



# BORIS TISHCHENKO

## Symphony No. 8

Concerto for Violin, Piano  
and String Orchestra

Three Songs to Poems  
of Marina Tsvetayeva

Mila Shkirtbil, Mezzo-soprano

Chingiz Osmanov, Violin

Nikolai Mazhara, Piano

St Petersburg State  
Symphony Orchestra

Yuri Serov



## Boris Ivanovich Tishchenko (1939-2010): Symphony No. 8

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The works of Boris Ivanovich Tishchenko (1939-2010) hold a unique place in contemporary Russian music. In a century of radical musical innovations, almost to the point of negating individual compositional voices, Tishchenko's music remains instantly recognisable. His works demand great concentration from the listener, and he establishes, within just a few bars, his own highly personal approach to music-making. In this way, his artistic integrity, and sense of responsibility as a musician, are as clear in his oeuvre as it was in his personal demeanour.

Tishchenko spent his entire career in St Petersburg (or, as it was until the composer's fifty-second year, Leningrad). He began serious musical study at the Rimsky-Korsakov School of Music when he was 14. Here he learned composition with Galina Ustvolskaya, whose influence on Tishchenko was particularly profound, and can be heard in his early compositions – including his opus one, a set of piano variations which formed his entry submission for St Petersburg Conservatory.

Once at the senior Conservatory, from 1957-1962, Tishchenko continued to study the piano (with Abraham Logovinsky), as well as taking composition classes with Vadim Salmanov, Victor Voloshinov and Orest Yevlakhov. He remained at the Conservatory for a further three years of postgraduate studies, when Dmitri Shostakovich took over as his teacher. This was a decisive moment for Tishchenko's compositional development: Shostakovich was a crucial influence upon the younger man, and was to be the dedicatee of his *Third* and *Fifth Symphonies* (the latter dedicated *in memoriam*); and in time, it was Tishchenko who would take up the mantle of Russia's greatest symphonist, following Shostakovich's death in 1975.

Given his fine abilities as a performer, Tishchenko was able to perform and promote his own music while still a student, giving performances of his *First Piano Concerto* and *Third Piano Sonata* in the early 1960s. He joined the staff of the St Petersburg Conservatory in 1965 on completion of his studies, and became a professor of composition in 1986. Over the course of his career, he

composed in virtually all major genres, including symphonic works, concertos, chamber music, *a cappella* vocal pieces and film scores. However, certain genres were clearly of particular importance to him – above all, the symphony. He composed twelve symphonies, eight of which are numbered (the other four having descriptive titles), completed between the ages of 22 and 69. Each symphony is carefully individuated from its predecessors and successors, though many include substantial monologues for particular instruments, and dramatic use of extreme contrasts. Tishchenko is also extremely economical in terms of thematic material, deriving his movements from brief motifs and gestures. Many of these techniques are also evident in his concertos, in which the roles of soloist and orchestra are often combined – indeed, the *Second Violin Concerto* is also known as the 'Violin Symphony'.

Tishchenko even retains the scope and scale of symphonic drama in his chamber works, with several of the string quartets and piano sonatas seemingly more like symphonies for their respective forces. This is achieved in part through stretching the traditional rôles of the instruments: using extremes of dynamic range, combining unison playing and thick clusters, and thus also widening the emotional gamut of these pieces. Such dramatic dynamism permeates his output: from his vocal works to his ballets (he preferred ballet to opera, and produced scores for a diverse range of scenarios) and film scores.

A wide range of musical styles and models inspired Tishchenko over the course of his career. His use of traditional forms is tied in part to his sense of historical continuity, and his sustained interest in the music of Western Europe – particularly that of J.S. Bach and Monteverdi (whose *L'incoronazione di Poppea* he orchestrated). His Russian heritage is perhaps more apparent in his dramatic works, which often call on the sounds of Orthodox chant and communal, celebratory music (for example in the ballet *Yaroslavna* (*The Eclipse*), and scores for the films *Suzdal* and *The Tale of Igor's*

*Campaign*). He also looked further afield to the rhythmic and harmonic variety of non-diatonic music – particularly the musics of India, China and Japan – as well as Russian folk music. And of course, his contemporaries and immediate predecessors were also hugely influential, primarily Béla Bartók, Alban Berg, Sergey Prokofiev and Igor Stravinsky. His traditionalist leanings thus served to keep this melting pot of styles and models within familiar formats – he did not simply innovate for the sake of it, and his works feature everything from aleatoric ideas and twelve-tone writing to Renaissance allusions and pop rhythms.

