

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

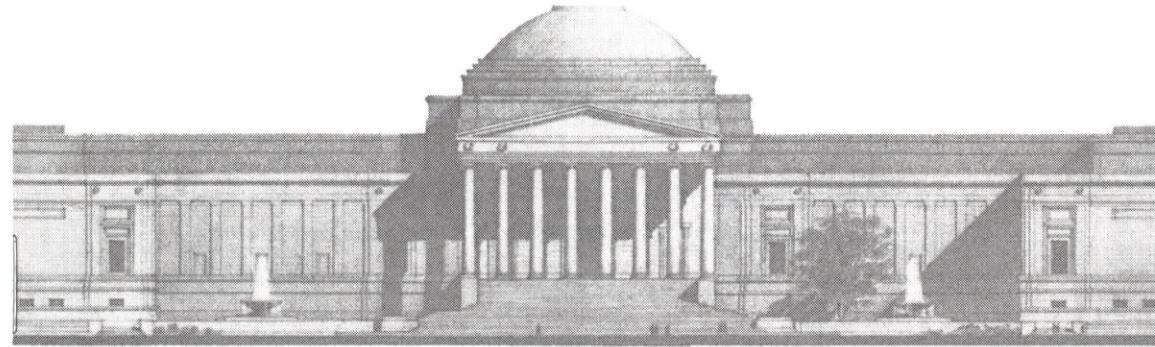
Please note that late entry or reentry of the West Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

For the convenience of concertgoers, the Garden Café remains open for light refreshments until 6:00 pm on Sundays.

Music Department
National Gallery of Art
Sixth Street and Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC

www.nga.gov

Concerts are made possible in part through the generosity of donors to the National Gallery of Art through The Circle. Reserved seating is available in recognition of their support. Please contact the development office at (202) 842-6450 or circle@nga.gov for more information.



The Seventy-first Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art
2,909th Concert

PostClassical Ensemble
Angel Gil-Ordóñez, Music Director
Joseph Horowitz, Artistic Director
George Vatchnadze, pianist

Presented in conjunction with
“Interpreting Shostakovich”

November 4, 2012
Sunday, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program
(performed without intermission)

Music by Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–1975)

Chamber Symphony for Strings in C Minor, op. 110a

Transcribed by Rudolf Barshai from *String Quartet no. 8*, op. 110 (1960)

Largo

Allegro molto

Allegretto

Largo

Largo

Preludes and Fugues for Solo Piano from op. 87

Prelude in C Major (as recorded by the composer)

Prelude and Fugue in C Major

Prelude and Fugue in G Minor

George Vatchnadze, *pianist*

Chamber Symphony for Strings in A-flat Major, op. 118a

Transcribed by Rudolf Barshai from *String Quartet no. 10*, op. 118 (1964)

Andante

Allegro furioso

Adagio

Allegretto

The Musicians

POSTCLASSICAL ENSEMBLE

Founded in 2003 by Angel Gil-Ordóñez and Joseph Horowitz, PostClassical Ensemble is an experimental musical laboratory testing the limits of orchestral programming. Its tagline, “More than an Orchestra,” refers to the thematic scope and exceptional formats of its concerts, and aspiration to embrace collaborative and educational activities not normally associated with orchestras. This spring, the ensemble will present “Dvořák and America” at the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center in College Park, Maryland, which will include the world premiere of *Hiawatha Melodrama*—a creation of Horowitz and Dvořák scholar Michael Beckerman, inspired by the Longfellow poem *The Song of Hiawatha* and drawing on elements of Dvořák’s *New World Symphony*. The ensemble maintains a website at www.postclassicalensemble.com.

PostClassical Ensemble gratefully acknowledges support for “Interpreting Shostakovich” from the the District of Columbia Commission on the Arts and Humanities and from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Members of PostClassical Ensemble participating in tonight’s concert are:

Violin I

Oleg Rylatko, concertmaster

Zino Bogachek

Ko Sugiyama

Susan Midkiff

Cristina Constantinescu

Sonja Chung

Violin II

Xi Chen, principal

Eva Cappelletti

Jan Chong

Jennifer Rickard

Heather Haughn

Viola

Philippe Chao, principal

Chris Shieh

Adrienne Sommerville-Kiamie

Megan Yanik

Cello

Igor Zubkovsky, principal

Den Ding

Kerry Van Laanen

Bass

Ed Malaga, principal

Marta Bradley

ANGEL GIL-ORDÓÑEZ

The former associate conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra of Spain, PostClassical Ensemble Music Director Angel Gil-Ordóñez has conducted throughout Europe, Latin America, and the United States. In 2006 King Juan Carlos I of Spain awarded Gil-Ordóñez the country’s highest civilian decoration, the Royal Order of Queen Isabella, for his work in advancing Spanish culture around the world. He also serves as principal guest conductor of New York’s Perspectives Ensemble, and as music director of the Georgetown University Orchestra.

