

A photograph of Benjamin Zander, an older man with white hair, wearing a dark suit and a white bow tie. He is captured in a dynamic pose, holding a baton with both hands and looking intently towards the left. The background is dark, and the lighting highlights his face and the baton. A large, stylized, light blue number '5' is positioned behind the text on the right side of the image.

Shostakovich

Benjamin Zander

Live from Carnegie Hall

Boston Philharmonic
Youth Orchestra

BOSTON PHILHARMONIC YOUTH ORCHESTRA

Benjamin Zander *conductor*
*Shaping Future Leaders
Through Music*

DIMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH (1906–1975)
SYMPHONY NO. 5 IN D MINOR, OP. 47

1. Discussion on Symphony No. 5 7:29
2. Moderato – Allegro non troppo 17:20
3. Allegretto 5:27
4. Largo 14:31
5. Allegro non troppo 11:59

Total Running Time: 56 minutes

Go behind the scenes as the BPYO
prepares for its Carnegie Hall debut at
www.tbccom

Recorded at

Carnegie Hall, New York City, USA
9 December 2013

Produced by

James Blachly

Recorded live by

Jerry Bruck with Michael Karas

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DIMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH (1906–1975)
SYMPHONY NO. 5 IN D MINOR, OP. 47

*An artist-barbarian with a drowsy brush
Blackens over the painting of a genius,
And his lawless drawing
Scribbles over it meaninglessly.*

*But with the years the alien paints
Flake off like old scales;
The creation of the genius appears
Before us in its former beauty.*

*Thus the delusions fall away
From my worn-out soul,
And there spring up within it
Visions of original, pure days*

— Alexander Pushkin

The above poem, *Rebirth*, was set to music by Shostakovich in December 1936 as the opening of his Four Romances on Poems by Pushkin, Op. 46. Eleven months earlier

Shostakovich had, on Stalin's instructions, been savagely attacked for the supposedly pornographic and modernist excesses of his opera, *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*. This famous *Pravda* article appeared under the title 'Muddle Instead of Music'. The various attacks that followed included an article condemning his ballet *The Limpid Stream*, as well as a number of more or less public threats. There were also threats transmitted privately through 'friends' and colleagues. The composer was all too aware that his life was in danger. We are told that at this time and for some time afterwards Shostakovich, like others at that unhappy period, took to sleeping by the door of his flat; he did not wish the children to be woken by his being arrested in the middle of the night.

During all of 1936 and most of 1937 he was under immense pressure. On the one hand, this was a time when, in Anna Akhmatova's words (from a poem dedicated to Shostakovich), 'the last friends had turned away their eyes', and many of his colleagues

were behaving almost as though he did not exist. On the other hand there was a clear atmosphere of expectation on the part of the authorities, who were waiting for the composer to humiliate himself, to admit his crimes and declare himself ready to knuckle down to the business of writing only the music that others had deemed he should write. It was against this sombre background that he sat down to compose his Fifth Symphony. And it was against this background too that after his new work had been given a triumphant first performance on 21 November 1937, it was famously, although anonymously, described as ‘A Soviet artist’s practical creative reply to just criticism’.

We have moved a long way from the days where audiences (and, even more, conductors) apparently imagined that the finale of this Fifth Symphony was indeed just a vulgarly optimistic apotheosis, a craven celebration of Stalinist power. We can feel the obvious truth of Shostakovich’s own comment (reported by Solomon Volkov in *Testimony*) that:

I think it’s clear to everyone what happens in the Fifth. The rejoicing is forced, created under a threat, as in Boris Godunov. It’s as if someone were beating you with a stick and saying: ‘Your business is rejoicing, your business is rejoicing’, and you rise, shakily, and go off muttering, ‘Our business is rejoicing, our business is rejoicing’. People who came to the premiere of the Fifth in the best of moods wept.

We can also now see that there might well be some truth in the report that Shostakovich himself agreed to the subtitle ‘A Soviet artist’s practical creative reply to just criticism’. It would have been utterly characteristic of this supremely ironic man to have done so. The symphony is indeed his awe-inspiringly creative reply to criticism, as well as being the only reply that was practically possible for him. As for those adjectives ‘Soviet’ and ‘just’, their tawdry hollowness is now as audible as the similar hollowness of the march in the

symphony's finale.

To anyone who already knew Shostakovich's music and who heard this work at its first performance under Yevgeny Mravinsky in Leningrad in November 1937, it must have been clear even from the opening notes that here was an artist who had entered upon a new field of experience, a new way of listening and a new way of making other people listen. After the childlike brilliance of the First Symphony, the experimental uproar of *The Nose* and the Second and Third Symphonies, and the intoxicated inventiveness and melodrama of *The Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* (not to mention the Fourth Symphony, which as yet no one had heard), here was something different again; a symphonism overpowering in the precision and unity of its form and in the simultaneous concision and profusion of its detail, utterly original in its grasp of thematic identity and contrast as well as in its manipulation of extended development and long-term harmonic structure, while

at the same time (and for the first time in this composer's work) engaging with the greatest of models in our musical culture: with Mahler (with his Sixth and Ninth Symphonies especially), and, through Mahler, with Beethoven.

