Back in the U.S.S.R.

Dear Friends and Supporters of the Yakima Symphony Orchestra:

We will conclude the Rosemary A. C. Gottlieb 2017-18 Season, A Musical Voyage Around the World, with Back in the U.S.S.R. on Saturday, May 12th at the Capitol Theater. This program will include two masterpieces from the Soviet era: Shostakovich’s brilliant Symphony No. 5 and Prokofiev’s Alexander Nevsky, featuring the Yakima Symphony Chorus along with members of the Mid-Columbia Mastersingers; Justin Raffa, chorusmaster.

Throughout the Soviet era, the government maintained tight control over everything, including the fine arts. A committee was established to ensure that composers wrote pieces that were patriotic, appealed to the masses and were conservative in form and content. Dmitri Shostakovich had an extremely volatile relationship with the Soviet government throughout his career. Not an un-patriotic man, often his music did satisfy government expectations. However, there were times when his music was deemed too sophisticated, avant-garde or esoteric. One of the lowest points in Shostakovich’s career came when Stalin saw his opera Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District and absolutely hated it. The composer was ridiculed, and he genuinely feared for his life. The fifth symphony, which we will perform on this concert, was Shostakovich’s response that criticism. On the surface, he does seem to meet government guidelines. However, the underlying sentiments in the symphony suggest that the composer may actually have been ridiculing the government, in a manner that one Russian phrase sums up as “kiss, but spit.”

Sergei Prokofiev, on the other hand, was the darling of the Russian government. His music is unabashedly patriotic, accessible and relatively conservative. Prokofiev wrote the score to the film Alexander Nevsky in 1938. The film tells of the great Russian war hero, Alexander Nevsky (1221-1263), and it contains epic battle scenes from some of his great victories. In 1939, Prokofiev arranged music from the film score into a cantata for orchestra, chorus and mezzo-soprano, and it is this version that we will perform. It is one of the very few examples of film music that have found a permanent place in the standard orchestral repertoire.

We look forward to seeing you on May 12th at the Capitol Theatre for Back in the U.S.S.R.!

Sincerely,

Lawrence Golan
The Helen N. Jewett Music Director
Yakima Symphony Orchestra
From the Executive Director

In keeping with our season theme, YSO’s recent Raise the Baton fundraising event at the 4th Street Theatre included a feast of music and food from around the world. Opening the musical offering were Josh Humphrey and Brandon McIntosh, performing Indian classical music. As a preview of our upcoming Holiday concert, we were then serenaded by Tri-Cities Steel Band Bram Bratá, who played everything from European classical selections and a Latin music by a Japanese salsa band to British pop and traditional Caribbean and calypso; this was topped off by Maestro Golan on violin with a Hungarian ‘gypsy’ dance. Orchestrating the culinary ballet for the evening, with a parade of fourteen delicacies representing twelve countries, was the amazing team from Zesta Cucina, whose attention to every detail made for a very satisfying evening. Our entire staff and event committee worked hard to make this year’s event ‘a cut above,’ and we’re grateful to all the performers, catering staff, volunteers and theater crew for their support in making this a truly memorable evening—and, most of all, thank you to our patrons whose attendance and participation play such a vital role in YSO’s continued success.

As we are quickly approaching the end of our season-long Musical Voyage Around the World, we are also approaching the deadline to renew subscriptions in your existing seats for our upcoming season, Heroes! If we receive your renewal by Thursday, May 31st, we will be able to guarantee your current seats for existing subscriptions. Beginning June 1st, we will begin seating patrons who have asked to renew but with different seats, in the order the requests were received. If you are currently a subscriber and we haven’t heard from you by the third week of May, expect to receive a phone call—we don’t want to give away your seat if you’d like to keep it!

Finally, I would like to invite everyone who did not experience our outdoor concerts at Cave B Estate Winery last year to carve out some time to do so this summer. The concert environment is spectacular, nestled within the vineyards with panoramic views across the Columbia cliffs; and of course the music is equally spectacular. For those who would like to enjoy the wine without driving back to Yakima afterward, there are various camping and lodging options nearby, or you can sign up for our Patron Bus—for $20 round trip, you can enjoy the concert without the hassle of traffic and parking. Reservations for the bus are available through the symphony office, in person or at 248-1414; tickets for the concerts are available through the office or online through links on our website: www.ysomusic.org.

See you at the Symphony!

