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CLASSICS

2 CD

SHOSTAKOVICH

**24 PRELUDES
AND FUGUES**

PETER DONOHOE *piano*

24 PRELUDES AND FUGUES, OP.87

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH (1906-1975)

DISC 1

Prelude & Fugue No.1 in C Major

[1] Prelude: Moderato [3.10] [2] Fugue: Moderato [4.07]

Prelude & Fugue No.2 in A Minor

[3] Prelude: Allegro [0.55] [4] Fugue: Allegretto [1.24]

Prelude & Fugue No.3 in G Major

[5] Prelude: Moderato non troppo [1.48] [6] Fugue: Allegro molto [1.48]

Prelude & Fugue No.4 in E Minor

[7] Prelude: Andante [2.54] [8] Fugue: Adagio [5.16]

Prelude & Fugue No.5 in D Major

[9] Prelude: Allegretto [2.02] [10] Fugue: Allegretto [1.56]

Prelude & Fugue No.6 in B Minor

[11] Prelude: Allegretto [1.48] [12] Fugue: Allegro poco moderato [4.02]

Prelude & Fugue No.7 in A Major

[13] Prelude: Allegro poco moderato [1.12] [14] Fugue: Allegretto [2.38]

Prelude & Fugue No.8 in F-Sharp Minor

[15] Prelude: Allegretto [1.03] [16] Fugue: Andante [5.45]

Prelude & Fugue No.9 in E Major

[17] Prelude: Moderato non troppo [3.09] [18] Fugue: Allegro [1.37]

Prelude & Fugue No.10 in C-Sharp Minor

[19] Prelude: Allegro [2.02] [20] Fugue: Moderato [4.37]

Prelude & Fugue No.11 in B Major

[21] Prelude: Allegro [1.13] [22] Fugue: Allegro [2.04]

Prelude & Fugue No.12 in G-Sharp Minor

[23] Prelude: Andante [4.44] [24] Fugue: Allegro [3.25]

Prelude & Fugue No.13 in F-Sharp Major

[25] Prelude: Moderato con moto [2.10] [26] Fugue: Adagio [5.16]

Total timings:

[72.05]

DISC 2

Prelude & Fugue No.14 in E-Flat Minor

[1] Prelude: Adagio [4.17] [2] Fugue: Allegro non troppo [2.46]

Prelude & Fugue No.15 in D-Flat Major

[3] Prelude: Moderato non troppo [2.55] [4] Fugue: Allegretto [1.50]

Prelude & Fugue No.16 in B-Flat Minor

[5] Prelude: Allegro molto [2.35] [6] Fugue: Andante [5.53]

Prelude & Fugue No.17 in A-Flat Major

[7] Prelude: Allegretto [1.53] [8] Fugue: Allegretto [3.24]

Prelude & Fugue No.18 in F Minor

[9] Prelude: Moderato [2.17] [10] Fugue: Moderato con moto [3.31]

Prelude & Fugue No.19 in E-Flat Major

[11] Prelude: Allegretto [1.52] [12] Fugue: Moderato con moto [2.52]

Prelude & Fugue No.20 in C Minor

[13] Prelude: Adagio [4.23] [14] Fugue: Moderato [5.27]

Prelude & Fugue No.21 in B-Flat Major

[15] Prelude: Allegro	[1.11]	[16] Fugue: Allegro non troppo	[2.41]
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Prelude & Fugue No.22 in G Minor

[17] Prelude: Moderato non troppo	[2.07]	[18] Fugue: Moderato	[3.34]
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Prelude & Fugue No.23 in F Major

[19] Prelude: Adagio	[4.08]	[20] Fugue: Moderato con moto	[3.31]
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Prelude & Fugue No.24 in D Minor

[21] Prelude: Andante	[4.21]	[22] Fugue: Moderato	[8.30]
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Total timings:			[75.58]
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PETER DONOHOE PIANO

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Shostakovich's 24 Preludes & Fugues, Op. 87

Notes by Peter Donohoe

In the history of music, few composers have been as enigmatic as Shostakovich. As with every composer, it is inevitable that his music should display all the contradictions, the pain, the nostalgia, and the enigma of the mind that created it – sometimes consciously; often not. At the same time as this, the ubiquitous propaganda war between the Soviet

Union and the Democratic West often dragged the names of almost all major Iron Curtain artists, poets and composers into a discussion of the relative merits of the two opposing systems.

