

Moscow State Symphony Orchestra

PAVEL KOGAN, CONDUCTOR



Welcome to *Keynotes*, a performance guide created by the Education Department of the State Theatre in New Brunswick, NJ. These *Keynotes* are designed to enhance your experience attending the concert by the Moscow State Symphony Orchestra. Here's what you'll find inside:

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Formed in 1943, **the Moscow State Symphony Orchestra** exemplifies the Russian tradition in classical music. The orchestra's founder and first Musical Director was Nikolai Anosov, whose son, Gennadi Rozhdestvensky, became one of Russia's leading conductors. Under the subsequent leadership of Lev Ginzburg, the orchestra developed close relationships with the most prominent 20th-century Russian musicians and composers, including Prokofiev and Shostakovich. The orchestra also had the distinction of performing under the directorship of the Soviet woman conductor, Veronika Dudarova. Since Pavel Kogan assumed the positions of Music Director and Chief Conductor in 1989, the orchestra has steadily expanded its repertoire beyond the classics of Russian and Western symphonic literature to include contemporary compositions from both Russia and abroad.

In addition to regular appearances at the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory and throughout Russia, the Moscow State Symphony Orchestra tours extensively, performing 20 to 50 concerts each year in the most prestigious concert halls of Germany, Switzerland, Austria, the U.K., Italy, Spain, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Japan, Hong Kong, South Korea, and Australia. The ensemble also appears regularly at the major Russian and European festivals. They are the only Muscovite orchestra in recent years to perform the full cycle of Beethoven Symphonies in Moscow. The event was broadcast throughout Russia on Russian television.



The Russian Classical Tradition

In the 17th century, as Russia began to engage increasingly with the world outside its borders, an influx of ideas brought about great cultural changes, including the arrival of music from Western Europe. From then until the 19th century, Russia's secular art, music and opera was largely in the hands of imported composers and performers from Italy, Germany, and France.

The first classical composer generally recognized as authentically Russian was **Mikhail Glinka** (1804-1857), whose music was based not only on native melodies and stories but also on the harmonic system of the Russian folk song. His nationalistic vision was carried on in the second half of the 19th century by a group known as "The Mighty Handful," or simply "The Five": **Modest Mussorgsky** (1839-1881), **Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov** (1844-1908), **Mily Balakirev** (1837-1910), **Aleksandr Borodin** (1883-1887), and **César Cui** (1835-1918).

In 1862, the same year that "The Five" were established as a group, the first Russian conservatory was founded in St. Petersburg. Its teaching was strictly in the Western European model, causing a storm of protest from the Russian nationalists. One of the first graduates from the St. Petersburg Conservatory was **Pyotr Illyich Tchaikovsky** (1840-1893), whose symphonies, overtures, ballets, and operas combined Western European style and craftsmanship with Russian subject matter. **Sergei Rachmaninoff** (1873-1943) followed Tchaikovsky's lead in writing passionate, melodic music that did not sound particularly "Russian."

In the 20th century, **Igor Stravinsky** (1882-1971) left Russia for Paris, and proceeded to revolutionize classical music with his groundbreaking approach to melody, harmony, rhythm, and orchestration. **Sergei Prokofiev** (1891-1953) also elected to pursue much of his career outside of Russia, while **Dmitri Shostakovich** (1906-1985) managed to find his distinctive musical voice while working under the repressive Soviet system.

In addition to its distinguished composers, Russian classical music has produced a long list of acclaimed conductors and performers who have made an indelible mark on the international music scene.



Moscow State Symphony Orchestra music director and chief conductor **Pavel Kogan**, son of world-famous Russian violinists Leonid Kogan and Elizaveta Gilels, began his musical studies at the prestigious Central Music School in Moscow and continued at the Moscow Conservatory. He studied violin with the great

pedagogue Yuri Yankelevich and conducting with Lev Ginzburg and Ilya Musin. In 1970, at the age of 18, Kogan won first prize and the gold medal at the Sibelius International Violin Competition in Helsinki, Finland. Concert tours followed throughout Russia, Europe, Japan, and the United States, in recital and as orchestral soloist with many leading ensembles, including the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

In 1974, he made his conducting debut with the Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra. Now considered one of Russia's top conductors, Kogan regularly conducts that country's major orchestras and appears frequently with the leading orchestras of Europe and the U.S. He is also a frequent guest at such festivals as Prague Spring, Helsinki, Dubrovnik, Flanders, and St. Petersburg White Nights. Equally at home in the opera house, Maestro Kogan opened the 1988-89 season of the Bolshoi Opera in Moscow with Verdi's *La traviata*.

