



**PRELUDE CONCERTS**  
**THE CHAMBER MUSIC OF**  
**MIECZYŚLAW WEINBERG**

PARK AVENUE  
ARMORY  
PRESENTS



Lincoln Center  
Festival

# PRELUDE CONCERTS

THE CHAMBER MUSIC OF MIECZYSLAW WEINBERG

## ARC ENSEMBLE

THURSDAY, JULY 10 AT 6:00PM

**From the Lyrics of Baratiynsky,  
op. 125 (1979)**

Robert Pomakov, bass  
David Louie, piano

**Piano Trio, op. 24 (1945)**

Benjamin Bowman, violin  
Se-Doo Park, cello  
David Louie, piano

SATURDAY, JULY 12 AT 6:00PM

**Cello Sonata No. 2, op. 63 (1958)**

Se-Doo Park, cello  
Dianne Werner, piano

**Violin Sonata No. 1, op. 12 (1943)**

Erika Raum, violin  
Dianne Werner, piano

SUNDAY, JULY 13 AT 6:00PM

**Piano Quintet, op. 18 (1943)**

Erika Raum, violin  
Marie Bérard, violin  
Steven Dann, viola  
Se-Doo Park, cello  
David Louie, piano

*Each program is approximately 45 minutes in length, without intermission.*

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# ABOUT THE PROGRAM

## THURSDAY, JULY 10 AT 6:00PM

### From the Lyrics of Baratynsky, op. 125 (1979)

My gift is poor  
Old man  
The Waterfall  
There were tempests  
Slave to a wearying dream  
Spring, spring!  
The Muse

The bass voice held a special attraction for Weinberg. In addition to the present Baratynsky cycle, there are several others for bass: the *Six Sonnets after Shakespeare*, op. 33; *From Afanasy Fet's Poetry*, op. 134; the *Triptych* for bass and orchestra, op. 99; and *From Zhukovsky's Lyrics*, op. 116. This evening's soloist, Robert Pomakov, gave the latter work its American premiere in 2008 as part of the ARC Ensemble's "Music in Exile" series in New York, and we believe that the performance of the Baratynsky settings this evening is a further American premiere — the songs are yet to be published. (Mr. Pomakov performs the role of first S.S. Officer in *The Passenger*.)

By 1979, when Weinberg wrote the Baratynsky cycle, performances of his works were already on the decline, but he continued to compose with an almost demonic energy. No sooner had he completed a work than he would begin another. A fallow period of just a couple of weeks would induce self-doubt and depression, and fears that he had lost the ability to compose.

If these feelings were without real cause, the circumstances of Yevgeny Baratynsky's childhood provided an ideal foundation for the depression and melancholy that plagued most of his life. The child of an aristocratic family, Baratynsky lost his father when he was eight and was dispatched to the Page Corps in St. Petersburg four years later. The Page Corps was a school where strict discipline and the liberal application of the birch groomed the sons of the high-born for a career in the military and this seemed inevitable, until an incident involving the theft of a gold snuff-box filled with cash led to Baratynsky's expulsion. The dishonor plagued him for the rest of his life. Although widely admired—Pushkin considered him Russia's consummate elegiac poet—by the end of the 19th-century Baratynsky had become a marginal figure. It was thanks to his enthusiastic promotion by Joseph Brodsky, and later Anna Akhmatova, that Baratynsky's poetry found a wider audience in the 20th-century. But the poet had already inspired a number of composers: Mikhail Glinka and Alexander Dargomyzhsky during the 19th-century, and later, Sergei Taneyev, Nikolai Myaskovsky, and Alexander Tcherepnin.

Weinberg uses clear, unembellished melodies in his settings of Baratynsky's texts, and the piano writing is similarly spare; providing simple rhythmic support—the slow swing of "My gift is poor" and the guitar-like arpeggios of "Old man" for example—or a slow-moving harmonic bed. The language is similar to the Zhukovsky settings Weinberg composed three years earlier, although the changes from song to song range from simple diatonic harmony to near atonality.

### Piano Trio, op. 24 (1945)

Prelude and aria: Larghetto  
Toccata: Allegro marcato  
Poem: Moderato  
Finale: Allegro moderato

The Piano Trio was composed in the new-found safety of Moscow in 1945. Like his Piano Quintet, completed two years earlier, the Trio's emotional force is informed by the composer's grim personal experience with war, and the murder of his immediate family and many friends and colleagues. The specificity of the relationship between experience and musical substance can only be guessed at, and commentators are forever tempted to impose some kind of retrospective emotional or even programmatic narrative. Many years later, Weinberg described the influence of the war years: "Many of my works are related to the theme of war. This, alas, was not my own choice. It was dictated by my fate and by the tragic fate of my relatives. I regard it as my moral duty to write about the war, about the horrors that befell mankind in our century."

