

signum
CLASSICS

SHOSTAKOVICH

PIANO CONCERTOS NOS 1&2

PIANO SONATAS NOS 1&2

PETER DONOHOE *piano*
ORCHESTRA OF THE SWAN
DAVID CURTIS *conductor*

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH (1906-1975)
PIANO CONCERTOS NOS 1&2
PIANO SONATAS NOS 1&2

[1] Piano Sonata No. 1, Op. 12	[12.21]	Piano Sonata No. 2, Op. 61	
		[6] I. Allegretto	[7.27]
Concerto for piano, trumpet and strings (Piano Concerto No. 1), Op. 35		[7] II. Largo	[6.42]
		[8] III. Moderato	[12.33]
[2] I. Allegro moderato	[5.50]	Piano Concerto No. 2, Op. 102	
[3] II. Lento	[7.25]	[9] I. Allegro	[6.57]
[4] III. Moderato	[1.39]	[10] II. Andante	[6.45]
[5] IV. Allegro brio	[6.46]	[11] III. Allegro	[5.18]
Hugh Davies trumpet			
		Total timings:	[79.45]

PETER DONOHUE PIANO
ORCHESTRA OF THE SWAN
DAVID CURTIS CONDUCTOR

www.signumrecords.com

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)
Piano Sonata No. 1, Op. 12 (1926)

On 20 February 1927 Prokofiev, during his first return visit to Russia since leaving his homeland in 1918, was invited to hear compositions by some rising young composers. Among them was the twenty-year-old Shostakovich. Prokofiev wrote afterwards in his diary: "quite a young man, not only a composer but also a pianist. He played by heart and with panache, having passed me the score to peruse as I sat on the sofa. His Sonata opened with a vigorous Bach-like two-voice counterpoint, and the second movement, which followed without a break, is written with supple harmonies surrounding an interior melody... it was altogether so much more lively and interesting than Schillinger's piece [played previously] that I am quite happy to start praising Shostakovich. Asafiev [a musicologist and friend of Prokofiev's] laughs at me, saying I like Shostakovich so much because the first movement is so clearly influenced by me."

There is indeed a distinct echo in Shostakovich's First Piano Sonata from the opening of Prokofiev's Third Piano Sonata, composed in 1917 but itself based on an earlier work

Prokofiev composed aged 16. There are hints, too, of Prokofiev's penultimate *Vision fugitive*, itself inspired by the street fighting during the February 1917 Revolution. It is altogether one of Shostakovich's most ferocious works, and amply demonstrates the young pianist-composer's ambition. Indeed, Shostakovich was already seen as one of the brightest hopes of Soviet music: in just the previous year he had been unanimously accepted on the Leningrad Conservatory's post-graduate composition course, aged 19, having already composed his First Symphony – the work which in May 1927 was to receive its first Berlin performance conducted by Bruno Walter and then subsequently taken up by Toscanini and Klemperer. His promise as a pianist was virtually on the same level: only a month before his first encounter with Prokofiev, Shostakovich had participated in the first Chopin Piano Competition in January 1927, in which he reached the finals; and his repertoire encompassed such virtuosic works as Liszt's *Venezia e Napoli* and Beethoven's *Hammerklavier*.

In his compositions Shostakovich, after mastering the orthodox nationalist style of Borodin and Rimsky-Korsakov in his earliest

orchestral works, had quickly shown a rebellious streak. To the dismay of both his composition teacher Maximilian Steinberg (Rimsky-Korsakov's son-in-law) and his piano teacher Leonid Nikolayev, Shostakovich increasingly turned for inspiration to such leading modernists as Stravinsky and Prokofiev. Nikolayev was distinctly unimpressed with Shostakovich's Op. 12, calling it "a sonata for metronome to the accompaniment of piano". It is, of course, far more than that, but it is unquestionably a gnarly and knotty work for both performer and listener. It starts with a by turns nervy and thunderous *Allegro*, eventually arriving at a rumbling tremulando in the bass punctuated with pugnacious note clusters. Then follows an *Lento* in which an alto melody is picked out, sandwiched amid what Prokofiev described as "supple harmonies" (here one may suspect the lingering influence of Scriabin, notwithstanding the fact his work was much reviled by Shostakovich in public). This leads without a break into a concluding *Allegro*, boiling upwards from the bass like a malevolent spirit (and surely recalled by Prokofiev in turn in his Eighth Piano Sonata composed during World War II).