The *Concerto for Violin, Piano and String Orchestra* was written in 2006 and dedicated to the composer's friend and supporter Jacques (originally Yakov) Ioffe for his sixtieth birthday. This is a four-movement opus, encompassing a range of styles and approaches that are comprehensible without being simplistic, and rich in their emotional depth. By setting up a texture with two soloists, Tishchenko is not only able to alternate the latter with the ensemble, but also to allow the violin and piano to stand together as a duo. Thus the opening movement, the *Fantasia*, begins with the solo violin and occasional rhythmic beats in the very low register of the piano, before the two begin a chamber-like duet, lyrical and increasingly impassioned. It is only later that the strings join them. Both aleatoric writing and free improvisation are used over the course of the movement. This is followed by a highly rhythmic *Rondo*, dance-like and witty. This time both the pianist and the violinist are afforded extended solo passages, and the alternations between the strings and the solo duo towards the end of this movement are almost reminiscent of a Baroque *concerto grosso* approach to ensemble writing. The *Interlude* is given to the string orchestra alone: a slow, contemplative and lyrical movement in which the strings are divided into twelve voices. Here, moments of extreme emotional tension are brought about by a kind of chromatic tightening between parts, the voices closing in on each other step by step, before falling into a downward chromatic scale in unison octaves. The movement ends on a minor chord before the piano immediately begins the

*Romance* on a major chord, spreading simple harmonies over which the solo violin plays a floating cantabile melody. This music is based on elements of a Russian popular romantic song, which is spun out and gradually rises higher and higher in the instrument's register until it fades away altogether, the harmonies unresolved beneath it, as if disappearing into the distance.

*Symphony No. 8* was one of Tishchenko's last completed works, written in 2008 when he was already seriously ill. The piece was composed to form a pair with Franz Schubert's '*Unfinished*' *Symphony No. 8 in B minor, D759*, and is intended for performance immediately after Schubert's work, without a break. This accounts for its orchestration; and the composer also makes reference to Schubert's symphony in both his approach to writing for the ensemble, and the configuration of certain sections. The low string *pizzicati*, scuttling violins and clarinet solo of Schubert's first movement are echoed in the *pizzicato* strings and clarinet writing that open Tishchenko's work. This gives way to a bouncing dance rhythm in the strings, and somewhat ominous interjections from the brass (particularly the trombones). The second movement *Andante* is long-breathed and lyrical, once again looking to Schubert for models of instrumentation – though where Schubert's middle section has a clarinet solo, Tishchenko gives his to the oboe, over syncopated strings. This, of course, is where Schubert's symphony ends. Tishchenko's *Allegro* finale is an earthy dance movement, full of rhythmic play and syncopation. A series of imitative gestures across the orchestra leads to a mighty climax, after which the music seems to play itself out. In the final few seconds, there is a blazing *tutti* chord of B major – the key in which Schubert's incomplete work would have ended.

The vocal cycle *Three Songs to Poems of Marina Tsvetayeva* was composed almost forty years earlier, in 1970 – three years before Shostakovich wrote his own settings of some of Tsvetayeva's poetry. Set for mezzo-soprano (as Tsvetayeva's own voice was described as veiled in 'the bitterness of home-grown tobacco', which she 'smoked, and smoked, and it was like weeping'), the cycle unites three poems written at different times during

her career, but linked by the themes of love, loneliness, hope and separation.

Tishchenko's settings are a curious combination of popular song and Russian romance, with no little debt to Shostakovich in the grotesque wit of the first number, *The Window*. Here the music is glib and satirical, the 'cries of parting' in the second verse mocked in overwrought romantic harmonies. *The Leaves Have Fallen* is more earnest, restless and circling as the protagonist is unable to

get away from her memories and is drawn again and again to the same melodic lines and obsessive rhythms. In *The Mirror*, a simple harp accompaniment opens and closes the song, wistful and melancholy. The songs were orchestrated by Tishchenko's pupil Leonid Rezetdinov in 2014.

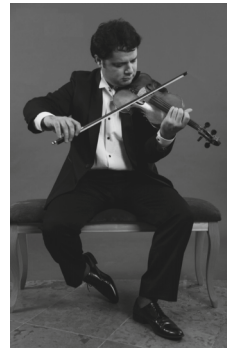
**Yuri Serov,  
edited by Katy Hamilton**

## Mila Shkirtil



The mezzo-soprano Mila Shkirtil graduated from the Rimsky-Korsakov Music College in Choral Conducting and Solo Singing, and from the Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatory of St Petersburg in Solo Singing. She made her début in Vivaldi's *Gloria* in 1994 at the St Petersburg Philharmonic Hall. Since 1997 she has appeared at the Conservatory Opera and Ballet Theatre, making her opera début abroad in 2001 as Eboli in *Don Carlos* at the Stadttheater Klagenfurt. Her career has since then taken her to venues throughout the world. Mila Shkirtil has made several recordings, particularly of Russian vocal repertoire, including works by Glinka, Glazunov, Smirnov, Sviridov and Boris Tchaikovsky, as well as vocal works by Valery Gavrilin and collected songs by Anton Rubinstein.

