

Shostakovich & Other Russians



Session Four

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LIFECourses.ca/Shostakovich

Plan for today

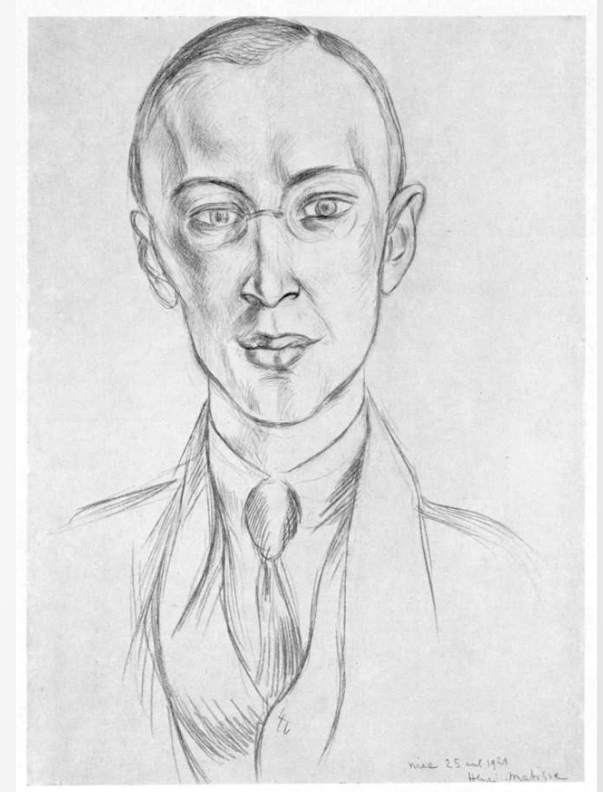
- Prokofiev returns
 - BSO lecture on Prokofiev
 - Selected compositions
- Khachaturian - 3rd “Big 3”
 - Selected compositions
- Shostakovich, after *Pravda*
 - Documentary, segment 2
 - The 1st string quartet
 - The Leningrad symphony
- Next week

3rd hour – Rachmaninoff continued

- He's both appealing and approachable
 - Where/How to place his music?
 - Old-fashioned?
 - Deeply satisfying?
- Listen to more of the documentary
- Listen to selected compositions
 - Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini (thanks Gilbert)
 - Piano Concerto No. 2 (thanks again Gilbert)
 - Piano Sonata No. 2

Sergei Prokofiev 1891-1953

- Pianist, composer, conductor
- 1902 - Reinhold Glière visited during summer
- 1904 enters St. Petersburg Conservatory
 - Myaskovsky was a fellow student
- 1918 exits Russia, with state blessing
- Lived in US, Germany, then Paris
- 1936 returned to Soviet Union



Life and Context



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fx1oQsvE3Kw>

Compositions

- 7 operas
- 7 symphonies
 - “Classical” Symphony no. 1
 - Victory (1945) Symphony no. 5
- 8 ballets
 - Romeo & Juliet
- 5 piano concertos
- 2 violin concertos
- 9 piano sonatas



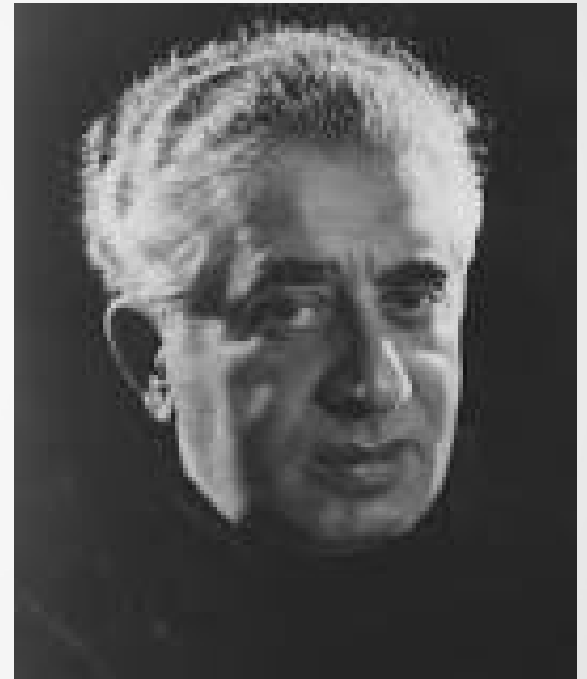
Prokofiev & his second wife,
Mira Mendelson

Compositions - Videos

- Symphony No. 1 Op. 25 “Classical”
 - Mariinsky Theatre Orchestra, Valery Gergiev
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vGwW9ecNWEs>
- Symphony No. 5 in B flat major
 - Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Proms 2013
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBY5Mb90_lw
- Romeo & Juliet - NY City Ballet May 2009
 - Ballet Master in Chief Peter Martins
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uwpZcae8tsw>

Aram Khachaturian 1903-1978

- One of the “Big 3” Soviet composers
 - Shostakovich, Prokofiev & Khachaturian
- Armenian, born in Georgia
- 1921 began Moscow studies
- 1936 1st Piano Concerto
- Composed ballets, symphonies, concertos & film scores



