



2024-25 Season



For immediate release
Friday, March 14, 9 a.m. EST



 Boston Pops  Tanglewood  Symphony Hall



Yuja Wang Records the Shostakovich Piano Concertos with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Andris Nelsons

**The pianist joins the BSO and Nelsons as they complete their
monumental Shostakovich cycle and commemorate the 50th
anniversary of the composer's death**

**To be released on May 2, the album presents the composer's
Piano Concertos Nos. 1 & 2, together with a selection of his
solo Preludes and Fugues**

**Listen to the central Andante from the Second Piano
Concerto [here](#) and download CD cover and performance
photos [here](#)**

“It’s amazing to play Shostakovich with the Boston Symphony, who recorded all the symphonies. You know, they just have it.”

-Yuja Wang



Deutsche Grammophon announces the release of ***Shostakovich: The Piano Concertos | Solo Works***, featuring the electrifying artistry of **Yuja Wang**. The album marks the culmination of the **Boston Symphony Orchestra**’s decade-long, GRAMMY Award®-winning **Shostakovich cycle** and is released to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the composer’s death. It showcases the star pianist’s performances with the BSO under the baton of its **Music Director Andris Nelsons** of Shostakovich’s two contrasting piano concertos—No. 1 in C minor and No. 2 in F major (“Yuja Wang ... navigated both works with conviction and fearless technique” – *Boston Globe*). Also included are six of Shostakovich’s

Preludes and Fugues for solo piano, works which have been chosen by Yuja from the composer's Opp. 34 & 87, and which offer a more intimate glimpse into his pianistic world.

Recorded at Boston's Symphony Hall by a team headed by legendary Hollywood producer **Shawn Murphy** and BSO lead recording engineer **Nick Squire**, the album will be released in standalone digital, CD and vinyl formats on **May 2**. The Andante from Piano Concerto No. 2 is available digitally from **March 14**, while the Prelude in A minor, Op. 87/2a will be issued on **April 11**. Yuja's concerto recordings will also form part of the BSO's comprehensive Shostakovich anthology, which contains all 15 symphonies, key incidental works, new recordings of the complete piano, violin, and cello concertos—the latter with soloists **Baiba Skride** and **Yo-Yo Ma** respectively—and the first commercial audio release in over 20 years of the composer's only full-length opera, *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*. The anthology is released digitally and as a 19-CD box set on **March 28**.

Shostakovich's Piano Concerto No. 1 in C minor is a work brimming with youthful energy and sardonic wit. Composed in 1933, shortly after the completion of *Lady Macbeth* and during a period of relative personal tranquility, it represents a fascinating blend of styles and influences. Originally conceived as a trumpet concerto, it was eventually expanded by the composer into a double concerto for piano and trumpet, accompanied by a string orchestra. This unusual instrumentation, combined with Shostakovich's characteristic humour and penchant for musical parody—here including sly references to Beethoven, Haydn, and even popular tunes—results in a work both virtuosic and playfully subversive.

The interplay between Yuja's piano and BSO principal **Thomas Rolfs'** characterful trumpet, backed by the vibrant BSO strings, is pure delight. As the pianist herself observes, "Every time I take it up, it feels like there's another layer of dark humor to come out ... there's so much making fun of Beethoven, of Bach, of almost everything we know."

"Yuja Wang is a truly extraordinary musician," says Nelsons. "We are thrilled to share this recording as part of our complete Shostakovich box set with Deutsche Grammophon, and the Boston Symphony Orchestra and I are immensely grateful to Yuja for joining us on this landmark project. Her joyful interplay with the BSO's brilliant principal trumpet, Tom Rolfs, brings out the humor and pathos of the First Concerto, while she masters the cinematic sweep of the Second Concerto with

effortless elegance and bravura. Yuja's technical brilliance and boundless musical energy are a perfect match for the genius of Shostakovich's music, which contains the breadth of the human experience in the twentieth century and beyond."

Almost a quarter of a century separates the First Concerto from its successor—a period of immense personal and political turmoil for Shostakovich, shaped by purges, war and the resurgence of Stalinist repression. Such darkness is not, however, reflected in the Piano Concerto No. 2 in F major, composed in 1957 as a 19th-birthday gift for his son Maxim.

Yuja's performance captures the light, often jokey mood of the outer movements—revealing, as she notes, Shostakovich's "shy, kind of quiet, childish" nature—as well as the tender lyricism of the central slow movement. The BSO, under Nelsons' assured direction, provides a rich and supportive backdrop that allows her nuanced playing to shine.

The album concludes with six works chosen from two sets of solo pieces: the 24 Preludes, Op. 34, influenced by Prokofiev and contemporaneous with the First Concerto, and the 24 Preludes and Fugues, Op. 87 of 1950–51—a highly original 20th-century tribute to Bach. Yuja's technical command and expressive range are perfectly suited to the demands of this music, bringing out the intricate counterpoint and emotional weight of these often-overlooked gems.

Taken as a whole, this album is a testament to the deep connection felt by Yuja Wang, the BSO, and Andris Nelsons to this composer's music, and a fitting culmination to a remarkable Shostakovich cycle.

Yuja Wang in Concert with the BSO at Tanglewood this Summer

Yuja Wang will perform with Nelsons and the BSO on Sunday, July 20 at Tanglewood's Koussevitzky Music Shed in a program that includes Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 2. Tickets to this and other Tanglewood concerts may be purchased at [bso.org](https://www.bso.org).

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About the BSO

Led by Music Director Andris Nelsons since 2014, the Boston Symphony Orchestra gave its inaugural concert in 1881 and opened Symphony Hall—widely acclaimed as one of the greatest concert halls in the world—in 1900. Today, the BSO reaches millions of listeners through not only its concert performances in Boston and at Tanglewood—the orchestra’s summer home in Lenox and Stockbridge, Mass.—but also via educational and community programs, radio, television, recordings, and tours. Celebrated for its diverse programs, passionate performances, and tradition of innovation, the BSO is one of the world’s most accomplished and versatile ensembles, attracting world-renowned guest artists and players, composers, and conductors. More information about the BSO and Andris Nelsons may be found at [bso.org](https://www.bso.org).

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