GEORGE VATCHNADZE

An associate professor of piano and coordinator of the keyboard program at DePaul University in Chicago, George Vatchnadze has previously appeared with PostClassical Ensemble in the Stravinsky Project at Strathmore Hall in Bethesda, Maryland. His 1997 recital debut at the Edinburgh Festival received the Herald Angel Award, presented by the *Scottish Herald*. A veteran of recitals and orchestral appearances throughout Canada, Chile, Finland, France, Great Britain, Israel, Italy, Japan, The Netherlands, Russia, Taiwan, and the United States, he made his New York recital debut in 1999 at Lincoln Center’s Alice Tully Hall. Reviewing that performance, critic Faubion Bowers wrote: “Vatchnadze is a consummate artist, now at the height of his musical and intellectual powers. He can do absolutely anything he wants at the piano.”

Program Notes

This concert is the musical culmination of a multi-week festival titled “Interpreting Shostakovich,” a collaboration between PostClassical Ensemble and the film and music departments of the National Gallery of Art. In addition to film presentations and discussions at the National Gallery, the festival has included events at the Dumbarton Concert Series as well as at The George Washington and Georgetown universities. PostClassical Ensemble, conducted by Angel Gil-Ordóñez, was joined in the festival by the ensemble’s artistic director, Joseph Horowitz; authors Roy Guenther, Peter Rollberg, and Solomon Volkov; and filmmaker Tony Palmer to provide a “Shostakovich immersion experience.” Offerings included four films scored by Shostakovich; Palmer’s 1988 film *Testimony*; panel discussions; examples from Shostakovich’s choral and chamber music; and a discussion of Volkov’s book *Testimony: The Memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich*, led by the author.

A prolific writer on the subject of Russian arts and culture, Volkov has also written *Balanchine’s Tchaikovsky*; *Conversations with Joseph Brodsky*; *From Russia to the West: The Musical Memoirs and Reminiscences of Nathan Milstein*; *Saint Petersburg: A Cultural History*; *Shostakovich and Stalin: The Extraordinary Relationship Between the Great Composer and the Brutal Dictator*; and *The Magical Chorus: A History of Russian Culture from Tolstoy to Solzhenitsyn*. Volkov’s biography of Shostakovich was prepared in close collaboration with the composer during the late 1950s and early 1960s.

In a recent interview with PostClassical Ensemble artistic director Joseph Horowitz, Solomon Volkov provides revealing insights into the circumstances surrounding the composition of Shostakovich’s *String Quartet no. 8*, op 110. Volkov quotes the composer: “When I wrote the *Eighth Quartet*, it was assigned to the department of ‘exposing fascism.’ You have to be blind and deaf to do that, because everything in the quartet is as clear as a primer. I quote *Lady Macbeth* [and] the *First* and *Fifth Symphonies*. What does fascism have to do with these? The *Eighth* is an autobiographical quartet; it quotes a song known to all Russians: ‘Exhausted by the hardships of prison.’”

Volkov adds: “I would say that the *Eighth Quartet* was the first time Shostakovich wrote a ‘letter in a bottle.’ I believe firmly that everything one creates as an artist is autobiographical in nature with very rare exceptions. Especially, if it bleeds. At a certain point, he can begin to feel less at the mercy of fate than a participant in something like divine will . . . [Shostakovich] felt that he was on earth to play an important societal and even political role.

“That understanding began for him after 1936, when he was denounced in *Pravda* for *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. Remember, this opera had been received in Leningrad as the greatest Russian opera since Tchaikovsky’s *Pique Dame*; a milestone. The critics were in effect saying [that] the tradition of Russian opera is in your hands . . . Then, suddenly, absolutely unexpectedly, he received an almost mortal blow: the denunciation in *Pravda*. And from this point on, I believe, he would intentionally interpolate quotations in his music that reveal his situation and his attitudes. The *Eighth Quartet* is a culmination of this process. Here he was as open as possible and was saying for the first and last time: ‘This is about me.’”