With hindsight, perhaps one could draw the conclusion that the struggles Shostakovich had within himself have sometimes been mistaken for an attempt on his part to reveal aspects of the unimaginably complex and constantly developing political situation in

which he was working. Of all the great Soviet composers, Shostakovich is the most politicised by historians, and yet he remains the most questioning, at the same time as which he almost never reveals the answers, and usually not even the questions.

These theoretical component characters could equally be interpreted as part conflict between two opposing parts of the composer's personality, a satire upon himself, a lament for the beloved past and a genuine triumph of the spirit over adversity. That Shostakovich's most popular and most politically savvy work – his Fifth Symphony – is ambiguous and enigmatic from first note to last is part of its greatness.

Of all Shostakovich's large scale works, that symphony is the closest in style to the **Twenty Four Preludes and Fugues for Piano Solo**, written 14 years later. With the similarities in his approach to tonality and many other aspects of his technique of composition comes a similar enigma. Is the apparent triumph of the huge final fugue (which even shares its key of D minor with the Fifth Symphony and resolves at the end in a massive statement of the major) a deliberate parody of a

triumph, inspired by inner thoughts regarding the political system, or more specifically Shostakovich's Svengali – the Soviet leader, Joseph Stalin? Or is it a true triumph in which the apparent ambiguity created by Shostakovich's acerbic harmony is a red herring? We will never know. In Shostakovich's music we often sense that there is a hidden message. The ultimate enigma of this great composer is that we can never be sure of what the message is.

Influence of Bach

Shostakovich admired Bach's music enormously. This applied in particular to the latter's toweringly great polyphonic writing - not only in his choral and organ works, but most relevantly in *Das Wohltempierte Klavier* ('The Forty Eight Preludes and Fugues'). Along with so many late 19th and early 20th Century Russian composers, Shostakovich held the traditional disciplines of counterpoint, polyphony and fugal writing essential to the art of composition.'

Shostakovich was inspired by the playing of Tatiana Nicolayeva, whom he heard – significantly performing Bach – when he was a jury

member at the Leipzig Bach Competition in 1951. His admiration for Nicolayeva and his desire to create these works for her was such that he produced all twenty four Preludes and Fugues in a few months. As he wrote them – in the order in which they appear in the final published version – she learned them. That he was able to write so quickly was characteristic of the composer, but it is also significant as it contributes to the feeling that one can take the cycle as conceived as a single work.

They were published in two halves, entitled Volume One and Volume Two. Each volume is divisible into three groups of four, and each coupling of an adjacent major and minor key is logical – they easily form an interdependent pair. It is thus satisfying to hear these works in groups of two adjacent ones, four (starting with nos. 1, 5, 9, 13, 17, or 21), twelve (either volume separately) or complete. It follows that Shostakovich had in mind the context of each one when writing its successor. It is of course valid to play any of them singly, or to simply form groups out of selected ones from across the collection.

Shostakovich was famously able to compose convincingly in the style of many other

composers, and often produced extraordinary pastiches to order. Such works as *The Gadfly* and *The Age of Gold* demonstrate this, but this talent sometimes spilled over into his symphonic works – e.g. the second movement of his Piano Concerto No.2. Throughout the Preludes and Fugues, despite the immense variety and the occasional echo of Hindemith, Prokofiev and of course Bach, there is no pastiche – no poking fun at styles other than his own. Everyone of these works is a gem, not only of originality that makes them all uniquely Shostakovich, but also very deeply and sincerely felt.