Khachaturian Compositions

- “colorful harmonies, captivating rhythms, virtuosity, improvisations and sensuous melodies”,... “sharply identifiable style, something which his successors have found impossible to emulate”
- Sabre Dance
 - Rattle · Berliner Philharmoniker
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mUQHGpxrz-8>
- Cello Concerto Rhapsody
 - Rostropovich cello, Khachaturian-conductor
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5C0S-IUEhAQ>
- Introduction
 - <http://www.boosey.com/podcast/Aram-Khachaturian-an-Introduction/100675>

the Soviet composer

- 1936 *Pravda* editorial
 - Symphony 4 withdrawn, Symphony 5 great success
- The 1st of 15 string quartets
 - Stalin never went to chamber music concerts
- 1941 siege of Leningrad
 - Symphony 7, world-wide success
- 1945 Victory
 - ... and the controls return



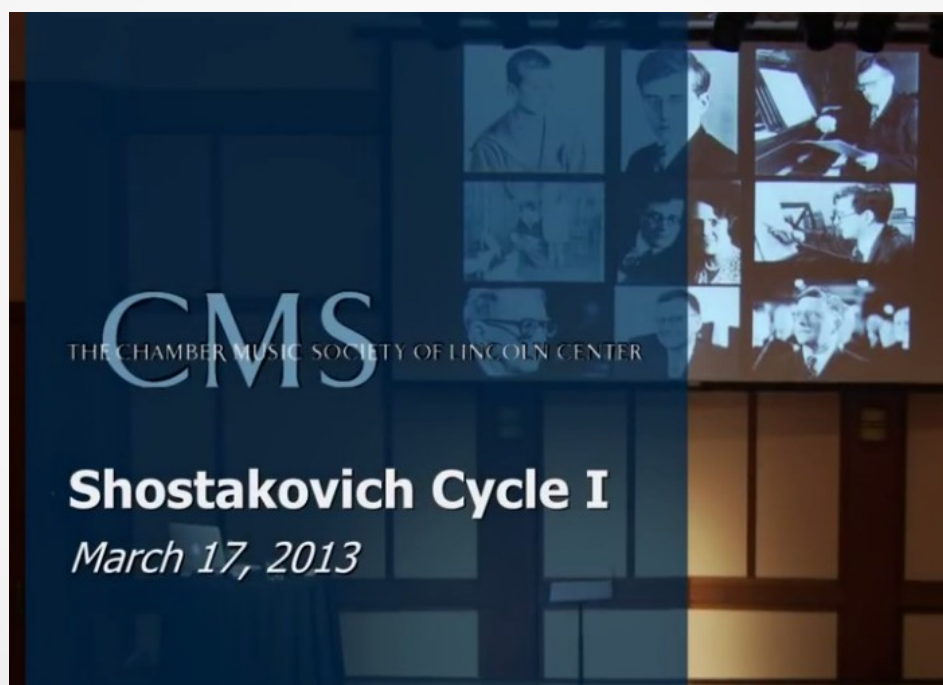
A film portrait, part 2



Directed by Oliver Becker, 2006 (part 2 of 6)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T7ixMKWp5bQ>

The String Quartets

- Intimate, “pure” musical expression
 - ... and there was much less supervision



String Quartet No. 1 in C Major



The Center Bancroft String Quartet, 2011
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sgh-rww7Al0>

Siege of Leningrad 1941-1944

- Nazi siege, lasting 872 days
 - “The mass of the Finnish army will have the task, ... , of tying up maximum Russian strength”
- 1,500,000 soldier and civilian deaths
- 1,400,000 evacuated during siege
- Shostakovich tried to enlist



Symphony 7, “Leningrad”, Op 60

- Symphony No 7 in C major, Op 60 (78 min)
 - 1 Allegretto
 - 2 Moderato (poco allegretto)
 - 3 Adagio
 - 4 Allegro non troppo
- Barcelona Symphony and Catalonia National Orchestra
 - Pablo González, director / conductor
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xbru9UcCLQQ>

Next week

- Weinberg arrives in 1939
 - Colleague/friend of Shostakovich
 - Most successful (2011) Holocaust opera
- Soviet musical establishment continues
 - Example: Khrennikov 1913-2007
- Great Shostakovich chamber music
 - String Quartet No. 8 in C minor, Op. 110
 - 24 Preludes and fugues op.87
 - Performed by Tatiana Nikolayeva
 - Performed by Dmitri Shostakovich

Rachmaninoff continued

- Is Rachmaninoff attractive, great or both?
 - What distinguishes truly great music?
- Harvest of Sorrow, continued
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vi3MU9JnL7E>
- Compositions
 - Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Op 43
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lgyN5GOL_Ao , Mikhail Pletnev
 - Piano Concerto No. 2, Op. 18
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pBx-tr1FDvY> , Rachmaninoff (no video)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=leXt4ilaPdA> , Evgeny Kissin
 - Piano sonata No. 2
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-JaY0IZEy90> , Vladimir Horowitz