

The NAXOS logo is a white rectangular box with the word "NAXOS" in a bold, sans-serif font. Above the text are several horizontal lines of varying lengths, resembling a stylized architectural facade or a musical staff.

NAXOS

WEINBERG

Symphony No. 12

'In memoriam D. Shostakovich'

The Golden Key – Ballet Suite No. 4

**St Petersburg State
Symphony Orchestra**

Vladimir Lande

Mieczysław Weinberg (1919-1996):

Symphony No. 12 'In memoriam D. Shostakovich' · The Golden Key – Ballet Suite No. 4

Mieczysław Weinberg was born on 8th December 1919 in Warsaw, where he emerged as a highly regarded pianist. He might well have continued his studies in the United States until the Nazi occupation saw him flee to Minsk (in the course of which his travel documents were inscribed as Moisey Vainberg, by which name he was 'officially' known until 1982). During 1939-41 he studied composition with Vasily Zolotaryov, then, soon after the Nazi invasion, he headed further east to Tashkent where he immersed himself in theatrical and operatic projects. There he also wrote his *First Symphony*, which favourably impressed Shostakovich and resulted in his settling in Moscow in 1943, where he was to remain for the rest of his life. In spite of numerous personal setbacks (his father-in-law, the actor Solomon Mikhoels, was executed in 1948 and he himself was briefly imprisoned for alleged Jewish subversion prior to the death of Stalin in 1953), he gradually amassed a reputation as a composer who was championed by many of the leading Soviet singers, instrumentalists and conductors.

Despite several official honours Weinberg's fortunes declined notably over his final two decades, not least owing to the emergence of a younger generation of composers whose perceived antagonism to the Soviet establishment ensured them much greater coverage in the West, and his death in Moscow on 26th February 1996 went all but unnoticed. Since then, however, his output – which comprises 26 symphonies and seventeen string quartets, along with seven operas, some two dozen song-cycles and a wealth of chamber and instrumental music – has received an increasing number of performances and recordings, and has been held in ever greater regard as a substantial continuation of the Russian symphonic tradition.

When Weinberg composed his *Twelfth Symphony* (1976), it had been 14 years since his last such work for full orchestra – Nos. 6, [8.572779], 8 [8.572873] 9 and 11 being choral symphonies while Nos. 7 and 10 are for chamber orchestra. The catalyst here was the death in August the previous year of Shostakovich, with whom Weinberg had been on close terms since their first meeting 32 years earlier and who was the single most

important influence on his evolution. Not surprising, then, that the present work is the longest and the most wide-ranging of all his purely orchestral symphonies, though it is by no means a continuation of Shostakovich's late idiom – for all that allusions to the older composer (not least the veiled references to his D-S-C-H monogram) are subtly and often intriguingly integrated into the musical discourse. Interesting, too, that this piece had to wait over three years for its first performance – given on 13th October 1979 by the Moscow Radio Symphony Orchestra and (appropriately enough) Maxim Shostakovich, who also made the first recording.

The first movement begins with a powerful theme in rhythmic unison on the whole orchestra, forcefully underpinned by timpani. Shrill woodwind and brass latterly emerge, then a hushed transition on woodwind leads to the inward second theme on divided strings with ruminative woodwind gradually coming to the fore. At length an animated version of the first theme on strings emerges as tension builds heading into the development, with elements of both themes seized on in aggressive exchanges between strings and brass. A crescendo underpinned by timpani presages a climactic return of the first theme, but this proves to be short-lived as the second theme takes precedence in a searching discourse for strings and woodwind. The animated version of the first theme presently reappears on strings and heads towards a heated encounter fronted by brass. An extended coda sees the first theme forcefully restated, before subsiding into a series of speculative exchanges between solo wind and harp over hesitant strings and brass. The strings continue alone, before a violent chord on brass and percussion brings a crescendoing surge of almost Mahlerian anguish which is left to echo into silence.