The first movement begins with music that is both a slow introduction and the symphony's exposition ('exposing', incidentally, the material not only of the first movement, but, as it later turns out, of the other three as well). Quite near the very opening, just after the first four bars or so of jagged dotted rhythms, there begins a rocking accompaniment in the lower strings over which the first violins enter with the symphony's first quiet suggestion of a melody, a descent from A to D, but the fourth note of the phrase is not an E natural (which our ears would expect) but an unexpected E flat. One need not be a musical analyst to feel the power and logic of the way in which the composer takes the listener on a journey from the bitter-sweet experience of a single 'wrong' note to the bitter-sweet experience of

a whole, complex, but profoundly organized, symphonic world.

In a classical symphony, a slow introduction would typically lead to the fast music of the first movement proper. And so it happens here, except that, as the composer has already introduced us to his main themes and ideas, the fast music, towards which the slow music gradually and subtly accelerates, turns out to be already the movement's development section. Such a direct physical play with our conventional expectations of the rhetoric of symphonic architecture was something that was subsequently to become typical of the mature Shostakovich.

Incidentally, one of the most carefully organized aspects of this symphony is the matter of the measurement of pulse. The composer took extraordinary care with his metronome specifications to indicate how the inexorable acceleration towards catastrophe is to be achieved in performance. Interestingly the scherzo, in A minor and marked 'Allegretto', sets off at $\text{♩} = 138$,

which is exactly the same as the speed of the climax of the first movement's development; in other words, the scherzo is taking off from the point where that development had left off. And although the quite new character of the second movement (with its almost startling likeness to a Mahlerian Ländler) might seem a long way from the world of the first movement, as Shostakovich begins to twist and turn his delirious fragments of triple-time dance music, they begin to yield up echoes and memories of the earlier music.

For the slow movement in F sharp minor, Shostakovich takes the unusual step of dividing all the violins into three equal parts, as well as dividing the violas and cellos each into two parts. The resulting eight-part string texture (including the double basses) is what gives the string writing of this 'Largo' its peculiar feeling of mass and sonority. Like the thematic material of the scherzo, the material of this movement, although it grows into a sonata structure of a kind, also holds our

attention by suggesting a network of affinities and connections with the themes of the first movement. In particular the descending five-note phrase with its bitter-sweet E flat from near the beginning of the whole work reappears here, changing itself into a whole variety of new guises.

The last movement begins with that famous march ‘as though someone were beating you with a stick and saying: “Your business is rejoicing, your business is rejoicing”.’ As in the first movement, Shostakovich takes tremendous care to construct a precise and calculated acceleration through his metronome indications. It is at the height of acceleration that the character of this music suddenly changes. On paper at this moment there is a further acceleration, but the real effect of the music is, if not actually slower, at any rate something akin to that of a translation into another dimension of time. All around us, the atmosphere is suddenly gentle, spacious and lilting; the horror and the bombast has ebbed

away. And the high strings are heard rocking backwards and forwards on two notes.

This rocking figure, a gentle oscillation on two notes, is an idea that recurs again and again in Shostakovich’s work, and is usually a reference to one of the most famous moments in Russian music, a moment from one of Shostakovich’s favourite works, Mussorgsky’s *Boris Godunov*. The moment in the opera from which the figure comes is the opening of the monastery scene, where the curtain rises to reveal the chronicler-monk Pimen writing at his desk. The rocking seems to suggest the old man’s hand moving across the parchment page. Pimen tells us (and here Mussorgsky sets almost exactly Pushkin’s words) that his task is almost done; that in his chronicle he has set out all that has happened in his age so that future generations may read the truth of the crimes of tyrants and the sufferings of the ordinary people. Pimen regards his work as not merely history, but a vessel of judgment.

This characteristically Russian view of the political and moral responsibilities

of someone who writes things down, was probably first enunciated by Pushkin here in this very scene. Amongst Russian musicians and music-lovers it has become almost commonplace to describe Shostakovich's works as not merely music, but part of a continuous moral chronicle. We know from the accounts of his friends that Shostakovich himself came to see his work in this light. So the reference to Pimen in his cell can be seen as a signal that the composer is about to tell us something.

In fact, what Shostakovich tells us is two things. Firstly he begins quietly and inexorably to draw into the foreground of our attention memories of ideas from the symphony's first movement. In the second place, he begins to make comparisons between those memories and other curiously similar memories of musical images from that little Pushkin song, *Rebirth*, which he had written only a few months before, and whose text is quoted at the head of this note.

When the Fifth Symphony was first

performed, no one had yet heard the Pushkin song. Therefore, either the composer intended his references to the song as an entirely private message to himself, or he intended them, like Pimen's chronicle, to become clear only later, to later generations. In either event, what is evident is that beneath the central section of this finale there is an implied text. The first fragmentary references are to the second of the song's three verses. This is the verse which tells how, with the passing of time, the crude daubings of the barbarian will dry and flake off like old scales. The beauty of the original painting, which had been obliterated by the barbarian, will become visible once more.

