

Eastman Philharmonia

Leonard Slatkin,
conductor

Kelly Hall-Tompkins,
violin

Wednesday, March 19, 2025
Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre
7:30 PM

~ PROGRAM ~
Eastman Philharmonia
Leonard Slatkin, *conductor*

Variations on “America” (1891)

Charles Ives
(1874-1954)
orch. William Schuman
8'

Body In Motion (2023)

1. head above water
2. breathing
3. running

Jeff Beal
(b. 1963)
20'

Kelly Hall-Tompkins, *violin*

~ INTERMISSION ~

Symphony No. 11 in G minor,
Op. 103 “The Year 1905” (1956-1957)

- I. The Palace Square
- II. The 9th of January
- III. In Memoriam
- IV. The Tocsin

Dmitry Shostakovich
(1906-1975)
55'



EASTMAN
SCHOOL OF MUSIC
UNIVERSITY of ROCHESTER

~ PROGRAM NOTES ~

Variations on “America”

Charles Ives was only seventeen years old when he wrote the *Variations on “America”*. The tune “America”, better known as “My Country, Tis of Thee”, was at the time the de facto anthem of the United States, so it was only appropriate that Ives had prepared it for a Fourth of July celebration in 1892 at the church he was organist at in Brewster, New York. The piece went unpublished until 1949 when organist E. Power Briggs rediscovered it. It became part of the regular repertoire of organists shortly after. It was in 1962 that composer William Schuman orchestrated the piece and was later premiered by the New York Philharmonic under Andre Kostelanetz in 1964. William E. Rhoads then transcribed the Schuman orchestration for Wind Ensemble in 1968.

Before a performance in 1970, American organist Virgil Fox had these colorful remarks on the piece:

“Charles Ives was very annoyed about themes and variations, and when he wrote this piece I am sure he meant it to be a great big travesty on the form! If you listen to this with a long face, you will be in the wrong pew! At the beginning of the piece, he makes an introduction that is a very much tongue-in-cheek affair. Listen for the innuendo as to what’s going to take place. He plays the tune immediately after the introduction just as straitlaced this can be without any emotion. The first variation sounds like Jenny Lind singing “Low Hear The Gentle Lark”. The second variation is a chromatic squeeze! The third variation very sounds like an actress casting out rose pedals from a swing. In the fourth variation: if you’ve never heard “My Country Tis of Thee” played in a Rumba Tango rhythm in the minor key: WATCH OUT! For the fifth and final variation he puts instructions for the player on the music and it says in plain language: hold on to the bench with one hand and pedal it just as fast as it’ll go. So will you now please fasten your seat belts for the *Variations on “America”* by Charles Ives”

- Brett Miller

Body In Motion

The first image that came to me when developing the materials for this new concerto was one of water. I love the way water presents to us a visual tension between the hypnotic, peaceful and (in the case of a windy lake or sea) a sense of constant, fluid motion. I began to think of the both the orchestra and soloist as active natural forces. Often in a concerto the orchestra’s is conceived in a more static fashion making musical “room” for the soloist. Wanting to upend this norm, I strove to create a sense of constant motion in the first movement from both partners.

The title “head above water” was also an early visual image - I pictured a swimmer constantly bobbing in a turbulent sea, trying to catch breaths and survive, and this swimmer became metaphor for the soloist.

My feelings about Kelly’s artistry were no doubt part of this inspiration. She is an intense, passionate performer, who seems to never wish to sit still artistically, nor shy away from intense effort. I feel a sense of unrest is what haunts most true artists, and in a way, unrest is indicative of all lives lived with meaning.

In the same way both “breathing” and “running” fill out this picture of life forces. “Breathing” feels like the earth; a plant breaking through the soil to find sun, or a baby’s first precious breaths, or a bird hatching from the egg. Life moving slowly but deliberately, with the absolute need of breath for sustenance.

As I began my musical life as a jazz trumpet player, a sense of improvisation and dance is a part of much that I compose. “Running” is one part joyful romp, and another part a more desperate act - perhaps pursuit of prey, or escape from a predator. Here the violin is a jazz soloist, soaring in the sky and skating across of bed of syncopations and counter rhythms from the orchestra.

I’d like to dedicate this work to both Kelly Hall-Tompkins and to my good friend & frequent collaborator Leonard Slatkin who has graciously agreed to conduct the initial performances of the concerto.

- Jeff Beal

Symphony No. 11 in G minor, Op. 103 “The Year 1905”

Dmitri Shostakovich’s Symphony No. 11 in G minor, subtitled *The Year 1905*, is a work depicting a singular day in Russian history yet timeless in its portrayal of the human spirit’s struggle against oppression. Commissioned by the Soviet authorities to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the 1905 Russian Revolution, the symphony is fraught with poignant commentary on the brutal events of both the past and his own time. The work is often seen as an allegory for the Hungarian Uprising of 1956, which had left an already skeptical Shostakovich completely disillusioned with the Soviet regime’s violent suppression of dissent.

