





in the summer of 1956 Soviet schoolchildren found that their history exams were cancelled. The reason was that Nikita Khrushchev had made a 'secret speech' in February of that year to the 20th Communist Party Conference, denouncing Stalin and what he euphemistically termed the 'personality cult'. Suddenly history had been taught in a process that was to be repeated 35 years later with glasnost and the collapse of Communism and the Soviet Union).

1 the palace square
adagio

2 the ninth of january
allegro - adagio - allegro - adagio

3 in memoriam
adagio

4 the tocsin
allegro non troppo - allegro -
adagio - moderato - allegro

SHOSTAKOVICH
1906-1975

ROYAL SCOTTISH NATIONAL ORCHESTRA
SYMPHONY No. 11, OP. 103
"The Year 1905"



Shostakovich had little to unlearn, however. He had grown up in a family with highly developed social and political awareness; he had had abundant contact with the free-thinking and not-so-free-thinking intelligentsia in the comparatively undoctinaire 1920s; and he had been at the sharp end of Stalinist repression for more than 20 years, including career-threatening disgraces in 1936 and 1948. He also kept himself up to date with the rumblings of dissension in Poland and Hungary in the aftermath of Khrushchev's speech (the Poles won relative autonomy, especially in the arts, while the Hungarians were crushed).

He then did a curious thing. In the following year he composed a symphony commemorating a famous atrocity in pre-communist Russia – the original Bloody Sunday in fact – whose events are worth recapping. 1905 was a year of revolutionary upheaval. On 9 January (22 January by the Western calendar) a crowd of between 5,000 and 16,000 workers and their families converged on the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg, unarmed, carrying icons and portraits of the Tsar and singing hymns, intending to present a petition to Nicholas II, appealing over the heads of local officials and bosses to alleviate the misery that overdue industrial development was inflicting on them. The Tsar had been advised to leave the capital and no one had been delegated to receive the petition. After the customary warning-shots failed to disperse the crowd the authorities lost their nerve, resorting to cavalry charges and infantry fire which left some 200 dead and 500 wounded (the figures were wildly exaggerated by the Western press at the time and by the Soviets in later years). Word spread that the Tsar, the 'Little Father', had betrayed his people, and this single event did more to revolutionize the workers of Russia than decades of agitation and propaganda had done.

The Eleventh Symphony was then, an act of apparently politically correct commemoration, bolstered by Shostakovich's quotation within it of some nine revolutionary songs and his accessible, film-score-ish idiom. All this seemed to represent a backtracking from the complexities of his Tenth Symphony of 1953 in a conscious attempt to curry favour with authority. This was, after all, the kind of symphony officials had been asking of



him for years and to all intents and purposes as an unimpeachably conformist way of celebrating the 40th anniversary of the 1917 Bolshevik revolution. That's how it was initially received – with delight by advocates of Socialist Realism and with dismay by its detractors, in Russia and outside.

It's possible Shostakovich intended it that way, but only if nine out of ten of those who knew him are deceiving themselves. Their stories, which have only been safe to tell since glasnost, suggest that the Eleventh Symphony is an Aesopian fable, 'really' commenting on the suppression of the Hungarian uprising. This is the line many today would probably like to believe, and the current burden of hearsay evidence tends to support it. But a lawyer for the other side would have little difficulty in finding inconsistencies and mendacities in many of Shostakovich's character witnesses; the habit of not letting truth get in the way of a good story is as deeply ingrained in Russia as anywhere and was never confined to the Stalinists; the urge to cast Shostakovich as a crypto-dissident is not the same thing as proof that he was one.

And there is another possibility to consider: that Shostakovich may have been speaking against any kind of state repression, and that the power of his statement comes more from how it is targeted (musically speaking) than from what it is targeted against. The nature of the target, or the lack thereof, is likely to remain a matter for individual listeners to decide.

The Eleventh Symphony is sometimes dubbed 'a film-score without the film', and it is true that the music sometimes moves at the rate of a camera panning across a vast open space. So it is in **THE PALACE SQUARE**, which seems to evoke dawn on the bright but bitterly cold morning of Bloody Sunday itself. The opening musical ideas are the only ones in the symphony that are not quotes or derivations from revolutionary songs, and they will prove crucial to the overall design. The square itself is memorably depicted in glassy open fifths on the strings, punctuated by ominous timpani triplets that will become a kind of leitmotif for the Crowd. Quiet Mahlerian trumpet fanfares then



seem to stand for the warning signals before the infantry open fire. Flutes give out the song 'Listen' ('Like an act of betrayal, like the conscience of a tyrant, the autumn night is dark') and cellos and basses soon follow with 'The Prisoner' ('The night is dark... the wall of the prison is strong').