David Rogers, Executive Director
Yakima Symphony Orchestra

Lunch With Lawrence
Friday, May 11 • 11:30am–1:00pm
Zesta Cucina Restaurant, $25
Join Maestro Lawrence Golan and guest Kindra Scharich for a lovely light lunch and convivial conversation about the pieces and composers featured in the YSO’s Back in the U.S.S.R. concert on May 12. Please contact the YSO office (509-248-1414) or info@ysomusic.org to reserve your seat.

Open Rehearsal
Saturday, May 12 • 10:30am–1:00pm
The Capitol Theatre
See the final touches being put on the evening’s program! Our dress rehearsals for The Yakima Valley Classical Series concerts at the Capitol Theatre are open to the public, and FREE to those who bring a canned food donation to benefit Northwest Harvest. Cash donations to the YSO are also welcome. Ideal for families and for other patrons unable to attend evening concerts.

ConcerTalk
Saturday, May 12 • 6:25pm
In the Capitol Theatre
Main Performance Hall
Join YSO Principal Horn Jeff Snedeker before the YSO’s Back in the U.S.S.R. concert for an inside look at the evening’s program. Dr. Snedeker’s extensive knowledge of music and entertaining style of presentation bring the music and the circumstances of its creation to life.

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Yakima Youth Symphony Orchestra (YSO) & Yakima Ensemble for Strings (YES!) YYSO.ORG
Bruce Walker, YYSO Conductor / Christy Baisinger, YES! Conductor

• Waltzing With the Youth Symphony! (rescheduled) Sunday, May 6, 4:00pm at the Harman Center. Join the Yakima Youth Symphony Orchestra and Yakima Ensemble for Strings at their annual fundraiser. Waltz, tango and swing dance music; dance instruction; silent auction; light appetizers and desserts. Tickets ($15) via any youth symphony member or by calling the YSO office (509) 248-1414.

• 2018-19 auditions will occur in late April and early May. Please check the website for details: www.yysso.org.

Yakima Symphony Chorus (YSC)
Justin Raffa, Chorusmaster

The chorus is busily preparing for this month’s performance of Alexander Nevsky at the Back in the U.S.S.R. concert, and we’re looking forward to our August 19th Haydn performance at the Cave B Summer Music Theater. If you’re interested in singing with the symphony, you can participate all season or join in for specific concert projects. In addition to the Lord Nelson Mass, we will be performing on the Halloween concert (music from Star Wars, Peter Pan and The Flying Dutchman) and the Holiday Pops Spectacular, along with a March stand-alone performance of James Whitbourn’s Annelies, based on the diary of Anne Frank. Rehearsals take place on Monday evenings from 7:00-9:15 at St. Paul Cathedral, and guests are welcome. For more information, contact Chorusmaster Justin Raffa at chorusmaster@ysomusic.org.

Yakima Music en Acción (YAMA)
Jennifer Moultine, Philharmonia Site Director and YSO Teaching Artist

It has been an exciting year at YAMA, with two sites serving nearly 100 students from 19 schools throughout the Yakima Valley. Join us for our end-of-year show on Saturday, May 26th at 2pm at The Seasons Performance Hall, and help us celebrate the hard work of all of these incredible young people. The performance is free and open to the public, with a reception to follow.

On April 5, 2018, at the beginning of YSO’s When In Rome concert, Dick and Carolyn Schactler were recognized for their enduring commitment to the welfare of professional musicians and music-making in Yakima, represented on stage by their generous gift of chairs specially designed for the physical need of our orchestra musicians. Joining Maestro Lawrence Golan and Executive Director David Rogers for the presentation to the Schactlers were their children Linda, Fred and Laura (in the violin section!), and longtime friend and colleague Dan Wallbaum.
Kindra Scharich

Mezzo-soprano Kindra Scharich has been praised by The San Francisco Chronicle for her “exuberant vitality,” “fearless technical precision,” “deep-rooted pathos” and “irrespressible musical splendor.” As a dedicated recitalist, she has performed over 150 art songs in ten languages and given solo recitals for The American Composer’s Forum, The Wagner Society, Lieder Alive and The La Jolla Athenaeum.