The most-performed and best-known Piano Trio of the 20th-century had been premiered the previous year: Shostakovich's searing Second Trio, op. 67. It is quite likely that Weinberg had some influence in the inclusion of the Jewish elements in its final movement, and Shostakovich's masterpiece clearly influenced Weinberg's work. Following the bold and confident announcement of the opening *Prelude* and its impassioned principal theme, there is a definite sense of flight in the *Toccata* movement, a relentless, pell-mell pursuit of sixteenth-notes punctuated by piano exclamations, all seemingly intent on resolution. Frenzied folk-tunes interject and elaborate on the piano figurations which spiral to a sudden and startling finish. The movement's correspondence to the *Allegro con brio* of Shostakovich's Trio is plain. The third movement, *Poeme*, opens with an extended and contemplative piano solo, somewhat reminiscent of J.S. Bach in its ruminative figurations and sequences, and presaging the similarly substantial piano solo of the Piano Quintet's slow movement. As Weinberg was a pianist, and a hugely accomplished virtuoso at that, one is tempted to interpret these piano passages as the most personal expressions of the composer's feelings. The sense of desolation is heightened with the arrival of lonely violin pizzicati and a

sombre cello theme, which, in turn are followed by a bleak violin melody accompanied by a similarly austere solo piano line. The music builds in intensity as the piano develops the opening material. Scurrying scalic passages and fugal writing give the *Finale* a frantic quality, which like the Piano Quintet, ends in a protracted diminuendo, the violin barely audible by the final notes.

– Simon Wynberg, Artistic Director of ARC Ensemble

## SATURDAY, JULY 12 AT 6:00PM

### Cello Sonata No. 2, op. 63 (1958)

Moderato  
Andante  
Allegro

By 1959 when Weinberg completed his second cello sonata and Shostakovich his first cello concerto, their families had known one another for some 16 years, most of them spent under the terrifyingly unpredictable reign of Joseph Stalin. The two composers developed a deep mutual admiration for one another and an intimate knowledge of each other's works—indeed the central theme of Shostakovich's Concerto appears (a tribute perhaps?) in the *Finale* of Weinberg's Sonata. A teenage cellist had arrived in Moscow around the same time as Weinberg, and by the mid-fifties he was already considered one of the Soviet Union's finest soloists. Mstislav Rostropovich had been a Shostakovich student at the Moscow Conservatory and he was the dedicatee of both Weinberg's and Shostakovich's cello concerti. The latter work, and Weinberg's Cello Sonata were both premiered by Rostropovich in 1960. Weinberg's legacy for the cello includes the Concerto, a *Fantasy* for cello and orchestra, three sonatas with piano, and four sonatas and a set of Twenty-Four Preludes for solo cello. They have been eagerly taken-up by cellists since their re-publication.

It is easy to understand Rostropovich's attraction to Weinberg's idiomatic and elegiac cello writing. The searching melody that opens the Second Sonata's *Moderato* is particularly arresting and provides the material on which most of the movement is built. The introspective *Andante* with its persistent barcarolle rhythm is no less effective. The final *Allegro* is firmly rooted in the unyielding motoric rhythms of Prokofiev and Shostakovich (Prokofiev's Piano Sonata No. 7, for example, and the second movements of Shostakovich's Eighth and Tenth Symphonies). Its momentum ebbs only in the final few bars when with a musical masterstroke, the movement lurches to a close with a sequence of triplet chords on the piano, a gesture similar to the bridge passage that introduces the closing section of the *Moderato* movement.

### Violin Sonata No. 1, op. 12 (1943)

Allegro  
Adagietto  
Allegro

According to the autograph score, Weinberg's first sonata for violin and piano—he was to compose five more as well as three solo sonatas—was composed in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, between February 11 and April 11, 1943. The work is dedicated to Solomon Mikhoels, one of the country's most distinguished actors, and Chairman of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee. Weinberg had recently married his daughter Natalya Vovsi-Mikhoels. The Piano Trio, Piano Quintet, and the Jewish Songs to texts by Shmuel Halkin all date from the early 1940s, and all have a visceral immediacy that in some way reflect the horror and destruction of the war.

But in the three movements of this richly melodic, and only occasionally unsettled Sonata, there is little indication of any recent trauma: Weinberg's flight from Poland, the physical exhaustion and privations he suffered, and the Nazi savagery that he had witnessed at first hand—it would take considerably longer to reveal the Soviet atrocities in Poland. It was in Tashkent that the jazz trumpeter, Eddie Rosner, another Polish refugee, told Weinberg that his family had been on a transport out of Warsaw (their actual deaths were only confirmed in the early 1960s). And yet the Sonata is balanced and introspective with recurring passages of contained majesty, and more than a hint of Johannes Brahms. But ultimately the music is conversational and the material refers to itself, rather than to any external program or narrative. Paradoxically, this might be indication enough. Wisps of the sonata's opening melody are found in the first movement of Weinberg's first symphony, completed the previous year, and like the Piano Quintet, this opening melody reappears at the end of piece.

