

# NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OF UKRAINE



 **STATE** THEATRE  
NEW JERSEY

# KEYNOTES

# WELCOME!

State Theatre New Jersey is delighted to welcome our Symphony Scholars to the performance of the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine. The young musicians in this exciting program have been preparing for the big event by studying and listening to the music, exploring the composers and the works on the program, and learning about what to expect at a live symphony concert.

These *Keynotes* provide helpful information and some fun details to make the concert a memorable experience—one that we hope will be the start of a lifelong love of classical music.



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## EDUCATION & OUTREACH SUPPORTERS

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# MEET THE ORCHESTRA



**THE NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OF UKRAINE** was founded in 1918. Among the many famous conductors and musicians who have performed with the orchestra are Leopold Stokowski, Artur Rubinstein, Isaac Stern, and Mstislav Rostropovich. The orchestra has had the honor of performing the very first performances of works by composers including Sergei Prokofiev and Dmitri Shostakovich. The NSOU has given concerts in Europe, Australia, Asia, the Middle East, and the U.S. Since 1993, they have made over 100 recordings and received two Grammy Award nominations.

## UKRAINE



- Ukraine is the second-largest country in Europe. It is bordered by the Black Sea and seven different countries.
- More than 70% of the land is used for farming. Ukraine is the third-largest exporter of grain in the world.
- The official language, Ukrainian, is spoken by about 68% of the people; about 30% speak Russian.
- Though it did not become independent until 1991, Ukraine's history goes back thousands of years.
- Ukraine's capital city, Kiev, is famous for its gold-domed churches and cathedrals, beautiful parks, museums, universities, and high-tech industries. It is also the home of Ukraine's national soccer team.



The gold and blue stripes on the Ukrainian flag symbolize grain fields under a blue sky.

**THEODORE KUCHAR** is a Ukrainian American conductor and violist, born in New York City in 1963. He started studying the violin when he was 10 and later switched to playing the viola. In 1980, he was awarded a



fellowship from the Boston Symphony Orchestra to study at Tanglewood Music Center. Two years later, he graduated from the Cleveland Institute of Music. He was the principal violist of orchestras in Cleveland, OH; Helsinki, Finland; and Cape Town, South Africa.

As a conductor, Theodore Kuchar has served as Music Director, Artistic Director, and Conductor with many orchestras, including the Janáček Philharmonic Orchestra in

the Czech Republic; the Queensland Philharmonic Orchestra in Australia; the Orquesta Sinfónica de Venezuela; and the Slovak Sinfonietta. Among the orchestras he has led in the U.S. are the Fresno Philharmonic Orchestra and the Reno Chamber Orchestra. He has performed as guest conductor with many international orchestras, including the BBC Symphony, Berlin Symphony, English Chamber Orchestra, Israel Symphony Orchestra, Prague Symphony Orchestra, and Munich Philharmonic.

In 1992, Maestro Kuchar became Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine. Under his direction, they have become one of the most frequently recorded orchestras. Theodore Kuchar himself has made over 100 recordings, which have won many awards. In 2000, the Ukrainian State Symphony Orchestra honored him as their Conductor Laureate for Life.

**ALEXEI GRYNYUK** was born in Kiev, Ukraine. He was interested in playing the piano from a very young age, and started giving concerts when he was only six years old. He studied at the Kiev Conservatory before winning a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music in London. When he was 13, he won first prize at the Sergei Diaghilev All-Soviet-Union piano competition in Moscow. He has gone on to win awards at other major piano competitions.



Alexei has performed at many of the world's most famous concert halls—in cities including London, Paris, New York, and Moscow—as well as throughout Europe, the U.S., Mexico, Japan, South Korea, and Morocco. He has also performed as part of a trio with violinist Nicola Benedetti and cellist Leonard Elschenbroich since they met as young music students in London.

## ASK ALEXEI!



**If you could meet a composer, who would it be and why?**

It would probably be Beethoven. It's hard to overestimate his influence in Western music. Sometimes I think of him as the single biggest talent of our civilization. Another composer of particular interest to me would be Rachmaninoff. He was not only a genius composer, but equally great at conducting and at the piano.

