CONCERT PROGRAM Saturday, March 5, 2016, 8:00pm Sunday, March 6, 2016, 3:00pm

Gilbert Varga, conductor Denis Kozhukhin, piano

TCHAIKOVSKY (1840-1893)	<i>Hamlet</i> , Fantasy Overture after Shakespeare, op. 67 (1888)
SHOSTAKOVICH (1906-1975)	Piano Concerto No. 2 in F major, op. 102 (1957) Allegro Andante— Allegro Denis Kozhukhin, piano
	INTERMISSION
PROKOFIEV (1891-1953)	Selections from Romeo and Juliet, op. 64 (1936) The Montagues and the Capulets Juliet—The Young Girl The Death of Tybalt Dance Romeo and Juliet before Parting Dance of the Maids from the Antilles Romeo at Juliet's Grave

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

These concerts are part of the Wells Fargo Advisors Orchestral Series.

Gilbert Varga is the Daniel, Mary, and Francis O'Keefe Guest Conductor.

Denis Kozhukhin is the Ruth and Ed Trusheim Guest Artist.

The concert of Saturday, March 5, is underwritten in part by a generous gift from Ms. Lesley A. Waldheim.

The concert of Sunday, March 6, is underwritten in part by a generous gift from Mr. and Mrs. David L. Steward.

Pre-Concert Conversations are sponsored by Washington University Physicians.

Large print program notes are available through the generosity of the Delmar Gardens Family and are located at the Customer Service table in the foyer.

CONCERT CALENDAR

Call 314-534-1700 or visit stlsymphony.org for tickets



Cat in the Hat

David Halen





Susanna Phillips

THE ZANY WORLD OF DR. SEUSS: FAMILY CONCERT: March 13

Steven Jarvi, conductor; Really Inventive Stuff, guest artist

Use your imagination as the orchestra takes you on a wondrous musical adventure through the stories of Dr. Seuss.

HALEN PLAYS BEETHOVEN: March 18-20 Jun Märkl, conductor; David Halen, violin

BEETHOVEN Fidelio Overture **BEETHOVEN Violin Concerto** SCHUMANN Symphony No. 3, "Rhenish"

Presented by Thompson Coburn LLP Sponsored by the Thomas A. Kooyumjian Family Foundation

ST. LOUIS SYMPHONY YOUTH ORCHESTRA: March 18 Steven Jarvi, conductor; YO Concerto Competitions Winners: Aidan Ip, violin; Leah Peipert, flute

TCHAIKOVSKY Romeo and Juliet Fantasy-Overture CONUS Violin Concerto HUE Fantasy for Flute and Orchestra BERNSTEIN Symphonic Dances from West Side Story

Sponsored by St. Louis Children's Hospital

MAHLER 4: April 2-3 David Robertson, conductor; Susanna Phillips, soprano

RAVEL Mother Goose Suite VIVIER Lonely Child MAHLER Symphony No. 4

Presented by Thompson Coburn LLP



BEFORE THE SILENCE

BY EDDIE SILVA

TIMELINKS

1888

TCHAIKOVSKY

Hamlet, Fantasy Overture after Shakespeare, op. 67 George Eastman patents Kodak box camera

1936

PROKOFIEV Selections from Romeo and Juliet, op. 64 Pravda criticizes Shostakovich's opera Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District

1957

SHOSTAKOVICH

Piano Concerto No. 2 in F major, op. 102 USSR, USA, and Great Britain carry out nuclear weapons tests The St. Louis Symphony Shakespeare Festival shifts to the tragedies this week. *Hamlet* is a central achievement of the Western canon. In its hero, Shakespeare created a type—the angry young rebel, impetuous, moody; a college boy who suddenly realizes the corruption of his elders. You may have met him when he came home from his sophomore year. The Renaissance prince is a very modern, goth-dressed man.

Romeo and Juliet is, arguably, Shakespeare's first great tragedy, if not his first great play. The story of the star-cross'd lovers has captivated audiences through the centuries, the innocence of youth eternally battling the cruelties of prejudice, their love-death a constant reminder, if not redeemer, of the price paid for gross intolerance. Shakespeare touches our hearts and fires our minds.