## Chingiz Osmanov



Born in Leningrad in 1982, Chingiz Osmanov graduated from the St Petersburg Conservatory and since 2002 has been a member of the Soloists of the St Petersburg Chamber Orchestra, and since 2013 a principal violinist of the St Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra. He has taught at the St Petersburg Rimsky-Korsakov State Conservatory since 2012. In 2005 he won the Jascha Heifetz International Violin Competition in Vilnius and the Maria Yudina Competition in St Petersburg. Chingiz Osmanov has performed as a soloist and chamber musician in the Goyang in the Aram Nuri Concert Hall, Goyang, South Korea, the Rosengarten Hall, Mannheim, the London Coliseum, the Israel Opera House, Tel Aviv, the Moscow Music House, the Glazunov Hall of St Petersburg Conservatory, the Kremlin Palace, Moscow, the Nurimaru APEC House, Busan, South Korea, and elsewhere.

## Nikolai Mazhara



Born in 1977 in Leningrad, Nikolai Mazhara is known in St Petersburg as an interpreter of Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Schoenberg and many contemporary Russian composers. He specialises in Russian piano music, including works by Glinka, Borodin, Mussorgsky, Liadov and Rachmaninov. He has collaborated as a soloist with leading orchestras and conductors and has been a member of the Composers' Union of St Petersburg since 2005. He currently teaches at the St Petersburg Conservatory Department of Composition.

## St Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra



The St Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra was founded in 1967 by Nikolai Rabinovich, Karl Eliasberg and Edward Grikurov and until 1985 was known as the Orchestra of Ancient and Modern Music. Renowned soloists and conductors, including Yuri Temirkanov, Mariss Jansons, Svyatoslav Richter, and many others, have performed with the orchestra. In 1985 the orchestra was enlarged, developing as the Leningrad State Orchestra under Raviil Martynov and undertaking concert tours of China, Japan, Germany, Austria, Mexico, Spain, Finland, Norway, Sweden, France and Belgium. From 2004 until 2007 the orchestra was headed by Martynov's pupil Vasily Petrenko. The orchestra's artistic director and chief conductor from 2007 to 2013 was Alexander Titov, who has recorded significant Russian compositions from the period of the Second World War.

## Yuri Serov



The conductor Yuri Serov graduated from the St Petersburg Rimsky-Korsakov State Conservatory in 1993, and has also studied in Salzburg and Weimar. As a conductor and pianist, Yuri Serov has toured the cities of more than thirty countries and has made over sixty recordings for a number of labels in Russia, Belgium, Japan and the United States. Yuri Serov is Chief Conductor of the Volgograd Philharmonic Orchestra and is the author of many articles and essays on music. At present he teaches at the St Petersburg Conservatory. He is Artistic Director of the Northern Flowers international music festival, and founder and editor of the CD series St Petersburg Musical Archive.

### 8 Okno

Vot opyat' okno,  
Gde opyat' ne spyat.  
Mozhet – p'yut vino,  
Mozhet – tak sidyat.  
Ili prosto – ruk  
Ne raznimut dvoye.  
V kazhdom dome, drug,  
Yest' okno takoye.

Krik razluk i vstrech –  
Ti, okno v nochi!  
Mozhet – sotni svech,  
Mozhet – tri svechi...  
Net i net umu  
Moyemu pokoya.  
I v moyom domu  
Zavelos' takoye.

Pomolis', družhok, za bessonniiy dom,  
Za okno s ognym!

### 9 Osipalis' list'ya

Osipalis' list'ya nad Vashey mogiloy,  
I pakhnet zimoy.  
Poslushayte, myortviy, poslushayte, miliy:  
Vi vsyo-taki moy.

Smeyotes'! V blazhennoy krilatke dorozhnoy!  
Luna visoka.  
Moy – tak nesomnenno i tak neprelozhno,  
Kak eta ruka.

Opyat' s uzelkom poydu utrom rano  
K bolnichnim dveryam.  
Vi prosto uyekhali v zharkiye strani,  
K velikim moryam.

### 8 The Window

Here's another window  
Where they are awake.  
Maybe they drink wine,  
Maybe they stay up late.  
Or maybe they would simply  
Not unlink their hands.  
Every house, my friend,  
Has a window like that.

Cries of partings, meetings –  
Window in the night!  
Maybe there are a hundred candles,  
Maybe there are three...  
And my restless mind  
Cannot find peace.  
For in my own home  
This has appeared.

Pray, my friend, for this sleepless home,  
For the blazing window!

