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Beethoven

Symphony no. 5

Shostakovich

Symphony no. 5

Michael Sanderling
Dresden Philharmonic

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 - 1827)

Symphony no. 5 in C minor, Opus 67

Allegro con brio

Andante con moto

Allegro

Allegro - Presto

The most famous symphony of them all. Without doubt the most recorded and performed of all symphonies, with two recorded performances dating from before World War One – and so over a century of recordings charting its onward march through our collective consciousness.

Those opening four notes, da-da-da-dum, instantly recognizable and known in nations and cultures across the globe. And yet how often do we sit and listen to a complete performance of this 30-minute symphony?

Concision is the key to the opening *Allegro con brio*, at less than seven minutes it is the shortest opening movement of all nine symphonies, even with its exposition repeat. The significance of those four opening notes has been much discussed. His pupil Czerny reported that Beethoven told him that the famous opening was inspired by the persistent call of the yellowhammer which he heard on his daily walks in Vienna. Later his factotum Anton Schindler quoted Beethoven remarking, 'thus Fate knocks at the door', in relation to these same four notes. Although Schindler has been shown to be an unreliable witness on many occasions, his reported description fits in with our conception of the Symphony as a whole and will forever be associated with the start of its great journey. Indeed, the Symphony is sometimes referred to as 'Fate' in a subtitle. But otherwise the Fifth is one of those few symphonies known by its number alone, like Mozart's Fortieth.

The key of C minor had a special significance for Beethoven and he does seem to have associated it with the expression and resolution of his feelings of anger, most famously the Fifth Symphony and the *Pathétique* Piano Sonata. Gathering together his various compositions in this key gives us the opportunity to hear the different ways in which he resolved the conflicts, sometimes achieving a resolution through struggle, sometimes a simpler acceptance of his situation and occasionally no simple resolution at all. Earlier works to consider are the *Pathétique* Piano Sonata, String Quartet, Opus 18 no. 4 and the Third Piano Concerto.

Contemporary with work on the Fifth Symphony are his *Coriolan* Overture and 32 Variations on a theme in C minor for solo piano. Two of the works that were also premiered at the mammoth concert that launched the Fifth Symphony on 22nd December 1808 share the same journey from C minor to C major: the *Agnus Dei* from his Mass in C and the Choral Fantasy, Opus 80.

His final Piano Sonata, Opus 111 suggests serene acceptance as we move from the stormy opening movement to the variations in C major, ending in heavenly silence. And so, journeying through Beethoven's varied works in C minor perhaps provides us with Beethoven's personal guide to anger management.

The orchestration of the Fifth is restrained, the extra instruments (piccolo, contrabassoon and three trombones) only appearing at the start of the *Finale*. So it is truly remarkable the power that he achieves in the opening movement with the same resources of the classical orchestra inherited from Haydn and Mozart. The tension of the first movement is only interrupted by the brief cadenza for solo oboe just after the start of the recapitulation, the relentless rhythm then hurtling to its angry conclusion.

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The second movement provides contrast and respite, although some may be inclined to agree with Helen in E.M. Forster's *Howard's End* about its disconnection from the rest of the Symphony: 'For the *Andante* had begun – very beautiful, but bearing a family likeness to all the other beautiful *Andantes* that Beethoven had written, and, to Helen's mind, rather disconnecting the heroes and shipwrecks of the first movement from the heroes and goblins of the third.' (Chapter 5).

But this movement remains quintessential Beethoven, simply showing the other side of his nature, just as capable of lyricism and grace as storming the heavens. In loosely arranged variation form, the theme constantly looks upwards, with a three-note rising sequence that Ernest Newman highlighted as one of Beethoven's distinctive finger-prints in his book *The Unconscious Beethoven*. Its use suggests that even here he is summoning up the energy for combat and victory that will be realized in the *Finale*.

The third movement *Scherzo* (in all but name) opens in an unusually mysterious manner before *fortissimo* horns take us unmistakably back to the driving rhythm and relentless drama of the opening movement. One cannot help but smile at the furious scurrying of cellos and double basses as they dig into the central Trio section – rarely had the basses had such a starring role in earlier symphonies.