So how to make music out of art made of words? And not just any words, but some of the most revered and memorable in the English language.

First, it helps not to know English all that well. The distance from the language was a benefit to both Tchaikovsky and Prokofiev. Take away Shakespeare's words and a musical interpretation becomes far less daunting. Music conveys the moods, the tone, the conflict, the characters, and the drama. Music makes tragedy sensate. When Hamlet speaks his last words, "The rest is silence," in the theater you are left with a scene of horror, of dead bodies strewn about. In Tchaikovsky, silence is all you are left with, and your moment with that silence before you shoo it away with applause.

Shostakovich provides a break from tragedy in the middle of these concerts. How ironic is that? Among the composers on the program, Shostakovich is the *Hamlet* man. Living amidst the terrors of Stalin and the Gulag, the composer shape-shifts and employs masks. Is his music heroic or a mockery of heroism? The first words of *Hamlet*—"Who's there?"—is a question that lingers over the character of Dmitry Shostakovich.

With the writing of his Second Piano Concerto, however, Stalin is dead and in his grave. Here's a birthday gift to the composer's 19-yearold son, the aspiring pianist Maxim. The jokester is a Hamlet pose too.

PYOTR IL'YICH TCHAIKOVSKY

Hamlet, Fantasy Overture after Shakespeare, op. 67

TO BE OR NOT TO BE The crux of the problem of making *Hamlet* into music, as David Brown– perhaps the sanest of the Tchaikovsky biographers–explains it, has to do with the complexity of the tragedy itself. Two of Tchaikovsky's most popular symphonic poems, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Francesca da Rimini*, are about fated love. Give that theme to a Hollywood composer today and he'll produce music that sounds a lot like Tchaikovsky. Strings surging, the rising and falling tumult of full orchestra, desperate cries, desperate sighs in the woodwinds. The brass signal an unavoidable fate, or Fate. Let 'er rip.

Hamlet is not that kind of tragedy. Tchaikovsky does manage a love theme in his Fantasy Overture, with Ophelia voiced as a plaintive oboe, but that surge of strings barely takes hold. A Tchaikovsky contemporary, Mily Balakirev, mocked it: "Hamlet pays compliments to Ophelia, handing her an ice cream!" But Tchaikovsky was being true to Shakespeare. Hamlet's love for Ophelia is ambivalent at best, cruel and manipulative at worst. Brown suggests that Tchaikovsky had two vastly different choices in writing a Hamletfocus solely on the single character (as Liszt does in his symphonic poem, Hamlet) or write a fullscale opera. Tchaikovsky chose another course, one more true to his character and the theme that drew him to Hamlet anyway: Fate.

Hamlet is a young man who sees his father's ghost, and that ghost tells him a horrible story of murder and betrayal. "Remember me" the ghost cries. Tchaikovsky begins his *Hamlet* with that ghost, or Fate, as the composer would have it. "It makes for a portentous beginning," Brown writes, "its first five notes later becoming a grim sign of its spectral presence." Tchaikovsky penned "To be or not to be" at this moment in the score.

Fate was a theme that darkened Tchaikovsky's imaginings throughout his brief life. You



Born

May 7, 1840, in Kamsko-Votkinsk, Russia

Died

November 6, 1893, St. Petersburg

First Performance

November 12, 1888, in St. Petersburg, Tchaikovsky conducting

STL Symphony Premiere

March 17, 1916, Max Zach conducting

Most Recent STL Symphony Performance

February 6, 1971, Walter Susskind conducting

Scoring

3 flutes piccolo 2 oboes English horn 2 clarinets 2 bassoons 4 horns 2 trumpets 2 cornets 3 trombones tuba timpani percussion strings

Performance Time

approximately 18 minutes



Born September 25, 1906, St. Petersburg,

Died

August 9, 1975, Moscow

First Performance

May 10, 1957, in Moscow; Maxim Shostakovich was the soloist, and Nikolai Anosov conducted the USSR Symphony Orchestra

STL Symphony Premiere

May 29, 1981, Seth Carlin was soloist, with Gerhardt Zimmermann conducting

Most Recent STL Symphony Performance

January 30, 2011, Kirill Gerstein was soloist, with Semyon Bychkov conducting

Scoring

solo piano 2 flutes piccolo 2 oboes 2 clarinets 2 bassoons 4 horns timpani percussion strings

Performance Time

approximately 20 minutes

hear in this work a distant march as Fortinbras approaches from the fringes of the tragedy, and an orchestral flurry as Hamlet and Laertes fight their ultimate duel. Yet that Fate theme is never far away, framing the final death scene with "the long descending scale in the cellos," as Brown describes it. A faint march, Fortinbras appraises the scene. Tchaikovsky chose a certain likeness in the Shakespearean hero he made into music, the one who won't survive, despite his craft.

