

2024–2025 | 125th Season
Marian Anderson Hall

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Thursday, March 27, at 6:30

Orchestra After 5

Nathalie Stutzmann Conductor
Austin Chanu Host

Shostakovich Symphony No. 5 in D minor, Op. 47
I. Moderato—Allegro non troppo
II. Allegretto
III. Largo
IV. Allegro non troppo

This program runs approximately one hour and will be performed without an intermission.

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YANNICK NÉZET-SÉGUIN
MUSIC & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



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Yannick Nézet-Séguin is now in his 13th season with The Philadelphia Orchestra, serving as music and artistic director. His connection to the ensemble's musicians has been praised by both concertgoers and critics, and he is embraced by the musicians of the Orchestra, audiences, and the community. In addition to expanding the repertoire by embracing an ever-growing and diverse group of today's composers, Yannick and the Orchestra are committed to performing and recording the works of previously overlooked composers.

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Hall at the Kimmel Center was officially rededicated as Marian Anderson Hall in honor of the legendary contralto, civil rights icon, and Philadelphian. The Orchestra's award-winning education and community initiatives engage over 50,000 students, families, and community members of all ages through programs such as PlayINs; side-by-sides; PopUP concerts; Our City, Your Orchestra Live; the free annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Tribute Concert; School Concerts; sensory-friendly concerts; open rehearsals; the School Ensemble Program; All-City Orchestra Fellowships; and residency work in Philadelphia and abroad.

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Conductor



Nathalie Stutzmann is the music director of the Atlanta Symphony and the second woman in history to lead a major American orchestra. She made her Philadelphia Orchestra conducting debut in 2016 with Handel's *Messiah* and her subscription conducting debut in 2019; she served as principal guest conductor of the Orchestra from 2021 to 2024. She made her Bayreuth debut at the 2023 Festival with Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, performances that resulted in her being named "Best Conductor" at the 2024 Oper! Awards.

She returned in 2024 for a revival of the production and returns in 2026 to mark the 150th anniversary of the Festival, conducting a new production of Wagner's *Rienzi* in addition to a revival of *Tannhäuser*. She made her Metropolitan Opera debut in 2023.

Ms. Stutzmann's 2024–25 season with the Atlanta Symphony features key pillars of the Romantic repertoire including Bruckner's Symphony No. 4, Mahler's Symphony No. 1, and Strauss's *An Alpine Symphony* alongside a complete Beethoven symphony cycle and the *Missa solemnis*. Highlights of the current season include debuts with the Czech Philharmonic, the Boston Symphony, the Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich, and her conducting debut at the Musikverein with the Vienna Symphony. Her season also includes returns to the New York Philharmonic with two programs as its featured artist, the Munich Philharmonic, and the Orchestre de Paris, and a return to La Monnaie in Brussels to conduct Bizet's *Carmen*. She has signed an exclusive recording contract with Warner Classics/Erato. Her first symphonic recording for the label, Dvořák's Symphony No. 9 ("From the New World") and the "American" Suite with the Atlanta Symphony, was released in September 2024. She was awarded the 2023 Opus Klassik "Concerto Recording of the Year" for the Glière and Mosolov harp concertos with Xavier de Maistre and the WDR Symphony (Sony Classical). In 2022 she released the complete Beethoven piano concertos recorded with Haochen Zhang and The Philadelphia Orchestra (BIS).

Ms. Stutzmann began her studies at a very young age in piano, bassoon, and cello, and studied conducting with the legendary Finnish teacher Jorma Panula. Also one of today's most esteemed contraltos, she has made more than 80 recordings and received the most prestigious awards. She made her Philadelphia Orchestra performing debut in 1997. Recognized for her significant contribution to the arts, she was named Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur, France's highest honor, and Commandeur dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French government.

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Photo: Pete Checchia

Host

Cristina Bugges



A recipient of the 2023 and 2024 Career Assistance Award from the Solti Foundation U.S., Brazilian-American conductor **Austin Chanu** just concluded his tenure as the assistant conductor of The Philadelphia Orchestra, where he supported Music and Artistic Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin. He made his Philadelphia Orchestra subscription debut in April 2023 conducting Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*.