Gradually these sketchy references to the song's second verse transform themselves into the clearer features of the third verse, 'Thus the delusions fall away | From my worn-out soul', until finally, at the point just before the return of the brutal march from the beginning of the movement, the strings spread out into a radiant chord of B flat major over which the

harp can be heard playing almost the very music that, in the song, the piano plays to accompany the words, 'And there spring up within it, Visions of original, pure days'.

So what did the composer do with the song's first verse, with its description of the artist-barbarian crudely daubing over the painting of a genius? The opening notes of the song, setting the words 'An artist-barbarian,' are in fact exactly the same as the opening notes of this finale, the main theme of the march that begins and ends it. In other words, this march is the march of the artist-barbarian himself. It takes no great imagination to realize who, in Shostakovich's mind, that great barbarian was, daubing crudely over the creations of others and obliterating the beauty in his path. If this music is played as it should be, following the composer's precise and detailed instructions, then indeed its meaning will be clear: the march will seem like a gross and hideous act of obliteration. We do not have to know the words of Pushkin's poem to be moved by the weight of the catastrophe.

It will seem almost incredible that anyone could ever have been musically insensitive enough to have supposed that this music suggested the smallest capitulation to the demands of a tyrant.

And yet, if we do listen to the words as well, if we do lend our ears to the necessarily secret message (to himself as much as to others) that Shostakovich in 1937 hid beneath the thunder of his music, we will find, oddly and ironically enough, that there is a quality of affirmation at the end of this symphony, albeit an affirmation of a kind utterly other than the one that was being demanded of him. For Pushkin's original words, the words to which Shostakovich had turned at a moment of extreme darkness, are words of triumph, words of trust that, like the chronicle of Pimen itself, the real work of art will survive to re-emerge in time with its original qualities, its 'beauty, truth and rarity', as unsullied as on its first day. It is part of the strangeness of Shostakovich's finale that no amount of histrionic tub-thumping in D major on the part

of the enraged barbarian can quite obliterate the radiance of that earlier moment, minutes before, when Shostakovich had conjured up in his own mind his private memories of a tiny Pushkin song, *Rebirth*, written at the very beginning of what was a new period, a new way of thinking and feeling, both in his life and in his music.

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A NOTE FROM THE CONDUCTOR

On 28 January 1936, *Pravda*, the official Communist Party newspaper, published an editorial entitled ‘Muddle Instead of Music’. It ran in part: ‘The listener is flabbergasted from the first moment of the opera by an intentionally ungainly, muddled flood of sounds. Snatches of melody, embryos of musical phrases, drown, escape and drown once more in crashing, gnashing and screeching. Following this “music” is

difficult, remembering it is impossible.’ The subject was Shostakovich’s internationally successful opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*, and the author, it now appears, was none other than Stalin himself.

Overnight the 30-year-old composer’s rapidly ascending star plummeted. He came to regard himself, and to be regarded, as a doomed man, waiting with packed bags for the secret police to take him away during the night. In fact, the police never came, but the fear of official reprisals for any displeasure which his music might occasion coloured every moment of his life after that. He was never to know freedom again, except surreptitiously in some of his music.

Shostakovich withdrew the Fourth Symphony from its scheduled performance and began the composition of a fifth which had as its subtitle, ‘An artist’s practical answer to just criticism’. His intention was to reinstate himself, through this work, in the eyes of the Politburo. The Fifth Symphony did indeed do that: the first performance was

a huge success. It is anything but cheerful: the first movement is dark and foreboding, the second is ironic and brittle, and the third a deep song of sorrow. However, only the message at the end was important to the Soviets, and Shostakovich knew that. The long final movement, as they heard it, climaxed in a triumphant march, a paean of praise to the Soviet State.

The musical director conducted a faithful first performance, but for one thing. He, and a generation of conductors who followed, missing the clear indication by Shostakovich that the concluding section of the symphony was to be played at $\text{♩} = 184$, a very slow tempo, conducted it at twice the indicated speed. One edition printed in Russia changed the metronome marking to $\text{♩} = 184$, doubling the tempo because the editor assumed that Shostakovich had had made an error. However, when the final march is played at the tempo indicated in the score, the joyful celebration heard at the faster tempo turns into a scream of pain, a crying out against a relentless and

inhuman force. This was Shostakovich's message to the world, one that for all his fear he knew he could risk encoding into the text, confident that the eagerness of the Soviet authorities to hear what they wanted to hear would keep them from hearing the subversive message that was actually there.