DMITRY SHOSTAKOVICH

Piano Concerto No. 2 in F major, op. 102

FROM FATHER TO SON In the period known as the "thaw," Soviet artists were granted the privilege to emerge, ever so cautiously, from out of the deadly oversight of Stalin's murderous regime. Nikita Khrushchev was a different kind of leader, and though he had risen under Stalin's eye by displaying a brutality that was a requisite for advancement, he saw a PR opportunity in presenting a more enlightened Soviet Union. He would publically denounce the mass crimes of his predecessor, and would usher in a period of greater openness. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich was allowed publication, giving Soviet citizens and the world a realistic portrait of the Gulag. It was a heady, yet also wary time.

I have described Shostakovich as a *Hamlet* man, but there is one crucial aspect in which he and Shakespeare's tragic hero are most decidedly apart–Shostakovich survives. He not only survives but prospers. By playing the game so long, he at last began to be rewarded. He was the regime's international symbol of Soviet artistic greatness: a dacha, a car, the symbols of a Soviet worth were bestowed upon him. Nonetheless, one who lives decades in fear of the nighttime knock on the door, who has witnessed friends disappear from the earth, is never truly at ease. Shostakovich would never allow himself to be fully exposed.

Knowing something about the perilous existence Shostakovich lived makes the emergence of the Piano Concerto No. 2 even more remarkable. There is a lightness and a comedic quality to the whole work. A cynical sneer is nowhere in evidence. A lively bassoon opens the orchestral shenanigans, with the piano entering with single notes played by both hands. There are inside-the-family jokes in the solo part, with the composer father forcing on his talented son the finger exercises Maxim abhorred. The finale is a wild, giddy dance upon the keys.

When the composer was a youth, his father died, leaving the boy to cadge employment to help feed his family as best he could. One of those jobs was piano player for a silent movie theater. This was a desperate time for Shostakovich, one among many, but in this F-major concerto you can hear the inventiveness that kept him alive. You can imagine him improvising while watching the figures on the screen, finding joy even in the struggle to make ends meet.

A father bestows on his son a wondrous gift, which is filled with laughter. The Second Piano Concerto is sometimes disparaged as a minor work, without the gravity of Shostakovich's other great compositions of this time, such as the Symphony No. 10 or the String Quartet No. 6. Tragedy always trumps comedy when the awards are bestowed. But for joy to emerge from such pain—the songs of a spirit made free need no prize. They just need to be shared.

SERGEY PROKOFIEV

Selections from Romeo and Juliet, op. 64

BLIND AMBITION To give an idea of how politics and ambition played in Prokofiev's mind, consider his response to one of the most chilling music reviews of the 20th century. "Muddle Instead of Music," published in *Pravda* unsigned, in 1936, denounced Shostakovich for an opera that had been previously acclaimed, *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*. The criticisms were delivered from an anti-modernist, anti-Western, and anti-"formalist" stance—a litany of sins that would become the regime's dominant refrain. Many believed the attack was written by Stalin himself.

Prokofiev had recently moved from the West with his sons and wife Lina. Although he was not indifferent to the threats to artistic freedom, he thought the political cloud over Shostakovich might benefit him. The younger Shostakovich had been the most highly regarded Soviet composer. Now, Prokofiev could be king of the cats.

Prokofiev was disastrously wrong about a lot of choices he made in his life, and this was the most profound. He was lured back to his homeland by Soviet flacks. He was promised significant commissions, including a new ballet, *Romeo and Juliet*. He would soon learn more about the torments that Shostakovich and millions of his countrymen had lived, if they had lived.

