

TEDDY
ABRAMS+



LOUISVILLE
ORCHESTRA



17 October 1905 (1906-11)
By Ilya Repin (1844–1930)

“RACHMANINOFF THIRD”

JANUARY 27, 2017 AT 11 AM

TEDDY ABRAMS, CONDUCTOR

LJOVA Current (a co-commission with the Britt Festival)

RACHMANINOFF Piano Concerto No. 3 in D minor
Andrew Tyson, piano

- I. Allegro ma non tanto
- II. Intermezzo: Adagio
- III. Finale: Alla breve

SHOSTAKOVICH Symphony No. 11 in G minor “The Year 1905”
IV. Allegro non troppo

Rachmaninoff Third program

Early Russian music developed much the same way as the rest of Europe with music being divided between the sacred (church) and secular (entertainment). Russian classical music didn't start to take off until the 18th century when Peter the Great introduced western music to the court as well as many well-known European musicians and composers.

But it was the 19th century when Russian composers found their musical voice by infusing Russian folk idioms and styles into their works; Mikhail Glinka and the "Mighty Five". Pyotr Tchaikovsky maintained the more western Romantic style and following in his footsteps was Rachmaninoff. Prokofiev, Stravinsky and Shostakovich pushed the musical envelope and modern composers like Leonid Desyatnikov and Lev Zhurbin continue the tradition of infusing their music with their Russian heritage.

The Composers

Ljova (b. 1978)



Ljova (Lev Zhurbin) was born in 1978 in Moscow, Russia, and moved to New York with his parents in 1990. Ljova grew up in a household filled with music, books and an unquenchable hunger for culture. His father, Alexander Zhurbin, is Russia's foremost composer for film and musical theatre; his mother, Irena Ginzburg, is a distinguished poet, writer and journalist. He began violin les-

sons at age four with Galina Turchaninova, a celebrated pedagogue who also taught violinists Maxim Vengerov and Vadim Repin. When not practicing, the pre-teen Ljova regularly overran his record player and played street hockey. Ljova is a graduate of The Juilliard School, where he was a pupil of Samuel Rhodes (violinist of the Juilliard String Quartet). He has won numerous prizes as a composer, and appeared several times as soloist with orchestras.

WHAT DOES "LJOVA" MEAN?

From the composer "Quite simply, Ljova (pronounced L'yova) is the Russian "informal" version of the name Lev, similar to what Danny is to Daniel. In its own turn, Lev has many meanings: in Russian it means "Lion"; in Hebrew it means "heart"; in Bulgaria it is the national currency (i.e. The Lev); and in Slovenia it's a Hotel. It is also the name of my grandfather, Lev Ginzburg. Furthermore, my other grandfather, grandmother, father — and yours truly — were all born in the "Lion" part of August. However Ljova has no apparent wide-ranging meaning as far as I know.)"

Ljova composes for the concert stage, contemporary dance & film, leading his own ensemble, Ljova and the Kontraband, as well as a busy career as a freelance violinist, violist & musical arranger. Among recent projects is a commission from the City of London Sinfonia, a string quartet for Brooklyn Rider new works for Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble, The Knights, Sybarite5 and A Far Cry, as well as arrangements for the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Alan Pierson and the Brooklyn Philharmonic, tenor Javier Camarena, conductor Alondra de la Parra, the Mexican songwriter Natalia Lafourcade, composer/guitarist Gustavo Santaolalla, and collaborations with choreographers Aszure Barton, Damian Woetzel, Christopher Wheelton, Katarzyna Skarpetowska (with Parsons Dance) and Eduardo Vilaro (with Ballet Hispanico). Ljova is also the composer and con-

ductor of the video project "Signal Strength". Ljova is the author of more than 70 compositions for classical, jazz, and folk ensembles, as well as scores for multiple films. In 2005, Ljova was one of six composers invited to participate in the Sundance Institute's Film Composers Lab. In 2007, Ljova worked as assistant to composer Osvaldo Golijov on his score to Francis Ford Coppola's film *Youth Without Youth*, to which Ljova also contributed an original track, "Middle Village".