There remains a question about the overall form of the third movement as Beethoven clearly had doubts about whether to prescribe a complete repeat of the opening *Scherzo* and *Trio* before the return to the *Scherzo* in its truncated form (ABABA) that eventually leads to the *Finale*. Jonathan Del Mar (in his comprehensive *Bärenreiter Urtext* edition, 2001) comes firmly down in favour of omitting this longer version, taking as evidence Beethoven's final instruction to his publisher in 1809 for the shorter ABA format. However, David Wyn Jones, in his introduction to Roger Norrington's 1988 recording, argues strongly that Beethoven's instructions were misunderstood and that the fuller ABABA keeps the movement in line with its neighbouring symphonies, Nos 4, 6 and 7, together with the contemporary Cello Sonata, Opus 69, and his second *Razumovsky* String Quartet, Opus 59. Denis Matthews supports this view, citing as evidence remarks by Beethoven's close friend Franz Olivia in a conversation book when he expressed surprise at the omission of the second repeat at a performance in 1820. Although Beethoven's reply is not noted (the conversation books only recording comments made to Beethoven), it seems probable that Beethoven was expecting the ABABA version to be performed, despite his earlier 'final instructions'. And so the jury will probably remain out on this matter and it will come down to a matter of personal preference. However, the main innovation here lies in the dramatic link between *Scherzo* and *Finale*. Before the bridge to the *Finale*, the *Scherzo* returns in ghost-like fashion, *sempre pianissimo* with plucked strings and bassoons outlining the thematic material. This gradually peters out to land on *ppp* string drone with *pp* timpani beating out the rhythm. The first violins' slowly rising arpeggios eventually lead to a short crescendo, paving the way for the start of the dramatic *Finale*, with sonorous trombones entering the symphonic orchestra for the first time.

This journey towards the light remains one of the most spine-tingling moments in music and echoes the transforming journey undertaken in his contemporary opera *Fidelio*. The ideals of the French Revolution remain central to Beethoven's vision despite his shock at Napoleon's

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 - 1827)

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coronation as Emperor that led to the famous destruction of the title page of his *Eroica* a few years earlier.

There is a further dramatic twist as the *Scherzo* returns when the *Finale's* development section reaches its climax. This is not unprecedented, as the ever-experimental Haydn had curiously brought back his *Minuet* towards the end of the *Finale* in Symphony No. 46 thirty years earlier in 1772. But Beethoven's use of this device takes the idea to a new dramatic level and leads to the triumphant symphonic coda, with piccolo blazing through the orchestral texture as the tempo increases steadily to its *presto* ending. The return of the haunting *Scherzo* music raises further questions about the format of the third movement, and indeed about whether to include the exposition repeat in the *Finale* itself. Some have argued that this exposition repeat must be balanced by the full-length ABABA *Scherzo*, and that the reappearance of the *Scherzo* only makes sense within this structure.

With all these repeats included, the Fifth does become an epic work, whilst others might prefer the dramatic impact of the shortened version, arguing that this helps to counter-balance the brevity of its first movement *Allegro con brio*. Questions about the structure will always take the back seat when involved in the drama of live performance, and in the words of E.M. Forster we witness as: '*He brought back the gusts of splendour, the heroism, the youth, the magnificence of life and of death, and, amid vast roarings of a superhuman joy, he led his Fifth Symphony to its conclusion.*'

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Dmitri Shostakovich (1906 - 1975)

Symphony no. 5 in D minor, Opus 47 (1937)

Moderato

Allegretto

Largo

Allegro non troppo

The ultimate political symphony – a matter of life or death...

Until recent years the Fifth Symphony usually appeared with the subtitle 'A Soviet artist's creative reply to just criticism', with the assumption that these words were penned by the composer himself. It was only made clear in later years that these words were actually written by a reviewer following the first performance of the Symphony in Moscow in 1938. However, Shostakovich appears to have been happy to allow the words to be affixed, although his inner feelings about the subtitle were undoubtedly ambivalent, to say the least.