On January 22nd, 1905 (January 9th in the old Russian calendar), thousands of Russians gathered in front of the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg, hoping to present a petition to Tsar Nicholas II demanding liberal reforms and an increased worker’s rights. Despite their desperation and dire economic conditions, the crowd believed that the Tsar would listen and offer help. Adorned with religious symbols and chanting anthems such as *Bózhe, Tsaryá khraní!* (God, Save the Tsar!) they gathered to present their request. Tragically, the Tsar had fled the city the night before, fearing that the protest might turn violent. In the Tsar’s absence, nervous Cossack troops opened fire on the demonstrators, resulting in the massacre of over a thousand men, women, and children. The snow turned red with blood. The composer’s own father was present that day, and often recounted those events in the years to follow. This first-hand account of what came to be known as ‘Bloody Sunday’ profoundly impacted Shostakovich; haunting the young composer and shaping his understanding of violence, revolution, and injustice.

By the time Shostakovich began work on his symphony, fifty years had passed since the 1905 massacre. The social unrest of the Hungarian Uprising, which Shostakovich learned of in 1956, provided much of the emotional impetus for the symphony. He saw clear parallels between the brutality of the Soviet response to the Hungarian protests and the tragedy of 1905. Though cautious of the Soviet authorities’ scrutiny, Shostakovich used his symphony to subtly critique their actions without directly confronting the regime.

The symphony’s four movements unfold without pause, each evoking vivid images of the tragedy. The first movement, ‘Palace Square’, sets a bleak and desolate tone. The cold expanse of the square is depicted with ominous timpani strokes, while distant brass fanfares signal the arrival of soldiers. Two revolutionary songs, *Slushai!* (Hearken!) and *Arrestant* (The Prisoner), emerge quietly, evoking the thoughts of prisoners languishing in captivity.

The second movement, 'The Ninth of January', is a tense and dramatic portrayal of the crowd's escalating frustration as their pleas for help go unanswered. The movement builds to a chaotic climax, as the sound of rifle shots interrupts the tension, mimicking the sudden violence that erupted on that fateful day in 1905. The disorienting music conveys the horror and confusion of the massacre, leaving behind a chilling, lifeless silence.

The third movement, 'In Memoriam', is a mournful tribute to those lost in the violence. It combines elements of revolutionary funeral marches, such as *Vy zherstvoyu pali* (You fell as victims), with a mix of resignation, anger, and defiance. The movement serves as a somber reflection on the cost of revolution and the price of resistance.

In the final movement, 'Tocsin' (an alarm or warning bell), Shostakovich evokes the spirit of defiance that survives despite overwhelming odds. The movement incorporates revolutionary songs like *Besnuytes, tyranny* (Rage, tyrants), *Varshavyanka* (Whirlwind of danger), and *Ogonki* (Sparks), symbolizing the hope of eventual triumph, though it is tempered by a sense of foreboding. The symphony concludes with the sound of ringing bells, a symbol of revolution, but their hollow, unresolved tone leaves the audience with a sense of uncertainty rather than victory.

Shostakovich's Symphony No. 11 is not merely a historical account of the 1905 events or a commentary on the Hungarian Uprising, but a profound exploration of human suffering, resistance, and the cyclical nature of oppression. The symphony's emotional depth, uncompromising tone, and stark imagery, all ensure its place as one of Shostakovich's darkest and most profoundly commentarial works.

- Yonatan Dvir

~ MEET THE ARTISTS ~

Internationally acclaimed conductor **Leonard Slatkin** is Music Director Laureate of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra (DSO), Directeur Musical Honoraire of the Orchestre National de Lyon (ONL), Conductor Laureate of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra (SLSO), Principal Guest Conductor of the Orquesta Filarmonica de Gran Canaria, and Artistic Consultant to the Las Vegas Philharmonic. He maintains a rigorous schedule of guest conducting and is active as a composer, author, and educator.

To celebrate his 80th birthday, he is returning to orchestras he led as Music Director, including the DSO, ONL, SLSO, and National Symphony Orchestra (Washington, DC). Additional 2024-25 highlights include the New York Philharmonic, Nashville Symphony, North Carolina Symphony, Manhattan School of Music Symphony Orchestra, Eastman Philharmonia, National Symphony Orchestra (Ireland), Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, Osaka Philharmonic, Hiroshima Symphony Orchestra, Kristiansand Symfoniorkester, Jerusalem Symphony, and Opera Theatre of St. Louis. Moreover, his composition *Schubertiade: An Orchestral Fantasy* and his arrangement of Scarlatti keyboard sonatas are receiving world premieres this season.

Slatkin has received six Grammy awards and 35 nominations. Naxos recently reissued Vox audiophile editions of his SLSO recordings featuring the works of Gershwin, Rachmaninov, and Prokofiev. Other Naxos recordings include *Slatkin Conducts Slatkin*—a compilation of pieces written by generations of his family—as well as works by Saint-Saëns, Ravel, Berlioz, Copland, Borzova, McTee, and Williams.