Ljova has taught as guest faculty at The Banff Centre in Canada focusing equally on composition, arranging, and viola performance. He has also guest-lectured on film music at New York University, taught at Mark O'Connor's String Camp, as well as at the Blaine Jazz Festival in Washington State. Ljova is on the viola & chamber music faculty of the Special Music School in New York City. His fourth album, *Melting River*, focuses on music Ljova created for "Project XII", on commission from Canadian choreographer (and Baryshnikov's protege), Aszure Barton. *Lost in Kino*, his third album, focuses on recent film music, and features cues from films by Francis Ford Coppola, James Marsh, Basia Winograd, Lev Polyakov, Roman Khrushch, as well as performances by the Gypsy band Romashka, the Tall Tall Trees and the pipa virtuoso Wu Man.

With his main performing ensemble, Ljova and the Kontraband, Ljova has appeared at New York's Lincoln Center, The Kennedy Center in Washington DC, the Brooklyn Academy of Music (as part of the Sundance Film Festival), New York's Museum of Modern Art, Joe's Pub and other venues. The Ensemble has toured to the United Kingdom, Canada, and around the United States.

Ljova released his acclaimed solo debut recording, *Vjola: World on Four Strings*, in 2006. Previously, he has recorded with Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble on the bestselling *Silk Road Journeys: Beyond the Horizon*, and with The Andalucian Dogs on *Ayre*, featuring the music of Luciano Berio and Osvaldo Golijov. He has performed on tour with Savion Glover, and recorded with composer Ryuichi Sakamoto, producer Guy Sigsworth, Nina Nastasia, Amy Correia, and the Electric Light Orchestra. As an arranger, Ljova has completed dozens of musical arrangements for Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble, the Kronos Quartet, Bond, Matmos, and others. He has also collaborated with composers Osvaldo Golijov and Gustavo Santaolalla, as well as the conductor Alondra de la Parra. Resulting from these collaborations are arrangements of musics from Argentina, Azerbaijan, China, India, Iran, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Tanzania, Uruguay, as well as gypsy music from Romania and France. Ljova performs on a viola made by Alexander Tulchinsky, and a six-string "fadolín" made by Eric Aceto.

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873 – 1943)



Sergei Rachmaninoff was born in 1873 at the estate of Semyonovo in north-west Russia to a privileged family, although much of the family's wealth would eventually be squandered by Sergei's father Vasily. Both of his parents were amateur pianists and Sergei's first teacher would be his mother Lyubov. Aware of his talents, the family arranged for Sergei to take piano lessons with a teacher from St. Petersburg. But after the family finances collapsed, the piano teacher returned to St. Petersburg and she arranged for Rachmaninoff to study at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. Rachmaninoff's family would endure more problems as a diphtheria outbreak would take the life of his sister Sophia, Sergei's parents separated and another sister (Yelena) would die from pernicious anemia. In the midst of these disasters,

Rachmaninoff's maternal grandmother stepped in, particularly in regards to their spiritual lives. She would often take Sergei to Russian Orthodox services and introduced him to that

musical world. But the several years of family disasters took their toll and Rachmaninoff failed his academics and was in danger of losing his scholarship. Desperate, his mother contacted Alexander Siloti (a cousin by marriage) who was a pupil of Franz Liszt to assess Rachmaninoff's talents. Siloti recommended Rachmaninoff attend the Moscow Conservatory to study with Nikolai Zverev, a noted teacher and strict disciplinarian. This turned out to be just what Rachmaninoff needed to get back on his musical track. Besides Rachmaninoff, another Zverev student at the time was Alexander Scriabin and regular guests at Zverev's home included Tchaikovsky and Anton Rubinstein among other notable Russian artists.

Rachmaninoff completed his piano studies in 1891 and by the following year had completed several compositions including several symphonic poems and the opera [Aleko](#), based on Pushkin's poem *The Gypsies*. He graduated in May 1892, and spent the next several years composing and moving around between family and friends. By the end of the summer in 1893, Rachmaninoff was looking to move back to Moscow and talks were underway about Tchaikovsky conducting Rachmaninoff's composition [The Rock](#), a symphonic poem dedicated to Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov. But Tchaikovsky's sudden death in November ended that possibility and a heartbroken Rachmaninoff composed [Trio élégiaque in D minor, Opus 9](#) for piano trio in Tchaikovsky's honor. Rachmaninoff continued to compose until 1897 when his [First Symphony](#) premiere was panned by several critics including noted Russian composer César Cui. This sent Rachmaninoff into a deep depression. Unable to compose large-scale works, Rachmaninoff made a living as a concert pianist, conductor and teacher for several years. He worked with psychologist Nikolai Dahl to overcome his depression and during this time he became engaged to his cousin Natalia (whom he would marry in 1902). As Rachmaninoff emerged from his depression, he composed the [Piano Concert No. 2](#). It would become one his best known and beloved works.