Shostakovich had burst onto the musical landscape of Soviet Russia with his youthful First Symphony, composed as a graduation exercise in 1925 when he was a 19-year-old student. His next two symphonies, *The First of May* and *To October* respectively, commemorated the events of 1917, and both concluded with celebratory settings of revolutionary texts. Shostakovich scored a major critical success with the 1934 premiere of his opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. He then embarked on the composition of his Fourth Symphony in 1935, basking in the triumph of his opera and enjoying the artistic experimentation that marked the early years of the Soviet Union.

In August 1934 the Union of Soviet Writers conference discussed the role of literature in the USSR. Later in the same year Sergei Prokofiev (who was just about to return to the Soviet Union) pondered the role of music in the USSR in the wake of the emerging doctrine of Socialist Realism:

The question as to what kind of music should be written at the present time is one of great concern to many Soviet composers. I have given considerable thought to the problem in the past two years and I believe that the correct solution would be the following. What is needed above all is great music, i.e., music that would correspond both in form and in content to the grandeur of the epoch. Such music would be a stimulus to our own musical development, and abroad too it would reveal our true selves. The danger of becoming provincial is unfortunately a very real one for modern Soviet composers.

At the same time in turning his attention to serious, significant music, the composer must bear in mind that in the Soviet Union music is addressed to millions of people who formerly had little or no contact with music. It is this new mass audience that the modern Soviet composer must strive to reach. I believe the type of music needed is what one might call "light-serious" or "serious" light music." It is by no means easy to find the right idiom for such music. It should be primarily melodious, and the melody should be clear and simple without however becoming repetitive or trivial. Many composers find it difficult enough to compose any sort of melody, let alone a melody having some definite function to perform. The same applies to the technique, the form – it too must be clear and simple, but not stereotyped. It is not the old simplicity that is needed but a new kind of simplicity. And this can be achieved only after the composer has mastered the art of composing serious, significant music, thereby acquiring the technique of expressing himself in simple, yet original terms.' (Izvestia, 16th November 1934).

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906 - 1975)

Symphony no. 5 in D minor, Opus 47 (1937)

The doctrine of 'Socialist Realism' as applied to music remained relatively open until matters were 'clarified' by the dramatic *Pravda* article on 28th January 1936 'Chaos instead of Music', when Shostakovich's opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* was savagely condemned, in an article allegedly penned by Stalin himself. To ensure that the message was unequivocal the article was followed up a couple of weeks later with a similar condemnation of Shostakovich's score for *The Limpid Stream*.

Surprisingly, Shostakovich's initial reaction was to continue with the composition of his Fourth Symphony and he still had hopes that this would be premiered in Leningrad at the end of the same year, 1936. We do not know what point in the score of his Fourth Symphony Shostakovich had reached when the *Pravda* article appeared; it is possible that he may well have had the whole Symphony in mind when he started work in 1935, but one cannot help wondering if the stark, bleak coda was composed in response to the savage criticism. Surely this is the most frightening conclusion of any symphony in the repertoire and it portrays the full horror of Stalin's Terror, at its height in 1936. During this time Shostakovich lived with a suitcase packed as he expected at any time to be taken away to the prison camps strewn across Russia.

The Fourth Symphony was rehearsed in late 1936 with the planned premiere set for 30th December with the Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra under the Austrian-born conductor Fritz Stiedry, who had recently premiered Shostakovich's Concerto for Piano, Trumpet and Strings with the composer as soloist. Various reasons have been given for withdrawing the Symphony shortly before the planned premiere: Shostakovich reportedly said that he wanted to re-write the Finale; there were also suggestions that the conductor and orchestra were struggling with the work. Undoubtedly, there was pressure from the local authorities who must have grown increasingly uneasy about what they were hearing during the rehearsals. Whilst there was pressure for cancellation, it was probably very wise in retrospect that the Fourth was not performed, as it would probably have been his last symphony. If Stalin had not liked *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, whatever would he have made of the cacophonous Fourth Symphony and in particular its unforgivingly dark ending? And so in 1937 Shostakovich embarked on his Fifth Symphony. And please note that he called his new symphony his 'Fifth' and merely put the Fourth Symphony aside with the plan that it would be performed at a later date, not knowing that it would wait another quarter of a century, receiving its belated Moscow premiere in December 1961 during the Khrushchev artistic thaw. Shostakovich did not make any revisions to the score that he completed in 1936.

