

Shostakovitch with Payare and the OSM

SATURDAY

18

JULY
7 P.M.

AMPHITHÉÂTRE
FERNAND-LINDSAY

PROGRAM

- **LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN** (1770-1827)
OVERTURE FROM *EGMONT*,
OP. 84 – 9'
- **GABRIELA ORTIZ** (born in 1964)
DZONOT – 32'
I. LUZ VERTICAL
II. EL OJO DEL JAGUAR
III. JADE
IV. EL VUELO DE TOH

INTERMISSION – 20'

- **DMITRI CHOSTAKOVITCH** (1906-1975)
SYMPHONIE N° 10 IN E MINOR,
OP. 93 – 57'
I. MODERATO
II. ALLEGRO
III. ALLEGRETTO - LARGO - PIÙ MOSSO
IV. ANDANTE - ALLEGRO - L'ISTESSO TEMPO

Presented by

Ratelle 

ORCHESTRE
SYMPHONIQUE DE
MONTREAL

ARTISTS

Rafael Payare, conductor
Alisa Weilerstein, cello

PROGRAM NOTES

BEETHOVEN:

EGMONT, OP. 84 – OVERTURE

Between 1809 and 1811 Beethoven wrote this incidental music, based on Goethe's drama *Egmont*, for the Burgtheater in Vienna. It was common at the time to write orchestral music to be inserted between the scenes of a theatrical performance. The heroic tone of this magnificent overture is Beethoven at his best: a slow, powerful and dramatic introduction to evoke Count Egmont's struggle against the tyranny of King Philip II of Spain over the Dutch. Then comes an Allegro and a rhythmic crescendo of great force, somewhat in the manner of the Fifth Symphony, composed in 1805–1807.

The subject of *Egmont* was well suited to stir Beethoven's political convictions, for this Count Egmont—a real sixteenth-century figure—sacrificed himself in defence of his people's freedom, and was put to death for it. The themes of the aspiration to freedom and of courageous revolt to preserve it resonated deeply for Beethoven with his own situation in Vienna, then under occupation by Napoleon's troops.

Over time the *Egmont Overture* has become a staple of the symphonic repertoire, and it never fails to make its effect, through its vivid, almost telluric writing and its build toward a victorious conclusion.

ORTIZ:

DZONOT – CONCERTO FOR CELLO AND ORCHESTRA

The Mexican composer Gabriela Ortiz turned her attention to the cenotes, natural sinkholes holding the pure waters of the Yucatán region. In Maya culture, the underground passages of these caves are regarded as sources of life, inhabited by shades and spirits. Ortiz herself explains that “*Dzonot* is a concerto for cello and orchestra inspired by the cenotes [...] a complex and delicate network of underground rivers and caves requiring rigorous conservation in order to protect their biodiversity and natural beauty.” She intends her work to be seen as a manifesto, as “[her] way of calling for an end to our negligence in the face of the urgent need to preserve these ecosystems amid the current climate crisis.” In addition to the solo cello and a very large orchestra,

the concerto calls for an imposing percussion section requiring several instruments of Mexican origin. The work is in four movements. The first, “Vertical Light,” evokes “the underwater environment and the hypnotic effects produced by the sun’s rays amid the shadows that reign inside the cenotes.” In the second movement, “The Eye of the Jaguar,” the cello represents the voice and body of that big cat. Here we find the percussion and great virtuosity between cello and orchestra. The third movement, “Jade,” is a reflection on “the meaning and history of these underground rivers, where everything comes to life: the eroded limestone, the jade-green colour, the sound of the water, the cascades of light.” Finally, the fourth movement, “The Flight of the Toh,” is a plea for the survival of this rare and splendid bird, despite deforestation and the human destruction of its environment. The work was premiered in October 2024 by Alisa Weilerstein and the Los Angeles Philharmonic under the direction of Gustavo Dudamel.

PROGRAM NOTES

(Sequel)

CHOSTAKOVITCH :

SYMPHONIE N° 10 IN *E* MINOR, OP. 93

Composed in 1953 after the death of Stalin—a liberation for the Russian composer!—

Shostakovich's Symphony No. 10 is an intimate notebook of the composer's thoughts on these atrocious episodes of his life. Let us recall that in 1936, and again in 1948, his music was twice banned by the Stalinist regime, on the pretext of its lack of optimism and its pessimistic formalism.

The Symphony No. 10 may be seen as a kind of inner migration, the expression of the composer's profound revolt against the injustices he suffered at the regime's hands. The immense first movement, *Moderato*, lasts twenty-four minutes and remains grave and enigmatic, shot through with magnificent woodwind solos (flute, clarinet), tragic chords and a close recalling Mahler's Tenth Symphony.

A violent revolt erupts in the *Allegro* that follows, a kind of portrait of the bloodthirsty warrior that Joseph Stalin was. A blend of reverie and bitter pessimism still inhabits the third movement, marked *Allegretto*, where the composer's signature motif, "D.S.C.H." (D, E-flat, C, B), grows insistent. The opening theme of the first movement is recalled midway through, the heavy and sombre character of the solo horn and its exchanges with the other instruments sweeping all before it.

The fourth movement is in two parts: a long, plaintive *Andante*, in which oboe, flute and bassoon meditate gravely; then the explosive final *Allegro*, a kind of victory of good over evil, according to the composer's customary logic.

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