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## Faculty Recital: Mozart/Shostakovich III

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SCHOOL OF MUSIC

FACULTY RECITAL

MOZART/SHOSTAKOVICH III

An evening of chamber music celebrating  
the 250th birth anniversary of  
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)  
and the 100th birth anniversary of  
Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)

Susan Waterbury, violin  
Debra Moree, viola  
Elizabeth Simkin, cello  
Jennifer Hayghe, piano

Hockett Family Recital Hall  
Monday, September 25, 2006  
7:00 p.m.

ITHACA



## PROGRAM

Piano Sonata No. 18 in D Major,  
K576 (1789)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
(1756-1791)

Allegro  
Adagio  
Allegretto

Sonata for Viola & Piano, Op. 147 (1975)

Dmitri Shostakovich  
(1906-1975)

Moderato  
Allegretto  
Adagio

## INTERMISSION

Trio for Violin, Cello & Piano,  
No. 2 in e minor, Op. 67 (1944)

Dmitri Shostakovich

Andante  
Allegro non troppo  
Largo  
Allegretto



## Program Notes

### Mozart and Shostakovich III

The pairing of Mozart and Shostakovich, born 150 years apart, is more natural than one might initially suspect. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (27 January 1756–5 December 1791), the seventh and last child born to Leopold Mozart and his wife Maria Anna, is the most famous musical prodigy in history. Beginning in 1763, he was received, feted, and honored by the royal families in Europe for ten years. Music historian Charles Burney (1726–1814) described Mozart as possessing “premature and almost supernatural talents” (Deutsch, 140). Mozart’s father was his teacher and impresario; he used every opportunity to turn the labors of his child into a source of wealth and status for his family. Mozart was so prone to illness as a child that Daines Barrington’s 28 September 1769 report to the Secretary of the Royal Society in London about Mozart’s abilities closed with “it may be hoped that little Mozart may possibly attain to the same advanced years as Handel, contrary to the common observation that such *ingenia praecocia* are generally shortlived” (Deutsch, 100).

Dmitry Dmitriyevich Shostakovich (12/25 September 1906–9 August 1975) was the second of three children born to Dmitry Boleslavovich and Sofiya Kokoulin. In pre-Revolutionary years, the young Dmitry Dmitriyevich grew up in comparatively privileged surroundings. As a youngster, he showed some interest in music but no desire to learn it. His mother, who had studied at the St. Petersburg Conservatoire, insisted he had to learn piano. She began giving him piano lessons in the summer of 1915, but she “did not conclude . . . that her son was a musical genius or a child prodigy. . . . [However,] she was surprised how easily he learned and memorized his pieces” (Wilson, 10). At about the same time he started to compose. In 1918 Dmitry Dmitriyevich began to study with his mother’s former teacher, Alexandra Rozanova, in preparation to enter the Petrograd/Leningrad Conservatoire, which he did in 1919 when he was thirteen.

Unlike Mozart, Shostakovich knew deprivation as a youth. The sudden death of his father in 1922 was a disaster for the family, and they struggled to survive hunger and cold. To earn some money for them, he played piano for silent movies in a movie theater. Like Mozart, Shostakovich was a fragile child, and in the spring of 1923 he was diagnosed with TB of the bronchial and lymph glands. To pay for his surgery and recovery in Crimera, his mother sold one of their pianos.

It has been recorded that as a child Mozart was able to notate Allegri’s *Miserere* after a single hearing at the Vatican. After attending a performance of Rimsky-Korsakov’s *The Tale of Tsar Saltan* in 1915, Shostakovich “recited and sang correctly most of the opera” (Wilson, 10).

Mozart returned to Salzburg in 1773, because his days as a child prodigy were over. However, Mozart was unhappy with life in Salzburg and “those coarse, slovenly, dissolute court musicians” with whom he worked; the final break came on 8 June 1781: He was released from Salzburg service “with a kick on my arse . . . by order of our worthy Prince Archbishop” (Anderson, 741). Shostakovich graduated as a pianist in 1923, but he was so unhappy at the Conservatoire when he was excluded from the post graduate piano course, ostensibly because of “his youth and



immaturity," he applied to and was accepted at the Moscow Conservatoire, but he did not matriculate because of his mother's worry over his poor health.

To complete his composition requirements at the Conservatoire, Shostakovich had to compose a symphony. He wrote most of it between December 1924 and February 1925. The First Symphony's premiere on 12 May 1926 by the Leningrad Philharmonic was a resounding success, catapulting the nineteen-year-old composer to international fame. Bruno Walter performed the symphony in Berlin on 5 May 1927, and Leopold Stokowski gave the American premiere with the Philadelphia Orchestra in November 1928.