– Simon Wynberg, Artistic Director of ARC Ensemble

# TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

SUNDAY, JULY 13 AT 6:00PM

## Piano Quintet, op. 18 (1943)

Moderato con moto  
Allegretto  
Presto  
Largo  
Allegro agitato

It is appropriate that performances of *The Passenger* (1968) are accompanied by music closest to the composer's own experience of war and the Holocaust, and few of his works seem to address this more powerfully than his extraordinary Piano Quintet — virtually unknown ten years ago, apart from a historic recording made by the composer and the Borodin Quartet (recently re-released on *Melodiya*). When the ARC Ensemble's recording of the piece was issued in 2006 (RCA Red Seal), there were no other available versions. Since then, another six recordings have joined the catalogue. It is rare that an altogether unknown work is so swiftly and widely embraced. Together with the Piano Trio, op. 24, which dates from the same period, the work inhabits a musical world where melody can slide from desolation to renewal; where rhythmic insistence transforms in a moment to a restrained gentleness, and where biting harmonies may just as quickly describe a perfect tranquility. While there is no clear program or autobiographical sense to the Piano Quintet, its sarcastic, parodic passages (notably in the violin's high-lying circus music of the third movement) speak intangibly of Weinberg's recent experiences.

The Piano Quintet was completed in 1943, when the composer was just 24, and premiered in the Small Hall of the Moscow Conservatory on March 18, 1945 by the eminent pianist Emil Gilels and the Bolshoi Theatre Quartet. It has a traditional structure, notwithstanding the inclusion of two *Scherzos* (Shostakovich's Piano Quintet completed in 1940 also has five-movements). The first movement begins rather introspectively and the contrasting second theme has a definite march quality. One hears fragments and derivatives of these principal themes throughout the work. The first *Scherzo*, an *Allegretto* colored by a folkloric theme in the minor, is followed by the second, a *Presto*, which integrates passages of grotesque café music.

The meditative *Largo*, conceivably a threnody to the millions of war dead, is a quasi-*Rondo* and the work's longest movement. It opens with a bold unison announcement; a serpentine theme that develops in a majestic arc and which is followed by a violin lamentation. The extended piano solo which elaborates on the material of the unison theme is the very heart of the work, and one is tempted to listen to it as Weinberg's most personal reaction to the war. A dialogue with the strings commences with a repeat of the movement's opening melody played by the cello. The strings elaborate on the solo piano music and the movement's close is both quiet and ominous. This sense of expectation is met by the *Finale's* striking opening: a relentless hammering that supports a terse string motif. Together they propel the movement forward until its careening course is unexpectedly interrupted by a wild, Scottish-sounding folk dance and, briefly, a strange boogie-woogie. After variations based on the work's opening theme, the music calms and a fading conclusion that culminates with a high, sirenic cello harmonic brings one of the 20th-century's most remarkable piano quintets to a close. It is an ending that is resigned, if not optimistic.

— Simon Wynberg, Artistic Director of ARC Ensemble

insert comma  
remove comma

THURSDAY, JULY 10 AT 6:00PM

## *Мой дар убог*

### My gift is poor

Мой дар убог, и голос мой не громок,  
Но я живу, и на земли моё  
Кому-нибудь любезно бытиё:  
Его найдёт далёкий мой потомок  
В моих стихах; как знать?  
Как знать? Душа моя  
Окажется с душой его в сношеньё,  
И как нашёл я друга в поколеньё,  
Читателя найду в потомстве я.  
Читателя найду в потомстве я.

My gift is poor, and my voice isn't booming  
But I live, and someone here on Earth  
must find my presence affable:  
My faraway descendant might discover it  
in my verse; who knows?  
Who knows? His soul  
and mine might both align,  
And in the way I made a friend among contemporaries,  
I'll find a reader in future generations.  
I'll find a reader in future generations.

## *Старик*

### Old man

Венчали розы, розы Леся,  
Мой первый век, мой век молодой:  
Я был счастливый пустомеля  
И девам нравился порой.  
Я помню ласки их живые,  
Лобзанья, полные огня...  
Но пролетели дни младые;  
Они не смотрят на меня!  
Как быть? У яркого камина,  
В укромной хижине моей,  
Накрою стол, поставлю вина  
И соберу моих друзей.  
Пускай венок, сплетенный Лелем,  
Не обновится никогда,  
Года, увенчанные хмелем,  
Ещё прекрасные года.