THE NINTH OF JANUARY is a brutal scherzo-substitute movement in two sections, depicting the assembly of the crowds and the massacre itself. Over a variant of the Crowd leitmotif, clarinet and bassoon intone part of the song 'O thou, our Tsar, little father!'; the later brass theme is from the beginning of the same poem: 'Bare your heads' [a traditional mark of respect for the Tsar].

For the third movement, **IN MEMORIAM**, Shostakovich turned to one of the best known of all revolutionary songs: 'You fell as a victim', familiar from many a Soviet film soundtrack when the scene is the funeral of a martyr to the communist cause. In the aftermath of the long, gloomy opening, the violins follow with the opening phrase of 'Welcome, the free world of liberty', musically a fine example of Shostakovich's mastery of Schubertian major-key pathos.

Three more revolutionary songs feature in the Finale, which is subtitled **THE TOCSIN** [Alarm-bell]. These are 'Rage, you tyrants', 'Boldly, comrades, keep in step' and 'Enemy whirlwinds blow against us', the last being set to the famous Polish tune, 'Warszawianka'. All sorts of cyclic reminiscences from earlier movements are built into this finale, along with a quote from an operetta about the events of 1905 by one of Shostakovich's most gifted pupils, Georgy Sviridov. Finally the warning signals seem to be directed, allegorically and prophetically, towards the future, and the Crowd theme dominates the symphonic canvas like a swarm of vengeful bees. The four movements are played without a break.

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ALEXANDER LAZAREV

Alexander Lazarev is one of Russia's foremost conductors. He studied with Leo Ginsbourg at the Moscow Conservatory graduating with first class honours. In 1971 he won first prize in the Soviet Union's national competition for conductors, and the following year went on to win first prize and gold medal in the Karajan Competition in Berlin.

From 1987 to 1995 Lazarev was Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the Bolshoi Theatre, the first person for over thirty years to hold both positions concurrently. His leadership marked a period of intense activity, with the Bolshoi Opera undertaking an unprecedented programme of prestigious foreign touring including Tokyo (1989), La Scala, Milan (1989), the Edinburgh Festival (1990 & 1991) and the Metropolitan Opera in New York (1991). Several of the Theatre's most successful productions including Glinka's *A Life for the Tsar*, Tchaikovsky's *The Maid of Orleans*, and Rimsky-Korsakov's *Maia* were filmed for video and the Bolshoi Symphony Orchestra made a number of highly acclaimed recordings for Erato including such milestones of the Russian symphonic repertoire as Rachmaninov *Symphony No. 2* and Shostakovich *Symphony No. 8*.

In recent years he has worked as a regular guest with the Philharmonia Orchestra and the St. Petersburg Philharmonic, appearing with them in London, Paris and Vienna. Other orchestras he has conducted include the Berlin Philharmonic, Munich Philharmonic, Bavarian Radio Symphony, Royal Concertgebouw, Orchestra Filarmonica della Scala, Orchestra dell' Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Orchestre National de France, Oslo Philharmonic, Swedish Radio Symphony, NHK Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Montreal Symphony and the London Philharmonic, and he has appeared with opera companies such as the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie, Brussels, the Arena di Verona, the Opéra National de Paris, Bastille and the Bavarian State Opera.

He has been a regular visitor to the UK since his debut in 1987. From 1992-1995 he was Principal Guest Conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and since 1997 he has

been Principal Conductor of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra. His activities with them have included complete cycles of the symphonies of Shostakovich and Prokofiev, appearances at the Proms and tours of Spain, Norway and Greece. Plans with them this season include a tour of Sweden, Norway, Greece and Sweden.

His repertoire is particularly enterprising in its scope, ranging from the 18th century to the avant-garde. In 1978 he founded the Ensemble of Soloists of the Bolshoi Theatre whose most important aim was the programming and wide dissemination of contemporary music by both Soviet and foreign composers.

Alexander Lazarev is a prolific recording artist - in addition to his recordings with the Bolshoi Symphony for Erato, he has made over 35 recordings for Melodiya, and has also recorded for Virgin Classics, with the BBC Symphony Orchestra for Sony Classical, with the London Philharmonic Orchestra for Hyperion and BMG, and with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra for BIS and Linn Records.