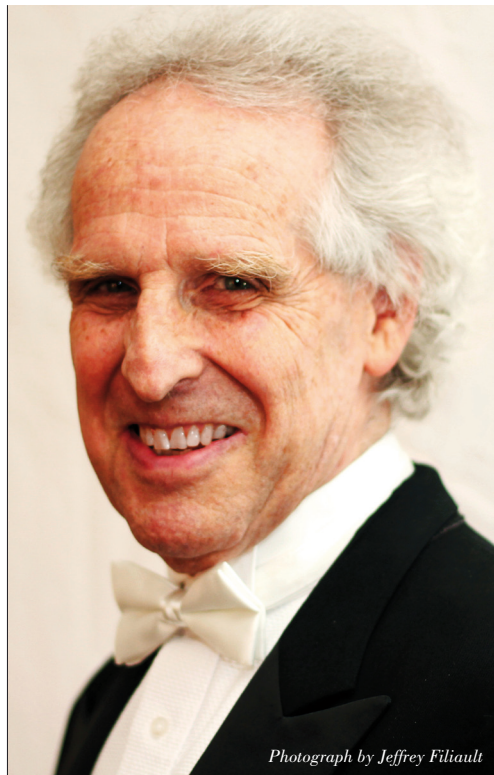
Years after the first performance, the great Rumanian conductor Sergiu Celibidache wrote a letter to Shostakovich from Switzerland asking the question: 'Is the tempo marking $\text{♩} = 184$ correct at the end of the Fifth Symphony?' He received a postcard from Moscow, unsigned. On it was a single word: 'Correct'.

© Benjamin Zander

Testimony is claimed to be Shostakovich's memoirs, published in 1979 by the Russian musicologist Solomon Volkov. The authenticity of the book has been disputed.

BENJAMIN ZANDER

Music was Benjamin Zander's life at a very early age. When Zander was nine he was already composing and by twelve he was studying under Benjamin Britten and Imogen Holst. He left home at the age of fifteen to study for five years with the great Spanish cellist Gaspar Cassado in Florence and at the State Academy in Cologne. After completing his degree at London University, he went to the United States on a Harkness Fellowship and has made his home in Boston ever since. There, as conductor of the Boston Philharmonic since its formation in 1978, and a guest conductor of numerous orchestras, he has become the centre of an intense, at times almost cult-like following. In his case, however, the followers are not starry-eyed acolytes, but rather some of the most well-informed musical intellectuals in America. For over forty years, beginning with Michael Steinberg's passionate advocacy on his behalf in the pages of the *Boston Globe*,



Photograph by Jeffrey Filiault

critics and public have been united in their praise of Zander's interpretations of the central repertory.

For 45 years he was on the faculty of the New England Conservatory of Music, where his class on interpretation attracted students from all over the world. Zander travels extensively giving masterclasses, conducting guest performances and touring with his own recently formed Boston Philharmonic Youth Orchestra. He has established an international reputation as a guest conductor and has conducted the Israel Philharmonic for three consecutive years, and conducted orchestras as diverse as the Bournemouth Symphony, the Scottish and Irish National Orchestras, the St Petersburg Philharmonic, the Malaysian Symphony, the St Louis Symphony Orchestra, the Indianapolis Symphony, the Youth Orchestra of the Americas, the Tulsa Symphony Orchestra, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and has appeared with the National Youth Orchestras of New Zealand, Australia and Venezuela.

Zander has a unique relationship with the Philharmonia Orchestra (London), with which he is currently recording a series of Beethoven and Mahler symphonies. Beethoven's Fifth and Seventh Symphonies, and Mahler's First, Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth and Ninth Symphonies have been released thus far. Each of these recordings includes a full-length discussion with Zander explaining the music. *High Fidelity* named the recording of Mahler's Sixth as 'the best classical recording of 2002'. The recording of Mahler's Third was awarded the 'Critics' Choice' by the German Record Critics' Award Association in 2004, and their recordings of Mahler's Ninth Symphony and Bruckner's 5th Symphony were nominated for Grammy Awards for Best Orchestral Performance.

Zander has travelled the world lecturing to organizations on leadership. He has appeared several times as a keynote speaker at the World Economic Forum in Davos, where he was presented with the Crystal

Award for ‘Outstanding Contributions in the Arts and International Relations’. The best-selling book, *The Art of Possibility*, co-authored with leading psychotherapist Rosamund Zander, has been translated into seventeen languages.

In 2002, Zander was awarded the Caring Citizen of the Humanities Award by the International Council for Caring Communities at the United Nations. In 2007, he was awarded the Golden Door award by the International Institute of Boston for his ‘outstanding contribution to American society’ as a United States citizen of foreign birth. In March of 2009, he was awarded an honorary doctorate from New England Conservatory of Music, and in 2012 he was awarded Faculty Emeritus status at that institution.

Please visit benjaminzander.com for more information, and TED.com to hear his influential presentation on the transformative power of classical music.

BOSTON PHILHARMONIC *Shaping Future Leaders* *Youth Orchestra* *Through Music*

The 120 members of the Boston Philharmonic Youth Orchestra range in age from 12 to 21, and are chosen through a highly selective audition process. They reside or attend school throughout New England and come together on Saturday afternoons for sectionals and full orchestra rehearsals at the Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology, in Boston’s South End.