Roses, roses of Lel\*, crowned  
My early age, my youth:  
I was a happy chatterbox  
And was liked by young ladies, now and then.  
I remember their lively touch,  
Kisses, full of fire...  
Those days have flown by;  
They don't notice me anymore.  
Who does one do? By the bright fireplace,  
In my secluded hut,  
I'll set a table, set down my wines,  
And gather my friends.  
So what if the wreath of Lel,  
Will never renew its bloom, —  
Crowned with a wreath of hops and vine,  
These years are lovely still.

\*A figure in Slavic mythology associated with desire and passion. Comparable to Cupid in classical mythology.

### *Водопад*

#### The Waterfall

Шуми, шуми с крутой вершины,  
Не умолкай, поток седой!  
Соединяй протяжный вой  
С протяжным отзывом долины.

Я слышу: свищет аквилон,  
Качает елию скрипучей,  
И с непогодою ревучей  
Твой рёв мятежный соглашён.

Зачем, с безумным ожиданьем,  
К тебе прислушиваюсь я?  
Зачем трепещет грудь моя  
Каким-то вещим трепетаньем?

Как очарованный стою  
Над дымной бездною твоею  
И, мнится, сердцем разумею  
Речь безлагольную твою.

Шуми, шуми с крутой вершины,  
Не умолкай, поток седой!  
Соединяй протяжный вой  
С протяжным отзывом долины!  
Шуми! Шуми! Шуми!

#### *Были бури...*

#### There were tempests

Были бури, непогоды,  
Да маадыс были годы!

В день ненастный, час гнетучий  
Грудь подымет вздох могучий;

Вольной песнью разольётся –  
Скорбь-невзгода распоётся!

А как век то, век-то старый  
Обручится с лютой карой.

Груз двойной с груди усталой  
Уж не сбросит вздох удалый:

Не положишь ты на голос  
С черной мыслью белый волос!

#### *Раба томительной мечты*

#### Slave to a wearying dream

Как много ты в немного дней  
Прожить, прочувствовать успела!  
В мятежном пламени страстей  
Как страшно ты перегорела!  
Раба томительной мечты!  
В тоске душевной пустоты,  
Чего ещё душою хочешь?  
Как Магдалина, плачешь ты,  
И, как русалка, ты хохочешь!  
Раба томительной мечты!

Roar, roar from on high,  
Do not go quiet, silver flow!  
Overlay your drawn-out howl  
With the valley’s echo.

I can hear: the wind is whistling,  
Swaying to and fro the firs,  
With this loud and foul weather,  
Your restless roar endlessly concurs.

Why, with mad anticipation,  
Do I listen to your noise?  
Why does my chest tremble  
With some prophecy it knows?

Like a man enchanted,  
Above your mist I stand,  
And, it seems, my heart  
Your wordless speech can understand.

Roar, roar from on high,  
Do not go quiet, silver flow!  
Overlay your drawn-out howl  
With the valley’s echo.  
Roar! Roar! Roar!

There were tempests, blackest weather,  
There was youth still in those days!

During rain, oppressive hours  
A mighty breath could lift my chest;

With a free song from me spilling –  
I could sorrows turn to song,

As for these days, older days,  
Age holds fierce punishment.

On my chest a double weight  
That my breath cannot dislodge.

You cannot set to a song  
Thought so black with hair so white.

In not much time, how much  
You’ve lived and felt!  
In passions’ twisting flames  
How horribly you’ve charred yourself!  
Slave to a wearying dream!  
In the ennui of your spirit, where nothing is,  
What does your soul reach out for?  
Like Magdalene, you’re crying tears,  
And, like Rusalka\*, bellowing with laughter!  
Slave to an agonizing dream!

\*In Slavic mythology, a mermaid-like creature that often leads people to their deaths.

### *Весна, весна!*

#### Spring, spring!

Весна, весна! как воздух чист!  
Как ясен небосклон!  
Своей лазурию живой  
Слепит мне очи он.

Весна, весна! как высоко  
На крыльях ветерка,  
Ласкаясь к солнечным лучам,  
Летают облака!

Шумят ручьи! блестят ручьи!  
Взревев, река несёт  
На торжествующем хребте  
Поднятый сю лёд!

Еще древа обнажены,  
Но в роще ветхий лист,  
Как прежде, под моей ногой  
И шумен и душист.

Под солнце самое взвился  
И в яркой вышине  
Незримый жавронок поёт  
Заздравный гимн весне.

Что с нею, что с моей душой?  
С ручьём она ручей  
И с птичкой птичка! с ним журчит,  
Летает в небе с ней!

