

# Vissarion SHEBALIN

## ORCHESTRAL MUSIC, VOLUME TWO

SUITE NO. 3, OP. 61  
SUITE NO. 4, OP. 62  
BALLET SUITE

Siberian Symphony Orchestra  
Dmitry Vasiliev

# VISSARION SHEBALIN: ORCHESTRAL MUSIC, VOLUME TWO

by Paul Conway

Vissarion Shebalin was one of the foremost composers and teachers in the Soviet Union. Dmitri Shostakovich held him in the highest esteem, keeping a portrait of his slightly older friend and colleague hanging on his wall and writing this heartfelt obituary: 'Shebalin was an outstanding man. His kindness, honesty and absolute adherence to principle always amazed me. His enormous talent and great mastery immediately earned him burning love and authority with friends and the musical community'.<sup>1</sup> Recent recordings have rekindled interest in the works of this key figure in mid-twentieth-century Soviet music.

Vissarion Yakovlevich Shebalin was born in Omsk, the capital of Siberia, on 11 June 1902. His parents, both teachers, were utterly devoted to music. When he was eight years old, he began to learn the piano. By the age of ten he was a student in the piano class of the Omsk Division of the Russian Musical Society. Here, he developed a love of composition. In 1919 he completed his studies at middle school and entered the Institute of Agriculture – the only local university at that time. When a music college opened in Omsk in 1921, Shebalin joined immediately, studying theory and composition with Mikhail Nevitov, a former pupil of Reinhold Glière. In 1923 he was accepted into Nikolai Myaskovsky's composition class at the Moscow Conservatoire. His first pieces, consisting of some romances and a string quartet, received favourable reviews in the press. Weekly evening concerts organised by the Association of Contemporary Music introduced him to the music of Bartók, Hindemith, Prokofiev, Schoenberg, Stravinsky and Webern. In 1928, Shebalin

<sup>1</sup> 'To the Memory of a Friend', in Valeria Razheva (ed.), *Shebalin: Life and Creativity*, Molodaya Gvardiya, Moscow, 2003, pp. 238–39.

graduated and started teaching at the Moscow Conservatoire, where he was made a professor in 1935 and, from 1940 to 1941, head of the faculty of composition. He then served as director from 1942 until 1948. By this time he had garnered several honours, including a doctorate in arts in 1941 and two Stalin prizes – for his Fifth String Quartet in 1943 and the oratorio-cantata *Moscow* in 1947.

Disaster struck in 1948, when he was dismissed from the Conservatoire in the wake of the First Congress of Composers in Moscow of that year. At that infamous gathering, Shebalin was accused of being a principal leader of the ‘formalist’ trend in music. He was demoted to a subordinate job, teaching theory at a bandmasters’ school, but he was reinstated as professor of composition at the Conservatoire in 1951. On 14 September 1953 Shebalin suffered the first in a series of strokes which left him partly paralysed on the right side; he nevertheless continued to teach and to compose. He learned to write with his left hand and, with the help of his devoted wife, Alisa Maximovna Shebalina, kept a journal of his activities. He died in Moscow on 29 May 1963.

In addition to being an erudite musician and a technically gifted composer, he was also an outstanding teacher. Gerard McBurney has credited him with inspiring ‘the highest standards both of craftsmanship and artistic aspiration’<sup>2</sup> in his students, among whom may be numbered Edison Denisov, Sofia Gubaidulina, Nikolai Karetnikov, Karen Khachaturian, Tichon Khrennikov, Boris Tchaikovsky and Veljo Tormis. He carried out conscientious editorial work, rooting out and completing Glinka’s *Overture-Symphony on Russian Themes* in 1937. He also produced what is arguably the finest incarnation of Mussorgsky’s unfinished opera *Sorochyntsi Fair* (1931–32), superseding previous attempts by Anatoly Lyadov, César Cui, Yuri Sakhnovsky and Nikolai Tcherepnin.