Now in its third season, the BPYO has already established itself as a significant feature in the cultural and educational fabric of Boston and beyond. The BPYO made its Carnegie Hall debut in December 2013. The *New York Times* review of that concert noted that the members of BPYO ‘play with a maturity and cohesion well beyond their years’, and described their performance of Shostakovich’s Fifth Symphony as ‘a brilliantly played, fervently felt account, enriched with silken strings, robust brass

and eloquent solos’.

The inaugural 2012-13 season of the BPYO culminated in a 5-city concert tour of the Netherlands, with a final performance of Mahler’s Second Symphony in Amsterdam’s Concertgebouw. In the course of the 12-day tour, the orchestra received two superlative five-star reviews in national papers, collaborated with an orchestra of 600 12-year-olds, and was featured in the International Koorbiënnale Haarlem.

The BPYO’s motto is ‘shaping future leaders through music’. Complementing their musical assignments, BPYO members receive weekly leadership assignments. The orchestra members carry on a dialogue with Benjamin Zander through ‘white sheets’, wherein they are invited to reflect on the leadership assignments, and offer feedback about the rehearsal process and their musical and life experiences. These conversations often lead to stimulating discussions on personal leadership and effective contribution.

BPYO members participate as musical mentors in the Crescendo! program of the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra, working with younger musicians in local schools and El Sistema-inspired programs. At the end of each of the first two seasons BPYO co-hosted the Annual El Sistema Greater Boston showcase, which featured a side-by-side performance with musicians from BPYO and the Conservatory Lab Charter School.

**BOSTON PHILHARMONIC
YOUTH ORCHESTRA**
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Photograph by Steve Dunwell

VIOLIN I

Abby Adams
Nikhil Bajaj
Francesca Bass
Yuki Beppu
Courtney Chang
Hyunnew Choi
Julia Churchill
Tristan Flores
Joshua Henderson
Becca Kasdan
Benjamin Lyo
Eric Mrugala
Greta Myatieva
Dillon Robb
Ann-Frances Rokosa
Max Tan*
Leland Wu
Faye Yang
Hikaru Yonezaki
Mitsuru Yonezaki
Sarah Yu
Ilana Zaks

VIOLIN II

Daniel Cetlin
Lilia Chang

Emily Chen
Roland Clark
Benjamin Covell
Laura Dynes
Isabel Espinosa
Njioma Greivous
Mirella Gruesser-Smith
Sing Hong Lee
Hoyeon (Kelly) Lew
Aditya Mahadevan
Susanna Monroe
Joshua Newburger*
Lauryn Phinney
September Rose
Ryan Shannon
Walker Stroud
Michelle Tan
Amy Thacker
William Wang
Sasha Yakub

VIOLA

Harrison Adams
Natalie Alper-Leroux*
Ella Belina
Kenneth Chen
Thomas Cooper

Raymond Dineen
Emily Edelstein
Nicholas Gallitano
Christian Hoschek-Santillan
Gerald Karni
Nathan Kwak
Grace Laminack
Wei Li
Rebecca Long
Julia McLean
Julia Wells

CELLO

Benjamin Adams
Raphael Boden
Graham Boswell
Emma Churchill
Jonah Ellsworth
Katherine Haroldson
McKinley James
Leland Ko*
Lev Mamuya
Rei Otake
Nicolas Sterner
Keith Williams
Lisa Yasui
Eric Zaks

BASS

Justin Cheeseman
Eric Farnan*
James Hotchkiss
Daniel Klingsberg
John Krause
Aidan Phipps
Peter Walsh

FLUTE

Melissa Cheng
Michelle Sung*
Katie Velasquez

PICCOLO

Lily Josefsberg

OBOE

Nicole Caligiuri
Mark Debski
Jonathan Gentry*
Nicholas Tisherman

CLARINET

Diego Bacigalupe
Keum Yong Lee*
Brittnee Pool

E♭ CLARINET

Brittnee Pool

BASSOON

Cheryl Fries*
Rachel Parker
Kai Locke
Tylor Thomas

CONTRABASSOON

Rachel Parker

FRENCH HORN

Nick Auer
Evan Gross
Gabriel Lesnick
Mackenzie Newell
Megan Shusta*
Justin Smith
Stephanie Smith

TRUMPET

Arthur Abbate
Joseph Blumberg
Elmer Churampi
Daniel Katz
Brian Olson*

TROMBONE

Taylor Blanton*
Jicheng Zhang

BASS TROMBONE

Zachary Haas

TUBA

Daniel Sanchez

TIMPANI &
PERCUSSION

Brandon Ilaw*
Andrew Kim
Noah Rosen
John Stapleton
Carley Yanuck

PIANO & CELESTA

Hunter Bennett

HARP

Anna DeLoi
Charles Overton

*indicates principal

A LETTER FROM OUR MUSIC DIRECTOR

Since we gave our final Boston area concert at the end of last season, we have continued on our grand musical adventure. On the 16 June we set off on a five-city tour of the Netherlands. We called it a ‘Tour Of Possibility’. We took only four chaperones to ‘look after’ 116 young musicians, aged 12 to 21. How could we get away with so few adults to mind so many teenagers in a foreign country – especially in Amsterdam? We had no need to worry, because we knew that every one of the students would be guided by their love of the music, their respect for each other, and the responsibility they all felt for the orchestra and the magnificent concert venues in which they were privileged to play.

