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SHOSTAKOVICH

Violin Sonata

24 Preludes
(arr. violin and piano)

Sergei Dogadin, Violin
Nikolai Tokarev, Piano

Dmitry
SHOSTAKOVICH
(1906–1975)

Violin Sonata, Op. 134 (1968) 38:36

1	I. Andante	12:38
2	II. Allegretto	7:42
3	III. Largo – Andante	18:16

24 Preludes, Op. 34 (1932–33) 35:09

arr. Dmitry Tsyganov (1937 13 18 19 27;
1961 5 9 15 16 20–25; 1963 4 6 8 11 14 18)/
Lera Auerbach (2000 7 10 12 17 26)

4	No 1. Andante	1:30
5	No 2. Allegretto	1:03
6	No 3. Andante	2:26
7	No 4. Moderato	2:41
8	No 5. Allegro	0:40
9	No 6. Allegretto	1:12
10	No 7. Andante	1:49
11	No 8. Allegretto	1:00
12	No 9. Presto	0:45
13	No 10. Moderato non troppo	1:59
14	No 11. Allegretto	0:50
15	No 12. Allegretto non troppo	1:46
16	No 13. Moderato	0:58
17	No 14. Adagio	2:27
18	No 15. Allegretto	0:54
19	No 16. Andantino	1:06
20	No 17. Largo	2:13
21	No 18. Allegretto	0:48
22	No 19. Andantino	2:04
23	No 20. Allegretto furioso	0:42
24	No 21. Allegretto poco moderato	0:41
25	No 22. Adagio	3:00
26	No 23. Moderato	1:09
27	No 24. Allegretto	1:26

Dmitry Shostakovich (1906–1975)

Violin Sonata, Op. 134 · 24 Preludes, Op. 34 (arranged for violin and piano)

Aside from both featuring violin and piano, together with the common denominator of their composer, there might not seem to be much of a connection between the two pieces featured on this recording. Yet between them these illustrate crucial if complementary aspects of the music of Dmitry Shostakovich. When focussing, moreover, on the theatrical projects of his earlier years and the symphonic works which came afterwards, it is easy to forget the importance of his piano and chamber music as a repository for some of his most abstract and personal ideas.

By the time of his *24 Preludes* – composed, in the order in which they were published, during the winter of 1932–33 – the urge to shock has been transmuted into a desire to entertain. This is not to say these pieces, which follow the same tonal order as that found in Chopin's *Op. 28 Preludes* (from C major and A minor through to F major and D minor), are at all unorthodox in content; rather their expressive surprises come not from any abrupt juxtaposition but from more subtle contrasts between preludes and across the sequence viewed as an integral entity.

Arrangements of individual or groups of preludes soon gained currency (chief among them a powerful orchestral version of *No. 14* (in E flat minor) by Leopold Stokowski). The present recording utilises the transcription of the complete cycle for violin and piano as commenced by the violinist Dmitry Tsyganov then completed by the composer and pianist Lera Auerbach. Tsyganov (1903–1992) was for 44 years the first violinist of the Beethoven Quartet, which gave the first performances of all but the *First* and *Fifteenth* of Shostakovich's *String Quartets*, and his versions of 19 of these preludes were praised by the composer as sounding more idiomatic in this guise than even the piano originals. Auerbach (b. 1973), who also made transcriptions of all 24 preludes for viola and piano, as well as for cello and piano, arranged the other five preludes for violin and piano in 2000 so that the full set could be heard in this effective guise.

The harmonic piquancy of *No. 1* is followed by the

gangling motion of *No. 2* and the mainly gentle pathos of *No. 3*. Following the Bachian fluency of *No. 4*, the boisterous *No. 5* cavorts up and down both instruments, while *No. 6* is a study in typically Shostakovich humour. The placid *No. 7* finds contrast with the quixotic gait of *No. 8* and the hectic rhythmic motion of *No. 9*, before *No. 10* exudes a bittersweet harmonic touch. *No. 11* sounds a note of slapstick, and the lyrical *No. 12* pre-echoes ideas found in the *First Piano Concerto* [Naxos 8.553126].

No. 13 links its teasing theme with a repeated-note idea in the bass, in total contrast with the glowering emotional fervour of *No. 14*. *No. 15* duly lightens the mood with its effervescent high spirits, then *No. 16* has an insouciance more usually associated with Prokofiev, before *No. 17* evinces rapt poetry that accords easily with Chopinesque precedent. *No. 18* is lively and playful, whereas *No. 19* fairly enchants with its lilting barcarolle gait, then *No. 20* is all energy and confrontation. *No. 21* is a good-humoured ramble, while the ruminative poise of *No. 22* more obliquely evokes Chopin. The limpid intermezzo of *No. 23* heads directly into the clipped humour of *No. 24*, thereby ending this cycle on a note of deffest understatement. Shostakovich here reaffirmed his commitment to an inherently abstract mode of composing.

The *Cello Sonata* [8.557722] consolidated this abstract thinking soon after in 1934, whereas Shostakovich's latter two string sonatas were both products of his last decade, with the *Violin Sonata* one of his most uncompromising pieces. Ironic, perhaps, that its genesis came about as if by accident, when the composer delivered his *Second Violin Concerto* [8.550814], intended as a 60th birthday present for David Oistrakh, a whole year early in 1967. He subsequently made good this error with the *Violin Sonata* – composed from August to October 1968, then premiered in Moscow by Oistrakh with Sviatoslav Richter on 3 May 1969 (an earlier run-through by Oistrakh with the composer is almost the last archival evidence of Shostakovich as pianist, as his polio-related condition was making it increasingly difficult for him to play).