**How do you feel about the piano?**

I like to think of the piano as one of my body parts. A musical picture is created in the brain, then it travels through the arms and fingers, then through the keys, hammers, and strings, filling the hall with sound and finally reaching the listener's ear.

**You can't carry your own piano with you to each concert. How do you adjust to playing different pianos each place you go?**

Whenever I am faced with a different piano, I have to find the best in it. I always try my best to love the qualities of that particular piano, not to fight them. A pianist must be flexible and adjust to every instrument.

# UNDERSTANDING THE PROGRAM PAGE

The program book (or playbill) contains helpful information about the performance. It lists the pieces the orchestra will play in the order they will play them. It tells you the name of each piece, the name of the composer, and the movement headings. If you're not familiar with a piece, the program will help you keep track of what's going on and know when the piece is finished. The program page for the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine's concert looks like this:

SUN, FEBRUARY 19, 2017 AT 3PM

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## NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OF UKRAINE

**THEODORE KUCHAR**, *Conductor*  
**ALEXEI GRINYUK**, *piano soloist*

**Antonín Dvořák**  **COMPOSER**

Carnival Overture, **Op. 92**  = It's okay to applaud here.  
**OPUS NUMBER**

Sergei Prokofiev Piano Concerto **No. 3** in C Major, Op. 26

I. Andante — Allegro *Slow – Fast*  
II. Tema con variazioni *Theme and variations*  
III. Allegro, ma non troppo *Fast, but not too fast*

**MOVEMENTS**  **NUMBER**

—Intermission—

Dmitri Shostakovich Symphony No. 5 **in D Minor**, Op. 47

I. Moderato — Allegro non troppo *At medium speed – Not too fast*  
II. Allegretto *Somewhat fast*  
III. Largo *Slow and solemn*  
IV. Allegro non troppo *Not too fast*

 **WHAT KEY IT'S IN**

\*PROGRAM SUBJECT TO CHANGE\*

**FUNDING CREDITS:** *State Theatre New Jersey is a not-for-profit organization; acknowledging donors and sponsors is an important part of staying in business.*

UNDERWRITTEN BY

 The Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation

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**MOVEMENT** - a section within a musical piece, like a chapter in a book. Movements are usually referred to by the tempo marking that the composer has written at the beginning of the section. At the concert, it is considered polite not to applaud between the movements—wait until the entire piece is finished.

 = It's okay to applaud here.

**KEY** - the group of notes (called a scale) that are used in a piece of music. The name of the key tells you which note is the most important note in the scale. Scales can be major or minor, depending on what other notes are in the scale.

**NUMBER** - When a composer writes two or more works of the same type (for example, a symphony), each one is given a number. Looking at the program page for this concert, we know that we will be hearing the third piano concerto that Prokofiev wrote and the fifth symphony that Shostakovich wrote.

**OPUS NUMBER** - Opus means an artistic work. Lists of all the works by a composer are usually put in order according to when each piece was published—not when it was written. So, the lower the opus number, the earlier a piece of the composer's music was published.



***Carnival Overture, Op. 92***  
**Antonín Dvořák (Czech; 1841-1904)**

Antonín Dvořák (on-toe-NEEN DVOR-zhock) was born in a small town in what is now the Czech Republic. He started playing the violin when he was six years old, and later studied piano and organ. When he was 17, he got a job playing in an orchestra. After a few years, he left the orchestra to concentrate on composing. In his music, he would often use melodies and rhythms that sounded like the folk songs he heard when he was growing up.

**GET TO KNOW**  
**DVOŘÁK**

Dvořák was the oldest of 14 children. His father was an innkeeper and butcher who was also a professional musician.

In 1892, Dvořák became director of the National Conservatory of Music in New York City. While living in this country, he fell in love with American folk music, which inspired him to write his famous “New World” Symphony.