At the core of Shebalin’s output lies his series of five symphonies (1925–62) and nine string quartets (1923–63), of which the Fifth (*Slavonic*, Op. 33) became the best known. He wrote a concertino for violin and strings (1933) and a horn concertino (1933, revised in 1958) – together, they form his Op. 14 – but his major work for soloist and orchestra is the Violin Concerto, Op. 21, of 1936–40 (it was revised in 1959). Other orchestral

<sup>2</sup> Gerard McBurney, ‘The Music of Roman Ledenev’, *Tempo*, No. 177 (June 1991), p. 24.

pieces include the *Overture on Mari Themes*, Op. 25 (1936), and the *Variations on the Russian Folktune 'Oh, You My Field'*, Op. 30 (1939–40). Among his works for the stage are the musical comedy *The Bridegroom from the Embassy* (1941–42) and the ballet *The Lark*, Op. 37 (1943). His songs are distinguished by his sensitivity to well-chosen texts. He also wrote a good deal of music for choirs, both a *cappella*<sup>3</sup> and accompanied, as well as making choral arrangements of Russian folksongs. His *magnum opus* is the opera *The Taming of the Shrew*, Op. 46 (1946–56), which was staged at the Bolshoi Theatre in 1957 and acclaimed as a masterpiece.

Shebalin was by nature more lyric than epic and chamber-instrumental music forms a notable part of his output. His chamber works include a string trio, Op. 4 (1924, rev. 1934), and a piano trio, Op. 39 (1947), and there are sonatas for violin and viola, Op. 35 (1940–44), violin and piano, Op. 51, No. 1 (1957–58), viola and piano, Op. 51, No. 2 (1957–58), and cello and piano, Op. 51, No. 3 (1960).<sup>4</sup> His music for solo piano comprises a sonata, Op. 10 (1926, rev. 1963), and three sonatinas, Op. 12 (1929), and he also wrote a number of works for solo guitar, including some preludes (1951 and 1954) and a sonatina, Op. 60 (1963).

The first two Orchestral Suites (Opp. 18 and 22, respectively) were originally written in the mid-1930s, though Shebalin made new editions of both of them in 1962.<sup>5</sup> The Third and Fourth Suites date from 1963, the year of the composer's death. There is a consistency of approach and style in all four Suites; each of them demonstrates Shebalin's mastery of orchestration and melody, as well as his unflinching ability to suggest time, place and character within the context of a brief musical vignette.

<sup>3</sup> His complete *a cappella* choral cycles are featured on Toccata Classics TOCC 0112, sung by the Russkaya Conservatoria Capella conducted by Nikolay Khondzinsky.

<sup>4</sup> The Sonata for Violin and Piano in A major, Op. 51, No. 1, appears on TOCC 0327, which also contains the following works allocated no opus numbers: Suite for Solo Violin (1933), Four Pieces for violin and piano (1936, 1946), *Orientalia* suite for violin and piano (1946), *Four Light Pieces* for violin and piano (1946) and the *Concert Piece* for violin and piano (1952).

<sup>5</sup> Shebalin's First and Second Orchestral Suites can be heard on TOCC 0136, played by the Siberian Symphony Orchestra conducted by Dmitry Vasiliev.

### Orchestral Suite No. 3, Op. 61 (1935, arr. 1963)

Shebalin's Third Orchestral Suite (1963) was arranged by Leonid Feigin<sup>6</sup> at the request of the composer from incidental music written for a 1935 radio production conceived by the great theatre director Vsevolod Meyerhold<sup>7</sup> of the poetic drama, *The Stone Guest* by Alexander Pushkin, based on the Spanish legend of Don Juan. Meyerhold had studied music in his youth and at one time considered a musical career before choosing the theatre. He once said, 'I consider my musical education the basis of my work as a director.'<sup>8</sup> Fully aware of the important contribution of music to theatre productions, he has been quoted as exclaiming, 'What is music? A fistful of notes, thrown by the hand of a genius onto five staff-lines, onto five of the most ordinary lines, which can set in motion an avalanche of imagination and feelings.'<sup>9</sup>

According to the Shebalin scholar Inna Rud, the aural images of Meyerhold's radio production of *The Stone Guest* were so impressive that they 'evoked visual representations and gave the feeling of a fully fledged theatre performance.'<sup>10</sup> Meyerhold conceived the production in a romantic way, with Shebalin's music built organically into the play, so that it provided extra layers of meaning, began and completed the dramatic scenes, and energised the action or, conversely, slowed down the internal rhythm. The solemn aspects of the play with the mediaeval monastery and the renunciation of all worldly things, expressed in the form of solemn, gloomy chorales, was contrasted by themes of love, earthly pleasures and a thirst for the fullness and happiness of life. Laura's songs, including 'I am there, Inesiglia', which was later included in Shebalin's song-cycle

<sup>6</sup> Born in Bobruisk (now Belarus), Leonid Feigin (1923–2009) was a Soviet composer, arranger and violinist. A student of Shebalin and Myaskovsky, he joined the Union of Soviet Composers in 1953. His works include three symphonies, several operas and ballets, four quartets and assorted vocal and instrumental music. He was a prolific arranger, creating new instrumentation for works such as Mozart's Requiem, Verdi's opera *The Battle of Legnano* and *Don Quixote* by Ludwig Minkus.