Зачем так радует её  
И солнце и весна!  
Ликует ли, как дочь стихий,  
На пире их она?

Что нужды! счастлив, кто на нём  
Забвенье мысли пьёт,  
Кого далёко от неё  
Он, дивный, унесёт!

#### *Муза*

#### The Muse

Не ослеплён я музою моею:  
Красавицей её не назовут,  
И юноши, узрев её, за нею  
Влюбленную толпой не побегут.  
Приманивать изысканным убором,  
Игрою глаз, блестящим разговором  
Ни склонности у ней, ни дара нет.  
Но поражён бывает мельком свет  
Её лица необщим выраженьем,  
Её речей спокойной простотой;  
И он, скорей чем саким осужденьем,  
Её почтит небрежной похвалой.

Spring, spring! How pure the air!  
The skies above so bright!  
With a living coat of blue  
You are dazzling my eyes.

Spring, spring! How high  
The wind lifts up the clouds,  
To frolic and nuzzle up against,  
The sunshine in the skies!

The streams are loud! The streams all glisten!  
The roaring river rolls,  
On her victorious back  
She carries winter’s ice floes.

The trees are nude,  
But in the grove, the leaves  
Rustle underneath my step,  
Their woodland smells released.

Into the very sun has soared,  
Into the brightest heights,  
An unseen lark that’s singing  
A hymn to honour springtime.

What’s happening to my soul?  
Beside a stream, she turns to water.  
And with a bird, she turns to flight. With a brook, in brook she babbles,  
With a lark, takes off into the skies!

Why should she be so pleased  
With sunshine and with spring?  
Does she, as daughter of the elements,  
Rejoice in her own feasting?

Forget your needs! The happy at the feast  
Drink from oblivion’s cup,  
Away from needs and wants they’re carried  
By springtime’s marvellous floods.

I am not dazzled by my muse:  
No one would call her beautiful.  
And young men, seeing her, would not,  
In an enraptured throng, go chasing after her.  
When it comes to seducing with elegant dress,  
Or making eyes or sparkling conversation,  
My muse shows neither the wish nor the inclination.  
But the world is sometimes struck, in passing,  
By the uncommon look on her face,  
By the calm simplicity of her speech;  
And then, rather than acid condemnations,  
The world offers slipshod praise.

# ABOUT THE COMPOSER

Mieczysław Weinberg’s flight from Nazi-occupied Europe was rather different from the experience of exiles to the West, to England or America. His move to the Soviet Union meant a second period of danger and discrimination under Stalin. But unlike many of his émigré colleagues in the West, Weinberg did enjoy considerable success as one of his adopted country’s most fêted and frequently performed composers, especially during the 1950s and 1960s when Emil Gilels, Mstislav Rostropovich, Kiril Kondrashin, the Borodin Quartet, and Leonid Kogan all performed and recorded his works. Weinberg’s massive oeuvre, which includes over 150 opus numbers, found favour on the opera stage, on movie soundtracks, and in chamber and orchestral programs. However, his music was unknown outside the USSR, its spread stifled by the Iron Curtain and the restrictions imposed by the cold war. His career foundered completely when the USSR fragmented, and it is only over the last five to ten years that Weinberg has found a growing number of enthusiasts outside Russia. Weinberg’s significance is now being reassessed, and several critics argue that the century’s greatest Russian music was composed by a triumvirate: Prokofiev, Shostakovich, and Weinberg.

Weinberg was born in Warsaw on December 8, 1919. His father Shmuel had left the Moldavian town of Kishinyov (Chişinău) ten years earlier following a series of anti-Semitic attacks that had killed both his father and grandfather. In Warsaw he worked as a violinist and conductor in Yiddish theater, and it was he who provided Mieczysław with his initial practical experience and exposed him to the traditional and liturgical Jewish music that was to inform his work for the rest of his life.

Eight years at the Warsaw Conservatory, then directed by Karol Szymanowski, provided Weinberg with a thorough traditional grounding. Under the tuition of Józef Turczyński he became an exceptional pianist, and it was generally assumed that once he had graduated, Weinberg would become a touring virtuoso in the tradition of Polish legends like Leopold Godowsky, Ignaz Friedman, and Ignaz Paderewski. War changed these expectations, and his departure (on foot) from Warsaw in 1939, moments before Hitler’s Panzers swept through Poland, marked the beginning of a series of well-timed re-locations. By 1940, he was in the White Russian capital of Minsk, studying composition with Vassily Zolotaryov, a protégé of Rimsky-Korsakov and Mily Balakirev. The day after his final examinations in June 1941, the Wehrmacht rolled into Russia and Weinberg was again forced to flee. He found work as a coach at the Tashkent opera house, 2,000 miles away in eastern Uzbekistan. Many intellectuals and artists had been evacuated here, among them the illustrious actor and theater director Solomon Mikhoels, a Latvian Jew whose daughter, Natalia Vovsi, Weinberg would soon marry.