In 1997, Pavel Kogan made his North American debuts with the Utah Symphony and Milwaukee Symphony, and since 1998 has served as Principal Guest Conductor of the Utah Symphony. Since then, he has made guest appearances with the symphony orchestras of New Jersey, Vancouver, Houston, Toronto, Indianapolis, Oregon, Edmonton, and the National Arts Centre Orchestra. In 2001-2002, Pavel Kogan led the Moscow State Symphony in a cross-country tour of the U.S., which included the orchestra's New York debut at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall.



The Family Business

Pavel Kogan's son, Dmitri Kogan, plays the violin and his niece, Victoria Korchinskaya-Kogan, plays the piano.

Pavel Kogan on the Challenges of Being a Conductor:

[Conducting] is a really hard thing to do because a symphony orchestra is one great instrument that is alive and brings together 120 individualities, 120 characters that are all different from one another... You've got to work really hard to fuse together all these different egos. It's my strong conviction that when we are already going through a piece of music, you just can't force the people to sound right. What you really need here is a psychological contact with the musicians, some inexplicable chemistry that emotionally connects them with the conductor. I always keep in mind that I'm dealing with 120 individualities and not merely instruments you can play just the way you want...



OPUS- Latin for 'work,' a term, used with a number, to indicate where the piece falls in the chronological order of the composer's works (the order of publication, not the order of composition)

MOVEMENT - a separate section within a musical piece, like chapters in a book. The movement headings are usually taken from the tempo instructions that the composer has written at the beginning of the section. There is usually (but not always) a brief pause between movements, during which the audience should remain silent. Concert etiquette dictates that the audience hold their applause until the entire piece is finished.

The program book or playbill contains helpful information about the evening's 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, the **opus** number, 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 Moscow Symphony Orchestra will look like this:

ICM Artists, Ltd.
presents

The Moscow State Symphony Orchestra

Pavel Kogan, music director & chief conductor
Alisa Weilerstein, cello

title of piece → *Marche slave, Op. 31*

opus number →

Variation on a Rococo Theme, Op. 33

Theme:	<i>Moderato semplice</i>	}	variations
Var. I:	<i>Tempo della Thema</i>		
Var. II:	<i>Tempo della Thema</i>		
Var. III:	<i>Andante sostenuto</i>		
Var. IV:	<i>Andante grazioso</i>		
Var. V:	<i>Allegro moderato</i>		
Var. VI:	<i>Andante</i>		
Var. VII and Coda:	<i>Allegro vivo</i>		

composer → Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

The variation headings (in English):

Theme: Just plain moderate

Var. I Same speed as the Theme

Var. II Same speed as the Theme

Var. III Medium slow and sustained

Var. IV Medium slow and graceful

Var. V Moderately fast

Var. VI Medium slow

Var. VII Fast and lively ("Coda" means tail, or ending.)

solist → Alisa Weilerstein, cello

–Intermission–

a chance to stretch your legs, get a drink, visit the restroom, or read the program notes

the popular nickname for this piece →

Symphony No. 9 in E minor, Op. 95 ("From the New World")

Adagio - Allegro molto	}	movements
Largo		
Scherzo: Molto vivace		
Allegro con fuoco		

Antonín Dvořák

The movement headings (in English):

I: Slow - Very fast

II: Slow and broad

III: Very lively ("Scherzo" means "joke"; a quick, playful section)

IV: Fast, with fire

The Moscow State Symphony Orchestra is performing on their U.S. Tour with double basses provided by K.C. Strings Violin Shop.

Alisa Weilerstein records for EMI Classics.

The BioTec Company Group is the official sponsor of the Moscow State Symphony Orchestra.

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David V. Foster, President and C.E.O.

The Moscow State Symphony Orchestra's program for their State Theatre concert includes works by two composers: *Variations on a Rococo Theme*, Op. 33 and *Marche slave*, Op. 31 by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, and Symphony No. 9 in E Minor, Op. 95 by Antonín Dvořák.