<sup>7</sup> Meyerhold was executed by firing squad on 3 February 1940, having been arrested and tortured by the Soviet authorities, who forced him into a false confession that he was a spy for the British and Japanese.

<sup>8</sup> Harlow Robinson, 'Love for Three Operas: The Collaboration of Vsevolod Meyerhold and Sergei Prokofiev', *The Russian Review*, Vol. 45, No. 3 (July 1986), p. 287.

<sup>9</sup> Alma H. Law, 'Meyerhold Speaks...', *Performing Arts Journal*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (Winter 1979), p. 70.

<sup>10</sup> Inna Rud, 'Shebalin's Work in Theatre and Cinema', in *In Memory of Vissarion Yakovlevich Shebalin: Memoirs, Materials*, compiled by Alisa Shebalina, ed. Marina Sabinina, Soviet Composer, Moscow, 1984, pp. 151–62.

12 Poems by Alexander Pushkin, Op. 23, were written with a subtle insight into the spirit of Pushkin's poetry and the intonations of Spanish music. In Inna Rud's opinion, 'The melodic freshness, the peculiarity of the harmonies and rhythms [of Shebalin's music] gives them an aesthetic value independent of the radio performance.'<sup>11</sup> The premiere of *The Stone Guest*, with music by Shebalin, took place on 17 April 1935 as a concert performance at the Radio Theatre, Moscow, with many invited guests, including Sergei Prokofiev and the novelist Yuri Olesha. A further concert performance took place on 10 February 1937 at the Meyerhold State Theatre (GosTIM), Moscow (now the Tchaikovsky Concert Hall).

Shebalin had already collaborated with Meyerhold on several previous theatre productions at GosTIM, including Ilya Selvinsky's *The Second Commander* (24 July 1929), Vsevolod Vishnevsky's *The Last Flight* (7 February 1931), Y. P. German's *Prelude (Professor Kelberg)* (28 January 1933) and Alexander Dumas' *The Lady of the Camellias* (19 March 1934). By the time of the Dumas production, Shebalin had become 'Meyerhold's favourite music collaborator'<sup>12</sup> and, after *The Stone Guest*, the two men would work together on one more radio production, of Pushkin's *Rusalka* (24 March 1937).

*The Stone Guest*, last and longest of the 'Little Tragedies' that Pushkin wrote in 1830, was never published during his lifetime. The title is not a reference to Pushkin's two most famous precursors, Molière's *Don Juan, or The Feast of Stone* (1655) and Mozart's and Lorenzo da Ponte's opera *Don Giovanni* (1787), but is taken from the second half of the title of the original work in the tradition, Tirso de Molina's *The Libertine of Seville and the Stone Guest* (1630).

In Pushkin's version of the story, the poet and seducer Don Juan has unlawfully returned to Madrid from exile for having murdered Commander de Solva. Don Juan seduces the Commander's widow, Doña Ana, when she visits the grave of her late husband. Doña Ana agrees to an assignation at her house, and Don Juan arrogantly

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Robert Leach, *Vsevolod Meyerhold (Directors in Perspective, ed. Christopher Innes)*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989, p. 163.



*At the radio premiere of The Stone Guest on 17 April 1935:  
front row, left to right – the pianist and conductor Elena Senkevich,  
Shebalin, Meyerhold and Prokofiev  
standing – Yuri Olesha (far left), Zinaida Raikh (Meyerhold's wife)  
and the actor Mikhail Tsarev (behind Meyerhold)*

invites the statue of her Commander to stand watch during this tryst. The statue comes to life and offers a hand to Don Juan, which he takes, and they both descend through the floor as Don Juan dies with the name of Doña Ana on his lips. Pushkin rarely referred to music and yet Scene Two of *The Stone Guest* contains one of his most moving musical references: 'Of the enjoyments of life/Music yields to love alone/but love itself is melody'.<sup>13</sup>

Leonid Feigin's 1963 arrangement of Shebalin's music for *The Stone Guest* requires substantial forces, consisting of three flutes (third doubling piccolo), two oboes, cor anglais, three clarinets (third doubling bass clarinet), two bassoons (second doubling contrabassoon), four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, triangle, castanets, tenor drum, side drum, cymbals, bass drum, tam-tam, glockenspiel, tubular bells, celesta, harp and strings. This large orchestra is used sparingly, with tuttis reserved for grand gestures; the more intimate numbers are often scored for smaller ensembles, such as wind soloists and strings.