The work begins with an *Andante* (originally entitled *Pastorale*) of an expressive restraint that is reinforced yet also undermined by the fractured discourse between these instruments. The piano commences with a fragmentary idea that is presently complemented by the violin's more linear response, growing in intensity and given extra plangency by sparing use of multi-stopping. Next comes a more animated passage (almost dance-like were it not for its stylised inflexibility), before the dialogue comes almost to a halt. From here the first theme emerges, interrupted by a passage with the violin playing *sul ponticello*. Although the second theme reappears, the music cannot shake off the chill atmosphere now firmly established, and the movement closes uncertainly amid repeated-note piano phrases and spectral violin gestures.

The *Allegretto* (originally, and aptly, entitled *Allegro furioso*) is among Shostakovich's most abrasive and dissonant scherzos. From its angry initial confrontation of violin and piano, the movement moves purposefully on to an idea of grimly sardonic humour, then to an extended passage in which the constituent motifs from both themes are aggressively hurled from one instrument to the other. At the centre, the first idea is once more taken up, now accumulating in intensity towards its climactic restatement and moving to a conclusion of grating defiance.

The *Largo* (originally entitled *Variations on a Theme*) which closes the work is also the last occasion on which Shostakovich used the form of a passacaglia, a sequence of variations on a theme frequently confined to the bass register, to structure an entire movement (not forgetting the passacaglia at the centre of the finale of his *Fifteenth Symphony* [8.572708]). The theme itself is stated starkly by both instruments at the beginning, before the first variation begins with unaccompanied pizzicati on the violin. The piano makes its entry in the more flowing second variation, before the tempo increases markedly during the third. The fourth variation brings a more expressive dialogue, presaging the detached gestures of the fifth and the lyrical restraint of the sixth. The capering seventh variation once again brings an increase in tempo, continued in the eighth and ninth while the movement builds in cumulative intensity towards explosive cadenzas for piano then violin. Near the apex of what is the eleventh variation, the piano reintroduces the passacaglia theme and the instruments unite in a statement of heartfelt anguish. The final three variations gradually disperse the accumulated emotion, after which the passacaglia theme is heard on piano for a final time. The spectral violin writing from the end of the first movement now steals in to end this movement in a mood of disquieting calm.

Richard Whitehouse

Nikolai Tokarev



Russian pianist Nikolai Tokarev was born in Moscow in 1983 into a musical family. He started his musical training in 1988 at the renowned Gnessin School of Music in Moscow with Ada Traub and Mikhail Khokhlov, and he completed his studies with a distinction in 2001. Between 2004 and 2007 Tokarev studied at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester with Dina Parakhina; he completed his postgraduate study in Düsseldorf with Prof. Barbara Szczepanska at the Robert-Schumann-Hochschule. In September 2006, he received the Orpheum Public Award at the 8th International Orpheum Music Festival in the Tonhalle, Zurich. In 2007 he received an ECHO Klassik prize for his CD *No. 1*, and in October 2009 he received the Prix Montblanc in the Berlin Konzerthaus. Nikolai Tokarev is a regular guest player at international festivals including, among others, the Klavier-Festival Ruhr where he played the opening concert in the Essen Philharmonie in 2007. He has also made many recordings and radio broadcasts.

Sergei Dogadin



Sergei Dogadin is the winner of ten international competitions, including the prestigious Tchaikovsky Competition in 2011 and the Joseph Joachim International Violin Competition in Hannover in 2015. Since making his major debut in 2002 at the St Petersburg Philharmonia with Vasily Petrenko and the St Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra, Dogadin has performed with many leading orchestras in the world's most renowned venues including the Golden Hall of the Musikverein in Vienna, the Berlin Philharmonie, Suntory Hall in Tokyo, the Herkulessaal in Munich, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Tonhalle in Zurich and Düsseldorf, Symphony Hall in Shanghai, the Auditorio Nacional in Madrid, and the Alte Oper in Frankfurt, among others. Dogadin's performances have been broadcast on Mezzo Classic in France, by the European Broadcasting Union, BR Klassik and NDR Kultur in Germany, NHK in Japan, and on the BBC. He has collaborated with such prominent conductors as Valery Gergiev, Yuri Temirkanov, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Vladimir Spivakov and Manfred Honeck, and has shared the stage with many outstanding musicians including Elisabeth Leonskaja, David Geringas, Denis Matsuev and Daniil Trifonov, among others. He is currently furthering his education with Boris Kuschnir at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna. Dogadin plays the G.B. Guadagnini violin (Parma, 1765) provided by the F. Behrens Stiftung (Germany).

www.sergeidogadin.com

Dmitry Shostakovich's succinctly composed and highly distinctive *24 Preludes* have proved their popularity in numerous arrangements, but when the composer heard these transcriptions by Dmitry Tsyganov he declared that 'I forgot they were originally written for piano, so naturally did they sound.' The set was completed in 2000 by the Russian-born composer and pianist Lera Auerbach. These often whimsical and ironic *Preludes* contrast greatly with the chilling and profound *Violin Sonata*, a late work that concludes with Shostakovich's last ever use of passacaglia form.

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