Concerto for piano, trumpet and strings (Piano Concerto No. 1), Op. 35 (1933)

In 1932, having composed his opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*, Shostakovich decided to return to the concert platform as a pianist. For that purpose, he composed a set of 24 Preludes, Op. 34 in December, shortly followed by his Concerto for piano, trumpet and strings in spring 1933. Though this was his first attempt at the concerto form, his original intention – as might be guessed from the work's title (often replaced retrospectively and misleadingly with the title Piano Concerto No. 1) – was not to create a performing vehicle for himself: Shostakovich later claimed that its unusual instrumentation of piano with string orchestra and solo trumpet was due to his original intention to write a trumpet concerto, and he only added a piano when he found writing for that instrument alone too great a challenge.

Again, as with the First Sonata, we can hear the influence of Prokofiev. Shostakovich had performed Prokofiev's First Piano Concerto several times in the late 1920s; one of the most haunting sounds of his own *First Concerto* is a lone muted trumpet playing a theme

originally heard on the strings, then played by the piano soloist – which surely recalls the moment in Prokofiev's slow movement when the piano melody is given a sardonic, 'off-key' imitation by a muted trumpet. Yet in the dour poetry of Shostakovich's movement one senses that here he is speaking from the heart rather than indulging in the wry humour to be found abundantly in the concerto's outer movements.

Though nominally in four movements, the third movement, notwithstanding its striking moment of Mahlerian pathos, is so brief that it effectively serves as a prelude to the finale; so to the casual listener the work falls into three main movements: a slow movement framed by lively outer movements in which we are presented with a circus-parade of Classical clichés in the style of Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven (including an actual quotation from Beethoven's *Rage Over a Lost Penny*), overseen by a swaggering trumpet soloist. Myaskovsky, a fellow composer and close friend of Prokofiev's, noted in his diary after hearing a performance: "Piano Concerto – brilliant, with philistinism." The Concerto found greater favour outside the Soviet Union, and alongside the First Symphony and *Lady Macbeth* was

one of the few works for which Shostakovich was widely celebrated before the appearance of his Seventh Symphony during World War II.

Piano Sonata No. 2, Op. 61 (1943)

For all Shostakovich's rebelliousness as a student, his appreciation of his Conservatory piano professor became clear when he received news in 1942 of his death. Leonid Nikolayev died on 11 October from typhoid fever in Tashkent, where he had been evacuated during the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union. Before the end of the year, Shostakovich had sketched out a piano sonata dedicated to Nikolayev's memory. In January Shostakovich himself caught typhoid fever, and after withstanding its most painful phase turned again to the sonata; by February he had managed to complete its sonata form first movement, which he showed to Lev Oborin (the winner of the very Chopin Competition he had competed in in 1927). Oborin gave Shostakovich helpful feedback and much encouragement to complete the work. This he did on 17 March 1943.

Shostakovich's Second Piano Sonata is one of the most substantial works he composed for

that instrument, second only to the mighty cycle of 24 Preludes and Fugues he composed less than ten years later. It opens with a limpid *Allegretto* whose opening (mostly) two-part texture suggests a milder form of the “vigorous Bach-like two-voice counterpoint” Prokofiev identified in the First Sonata. This builds and reaches the second subject: a more straightforward texture of a melody in octaves with a simple chord accompaniment. These two themes are developed, building an increasingly involved and chromatically more anguished texture. The slow central movement offers hints of a more lyrical style in the midst of bare and often angular accompaniment with bitter harmonic implications. The finale, in the form of a set of nine variations, was in direct tribute to Shostakovich’s teacher who had recommended variation writing as a perfect exercise for budding composers to discover their own style.