Shostakovich knew that he now had to produce a symphony that would comply with the doctrines of 'Socialist Realism' as applied to music. The conductor Fritz Steidry left Leningrad after the cancellation of the Fourth Symphony and the young Yevgeny Mravinsky was asked to take charge of the premiere of the Fifth Symphony. His nervousness at the task is well captured in his personal account of this time, starting with his hope that the composer would be able to advise him regarding the work in question:

'However, my first meeting with Shostakovich shattered my hopes. However many questions I put to him, I didn't succeed in eliciting anything from him. In the future I encountered this reticence in regard to his other compositions. This made every meagre comment all the more valuable. In truth, the character of our perception of music differed greatly. I do not like to search for subjective, literary, and concrete images in music which is not by nature programmatic, whereas Shostakovich very often explained his intentions with very specific images and associations.'

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Symphony no. 5 in D minor, Opus 47 (1937)

But one way or another, any remark on his own compositions that you can wrest from a composer is always of enormous value to a performer. Initially I could get no information about the tempo indications in the Fifth Symphony. I then had recourse to cunning. During our work together I sat at the piano and deliberately took incorrect tempi. Dmitri Dmitriyevich got angry and stopped me, and showed me the required tempo. Soon he caught on to my tactic and started to give me some hints himself. The tempi were soon fixed with metronome markings and transferred into the score. They were reproduced in the printed edition. But now, when I check them with recordings of performances, I realize that in many cases the metronome indications in the Fifth Symphony have proved to be incorrect, and the long life of this symphony has in itself brought about essential changes to the tempi that we marked down at the time.'

These reflections on tempi markings suggest that flexibility regarding such matters remains valid and we will see later how varied this might be in practice.

There can be no doubt that Shostakovich reflected very deeply on what might constitute a Soviet symphony and was strongly aware of his need to comply with the main strictures of 'Socialist Realism' as applied to music. Shostakovich wrote himself about his Fifth Symphony: *'My latest work may be called a lyrical-heroic symphony. Its basic ideas are the sufferings of man, and optimism. I wanted to convey optimism asserting itself as a world outlook through a series of tragic conflicts in a great inner, mental struggle.*

'During a discussion at the Leningrad section of the Composers' Union, some of my colleagues called my Fifth Symphony an autobiographical work. On the whole, I consider this a fair appraisal. In my opinion, there are biographical elements in any work of art. Every work should bear the stamp of a living person, its author, and it is a poor and tedious work whose creator is invisible.' (*Literaturnaya Gazeta*, 12th January 1938).

Later in the same year he wrote about his initial struggles when working with the conductor Mravinsky in preparation for the first performance and his account does tie in with Mravinsky's reflections quoted earlier. Shostakovich appreciated the conductor's almost pedantic approach in the end, saying *'thanks to his extreme thoroughness, Yevgeny Mravinsky presented my Fifth Symphony precisely as I wanted. I am very grateful to him for this.'*

Shostakovich remained highly anxious right up until the first performance of the Fifth in Leningrad on 21st November 1937 and a second performance at a special meeting of Communist Party activists. Fortunately for Shostakovich the Symphony was a great public success in Leningrad with over 45 minutes of loud applause at the end and critics were similarly positive in their response. And so, this meant successful rehabilitation for the composer.

Thus the story remained the same for the next 40 years, as witnessed by the Hugh Ottoway's *BBC Music Guide to the Shostakovich Symphonies* published in 1978. Views about the Fifth Symphony changed dramatically with the publication of Solomon Volkov's *Testimony* in 1979. The authenticity of these alleged memoirs has long been contested and there is no doubt that the methodology for much of Volkov's work is dubious. However, people who were close to Shostakovich, including his great friend the cellist Mstislav Rostropovich, have vouched for the truth behind many of the views expressed.

