The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Dmitry Shostakovich's 'Lady Macbeth' Comes to Boston and New York

January 22, 2024



Composer Dmitry Shostakovich working in his study. **Georgy Petrusov / Photo ITAR-TASS**

At the end of January Andris Nelsons, music director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra (BSO), is conducting a concert version of Dmitry Shostakovich's 1932 opera "Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District." The opera is one of the composer's most innovative and celebrated works — and one that so offended Josef Stalin that he banned further performances.

"Lady Macbeth" will be performed in Boston on Jan. 25 and 27 and in New York's Carnegie Hall on Jan. 29 and 30. For a rich backstage experience, on Tuesday, Jan. 23 at 5:30 p.m. in Boston Symphony Hall. Harlow Robinson, one of the country's leading experts on Russian and Soviet cultural history and music, and members of the Boston Symphony will discuss the opera before an open rehearsal beginning at 7 p.m.

The opera "Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District," based on a short story of the same name by Nikolai Leskov, tells the story of a lonely and oppressed wife of a merchant in a provincial Russian town who begins an affair that eventually leads to murder. Shostakovich debuted the opera in 1934 to very positive reviews. But two years later Stalin left a performance of the

opera midway through and an unsigned denunciation appeared in the newspaper Pravda with the now-famous title "Muddle Instead of Music." The opera was banned in the Soviet Union, and first performed in Russia only in 2000.

"Lady Macbeth" is conducted by Andris Nelsons. Nelsons, who was born and raised in Riga, Latvia, was introduced to Shostakovich's music at age six in music school and has felt a particular affinity with the composer and his works. Nelsons and the BSO have produced the award-winning complete cycle of the composer's 15 symphonies for Deutsche Grammophon. A live performance of "Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk" this January will also be recorded for the label.

In Boston and New York City the lead roles with be sung by Nelsons' compatriot Kirstine Opolais as Katerina, Brendon Gunnell as Sergei and Peter Hoare in his BSO debut as Katerina's husband Zinovy.

For tickets and more information about the concerts in Boston, see the BSO site here*. For tickets and more information about the concerts in New York, see the Carnegie Hall site* here*.*

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2024/01/22/dmitry-shostakovichs-lady-macbeth-comes-to-boston-and-new-york-a83809