In the summer of 2016, Ms. Scharich toured in Brazil, where she performed with Ricardo Ballestero and Cristiano Alves at the acclaimed Sala Cecilia Meireles, and in 2017 she and Mr. Ballestero continued their collaboration by presenting all of the non-Portuguese songs of the great Brazilian composer Alberto Nepomuceno, which until now have remained in relative obscurity. A great proponent of Lieder, she is currently collaborating with the Alexander String Quartet on new quartet and voice arrangements of the great orchestral Lieder (Rückert, Kindertotenlieder, Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen, Wesendonck-Lieder and Vier letzte Lieder), for which recordings are to be released in the spring of 2018. Symphonic works performed include Les nuits d’été, Rückert-Lieder, Pulcinella, Fauré’s Requiem, Mozart’s Requiem, the great choral works of J.S. Bach and Handel, and in 2018 Prokofiev’s Alexander Nevsky with the Yakima Symphony.

In the world of opera, Ms. Scharich has sung over 25 roles in the lyric mezzo repertoire, most recently and to much acclaim as Minerva in West Edge Opera’s production of Monteverdi’s Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria. In 2017, she appeared with Opera Parallèle as Agathe in Les enfants terribles, and as the Fox in The Little Prince. Enthusiastic about working with living composers, she has premiered works by Kurt Erickson and will be heard in Janis Mattox’s upcoming chamber opera Sueños de Medianoche (Midnight Dreams), set in Spanish and based on Bolivian legend.

**Program Notes**

_We conclude our Musical Voyage Around the World with Back in the U.S.S.R., featuring Shostakovich’s brilliant Symphony No. 5 and Prokofiev’s Alexander Nevsky, one of the very few film scores that have found a permanent place in the standard orchestral repertoire._

**Dmitri Shostakovich**

_(September 12/25, 1906-August 9, 1975)_

*Symphony No. 5 in D minor, op. 47* (1937)

Born in St. Petersburg, Russia, into a politically liberal family, Shostakovich was a child prodigy as a pianist and composer, entering the Petrograd Conservatory at age thirteen. By the time he graduated in 1926, Shostakovich was intent on pursuing a dual career as a pianist and composer, but early success with his First Symphony led him to concentrate on composition. The premiere of his opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* in 1934 was a resounding success with critics and the public, and placed him at the forefront of Soviet musical composition. This also made him a target. Two years later, amid Stalin’s Great Terror, an article entitled “Muddle instead of music” took Shostakovich to task for producing “leftist confusion instead of natural, human music,” and warned him of the consequences of not changing his style to something more appropriate. The general public was caught completely by surprise, and the composer was well aware that the consequences included the threat of death.

His musical response was calculated carefully as he searched for the right balance between the government’s directive for music that promoted the ‘right’ sorts of emotional responses (accomplished by using overt lyricism and heroic textures) and his artistic desires for forward-looking styles. Much was at stake at the premiere of the Fifth Symphony on November 21, 1937.

*Symphony No. 5* is cast in four movements. The first movement opens with an aggressive angular melody, made even more intense by dotted rhythms and imitation. This quickly gives way to a haunting melody that winds its way through the strings, gradually adding instruments from other sections. The second theme resembles a march that starts gently and gradually builds in strength and purpose, perhaps the proletariat marching into the future. The mood becomes increasingly bombastic, and the two themes are combined to reach an incredible climax and unison melody. After the peak, things settle down and the movement ends in a soft, haunting mood.

The second movement is a rollicking, somewhat twisted scherzo, witty and occasionally sarcastic. The heavy opening character is contrasted with a more intimate middle section featuring a variety of soloists. The heavier, raucous material returns in various guises, and the movement ends with wit and charm. The third movement is slow and very expressive, almost an elegy, with long unfolding melodies, using primarily strings throughout. Winds, harp, and celesta have moments in the spotlight, and the climax of the movement is emotionally intense, but the somber mood is consistent to the end.

The fourth movement explodes out of the silence left by the third into a frenzied march that builds, peaks, and continues forward to yet another more intense climax. Finally, the march theme from the first movement arrives, steering the movement in a positive direction. After this particular climax, there is a moment of solace that eventually winds its way back to the opening theme and an extended, triumphant ending.
With the Fifth Symphony, Shostakovich regained his position as the voice of Soviet music, with music that was equally appealing to both the public and official critics. Not surprisingly, the authorities claimed that the composer had met their demands. Meanwhile, the public heard it as an expression of the suffering it experienced under Stalin. Some even felt that the symphony was an expression of the Soviet personality working through a psychological crisis and setting a path for resolution, respite, forming of mature ideas, and optimism for the future.