Mr. Chanu has recently appeared as a guest conductor with the Filarmonica Banatul Timișoara in Romania, the Baltimore Symphony, the St. Louis Symphony, the Rochester Philharmonic, and the Omaha Symphony. He has worked with prominent conductors including Esa-Pekka Salonen, Herbert Blomstedt, Stéphane Denève, Alan Gilbert, and Marin Alsop. He is currently co-leading a project with The Philadelphia Orchestra to restore, rebuild, and elevate the underperformed works of American composer William Grant Still. In this context, he recently led the world premiere of a newly restored edition of Still's *Wood Notes* that he helped create.

Stemming from his background as a composer, Mr. Chanu has a passion for contemporary music. He served as a teaching artist and conductor for the LA Philharmonic Association's Associate Composer Program and as a conducting fellow at the 2022 Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, where he studied with conductor Cristian Măcelaru. He was commissioned by the Eastman School of Music to compose an orchestral work for the school's centennial celebration and conducted its world premiere in the fall of 2021.

Previously, Mr. Chanu was music director for the Los Angeles Music and Art School, where he conducted and developed the artistic direction for the youth orchestra, choirs, and jazz band. Drawing on his Latino heritage he found it rewarding to foster representation for the predominantly Latinx students and families in the program through repertoire selection. In addition to his orchestral background, he has extensive experience in jazz and musical theater styles. While living in Los Angeles, he was a high-call woodwind performer for musical pit orchestras and jazz ensembles. He received a Bachelor of Music in composition from the USC Thornton School of Music in 2015, graduating magna cum laude. He graduated from the Eastman School of Music in 2021 with a master's degree in orchestral conducting.

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Yannick Nézet-Séguin · Music & Artistic Director

Framing the Program

Parallel Events

1937

Shostakovich

Symphony

No. 5

Music

Orff

Carmina burana

Literature

Steinbeck

Of Mice and Men

Art

Picasso

Guernica

History

Japan invades

China

Dmitri Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony was a key work in the composer's career. Shostakovich had emerged rapidly in his 20s as the great genius and hope of Soviet music, but in 1936 he was brutally attacked in the official Communist press, which put both his private and professional life in serious peril. He withheld the premiere of his Fourth Symphony for more than a quarter century and wrote the magnificent Fifth Symphony, which helped to restore his reputation at home while achieving classic status abroad.

The Philadelphia Orchestra is the only orchestra in the world with three weekly broadcasts on SiriusXM's *Symphony Hall*, Channel 76, on Mondays at 7 PM, Thursdays at 12 AM, and Saturdays at 4 PM.

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The Music

Symphony No. 5

Dmitri Shostakovich

Born in St. Petersburg, September 25, 1906

Died in Moscow, August 9, 1975



The life and career of Dmitri Shostakovich were in a perilous state when he began writing his Fifth Symphony in April 1937. The 30-year-old composer had recently experienced a precipitous fall from the acclaim he had enjoyed throughout his 20s, ever since he burst on the musical scene at age 19 with his brash and brilliant First Symphony. That work won him overnight fame and extended his renown far beyond the Soviet Union. Bruno Walter, Wilhelm Furtwängler, Arturo Toscanini, and other leading conductors championed the

Symphony and Leopold Stokowski gave its American premiere with The Philadelphia Orchestra in 1928. Shostakovich's Second Symphony followed the next year and was entitled "To October—A Symphonic Dedication." It included a chorus praising Lenin and the Revolution, and the Third Symphony, "The First of May," also employed a chorus to make a political statement. Despite their ideological baggage, his musical innovations continued.

A Fall from Grace Shostakovich had also received considerable attention for his contributions to the screen and stage, including film scores, ballets, incidental music, and two full-scale operas: *The Nose* and *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*. The latter enjoyed particular popular and critical success in the Soviet Union and abroad after its premiere in January 1934, so much so that a new production was presented at the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow two years later.