As we predicted, there was not a single incident that needed the intervention of an adult – only glorious music-making for wildly appreciative audiences; deepening friendships and the awe and joy that

comes from experiencing the beautiful and unfamiliar sights, sounds and people of a new culture. Our eyes were shining and so were theirs!

That everybody behaved so perfectly throughout the twelve days of the tour was not a matter of chance. All the players had been chosen not only for their musical accomplishment, but also for their spirit and character. Moreover, since the first rehearsal, the previous September, everyone had been working on the leadership assignments that I gave out each week.

These assignments are designed to open the possibility for young people to be aware, awake and to take responsibility for everything that happens in their lives. They are designed to train them as communicators, to bring to the world the passion, intensity and joy they feel while playing music with others. We are training them to be ambassadors for a way of life: a way of life that is not bogged down by doubt and criticism, but one that speaks of

opportunities to enhance and to contribute to the lives of others, and to walk with spirit and love, whatever the circumstances.

Perhaps the best way of knowing a youth orchestra is through the eyes of those who have left it behind. Here are some ‘white sheets’ written after the tour, by members of the orchestra who have moved on to further education elsewhere. It is these eloquent communications and the certain knowledge that these young people will go on to make a profound difference in their new communities that inspire everyone involved in the BPYO to pour all of themselves into creating the best possible musical, educational, and social environment.

Hello Mr. Zander,

Greetings from Korea! I'm living here now on a Fulbright Scholarship, and have been in Seoul for about three weeks. I'm listening to the recording of our La Valse and reminiscing about my experience in BPYO and how it

revolutionized my approach to music and life in general. I joke with my friends that I now preach the “gospel of classical music” to everyone I meet. I love discovering the new ways in which music brings people together, and the ways that music helps me to discover the world anew each day.

Your assignments to approach the world with more generosity than you think you are capable of, and to “walk with spirit and love”, have carried me very far in a culture that is so far and different from my own. Language often prevents me from properly communicating warmth and acceptance with those I meet, but maintaining an attitude of love and openness with everyone creates friendships, connections and opportunities where they could not otherwise exist. Beginning from a place of love generates love and a certain amount of forgiveness and patience in new acquaintances, and walking with spirit and love is now as much a matter of survival as it is part of my mission to make

the most of the blessings I have been given in life. I wake up every morning now and think of your assignments. Though I learned them in an artistic context, they continue to serve me well in my academic endeavors abroad.

I can't help but think that if everyone walked with spirit and love and openness to fellow human beings how different our world would look. I never would have thought at this time last year that I would have such a life-changing experience in a youth orchestra. Now I can't imagine life without it. I have no doubt that BPYO will be a prominent feature in Boston's culture and the world of music for years to come.

*With love,
Chelsea Carlson*

And from Lucinda Chiu, who attends Johns Hopkins University:

The 11 day tour through the Netherlands has been the greatest orchestral experience I have ever had. And, I'm sure that you have heard this statement many times, from other members of the group.

But why I enjoyed this tour so much, beyond the incredible and emotional concerts we put on throughout the country, was the fact that you allowed us to be adults on this trip. You trusted us enough to make rational decisions and to look out for each other. Never have I gone on tour, with any group, where we are given free time to explore the city we're in, on our own. In fact, most of the time, we're stuck visiting sites in a large group, where we can't even hear, much less see, the tour guide. Yet, it was during these moments, that I was truly able to experience the culture of the country.

I fondly remember this one free afternoon we were given. A friend, Ella, and I decided to go explore Haarlem, and we had heard that there was a famous castle ruin, about a half hour walk from the hostel. Despite the rain, we asked the front desk manager at the hostel for directions, and using a map that was completely in Dutch, we left to find this historical site. Along the way, we saw the cutest houses, and talked to some of the nicest people, who all knew varying levels of English! By the time we actually got to the castle itself, we were so thankful to finally find shelter from the downpour in all of its nooks and crannies through wandering and exploring as we pleased.

Thus, all in all, thank you for these possibilities and opportunities. Thank you for helping to make this tour happen. Thank you for coaching us each Saturday and for believing in our ability to perform pieces like Mahler 2 and Ein Heldenleben. And most of all, thank you for giving us the opportunity

to go out and find our own possibilities to experience.

As I leave for college in less than two weeks, I will take all that I've learned, experienced, and seen with me. I will never forget this year with the Boston Philharmonic Youth Orchestra.

*With love,
Lucinda*

From Francesca Bass, who played an exquisite Mozart concerto for the BPYO and has gone on to the Cleveland Institute of Music:

Dear Mr. Zander

I think about BPYO all the time, and there are frequent moments when I am very sad that I will no longer be in that incredible orchestra. The past few years working with you have been really, really beautiful and I feel that I truly found myself because of your teaching and inspiration. You always give me so much confidence to be ME! I didn't know who I was until you gave me the courage to open my heart. I am not sure if you remember, but on the BYPO tour in 2011, you had lunch with Yuki and me in Bratislava at an outdoor cafe. Yuki asked you why you have so much energy. You said, "Well, I love to be alive." That was really beautiful.

