STANFORD LIVE

St. Louis Symphony Orchestra

David Robertson, Music Director
Augustin Hadelich, Violin

WHEN:
FRIDAY,
JANUARY 19, 2018
7:30 PM

VENUE:
BING
CONCERT HALL

Program

Thomas Adès (b. 1971): ***Powder Her Face* Suite (1995/2017) *SLSO co-commission***

Overture –
Scene with Song –
Wedding March –
Waltz –
Ode –
Paperchase –
Hotel Manager's Aria "It Is Too Late" –
Finale

Benjamin Britten (1913–1976): **Violin Concerto, op. 15 (1939)**

Moderato con moto –
Vivace –
Passacaglia: Andante lento (un poco meno mosso)

Augustin Hadelich, *violin*

—INTERMISSION—

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–1975): **Symphony No. 1 in F minor, op. 10 (1925)**

Allegretto; Allegro non troppo
Allegro
Lento –
Lento; Allegro molto

Program Notes

Thomas Adès, Benjamin Britten, and Dmitri Shostakovich were all under the age of 30 when they wrote the pieces on today's program. Adès's opera, *Powder Her Face*, and Shostakovich's Symphony No. 1 launched their composers to fame, receiving international performances soon after their premieres. Britten's Violin Concerto has burned its way into the repertoire more slowly, increasingly recognized for its subtlety and beauty.

There are also personal, professional, and aesthetic connections between these three composers. In the 1960s, Britten and Shostakovich became friends, connected by their mutual collaborator, the cellist Mstislav Rostropovich. Though two generations younger, Adès, an Englishman, was artistic director of the Aldeburgh Festival, which Britten founded in 1948.

All three works show a concern for public relevance, belying the narrative that 20th-century classical music invariably drifted toward academic obscurity. Here is a strand of complex musical artistry, attuned to audience understanding, running from 1926 to the present day.

PROGRAM SUBJECT TO CHANGE. Please be considerate of others and turn off all phones, pagers, and watch alarms. Photography and recording of any kind are not permitted. Thank you.

Thomas Adès
Born March 1, 1971, London
Now Lives London
***Powder Her Face* Suite**

Powder Her Face is Thomas Adès's 1995 chamber opera, based on Margaret Campbell, Duchess of Argyll, whose real-life 1963 divorce created a sensational sex scandal in England. Her husband accused her of infidelity, introducing a set of stolen Polaroid photos as evidence in court. Later in life, she squandered her inheritance and ended up living in a hotel suite. This is where the opera finds her, as she slips into the past, conjuring scenes set in the 1930s through '70s.

Both the 24-year-old Adès and his librettist, Philip Hensher, were drawn to the tabloid tale when they were commissioned by London's Almeida Opera in the mid-1990s. "The Almeida didn't disguise their complete bewilderment at what we were proposing," Hensher told *The Guardian* in 2008. "The director of opera said he had no idea what I meant when I said I wanted it to seem like scenes from the life of a medieval saint, only with shopping expeditions instead of miracles." The opera was met with a mix of outrage and admiration—and is now one of the most frequently produced operas of the late 20th century.

In 2007, Adès extracted three orchestral numbers from the opera and published them as Dances from *Powder Her Face*. Since the original score used a 15-piece pit band, he rescored the music for full orchestra. For the 2017 *Powder Her Face* Suite performed on today's program, he added five more movements, now including some vocal writing transcribed for purely instrumental forces. The expanded suite was co-commissioned by the Berlin Philharmonic, the Danish National Symphony Orchestra, the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra, Carnegie Hall, and the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. The Berlin Philharmonic and Simon Rattle premiered it in May 2017.

Scene with Song comes from the opera's opening, where a maid and an electrician fool around in the Duchess's hotel room, laughing and mocking the old woman behind her back. *Wedding March*, *Waltz*, and *Ode*, call back to her earlier life, and draw on the popular dance styles of the time. *Paperchase* finds the Duke searching for incriminating evidence. In the libretto's stage directions, "*he goes over to the trunk and starts pulling out clothes and letters. Papers scatter everywhere, on the floor, on the bed … finally in the last drawer, he finds a camera. He rips it open and pulls out the film.*" *Hotel Manager's Aria* and *Finale* return to the end of the Duchess's life, when she is evicted from the hotel. The Manager, originally sung by a bass, and here portrayed by the horn, is an avatar of death.