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906 - 1975)

Symphony no. 5 in D minor, Opus 47 (1937)

According to Solomon Volkov's *Testimony* Shostakovich reportedly said:

'I discovered to my astonishment that the man who considers himself its greatest interpreter [Mravinsky] does not understand my music. He says that I wanted to write exultant finales for my Fifth and Seventh Symphonies but I couldn't manage it. It never occurred to this man that I never thought about any exultant finales, for what exultation could there be? I think that it is clear to everyone what happens in the Fifth. The rejoicing is forced, created under threat, as in [Mussorgsky's] Boris Godunov. It's as if someone were beating you with a stick and saying, "Your business is rejoicing, your business is rejoicing," and you rise, shaky, and go marching off, muttering, "Our business is rejoicing, our business is rejoicing." What kind of apotheosis is that? You have to be a complete oaf not to hear that.'

Since then further hidden codes within the Fifth have been uncovered. David Rabinovich in his biography *Shostakovich, Composer*, pointed out the relevance of Shostakovich's only other serious composition of 1937, the *Four Pushkin Romances*, Opus 46. The first song, *Rebirth*, is quoted directly in the central quiet passage of the Fifth's Finale, with the lilting accompaniment in high strings referring to the final quatrain:

*Thus delusions fall off
My tormented soul
And it reveals to me visions
Of my former pure days.*

This perhaps suggests the composer's hope that one day the true message of the Fifth would be appreciated and show that Shostakovich had not betrayed his basic ideals.

The musicologist Gerard McBurney also pointed out in a talk on BBC Radio 3 in January 1993 that the march theme in the Finale is derived from the quatrain:

*A barbarian painter with his somnolent brush
Blackens the genius' painting,
Slapping over it senselessly
His own lawless picture.*

Following Stalin's savage *Pravda* condemnation, we do not need to think too hard about the identity of the 'barbarian painter' who besmirched his work. More recently Stephen Johnson spoke on Radio 3's *Discovering Music* about his realization that the duet between flute and horn over gently pulsing strings in the closing stages of the first movement echoes the *Habanera* from Act One of Bizet's *Carmen*. This is when Carmen sings of love as a rebellious bird who will not be tamed. Shostakovich may have been thinking about an unrequited love affair at the time or he may be referring to the final victory of love over oppression. Undoubtedly, more codes in the Fifth will be revealed in the coming years but it is hard to think that we will ever fully understand all the cryptic references in his music which increased with the passage of time, culminating with his enigmatic Fifteenth Symphony in 1971.

From its earliest years, however, the Fifth was admired purely as a musical masterpiece and, whilst we might be horrified by the condemnation that Shostakovich experienced in 1936, there is no doubt that this did result in a thorough personal reflection on the future direction of the Symphony in Shostakovich's oeuvre. It is difficult to think how he might have progressed following the Fourth Symphony without this period of enforced reflection and we can be reasonably sure that the subsequent 'simplification' of his musical language helped ensure his enduring popularity.

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906 - 1975)

Symphony no. 5 in D minor, Opus 47 (1937)

We can marvel at the purely musical mastery in the Fifth, how tender musical themes presented at the start of the first movement are transformed into brutal marches in the central development. His use of the orchestra remains distinctive, the brutality of the central section emphasized by the use of low braying horns, playing well out of their comfort zone.

Shostakovich's admiration for Mahler is strikingly evident throughout the Fifth, and no more so than in the second movement with its echoes of similar dances that are such a distinctive part of the Mahlerian sound-world.

Any suggestions of irony or ambivalent emotions are completely absent when we reach the third movement *Largo*, the heart of the Fifth, its tragic lament in the key of F sharp minor. It is fully understandable why many present at the work's premiere in November 1937 wept openly when hearing this music. Shostakovich showed himself to be truly in tune with the feelings of the people who had all been affected by anxiety, fear and loss during the Great Terror.