VOLUME ONE

Prelude and Fugue No.1 in C Major

The opening of this sublime and diverse set of pieces is already enigmatic. The prelude is based on a rhythmic figure consisting of quarter note, dotted quarter note, eighth note and two quarter notes in 3/4 time – reminiscent of a sarabande.

By comparison, the fugue – which is in four voices – is choral in style and beatific in mood. This is Shostakovich at his most spiritual, and

is, perhaps more than any of the set, reminiscent of Bach – in particular, the mood of the Prelude and Fugue that occupies exactly the same position in Volume One of 'The Forty-Eight'.

Prelude and Fugue No.2 in A Minor

The prelude is a swift toccata – a perpetuum mobile of whirling sixteenth notes that seems to be an accompaniment without a melody. It is punctuated only at one point by a succession of long Es that threaten to become a melody, but disappear almost as soon as they arrive.

The fugue in three voices that follows, is a grotesque dance, with a subject in two sections – a baroque motif of two bars followed by a series of leaps of a seventh, leading to acerbic harmonic clashes. The keyboard writing is very demanding; the wide leaps and the clarity needed for this piece demand great finger strength.

Prelude and Fugue No.3 in G Major

The prelude is declamatory, at first alternating between a strong unison phrase in the lower register and an almost plaintive single line in the treble, with insistent repeated notes a

notable feature. Eventually the tessitura of the two characters is reversed, they are superimposed, and the unison phrase becomes a chorale. The harmonies become increasingly dissonant, and the piece concludes with an unresolved suspension played fortissimo, over which pounds the repeated note figure.

Out of this rising tension catapults the energetic fugue – a wild piece in 6/8 time requiring brilliance of finger-work and clarity of texture. This virtuoso fugue in three voices is one of the most demanding of the whole cycle, and is again reminiscent of Hindemith, with its angular subject and displaced accents.

Prelude and Fugue No.4 in E Minor

The sad prelude is built on drooping pairs of eighth notes, over which appears a sighing motif in long notes. The tonality is ambiguous in characteristic Shostakovich fashion, but E minor is rarely far away. Near the end an unexpected rising scale takes us into A-flat major for a moment of pure ecstasy and calm, after which the desolate E minor immediately returns.

The double fugue that follows is one of the three in the cycle that gradually builds from a quiet opening to a fortissimo final climax; the

majority of the slower fugues climax in the middle, and return to their opening moods, whilst most of the quicker ones remain a static statement.

Prelude and Fugue No.5 in D Major

In the prelude the ambiguous atmosphere – a mixture of simple rural charm and melancholy – is in sharp contrast to its predecessor. A folk-style melody is supported by continuous arpeggiated chords, suggesting a lute or some other simple folk instrument, in the treble. Meanwhile in the bass is an equally folksy line, redolent of the sound of a cello.

The fugue has a simple construction, whose subject is in two parts – a repeated motif whose main characteristic is two groups of four repeated notes, and then a series of downward-falling pairs of repeated notes. In three voices, the work is one of the most lighthearted of the cycle, and has a mood of untarnished naiveté.

Prelude and Fugue No.6 in B Minor

The powerful prelude in B minor is in the style of a Baroque French Overture, with its marcato double dotted rhythms. However, the harmonies

are exclusively and strikingly Shostakovichian – in particular the chorale melody that appears after a few lines – reminiscent of certain of his symphonies. The piece dies away unexpectedly, as if suddenly all its energy has drained away, leaving the link to the fugue.

The pianissimo opening of the fugue in four voices grows out of the end of the prelude. The mood of this beautiful fugue is dark and foreboding, although there are some blissfully sunny moments and modulations to distant tonalities on the way.

Prelude and Fugue No.7 in A Major

A pastoral and naive mood dominates the prelude. The music is in a lilting 12/8 time, and in an unusually simple tonal style. However, occasional strange harmonic turns indicate something disturbing underneath.