When he was not writing or playing music, Dvořák would spend hours at the railway station watching the trains.

An overture is usually written to be played at the beginning of an opera or musical, but that is not the case with this piece.

Dvořák wrote his *Carnival Overture* in 1891. Even though it has no words or pictures, the music tells a story. In the story, a lonely wanderer arrives at a city where a festival is taking place. All around he hears the sound of instruments (listen for the clanging of the triangle and the rattling tambourine), along with shouts of joy and fun as the people sing and dance. Towards the middle of the overture, listen for a slower part where the English horn and flute play together; Dvořák said this music represents “a pair of straying lovers.”





## Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Major, Op. 26 Sergei Prokofiev (Russian; 1891-1953)

In 1918, composer Sergei Prokofiev (SAIR-gay pro-KO-fee-ev) left his home in Russia, where there was a revolution. One of the places he went was the U.S., where he played the first performance of his Third Piano Concerto on December 16, 1921, with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Prokofiev was not only a great composer—he was also a brilliant and powerful pianist. He wrote this piano concerto to show off his talent.

The concerto is written in three movements. The first movement begins quietly with a solo clarinet. Then it suddenly gets fast and wild, as the piano plays a lively melody. The oboe then introduces a different melody. At the end of the movement, the piano really shows off.

The second movement is “Theme and Variations,” which means the composer takes a melody (the theme) and then plays with it in different ways (the variations), such as changing the tempo, the rhythm, or which instruments are playing it. In this movement, the theme is followed by five variations. See if you can follow along!

- The **THEME** is played by the orchestra.
- The piano comes in for **VARIATION 1**, which is slower and smoother.
- **VARIATION 2** is at a galloping pace, with the trumpet playing the melody at first and the piano playing exciting runs up and down the keyboard.
- **VARIATION 3** is kind of jazzy, with accents occurring where they normally don’t.
- **VARIATION 4** is slow, quiet and haunting.
- **VARIATION 5** is fast and playful.

Prokofiev said the end of the third movement was like an “argument” between the soloist and the orchestra. It begins with the bassoon and low strings, and then the piano comes thundering in. The woodwinds play a calmer section, and the piano once again replies. At the end of the movement, the piano plays lots of notes incredibly fast, bringing the concerto to an exciting end.



Sergei Prokofiev and  
Dmitri Shostakovich

## WHAT'S A CONCERTO?

A concerto is a piece of music written for a solo instrument with an orchestra. It usually has three movements. In a concerto, the soloist and orchestra have a “conversation,” interacting in different ways: the soloist can play alone, the orchestra can play alone, the orchestra can play something to support the soloist, or the soloist can join in like a member of the orchestra.

## GET TO KNOW PROKOFIEV

Prokofiev was born in Ukraine.

He began composing at a very young age. He wrote his first piano piece when he was five and his first opera when he was just nine!

When Prokofiev was 13, he went to Russia to study at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory, where he was much younger than the other students. He annoyed them by keeping a list of all the mistakes they made in class.

He was married to a Spanish singer named Carlina Codina.

Disney took one of Prokofiev’s orchestra compositions, “Peter and the Wolf,” and turned it into a movie.

Prokofiev was an amazing chess player. He once beat a future world chess champion!



**Symphony No. 5 in D Minor, Op. 47**  
**Dmitri Shostakovich (Russian; 1906-1975)**

Composer Dmitri Shostakovich (d-MEE-tree shos-ta-KOH-vich) lived in Russia, during a time when it was a very scary place. Millions of people were sent to prison or even killed by the government, including many of Shostakovich's friends and family. The government controlled everything—even what kind of music composers could write. Shostakovich got into serious trouble when one of his operas was criticized by the leader of the country. So when he composed his Fifth Symphony, he was very careful to

write it so that the government would have no objections.