And that is when the serious troubles began that changed the course of Shostakovich's life. Stalin attended *Lady Macbeth* on January 26, 1936, and left before the end of the performance. A few days later an article titled "Muddle Instead of Music" appeared in *Pravda*, the official newspaper of the Communist Party. The anonymous critic wrote that the opera "is a leftist bedlam instead of human music. The inspiring quality of good music is sacrificed in favor of petty-bourgeois formalist celebration, with pretense at originality by cheap clowning. This game may end badly."

Those terrifying final words were life-threatening; this was not just a bad review that could hamper a thriving career. The article was soon followed by another in *Pravda* attacking Shostakovich's ballet *The Limpid Stream*, and then by yet another. The musical establishment, with a few brave exceptions, lined up in opposition to the composer, who was working at the time on a massive Fourth Symphony, which went into rehearsals in

December 1936. At the last moment, just before the premiere, the work was withdrawn, most likely at the insistence of the authorities. The impressive Symphony would have to wait 25 years before its unveiling in 1961. (The Philadelphians gave the American premiere in 1963.)

Shostakovich's Return Shostakovich, whose first child had just been born, was well aware of the show trials and mounting purges, as friends, family, and colleagues disappeared or were killed. He faced terrifying challenges in how to proceed after the sustained attacks on his music. He composed the first three movements of the Fifth Symphony with incredible speed—he later recounted that he wrote the Largo in just three days—although the finale slowed him down. The completion of his new symphony is usually dated July 29, 1937, but the most recent investigation for a new critical edition indicates that composition continued well into the fall.

The notable premiere took place on November 21 with the Leningrad Philharmonic under Evgeny Mravinsky, at that time a relatively unknown young conductor. In the words of Shostakovich biographer Laurel Fay: “The significance of the occasion was apparent to everyone. Shostakovich’s fate was at stake. The Fifth Symphony, a non-programmatic, four-movement work in a traditional, accessible symphonic style, its essence extrapolated in the brief program note as ‘a lengthy spiritual battle, crowned by victory,’ scored an absolute, unforgettable triumph with the listeners.”

The funereal third movement, the Largo, moved many listeners to tears. According to one account, members of the audience, one by one, began to stand during the extravagant finale. Composer Maximilian Steinberg, a former teacher of Shostakovich, wrote in his diary: “The ovation was stupendous, I don’t remember anything like it in about the last 10 years.” Yet the enormous enthusiasm from musicians and non-musicians alike—the ovations reportedly lasted nearly a half hour—could well have been viewed as a statement against the Soviet authorities’ rebukes of the composer—artistic triumphs could spell political doom. Two officials were sent to monitor subsequent performances and concluded that the audience had been selected to support the composer—a false charge made even less tenable by the fact that every performance elicited tremendous ovations.

The Importance of Art It may be difficult for contemporary audiences to appreciate how seriously art was taken in the Soviet Union. The attention and passions, the criticism and debates it evoked—dozens of articles, hours of official panels at congresses, and abundant commentary—raised the stakes for art and for artists. For his part Shostakovich remained silent at the time about the Fifth Symphony. He eventually stated that the quasi-autobiographical work was about the “suffering of man, and all-conquering optimism. I wanted to convey in the Symphony how, through a series of tragic conflicts of great inner spiritual turmoil, optimism asserts itself as a world view.”

The best-known remark about the work is often misunderstood. In connection with the Moscow premiere of the Symphony, Shostakovich noted that among all the attention it had received, one interpretation gave him “special pleasure, where it was said that the

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Photos: Allie Ippolito, Jeff Fusco

Fifth Symphony is the practical creative response of a Soviet artist to just criticism.” This last phrase was subsequently attributed to the composer as a general subtitle for the Symphony. Yet as Fay has observed, Shostakovich never agreed with what he considered the unjust criticism of his earlier work, nor did he write the Fifth along the lines he had been told to do. Most importantly, he gave no program or title to it at any time. The work, which reportedly was one the composer thought particularly highly of in later years, went on to be one of his most popular and successful compositions and a staple of the symphonic repertory.

A Closer Look The first movement (**Moderato**) opens with the lower strings intoning a striking, jagged theme, somewhat reminiscent of the one Beethoven used in his “Great Fugue,” Op. 133. It is immediately imitated by the violins and gradually winds down to become an accompaniment to an eerie theme that floats high above in the upper reaches of the violins. The tempo eventually speeds up (**Allegro non troppo**), presenting a theme that will appear in different guises elsewhere in the Symphony, most notably transformed in the triumphant conclusion.