The fugue – in three voices – is based on a remarkable subject consisting entirely of the notes of a broken chord of A major. There is almost no chromaticism in this piece, and the harmonic variety comes from the – sometimes surprising – juxtaposition of blocks of tonal harmony, creating an impression of naive wonderment.

Prelude and Fugue No.8 in F-Sharp Minor

One of the most significant of the cycle, the enormously moving fugue is preceded by an equally disturbing prelude. The style of both prelude and fugue is arrestingly Jewish. Although the prelude alone could be taken to be a fairly light-hearted dance, in the context of the fugue, it becomes a grotesque parody.

The fugue subject is extraordinary, consisting of two characters – a bar-long downward-looking phrase that is repeated, and returns in the eighth bar, and an upward leap of an augmented fourth that resolves onto the note one semitone below, giving the impression of a pained sigh. The enormous fugue in three voices that is built upon this series of motifs becomes increasingly chromatic and tortured.

Prelude and Fugue No.9 in E Major

With the tragic mood of its predecessor still in the air, the strikingly beautiful and questioning prelude in E major is as unexpected as it is ambiguous. Notated largely on four staves, it consists of a series of phrases alternating between the two extremes of the keyboard – mostly unharmonised and in unison two octaves apart.

The bubbly fugue that follows completely dispels any unease created by the prelude. This fugue is written in only two voices – the only one of the twenty four. Thus it has the sound of a Baroque two-part invention, but with Shostakovich's unique twists of tonality, and a very thorough working-out of the fugue.

Prelude and Fugue No.10 in C-Sharp Minor

One of the most obviously Bachian ideas forms the basis of the prelude – the opening is a quote – almost certainly a conscious one – from that of No.7 in E-flat major of Volume One of 'The Forty-Eight'. This passage alternates with chorale-type passages played in the lower registers.

The fugue is one of the most inspired. In three voices, it is in a moderate tempo, the atmosphere autumnal. Towards the end, over a dominant pedal-point, the music becomes particularly beautiful, rising to a lyrical climax which then falls away to the final phrase.

Prelude and Fugue No.11 in B Major

This prelude is Shostakovich typically clowning around with a folksy melody, adding incongruous notes to an apparently predictable tune,

rendering it unpredictable in the extreme. It is reminiscent of the finale of his Ninth Symphony. But whereas in the symphony the tune is transmogrified into a grotesque and monstrous version of itself later in the movement, here it disappears off at the end in a happy-go-lucky fashion.

The happy mood is interrupted by the fugue, which is designed to be in the same tempo and to emerge directly from the prelude. Amongst the most difficult to play of the whole cycle, it is a wild and whirling Hopak, reminiscent of the finale of the Tenth Symphony, with its hysterical virtuosity.

Prelude and Fugue No.12 in G-Sharp Minor

The magnificent prelude has the form of a Passacaglia throughout. At its climax, one is reminded of one of Russia's great Orthodox Cathedrals. As the piece dies away, a ghostly pre-echo of the fugue's main subject is heard in the tenor, but nothing can prepare one for the avalanche of composer-virtuosity into which one is suddenly hurled.

The fugue in three voices is an extraordinary tour de force. It has an angular subject, the tempo is fast, and the time signature 5/4. The

climax towards which the first section hurtles is characterised by harsh dissonance, fortissimo octaves in the bass and a feeling of forward movement. A pedal-point on the dominant is reached and a pianissimo reworking of the fugue begins. A ghostly memory of the earlier aggression progresses, and the fugue gradually dies away. The final cadence is exquisitely beautiful, with dissonances gradually becoming more and more concordant and spaced further apart. Volume One finishes, very unexpectedly, on a pianississimo chord of G-sharp major.

VOLUME TWO

Prelude and Fugue No.13 in F-Sharp Major

The second volume of Shostakovich's preludes and fugues opens with a prelude whose main quality is contented naïveté. A expressive sequence of arabesques in the treble, in varying and unpredictable time signatures, alternates with a series of calmly undulating chords.