Sergei Sergeyevich Prokofiev
(April 27, 1891-March 5, 1953)
Alexander Nevsky, op. 78
(1938)

A precocious musical talent, Prokofiev had composition and piano lessons from an early age and studied with important Russian composers and teachers, including Gliere and Rimsky-Korsakov. As a performer, he gained an early reputation as a temperamental, “ultra-modern” artist, which he embraced whole-heartedly and purposely carried over to his composition. He traveled widely and by 1920 settled in Paris, where he could promote his avant-garde image more efficiently. He experimented with a wide range of musical elements and genres, drawing on divergent influences ranging from Stravinsky’s Primitivism to Debussy’s Impressionism, in pieces ranging from solo piano to ballet, opera and eventually film music. This eclecticism did more for Prokofiev’s reputation as a personality than as a composer. What helped him eventually to focus his energies and ideas was the beginning of a sort of musical reconciliation with the Soviet Union in the 1930s. He returned permanently to Moscow in 1936, where his work was generally well-received but not taken as seriously as that of his contemporary, Dmitri Shostakovich.

The composition of Alexander Nevsky came about at the invitation of film-maker Serge Eisenstein, whose films Prokofiev admired. This medium lent itself well to Prokofiev’s imaginative and eclectic musical language; in fact, the composer subsequently received offers from Hollywood to move there and work. The film deals with the exploits of the near-legendary Alexander Nevsky (1220-1263), Prince of Novgorod, who defeated an invading army of Catholic Teutonic Knights on the frozen Lake Peipus in 1242. The subject was very timely with the increasing threat of Hitler and calls for Soviet patriotism. A suite from the film score forms a cantata made up of seven important scenes in the story, indicated by the movement titles. The cantata was first performed in Moscow in May of 1939, with the tensions of what would become World War II very present. As one might expect, the work was an immediate success and has been one of Prokofiev’s most enduring works, because of the emotion and images evoked by the combination of the music and storyline.

In the cantata, the first section, “Russia under the Mongolian Yoke,” is the underscore for the opening credits. In No. 2, “Song about Alexander Nevsky,” the chorus tells the story of how Alexander had previously defeated the Swedish army on the River Neva (hence his name “Nevsky), and exhorts him to take up arms again against the invaders. Part 3, “The Crusaders in Pskov,” depicts the havoc brought to the city by the pillaging invaders. “Arise, Ye Russian People,” No. 4, is a heroic hymn, a bright contrast to the dark music used to describe the Germans in the preceding movement. No. 5, “The Battle on the Ice,” represents the battle between darkness and light, dark for the Teutonic invaders and light for the Russians. At the climax of the battle, the ice begins to crack under the weight of Teutonic armor on heavily burdened horses, and horses and riders sink beneath the water. The ensuing “Field of the Dead” is a solo lament for the Russians lost in the battle. In the final section, No. 7, “Alexander’s Entry into Pskov,” the chorus exults in his victory, with stern warnings to potential invaders that any with similar intentions will meet the same fate.
The 2018-19 season includes six Classical Series concerts and five Pops Series concerts at the Capitol Theatre, conducted by YSO Music Director Lawrence Golan except as noted, and one special performance by the Yakima Symphony Chorus.

**The Yakima Valley Classical Series**

**The Eroica**
October 13, 2018, 7:30pm
Hal Ott, flute; Jill Whitman, harp

**Musical Heroes**
November 10, 2018, 7:30pm
Denise Dillenbeck, violin

**National Heroes**
February 2, 2019, 7:30pm
John Michel, violoncello

**Knights in Shining Armor**
March 16, 2019, 7:30pm

**Heroes from Olden Times**
April 13, 2019, 7:30pm
Yakima Symphony Chorus; Justin Raffa, chorusmaster

**Ein Heldenleben (A Hero's Life)**
May 25, 2019, 7:30pm
Natasha Paremski, piano

**The Gilbert Orchards Pops Series**

**Heroes and Superheroes!**
September 15, 2018, 7:30pm

**Heroes and Hobgoblins**
October 27, 2018, 7:30pm
Yakima Symphony Chorus; Justin Raffa, chorusmaster

**Holiday Pops Spectacular**
December 1, 2018, 7:30pm OR
December 2, 2018, 4:00pm matinee
Yakima Symphony Chorus; Justin Raffa, chorusmaster
Bram Bratá Steel Band

**Wylie & the Wild West**
February 23, 2019, 7:30pm
Wylie and the Wild West

**A Tribute to Elvis Starring Kraig Parker**
May 11, 2019, 7:30pm
Michael Butterman, conductor

**Special Concert – Yakima Symphony Chorus**
March 9, 2019, 7:30pm
St. Paul Cathedral
Justin Raffa, conductor

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