The brief scherzo-like **Allegretto** shows Shostakovich’s increasing interest at the time in the music of Mahler, in this case the Fourth Symphony, which also includes a grotesque violin solo. The **Largo**, the movement that so moved audiences at the first performances, projects a tragic mood of enormous intensity. The brass instruments do not play at all in the movement but return in full force to dominate the finale (**Allegro non troppo**). The “over the top” exuberance of this last movement has long been debated, beginning just after the first performances. Especially following the effect of the preceding lament, some have found the optimistic triumphalism of the ending forced and ultimately false. Perhaps it is the ambiguity still surrounding the work that partly accounts for its continued appeal and prominence.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

Christopher H. Gibbs is James H. Ottaway Jr. Professor of Music at Bard College and has been the program annotator for The Philadelphia Orchestra since 2000. He is the author of several books on Schubert and Liszt, and the co-author, with Richard Taruskin, of The Oxford History of Western Music, College Edition.

Shostakovich composed his Symphony No. 5 in 1937.

Leopold Stokowski led the first Philadelphia performances of the Symphony, in March 1939. Since then the Orchestra has performed the work many times at home, as well as on domestic and international tours, including performances in the Soviet Union under Eugene Ormandy in 1958. The most recent subscription performances were in March 2022, with Kensho Watanabe.

The Philadelphians have recorded the Symphony five times: in 1939 for RCA with Stokowski; in 1965 for CBS with Ormandy; in 1975 for RCA with Ormandy; in 1992 for EMI with Muti; and in 2006 with Eschenbach for Ondine.

Shostakovich scored the work for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, E-flat clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, orchestra bells, snare drum, tam-tam, triangle, xylophone), harp, piano (doubling celesta), and strings.

The Symphony runs approximately 45 minutes in performance.

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Musical Terms

GENERAL TERMS

Cadence: The conclusion to a phrase, movement, or piece based on a recognizable melodic formula, harmonic progression, or dissonance resolution

Chord: The simultaneous sounding of three or more tones

Coda: A concluding section or passage added in order to confirm the impression of finality

Dissonance: A combination of two or more tones requiring resolution

Dynamics: The varying and contrasting degrees of loudness

Fugue: A piece of music in which a short melody is stated by one voice and then imitated by the other voices in succession, reappearing throughout the entire piece in all the voices at different places

Harmonic: Pertaining to chords and to the theory and practice of harmony

Harmony: The combination of simultaneously sounded musical notes to produce chords and chord progressions

Intonation: The treatment of musical pitch in performance

Legato: Smooth, even, without any break between notes

Meter: The symmetrical grouping of musical rhythms

Minuet: A dance in triple time commonly used up to the beginning of the 19th century as the lightest movement of a symphony

Op.: Abbreviation for opus, a term used to indicate the chronological position of a composition within a composer's output. Opus numbers are not always reliable because they are often applied in the order

of publication rather than composition.

Rondo: A form frequently used in symphonies and concertos for the final movement. It consists of a main section that alternates with a variety of contrasting sections (A-B-A-C-A etc.).

Scherzo: Literally "a joke." Usually the third movement of symphonies and quartets that was introduced by Beethoven to replace the minuet. The scherzo is followed by a gentler section called a trio, after which the scherzo is repeated. Its characteristics are a rapid tempo, vigorous rhythm, and humorous contrasts. Also an instrumental piece of a light, piquant, humorous character.

Sonata form: The form in which the first movements (and sometimes others) of symphonies are usually cast. The sections are exposition, development, and recapitulation, the last sometimes followed by a coda. The exposition is the introduction of the musical ideas, which are then "developed." In the recapitulation, the exposition is repeated with modifications.

Timbre: Tone color or tone quality

THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)

Allegretto: A tempo between walking speed and fast

Allegro: Bright, fast

Largo: Broad

Moderato: A moderate tempo, neither fast nor slow

TEMPO MODIFIERS

Non troppo: Not too much

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