The fugue is unique in this collection in that it is the only one written in five voices. Although this renders the writing very un pianistic, and its execution extremely arduous, it is one of the most profoundly beautiful piano

works of the 20th Century. Marked Adagio, it is choral in style – reminiscent of the singing of Russian Orthodox Church choirs – and takes us through a remarkable tapestry of different tonalities.

Prelude and Fugue No.14 in E-Flat Minor

After the sublime beauty and serene calm of the F-sharp major, the intense sadness and overwhelming dark foreboding of this prelude comes as a shock. A fortissimo tremolo begins the work. This dies down to what turns out to be hugely taxing on the performer, as the tremolo is the first of many that underlie almost the whole piece, and thus continues for an enormously long time. The melody line eventually builds in dynamic, reaching a desperate climax, before subsiding to a brief moment of uneasy calm. The music remains uneasy and extremely sad, but now without the incessant and oppressive tremolos that help to make this piece, along with Chopin's *Funeral March Sonata*, one of the most pessimistic and menacing piano works ever penned.

The fugue is again in total contrast. Although the sadness set up by the prelude does not evaporate, its threatening nature has disappeared.

Instead, the fugue is a grey, autumnal dance in a moderately quick 3/4 time.

Prelude and Fugue No.15 in D-Flat Major

Perhaps the best known of these works for reasons of its technical demands as well as its memorability, the D-flat major poses a particular enigma, stemming from the extraordinary contrast between prelude and fugue; the former is unambiguously tonal, witty and superficially populist, and the latter almost completely atonal (the very end being the exception), aggressive, and uncompromising throughout. As so often with this composer, one senses a message – one that remains intangible, and yet difficult to deny.

The prelude is uninhibitedly in the style of a rustic folk dance. It is somewhat reminiscent of the scherzo of the Fifth Symphony, whose position in between one of Shostakovich's most significant movements (the first) and one of profound lament (the third) gives it a context that makes it seem a snarlingly sarcastic parody.

The latter plunges the listener very suddenly into a world of unequal bar lengths: the fugue subject itself consists of three bars of 3/4,

one of 4/4, one more of 3/4, and one of 5/4, which renders it inevitable that the whole fugue is a nightmarish and exhausting avalanche of unpredictable rhythms. It is at the same time amusing, questioning, sarcastic and deliberately incongruous; perhaps it could be said that it is the opposite form of incongruousness to that of the ending of Mozart's *Musical Joke*, or Charles Ives' Second Symphony, in which tonal music has a deliberately wrong chord at the end – here we have atonal music that has a surprise tonal ending.

Prelude and Fugue No.16 in B-Flat Minor

According to Tatiana Nicolayeva, the B-flat Minor prelude is the only one of the forty eight pieces that make up this cycle about which Shostakovich had second thoughts. The original composition had been very different, and the composer decided later to create a piece using the model of a Mozartian set of variations. His rethinking would not seem atypical of most composers' ways of working. That he untypically had second thoughts over this prelude is significant only because the composer was perhaps searching for the perfect way to introduce the strangest of all the fugues.

The form of the prelude is indeed similar to that of a set of variations written by Mozart. However, the style of the music is very typical of Shostakovich, and very Russian in the dark, choral style of its opening theme. There are three variations upon this theme, after which a coda introduces new harmonies. The music slows and becomes even darker, with the last phrase intoned in the bottom octave of the piano, preparing the way for the mood of the fugue.

Along with the final fugue in D minor, the B-flat minor is the most extended of the cycle. In the former case, its length is determined by an extended coda to the whole cycle after the music has ceased to be fugal. In this case, however, it is the extreme length of the subject and the tempo of the piece that causes its duration.