Romeo and Juliet proved to be a torturous undertaking. The Russian balletic tradition was one of melodramatic pantomime, the very tradition that Prokofiev, after his collaborations with Sergey Diaghilev's Ballets Russes in Paris, had left behind. It was not long before Prokofiev began to hear that his music was "undanceable." Scenes were moved, scenes were trimmed. A premiere date was canceled. A version in which Romeo and Juliet don't die was completed, and years later rewritten.



Born April 23, 1891, in Ukraine

Died March 5, 1953, in Moscow

First Performance

December 30, 1938, the full ballet was first performed in Brno, Czechoslovakia

STL Symphony Premiere

February 4, 1949, Suite No. 2, Vladimir Golschmann conducting

Most Recent STL Symphony Performance

November 28, 2009, Ward Stare conducting excerpts from the full ballet

Scoring

2 flutes piccolo 2 oboes English horn 2 clarinets bass clarinet tenor saxophone 2 bassoons contrabassoon 4 horns 2 trumpets cornet 3 trombones tuba timpani percussion harp piano celesta strings

Performance Time

approximately 31 minutes

Eventually, *Romeo and Juliet* would be a great success for Prokofiev, but he knew from the experience that the drive for innovation that he experienced in Paris with Diaghilev and others, was not part of his Soviet future. The Western European and American concert tours he was promised would not be approved by the State. Prokofiev enjoyed other great triumphs as a Soviet artist, but he would eventually be resigned to writing patriotic tunes. Shostakovich maintained his precarious crown.

SWEET SORROW But for all that, the music is, to borrow descriptions from a few St. Louis Symphony musicians: "a pleasure," "creative and fresh," "sublime," "heart-wrenchingly beautiful." The Montagues and Capulets enter to music that conveys the arrogance of power. It swings and sways lugubriously to the beat of an insistent tuba. In distinct contrast, the movement "Juliet-The Young Girl" is all bright notes and flighty rhythms. A sweet flute is the song of the lark awakening the young lovers after their first night together. "Sweet sorrow" has never been so vitally evoked. Here is Prokofiev's orchestrative brilliance, a pas de deux that allows for full expression throughout the ensemble-viola and bassoon are given song, horns arise like the first dazzle of sunlight. First subtly, beneath the loveswoon melodies, a clarinet, then bassoon, and then pizzicati strings tick tock, until they become the beat of the orchestra. Time is Romeo and Juliet's enemy. The dark gravity of the tuba is premonition of what morning will bring.

"Dance of the Antilles Girls" refers to a scene that never appears in Shakespeare, and probably became part of the Russian version of the play/ ballet because of some poor translation. It refers to slave girls purchased for a wedding present. Oh dear.

Romeo finds his fallen Juliet, and for us the tragedy is not yet complete. We know what is to come. Hold this moment, to which the music brings life.

FROM THE STAGE

Jennifer Nitchman, flute, on Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*: "For me, the most wonderful flute moment is from 'The Montagues and the Capulets.' In the middle of all this music about conflict and power, a solo flute plays a theme that is so lonely and serene. Then the second flute comes in with melancholy chords that lends even greater beauty to this sweet sounding music. That's one of the things I love about playing second—when I get to add to that which is already so beautiful."



Jennifer Nitchman and Mark Sparks



Gilbert Varga most recently conducted the St. Louis Symphony in January 2013.

GILBERT VARGA

DANIEL, MARY, AND FRANCIS O'KEEFE GUEST CONDUCTOR

Gilbert Varga, son of celebrated Hungarian violinist Tibor Varga, is repeatedly acclaimed for performances displaying a broad range of colors, exquisite textures, and subtle use of dynamics. Renowned for his elegant and exceptionally clear baton technique, Varga has held positions with and guest-conducted many of the major orchestras across the world.

Varga works extensively with the symphony orchestras of North America, enjoying regular relationships with many including the Minnesota Orchestra and Nashville Symphony, among others. In Europe, he works regularly with many of the major orchestras including the Royal Scottish National Symphony, Frankfurt Museumgesellschaft, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, and in the 2015-16 season he looks forward to his debuts with the Tonkünstler Orchestra at Vienna's Musikverein and further afield with the Macao Symphony. In May 2013 Varga was appointed Principal Conductor of the Taipei Symphony Orchestra, an appointment that comes at an exciting time for the orchestra as the city of Taipei embarks upon a journey to build the orchestra its own concert hall, a process in which Varga will be heavily involved as Consultant.