The Introduction [1] begins with a slow section featuring atmospheric chords for winds and strings, punctuated by glockenspiel taps. In the ensuing lively main section, triple-time Spanish rhythms underpin a series of tuneful solos, the most substantial of which is reserved for violin. In the closing bars of the Introduction, the baleful chords of the opening section return, casting a shadow over the dance. 'Laura's Dance' [2] maintains the exotic, Hispanic flavour, with crisply accented rhythms accompanying a sinuous theme for clarinets. Marked 'slow and languid', the Habanera [3] has a sultry intensity, thanks to its swooning violin melody. The Intermezzo [4] is a brief but delightful dance movement. The following bipartite number begins [5] with a scene in which a gentle, lilting oboe tune is taken up by strings; there is an increase in tempo for the elegant Serenade, which follows without a break. 'Chant in the Convent' [6] begins innocently, with chaste woodwind, but continues with darker hues on lower strings and solo trombone. The woodwinds return, but the ominous air remains with sustained string chords and chimes. The Fast Dance [7] is another Spanish-flavoured number, replete

<sup>13</sup> Quoted by Gerald Seaman in his article 'Pushkin and Music: A Poet's Echoes', *The Musical Times*, Vol. 140, No. 1886 (Spring 1999), p. 32.



with castanets. The Finale [8] returns to the ominous brass calls of the Introduction as the ‘Stone Guest’ draws nearer. A huge crescendo leads to a terrifying climax as Don Juan meets his fate and the Suite ends with a final dramatic flourish.

### **Orchestral Suite No. 4, Op. 62 (1958, arr. 1986)**

Shebalin’s Fourth Orchestral Suite began life in 1958 as the incidental music for a production of Oscar Wilde’s *Lady Windermere’s Fan* at the Maly (‘Little’) Theatre in Moscow. The premiere took place on 18 February 1959 under the direction of Viktor Komissarzhevskiy. It was Shebalin’s last work for the theatre. His music for this production was arranged in a concert version by Vladislav Agafonnikov<sup>14</sup> in 1986. According to Inna Rud,

Vissarion Shebalin’s view on music for theatre as a distinct genre that does not tolerate flat illustration, designed to convey to the viewer the inner meaning of the events on the stage, perhaps achieved its most complete expression in his last theatrical work, the colourfully scored music to Oscar Wilde’s play, *Lady Windermere’s Fan*.<sup>15</sup>

The plot involves Lady Windermere’s suspicions that her husband might be having an affair with another woman. She confronts her husband with these rumours but, although he denies it, he invites the other woman, Mrs Erlynne, to his wife’s birthday ball. Angered by her husband’s unfaithfulness, Lady Windermere leaves her husband for another lover. After discovering what has happened, Mrs Erlynne tracks down Lady Windermere and tries to persuade her to return to her husband. In the course of this undertaking, Mrs Erlynne is found in a compromising position. It is then revealed that

<sup>14</sup> Vladislav Agafonnikov was born in 1936 in Podolsk, near Moscow, into a family of musicians. He became a member of the celebrated boys’ choir of the Moscow Choral School and entered the Moscow Conservatoire in 1954, where he studied composition with Shebalin. He has composed for many genres, including opera and ballet, orchestral music, including a symphony (1976) and choral music. He has also written chamber music and songs, and his instrumental catalogue contains a piano sonata (1958).

The Orchestral Suite No. 4, Op. 62 (1963), is listed in the catalogue of Shebalin’s music produced by his publisher, Le Chant du Monde, as being an arrangement by Leonid Feigin of numbers from Shebalin’s music to Wilde’s *Lady Windermere’s Fan*; an 1986 arrangement of music from the same source by Vladislav Agafonnikov follows it in the catalogue, appearing to be an alternative version. At the time of writing, there seems to be no evidence that the Feigin version was ever completed, so that the arrangement of the Fourth Suite by Agafonnikov featured on this recording can be regarded as the ‘official’ version of this Suite.

