



**Alexander Vedernikov opens Prokofiev – Man of the People?  
with London Philharmonic Orchestra  
at Royal Festival Hall on 13 January 2012**

**Russian conductor's season includes fascinating programmes with Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and BBC Symphony Orchestra**

Integrity is Alexander Vedernikov's watchword. The Russian conductor, who returns to the UK for three concerts in the coming months, underlined the matter in 2009 when he resigned as Music Director and Chief Conductor of the Bolshoi Theatre on a point of principle. He has since forged a formidable international career as a guest conductor, securing critical acclaim for performances of a broad spectrum of symphonic repertoire and opera.

Vedernikov returns to work with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, opening its ambitious Prokofiev – Man of the People? series at the Royal Festival Hall on Friday 13 January 2012. His all-Prokofiev programme promises to deliver fresh insights into the composer's creative development following his return to the Soviet Union in the 1930s. It also presents a compelling opportunity to hear the artistry of a conductor known for breathing fresh life into familiar scores and energising rarely heard compositions. The concert opens with the Suite from *Lieutenant Kijé* and continues with the first version of the Cello Concerto Op.58. The programme is crowned by one of Prokofiev's final works, his Seventh Symphony in C-sharp minor.

In shaping his Prokofiev interpretations, Vedernikov draws from the experience of his training at the Moscow Conservatoire and the rich musical heritage of his family. The conductor's father, also Alexander, achieved legendary status with his title-role performances of Musorgsky's *Boris Godunov* and as Kutuzov in Prokofiev's *War and Peace* at the Bolshoi Theatre; his mother, the organist and harpsichordist Natalia Gureyeva, frequently worked with artists with close ties to Prokofiev.

"These pieces allow us to see Prokofiev's music and personality from different sides," Vedernikov observes. "He began writing the Cello Concerto in 1933 while he was still based in Paris but only completed it after his return to the Soviet Union in 1936. Following the premiere in 1939, which was very unsuccessful, Prokofiev altered the score. About a decade later he was persuaded by Mstislav Rostropovich to revise the piece as the Symphony-Concerto, which is what we most often hear today. I think the first version of the Cello Concerto has its own charms and definitely deserves to be heard more often. His music for the film *Lieutenant Kijé* also dates from 1933 and is, I believe, one of the greatest of all cinema scores."

A glance at Alexander Vedernikov's 2012 schedule reveals the striking variety of his guest conducting career. His working year begins at Salle Pleyel in Paris in January in company with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France and Mikhail Rudy. The conductor's diary includes red-letter dates at Berlin's Komische Oper, not least with Strauss's *Salome* in April and May, and concerts with the symphony orchestras of Odense, Aarhus, Trondheim and Gothenburg. Over the next six months, Vedernikov will conduct everything from core Russian orchestral works and neglected treasures such as Taneyev's choral cantata *St John of Damascus* to the *Grande Symphonie funèbre et triomphale* of Berlioz and individual acts from Wagner's *Die Walküre* and *Parsifal* in concert performance.

"My artistic life has changed since I left the Bolshoi," comments Vedernikov. "I believe that in future I may be useful in building an orchestra or an opera company as its chief conductor. But for now I have the opportunity to conduct works new to me, such as the operas of Richard Strauss and Janáček, and explore pieces I have always

wanted to perform with symphony orchestra. I even have the possibility to conduct Russian works such as Glinka's *Life for the Tsar*, which I was unable to do while I was at the Bolshoi Theatre."

British audiences have the chance to discover more of Vedernikov's work in the next five months. The conductor makes his Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra debut in concerts at the Poole Lighthouse and Portsmouth Guildhall on 22 and 23 February, offering the ear-catching combination of Rachmaninov's Second Symphony, the *Reverie* of Alexander Scriabin and Mendelssohn's Second Piano Concerto (with the young Palestinian pianist Saleem Abboud Ashkar as soloist). Vedernikov joins the BBC Symphony Orchestra at the Barbican Centre on 10 May to perform an equally imaginative programme. The concert opens with the Suite from Shostakovich's ballet *The Bolt*, unfolds with the UK premiere of Aho's Trombone Concerto, with Jörgen van Rijen as soloist, and concludes with the First Symphony of Sibelius.