Varga studied under three very different and distinctive maestros: Franco Ferrara, Sergiu Celibidache, and Charles Bruck. In the earlier part of his conducting career Varga concentrated on work with chamber orchestras, particularly the Tibor Varga Chamber Orchestra, before rapidly developing a reputation as a symphonic conductor. He was Chief Conductor of the Hofer Symphoniker (1980-85), and Chief Conductor of the Philharmonia Hungarica in Marl (1985-90), conducting its debut tour to Hungary with Yehudi Menuhin. He was also Permanent Guest Conductor of the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra (1991-95) and Principal Guest of the Malmö Symphony (1997-2000). In 1997 Varga became Music Director of the Basque National Symphony Orchestra, leading them through 10 seasons, including tours across the U.K., Germany, Spain, and South America.

DENIS KOZHUKHIN

RUTH AND ED TRUSHEIM GUEST ARTIST

Denis Kozhukhin was launched onto the international scene after winning First Prize in the 2010 Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels at the age of 23. His playing is characterized by an extraordinary technical mastery balanced by a sharp intelligence, calm maturity, and wisdom. Kozhukhin has that rare and special gift of creating an immediate and compelling emotional connection with his audience.

Kozhukhin has quickly established a formidable reputation and has already appeared at many of the world's most prestigious festivals and concert halls including the Verbier Festival, where he won the Prix d'Honneur in 2003, Berliner Philharmonie, Kölner Philharmonie, Klavier-Festival Ruhr, Rheingau Music Festival, Jerusalem International Chamber Music Festival, Carnegie Hall, Leipzig Gewandhaus, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Auditorio Nacional Madrid, Théâtre du Châtelet, and Auditorium du Louvre Paris.

In the 2015-16 season, Kozhukhin performs with the Orchestre National de France with Kazuki Yamada, Pittsburgh Symphony with Gianandrea Noseda, Philharmonia with Joshua Weilerstein, Brussels Philharmonic with Stéphane Denève, and Netherlands Radio Philharmonic with Jun Märkl.

Born in Nizhni Novgorod, Russia, in 1986 into a family of musicians, Kozhukhin began his piano studies at the age of four with his mother. As a boy, he attended the Balakirev School of Music where he studied under Natalia Fish. From 2000-07, Kozhukhin was a pupil at the Reina Sofia School of Music in Madrid studying with Dimitri Bashkirov and Claudio Martinez-Mehner.

Upon graduating, he received his diploma personally from the Queen of Spain. After his studies in Madrid, Kozhukhin was invited to study at the Piano Academy at Lake Como and completed his studies with Kirill Gerstein in Stuttgart. Kozhukhin has also been awarded 1st Prize at the Vendome Prize in Lisbon in 2009, and 3rd Prize at the Leeds International Piano Competition in 2006.



Denis Kozhukhin makes his St. Louis Symphony debut this weekend.

IF YOU LIKED THIS...

If you love the music you hear in this concert, try this program later in the season.

PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION Friday, April 8, 2016, 8:00pm Saturday, April 16, 2016, 8:00pm Yan Pascal Tortelier, conductor; Louis Lortie, piano

DUKAS Polyeucte Overture SAINT-SAËNS Piano Concerto No. 5, "Egyptian" MUSSORGSKY/orch. Ravel Pictures at an Exhibition

A grand Russian favorite, also featuring a saxophone, plus a riveting French concerto played by French-Canadian pianist Louis Lortie.



Louis Lortie

PLAYING PROKOFIEV: JENNIFER NITCHMAN, FLUTE

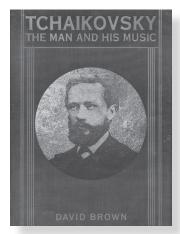
"I don't mean to disparage any of the others, but this is my favorite Romeo and Juliet. Prokofiev's music is evocative without being sentimental. I especially take notice when Prokofiev is included in a season. He's always expressive, and even quirky. He's definitely a modern but not off-putting. He's always a challenge for a player, especially, for flutists, his 'Classical' Symphony, but his music is always very rewarding."