<sup>15</sup> ‘Shebalin’s Work in Theatre and Cinema’, *loc. cit.*

Mrs Erlynnne is Lady Windermere's mother, who had abandoned her as a child. Mrs Erlynnne sacrifices her reputation to save her daughter's marriage.

The orchestral forces for Shebalin's Fourth Suite are much smaller than those required for the Third, and comprise one each of flute and oboe, two clarinets, one bassoon, two horns, two trumpets, trombone, tuba, timpani, triangle, side drum, cymbals, glockenspiel, harp, piano and strings. This reduced orchestration is appropriate for the intimacy of the story and also provides many solo opportunities for various instruments throughout the piece.

The charming Introduction [9] sets the tone of the Suite, with sparkling glockenspiel accompanying the bright-eyed main theme given out on clarinet, oboe and strings in turn. Having whetted the listener's appetite, this prefatory movement swiftly draws to a close. In 'Arrival of the Guests' [10], Shebalin uses a minuet to suggest grandeur and excessive formality. If parallels with the celebrated 'Montagues and Capulets' from Prokofiev's 1935 *Romeo and Juliet* ballet music suggest themselves, that is perhaps because Shebalin's number is fulfilling a similar function in creating vividly a sense of ritual and splendour. The following Waltz [11] is conceived on a similarly grand scale, but this time the medium is used as a vehicle for unabashed, passionate intensity as the main theme, presented by soaring strings, conveys considerable depth of feeling. After these grandiose gestures, 'Erlynnne's Wait' [12] offers a very different kind of music in triple time – a personal and intimate waltz. The 'Dance of the Dolls' [13] is graced by one of its composer's most haunting ideas, Tchaikovskian in its emotional sincerity and natural fluency. The 'Farewell Waltz' [14] makes a satisfying conclusion to a Suite which one might almost describe as the apotheosis of the waltz, so varied and far-reaching is Shebalin's use of the form.

### ***Ballet Suite (1958)***

In the summer of 1958, in the Nikolina Gora district of Moscow, Shebalin was working on a ballet entitled *In the Name of Life* (he first called it *Festival*). The music of Act One and the Prologue was completed, but the rest exists only in sketch form, and the work was left incomplete at Shebalin's death in 1963; Leonid Feigin accordingly arranged the



*Leonid Feigin*



*Vladislav Agafonnikov*

Photograph: D. Rilov

existing music to form the *Ballet Suite*, published in 1973. It is scored for two flutes, piccolo, two oboes, cor anglais, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, tenor drum, side drum, bass drum, cymbals, tubular bells, xylophone, celesta, harp and strings.

The opening number [15] begins with an imposing Introduction with a commanding tune incorporating brass fanfares; the succeeding Waltz is a droll affair with deft harmonic shifts in its blithely unfolding melodic line. This substantial, two-part curtain-raiser merits, and receives, an impressive closing flourish. The following Nocturne [16] begins serenely, scored for only harp and strings. Gradually woodwinds and horn join

in and then the full orchestra generates a powerful central climax before the piece slowly fades from view: Shebalin's imaginative use of flute and piccolo in these closing bars is especially gratifying. The insouciant 'Dance of the Girls' [17] is characterised by a pervasive lilting rhythm, to be followed by an *Adagio* [18] which opens delicately with hushed solo strings but gradually gains in intensity and thickens in texture until the whole orchestra is heard at full stretch; the writing for timpani in the closing bars is notably triumphant. In the Gavotte [19], Shebalin has fun suggesting a wry undertow to the rigid formality of the dance-form. The Slow Waltz [20] is a perfect example of the composer finding emotional depth in a simple idea. With an inventive use of percussion, the lively closing Galop [21] carries all before it in a headlong race to the finish.

*Paul Conway is a freelance writer specialising in twentieth-century and contemporary British music. He has reviewed regularly for The Independent, Tempo and Musical Opinion, provided programme notes for The Proms and the Edinburgh, Spitalfields and Three Choirs Festivals and contributed chapters to books on John McCabe and Robert Simpson.*

**Dmitry Vasiliev** was born in 1972 in the city of Bolshoi Kamen in Primorsky Krai in the Russian Far East. He graduated from the Rostov State Conservatoire and then took a postgraduate course and probation period under the guidance of Alexander Skulsky at the Nizhny Novgorod State Conservatoire. He also participated in the master-classes of Alexander Vedernikov and Vladimir Ziva in Moscow.