At Mikhoel’s behest Shostakovich examined the score of Weinberg’s First Symphony. Immensely impressed, he organized for Weinberg to come to Moscow. Here Weinberg re-established his friendship with Nikolay Myaskovsky, Professor of Composition at the Moscow Conservatory, whom he had first met in 1940. After 1917, the emerging Soviet Union had offered Jews living conditions superior to anything they had ever previously enjoyed. But this dispensation was short-lived and a renewal of repression in the 1930s saw the banning of Jewish newspapers and periodicals, and the closure of Jewish theaters and educational institutions. During the Second World War—still known in Russia as “The Great Patriotic War”—the reins of anti-Semitism were relaxed again, this time by Joseph Stalin, who wanted to encourage Jewish support for the war within the Soviet Union, as well as to access funds from American Jewry. It was during this period of relative tolerance that Weinberg found refuge in Moscow. Official permission to reside in the city, a rarity during the war, was granted thanks to Shostakovich’s influence. He arrived in the capital in 1943 and remained there until his death in 1996. A lifelong friend, Shostakovich’s enthusiasm for Weinberg’s abilities grew and he came to describe him as “one of the most outstanding composers of today.” In turn, Weinberg revered Shostakovich for his generosity and humanity, as well as his gifts as a musician. Although he was already an accomplished composer by the time he arrived in Moscow—his Piano Quintet completed in 1943 is one of the most extraordinary in the repertoire—Weinberg claimed that Shostakovich had introduced him to “a new continent” in music, and despite the 12 year age difference and Shostakovich’s burgeoning reputation, the nature of their relationship was collegial rather than that of master and student. They lived in the same Moscow apartment block, met regularly, and played through one another’s compositions, often in arrangements for two pianos. Weinberg performed the four-hand piano-reductions of Shostakovich’s Tenth Symphony (with Shostakovich), and his Twelfth (with Boris Chaikovsky, another Shostakovich student) when the works were auditioned by the Composers’ Union. Weinberg and Shostakovich also played the *Babi Yar* Symphony in this arrangement. There are also many mutual musical “borrowings”: the two-note motif that appears in Shostakovich’s Fourth Symphony is re-applied in Weinberg’s Fifth, composed shortly after its premiere, while Weinberg’s Seventh Symphony shares a similar formal design with Shostakovich’s Ninth String Quartet. Shostakovich’s Tenth Quartet, dedicated to Weinberg, draws on the latter’s Seventh Symphony. Weinberg performed premieres of Shostakovich’s *Seven Romances on Poems of Alexander Blok*, op. 127 (with Galina Vishnevskaya, David Oistrakh, and Mstislav Rostropovich) and the Violin Sonata, op. 134 (with Oistrakh), filling in for the indisposed Svjatoslav Richter.

Weinberg worked as a freelance composer and pianist, outside the organizations that would have required him to become a party member, and therefore without the protection of the state. His status became increasingly precarious after 1948 when Stalin’s anti-Semitic purges resumed. Andrei Zhdanov—Stalin’s deputy with responsibilities for “ideology, culture, and science”—began a campaign aimed at extinguishing works with creative connections to Western musical developments; those works that exhibited traits of “cosmopolitanism and formalism” and in particular anything produced by Jewish artists and thinkers. Instead Zhdanov wanted works that would be easily assimilated by the public and which would also glorify the achievements of the Soviet Union. This was nothing less than the communist incarnation of the *Reichsmusikkammer*’s similarly repressive credo. Some of Weinberg’s compositions joined the list of prohibited works which included pieces by Shostakovich and Prokofiev, although he was not banned, unlike his colleague and friend Myaskovsky.

On the same day as the Zhdanov announcement, Weinberg’s father-in-law, Solomon Mikhoels, was murdered by the NKVD (the state secret police), his corpse run over by a truck and his death described as “an accident.” From that time on Weinberg found himself under surveillance, his movements tracked and recorded by the NKVD. Weinberg himself was arrested in January 1953. He was charged with conspiring to establish a Jewish republic in the Crimea—the concoction although absurd, was still accompanied by a death sentence. The real reason for his arrest lay in Weinberg’s connection to Miron Vovsi, a cousin of Mikhoels and the principal defendant in Stalin’s trumped-up “Doctor’s Plot.” It was assumed that Weinberg’s wife and sister-in-law would be arrested as a matter of course, and Nina Vasilyevna, Shostakovich’s wife, was given power-of-attorney for the Weinbergs’ seven-year-old daughter Vitosha, as well as for the family’s possessions. With scant regard for his own safety, Shostakovich wrote to Stalin and to his equally unpredictable and murderous security chief, Lavrenti Beria, proclaiming Weinberg’s innocence. In the Lubyanka, Weinberg’s head was shaved and he was placed in a cell too small to lie down in. A bright floodlight and sub-zero temperatures precluded sleep between interrogations. It was only Stalin’s propitious death on March 5, 1953, that led to Weinberg’s rehabilitation and ultimate release. **release and rehabilitation.**