The scherzo begins with a striding theme that unfolds contrapuntally across the strings, answered by tensile horns and trumpets over a steady accompaniment from the lower brass. Strings quickly reassert themselves, then comes a bizarre episode for woodwind at the top of their compass – the strings once more emerging as the music becomes increasingly confrontational. This dies down on woodwind, only for brass jaggedly to re-emerge, but the

final minutes are relatively calm – strings and woodwind continuing their quizzical exchanges – before a belated lurch towards the emphatic close.

The third movement opens with a searching threnody for upper strings over a slowly evolving accompaniment in lower strings, its monochrome shades gradually being tempered by the addition of woodwind. Solo clarinet then flute briefly assume the foreground, with the music effortfully unfolding towards an elegiac outburst from the full strings which is latterly underpinned by the timpani as brass climactically enter. This is suddenly curtailed to leave solo bassoon sounding plaintive over lower woodwind, before flute and upper strings wistfully open out the musical space and a further climax is reached. This briefly draws in the whole orchestra, before regretfully dying down into the depths of the lower strings. The finale now commences without pause – its capricious main theme given to solo marimba heard against lower strings, which presently embark on a wistful episode that continues this unexpected lightening of mood. The marimba once more emerges – its final notes hammered out as woodwind then strings engage in animated exchanges, which take on a more aggressive manner when brass join the fray. From here the music briefly takes pause, before building intently towards an energetic climax that culminates in a version of the main theme being forcefully expounded by strings and timpani, brass and woodwind retorting with angular gestures. The tension now subsides into veiled exchanges between woodwind and strings – a sense of peace coming across the music while the marimba returns as a spectral presence, before strings unfold a soulful epitaph made more eloquent by the presence of horn and flute. Harp and celesta add evocative touches, as do solo woodwind and strings, before the lower strings suddenly lurch forward as though to deny the expected resolution.

Save for a wartime one-act piece composed in Tashkent and seemingly lost, Weinberg's contribution to ballet comprises two scores from the 1950s. The first of these, *The Golden Key*, was composed during 1954-5 to a scenario by Alexander Gayamov after a satirical 1936 tale by Aleksey Tolstoy. The actual puppets – the hero Burattino, his sweetheart Malvina and the entourage of humans and animals – suggest characters drawn from the *commedia dell'arte*, while the music feels audibly in the

lineage of ballets from Prokofiev's *The Stone Flower*, through Shostakovich's *Limpid Stream* and back to Stravinsky's *Petrushka*. Rejected by Moscow's Stanislavsky/Nemirovich-Danchenko theatre in 1955 (under its original title *The Adventures of Burattino*), the ballet was eventually staged there on 10th June 1962 to a reworked scenario and revised score. Two years later, Weinberg extracted four suites for concert use – the individual numbers drawn from both the original and revised versions, and with music from different stages of the ballet often effectively spliced together.

Burattino's Dance with the Key launches the *Fourth Suite* with a lively alternation of strings and woodwind, its second half introduced by a sudden acceleration that brings subtle alterations to the main theme which is now decked out in even more scintillating scoring. *Elegy* centres around a plangent melody for solo oboe heard against lilting pizzicato strings, passing to clarinet and flute then violins as it gains in intensity, before heading on to a wistful close. *Dance of Artemon* features a perky idea for bassoon against lower strings and side drum, with piquant contributions from other woodwind over its course. *Dance of the Cricket* consists of quirkily ascending phrases on woodwind, then strings and then brass in a mood of genial humour. *Dance of the Cat and the Fox* involves said figures in a rustic-sounding exchange on strings, woodwind and brass to the fore during the more agile trio. *Dance of Shushera the Rat* evinces a feeling of malevolence with its threatening theme for woodwind and strings over a remorseless accompaniment from brass. *The Lesson* begins with a lively theme for woodwind and percussion, answered inquisitively by strings, before it is taken up by the trumpet in a mood of keenly didactic humour; its coda consists of a hectic galop for the woodwind and brass against scampering lower strings. *The Pursuit* is launched with an effervescent theme for upper strings, countered by a weightier idea for brass, before the main theme is taken up by the full orchestra: this segues into a more flowing though no less animated dance, audibly using the same basic motifs, which aptly evokes the chase of the title. The tempo increases apace going into an energetic apotheosis, with brass and percussion to the fore, which propels the suite on to its riotous conclusion.