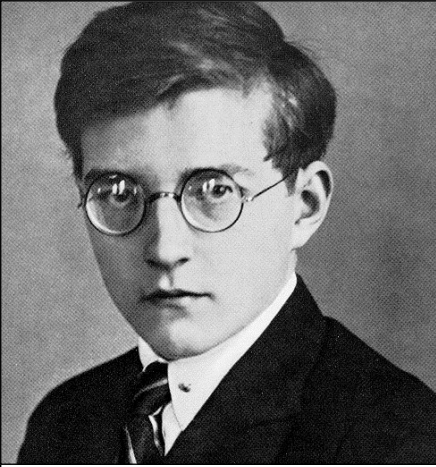
Sergei and Natalia

Rachmaninoff's marriage to Natalia would produce two daughters (Irina and Tatiana) and would endure to the end of his life. Rachmaninoff became conductor at the Bolshoi in 1904 although he resigned in 1906 (political reasons) and retreated to Italy and Germany as well as Natalia's family estate Ivanovka to compose. Rachmaninoff completed his [Piano Concerto No. 3](#) while in Ivanovka and premiered the piece when he toured the United States in 1909 as a pianist. In 1915, his good friend Scriabin died and Rachmaninoff honored his friend by performing "Scriabin only" concerts. But in 1917, Rachmaninoff's Russia would change forever with the Russian Revolution, forcing him and his family to flee Russia, first for Denmark and then to the United States. As he had very little upon his arrival, Rachmaninoff quickly found an agent and began a lengthy concert tour that he would complete in four months. The grueling schedule left Rachmaninoff with very little time to compose. In fact, his remaining years would produce only 6 compositions but these would include [Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini](#), [Symphony No. 3](#) and [Symphonic Dances](#). He and Natalia struggled with the loss of their Russia and tried to re-create the Russia of their youth by welcoming other Russians abroad like pianist Vladimir Horowitz and noted opera singer Feodor Chaliapin. Rachmaninoff and Horowitz were supportive of each other's works with Horowitz particularly championing Rachmaninoff's piano concertos and sonatas.

In 1942, Rachmaninoff was diagnosed with advanced melanoma and on March 28, 1943, Rachmaninoff died in Beverly Hills. His wishes were to be buried at his villa on Lake Lucerne in Switzerland, but with World War II raging, this was not possible. Rachmaninoff was buried in Valhalla, New York.



Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)



Dmitri Shostakovich was born in Saint Petersburg, Russia to Dmitri Boleslavovich, an engineer who worked with Dmitri Mendeleev, and his wife Sofiya. Young Shostakovich began studying piano with his mother at age nine and at thirteen began studying at the Petrograd Conservatory under Alexander Glazunov. He wrote his *First Symphony* as his graduation piece but struggled to meet the political ideology of the Soviet era (a problem that would plague much of his career). His [First Symphony](#) was championed by Bruno Walter and Leopold Stokowski such that Shostakovich spent most of his time composing (rather than performing unless it was his own work). During the 1920s and early 1930s, Shostakovich composed three more symphonies as well as two operas and it would be his opera [Lady Macbeth of the](#)

[Mtsensk District](#), based on the novel by Nikolai Leskov, which would prove to be his undoing with Joseph Stalin. Though initially hailed as written in the best tradition of the Soviet culture, after Stalin and his Politburo attended a *Lady Macbeth* production in 1936, an article appeared in Pravda condemning the opera as being vulgar. Stalin's Great Terror or Purge began in 1936 and many of Shostakovich's friends and family were either killed or imprisoned. Even though Shostakovich was well on his way to completing his [Fourth Symphony](#) when the first of the Pravda articles came out, he opted to lay low and not release the Fourth but rather composed more film music. In 1937, Shostakovich premiered his [Fifth Symphony](#) in Leningrad to great acclaim. The success of this symphony seemed to redeem him in the eyes of the Soviet authority.