Marche Slave

The French title, pronounced *Marsh Slav*, means "Slavic March." The piece is one of Tchaikovsky's most popular concert works. It was written in 1876 for a concert to benefit soldiers wounded in the war between Serbia and Turkey. The conflict eventually escalated into all-out war between Russia and Turkey; to capitalize on the prevailing spirit of Slavic solidarity, Tchaikovsky used Serbian folk songs as the main themes, along with the Russian imperial anthem, "God Save the Tsar." Still, Tchaikovsky's intent seems not to have been wholly nationalistic; his orchestration of the national anthem in its various appearances is almost satirical, though this aspect of the work is often downplayed in performance.

Politically Incorrect?
During the Soviet era, when performances of "God Save the Tsar" were forbidden, a melody by Glinka was inserted into the *Marche slave* as a substitute.



Russian composer **Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky** (1840-

1893) was the son of a mining engineer and his second wife, a Russian of French ancestry. The musically precocious Pyotr began piano lessons at age five. Through his music studies he fell in love with Italian opera and especially with the music of Mozart. In his early 20s, he gave up his civil service position to study music composition at the new St. Petersburg Conservatory. Upon graduation, he was made a professor at the conservatory and spent the next ten years teaching and writing music.

In 1877, Tchaikovsky (whom scholars believe was homosexual) made a hasty and disastrous marriage. Two weeks after the honeymoon he attempted suicide. He left his wife, quit his teaching post, and eventually moved in with his sister. Discovering a gift for conducting, in 1891 he embarked on a triumphant tour of America conducting performances of his works—including the inaugural performance at the opening of Carnegie Hall in New York. On November 6, 1893, just a few days after leading the premiere of his Sixth Symphony, Tchaikovsky died in Saint Petersburg. Although the official cause of death was given as cholera, in recent years it has been theorized that he committed suicide over a threat to expose his homosexuality.

Whatever the circumstances of his death, Tchaikovsky left a rich legacy of music that may be considered the ultimate expression of the Romantic era. Among his most popular works are scores for the ballets *Swan Lake* (1876), *Sleeping Beauty* (1889), and *The Nutcracker* (1892); six symphonies, including the deeply passionate No. 6 (the "Pathétique," 1893); operas (sung in Russian but Italian in style) including *Eugene Onegin* (1879) and *The Queen of Spades* (1890); three concertos for piano and one for violin; and evocative orchestral works such as *Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture* (1869), *Capriccio Italien* (1880), and the *1812 Overture*.

Variations on a Rococo Theme

Tchaikovsky's *Variations on a Rococo Theme*, Op. 33, for solo cello and orchestra, was written between December 1876 and March 1877, for and with the help of the German cellist Wilhelm Fitzenhagen (a professor at the Moscow Conservatory). It was well received at its first performances and Fitzenhagen himself took the piece with him on a tour of Europe.

In this work Tchaikovsky comes closest to capturing the spirit of his idol, Mozart. He scored the piece for a smaller, 18th-century-sized orchestra. The elegant, witty style evokes the Classical world of Haydn and Mozart while remaining unmistakably Tchaikovskian.

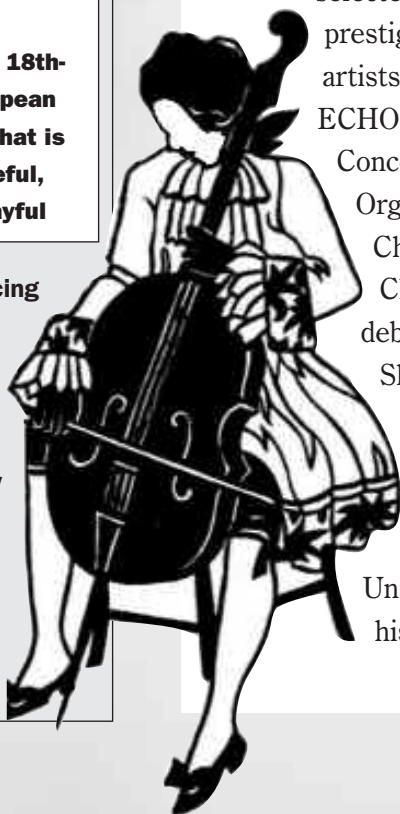
Though not a true **CONCERTO**, this was the closest Tchaikovsky

ever came to writing a full concerto for cello. It is constructed as a sequence of seven variations on a musical theme, which is played at the beginning of the work. Despite the title, the theme is original to Tchaikovsky and not actually from the **ROCOCO** period. The variations include

changes in rhythm, tempo, key, and voicing (which instrument or combination of instruments play which notes). The variations are played without a pause in between, except between the last slow movement and the finale. The seemingly simple arrangement of the eight sections belies the difficulty of this piece, which lacks the usual longer orchestral interludes that allow the soloist to catch her breath.