He has since been active all over Russia. In 1997 he set up the Tambov Symphony Orchestra in Tambov, south of Moscow, which he led as artistic director and chief conductor until 2005, touring with the Orchestra to France and Moscow. While in Tambov he was artistic director of the International Rachmaninov Festival in 2001 and 2002, the Tambov Musicians' Festival in 1999, 2000 and 2001 and the Musical Province Festival in 2002. In 2003–5 he held the position



of guest chief conductor of the Sochi Symphony Orchestra on the Black Sea, and since 2005 he has been principal conductor of the Siberian Symphony Orchestra in Omsk (it is known domestically as the Omsk Philharmonic), where since 2008 he has been artistic director of the New Music Festival biennale. In June 2009 he took the Siberian Symphony Orchestra to Moscow to participate in the Fourth Festival of World Symphony Orchestras. Since then Dmitry Vasiliev and the SSO have toured many times to Moscow (Tchaikovsky Concert Hall), St Petersburg (Mariinsky Theatre), to various other cities of Russia and to Austria, China and Italy.

In Moscow he has conducted the National Philharmonic Orchestra, State Academic Symphony Orchestra 'Evgeny Svetlanov' and the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra; among the orchestras he has conducted elsewhere in Russia are the St Petersburg State Capella, the Rostov Philharmonic and Nizhny Novgorod Philharmonic; internationally, he has appeared in France, China, Italy, Poland and South Korea. Among the labels for which he has recorded, as well as Toccata Classics, are Antes Edition and ArtBeat Music. The soloists with whom he has appeared include the soprano Hibla Gerzmava and bass Vladimir Matorin, the pianists Denis Matsuev, Nikolai Petrov and Eliso Virsaladze, the violinists Pierre Amoyal, Oleh Krysa, Vadim Repin, Sayaka Shoji and Leonard Schreiber, the cellists Boris Andrianov and Misha Maisky and the trumpeter Sergey Nakariakov.

Among the world premieres Dmitry Vasiliev has to his credit are works by Mikhail Bronner, Sofia Gubaidulina, Ilya Heifets, Alemdar Karamanov, Ephraim Podgaitz, Tolib Shakhidiy, Andrey Tikhomirov and Mieczysław Weinberg, as well as Russian premieres of music by John Adams, Woldemar Bargiel, John Corigliano, Karl Jenkins, Christopher Rouse, Charles Villiers, Stanford, Alexander Tchaikovsky, Eduard Tubin and others.

The **Siberian Symphony Orchestra** (SSO) is one of the largest of Russian orchestras. It was founded in 1966 at the instigation of the conductor Simon Cogan, who remained at its head for more than ten years. From the beginning it attracted talented graduates from the Leningrad, Novosibirsk and Ural Conservatoires, each institution with a well-earned reputation for producing dynamic and highly professional musicians. For many years the Siberian Symphony Orchestra toured the cities of the former Soviet Union, giving concerts in Moscow and Leningrad, Krasnoyarsk and Chita in central and eastern Russia, the cities along the Volga, Riga in Latvia, Kiev in Ukraine, Minsk in Belarus and Almaty in Kazakhstan. From 1975 the Orchestra participated in the contemporary-music festivals organised by the Union of



Composers of the USSR, performing music by Khachaturian, Khrennikov, Shchedrin and other prominent composers.

From 1978 the Siberian Symphony Orchestra was headed by the conductor Viktor Tietz, under whose leadership it reached artistic maturity and developed a wide repertoire, winning first prize at the All-Russian Competition of Symphony Orchestras in 1984. From 1992 to 2004 the chief conductor of the Orchestra was Evgeny Shostakov. Since 1994 the Siberian Symphony Orchestra has regularly travelled abroad on tour and in 1996 it was awarded the title of 'Academic' – an honour in Russia.

Over the years the Orchestra has also worked with such distinguished conductors as Veronika Dudarova, Karl Eliasberg, Arnold Katz, Aram Khachaturian, Fuat Mansurov, Krzysztof Penderecki, Kirill Petrenko, Nathan Rachlin and Abram Stasevich and Alexander Vedernikov. The soloists with whom the SSO has worked include the pianists Dmitri Bashkirov, Lazar Berman, Peter Donohoe, Denis Matsuev, Mikhail Pletnev, Grigory Sokolov and Eliso Virsaladze, the violinists Pierre Amoyal, Viktor Pikayzen and Viktor Tretyakov, the cellists Natalia Gutman, Mstislav Rostropovich and Daniil Shafran and the singers Dmitri Hvorostovsky and Alexander Vedernikov.