A recipient of the National Medal of Arts, Slatkin also holds the rank of Chevalier in the French Legion of Honor. He has been awarded the Prix Charbonnier from the Federation of Alliances Françaises, Austria's Decoration of Honor in Silver, and the League of American Orchestras' Gold Baton. He received the ASCAP Deems Taylor Special Recognition Award for his debut book, *Conducting Business* (2012), which was followed by *Leading Tones* (2017) and *Classical Crossroads: The Path Forward for Music in the 21st Century* (2021). His latest books are *Eight Symphonic Masterworks of the Twentieth Century* (Rowman & Littlefield, spring 2024) and *Eight Symphonic Masterworks of the Nineteenth Century* (fall 2024), comprising essays that supplement the score-study process.

Winner of a Naumburg International Violin Competition Honorary Prize and featured in the Smithsonian Museum for African-American History, **Kelly Hall-Tompkins** is a violin soloist entrepreneur who has been acclaimed by the New York Times as "the versatile violinist who makes the music come alive," for her "tonal mastery" (BBC Music Magazine) and as New York Times "New Yorker of the Year." She has appeared as co-soloist in Carnegie Hall with Glenn Dicterow and conductor Leonard Slatkin, in London at Queen Elizabeth Hall, at Lincoln Center and with the Symphonies of Baltimore, Dallas, Jacksonville, Oakland, recitals in Paris, New York, Toronto, Washington, Chicago, and festivals of Tanglewood, Ravinia, Santa Fe, France, Germany and Italy. She was "Fiddler"/Violin Soloist of the Grammy/Tony-nominated Broadway production of *Fiddler on the Roof*. Inspired by her experience, she commissioned and developed the first ever *Fiddler* solo disc of all new arrangements, "The Fiddler Expanding Tradition," which is featured in the upcoming new documentary "Fiddler: A Miracle of Miracles" on the 55-year history of the musical. Actively performing virtually throughout the pandemic, numerous projects include premiering 4 pieces written for her, creating and/or been invited to participate in unique collaborations including with Tony-nominated actor Daniel Watts, aerial dancer Alexandra Peter, Frisson Films, Gil Shaham's Gilharmonic, Routledge press as contributing author for a new book on Music and Human Rights and with WQXR as part of the inaugural Artist Propulsion Lab. As founder of Music Kitchen-Food for the Soul, Kelly Hall-Tompkins is a pioneer of social justice in classical music, bringing top artists in over 100 concerts in homeless shelters coast to coast from New York to Los Angeles, and in internationally in Paris, France. Music Kitchen commissioned and will present the World Premiere of the Forgotten Voices Song Cycle in Association with Carnegie Hall.

~ **PERSONNEL** ~
Eastman Philharmonia

Violin I

Anne-Marie Wnek,
concertmaster
Madeleine Nysetvold
Qi Su
Simon Cheng
Grace Belsie
Erica Lin
Aviva Bock
Paige Griffin
Victoria Zhao
Veronica Rokicki
Kaylynn Li
Fengyi Yang
Yan Yue
Katrina Johnson

Violin II

Amelia Posner-Hess,
principal
Magali Pellety
Ingrid Buschkopf
Olivia Walberger
Hagan Tran
Bo Yang
Lisa Wang
Xuanzhen Zhang
Nicole Cheng
Ellen Kim
Kristina Kaye

Viola

Arthur Nyanfor II,
principal
Hide Shiotsu
Phoenix Mercier
Ethan Shin
Amelia Abouljoud
Sujin Kim
Vincent Kaverud
Zijin Yang
Katherine Park
Alexander Diaz

Violoncello

Alex Engelhardt,
principal
Ivy Robison
Ryan Post
Maggie Slap
Felix Kim
Ethan Hess
Abby Hanna
Alex Tuan

Double Bass

Emma Goldberg,
principal
Nathan Kim
Liz Young
Karly Ison
Gregory Galand
Tristan Wiafe

Flute

Helen Freeman
Andrew Hankes
Ivy Lee
Alex Lehmann
Ray Zheng

Oboe

Lewis Painter
Josh So
Alexis Wilson

Clarinet

Barak Dosunmu
Lauren Enos
Victor Ni

Bassoon

Noah Eastman
Aaron Lukenbill
Emmalee Odom

Horn

Morgan Chalmers
Nathan Howton
Nicole Keller
Mary Kimble
Alina Liebschner
Danica Tuohy

Trumpet

Ted Ekstrand
Jacob Hunkins
Kirk Morrison
Diego Turner

Trombone

Talia Berenbaum
Darren Brady
Jacob Lytle
Ethan Pound
Madelyn Stoklosa
Gabriel Williams

Tuba

Connor Higley

Timpani

Andrew Lauler
Fletcher Leonard

Percussion

Lucy Chugh
Izaiah Gonzales
Ben Landon
Remy Thomas

Harp

Kathleen Miao
Sunshine Quan

Keyboard

Erico Bezerra



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