During World War II, Shostakovich tried to remain in Leningrad but was forced to evacuate with his family to Kuybyshev (now Samara) and eventually to Moscow. During this time, Shostakovich completed his [Seventh Symphony](#); a piece that became hailed as true Soviet art and perhaps inspired by the siege of Leningrad. His [Eighth](#) and [Ninth](#) Symphonies did not fare as well and in 1948 was again denounced (along with many other composers) by the Soviet authorities. Shostakovich lost his position at the conservatory and his works were banned. The following year he was sent to New York as an emissary of Soviet culture but was publically humiliated by having to tow the party line. The death of Stalin in 1953 was a turning point for Shostakovich and his [Tenth](#) Symphony reflected the change in his life. In 1957, Shostakovich composed his [Eleventh](#) Symphony, nicknamed "The Year 1905" in reference to the Bloody Sunday massacre (January 1905) and the Russian Revolution. Shostakovich completed another four symphonies in his lifetime (for a grand total of 15) as well as numerous chamber works and film scores including Russian adaptations of Shakespeare's [Hamlet](#) (1964) and [King Lear](#) (1971). During his final years Shostakovich suffered from ill health and died of lung cancer on August 9, 1975.

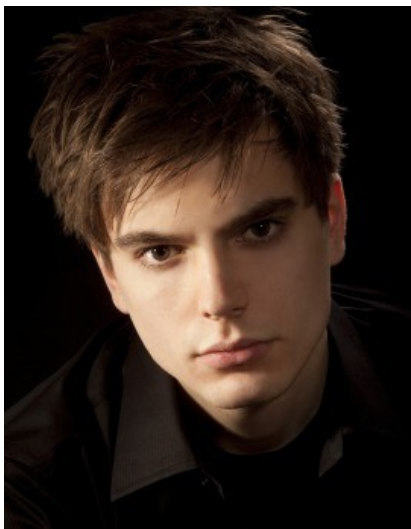
Shostakovich's music continues to generate discussion about whether or not it solely espoused the party line or if Shostakovich was able to convey hidden meaning and emotion through his compositions. His large body of work spanning multiple genres gives us a window into this remarkable composer's journey from the early excitement and innovation of revolution to the hard truths of life under Stalin.



Prokofiev, Shostakovich and Khatchaturian

The Soloist

Andrew Tyson, piano



Andrew Tyson (Photo by Christian Steiner)

Hailed by BBC Radio 3 as “a real poet of the piano,” Andrew Tyson is emerging as a distinctive and important new musical voice. In summer 2015, he was awarded First Prize at the Géza Anda Competition in Zürich, as well as the Mozart and Audience Prizes. These victories result in performances of upwards of 100 concerts throughout Europe over the course of the next three years under the auspices of the Géza Anda Foundation.

He is a laureate of the Leeds International Piano Competition where he won the new Terence Judd-Hallé Orchestra Prize, awarded by the orchestra and conductor Sir Mark Elder resulting in several performances. Other concerto appearances include the Colorado Symphony, the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, the Las Vegas Philharmonic, the National Orchestra of Belgium under Marin Alsop, and the Orchestra of St. Luke's at Alice Tully Hall, amongst others. This season he makes his debut with the SWR Symphony Orchestra Stuttgart, returns to the North Carolina Sym-

phony and appears in Russia performing Mozart's Concerto no. 25 with the Moscow Virtuosi and Vladimir Spivakov.

In the US, Tyson has given recital performances in Boston, Miami, New York, and Washington, DC amongst others. In Europe he has appeared at the Zurich Tonhalle, Musiekzentrum de Bijloke Gent, the Brussels Palais des Beaux-Arts and the Filharmonia Narodowa in Poland, as well as concerts further afield in Azerbaijan, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. As a chamber musician, Tyson appears in Europe with violinist Benjamin Beilman and cellist Jeong-Hyoun Lee in venues including the Auditorium du Louvre, Paris and London's Wigmore Hall.