CONCERTO (con CHAIR-toh) - a musical work for one or more solo instruments accompanied by an orchestra

ROCOCO - an 18th-century European style of art that is ornate, graceful, light, and playful



The soloist for Tchaikovsky's *Variations on a Rococo Theme* is the internationally-renowned cellist **Alisa Weilerstein**. Since her first public concert at the age of 4, the 24-year-old has appeared with prestigious ensembles including the orchestras of Baltimore, Cleveland, Minnesota, Pittsburgh, and San Francisco, as well as the New York Philharmonic and National Symphony Orchestra. In January 2007 she will make her New York Philharmonic debut performing the Elgar Cello Concerto with Zubin Mehta conducting.

Ms. Weilerstein was the recipient in 2000 of an Avery Fisher Career Grant and was selected for two prestigious young artists programs: the ECHO (European Concert Hall

Organization) "Rising Stars" recital series and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's Chamber Music Society Two. Her highly praised debut recording was released on EMI classics. She often plays with her parents, Donald and Vivian Hornik Weilerstein, as the Weilerstein Trio, the Trio-in-Residence at the New England Conservatory in Boston. In May 2004, Alisa graduated from Columbia University in New York with a degree in Russian history.



"My parents are the two most fantastic musicians I can think of. They love what they do so much. It was never a question of, 'Is it practical/possible to make a living as a musician?' It was always, 'Follow your heart, love your instrument, love the music.'"

—Alisa Weilerstein

“New World” Symphony

Dvořák’s *Symphony No. 9 in E minor, Op. 95* (“From the New World”) is by far his most popular work, and one of the most popular symphonies in the modern repertory. He wrote it in 1893, during his visit to the U.S.

Dvořák’s love of folk music led him to embrace the Native American and African American music he heard while he was in this country.

Following the premiere of his “New World” Symphony, a heated debate arose as to whether or not the work incorporated actual elements of American folk music. The composer himself seems

to have reversed his own opinion on this issue. He ultimately stated, “I have not actually used any of the [Native American] melodies. I have simply written original themes embodying the peculiarities of the Indian music, and, using these themes as subjects, have developed them with all the resources of modern rhythms, counterpoint, and orchestral color.”

“In the negro melodies of America I discover all that is needed for a great and noble school of music. There is nothing in the whole range of composition that cannot be supplied with themes from this source.”

—Antonín Dvořák

It’s a New World!

In 1969, American astronaut Neil Armstrong took a recording of the “New World” Symphony to the Moon during the Apollo 11 mission, the first Moon landing.

Composer **Antonín Dvořák** (1841-1904) wrote in a variety of classical forms, including symphonies, concertos, ‘symphonic poems,’ chamber music, choral and piano music, and even opera. His music is characterized by a fusion of European Romantic style with the idioms and



BOHEMIA - a historical region in what is now the western and middle thirds of the Czech Republic

melodies of the folk music of the composer’s native **Bohemia**.

Dvořák was the son of a butcher (who also worked as a professional zither player). Displaying talent at an early age, the boy took lessons in organ, viola, piano and basic composition. After graduating from the Prague

Organ School, he became a member of the new Provisional Theatre orchestra, which was conducted by the Czech nationalist composer Bedřich Smetana.

Eventually Dvořák left the orchestra to devote himself full time to composing. By his early 30s, he was sufficiently well known for Johannes Brahms to recommend him to the music publisher Simrock; the company commissioned Dvořák’s hugely successful *Slavonic Dances* (1878). His music was increasingly performed to great acclaim, leading to new commissions and invitations to tour abroad. England was especially hospitable to the composer, hosting frequent visits, commissioning new works, and even awarding him an honorary Cambridge doctorate. He visited Russia in 1890, continued to launch new works in Prague and London and began teaching at the Prague Conservatory in 1891.

Dvořák’s fame was not limited to Europe. From 1892-1895 he served as director of the National Conservatory in New York City, where he also taught composition. In New York he wrote his best-known work—the Ninth Symphony (“From the New World”), as well as the Cello Concerto in B minor. The composer’s American sojourn included a summer in the Czech-speaking community of Spillville, Iowa, where he wrote two of his most beloved chamber works: the String Quartet in F (“The American”), the String Quintet in E-flat.

Financial disputes and family ties took him back home, where he focused on writing opera and chamber music. He served as director of the Conservatory in Prague from 1901 until his death in 1904.