Prelude and Fugue No.17 in A-Flat Major

This prelude returns to the rustic character of the preludes in D major and D-flat major, although here the music has a more unquestioning quality. The melancholy of the D major and the sarcasm of the D-flat major are both mostly absent here. Instead, a pastoral melody line is accompanied by a simple ostinato, reminiscent of the sound of an organ

grinder. The ending is almost bluesy – strikingly reminiscent of 1950s American jazz.

The fugue, rather than being in contrast to the prelude, as characterises most of these works, seems to continue the same mood. It has a rustic dance flavour to it, even though it is in a 5/4 time signature throughout, and later becomes extremely complex pianistically. It has, probably coincidentally, a style suggestive of English country dance; the ghost of Percy Grainger seems to hover above the piece, with its witty harmonic twists and turns.

Prelude and Fugue No.18 in F Minor

A beautiful melody line opens the prelude, tinged with a longing sadness. The pitch gradually descends towards the bass. Unexpectedly, the mood is transformed as the key changes to the distant one of D major, the tempo becomes Adagio, and an ecstatic moment, represented by very simple slow-moving chords is an unexpected as it is brief.

The fugue is based on a singing and simple subject, from which the rhythm of a quarter note followed by two eighth notes becomes the dominant force of its later development. As

always, the fugue, in three voices, passes through many other keys. Again there is a suggestion of a conflict between minor and major during the final bars, created by the music hovering between F major and A-flat. The final resolution in F major is like an echo of the same uneasy calm that concluded the prelude.

Prelude and Fugue No.19 in E-Flat Major

The same suspended unease comes with the end of this prelude. It results from the progress of the majestic chorale that opens it, as it alternates several times with a nervous and tonally ambiguous passage of short chords. The fugue, in three voices, that follows is perhaps the most unapproachable of the twenty four from the first-time listener's point of view. However, it is a very fine example of the form, and, in the final bars, after the fugue's strangeness has been fully worked out, there is a curiously satisfying and surprisingly gentle resolution onto the tonic.

Listeners' difficulty on first hearing stems from its consistent 5/4 time combined with a modal subject that, although revolving around the tonic E-flat pitch, is chromatic to the degree that it is almost atonal. The complex harmonies

are particularly highlighted by the mostly legato and lyrical phrasing required by the composer. Thus the whole fugue is a mêlée of strange contrapuntal but lyrical lines and acerbic harmonies – that is, until the coda, in which the harmony is resolved in a way that at least implies a diatonic solution.

Prelude and Fugue No.20 in C Minor

This is a very special pair of pieces. The relationship between the theme of the prelude and the fugue subject is made obvious by their thematic simplicity, unifying the two works. The prelude is very ponderous and atmospheric. The opening phrase is dark and mysterious. The line of notes later becomes the subject of the fugue. It is answered by a lonely voice in the treble. This contrast is repeated several times over – the immediately obvious similarity to many of the composer's symphonic slow movements is compounded with each phrase.

The beautiful fugue in four voices is one of the greatest of the cycle. The simple subject – a derivative of the first bar of the prelude – is itself modal. Again the atmosphere is one of quiet melancholia, its major key episodes

especially radiant in contrast. The augmentation of the fugal writing that occurs in the latter half is particularly poignant, as is the use of pedal point. However, the hushed serene beauty of the C major coda, where Shostakovich uses the major key material to resolve the tonality, is perhaps the most poignant moment of all.

Prelude and Fugue No.21 in B-Flat Major

This pair of works constitutes a formidable challenge for the performer. Whilst the prelude requires a fleet delicacy and extreme speed on the part of the right hand, the extensive fugue makes extraordinary demands of energy and entails the negotiation of some very un pianistic leaps.

The prelude is a tour de force. Its relentless sixteenth notes in the treble are accompanied for the most part by continuous quarter notes in the bass. It could be taken as an étude for the right hand, given that at no point does the left hand take over the semi quavers; Chopin and Liszt would undoubtedly have reversed the roles of the hands at some point. The predominant mood is one of humour throughout, and after several modulations into distant keys, the piece snuffs itself out like a light.