No stranger to the International festival scene, he has appeared at the Brevard Music Festival, the Brussels Piano Festival, the El Paso Chopin Music Festival, the International Festival of Arts “Art November” in Moscow, the Festival Cultural de Mayo in Guadalajara, Mexico, the Sintra Festival in Portugal, and last season he made his debut at the Dubrovnik Festival.

Tyson is represented on disc by the complete Chopin Preludes which was released in October 2014 on the Zig-Zag Territoires label to critical acclaim with further discs planned.

As winner of the Young Concert Artists International Auditions in 2011, Tyson was awarded YCA's Paul A. Fish Memorial Prize and the John Browning Memorial Prize. In 2013 he was the Avery Fisher Career Grant recipient. He is a Laureate of the Queen Elisabeth Competition and won the Eastern Music Festival Competition at the age of 15. After early studies with Dr. Thomas Otten of the University of North Carolina, he attended the Curtis Institute of Music, where he worked with Claude Frank. He later earned his Master's degree and Artist Diploma at The Juilliard School with Robert McDonald, where he won the Gina Bachauer Piano Competition and received the Arthur Rubinstein Prize in Piano.

The Works

Ljova—Current

A co-commission with the Britt Festival



Ljova and Teddy at
Britt Festival, August 2016

From the composer: “Current” was inspired by the landscape of currents, and by taking a look at the orchestra as a group of individuals coming together to interpret a piece not as a singular unit but in a more personalized way. The score consists of musical ideas which are not aligned to a unified sense of pulse; there are very few measures with a time signature. For the majority of the piece, the conductor cues musicians only at the start of a bar — how the music is shaped between one downbeat and the next is largely up to the performers. At the beginning of the piece, this effect (sometimes called “aleatoric music”) is used to create sweeping waves; later on it’s used to create intricate rhythmic textures, uniquely different at each reading.

I realized that by leaving rhythmic precision on the sidelines I would be inviting chaos to reign over the score. To regain some amount of control, I felt compelled to employ simplified notation (most long notes are “whole” and most short notes are “sixteenths”) and to leave musical ideas in their germinal form rather than fully developed. Having an en-

tire section of musicians interpret the same rhythmic figure individually can lead to a beautiful and unpredictable sea of counterpoint and harmony.

My hope with “Current” is to give the musicians more latitude to interpret their parts, invite them to put more of a personal stamp on the performance, and, through listening to each other, come together in a new way. I’m deeply indebted to Teddy Abrams, the musicians and staff of The Britt Festival and The Louisville Orchestra for their courage and trust in commissioning “Current”, my first commissioned work for full orchestra. ~Ljova

Rachmaninoff—Piano Concerto No. 3 in D minor



Rachmaninoff spent the years between 1906 and 1909 in Dresden, Germany with his family as a composition break. They would return to the family estate Ivanovka during the summers and in September 1909, Rachmaninoff completed his [*Piano Concerto No. 3*](#). No longer plagued by insecurities after his extensive therapy sessions and now that he was an “in demand” conductor and pianist, Rachmaninoff decided to tour America; he even marketed his new piano concerto as “written especially for America”. The concerto premiered on November 28, 1909 with the New York Symphony and Walter Damrosch, conductor and a second performance two months later with the New York Philharmonic and Gustav Mahler, conductor. Rachmaninoff felt a kinship with Mahler and noted “At that time Mahler was the only conductor whom I considered worthy to be classed with Nikisch. He devoted

himself to the concerto until the accompaniment, which is rather complicated, had been practiced to perfection, although he had already gone through another long rehearsal. Accord-

ing to Mahler, every detail of the score was important -- an attitude too rare amongst conductors. ... Though the rehearsal was scheduled to end at 12:30, we played and played, far beyond this hour, and when Mahler announced that the first movement would be rehearsed again, I expected some protest or scene from the musicians, but I did not notice a single sign of annoyance. The orchestra played the first movement with a keen or perhaps even closer appreciation than the previous time."

One of the early reviews noted "The work grows in impressiveness upon acquaintance and will doubtless take rank among the most interesting piano concertos of recent years, although its great length and extreme difficulties bar it from performance by any but pianists of exceptional technical powers." As Rachmaninoff was a pianist of "exceptional technical powers", he composed the piece for himself (each hand could span at least an octave and a half on the piano, a huge reach that allowed him to compose almost impossible music for any other pianist to perform). In pop culture, this piece became known through the movie *Shine* (1996) about Australian pianist David Helfgott who suffered a nervous breakdown learning Rachmaninoff's *Piano Concerto No. 3*.