The coarse interruption of the Finale completely shatters the mood of the preceding *Largo*, but prepares the way well for the conclusion of this dramatic Symphony; it starts with excitement and brutal energy, before giving way to the central reflective section that culminates in the aforementioned Pushkin quotation. And so to the ending. Volkov has already quoted Shostakovich allegedly referring to the forced celebration at the coronation scene in Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*. But there is a Russian tradition of ambivalent endings and most markedly so with Tchaikovsky: Tchaikovsky's explanation (in a letter to Nadezhda von Meck) of his Fourth Symphony's finale is strangely apt for Shostakovich:

'The fourth movement. If within yourself you find no reasons for joy, look at others. Go among the people. Observe how they can enjoy themselves. Surrendering themselves wholeheartedly to joyful feelings. A picture of festive merriment of the people... O, how they are enjoying themselves, how happy they are that all their feelings are simple and direct!... Rejoice in others' rejoicing. To live is still possible.'

(letter to Nadezhda von Meck, 1877, as quoted in David Brown's *Tchaikovsky, Volume II: The Crisis Years*). And one cannot help hearing that the Finale of Tchaikovsky's Fifth sounds similarly forced in tone, Tchaikovsky himself expressing his dissatisfaction with it on several occasions afterwards because of its questionable authenticity.

Shostakovich's Fifth culminates with a combination of woodwind and strings playing the dominant note A no less than 252 times. After 1979, the interpretation of these repeated notes has changed dramatically. Rostropovich slowed down markedly with subsequent performances: his 2002 recording of the Finale with the LSO taking 2½ minutes longer than Mravinsky's 1975 performance, the extra time largely as a result of Rostropovich's interpretation of these final bars. This reflects his view that *'the strident repeated notes at the end of the symphony are like the stabbing strokes of a spear thrust into the wounds of a tormented man'*.

Alternatively, we might also hear echoes of the closing bars of Mahler's Third Symphony with the same slow thumping out of the tonic-dominant D and A on timpani taking us to the conclusion. Perhaps this too reflects Shostakovich's hope for the ultimate victory of love, with its memories of Mahler's depiction of 'What Love Tells Me'. It will always be very difficult to separate this great Symphony from its political associations, but its triumph of personal survival in challenging circumstances will surely continue to resonate.

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Michael Sanderling conductor

Michael Sanderling, one of the most distinguished conductors of our time, has been the Principal Conductor of the Dresden Philharmonic since 2011.

The high point of the season was, when in April 2017 the Dresden Philharmonic moved into the newly renovated concert hall at the Kulturpalast. The inaugural performance marking the re-opening of the venue was conducted by Michael Sanderling and featured songs of Franz Schubert (soloist Matthias Goerne), Julia Fischer performing as soloist in the Johannes Brahms Violin Concerto, and the iconic finale, "Ode to Joy," from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

Besides this position, he is guest conductor of renowned orchestras such as the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, the Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich, the Munich Philharmonic, the Konzerthausorchester Berlin, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, the Tchaikovsky Symphony Orchestra of Moscow, the Czech Philharmonic, the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra and the German Radio Symphony Orchestras of WDR and SWR.

With the Dresden Philharmonic, Michael Sanderling regularly undertakes concert tours in Asia, South America, the U.S.A., Spain, the United Kingdom, Austria, Switzerland and Germany.

In cooperation with SONY Classical, since 2015 a series of recordings of all the symphonies by Ludwig van Beethoven and Dmitri Shostakovich is being made under Michael Sanderling's leadership. As of now, the first three CDs of the series have been released, marking a new chapter in the discography of the Dresden Philharmonic.

Born in Berlin, Michael Sanderling is one of the few people who, after playing in an orchestra, has been able to achieve a highly successful career as conductor. In 1987, at the age of 20, he became solo cellist of the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig under Kurt Masur and, from 1994 to 2006, he held the same position in the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra. As soloist, he gave guest performances with ensembles including the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Orchestre de Paris. As a cellist however, he stopped performing a long time ago.

Michael Sanderling first graced the conductor's stand at a concert of the Kammerorchester Berlin in 2000 – and caught fire. Having been familiar with the art of conducting from a young age, as son of the legendary Kurt Sanderling, Michael Sanderling took on more and more conducting roles, and was named the Principal Conductor and Artistic Director of the Kammerakademie Potsdam in 2006.

