

Shostakovich - Piano Concertos Nos 1 & 2 □ Shchedrin - Piano Concerto No. 5 (2012)



Dmitri Shostakovich - Concerto For Piano And Orchestra No. 1 In C Minor, Op. 35 1 *I. Allegretto Moderato* 5:50 2 *II. Lento* 7:51 3 *III. Moderato* 1:19 4 *IV. Allegro Brio* 6:48
Dmitri Shostakovich - Concerto For Piano And Orchestra No. 2 In Fa Major, Op. 102
5 *I. Allegro* 7:33 6 *II. Andante* 5:32 7 *III. Allegro* 5:32
Rodion Shchedrin - Concerto For Piano And Orchestra No. 5
8 *I. Allegretto Moderato* 13:32 9 *II Andante* 10:30 10 *III. Allegro Assai* 9:03
Denis Matsuev - piano Timur Martynov - solo trumpet The Orchestra Of The Mariinsky
Theatre Valery Gergiev - conductor

Shostakovich's two concertos for piano and orchestra both might be described as uncharacteristically optimistic pieces, and they have never lacked for performances and recordings. This version of the pair, plus the Piano Concerto No. 5 of Rodion Shchedrin, makes a strong choice. The star of the show is the Mariinsky Orchestra under Valery Gergiev, its strings honed to an icy gleam that is entirely appropriate to this composer. Gergiev and hot pianist Denis Matsuev take the opening movement of the Piano Concerto No. 2 in F major, Op. 102, at a moderate clip, roughly equivalent to the tempo in the old reading by Leonard Bernstein conducting the New York Philharmonic from the keyboard. The general trend is to surround the hyper-Romantic slow movement with zippy tempi, but the opening movement reveals a lot of rhythmic details if they are given room. Matsuev reins in the emotion in the slow movement and finally depressed the gas pedal in the finale. It's an exhilarating performance that makes the concerto into much more than the pedagogical piece it is sometimes held to be, even in the booklet notes by Leonid Gakkel (the work was premiered by the composer's teenage son Maxim). The ebullient Concerto No. 1 for piano, trumpet, and orchestra in C minor, Op. 35, is also held nicely in check by Matsuev and Gergiev. This madcap work, alluding to music all over the Western canon and beyond, can be given a bitter tang, but Matsuev and Gergiev take him at his word that he intended it as joyous, and they have the lightness needed to pull this off. Shchedrin's concerto, lying halfway between Shostakovich and Schnittke, deserves to be better known in the West. The Mariinsky's own engineers deliver reasonable Super Audio sound, although one might want to hear more of those fabulous strings. Strongly recommended.
---James Manheim, AllMusic Review

Written by bluesever

Monday, 18 February 2019 15:52 -

Denis Matsuev returns to the Mariinsky label with his recording of both Shostakovich piano concertos, showcased here alongside Shchedrin's Piano Concerto No 5.

Since winning the 11th International Tchaikovsky Competition in 1998 Matsuev has established a reputation as one of Russia's greatest and most dynamic pianists. Over recent years he has begun to perform regularly on the international scene and has recorded for BMG Russia. He has appeared with many of the world's leading orchestras and gave his first Carnegie Hall recital in 2007.

Matsuev is renowned for his interpretations of music by Russian composers and has collaborated with the Serge Rachmaninoff Foundation. He was chosen by the Foundation to perform and record unknown pieces of Rachmaninov on the composer's own piano at the Rachmaninov house on the Villa Senar estate, Lucerne. ---mariinskylabel.com

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