The first movement is introduced with some loud, dramatic chords, then becomes softer and sad. The middle section is loud and violent. The ending is tense and quieter. The second movement sounds like folk dances—some parts gruff and other parts lighter. The third movement is very slow and solemn. It opens with just the strings. The next part features solos for the oboe, clarinet, and flute. The ending uses the entire orchestra and is very emotional. The last movement begins fast and loud. Then comes a slower, calmer middle section. At the very end the full orchestra, with clashing cymbals and pounding timpani, plays music that sounds like a victory celebration. Late in life, when he was no longer in danger of going to prison, Shostakovich said that the music at the end of the symphony was not really joyful. He said he wrote it to sound like people who were forced to act happy—the way the Russian government treated its citizens when he wrote the symphony.

## GET TO KNOW SHOSTAKOVICH

Shostakovich began taking piano lessons when he was nine years old. He showed a great talent for music.

At the start of his music career, he was a concert pianist as well as a composer, but he gave up being a performer when it became clear he would have more success writing rather than performing.

In addition to writing 15 symphonies, Shostakovich also composed concertos, chamber music (for small groups of instruments), operas, choral music, ballet music, and music for movies.

Shostakovich first visited America in 1949, when he spoke at a world peace conference in New York City.

Shostakovich was a huge soccer fan.

He was a perfectionist about his music, but also his personal life. For instance, he was always making sure all the clocks in his house were set at exactly the same time. He even sent mail to himself to see if the post office was doing a good job.

A peninsula on Alexander Island, in Antarctica, is named after him.



# WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE CONCERT

People who have never been to a symphony concert sometimes get nervous that they won't know where to go or that they'll do something embarrassing. Here are some answers to questions people often ask about attending a concert. Knowing what to expect will help you enjoy the show even more!

**Q: What should I wear to the concert?**

A: Most people who go to an orchestra concert like to dress up. Treat the concert like a special occasion. If you're not sure what to wear, your school uniform will be fine.

**Q: How early should I get to the theater?**

A: You should arrive at least 30 minutes before the show starts.

**Q: What if I show up late?**

A: If you get to the theater after the concert has started, you will probably have to wait in the lobby until a piece has ended. The usher will tell you when you can go in.

**Q: How will I know where to go when I get to the theater?**

A: Your ticket shows where you are sitting. First it shows the section: the orchestra level is downstairs, and upstairs is the balcony. Once you find your section, look for your row (which will have a letter) and your seat number. If this sounds complicated, don't worry! The ushers are there to help you find your seat.

**Q: Where do I get a program book (also called a playbill)?**

A: An usher will give you a program when you go to your seat.

**Q: Can I bring food or beverages into the theater?**

A: You can purchase drinks and snacks in the theater lobby, but you can't eat or drink inside the audience chamber. You shouldn't chew gum in the theater, either.

**Q: Can I take pictures or video of the performance?**

A: It is not permitted to take pictures or make a video of the concert.



photo: Kyle D. Barker

The State Theatre has a specially-designed acoustical shell just for classical music concerts, which don't use microphones. The shell's wooden walls and ceiling help carry the sound out into the audience.

**Q: Is it okay to talk during the concert?**

A: Absolutely not! Any noise will disturb the other people in the audience. Also, make sure to turn off your cell phone before the concert begins. If you turn it back on during intermission, don't forget to turn it off again before the second half of the show starts.

**Q: What if I need to use the bathroom?**

A: Make sure to visit the restroom before the concert begins. There are bathrooms upstairs and downstairs in the theater. It's bad manners to leave your seat during the performance at a symphony concert. Unless it's an emergency, wait until intermission.

**Q: How will I know when to applaud?**

A: You can applaud at the end of each piece on the program. If a piece has more than one movement, don't applaud between movements—wait until the end of the last movement. The program book can help you keep track of when a piece is finished.

**Q: I was invited to attend a special reception. Where do I go, and what do I do?**

A: The reception is in the upstairs lobby of the theater. If you came with a family member, they can go to the reception, too. There will be food served. Keep in mind the food is for everyone; don't take more than your share.

The reception is a great place to meet new people and practice your social skills; don't be shy about making conversation with the other guests. They would love to hear about you and how you liked the concert!