"My diet of guest conducting work in opera and the concert hall suits me very well. I believe it is a conductor's duty to learn new works in order to expand his artistic outlook. Now I am looking forward to conducting *Tristan und Isolde* for the first time in 2013, to exploring one of the most important works in the opera literature. Of course I also have a sense of responsibility as an interpreter to bring less familiar Russian works, including pieces from the Soviet period, to the West. This is why I am so happy to be performing Scriabin's *Reverie* for orchestra with the Bournemouth Symphony and to programme Shostakovich's Suite from *The Bolt* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra."

**Friday 13 January 2012**  
**Royal Festival Hall, 7.30pm**

London Philharmonic Orchestra  
**Danjulo Ishizaka** cello

Prokofiev Lieutenant Kijé Suite  
Prokofiev Cello Concerto in E minor  
Prokofiev Symphony No. 7 in C-sharp minor, Op. 131

**Wednesday 22 February 2012, Lighthouse, Poole, 7.30pm**  
**Thursday 23 February 2012, Portsmouth Guildhall, Portsmouth, 7.30pm**

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra  
**Saleem Abboud Ashkar** piano

Rachmaninov Symphony No. 2  
Scriabin Reverie  
Mendelssohn Piano Concerto No. 2

**Thursday 10 May 2012**  
**Barbican Centre, 7.30pm**

BBC Symphony Orchestra  
**Jorgen van Rijen** trombone

Shostakovich The Bolt Suite  
Kalevi Aho Trombone Concerto  
Sibelius Symphony No. 1

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## **Notes for Editors**

### **Alexander Vedernikov Conductor**

Chief Conductor, Odense Symphony Orchestra

Chief Conductor, Trondheim Opera

Alexander Vedernikov was Music Director and Chief Conductor of the Bolshoi Theatre from 2001 until 2009. He has been credited with rebuilding the Bolshoi Theatre's historical reputation for artistic excellence. He led many productions at the Bolshoi, including a new production of *Boris Godunov* using Musorgsky's original orchestrations (2007); Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, the Bolshoi's first new production in more than fifty years (2006); Puccini's *Turandot* (2006); Prokofiev's *The Fiery Angel* (2004), *War and Peace* (2005/2006) and *Cinderella* (2006); the world premiere of Leonid Desyatnikov's *The Children of Rosenthal*, commissioned by the Bolshoi Theatre; Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman* (2004), Glinka's *Ruslan and Ludmila* (2003); *Turandot* (2002) Musorgsky's *Khovanshchina* (2002) and Cilea's *Adriana Lecouvreur* (2002).

He was also responsible for developing the Bolshoi's programme of symphonic concerts, notable for its broad repertoire, including Prokofiev's *Cinderella*, Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust*, Verdi's Requiem, scenes from the operas of Wagner, and music by Richard Strauss, Berg, Shostakovich, and Georgy Sviridov. Under Vedernikov's direction, the orchestra of the Bolshoi toured extensively, including visits to Athens, Hamburg and Paris in February 2008 and a season of opera and ballet at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in July 2006 (including *The Fiery Angel* and *Boris Godunov*), where the orchestra was singled out for its exceptional playing. His recent opera and symphonic performances at La Scala Milan also attracted critical acclaim.

Beyond the immense success of his work in Russia, Alexander Vedernikov performs extensively throughout Europe and further afield. Recent seasons have included engagements with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Danish National Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Symphony, BBC Symphony Orchestra, China Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestra Verdi, Milan, City of Birmingham Symphony, the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington DC, Bayerischer Rundfunk Symphony Orchestra (at Mariss Jansons' personal request), Maggio Musicale Florence, Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana (with Martha Argerich at the Martha Argerich Project in Lugano), Netherlands Philharmonic, the Hamburg Philharmonic, and symphonic programmes with the orchestras of the Teatro Comunale Florence and Teatro Comunale Cagliari.