Since 2005 the principal conductor of the Orchestra has been Dmitry Vasiliev. Under his direction the repertoire of the SSO has become even wider and now includes not only the classics but also contemporary music, jazz, rock, musicals, film soundtracks, and so on, and participates in a wide number of innovative projects, from festivals of contemporary classical music to the World and European ballroom dancing championships. In 2009 the SSO took part in the Fourth Festival of World Symphony Orchestras held in the Hall of Columns in Moscow; in 2010 and 2018 it took part in the Forum of the Symphony Orchestras of Russia in Yekaterinburg. In recent years the Orchestra has also toured in Austria, Germany, Italy, Spain, Ukraine and the USA. The SSO is a long-standing participant in the concert series of the Moscow State Philharmonic and the Mariinsky Theatre.

The last decade has been a period of growth and flowering of the SSO. Its huge repertoire ranges from the symphonic classics to works by composers of the 21st century. The composition of the Orchestra is in line with European standards, boasting more than 100 experienced, highly professional musicians. The discography of the SSO includes the four symphonies of the Danish composer Victor Bendix on Danacord and the Orchestral Suites Nos. 1 and 2 by Vissarion Shebalin, the first of its recordings for Toccata Classics (TOCC 0136), which was followed by albums of music by Woldemar Bargiel (his Symphony in C major and the overtures *Prometheus*, *Overture to a Tragedy* and *Medea* on TOCC 0277), two of the music of Mieczysław Weinberg (*Polish Tunes* and Symphony No. 21 on TOCC 0193, and *Six Ballet Scenes* and Symphony No. 22 on TOCC 0313) and Philip Spratley (*Cargoes*, *A Helpston Fantasia* and Third Symphony on TOCC 0194). The 400th recording in the Toccata Classics catalogue (TOCC 0500) was made by the SSO under Dmitry Vasiliev: the First Symphony and symphonic poem *Vaterland* by the Austrian late-Romantic Julius Bittner, a release which met with universal enthusiasm around the world (one customer review commenting that 'Dmitry Vasiliev and the Siberian Symphony Orchestra do Bittner's music credit [...] they seem to capture the essence of the style in these performances').



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# VISSARION SHEBALIN *Orchestral Music, Volume Two*

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## **Orchestral Suite No. 3, Op. 61 (1935)**

**21:29**

Arranged by Leonid Feigin, 1963

- |   |                         |      |
|---|-------------------------|------|
| 1 | I Introduction          | 2:27 |
| 2 | II Laura's Dance        | 2:01 |
| 3 | III Habanera            | 2:25 |
| 4 | IV Intermezzo           | 1:24 |
| 5 | V Scene and Serenade    | 2:35 |
| 6 | VI Chant in the Convent | 3:58 |
| 7 | VII Fast Dance          | 1:39 |
| 8 | VIII Finale             | 5:00 |

## **Orchestral Suite No. 4, Op. 62 (1958)**

**18:24**

Arranged by Vladislav Agafonnikov, 1986

- |    |                          |      |
|----|--------------------------|------|
| 9  | I Introduction           | 1:45 |
| 10 | II Arrival of the Guests | 2:43 |
| 11 | III Waltz                | 5:42 |
| 12 | IV Erlynné's Wait        | 1:59 |
| 13 | V Dance of the Dolls     | 2:46 |
| 14 | VI Farewell Waltz        | 3:29 |

## ***Ballet Suite* (1958)**

**29:19**

Arranged by Leonid Feigin, 1973

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|----|--------------------------|------|
| 15 | I Introduction and Waltz | 5:31 |
| 16 | II Nocturne              | 5:08 |
| 17 | III Dance of the Girls   | 2:43 |
| 18 | IV <i>Adagio</i>         | 6:43 |
| 19 | V Gavotte                | 3:56 |
| 20 | VI Slow Waltz            | 2:32 |
| 21 | VII Galop                | 2:46 |

**Siberian Symphony Orchestra**

**Dmitry Vasiliev, conductor**

**TT 70:30**

FIRST RECORDINGS