### 9 The Leaves Have Fallen

The leaves have fallen over your grave,  
And the air smells of winter.  
Listen, the deceased one, my darling:  
You are still mine.

You laugh! What a charming road coach!  
The moon is high.  
You are mine – without a doubt and as real,  
As my own hand.

And again, early in the morning, I will walk  
To the hospital's doors.  
You simply went away to the distant lands,  
To the great seas.

Ya vas tselovala! Ya vam koldovala!  
Smeyus' nad zagrobnoyu t'moy!  
Ya smerti ne veryu! Ya zhdu Vas s vokzala –  
Domoy!

Pust' list'ya osīpalis', smīti i styortī  
Na traurnikh lentakh slova.  
I, yesli dlya tselogo mira Vī myortvī,  
Ya tozhe mertva.  
Ya vizhu, ya chuvstvuyu, – chuyu Vas vsyudu,  
Chto lentī ot Vashikh venkov!  
Ya Vas ne zabīla i Vas ne zabudu  
Vo vekī vekov!

Takikh obeshchaniy ya znayu bestsel'nost',  
Ya znayu tshchetu.  
Pis'mo v beskonechnost'.  
Pis'mo v bespredel'nost'.  
Pis'mo v pustotu.

#### Zerkalo

Khochu u zerkala, gde mut'  
I son tumanyashchiy,  
Ya vipitat' – kuda Vam put'  
I gde pristanishche.

Ya vizhu: machta korablya,  
I Vī – na palube...  
Vī – v dīme poyezda... Polyā  
V vecherney zhalobe.

Vechniye polyā v rose,  
Nad nīmī – voronī...  
Blagoslovlyayu Vas na vse  
Chetīre storonī!

I kissed you! I put a spell on you!  
I laugh at the darkness of the grave!  
I do not believe death! I am waiting for you  
At the station – to bring you home!

Let the leaves fall, and the words  
On your wreaths fade away.  
If you are dead to the entire world,  
Then so am I.  
I see, I feel – I sense you everywhere,  
Despite the faded sashes of your wreaths!  
I have not forgotten you and I will not forget you for the  
whole of eternity!

I know how useless these promises are,  
I know their futility.  
A letter into eternity.  
A letter into boundless space.  
A letter into the void.

#### The Mirror

I want to ask a mirror, reflecting mist  
And a hazy dream,  
Where will your path take you,  
And where it will lead you to rest.

I see: the mast of a ship,  
And you are on its deck...  
You – in the steam of a train... Fields  
In the evening lament.

The evening fields in dew,  
Above them – crows...  
I bless you  
To travel all four paths!

Boris Tishchenko was one of the most recognisable and important Russian composers of his time. His studies with Shostakovich – whose mantle as Russia's leading symphonist he assumed after his teacher's death in 1975 – proved decisive. *Symphony No. 8*, one of his last completed works, was written to be performed immediately after Schubert's *'Unfinished' Symphony* to which it makes reference. The *Concerto for Violin, Piano and String Orchestra* is rich in emotional depth, lyricism and dance rhythms while *Three Songs to Poems by Marina Tsvetayeva* intriguingly fuses popular song with Russian romance.

Boris  
**TISHCHENKO**  
(1939-2010)

**Concerto for Violin, Piano and String Orchestra (2006) 33:14**

- |          |                    |              |
|----------|--------------------|--------------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>Fantasia</b>    | <b>8:40</b>  |
| <b>2</b> | <b>Rondo</b>       | <b>6:57</b>  |
| <b>3</b> | <b>Interlude –</b> | <b>7:11</b>  |
| <b>4</b> | <b>Romance</b>     | <b>10:26</b> |

**Symphony No. 8 (2008)\* 18:59**

- |          |                            |             |
|----------|----------------------------|-------------|
| <b>5</b> | <b>Andantino – Allegro</b> | <b>6:20</b> |
| <b>6</b> | <b>Andante</b>             | <b>5:57</b> |
| <b>7</b> | <b>Allegro</b>             | <b>6:42</b> |

**Three Songs to Poems of Marina Tsvetayeva (version for chamber orchestra by Leonid Rezetdinov) (1970/2014)\* 7:38**

- |           |                               |             |
|-----------|-------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>8</b>  | <b>The Window</b>             | <b>2:00</b> |
| <b>9</b>  | <b>The Leaves Have Fallen</b> | <b>2:54</b> |
| <b>10</b> | <b>The Mirror</b>             | <b>2:44</b> |

\*WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDING

**Mila Shkirtil, Mezzo-soprano [8]-[10]**

**Chingiz Osmanov, Violin [1]-[4] • Nikolai Mazhara, Piano [1]-[4]**

**St Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra • Yuri Serov**

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Producer: Yuri Serov • Engineer and editor: Danil Zosin

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