Piano Concerto No. 2, Op. 102 (1957)

Shostakovich composed his Second Piano Concerto in 1957, just as he was recovering from the huge emotional blow of the sudden death of his first wife, Nina. When in December 1954 she had succumbed to a

cancerous tumour, Shostakovich was left a widower with two teenage children, with only his mother to help. Slightly less than a year later, on 9 November 1955, she too died. Shostakovich, lonely, coping with two wilful and almost adult children, and just short of his fiftieth birthday, over-hastily remarried in July 1956. His new wife, a member of the Communist Youth Organization, had no understanding or interest in music. She showed, if anything, even less understanding of Shostakovich’s far from biddable offspring.

It was in the first year of his new marriage that Shostakovich composed his Second Piano Concerto for his son, Maxim, who was then studying at the Moscow’s Central School and showing some promise as a concert pianist. Scored more or less for a conventional classical orchestra (supplemented by a piccolo and side drum with their “fife and drum” militaristic – or perhaps more precisely in this context, Soviet Pioneer – associations), the work appears a light divertimento rather than offering any of the shadows to be found in Shostakovich’s earlier concerto, let alone the darkness of his sonatas. At first listen, one would hardly guess that the Second Concerto was composed during such a fraught time

in Shostakovich’s life: apparently bright and even mischievous in its outer movements (the brilliant finale with its lively 7/8 episodes being particularly memorable), the central movement is one of Shostakovich’s most easeful and has itself become a popular favourite. Yet the pianist, Peter Donohoe, hears a darker subtext in the typically ‘triumphant’ treatment given to the first movement’s second subject, the modulation from C major to the minor for the end of the second movement (whose final bars are reminiscent of those of the enigmatic Fourth Symphony), and the relentlessness of the superficially light-hearted third movement. Maxim gave the first performance of the Second Piano Concerto on his 19th birthday, on 10 May 1957.

© Daniel Jaffé

PIANO CONCERTO NO. 1

Piano

Peter Donohoe

Trumpet

Hugh Davies

Violin 1

David Le Page *Leader*

Amelia Conway-Jones *Co-Leader*

Catherine Leech

Rebekah Allan

Rosie Tompsett

Cathy Hamer

Violin 2

Richard Laing

Catalin Chelaru

Caroline Mitchell

Naomi Rump

Zhivko Georgiev

Viola

Adrian Turner

Vanessa Murby

Sophie Broadbent

Virginia Slater

Cello

Chris Allan

Matthew Forbes

Anna Joubert

Leonie Adams

Double Bass

Andy Marshall

Antonia Bakewell

Oboe

Victoria Brawn

Louise Braithwaite

Horn

Francesca Moore-Bridger

Craig Macdonald

Conductor

David Curtis

PIANO CONCERTO NO. 2

Piano

Peter Donohoe

Violin 1

David Le Page *Leader*

Amelia Conway-Jones *Co-Leader*

Catherine Leech

Liz Hodson

Rebekah Allan

Catalin Chelaru

Violin 2

Dominika Feher

Cathy Hamer

Caroline Mitchell

Naomi Rump

Zhivko Georgiev

Viola

Adrian Turner

Vanessa Murby

Mark Chivers

Ruth Woolley

Cello

Nick Stringfellow

Chris Allan

Anna Joubert

Bryony James

Double Bass

Ben Griffiths

Lucy Rundle

Flute

Diane Clark

Nick Bhattacharjee

Oboe

Victoria Brawn

Louise Braithwaite

Clarinet

Sally Harrop

Luan Shaw

Bassoon

Philip Brookes

Maria Mealey

Horn

Francesca Moore-Bridger

John James

Craig Macdonald

Claire Dawes

Trumpet

Hugh Davies

Peter Wright

Timpani

Tim Farmer

Conductor

David Curtis

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.