Jennifer Nitchman

YOU TAKE IT FROM HERE

If these concerts have inspired you to learn more, here are suggested source materials with which to continue your explorations.



David Brown, Tchaikovsky: The Man and His Music Pegasus Books

Brown doesn't try to astound you with theory. He sticks to the facts of the life, and those are plenty.

Clemency Burton-Hill, "Shostakovich: The Composer Who Was Almost Purged" bbc.com/culture

A brief overview of the composer's life, his dilemmas, and his significance, written for the 40th anniversary of his death in 2015.

Simon Morrison, *The People's Artist: Prokofiev's Soviet Years* Oxford University Press

Morrison unearths a wealth of detail about Prokofiev's return to his homeland, a choice both triumphant and tragic.

Read the program notes online, listen to podcasts, and watch the St. Louis Symphony musicians talk about the music. Go to stlsymphony.org. Click "Connect."

Keep up with the backstage life of the St. Louis Symphony, as chronicled by Symphony staffer Eddie Silva, via **stlsymphony.org/blog**.

The St. Louis Symphony is on



DONOR SPOTLIGHT EMPLOYEE COMMUNITY FUND OF BOEING ST. LOUIS

The Employee Community Fund of Boeing St. Louis has generously supported the STL Symphony's Picture and Express the Music programs for well over a decade. Presented by the Symphony Volunteer Association, more than 15,000 students from schools across the bi-state region participate in the annual contests, inspired to create visual and written pieces of art in response to a piece of symphonic music. Winners, selected by a distinguished panel of judges, receive their awards in a ceremony on stage at Powell Hall.



What is the Employee Community Fund of Boeing St. Louis?

2015 Picture the Music finalist Carleigh Jones, Hawthorn Elementary

The Employee Community Fund is an employee owned and managed charity fund

founded in 1947. It is funded by Boeing employee donations of which 100 percent are invested back into the St. Louis community in collaboration with local non-profits.

What are the Employee Community Fund's philanthropic interests/priorities?

The funding goal of the Employee Community Fund is to strengthen the St. Louis metropolitan community and support all those who live in it. Approximately \$2 million in grants are awarded annually in the following focus areas: Health and Human Services, Education, Arts and Culture, and Civic and Environment.

How does your support of Picture and Express the Music fit into your overall philanthropy?

The Picture and Express the Music programs allow students to both experience the arts and to participate in them through self-expression. Promoting art to youth in this way fits with the ECF belief that art is an important part of a strong community in itself. Additionally it can be beneficial to other academic subjects such as math, character, and mental well being.

What are the ECF's hopes and dreams for the future of the Symphony?

We wish you continued success in being one of the leaders bringing quality music and promoting music appreciation to the St. Louis community! We are proud to have such a long history of partnering with the St. Louis Symphony.

COMMUNITY & EDUCATION: SYMPHONY WHERE YOU WORSHIP STRAVINSKY MASS



Amy Kaiser

Sunday, April 10, 7:30pm FREE CONCERT

A very special program with members of the St. Louis Symphony and Chorus and featuring Stravinsky's Mass for Mixed Chorus and Double Wind Quintet. Chorus Director Amy Kaiser leads 40+ members of the STL Symphony Chorus and 10 musicians from the orchestra in this incredible chamber work at beautiful Peace Lutheran Church in South County.

Also on the program: Music by Dvořák and Bruckner

STL Symphony musicians: Jelena Dirks & Michelle Dusky, oboe; Cally Banham, English horn; Andrew Cuneo, bassoon; Tom Drake & Mike Walk, trumpet; Timothy Myers, Amanda Stewart, Jonathan Reycraft, trombone; Gerard Pagano, bass trombone

Peace Lutheran Church 737 Barracksview Rd. St. Louis

CLASSICAL CONCERT: DVOŘÁK 7



Karen Gomyo

Friday, April 22, 10:30am Saturday, April 23, 8:00pm Sunday, April 24, 3:00pm Jakub Hrůša, conductor; Karen Gomyo, violin

JANÁČEK Jealousy SIBELIUS Violin Concerto DVOŘÁK Symphony No. 7