The fugue in three voices begins lightly, in the style of a quick 3/4 dance. The mood is bright, the harmonies angular – with a hint of Hindemith – and the gradual increase in tension very exciting. The piece ends in a very boisterous orchestral style, with an extended hemiola on the final cadence.

Prelude and Fugue No.22 in G Minor

This prelude is a beautiful but sad – almost mournful – piece, based almost entirely on Shostakovich's characteristic and expressive slurred pairs of notes, reminiscent of the earlier prelude in E minor (No.4 of the cycle).

The fugue is in three voices, and is another of Shostakovich's autumnal and deliberately suspenseful statements. Vocal in style, the subject has a harmonic simplicity that make parts of it sound as if they could be from any period of music. The work remains in the minor key at the end, and the whole impression of both prelude and fugue is one of suspenseful irresolution – a refusal to answer the intangible questions posed by itself.

Prelude and Fugue No.23 in F Major

This prelude constitutes one of Shostakovich's most profoundly romantic and moving creations. The influence of Mahler – particularly the famous Adagietto from the Fifth Symphony and the finale of the Ninth – is immediately obvious from the yearning turn that appears in the melody of the first phrase to the unexpected melting modulations and the beautiful harmony of the final few bars. It has an atmosphere of calmness and serene beauty that completely belies any ambiguity suggested by earlier works in the cycle.

In contrast with the prelude, the F major fugue is lyrical, leisurely and amiable. Its position as the penultimate fugue in the cycle of twenty four gives it a special significance that it seems at first unwilling to adopt. However, if one views it as the successor to a particularly open-hearted and nostalgic prelude, and the predecessor to the uniquely powerful final prelude and fugue, its static nature takes on a logical significance in the grand scale of the cycle as a whole.

Prelude and Fugue No.24 in D Minor

The D minor is the climax, not only of this magnificent cycle of preludes and fugues, but perhaps of the whole of Shostakovich's piano works. The slow declamatory majesty of the opening of the prelude rises like a monolith from the apparently calculated stasis of the preceding fugue in F major. After a few bars the tension increases even more and a crisis is reached with three fortissimo bars. After the music subsides, an heroic theme in G major sounds; this has the character of a military memorial eulogy played on a distant trumpet, and will later become the subject of the fugue.

The final work in this cycle is in two sections. The first is a quiet fully worked-out fugue – complete in its own right, built from the pianissimo trumpet tune that appears after the first statement of the prelude. A succession of continuous eighth notes heralds the beginning of the second part of this enormous piece. The eighth notes that create the forward movement towards the coda are again in pairs, similar to those of the Preludes in E minor (No.4) and G minor (No.22), giving the music a similarly yearning character. Again, the mood of the

first movement of the composer's own Tenth Symphony is here evoked. From here onwards, the music is not fugal at all, but constitutes a coda to the whole cycle. Gradually the tension increases until, out of an avalanche of octaves in the key of C minor, the tonality shifts suddenly to a triumphant D major, and the majestic trumpet tune of the fugue subject blares out. This 'triumphant moment' is one of only two occasions on which the dynamic level of 'fortississimo' is used in the cycle of twenty four preludes and fugues – the other being at the end.

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PETER DONOHOE

Peter Donohoe was born in Manchester in 1953. He studied at Chetham's School of Music for seven years, graduated in music at Leeds University, and went on to study at the Royal Northern College of Music with Derek Wyndham and then in Paris with Olivier Messiaen and Yvonne Loriod. He is acclaimed as one of the foremost pianists of our time, for his musicianship, stylistic versatility and commanding technique.