A member of the orchestra's string family, the cello is larger than the violin and viola and smaller than the double bass. In proportion with its size, it is the second-lowest instrument in the string section. Its formal name is *violoncello*, but it's almost always referred to nowadays as simply the cello—pronounced, Italian-style, as CHEL-loh. It's used primarily in European classical music, both in the symphony orchestra and in smaller chamber ensembles, including the string quartet.

SCROLL

TUNING PEG

NUT

NECK

FINGERBOARD

BODY

BRIDGE

F-HOLE

TAILPIECE

ENDPIN

Construction

Like other string instruments, the cello is made from thin pieces of wood that are glued together, coated with varnish, and baked. The cello's four strings stretch almost the entire length of the instrument. They are attached at the top by *pegs*. From the pegs the strings travel down a small piece of wood called the *nut* down the *neck* and over the *body* to the *bridge*. Originally, the strings were made from cat-gut, but today are usually made of metal wound around a core of steel, gut, nylon or other synthetic material. The cello is played with a bow, which is constructed of strands of horsehair strung along a long, thin wooden frame. Bowing or plucking the strings makes them vibrate, which is what produces the sound. The hollow body of the cello acts as a resonator, giving fullness and volume to the sound of the vibrating strings. The f-shaped holes in the body of the instrument also help project the sound.

Playing Technique

The cello is played with the musician seated. The instrument is held upright between the player's legs, resting on the floor by means of a rubber-tipped endpin. With the fingers of the left hand, the cellist changes the length of the strings by pressing them down against different points on the *fingerboard*. This produces the different notes required in the music. (The lower down the fingerboard the string is depressed, the shorter the string and therefore the higher the pitch.) The cellist's right hand produces the sound from the instrument, most often by drawing the bow across the strings, but also by plucking the strings with the fingers (a technique called *pizzicato*). A cellist usually plays just one string at a time. "Double stops" are when two strings are played at once. Triple and even quadruple stops are possible, but difficult to play.

COOL CELLO TECHNIQUES

VIBRATO - Wobbling the fingers of the left hand as they press the strings against the fingerboard to make the pitch waver slightly. This produces a richer, more expressive tone.

GLISSANDO - Sliding the finger(s) of the left hand up and down the fingerboard without releasing the string. This makes the pitch go up and down the scale without a break. (Like the sound made by a siren.)

HARMONICS - Lightly touching (instead of pressing down) the string with the finger at a given fraction of its length produces over-tones or harmonics—musical tones whose frequencies are integral multiples of the frequency of the string's fundamental pitch.

PIZZICATO - Plucking the string (usually with the fingers of the right hand) instead of playing it with the bow.

DOUBLE STOPS - Playing two strings at once.

COL LEGNO - Tapping the wooden part of the bow against the strings.

SPICCATO - Bouncing the bow against the strings rather than drawing it smoothly across.

To Clap, or Not to Clap?

People who've never attended a symphony concert before can be a little apprehensive about applauding at the wrong time. If you're one of those people, here are some general rules to guide you:

- Just before the concert begins, the audience will applaud the arrival onstage of the Concertmaster (the first violinist, who acts as the leader of the musicians).
- They'll applaud again when the conductor and soloist(s) enter.
- If they've liked the performance, the audience will applaud at the END of each piece of music on the program.
- Applauding between the movements or sections of a piece is generally frowned upon, even if there's a sizeable pause. Many people believe that applauding between movements breaks the "spell" or momentum of the piece. If you're not sure when a piece is finished, check the program to see how many movements there are, or applaud only when the conductor turns to the audience and bows.
- When a piece has ended, the conductor (and soloist, if there is one) may leave the stage and then return for curtain calls, depending on the level of applause.
- Though concertgoers are doing it more and more these days, it's generally considered impolite to leave the hall while the audience is still applauding. And if you leave too soon, you may miss the encore, if the orchestra plays one!



Additional Resources

www.mssso.ru

The official website of the Moscow State Symphony Orchestra, with Orchestra biographies, and tour schedule

www.alisaweilerstein.com

Alisa Weilerstein's web site

[www.vor.ru/VIS A VIS new/excl Kgeng.html](http://www.vor.ru/VIS_A_VIS_new/excl_Kgeng.html)

Interview with Pavel Kogan touching on his involvement with the Moscow State Symphony Orchestra

www.classical.net

Learn more about classical composers and their works.

key notes

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