



London Philharmonic Orchestra

SHOSTAKOVICH
SYMPHONY NO. 11 'THE YEAR 1905'

VLADIMIR JUROWSKI *conductor*
LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

SHOSTAKOVICH

SYMPHONY NO. 11 IN G MINOR, OP. 103 'THE YEAR 1905'

Palace Square: Adagio –

The 9th of January: Allegro –

Eternal Memory: Adagio –

The Tocsin: Allegro ma non troppo

Shostakovich originally intended his symphony celebrating the 1905 Revolution for the 50th anniversary of that event, but for various reasons was not able to get down to it until the summer of 1956. 'At the moment I am working on my Eleventh Symphony, which should be finished by the winter', he wrote in a magazine article marking his own 50th birthday that September. 'Its theme is the Revolution of 1905. I am very fond of this period in our country's history, a period vividly reflected in various workers' revolutionary songs. I do not know whether I shall directly quote the melodies of any of these songs in the symphony, but its musical language will presumably be in the same vein as the Russian revolutionary songs.' Shostakovich eventually finished the work on 4 August 1957.

The concept seems straightforward enough: a symphony by the USSR's leading composer remembering the heroes and victims of the popular uprising that briefly threatened to unsettle the Tsarist regime; a work with

revolutionary song at its heart by a composer who had already visited this territory in his Second and Third Symphonies and in numerous film scores, and whose own father had witnessed at first hand some of the occurrences of 1905; and a piece which, although late for its original purpose, was nevertheless ready in time to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the more historically decisive Revolution of 1917.

And indeed, the work's official premiere in Moscow on 30 October 1957 revealed an epic creation centred on the gunning down of more than 200 unarmed protesters outside St Petersburg's Winter Palace on 9 January 1905, and cast in four great panels of music almost cinematic in their vivid directness of purpose. Less psychologically intimate than in his Mahlerian Eighth and Tenth Symphonies, the Eleventh looks back towards the more openly illustrative, people-orientated manner of 19th-century Russian nationalists such as Mussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov and Borodin. Reaction in Russia was favourable, and helped Shostakovich climb back to favour from the dark days of his denouncement as a 'formalist' by the authorities in 1948; in 1958 it even won him the Soviet Union's highest artistic honour, a Lenin Prize.

In the rest of the world, however, it was less well received, often derided as propaganda art of small depth. But, this being Shostakovich, there certainly is more to the piece than that. How could there not be, indeed, when the composer had himself already suffered so much aggravation at the hands of the Soviet system? And how, given its subject matter, could its overall message not have become affected during its very composition by the gruesome events of October and November 1956, when Red Army tanks rumbled into Hungary to suppress an anti-Communist rebellion at a cost of over 2,000 lives? For the Russian intelligentsia it was a distressing reminder that their own leadership could visit the same kind of state violence on civilians that the revolutionaries had thought they were fighting against, and that such atrocities could repeat themselves anytime and anywhere.

In *Testimony*, Solomon Volkov's 1979 biography of Shostakovich, the composer told the author that he 'wanted to show this recurrence in the Eleventh Symphony. I wrote it in 1957 and it deals with contemporary themes even though it's called "1905". It's about the people, who have stopped believing because the cup of evil has run over'. The authenticity of Volkov's biography has been contested, but in any case these are hardly sentiments

Shostakovich could have made public in 1957. To hear the visceral terror and anger of the second movement of the Eleventh makes them highly believable.

Shostakovich's frankly pictorial approach is evident from the opening, an atmospheric vision of Palace Square in which the icy stillness of the strings' opening theme is gradually animated by ominous rhythmic patterns on timpani and muted fanfares – some menacing, some heroic – on trumpets and horns. After a while the first of the revolutionary song melodies appears, wistfully on flutes at first and then in more sinister tones on brass and side-drum. A broad contrapuntal discourse, instigated by a new theme introduced by the cellos and basses, enriches the orchestral texture before the revolutionary song reappears on bassoon, and finally the opening theme returns with its muttering timpani and cheerless fanfares.

Shostakovich chose to run all four movements together in this Symphony, and so it is from this quiet that the terrifying events of the massacre itself rush towards us in the second. The course of the music does not need much describing here, though it is worth pointing out that the heroic theme which seems to unite the people as their sense of purpose grows is presented as a slowed down

version of its own bustling accompaniment. Eventually the crowd's fervour spends itself, but then in the silence a side-drum signal rings out and murder is let loose in music of almost mechanistic violence. This ends even more suddenly than it began, however, and although the scene returns to the glacial stillness of the Symphony's opening, it is now haunted by sad distortions of the first movement's themes.