Scoring: 3 flutes (3rd doubling piccolo), 3 oboes, 3 clarinets (1st, 2nd, and 3rd doubling bass clarinets), 3 bassoons (3rd doubling contraforte), soprano saxophone, alto saxophone (doubling tenor saxophone), 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, glockenspiel, high hat, pop gun, rototoms, tam-tam, tambourine, triangle, vibraslap, side drum, antique cymbals, cabasa, flexatone, guiro, lion's roar, sizzle cymbal, wood wind chimes, clash cymbal, monkey drum, paper bag (for bursting), xylophone, tubular bells, bongos, washboard, anvil, rattle, kit bass drum, 2 whips, 2 suspended cymbals, 3 brake drums, 3 temple blocks), harp, piano, and strings

Performance Time: approximately 20 minutes

Benjamin Britten
Born November 22, 1913, Lowestoft, United Kingdom
Died December 4, 1976, Aldeburgh, United Kingdom
Violin Concerto, op. 15

Britten is so closely associated with his native England that it may be hard to imagine that for a few years at the beginning of the Second World War he emigrated to the United States—and might have stayed, had he not grown homesick by 1942. But it was an important three-year detour: his relationship with his traveling companion, Peter Pears, grew from an ambiguous friendship into affirmed romance. He found critical success in New York, and then drove across the continent with Pears in a borrowed Ford, arriving to stay with friends in Escondido, California. It

was in a Southern California bookshop in 1941 that he picked up a collection by the 19th-century English poet George Crabbe, which made him nostalgic for his coastal home in Suffolk and inspired his 1945 opera, *Peter Grimes*.

Britten's American journey was motivated by his commitment to pacifism in the face of war in Europe. He began the Violin Concerto in England and completed it in Quebec during the summer of 1939, just before he and Pears settled temporarily in New York. The piece feels more of its time than of a particular place: it's serious and uneasy, with lyrical surfaces built on a dangerously unstable foundation.

Britten creates this impression through harmony: from the start, he undermines the clarity of the key. The opening violin melody starts in F major, but by the third measure drifts toward F minor, then falls a woozy half step toward F-flat, before recovering back up—all while tracing the contour of a much more conventional tune. This is just one example of this concerto's tonal ambiguities, which crop up on both small and large scales.

The first movement's second theme is bold and belligerent, yet also lighthearted, perhaps mocking military pomp. Later, in what might be the concerto's most breathtaking moment, the orchestral strings take up the opening violin melody—now hushed, muted, and elongated—while the soloist picks up the original orchestral accompaniment (mixed with the restless second theme) in sharp accents, plucking, and strumming.

Though the concerto's three movements are linked together without pause, the beginning of the second movement is clear from its instant rambunctiousness. But the movement also holds periods of stasis, which grow into surprising colors. One passage finds the violin in its highest range, whistling almost pitchlessly. Then it hands the effect over to two piccolos before the tuba enters, six octaves below, creating a harrowing chasm of range. The movement ends with a cadenza, which plays with material from both the first and second movements.

With an echo of the concerto's opening theme, the cadenza bridges into the finale. The trombones enter down low with a phrase that will be repeated—sometimes boldly and sometimes subtly—throughout the movement. This is the passacaglia, an idea Britten borrowed from Baroque music, where a whole piece is built over a repeated ground bass. Britten, however, weakens the form's usual stability with another harmonic trick: The first four entrances each shift down a half step—almost imperceptible to the listener, but enough to maintain the concerto's deep-seated unease. Toward the end of the movement, a newfound brightness starts to shine through. In the final measures, the concerto coalesces around the key of D, shedding most of its harmonic complications, while still wavering between sweet major and bitter minor.

The *New York Times* review of the March 1940 premiere (at Carnegie Hall with the New York Philharmonic and violinist Antonio Brosa) noted, "the ending is uncommon, very earnest and far from the conventional 'hoopla' finale." The writer also struck a note of praiseful restraint, observing "there is more in this interesting work than was to be fully grasped or finally assessed at first hearing."

Scoring: 3 flutes (2nd and 3rd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes (2nd doubling English horn), 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (snare drum, suspended cymbal, triangle, cymbals, glockenspiel, bass drum, tenor drum), harp, and strings

Performance Time: approximately 32 minutes

Dmitri Shostakovich
Born November 25, 1906, Saint Petersburg
Died August 9, 1975, Moscow
Symphony No. 1 in F minor, op. 10

In the mid-1920s, a decade before Shostakovich was denounced by Stalin and made to fear for his life, his troubles were simply those of a student: not enough money, conflicts with teachers, and shaky confidence in his own work. He held evening jobs playing piano in cinemas, which he detested, while studying at the Leningrad Conservatory.