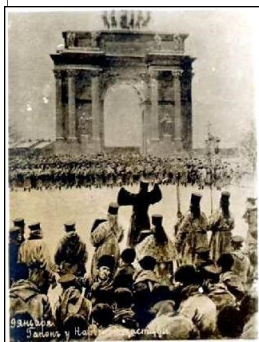


The three movement concerto opens simply first with the orchestra then the piano in perhaps a nod to the Russian monastic music Rachmaninoff heard as a boy. The movement builds to a cadenza (Rachmaninoff composed two) that leads into a quiet re-statement of the exposition theme. In the lush and romantic variation driven second movement, there are allusions to his *Piano Concerto No. 2*. The final frenetic movement returns to themes from the first movement.

Eight years later, the Russian Revolution forced Rachmaninoff into exile, his beloved family estate Ivanovka was burned to the ground and he would not be able to return home during his lifetime.

Shostakovich—Symphony No. 11 in G minor “The Year 1905”

Like Rachmaninoff, Dmitri Shostakovich suffered under Russian politics but instead of the Bolsheviks, Shostakovich had to manage the strictures of the Soviet regime. Though his [Second Symphony](#) received high praise, subsequent works had Shostakovich in and out of favor with the Stalin/Soviet regime. When Stalin died in 1953, some of the pressures eased on Shostakovich that were marked in his [Tenth Symphony](#). For his [Eleventh Symphony](#), Shostakovich intended to compose and premiere the work in 1955 for the 50th anniversary of the Revolution of 1905 and Bloody Sunday. However the death of his mother and other events of in his life prevented the composition until 1957. Premiered in October 1957, the symphony was a hit and earned Shostakovich the Lenin Prize.



Each movement of this symphony was based on events of January 22, 1905, what became known in history as “Bloody Sunday”. That day in St. Petersburg, a large group of unarmed demonstrators (striking workers) led by Father Gapon marched to the Winter Palace to present a petition to Tsar Nicholas II. They wanted fair treatment and better working conditions and thought if the Tsar knew of their plight, he would help them. Unfortunately the Tsar had left the Winter Palace the day before and meeting the demonstrators were 10,000 troops who opened fire. Various reports ranged from hundreds to 8 thousands killed. Regardless, it was a devastating event that had far reaching effects. Shos-



Dmitri Shostakovich

Photo by Roger & Renate Rössing, credit
Deutsche Fotothek

takovich's father had been in the crowd that day so it was a story that was well-known to the family and young Dmitri. While that event certainly influenced the composition, the very recent past of the Hungarian demonstrations of 1956 that ended in mass bloodshed may have also influenced Shostakovich.

Understanding Shostakovich's frame of mind as a composer is often challenging. Shostakovich composed under the Stalin/Soviet regime which meant often composing under a cloud of fear and cultural censorship so it's hard to know if his works truly "towed the party line" or if he was able to slip some of his own ideology into his works (there are arguments for either side).

For the final movement of his Eleventh Symphony, Shostakovich titled the movement "Tocsin" or "alarm bell" and portrayed the reaction to the event using a well-known Russian revolutionary song (*Rage, tyrants*), the Polish resistance song *Varshavyanka* as well as themes from previous movements. Shostakovich was also influenced by the earlier Russian composer Modest Mussorgsky (Shostakovich orchestrated several of Mussorgsky's works) and noted "[Mussorgsky] clarifies

something important for me in my own work. Work on *Boris* [Godunov] contributed greatly to my Seventh and Eighth symphonies, and then was recalled in the Eleventh. There was a time when I considered the Eleventh my most "Mussorgskian" composition." The overall effect of the Eleventh felt like a film score without the film as Shostakovich musically illustrated the events of Bloody Sunday and its aftermath.

After the Eleventh, Shostakovich would go on to compose another four symphonies as well as concertos, suites, chamber music, two operas, a ballet, multiple film scores, vocal and choral music. Shostakovich died on August 9, 1975 of lung cancer at the age of 68.