Weinberg lost many relatives and friends in the war, including his parents and sister who were murdered in the Trawniki camp, some 90 miles southeast of Warsaw. His experience of hate and racism inform his music to a very considerable degree. He contemplates the horrors of repression, the suffering of the Jews, and in particular the loss of children in many of his works. However, Weinberg’s personal response to the attacks on himself and those close to him remained stoical and positive, and he was relentlessly prolific in almost every musical genre. There are 26 complete symphonies — the last, *Kaddish*, written in memory of the Jews who died in

the Warsaw Ghetto. Weinberg donated the manuscript score to the Yad Vashem memorial in Israel. There are also four chamber symphonies, 17 string quartets, and 28 instrumental sonatas. His seven concertos include one for cello, premiered by Rostropovich; a brilliant concerto for trumpet; a violin concerto championed by Leonid Kogan; and a fine concerto for clarinet. There are over 150 songs that range from Yiddish laments to settings of poems by Julian Tuwim and Shakespeare; a Requiem (drawing on secular texts); seven operas; three operettas; two ballets; and incidental music for 65 films, plays, radio productions, and circus performances.

Although his language is occasionally uncannily close to Shostakovich’s, Weinberg’s resourcefulness and the wealth of his musical ideas render the epigone accusation baseless. His works often possess a wry humor, a strong sense of irony, and, in the Seventh and Twelfth Symphonies, an uncompromising severity and strength of purpose. But rarely do these qualities overwhelm an overall feeling of contained human acceptance and gratitude. Weinberg also drew liberally on Polish, Moldavian, and in particular Jewish folk sources, musical ideas which, some say, resonated with Shostakovich and manifest themselves in his Second Piano Trio and, notably, in the cycle *From Jewish Folk Poetry* composed at the height of Zhdanov’s repressive regime.

Shortly before his death in 1996, following a protracted struggle with Crohn’s disease, impoverished and dispirited by Russia’s disregard for him, Weinberg converted to the Russian Orthodox Church. Some 40 to 50 years after his initial Soviet success, his music is achieving a long-overdue but remarkably rapid integration into the repertoire.

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Over the last ten years, the **ARC Ensemble (Artists of The Royal Conservatory)** has become one of Canada's pre-eminent cultural ambassadors, raising international appreciation of the Royal Conservatory and Canada's rich musical life. Its members are all senior faculty members of the Conservatory's Glenn Gould School, with guest artists drawn from its most exceptional students and alumni. The ARC Ensemble has performed throughout Canada, the United States, Europe, and Asia. Its first two recordings, *On the Threshold of Hope* and *Right Through the Bone* (dedicated respectively to the music of Mieczyslaw Weinberg and Julius Röntgen), were nominated for Grammy Awards.

The ARC Ensemble has collaborated with a range of artists: Leon Fleisher; The Kalichstein; Laredo Robinson Trio; the novelist Yann Martel; actors Saul Rubinek and R.H. Thompson; and composers R. Murray Schafer, Omar Daniel, and Vincent Ho. The ensemble plays a leading role in the recovery of music suppressed or marginalized because of political oppression, and its work continues to receive acclaim and encouragement from the world's cultural press. The ARC Ensemble's concerts and recordings are meticulously researched and assembled with rich supporting materials. They are often augmented by lectures on their musical, political, and social context, or included as part of themed festivals.

The ARC Ensemble's acclaimed "Music in Exile" series, which explores the music of composers forced to flee Europe during the 1930s, has been presented in Tel Aviv, New York, Rome, London, Budapest, and Toronto. The ensemble's recordings enjoy regular airplay on networks around the world, and its concerts are broadcast on CBC Radio, NPR, and on radio stations throughout Europe.

The release of the ARC Ensemble's third recording, *Two Roads to Exile* (RCA Red Seal), devoted to works by Adolf Busch and Walter Braunfels, was accompanied by a short film in the style of a graphic novel—*Honour Bound – The Exile of Adolf Busch*—which chronicles the events that led to Busch's self-imposed exile from Germany in 1933. ARC's second film provides an account of Mieczyslaw Weinberg's flight from his native Warsaw to the Soviet Union. These films are part of the ARC Ensemble's long-term educational initiative to introduce new (and younger) audiences to its music. The ensemble's most recent CD (on Chandos) features the chamber music of another émigré, the Israeli composer Paul Ben-Haim (née Frankenburger). It includes his Quintet for Clarinet and Strings and the first recording of a Piano Quartet unheard since a Munich radio broadcast in 1932.