Shostakovich began his Symphony No. 1 as a conservatory assignment, and it became his graduation piece. At first he was dismissive, writing in October 1924, "Now I'm writing a symphony … which is quite bad, but I have to write it so that I can be done with the conservatory this year." He grew more invested in the project and defended it from the criticism of his teacher, Maximilian Steinberg, who thought its drafts were excessively grotesque. By May of 1925, Shostakovich completed a two-piano version of the symphony, which he played for his teachers as a final exam. He passed, and was pleased with his work, but could not have expected it would soon bring him international fame.

The public premiere of the complete, orchestrated symphony came a year later, in May 1926, with the Leningrad Philharmonic, on a special concert presented by the Leningrad Association for Contemporary Music. It was an immediate success, pleasing both the composer and the public. It also established Shostakovich as an emblematic Soviet composer, fit for export abroad.

In January 1927, Shostakovich met the conductor Bruno Walter in Leningrad and played his new symphony on the piano for him. Walter was impressed and promised to perform the piece in Germany with the Berlin Philharmonic. Shostakovich attended the concert the following spring, traveling at the expense of the Soviet government, though he chose to sit anonymously in the hall, unacknowledged.

From Europe, the piece spread to the United States, where it was premiered by the Philadelphia Orchestra under Leopold Stokowski in 1928 (five years before the U.S. and the Soviet Union would establish diplomatic relations). It was first taken up by the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra in 1939, under the direction of the Mexican composer and conductor Carlos Chávez.

Shostakovich's aunt, Nadezhda, had emigrated to America, where she heard a performance of her nephew's symphony. She later told a biographer that she recognized themes from his childhood piano improvisations and early, now-lost compositions. The final two movements are tenuously linked to Hans Christian Andersen's "The Little Mermaid"—a story which interested Shostakovich and inspired sketches for a ballet he left incomplete. Under one interpretation, the dramatic snare drum roll linking the third and fourth movements of the symphony represents the mermaid's transition from the underwater world to the land of human beings.

Whatever the sources, there is an unmistakable collage quality to the First Symphony. And it's very plausible that—like many young artists—Shostakovich drew from adolescent sketches to complete his first largescale work. The process of revisiting and reworking is part of what gives a composer a distinctive voice, and already in the Symphony No. 1, you can hear the recognizable voice of Shostakovich. It is not as harrowed as his later works, and its sarcastic edges gleam with acerbity more than grim irony. But it's this youthful voice that first made an impression on listeners around the globe, who had never before heard of Shostakovich, and had no idea of his later (now nearly mythologized) torment.

The symphony is also striking for its creative orchestration, sometimes surprisingly thin, verging on chamber music. Exposed solos pop from bare textures, with especially prominent roles for the concertmaster, principal cello, and piano. The first two movements, Allegretto and Allegro (also called a scherzo in Shostakovich's notes)—are lean, brisk, and satirical. The expressive weight of the symphony rests on the third and fourth movements. In them you can hear a premonition of the later symphonies in his towering output.

Scoring: 3 flutes (2nd and 3rd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, alto trumpet, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, glockenspiel, snare drum, tam-tam, triangle), piano, and strings

Performance Time: approximately 28 minutes

Benjamin Pesetsky is a Boston-based writer, composer, and consultant to the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra.

Biographies

St. Louis Symphony Orchestra

Celebrated as one of today's most exciting orchestras, the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra is the second-oldest in the country and widely considered one of the world's finest. Now in its 138th season, the SLSO is committed to artistic excellence, educational impact, and community connection—all in service of its mission to enrich lives through the power of music. American conductor David Robertson is the 12th music director in the orchestra's history and has solidified the SLSO's standing as one of the nation's most vital and innovative ensembles. Defined by musical excellence, widespread acclaim, artistic partnerships, innovative programing, Grammy award-winning recordings, and unprecedented orchestral achievements, the Robertson era is recognized as one of this storied institution's most illuminating. The SLSO pays tribute to Robertson as both a musical visionary and a gifted communicator as his remarkable 13-year tenure concludes at the close of the current season.

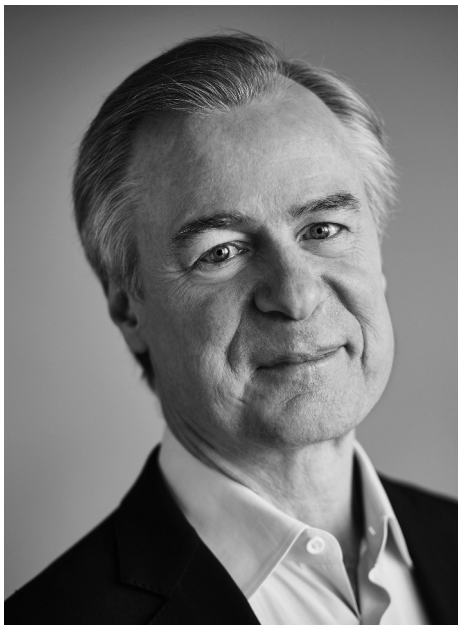
In addition to concerts at Powell Hall, the orchestra's home for 50 years, the SLSO is an integral part of the diverse St. Louis community, presenting hundreds of free education programs and performances throughout the region each year. Through weekly Saturday night concert broadcasts, celebrated recordings, and regular touring activity, the SLSO influences the entire orchestral world.