You have shared so many incredible and moving stories with me, and I feel as though

little things in life appear much brighter than they used to. Nature is more sublime, music is more powerful and life is more special. You are the person who encouraged me to be passionate, and that has changed my life completely.

I cannot tell you how much I will miss you next year. But I am confident to embrace what is to come in my life more than I ever thought I would be, and that is because you have been such a big part of my life.

*Love,
Francesca*



From Njeri Grevious, now at Yale:

Dear Mr. Zander,

I have never experienced anything more life-changing and glorious than being in this orchestra with you. I have grown not only musically but also spiritually. Your positive life lessons have affected my perspective deeply. Thank you. I think the moment that everyone in our orchestra felt the powerful energy of this new community you created was when we played the opening E flat of the Ein Heldenleben at the very first rehearsal last September. It was clear that this venture was going to be something great. All I could think about in that magical moment was: I am home. With BPYO, I feel myself shining more brightly and experiencing every day more fully. [I have also become more appreciative of everything around me. The cathedral performance in Haarlem, for instance, truly evoked such deep spiritual feelings. Like you,

I am an atheist, but when I allowed myself to appreciate and embrace the spirituality in Mahler 2, I felt in awe.] Life really is about trying to enjoy every moment, every feeling, every smile and every sound. When I play music with BPYO I feel more alive than in any other context, because I am connected to the collective positive energy of us all. What I see are hundreds of beautiful shining eyes. Your passion shows us how to be positive and your passion is something that I believe everyone in our orchestra absorbs. You have shown the world what possibility can do by building something more than just an orchestra from scratch: you have built an entire thriving community.

Thank you again for showing me the beauty of possibility that you demonstrate so well and that has opened up my life. My eyes are shining!

*Love,
Njeri*

The following letter was delivered to Benjamin Zander on the occasion of his 75th birthday by 17-year-old Anna Deloi, who was about to complete her seventh season as harpist, first in the New England Conservatory's Youth Philharmonic Orchestra and then in the Boston Philharmonic Youth Orchestra:

Dear Mr. Zander,

It's taken me a while to begin writing this white sheet. Birthdays are a time for gifts – but what on earth could I offer you today that would even begin to compare to what you've given me over the past seven years?

I still remember our first program together: I was all of eleven years old. I'd never played in an orchestra, and I had the glamorous position of assistant second harp. But counting measures in those rehearsals was the highlight of my week. I used to run out of Brown Hall beaming, dance my way up the stairs of the Huntington parking garage

and bounce in my seat the whole way home, talking my parents' ears off about what it sounded and felt like to play in BYPO. There was something magic in the atmosphere you created there that I could never quite put into words.

I was lucky enough to join your orchestra and learn your philosophy before I knew anything else. You taught me – as an inexperienced, over-enthusiastic pre-teen – what making music can and should be about. It was only when I got older and stumbled into other ensembles and competitions that I realized that classical music is not always approached from a place of possibility. I saw cruel, cutthroat competitiveness and crippling insecurity. It shocked me! I don't know if I would have been able to survive those aspects of music if I had not always had a home to fall back on each Saturday afternoon – a place to be recharged by your energy and joy.

You've taken me around the world, to places I never dreamed I'd travel in my young life.

I've grown up in a tiny, rural town. Life here is confined by picket fences and people rarely learn to dream of the world beyond our town lines. But by entering your world each Saturday, mine exploded in new color. Do you remember the "pilgrimage" we made together, all the way from Mahler's hometown to his grave? Do you remember planting him a rose? And then this past summer we got a chance to finish our journey in Mahler's home-away-from-home, the Netherlands, and to be reborn through the Resurrection Symphony. I feel like I've had 100 once-in-a-lifetime opportunities with you already, and I'm barely through high school!

And speaking of once-in-a-lifetimes, there's the Ginastera concerto – the piece we've been talking about since my first days in your orchestra. I remember you telling me, when I was still far too young to tackle the piece: "One day we'll do the Ginastera together". I hardly dared to believe you. When I finally began working on the concerto, you were the

only conductor I could imagine performing it with. My entire interpretation has been shaped by that dream – by the thought of your passion and by the immense talent of my colleagues in the BPYO. This concert in May means so much more to me than just another performance opportunity. As my last concert in the BPYO before I leave for college, it is also our journey coming full circle: a way to say goodbye, with love and gratitude, to everything we've experienced together.

So what can I give you for your birthday that compares to all that?

For now, I know of nothing except to live as you've always taught me: with unbridled optimism, immense generosity and infectious joy. Next year I'll dive headfirst into the beginning of adulthood and it is my mission to enact change through my art. Like you, I want to make my life and music meaningful; I want to spread inspiration, help others and transform societies. I'm honored to be a ripple

in the pool of your legacy – one of so many students, colleagues and friends that you have touched. Though I can't say yet what I will achieve in the years to come, I know that the possibilities are endless. And I promise that I will try to live, and create, in a way that would make you proud.

Thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for everything. I look forward to the rest of this season, to an exciting future, and to a hopefully lifelong relationship with you.

And, of course, happy birthday!

*Love always,
Anna*



Photograph by Steve Dunwell

REVIEWS OF THE PERFORMANCE

HERE, THE SOUND OF TRIUMPH TAKES ON A DIFFERENT TONE

Boston Philharmonic Youth
Orchestra at Carnegie Hall

By Steve Smith

Published in the *New York Times*
on 10 December 2013

There's a good chance that a vast majority of musicians who have come up through this country's student orchestras and concert bands have stormed through the inexorable finale of Shostakovich's Symphony No. 5. Far fewer musicians of any age will have played the famous conclusion in the manner that the conductor Benjamin Zander molded it during a concert by the Boston Philharmonic Youth Orchestra at Carnegie Hall on Monday evening.

Mr. Zander, also an admired pedagogue and motivational speaker, is renowned for coaxing professional-quality work from

amateurs and for wringing fresh insights from even the most familiar works. Both characteristics surfaced during the New York debut of this ensemble, established last year as an offshoot of Mr. Zander's admired Boston Philharmonic Orchestra. The members of the youth orchestra, ages 12 to 21, play with a maturity and cohesion well beyond their years, a point made in numerous audio and video clips on the ensemble's web page.

In the Shostakovich, especially the finale, Mr. Zander is a stickler for the composer's tempo markings and note values as indicative of the expressive intent. The movement starts at 88 to the quarter note, mounts to a feverish 184, then retreats back to 92 – at which point notes double in length. Thus, the ostensibly triumphal coda, Mr. Zander explained before the performance, is meant to sound beaten down and labored: points missed outright even in benchmark interpretations.

Here, those qualities were enacted

convincingly at the close of a brilliantly played, fervently felt account, enriched with silken strings, robust brass and eloquent solos by the principal winds and the concertmaster, Max Tan.

Whoops, whistles and flash bulbs at the end attested to an abundance of family and friends in the audience, but the concert was one that any music lover would savor.

A STUNNING REVELATION FROM BPYO

By Peter Mark

Published in *The Boston Musical*

Intelligencer on 20 November 2013

When one thinks of Youth Orchestras, one is prepared to make allowances in comparison to mature performing organizations, but I assure you that no allowances were necessary at any point in this riveting and fully professional performance – not in the ensemble and articulation of the string ensemble in

the breathless opening motive or many note-filled and exposed string passages throughout Verdi's *La forza del destino* Overture which opened the program, – nor in the intonation, tone color, and accuracy of singing line in the treacherous high-lying viola section first movement solo of the closing Shostakovich 5th Symphony. We have all heard professional orchestras struggle under these particular challenges on occasion. The Boston Philharmonic Youth Orchestra sailed through them with ease, finesse, energy and musical line – all under the alert alchemy of its obviously beloved and respected Maestro Benjamin Zander who was totally in charge throughout. I suspect the many key musicians named in the program, who prepared the different sections of the orchestra, also contributed heavily to the confidence and skillful performances of the evening.

The supreme and stunning performance of the evening was undisputedly the

desolate and gripping reading of the Shostakovich 5th by Zander and his BPYO. Starting with a perfectly inflected series of declamatory opening statements from the string sections which each maintained appropriate individual vocal line and shape, woodwind and brass choirs responded with equal ensemble, precision, and increasing passion as the movement gathered force and dynamic and then tapered back into its original carefully gauged despondency. Zander's well-chosen tempi and leadership was in evidence throughout the concert, but nowhere more conspicuous than in the perfectly poised and buoyant second movement dance-like quality with its tartly inflected violin solo played by the Shostakovich concertmaster, Max Tan (there were several gifted concertmasters!); in the various prismatic changes of the somber introverted third movement; and the more aggressive sailing, wailing, and striding of the final movement. His pre-performance explanation and

resolution of the controversy over the final tempo marking which ends the piece was reinforced by the conviction and rightness of the whole performance by BPYO, which could hold its own against that of any orchestra in the world.

ALSO AVAILABLE ON LINN



**Benjamin Zander
& Philharmonia
Orchestra and Chorus**
Mahler: Symphony No. 2
'Resurrection'



**Robin Ticciati
& Scottish Chamber
Orchestra**
Schumann:
The Symphonies



**Trevor Pinnock
& Royal Academy of
Music Soloists**
Mahler:
Symphonie No. 4



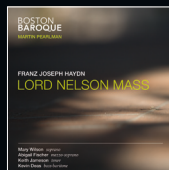
**Trevor Pinnock
& Royal Academy of
Music Soloists**
Bruckner:
Symphonie No. 2



**Alexander Lazarev
& Royal Scottish
National Orchestra**
Shostakovich:
Symphony No. 11



**Robin Ticciati
& Scottish Chamber
Orchestra**
Berlioz:
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