Recent ARC highlights include appearances at London's Wigmore Hall, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, the Budapest Spring Festival, and a series of performances at Canada's Stratford Festival. Upcoming engagements include a concert at Kennedy Center, tours to Belgium and Germany, and a special concert at Dachau to

commemorate the 70th anniversary of the camp's liberation. The ARC Ensemble's Artistic Director is Simon Wynberg. Florence Minz is Project Advisor and its Honorary Chairman is James Conlon.

Canadian bass **Robert Pomakov** began his 2013/2014 season with a return to the Canadian Opera Company performing Hobson in Britten's *Peter Grimes* opposite Ben Heppner and led by Johannes Debus. He then returned for his second season at the Metropolitan Opera to sing Monterone in the highly-acclaimed Michael Mayer's production of *Rigoletto* opposite Dmitri Hvorostovsky and as Mathieu in Nicolas Joël's production of *Andrea Chénier* opposite Patricia Racette and Marcelo Álvarez. Mr. Pomakov once again took the stage at Houston Grand Opera in Weinberg's *The Passenger* and as Monterone in their production of *Rigoletto*, both under Patrick Summers. Apart from his busy operatic calendar, he performed with the Gryphon Trio at the College of Wooster and University of Georgia.

Highlights of past seasons include performances with the Canadian Opera Company, Houston Grand Opera, and Los Angeles Opera, among others. Notable appearances include his Washington Opera debut as Leporello in *Don Giovanni* in a new production conducted by Plácido Domingo, his debut at the Teatro Real as Nikitich in *Boris Godunov* conducted by Jesus Lopez-Cobos and opposite Samuel Ramey, the role of the Chamberlain in a new production of *Le Rossignol* by visionary director Robert Lepage in a co-production with the Canadian Opera Company and Brooklyn Academy of Music, and singing the title role of Verdi's *Attila* in a new production by Pierre Audi and conducted by Riccardo Muti at the Metropolitan Opera.

Aside from his staged opera performances, Mr. Pomakov has performed with a number of concert organizations such as Le Festival de Lanaudière, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Ravinia Festival, National Arts Centre Orchestra, Edinburgh Festival, Royal Conservatory of Music, and Pacific Symphony, among others. Notable concert performances of past seasons include his Ravinia Festival debut in Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy* conducted by James Conlon, the role of Virgil in Rachmaninov's *Francesca da Rimini* and the Hector Berlioz version of *Der Freischütz* both under the baton of Christoph Eschenbach, his Canadian Opera Company debut in a concert with Dmitri Hvorostovsky, the Roy Thomson Hall Millennium Opera Gala with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Shostakovich's Symphony No. 14 with the Canadian Opera Company, a European tour of Handel's *Apollo e Dafne*, his Concertgebouw debut with the European Union Baroque Orchestra, and performances of Mahler's Eighth Symphony with the National Arts Centre Orchestra and Orchestre Métropolitain under the direction of Yannick Nézet-Séguin.

# ABOUT THE BOARD OF OFFICERS ROOM

**“The restoration of the Park Avenue Armory seems destined to set a new standard, not so much for its scale, but for its level of respect and imagination.”**

*—The New York Times*

The Board of Officers Room is one of the most important historic rooms in America and one of the few remaining interiors by Herter Brothers. After decades of progressive damage and neglect, the room completed a revitalization in 2013 by the architecture team at Herzog & de Meuron and executive architects Platt Byard Dovell White Architects to transform the space into a state-of-the-art salon for intimate performances and other contemporary art programming.

The Board of Officers Room is the third period room at the Armory completed (out of 18) and represents the full range of design tools utilized by the team including the removal of accumulated layers on the surfaces, the addition of contemporary lighting to the 1897 chandeliers, new interpretations of the stencil patterns on areas of loss, the addition of metallic finishes on new materials, new programming infrastructure, and custom-designed furniture.

The room's restoration is part of an ongoing \$200-million transformation, which is guided by the understanding that the Armory's rich history and the patina of time are essential to its character. A defining component of the design process for the period rooms is the close collaboration between architect and artisan. Highly skilled craftspeople working in wood, paint, plaster, and metals were employed in the creation of the building's original interiors and the expertise—and hand—of similar artisans has been drawn upon for the renovation work throughout.

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*The renovation of the Board of Officers Room was made possible through the generosity of The Thompson Family Foundation.*

*Cover photo by James Ewing.*