Robertson and the SLSO most recently toured California during the 2015-16 season, with stops in Berkeley and at Los Angeles's Walt Disney Concert Hall. The tour featured stunning performances of Messiaen's *Des canyons aux étoiles…*, which included video of the American Southwest landscapes that inspired the composer, created by artist Deborah O'Grady especially for the orchestra. This season's tour of California will be Robertson's final tour as music director.

Today, the SLSO builds on the institution's current momentum on all fronts, including its artistry, financial health, audience growth, and community impact. The orchestra looks toward the future with Stéphane Denève, who begins his tenure as music director in the 2019-20 season. Denève has made frequent appearances as a guest conductor with the SLSO since 2003.

David Robertson

David Robertson—conductor, artist, thinker, and American musical visionary—occupies some of the most prominent platforms on the international music scene. A highly sought-after podium figure in the worlds of



opera, orchestral music, and new music, Robertson is celebrated worldwide as a champion of contemporary composers, an ingenious and adventurous programmer, and a masterful communicator whose passionate advocacy for the art form is widely recognized. A consummate and deeply collaborative musician, Robertson is hailed for his intensely committed music making.

Currently in his valedictory season as music director of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, and in his fifth season as chief conductor and artistic director of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, he has served as artistic leader to many musical

institutions, including the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the Orchestre National de Lyon, and, as a protégé of Pierre Boulez, the Ensemble Intercontemporain. With frequent projects at the world's most prestigious opera houses, including the Metropolitan Opera, La Scala, Bayerische Staatsoper, Théâtre du Châtelet, the San Francisco Opera, and more, Robertson will return to the Met Opera in 2018 to conduct the premiere of Phelim McDermott's new production of *Così fan tutte*.

During his 13-year tenure with the SLSO, Robertson has solidified the orchestra's standing as one of the nation's most enduring and innovative. His established and fruitful relationships with artists across a wide spectrum is evidenced by the orchestra's ongoing collaboration with composer John Adams. The 2014 release of *City Noir* (Nonesuch Records)—comprising works by Adams performed by the SLSO with Robertson—won the Grammy Award for best orchestral performance. Robertson is the recipient of numerous musical and artistic awards, and in 2010 was made a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.

Augustin Hadelich

Musical America's 2018 instrumentalist of the year, Augustin Hadelich has firmly established himself as one of the great violinists of today. He has performed with every major orchestra in the United States, many on numerous occasions, as well as an ever-growing number of major orchestras in Europe and Asia.

One of the highlights of Hadelich's 2017–18 season will be a return to the Boston Symphony, performing the Ligeti Concerto with Thomas Adès on the podium, featuring the U.S. premiere of Adès's new cadenza for the concerto. Additional highlights include performances with the San Francisco Symphony and the symphony orchestras of Atlanta, Detroit, Houston, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Nashville, Oregon, Pittsburgh, Seattle, and Utah. Abroad, he will play with the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra, Polish National Radio Orchestra, the Lahti Symphony, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, the Hallé Orchestra, and the Orquesta Sinfónica de Castilla y León.

Among recent and upcoming worldwide performances are the BBC Philharmonic, BBC Symphony, Bournemouth Symphony, Concertgebouw Orchestra, Danish National Symphony, Finnish Radio Orchestra, Hamburg Philharmonic, Hong Kong Philharmonic, London Philharmonic, Mozarteum Orchestra, Netherlands Philharmonic, Norwegian Radio Orchestra, NHK Symphony, São Paulo Symphony, and the radio orchestras of Cologne, Frankfurt, Saarbrücken, and Stuttgart.

Hadelich's career took off when he was named gold medalist of the 2006 International Violin Competition of Indianapolis. Since then, he has garnered an impressive list of honors, including the inaugural Warner Music Prize in 2015, and a 2016 Grammy Award for his recording of Dutilleux's Violin Concerto, *L'arbre des songes*, with the Seattle Symphony under Ludovic Morlot.

Hadelich plays the 1723 "Ex-Kiesewetter" Stradivari violin, on loan from Clement and Karen Arrison through the Stradivari Society of Chicago.

ST. LOUIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA 138TH SEASON 2017–18

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