As an opera conductor, he enjoyed success with Philip Glass' *The Fall of the House of Usher* in Potsdam, and with a new production of Sergei Prokofiev's *War and Peace* at the Cologne Opera. As cellist and conductor, he recorded important works by Dvorak, Schumann, Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Tchaikovsky and many others.

One of Michael Sanderling's passions is working with young musicians. He teaches at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Frankfurt/Main and regularly works with the Bundesjugendorchester (National Youth Orchestra of Germany), the Young Philharmonic Orchestra Jerusalem Weimar, the Junge Deutsche Philharmonie and the Schleswig-Holstein-Festivalorchester. From 2003 to 2013, he was the Principal Conductor for the Deutsche Streicherphilharmonie.

His musical horizons encompass works by Bach and Handel, to Beethoven and Shostakovich, to world premieres, of which he has conducted many.

The Dresden Philharmonic

The Dresden Philharmonic can look back on a 150-year-tradition as the orchestra of Saxony's capital Dresden. Ever since 1870, when Dresden was provided with its first large concert hall, its symphony concerts have been an integral element of the city's cultural life. The Dresden Philharmonic has remained a concert orchestra to this day, with regular excursions into concert performance and oratorio. Its homestead is the state-of-the-art concert hall inaugurated in April 2017 in the Kulturpalast building at the heart of the historic district. The principal conductor of the Dresden Philharmonic since 2011 is Michael Sanderling. Besides Kurt Masur, principal conductor in the years 1967–1972, his predecessors have also included Paul van Kempen, Carl Schuricht, Heinz Bongartz, Herbert Kegel, Marek Janowski and Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, amongst others.

The musical and stylistic bandwidth of the Dresden Philharmonic is great. On the one side, the orchestra has managed to preserve its very own "Dresden sound" in the romantic repertoire. And on the other, it has developed a tonal and stylistic flexibility for the music of the Baroque and First Viennese School as much as for modern works. Important composers have also taken to its conductor's desk from early on, from Brahms, Tchaikovsky and Dvořák via Strauss through to Penderecki and Holliger.

World premieres continue to play an important part in the programme to this day. Guest performances around the world attest to the high esteem enjoyed by the Dresden Philharmonic in the world of classical music. And the Philharmonic's discography to have accumulated since 1937 is also impressive. A new CD cycle directed by Michael Sanderling and released by the Sony Classical label creates a dialogue between the symphonies of Dmitri Shostakovich and Beethoven.



Dresden Philharmonic Players

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Deborah Jungnickel
Xianbo Wen
Annekathrin Rammelt
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Forthcoming Concerts



PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA
Wednesday 23 May, 7.45pm

Mendelssohn Symphony no. 4
Italian
Brahms Symphony no. 2

Daniele Gatti



WÜRTH PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA
Tuesday 5 June, 7.45pm

***Strauss II** Overture:
Die Fledermaus
***Bruch** Violin Concerto no. 1
***Saint-Saëns** Introduction and
rondo capriccioso
Shostakovich Symphony no.10

Maxim Vengerov violin/conductor
Stamatia Karampini*



SUPERSIZE POLYPHONY 360
Saturday 7 July, 7.30pm

**Armonico Consort & The Choir of
Gonville and Caius College,
Cambridge**

Christopher Monks director

Programme includes

Tallis *Spem in Alium*
Striggio *Ecce Beatam Lucem*
(40 part motet)



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Forthcoming Concerts



RUSSIAN STATE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Tuesday 2 October, 7.45pm

Tchaikovsky Suite: Swan Lake
Prokofiev Violin Concerto no. 1
Rachmaninov Symphony no. 2

Chloë Hanslip violin
Vasily Petrenko



LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Wednesday 17 October, 7.45pm

Glinka Overture: Ruslan and
Ludmilla
Rachmaninov Piano Concerto no. 2
Dvořák Symphony no. 8

Benjamin Grosvenor piano
Alondra de la Parra



VIENNA TONKÜNSTLER ORCHESTRA Thursday 1 November, 7.45pm

Bernstein Overture: On the Town
Beethoven Piano Concerto no. 5
Sibelius Symphony no. 5

Angela Hewitt piano
Yutaka Sado

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