Richard Whitehouse

St Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra



Photo: Anton Lukinski

The St Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra was established in 1967 and until 1985 was known as the Orchestra of Ancient and Modern Music. Renowned soloists and conductors, including Yuri Temirkanov, Mariss Jansons, Svyatoslav Richter, and many others, have performed with the orchestra. In 1988, the orchestra began holding concerts in the Mirror Hall of the famous Princes Beloselsky-Belozersky Palace in the very heart of St Petersburg. Since 1990, the orchestra has been successfully touring in China, Japan, Germany, Austria, Mexico, Spain, Finland, Norway, Sweden, France, and Belgium. The orchestra's repertoire is limitless, as they have a well-considered policy of performing music of every epoch, genre, and style, with particular attention to the music of living composers. In 2008, the

American Vladimir Lande became the orchestra's principal guest conductor.

www.spb-orchestra.ru/index_eng.php

Vladimir Lande



Photo: Natalya Rinas

Vladimir Lande is Principal Guest Conductor of the St Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra (Russia). He is guest conductor of the National Gallery Orchestra, Washington D.C., Music Director of the Washington Soloists Chamber Orchestra, the COSMIC Symphony Orchestra, and Johns Hopkins University Chamber Orchestra. He appears as conductor with ballet and opera companies in Europe and the United States. In summer 2004, he conducted the opening concert of St Petersburg's White Nights Festival. Since then, he has led notable orchestras in the United States, conducted the National Gallery Chamber Orchestra on an American tour, and served as conductor of the 64th American Music Festival. Recent tours have taken him to New Zealand, Australia, the United Kingdom, Italy and Russia. In October 2011 he led the St

Petersburg Symphony Orchestra on their tour of the United States, Mexico and South America, and was made Associate Conductor in 2012. In addition to his busy conducting schedule, Vladimir Lande maintains a successful solo and chamber music career as oboist of the renowned Poulenc Trio. Recordings include those on the Marquis, Arabesque, Kleos, and Naxos labels.

www.vladimirlande.com

Weinberg's symphonies are recognized today as a substantial continuation of the Russian tradition. His *Twelfth Symphony*, written in the style and spirit of Shostakovich, is a response to the death in August 1975 of his great friend and supporter of 32 years. With its subtle stylistic allusions to Shostakovich, this is the longest and most wide-ranging of Weinberg's purely orchestral symphonies. This recording has been prepared utilising the composer's hand written materials and markings. One of only two surviving ballet scores, *The Golden Key* is a compelling satire, extending a lineage which includes Prokofiev and Stravinsky. The St Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra and Vladimir Lande have also recorded Weinberg's *Nineteenth* (8.572752) and *Sixth* symphonies (8.572779).

Mieczysław
WEINBERG
(1919-1996)

Symphony No. 12

'In memoriam D. Shostakovich' (1976) 57:19

- | | | |
|----------|----------------------------|--------------|
| 1 | I. Allegro moderato | 20:40 |
| 2 | II. Allegretto | 8:20 |
| 3 | III. Adagio | 11:06 |
| 4 | IV. Allegro | 17:13 |

The Golden Key – Ballet Suite No. 4 (1954-55) 18:21

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| 5 | I. Burattino's Dance with the Key | 2:13 |
| 6 | II. Elegy | 3:13 |
| 7 | III. Dance of Artemon | 1:13 |
| 8 | IV. Dance of the Cricket | 0:54 |
| 9 | V. Dance of the Cat and the Fox | 1:35 |
| 10 | VI. Dance of Shushera the Rat | 1:41 |
| 11 | VII. The Lesson | 2:48 |
| 12 | VIII. The Pursuit | 4:43 |

St Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra • Vladimir Lande

Recorded by Petersburg Recording Studio at the St Catherine Lutheran Church, St Petersburg, Russia, from 10th to 13th June, 2012 (tracks 1-4), and on 6th and 7th July, 2012 (tracks 5-12)

Produced, engineered and edited by Alexei Barashkin

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