

GRANT PARK MUSIC FESTIVAL

Carlos Kalmar Artistic Director and Principal Conductor

Christopher Bell Chorus Director



Friday, August 11, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, August 12, 2023 at 7:30 p.m.

Jay Pritzker Pavilion

HADELICH PLAYS PROKOFIEV

Grant Park Orchestra

Carlos Kalmar, conductor

Augustin Hadelich, violin

Sergei Prokofiev

Violin Concerto No. 2

Allegro moderato

Andante assai

Allegro; ben marcato

AUGUSTIN HADELICH

INTERMISSION

Dmitri Shostakovich

Symphony No. 8

Adagio; Allegro non troppo

Allegretto

Allegro non troppo

Largo

Allegretto

The appearance of Augustin Hadelich is generously underwritten
by Jerry and Jeannette Goldstone.

Friday's concert will be broadcast and
streamed live on 98.7WFMT/wfmt.com



Considered one of the great violinists of our time, **Augustin Hadelich** is known for his phenomenal technique, insightful and persuasive interpretations and ravishing tone. He tours extensively around the world and has played with all the major orchestras. He is winner of a Grammy Award for “Best Classical Instrumental Solo.” Committed to cultivating the next generation, Augustin Hadelich teaches at the Yale School of Music at Yale University. Born in Italy to German parents, he holds dual citizenship with the U.S. and Germany. He plays the “Leduc, ex Szeryng,” a 1744 violin by

Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesù on loan from the Tarisio Trust. He is a Warner Classics Artist.



SERGEI PROKOFIEV (1891 - 1953)
CONCERTO NO.2 IN G MINOR FOR VIOLIN & ORCHESTRA, OP.63 (1935)

Scored for: two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two French horns, two trumpets, percussion, strings, and solo violin
Performance time: 26 minutes

First Grant Park Orchestra performance: July 21, 1971;
Sergiu Comissiona, conductor and Zvi Zeitlin, violin

Professional animosity and competition may have partially motivated Sergei Prokofiev to compose his Violin Concerto No. 2. The Russian Revolution (1917–1923) had led many Russian composers to leave the country. A number settled in Paris, including Prokofiev and Igor Stravinsky. The two had a strained relationship, as both were harshly critical of each other’s works. In 1931, Stravinsky composed a violin concerto for the young Polish–American violinist Samuel Dushkin. Dushkin would then premiere Prokofiev’s Sonata for Two Violins in 1932 with French violinist Robert Soetens. Perhaps leaning into Prokofiev’s rivalry with Stravinsky, Soetens and his supporters persuaded Prokofiev to compose a concerto.

Prokofiev set to work on the concerto while touring Spain, Portugal, Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia with Soetens in 1935. At the time, Prokofiev was making plans to return to his homeland and end his “nomadic concert-tour existence.” His decision to repatriate after eighteen years abroad was due to homesickness and perceived professional opportunities. These factors may have caused him to ignore the warning signs of Stalin’s impending Great Purge. (Violin Concerto No. 2 would be Prokofiev’s last Western commission. Soviet officials seized his passport in 1938, and he never traveled again.)

Prokofiev returned to the Soviet Union in 1936 armed with a revamped compositional style he called the “new simplicity.” Compared to his more modernist early works, his new style returned to Classical influences and featured a lyricism that was both decisively modern yet accessible. Many of Prokofiev’s most enduring works, such as *Peter and the Wolf*, *Romeo & Juliet*, and Violin Concerto No. 2, stem from this period and exemplify this “new simplicity” with their compelling tension between old and new.

Violin Concerto No. 2 begins with a bleak unaccompanied melody in the solo violin. The agitated dissonances between the orchestra and the soloist create a tumultuous atmosphere. Even the contrasting lyrical sections are troubled, and the opening movement constantly veers between different affects and keys. The second movement features one of Prokofiev’s most sweeping melodies over a naïve arpeggiated accompaniment. However, sinister undercurrents are eventually revealed beneath the

placid surface. The energetic finale is in rondo form, with a main theme that becomes more insistent with each repetition. The percussion section plays a prominent role in this movement. The castanets add a Spanish flair in a nod to the work's premiere in Madrid, while the ominous bass drum propels the high-octane finale to its abrupt conclusion.



DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH (1906 - 1975)

SYMPHONY NO.8 IN C MINOR, OP.65 (1943)

Scored for: four flutes including piccolo, three oboes including English horn, four clarinets including bass clarinet and E-flat clarinet, three bassoons including contrabassoon, four French horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, and strings

Performance time: 61 minutes

First Grant Park Orchestra performance: August 4, 2001; Carlos Kalmar, conductor

Dmitri Shostakovich's reputation fluctuated wildly throughout his career. Before World War II, his music was subject to intense scrutiny, especially after Stalin's scathing review of his opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* in 1936. In peacetime, composers were expected to produce music of unadulterated optimism that toed the party line. The war years allowed for relative creative freedom as the authorities were occupied with more pressing matters than policing artistic expression. Plus, any overt musical gloom could easily be attributed to German atrocities rather than domestic ones. Shostakovich's Symphony No. 7 (Leningrad) bolstered his reputation for a time. Supposedly written in response to the siege of Leningrad in 1941, Symphony No. 7 became a powerful symbol of resistance to fascism in both the Soviet Union and the United States. The composer's resulting fame in the West protected him somewhat from criticism at home, and he was awarded numerous government honors.

In light of this success, expectations were high for Shostakovich's next symphonic outing. On February 2, 1943, the Red Army defeated the Nazis at Stalingrad. Though the loss of life was staggering, it marked a turning point in the war. Audiences were therefore expecting Shostakovich's Symphony No. 8, written in the summer of 1943, to be a celebratory work. However, Shostakovich saw little reason to celebrate, fearing that this victory would only elevate Stalin's prestige in the West and allow him to exert even more power.

Regarding the inspiration for Symphony No. 8, Shostakovich told a very different story in public than in private. In an article published shortly before the premiere, he preempted any backlash against the symphony's sorrowful tone by writing that it was "influenced by the joyful news of the Red Army's victories." Though he conceded that the symphony contained tragic elements and dramatic conflict, he wrote, "on the whole it is optimistic and life-asserting . . . The philosophical conception of my new work can be summed up in these words: life is beautiful. All that is dark and evil rots away, and beauty triumphs." Privately, though, he considered the symphony a requiem for those who had died at the hands of Hitler and those who were tortured, shot, or starved to death before the war under Stalin's regime. At first, critics were respectfully perplexed rather than outraged by the Eighth Symphony. However, in 1948, the Central Committee of the Communist Party condemned the work for its "pessimism, unhealthy individualism, extreme subjectivism, and willful complexity." Once again, Shostakovich found himself having to look over his shoulder, and

the symphony was rarely played again until after the Great Thaw in the late 1950s.

Symphony No. 8 is unorthodox in structure, beginning with a massive Adagio nearly half the length of the entire symphony. In light of the weighty first movement, any heroism or militaristic grandeur in the following three marches come across as sarcastic at best and terrifying at worst. After the screaming war music, life seems to reawaken timidly in the final Allegretto. Though the symphony does not end triumphantly, the final movement suggests that mere survival is victory enough.

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