In recent seasons Donohoe has appeared with the Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra, the BBC Concert Orchestra, the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra, the St Petersburg Philharmonia, RTE National Symphony Orchestra, the Belarusian State Symphony Orchestra, the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra and CBSO, a UK tour with the Russian State Philharmonic Orchestra, as well as concerts in South America, Europe, 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 alongside Noriko Ogawa, and numerous performances with



© Susie Ahlberg

The Orchestra of the Swan. Donohoe is also in high demand as an adjudicator at piano competitions around the world. Donohoe's recent competitions have been the International Tchaikovsky Piano Competition, Moscow, the Queen Elisabeth Competition, Belgium, and the Hong Kong International Piano Competition.

Recent discs include a new disc of Shostakovich's 24 Preludes and Fugues (Signum Records), which was described as 'thoughtful and poignant' by The Guardian; a disc of Scriabin Piano Sonatas (SOMM Records) which was called '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 Duchen. 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 such as 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 such as 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.

ORCHESTRA OF THE SWAN

BAFTA nominated Orchestra of the Swan is based in Shakespeare's Stratford-upon-Avon with residencies in Town Hall Birmingham, Number 8 Pershore, Worcester Cathedral and Malvern Theatres. OOTS is celebrating its 21st Anniversary Season in 2017 under the leadership of Artistic Director and Principal Conductor David Curtis.

With an annual programme of over 40 concerts throughout England and Wales, tours to China, Turkey, Mexico, USA and across the UK alongside groups such as Steve Harley & Cockney Rebel and James, OOTS has an international impact.



Recordings have been Gramophone Choice, CD of the Week on Classic FM (UK) and Washington Public Radio and live concert recordings are frequently broadcast on USA Performance Today, in Canada and Australia.

The Orchestra's extensive discography includes repertoire by Barber, Bax, Berlioz, Brahms, Copland, Debussy, Elgar, Finzi, Ireland, Mahler, Mendelssohn, Mozart, Schumann, Strauss, Vaughan Williams and the world premiere recording of the complete symphonies by Hans Gál. The latter received outstanding critical acclaim and was featured on BBC Radio 3 'Composer of the Week'. Mendelssohn's D Minor Violin Concerto with Tamsin Waley-Cohen was named as one of BBC Music Magazine's 'Recommended Recordings'.

DAVID CURTIS

David Curtis is the founder and Artistic Director of Orchestra of the Swan, one of the most successful chamber orchestras in the UK. Under his leadership for over twenty years, Orchestra of the Swan now has an annual programme of over 40 concerts, international touring and recording. Over the last two years the orchestra has performed in China Mexico, Turkey and the USA. David's recordings with OOTS are frequently broadcast on BBC Radio 3, Classic FM, USA and Canadian public radio and throughout Europe.

For the recent Shakespeare 400 celebrations David conducted the world premiere of Dobrinka Tabakova's oratorio *Immortal Shakespeare* live for BBC Radio 3 and conducted for artists from the Royal Ballet in *Shakespeare Lives!*, which was broadcast live on BBC 2 and relayed to cinemas in the UK, Europe and the USA.

David was appointed Principal Guest Conductor of the North Hungarian Symphony Orchestra from October 2016 and also conducts the Danubia Orchestra Óbuda in the same season. In December 2016 he returned to the Moores' School of Music, Houston to teach and conduct



and in February 2017 he conducted the American premiere of David Matthews' Piano Concerto, Op. 111 in Carnegie Hall, New York.

David's discography includes repertoire by Barber, Arnold Bax, Berlioz, Copland, Elgar, Finzi, Gershwin, Daren Hagen, John Ireland, Mahler, Mozart, Robert Saxton and Vaughan Williams for MSR Classics, Naxos, Signum Classics and Somm and the world premiere recording of the Robert Stark clarinet concertos with Dimitri Ashkenazy and the Hamburger Symphoniker.

David's thought-provoking programming, infectious enthusiasm and refreshing interpretations have enabled him to develop an active international career, working in Belgium, China, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Romania, Singapore, Slovakia, Sweden and the USA. He has worked with orchestras such as the Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields, the Prague Chamber Orchestra and Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra. With the Moravská filharmonie Orchestra and Festival Chorus, he appeared in the prestigious Olomouc Dvorak Festival and the Policka Martinu Festival.

