on a beautifully moulded melody and the *Gigue* is brisk and sprightly. Maybe Bach wanted to leave his weightiest contemplation for the *Chaconne*.

*Programme notes by Antti Häyrynen
translated (abridged) by Susan Sinisalo*

JUKKA-PEKKA SARASTE

Jukka-Pekka Saraste is one of the leading conductors of his generation: Chief Conductor of orchestras in Finland, other parts of Europe and North America, and a guest with many of the world's top ensembles.

Chief Conductor and now Conductor Laureate of the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra 1987–2001, Saraste has also served as Principal Conductor of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra (1987–1991), Music Director of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra (1994–2001), Music Director and Chief Conductor of the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra (2006–2013 and later its first Conductor Laureate) and most recently Chief Conductor of the WDR Symphony Orchestra in Cologne (2010–2019).

Together with Esa-Pekka Salonen, Jukka-Pekka Saraste was one of the founders of the Avanti! Chamber Orchestra in 1983. He was Principal Guest Conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra 2002–2005 and Artistic Advisor of the Lahti Symphony Orchestra 2008–2011. He also founded the Finnish Chamber Orchestra and is still Artistic Advisor of this and its annual Tammisaari Festival.

Saraste has a repertoire extending from the Classical era through to the present day and has conducted a large number of premieres. His large discography includes the complete Beethoven and Brahms symphonies with the WDR Orchestra, and music by Bruckner, Mahler, Stravinsky, Schönberg and others. Topping the list of his other projects are his complete recordings of the Sibelius and Nielsen symphonies with the FRSO.

ELENA PANKRATOVA

Elena Pankratova has in the past decade risen to the ranks of the world's dramatic soprano elite, with engagements at the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, Covent Garden in London, La Scala, Milan, the Berlin State Opera, the Semperoper Dresden, and the Bavarian State Opera in Munich. Born in Yekaterinburg, she studied at the St. Petersburg State Conservatory, and in Italy with Renata Scotto. She made her international breakthrough in 2010 as the Dyer's Wife in the production of *Die Frau ohne Schatten* directed by Zubin Mehta at the Florence May Festival, and in 2016, she was the first ever Russian dramatic soprano to appear at the Bayreuth Festival, singing Kundry in *Parsifal* in 2016–2019 and Ortrud in *Lohengrin* since 2019.

Other roles in Elena Pankratova's repertoire include the title role in Richard Strauss's *Elektra*, Beethoven's Leonore, Verdi's Amelia and Leonora (*La forza del destino* and *Il trovatore*), Puccini's Tosca and Turandot, and many of the other Wagner characters, such as Senta, Venus, Sieglinde, and as of this season Brünnhilde in *The Ring*. She is also an active concert singer, in such works as Pergolesi's and Rossini's *Stabat mater*, Shostakovich's 14th symphony, Mahler's 2nd and 8th symphonies, and Mussorgsky's *Songs and Dances of Death*.

MIKHAIL PETRENKO

A member of the solo ensemble of the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, fellow Russian Mikhail Petrenko also tours the world's opera houses and concert halls, collaborating with many of today's most celebrated conductors. While still a student at the St. Petersburg State Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatoire, he was invited to join the Mariinsky Academy of young Singers. He has been a soloist at the Mariinsky since 1998 and there sung over 30 roles. Winner of many singing competitions, he made his international breakthrough in 2004 singing Hunding in *Die Walküre* with Daniel Barenboim conducting at the Berlin State Opera. Since then, he has appeared several times at such illustrious houses as the New York Metropolitan.

Petrenko's repertoire covers not only the great Russian roles (such as the title roles in *Boris Godunov* and *Khovanshchina*), but also ones by Mozart (Sarastro, Leporello, Don Giovanni, Figaro), Verdi (Philip II, Ramfis, Zaccaria, Fiesco, Ferrando) and Wagner (Hunding, Hagen, Wotan, Heinrich). He has, among others, sung on the CD of *Die Walküre* conducted by Valery Gergiev, and Rachmaninov's *The Bells* with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Simon Rattle. He also sang Leporello in the film version of *Don Giovanni*.

THE FINNISH RADIO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra (FRSO) is the orchestra of the Finnish Broadcasting Company (Yle). Its mission is to produce and promote Finnish musical culture and its Chief Conductor as of autumn 2013 has been Hannu Lintu.

The Radio Orchestra of ten players founded in 1927 grew to symphony orchestra proportions in the 1960s. Its Chief Conductors have been Toivo Haapanen, Nils-Eric Fougstedt, Paavo Berglund, Okko Kamu, Leif Segerstam, Jukka-Pekka Saraste and Sakari Oramo, and taking over from Hannu Lintu in 2021 will be Nicholas Collon.

In addition to the great Classical-Romantic masterpieces, the latest contemporary music is a major item in the repertoire of the FRSO, which each year premieres a number of Yle commissions. Another of the orchestra's tasks is to record all Finnish orchestral music for the Yle archive. During the 2019/2020 season, the FRSO will premiere four works commissioned by Yle. Also on the programme are a large-scale collaboration between Yle and the Helsinki Festival: Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*. The symphonies and concertos of Dmitri Shostakovich will occupy special status during the season, while the RSO Festival now to be held for the second time will feature new and large-scale works by Magnus Lindberg. Among the visiting conductors will be Esa-Pekka Salonen, Herbert Blomstedt, Jukka-Pekka Saraste and Sakari Oramo, and a host of young Finnish artists will make their debut as FRSO soloists.

The FRSO has recorded works by Mahler, Bartók, Sibelius, Hakola, Lindberg, Saariaho, Sallinen, Kaipainen, Kokkonen and others. It has twice won a Gramophone Award: for its disc of Lindberg's Clarinet Concerto in 2006 and of Bartók Violin Concertos in 2018. Other distinctions have included BBC Music Magazine, Académie Charles Cros and MIDEM Classical awards. Its disc of tone poems and songs by Sibelius won an International Classical Music Award (ICMA) in 2018, and it has been the recipient of a Finnish EMMA award in 2016 and 2019.

The FRSO regularly tours to all parts of the world. During the 2019/2020 season its schedule will include tours to Central Europe and Japan under Hannu Lintu.

The FRSO concerts are broadcast live on the Yle Areena and Radio 1 channels and are recorded and shown later on Yle Teema and TV1.