A clue to the autobiographical character of the quartet is found in the frequent repetition of a four-note motif—D, S, C, H—the first letter of Shostakovich’s first name and the first three letters of his last name, as it is spelled in German. In German musical notation, those four letters correspond to the notes D, E-flat, C, and B.

In “Shostakovich and Film,” an essay prepared for the festival, Tony Palmer makes a comparison between Shostakovich and Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971) that provides additional insight into the former composer’s mind set: “[Shostakovich’s] life and his colossal achievements bestride the twentieth century like no other composer, except perhaps his compatriot Stravinsky. And that is not an idle comparison. I met both men, and to his dying day Stravinsky always maintained he was a ‘Russian’ composer. And to his dying day, Shostakovich always regretted his infamous denunciation of Stravinsky in 1949 as being ‘formalist’ and therefore worthless. Both knew in their hearts that, as two of the greatest composers of the century, they were the two sides of the same coin. They *were* the twentieth century in all its blood-soaked barbarism.

“But whereas Stravinsky had opted for a comfortable life in the West (although he himself had been every bit as much anti-Tsarist as Shostakovich), Shostakovich had chosen to stay in Russia, in spite of various opportunities to leave . . . It is clear to me now that if we want to know what it was like to live under Stalin in the Soviet Union from 1924 until 1953, the year of Stalin’s death, listen to Shostakovich. It’s all we’ve got. Shostakovich’s music is truthful, painful, and horrific. So in this sense, it is the most powerful memorial imaginable to the greatest number of innocent souls destroyed by a tyrant in all of recorded history.”

In 1950 Shostakovich represented the Soviet Union at a music festival in Leipzig, Germany, marking the bicentennial of the death of Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750). His duties included being the chair of the judging panel for the first International Johann Sebastian Bach Competition. One of the entrants in the competition was twenty-six-year-old Tatiana Nikolayeva from Moscow. Though not required to do so by competition regulations, she had come prepared to play any of the forty-eight preludes and fugues of *The Well-Tempered Clavier* on request. Impressed with her depth of preparation and skill in performing Bach’s music, the jury awarded her the gold medal.

Inspired by the competition and impressed by Nikolayeva’s playing, Shostakovich started composing his own cycle of twenty-four preludes and fugues. He worked fairly quickly, taking only three days on average to write each piece. As each was completed, he would ask Nikolayeva to critique it. Upon finishing the cycle in 1951, Shostakovich dedicated the work to Nikolayeva, who gave the public premiere in Saint Petersburg (then Leningrad) on December 23, 1952.

Beginning with a classically simple and harmonically straightforward phrase, the first prelude, in C major, proceeds to transpose through an eclectic array of harmonies, including ninth and eleventh chords more often heard in jazz. Its wistful tone, rendered mostly at the pianissimo dynamic level, continues into the *C-Major Fugue*. In contrast to the harmonic complexity of the prelude, the fugue is written in the purest C major, without a single accidental.

A master of the use of ostinato, Shostakovich mesmerizes the listener with the persistent simplicity of the *G-Minor Prelude*. Its companion fugue has a theme that recalls Bach’s *D-Minor Fugue* from Book I of *The Well-Tempered Clavier*. Shostakovich meanders quietly through a number of modulations before ending the fugue on an enigmatic upward turn.

As was to happen to Shostakovich so often later in his career, his preludes and fugues met with scorn in official circles. After an obligatory preview, played in 1951 by the composer for a panel from the Union of Soviet Composers, members of the panel expressed great displeasure at the dissonance in some of the fugues. They also objected to the fugue in Soviet music, because they considered it too Western and archaic.

Program notes based in part on materials provided by Joseph Horowitz, artistic director, PostClassical Ensemble

Concerts at the National Gallery of Art in November 2012

Michael Lewin, pianist

Music by Debussy
and other composers

November 11, 2012

Sunday, 6:30 pm

West Building, West Garden Court



Washington Saxophone Quartet

Music by Bielawa, d'Rivera,
and other composers

Presented in honor of

Roy Lichtenstein: A Retrospective

November 18, 2012

Sunday, 6:30 pm

West Building, West Garden Court

National Gallery of Art Orchestra

Philippe Entremont,
guest conductor and soloist

Music by Brahms, Danielpour,
and Mozart

November 25, 2012

Sunday, 6:30 pm

West Building, West Garden Court