Mozart, a famous keyboard player by the age of fifteen, had one dream: to be a composer of opera, and he wrote twenty-two stage compositions (operas, musical plays, dramatic cantatas) within a span of twenty-three years. Shostakovich, on the other hand, "aspired to Rachmaninov's double role of virtuoso pianist and composer" (Wilson, 44–45). He entered the Chopin Competition in 1927 in Warsaw. When he was one of eight finalists but not a prizewinner, he gradually relinquished his ambitions to be a concert pianist.

Mozart's first opera, *La finta semplice*, KV 51/46a (1768), an opera buffa, was a failure. After calling for numerous revisions following the first rehearsal, the impresario Giuseppe Affligio canceled the production. Shostakovich's first opera, *Nos*, op. 15 (1927–8), was lampooned by critics as "an attempt to negate opera as a musical form." The radical proletarians opposed it and they managed to have it removed from the stage.

Mozart, contrary to legend, used sketches and drafts. In the relatively few sketches that remain, most are simple notations of usable ideas. Mstislav Rostropovich contends that once Shostakovich conceived a composition, he generally "never made any sketches for his compositions. He held the whole preparatory process in his head. Then he sat down at his desk, and without ever touching the piano, he simply wrote the complete work from beginning to end. He wrote so fast that the urgency of the compositional process is tangibly evident in his uneven and jerky handwriting" (as quoted in Wilson, 396).

Mozart pursued the main genres of secular and sacred music: masses, litanies, church sonatas, symphonies, concertos, chamber music, sonatas, divertimentos, serenades, dances, vocal ensembles, operas, lieder, and concert arias. Shostakovich pursued only secular music: operas, ballets, symphonies, concertos, chamber music, choral works, songs, sonatas, and film scores.

#### **D. D. Shostakovich. Sonata for Viola and Piano, op. 147**

Shostakovich wrote to the Polish composer Krzysztof Meyer (1943–) from his hospital bed a few days before he died from lung cancer on the anniversary of the first performance of the seventh symphony in besieged Leningrad: "I am again in the hospital, due to lung and heart problems. I manage to write with my right hand only with the greatest difficulty. . . . Although it was difficult for me, I wrote a sonata for viola and piano" (as quoted in Wilson, 468). Shostakovich dedicated the sonata to Fyodor Druzhinin (1934–), the violist in the Beethoven Quartet. Shostakovich called Fyodor on 1 July 1975 to tell him that he had "the idea of writing a viola sonata" and wished to consult with him about technical details, e.g.,



“can you play parallel fourths on the viola?” Fyodor “encouraged Dmitry Dmitriyevich to write whatever he liked—viola players would stretch their technique and learn to play scales in fourths.” (as quoted in Wilson, 469–70). The viola sonata was completed on 5 July and sent it to the copyist. Although Dmitry Dmitriyevich had never before spoken to Fyodor about the inner content of his music, on 5 July he told Fyodor: “The first movement is a novella, the second a scherzo, and the Finale is an adagio in memory of Beethoven; but don’t let that inhibit you. The music is bright, bright and clear. The Sonata lasts about half an hour, and should take up one half of a concert” (as quoted in Wilson, 470). Druzhinin received the score on 6 August 1975 and the composer died 9 August.

The Moderato, cast in sonata form, begins with a *pizzicato* and unaccompanied rocking motive that moves primarily in fifths and pivots around G–D, the dominant of C. Against a repetition of this motive, the piano states a twelve-tone theme above the viola. The fifths quickly become inverted into fourths. The contrasting theme is vigorous, forte, and dominated by triplets. In the recapitulation, the rocking motive is in the piano and the twelve-tone material in the viola. A cadenza is followed by a coda that contains one last statement of the opening motive before closing on C.

The ♭ scherzo, which opens with a P4 motive, is in ternary form; it sings and dances. Although Shostakovich called this movement a scherzo, it is in duple meter and dominated by march and dance motives; only the trio is written in triple meter. In May and June 1942, Shostakovich began writing an opera based upon Nikolai Gogol’s (1809–52) comic play *The Gamblers*. He ceased work on it “after composing about forty minutes of first-rate music, bubbling over with brilliant wit and humour” (Wilson, 174). Shostakovich returned to this opera in his last composition: The Allegretto uses direct and extended quotations from Gavryushka’s aria “Wily fellows, these.” Returning to the opera at this point in his life represents, perhaps, as Henry Orlov speculates, a revisit to one of the “milestones of his life and, in the end, arrives at a mournful conclusion” (211).

The Adagio opens with a sequence of descending perfect fourths for unaccompanied viola in a very introspective passage. As soon as the piano enters, the “memory of Beethoven” is unmistakable: It is the rhythmic and melodic design of the opening of Beethoven’s “Moonlight” Sonata. This is an allusion to Beethoven and not a clear-cut quotation. The work concludes with the “Moonlight” motive, and the final c major chord is as serene as it is simple. Fyodor Druzhinin and Mikhail Muntyan gave the first performance to a select audience at Shostakovich’s home on 25 September 1975 on what would have been the composer’s sixty-ninth birthday. The official premiere occurred on 1 October in the Glinka Hall in Leningrad, and it was the climax to a program that included, as the composer had stipulated, his cello and violin sonatas.

