



PROKOFIEV:

Opus 125 för Cello and Orchestra

SINFONIA CONCERTANTE

Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra
Kurt Sänderling, Conductor

Mstislav

ROSTROPOVICH

Soloist

SHOSTAKOVICH:

CONCERTINO

FOR TWO PIANOS, Opus 94

Maxim and Dmitri

Shostakovich, Pianists

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ROSTROPOVICH, Cello • Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra, Sanderling, Conductor

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MAXIM and DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH, Pianists

Rostropovich and Prokofiev



PROKOFIEV: SINFONIA CONCERTANTE

DURING the early part of January 1952, the press in Moscow announced the completion of the *Concerto No. 2 for Cello and Orchestra* by Prokofiev. The new Concerto was dedicated to Rostropovich who lived as Prokofiev's house guest at Nikoloini Gore and took part in the editing of the cello part and the preparation of the score along the lines indicated by the composer. The friendship of the composer and the cellist, according to the press "helped more fully to bring out the rich melodic and technical possibilities of the instrument". (*Soviet Art*, January 12, 1952). On February 18, 1952, Rostropovich gave the first performance with the Moscow Youth Orchestra conducted by Sviatoslav Richter, the great Soviet pianist, appearing on the conductor's podium for the first time.

The Concerto was received coldly notwithstanding its basically lyric nature. Some close friends of the composer suggested a few simplifications in orchestration and improvement in form. During 1952 Prokofiev continued to improve the Cello Concerto; in its final form it received the new designation *Sinfonia Concertante* — the composer probably having in mind the importance of the complex orchestral parts. The work uses, partially and in a distinctly changed form, some of the musical ideas of the *First Cello Concerto* composed during the years 1934—38.

The *Sinfonia Concertante* is scored for two each of the woodwinds, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, percussion, celeste and the usual strings. The playing time is almost 38 minutes.

The first movement of the Concerto discloses the kinship of the lyric introduction to the cyclical idea of the work. Both themes of this movement are typical of the melodic, meditative lyricism of the late composer. The first theme is rather energetic and elevated, the second is expressive, sublimely, tenderly impetuous, reminiscent of one of the "leitmotifs" in the ballet score *Cinderella*.

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Side One

PROKOFIEV

Sinfonia Concertante, Op. 125 for Cello and Orchestra

First Movement: *Andante*

Second Movement: *Allegro giusto*

Side Two

Third Movement: *Andante con moto*

Mstislav Rostropovich, Cello

Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra

Kurt Sanderling, Conductor

SHOSTAKOVICH

Concertino, Op. 94 for Two Pianos

Maxim and Dmitri Shostakovich, Pianists

The second movement occupies the main place in the cycle and the fundamental ideas of the Concerto are concentrated in it. The cello has an introductory cadenza after which the main theme, energetic and dramatic, appears. The connecting parts are sharply contrasted so that the epic tone changes to a comical sharply-witted half-fantastic dance; in this grotesque piquancy the long-familiar patterns of Prokofiev's style are resurrected. But the aspiration to achieve a beautiful singing line is heard in the orchestra: a theme in E major unfolds — one hears heroic freedom, passionate love for life and ecstatic melodic singing. It is difficult to find in all of Prokofiev's heritage a melody of such extraordinary breadth and emotional power.

The form of the Finale is interesting: it is a sort of double variations arranged in three-part successions. The first theme sounds like a slow instrumental melody. But further on, the composer, not satisfied with strict ornamentation or timbre variations changes this quiet song-melody into a play-dance with amusing accents and sharply-humorous orchestration. The second theme of the Finale uses the well-known Byelorussian song (freely translated) "Good-bye" (*budte zdarove*). But in the process of working out the variations the composer molds the simple melody with light irony.

The first American performance of the *Sinfonia Concertante* was on April 19, 1956 when Rostropovich played the work with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, Dimitri Mitropoulos conducting. The first performance in Moscow of the revised Concerto took place in January, 1957 with the same cellist and Kurt Sanderling conducting. As David Oistrakh has made the Shostakovich Violin Concerto his vehicle (see *Monitor MC 2014*) so Rostropovich has become indelibly associated with the *Sinfonia Concertante* which he now performs constantly on his frequent tours throughout the world.

Note: The above material was translated, in part, from the Russian biography of Prokofiev by I. Nestiev published by the State Music Publishers, Moscow, 1957.

Maxim and Dmitri Shostakovich



SHOSTAKOVICH: CONCERTINO FOR TWO PIANOS

THE *Concertino* is an original work for two pianos. It was composed in 1954 soon after the completion of the *Tenth Symphony*, Op. 93 and the *String Quartet No. 5*, Op. 92. The *Concertino* was specially written for the composer's son Maxim (born in 1938) who played the work with another student, Alla Maloletkova, at a concert January 20, 1955 in the Small Hall of the Moscow Conservatory. Both students were pupils in a special concert devoted to works of Shostakovich. It is interesting to note that the other works on the program were the cycle of songs entitled *From Jewish Folk Poetry* (see *Monitor MC 2020*) and the *Piano Quintet* with the composer at the piano.

The *Concertino* is a one movement work which opens with a brief but serious *Adagio* which soon passes into a somewhat frisky, rompy *Allegretto* taken at a nice clip by father and son. The first piano has most of the brilliant upper register passages and, in this connection, it is worth noting that it is the son who plays the first piano part assigned to him by his modest (or proud?) father. The *Adagio* re-appears briefly again, then the same *Allegretto* material leads to an even briefer *Adagio* and the terse *Allegro* coda.

Apparently encouraged by his son's successful piano studies, Shostakovich composed a piano concerto for him. This work, too, was premiered by Maxim on May 10, 1957 and was subsequently played by Leonard Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic Orchestra.

The playing time of the *Concertino* is 8 minutes and it is published by Leeds Music Corporation, New York.

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