The third movement is a noble requiem led off by the revolutionary song 'You fell as victims' intoned soulfully by muted violas. The movement builds to a central massive climax that remembers the previous movement in an outburst of anger and (perhaps) desire for vengeance, before regaining its composure in a return to the viola theme.

The people are on the march again, this time with greater confidence and resolve, in the fourth movement, entitled 'The Tocsin' (or alarm bell). A terse brass call to arms is answered by steadily and long-gathering orchestral excitement, climaxing at a convulsive percussion crash that heralds an icy reprise of the Palace Square music, this time with the added eloquence of a mournful cor anglais. The energy picks up again, however, propelling the work to a

finish in which the major-minor indecisiveness of desperate bell-notes undermines thoughts of a simplistically triumphant trajectory. Whether we hear this Symphony as a mighty silent film score or a one-act voiceless opera, there is no doubt that it leaves us contemplating an uncertain future.

Programme notes © Lindsay Kemp

VLADIMIR JUROWSKI *conductor*

© Simon Pauly



One of today's most sought-after conductors, acclaimed worldwide for his incisive musicianship and adventurous artistic commitment, Vladimir Jurowski was born in Moscow in 1972. In 1990 he

relocated with his family to Germany.

In 2017 Vladimir Jurowski took up the position of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin and also celebrated ten years as Principal Conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra. 2021 will see him take up the position of Music Director of the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich. In addition he holds the titles of Principal Artist of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Artistic Director of the Russian State Academic Symphony Orchestra, and Artistic Director of the George Enescu International Festival, Bucharest. He has previously held the positions of First Kapellmeister of the Komische Oper Berlin, Principal Guest Conductor of the Teatro Comunale di Bologna, Principal Guest Conductor of the Russian National Orchestra and Music Director of Glyndebourne Festival Opera.

Vladimir Jurowski appears regularly at festivals including the BBC Proms, the Glyndebourne Festival Opera, the George

Enescu Festival of Bucharest, Musikfest Berlin, and the Dresden, Schleswig Holstein and the Rostropovich Festivals. In 2017 he made an acclaimed Salzburg Festival debut.

He collaborates with many of the world's leading orchestras including the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, the Staatskapelle Dresden, the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, the Cleveland and Philadelphia Orchestras, New York Philharmonic, Chicago and Boston Symphonies, the Berlin and Vienna Philharmonic Orchestras.

A committed operatic conductor, Jurowski has conducted at the Metropolitan Opera New York, the Opera National de Paris, Teatro alla Scala Milan, the Bolshoi Theatre, the State Academic Symphony of Russia, the Semperoper Dresden, the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, the Komische Oper Berlin and the Bayerische Staatsoper.

Jurowski's discography includes CD and DVDs with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, the Russian National Orchestra, the Chamber Orchestra of Europe and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment.

LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

The London Philharmonic Orchestra is one of the world's finest orchestras, balancing a long and distinguished history with its present-day position as one of the most dynamic and forward-looking ensembles in the UK. This reputation has been secured by the Orchestra's performances in the concert hall and opera house, its many award-winning recordings, trail-blazing international tours and wide-ranging educational work.

Founded by Sir Thomas Beecham in 1932, the Orchestra has since been headed by many of the world's greatest conductors, including Sir Adrian Boult, Bernard Haitink, Sir Georg Solti, Klaus Tennstedt and Kurt Masur. Vladimir Jurowski was appointed the Orchestra's Principal Guest Conductor in March 2003, and became Principal Conductor in September 2007. From September 2021 he will become the Orchestra's Conductor Emeritus

The Orchestra is based at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall in London, where it has been Resident Orchestra since 1992, giving around 30 concerts a season. Each summer it takes up its annual residency at Glyndebourne Festival Opera where it has been Resident Symphony Orchestra for over 50 years. The Orchestra performs at venues around the UK and has made numerous international tours, performing to sell-out audiences in America, Europe, Asia and Australasia.

The London Philharmonic Orchestra made its first recordings on 10 October 1932, just three days after its first public performance. It has recorded and broadcast regularly ever since, and in 2005 established its own record label. These recordings are taken mainly from live concerts given by conductors including LPO Principal Conductors from Beecham and Boult, through Haitink, Solti and Tennstedt, to Masur and Jurowski. **lpo.org.uk**



DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH (1906–75)

Symphony No. 11 in G minor, Op. 103 ‘The Year 1905’

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| 01 | 13:33 | Palace Square: Adagio – |
| 02 | 17:34 | The 9th of January: Allegro – |
| 03 | 12:38 | Eternal Memory: Adagio – |
| 04 | 14:58 | The Tocsin: Allegro ma non troppo |

VLADIMIR JUROWSKI *conductor*

LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Pieter Schoeman *leader*

Recorded live at Southbank Centre’s **ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL**, London