David champions new work and has commissioned and premiered at least 70 works by British, Bulgarian, Chinese, Nordic and American composers including Oscar i Bosch, Douglas Cuomo, Joe Cutler, Tansy Davies, Joseph Duddell, Daron Hagen, Peter Lieuwen, Paul Patterson, Joe Phibbs, Julian Philips, Dobrinka Tabakova, Param Vir, Andrew Waggoner, Errollyn Wallen, Shu Wang and John Woolrich.

For Icelandic Radio he conducted premieres by Snorri Sigfús Birgisson, Lars-Petter Hagen, Thuridur Jónsdóttir and Marie Samuelsson in the Nordic Music Days Festival and gave the

world premiere of a new work by Sampo Haapamäki with the Mikkeli City Orchestra.

David is passionate about the power of music to enrich and transform people's lives, both on and off the concert platform. He has commissioned three operas for special schools, developed a "relaxed" concert format for families with children who have autism, and pioneered programmes for people living with dementia, their families and carers.

Piano Concerto No. 1 recorded in Malvern Theatre, UK on 30th March 2016.

Producer & Editor – Nick Parker

Recording Engineer – Mike Hatch

Recording Assistant – George Collins

Piano Concerto No. 2 recorded in Cheltenham Town Hall, UK on 17th April 2015.

Producer – Adrian Peacock

Recording Engineer – Mike Hatch

Recording Assistant & Editor – Dave Rowell

Sonatas Nos. 1 & 2 recorded in the Britten Studio, Snape Maltings, Suffolk, UK from 10th to 11th December 2015.

Producer & Editor – Nick Parker

Recording Engineer – Robin Hawkins

Cover Image – Shutterstock

Design and Artwork – Woven Design www.wovendesign.co.uk

© 2017 The copyright in this sound recording is owned by Signum Records Ltd

© 2017 The copyright in this CD booklet, notes and design is owned by Signum Records Ltd

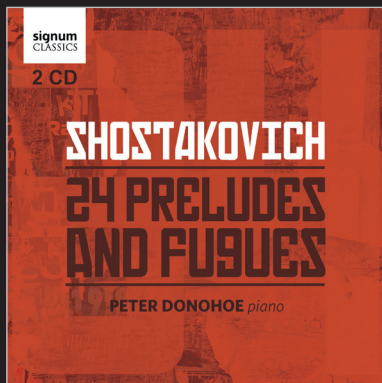
Any unauthorised broadcasting, public performance, copying or re-recording of Signum Compact Discs constitutes an infringement of copyright and will render the infringer liable to an action by law. Licences for public performances or broadcasting may be obtained from Phonographic Performance Ltd. All rights reserved. No part of this booklet may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission from Signum Records Ltd.

SignumClassics, Signum Records Ltd., Suite 14, 21 Wadsworth Road, Perivale, Middx UB6 7JD, UK.

+44 (0) 20 8997 4000 E-mail: info@signumrecords.com

www.signumrecords.com

ALSO AVAILABLE ON SIGNUMCLASSICS



Shostakovich: 24 Preludes & Fugues
Peter Donohoe piano

SIGCD396

"With impeccable musicality and a fine ear for all of Shostakovich's moods Donohoe never puts a foot wrong... Hesitate not. This is a recording of Shostakovich's 2 Preludes and Fugues that you'll want to keep close and guard well."

MusicWeb International

"Donohoe treats these piano miniatures with utmost sincerity. His new recording of the complete set isn't introspective or showy; it isn't overly reverent or sensationalist. Above all his playing is frank, sometimes to the point of plainness...there is immense dignity and power in Donohoe's directness."

The Guardian ★★★★★

"Donohoe approaches the music with detachment and a good deal of poise, observing Shostakovich's sparse performing instructions to the letter. His control of fingerwork in the more densely textured movements, such as the frenzied quasi-atonal D flat major Fugue, is mightily impressive."

BBC Music Magazine ★★★★★

Available through most record stores and at www.signumrecords.com For more information call +44 (0) 20 8997 4000