### **W. A. Mozart. Piano Sonata in D, KV 576**

Mozart visited Berlin and Potsdam in 1789, and according to a letter he wrote to his fellow freemason Michael Puchberg (12 July 1789), he seems to have agreed to compose six string quartets for King Friedrich Wilhelm II, an amateur cellist, and six easy keyboard sonatas for the royal daughter, Princess Friedrike of Prussia



(Anderson, 930). Mozart wrote only three quartets (KV 575, 589 ["Prussian"], and 590) and one keyboard sonata, KV 576, which was his last piano sonata. However, this sonata is anything but "easy"; in reality, it is among his most difficult, both technically and musically. The first movement is cast in sonata form, and the primary theme is a rising arpeggio that has given rise to the nickname "Posthorn" Sonata. The exposition continues with two secondary themes, the first of which is a varied canonic restatement of P in the dominant. In the recapitulation, the order of the secondary themes is reversed: 2S appears first in tonic followed by 1S in the submediant key. The Adagio, a ternary form in A, moves to the submediant (f#) for the contrasting section, which Mozart recalls in the coda. The last movement is a sonata-rondo, and, similar to the first movement, the material in the first contrasting section is contrapuntally derived from the rondo theme. Each contrapuntal section provides opportunity for humor, parody, and keyboard virtuosity.

### **D. D. Shostakovich. Piano Trio No. 2 in e, op. 67.**

Shostakovich wrote, "Chamber music demands of a composer the most impeccable technique and depth of thought. I don't think I will be wrong if I say that composers sometimes hide their poverty-stricken ideas behind the brilliance of orchestral sound. The timbral riches which are at the disposal of the contemporary symphony orchestra are inaccessible to the small chamber ensemble. Thus, to write a chamber work is much harder than to write an orchestral one" (as quoted in Fay, 141). Writing his op. 67 piano trio was even harder for Shostakovich: It is his anguished response to the sudden and unexpected death of his closest and dearest friend since 1927, Ivan Sollertinsky (1902–11 February 1944), a professor at the Leningrad Conservatoire and artistic director of the Leningrad Philharmonic; Sollertinsky had conducted the premiere performances of Dmitry Dmitriyevich's Symphony No. 8 in Novosibirsk the week before his death. Shostakovich, who had written the first movement in the spring of 1944, completed the second movement on 4 August and the whole composition on 13 August 1944 during his second summer at the Ivanovo Retreat.

The first movement of the trio, cast in sonata form, opens with a slow canon at the third with the cello in the high register, the violin in the middle, and the piano on the bottom. The primary theme is announced in octaves in the piano with a staccato drone in the strings. The Allegro non troppo is a scherzo in F-sharp. After the premiere, Sollertinsky's sister noted that the scherzo was "an amazingly exact portrait of Ivan Ivanovich, whom Shostakovich understood like no one else. That is his temper, his polemics, his manner of speech, his habit of returning to one and the same thought, developing it" (as quoted in Fay, 143). The third movement, a Largo, is a passacaglia in b $\flat$  minor; the passacaglia theme, a mournful elegy, is based on eight chords above two tetrachords in the bass: B $\flat$ -F-G-A and F $\sharp$ -G-A-B coupled with a chromatic descent from F4 to B3 in the upper voice. The cello entrance is a strict canon at the octave of the violin until midway through the fourth of six statements of the passacaglia. The dance-like finale, a sonata-rondo, uses a Jewish folk theme with its ubiquitous  $\flat_2$ , melodic augmented seconds, strummed pizzicato chords, and metrically regular dance rhythms. The trio was written after Shostakovich learned about the Nazi concentration camps in Triblinka and



elsewhere. Jewish folk music appealed to Shostakovich, and Joachim Braun contends that Dmitry Dmitriyevich's use of Jewish subjects is without precedent in Soviet music. As Shostakovich explained: "The distinguishing feature of Jewish music is the ability to build a jolly melody on sad intonations. Why does a man pick up a jolly song? Because he feels sad at heart" (as quoted by Wilson, 235). The trio is cyclic: The trio's opening canon returns in a *con sordino* statement in the strings, and the passacaglia chords return in the coda to reestablish tonal and thematic unity. The trio, dedicated to Ivan Sollertinsky, was premiered on 14 November 1944 by the composer, Dmitriy Tsiganov, violin; and Sergey Shirinsky, cello; Tsiganov was the founder of the Beethoven Quartet, and Shirinsky was the quartet's cellist. In 1946, Shostakovich received the Stalin Prize, given for outstanding achievement in literature, art, and science, for this piano trio.

Mary I. Arlin  
14 September 2006

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