

Belgrade Philharmonic  
Season 2021-22  
*We Have Really Missed You*

**Friday, 1 October 2021**

**Gabriel Feltz**  
**Johannes Moser, cello**

**Dmitri Shostakovich**  
Cello Concerto No. 1, Op. 107

*Allegretto*  
*Moderated*  
*Cadenza - Attacca*  
*Allegro con moto*

Duration: about 28 minutes

**Dmitri Shostakovich**  
Symphony No. 10, Op. 93 in E minor

*Moderato*  
*Allegro*  
*Allegretto*  
*Andante - Allegro*

Duration: about 45 minutes

**Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)** wrote his **Cello Concerto No. 1** in 1959 and dedicated it to his friend, Mstislav Rostropovich, who committed it to memory in only four days and gave the premiere in Leningrad in October of 1959, conducted by Yevgeny Mravinsky. Today, the work is considered to be one of the most difficult concerted works for cello along with the *Sinfonia Concertante* by Sergei Prokofiev with which it shares certain features, such as the prominent role of isolated timpani strokes. Shostakovich said that "an impulse" for the piece was provided by his admiration for that earlier work.

The first movement begins with its four-note main theme derived from Shostakovich's musical signature D-S-C-H motif. The DSCH motif appears throughout the piece (except in the second movement), giving this concerto a cyclic structure.

The second, third and fourth movements are played continuously. After the second movement, which is essentially elegiac in tone, comes a cadenza, which stands as a movement in itself. In the finale, the composer uses a distorted version of *Suliko*, one of Stalin's favorite songs, instead of another theme. This is followed by alternating themes from the first movement as well as previous and new themes from the final movement. The concert ends with seven timpani strokes.

The story of **Dmitri Shostakovich's** constant conflict with the Soviet authorities is very well known. It began, seemingly naively, while Shostakovich was still in his twenties, only to deepen over time, often reaching dramatic proportions and eventually resulting in the complete retraction of his works from the public. After the major conflict of February 1948, Shostakovich not only prohibited the performance of his Violin Concerto No. 1 but also decided to stop writing symphonies completely as long as Stalin was alive. Having personally experienced all the bitterness and public humiliation caused by the brutal and unfounded attacks, it is indisputable that these events strongly influenced Shostakovich and forever changed not only his life, but also the entire course of the development of Soviet music.

Finally, on 5 March 1953, the news of Stalin's death reached Shostakovich. His first move was to present to the public the works he had previously revoked and in the summer of the same year he began work on a new symphony, which he completed with incredible speed. **Symphony No. 10** is a work that marked a new beginning and, in the form of a symphony, summarized everything that had been on Shostakovich's mind until that time. The work thus represents the composer's liberation from everything that had accumulated in him during

the years of Stalin's repression and anticipates a new and enlightened future that lay before him.

Symphony No. 10, according to many critics the best of Shostakovich's 15 symphonic works, was premiered by the Leningrad Philharmonic under Yevgeny Mravinsky on 17 December 1953. The work immediately caused so much attention that the Association of Soviet Composers quickly organized a three-day conference dedicated exclusively to this symphony.

Shostakovich's principle of *metamorphosis* of thematic material, which implies the transformation of the theme through rehearsals and various modifications, while its basis always remains clearly recognizable, is characteristic of the first movement. More precisely, this principle was applied in the entire work, enabling it a certain cyclic cohesion. The second movement, in the form of a scherzo, as described by the author himself, is a portrait of Stalin. The third *Allegretto* movement contains Shostakovich's musical signature, the sequence of four tones, DSCH. The final movement, the intense *Allegro*, brings an impressive dance figure going into rhythmic and melodic patterns characteristic of Russian folk songs. In the final section, the composer again uses his DSCH motif, as if not wanting to leave any doubt about the significance of this symphony as his personal testament – not so much to the horrors of Stalin's years, but more to the vitality of his creative impulse.

Asja Radonjić, M. Sc.