Donohoe has appeared with Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic and Concert Orchestra, Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra, St Petersburg Philharmonia, RTE National Symphony Orchestra, Belarusian State Symphony Orchestra, and City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. He has undertaken a UK tour with the Russian State Philharmonic Orchestra, as well as giving concerts in many South American and European countries, China, Hong Kong, South Korea, Russia, and the USA. Other engagements include performances of all three MacMillan piano concertos with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, a series of concerts for the Ravel and Rachmaninov Festival at Bridgewater Hall, and numerous performances with The Orchestra of the Swan. Donohoe is also in high demand as a jury member for international competitions. He has served on the juries at the International Tchaikovsky Piano Competition in Moscow (2011 and 2015), Busoni International Competition in Bolzano, Italy (2012), the Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels (2016), Georges Enescu Competition in Bucharest (2016), Hong Kong International Piano Competition (2016), and Ricardo Viñes International Competition in Lleida, Spain, along with many national competitions both within the UK and abroad.



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Recent discs include a disc of Scriabin Piano Sonatas (SOMM Records) which was described as 'magnificent' by the Sunday Times; a recording of Witold Maliszewski's Piano Concerto in B-flat minor with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra conducted by Martin Yates (Dutton Vocalion); and three discs of Prokofiev piano sonatas for SOMM Records, the third of which was released at

the end of April 2016. The first Prokofiev disc was described by Gramophone as 'devastatingly effective', declaring Donohoe to be 'in his element', and a review in Classical Notes identified Donohoe's 'remarkably sensitive approach to even the most virtuosic of repertoire'. His second Prokofiev disc was given 5 stars by BBC Music Magazine, and the third disc was highly praised by The Times, Birmingham Post, and Jessica Duchon. Other recordings include Cyril Scott's Piano Concerto with the BBC Concert Orchestra and Martin Yates (Dutton Vocalion), and Malcolm Arnold's Fantasy on a Theme of John Field with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and Martin Yates (also Dutton), for which BBC Music Magazine described him as an 'excellent soloist', and Gramophone stated that it 'compelled from start to finish'.

Donohoe has performed with all the major London orchestras, as well as orchestras from across the world: the Royal Concertgebouw, Leipzig Gewandhaus, Munich Philharmonic, Swedish Radio, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Vienna Symphony and Czech Philharmonic Orchestras. He has also played with the Berliner Philharmoniker in Sir Simon Rattle's opening concerts as Music Director.

He made his twenty-second appearance at the BBC Proms in 2012 and has appeared at many other festivals including six consecutive visits to the Edinburgh Festival, La Roque d'Anthéron in France, and at the Ruhr and Schleswig Holstein Festivals in Germany. In the United States, his appearances have included the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Boston, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Cleveland and Detroit Symphony Orchestras. Peter Donohoe also performs numerous recitals internationally and continues working with his long standing duo partner Martin Roscoe, as well as more recent collaborations with artists such as Raphael Wallfisch, Elizabeth Watts and Noriko Ogawa.

Donohoe has worked with many of the world's greatest conductors: Christoph Eschenbach, Neeme Jarvi, Lorin Maazel, Kurt Masur, Andrew Davis and Yevgeny Svetlanov. More recently he has appeared as soloist with the next generation of excellent conductors: Gustavo Dudamel, Robin Ticciati and Daniel Harding. Peter Donohoe is an honorary doctor of music at seven UK universities, and was awarded a CBE for services to classical music in the 2010 New Year's Honours List.

Recorded in Wyastone Concert Hall, Monmouth, UK from 16-19 February 2014.

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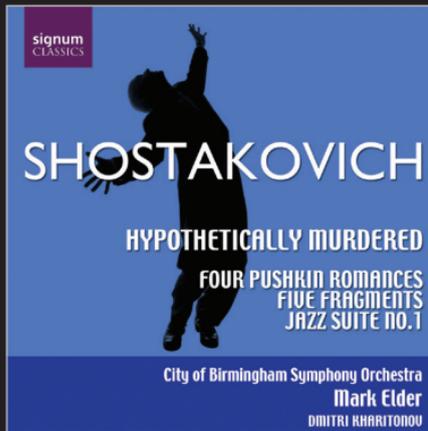
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