ROYAL SCOTTISH NATIONAL ORCHESTRA PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR ALEXANDER LAZAREV

The Royal Scottish National Orchestra is one of Europe's leading symphony orchestras. Formed in 1891 as the Scottish Orchestra, the company has performed full-time since 1950, and was awarded the Royal Patronage in 1991. A host of renowned conductors have contributed to the success of the Orchestra, including Kari Ranki, Hans Swarowsky, Walter Susskind, Sir Alexander Gibson, Bryden Thomson, Neeme Järvi and Walter Weller, who is now Conductor Emeritus.

In September 1997 the RSNO appointed Alexander Lazarev as Principal Conductor, under whom it has become internationally recognised for the quality of its performances, most notably for the complete cycles of Shostakovich and Prokofiev symphonies: *'The RSNO played brilliantly... there is no doubt that Lazarev and the RSNO are making waves with these concerts.'* The Telegraph. From September 2005, Stéphane Denève will be Music Director. The RSNO also recently appointed Garry Walker as Principal Guest Conductor, under whom the Orchestra performed at the opening of the Scottish Parliament, and James Lowe as Associate Conductor.

In the past few years, the RSNO has achieved a world-wide reputation for the quality of its recordings: from Dvořák and Shostakovich symphonies under Neeme Järvi, Nielsen and Martinů symphonies under Bryden Thomson, a complete cycle of Barber's orchestral works with former Principal Guest Conductor Marin Alsop, to soundtracks for films such as *Vertigo* (winner of a Gramophone Award), *Star Wars*, *Titanic*, *The Magnificent Seven* and *The Great Escape*.

Committed to performing to the highest standard, the RSNO's award-winning education programme continues to develop musical talent and appreciation with people of all ages and abilities throughout Scotland. In education and outreach work, members of the Orchestra work with schoolchildren and community groups, in some of the biggest projects to be undertaken in the UK, to ensure the continuation of music as an integral part of life for future audiences.

Recorded 22nd & 23rd January 2004 at the Usher Hall, Edinburgh.
Engineers Philip Hobbs & Calum Malcolm. Producer Ben Turner, Finespice UK.
Post Production Julia Thomas, Finespice UK.
Photos of Alexander Lazarev courtesy of RSNO. Design by the Art Surgery.



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ROYAL SCOTTISH NATIONAL ORCHESTRA

principal conductor Alexander Lazarev
leader Edwin Palling

1st VIOLIN

Edwin Palling *leader*
William Chandler *associate leader*
Tamas Fejes *assistant leader*
Andrew Martin, Robert Yeomans, Barbara Paterson,
Christopher Foulkes, Jane Reid, Nigel Mason, Sheila McGregor,
Alison McIntyre, Gerard Doherty, Ursula Heidecker, Lorna Rough

2nd VIOLIN

Rosalin Lazaroff *principal*
Jacqueline Speirs, Marlon Wilson, David Yelland, Michael Rigg,
Penny Dickson, Isabel Gourdie, Elizabeth Lloyd, Paul Medd,
Harriet Wilson, Anne Bünemann, Eleanor Kennedy

VIOLA

John Harrington *principal*
Ian Budd, Michael Lloyd, David Amon, Olwen Kirkham, David Martin,
Nicola McWhirter, Fiona West, Claire Dunn, Neil Gray, Katherine Wren

'CELLO

Pauline Dowse *principal*
Jeremy Fletcher, Betsy Taylor, Lyn Armour, William Paterson,
Geoffrey Scordia, Peter Hunt, Ruth Rowlands,
Rachael Lee, Katri Huttunen

DOUBLE BASS

David Inglis *principal*
Robert Mitchell, Michael Rae, Paul Sutherland, Gordon Bruce,
John Clark, Sally Davis

FLUTE

Katherine Bryan *principal*
Helen Brew,
Janet Richardson *principal piccolo*



OBOE Timothy Watts *guest principal*
Katherine MacKintosh, Shona Brown,
Stephen West *principal cor anglais*

CLARINET John Cushing *principal*
Josef Pacewicz *principal Eb clarinet*
Duncan Swindells *bass clarinet*

BASSOON Paul Boyes *guest principal*
Allan Geddes
David Davidson *principal contrbassoon*

HORN David McClenaghan *principal*
Robert McIntosh, John Logan,
Joseph Giddis-Currie, Alison Murray

TRUMPET John Gracie *principal*
Marcus Pope,
Brian Forshaw *principal cornet*,
Kevin Price

TROMBONE Lance Green *principal*
Bryan Free,
Alastair Sinclair *principal bass trombone*,
Simon Johnson

TUBA Philip Hore *principal*

TIMPANI Martin Gibson *principal*

PERCUSSION Simon Lowdon *principal*
Alan Stark, John Poulter, Tom Hunter,
Magnus Mehta, Iain Sandilands

HARP Christophe Sauniere

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