

Российская Музыка Фортепьяно
Russian Piano Music Series



vol. 7 Sergei Prokofiev
Sergei Dukachev

Russian Piano Music Series, vol. 7: Sergei Prokofiev

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)

Live concert recordings

Piano Sonata No. 2, Op. 14 (1912)

18.08

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------|
| [1] <i>Allegro non troppo</i> | 6.06 |
| [2] <i>Allegro marcato</i> | 1.58 |
| [3] <i>Andante</i> | 5.36 |
| [4] <i>Vivace</i> | 4.37 |

Visions Fugitives, Op. 22 (1915-17)

- | | |
|-------------|------|
| [5] No. 1 | 1.14 |
| [6] No. 3 | 0.55 |
| [7] No. 4 | 0.54 |
| [8] No. 7 | 1.52 |
| [9] No. 10 | 0.46 |
| [10] No. 6 | 0.35 |
| [11] No. 11 | 1.07 |
| [12] No. 17 | 1.14 |
| [13] No. 5 | 0.34 |

Ten Pieces from "Romeo and Juliet", Op. 75 (1937)

- | | |
|---|------|
| [14] No. 4 Juliet as a young girl | 3.32 |
| [15] No. 6 Montagues and Capulets | 3.26 |
| [16] No. 8 Mercutio | 2.16 |
| [17] No. 10 Romeo and Juliet before parting | 7.06 |

Piano Sonata No. 7 in B flat, Op. 83 (1939-42)

17.34

- | | |
|------------------------------|------|
| [18] <i>Allegro inquieto</i> | 8.01 |
| [19] <i>Andante coloroso</i> | 6.02 |
| [20] <i>Precipitato</i> | 3.50 |

Sergei Dukachev, piano

Total CD duration

61.42

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)

Born in Sontsova, a small village in Russia, Sergei Prokofiev displayed his talents and enthusiasm as a composer at the tender age of six years. In 1904 he entered the St. Petersburg Conservatoire studying harmony and counterpoint with Lyadov and orchestration with Rimsky-Korsakov. From his early period onwards, Prokofiev managed to project a strong and idiosyncratic impression on others, in terms of his artworks and also as a person. His musical style mediates between tradition and innovation. Especially in the late period, from which his seventh sonata dates, Prokofiev works with a modernist approach, thus generating music that is uncompromising and harshly direct.

Prokofiev is regarded by many as one of the most complex and progressive composers of the early twentieth century. His catalogue of music numbers some 135 works in such varied genres as symphony, sonata, ballet, opera, art-song, string quartet and film music. He was one of the last in a long tradition of pianist-composers and the nine piano sonatas are all testament to the quality and fertility of the composer's mind. Prokofiev's output within the piano sonata genre represents the most important and influential in the Twentieth Century.

His melodic, rhythmic and harmonic material encompasses a new world, far removed from the conventional romantic ideals of the time. The structure of this sonata is conventional but the unusual sonorities, juxtaposition of harmonies and syncopated rhythmic patterns all come together to produce a radical style of composition. However, despite all of these new ideas, tonality as a structural base is essential for Prokofiev in all his works.

Prokofiev's **Second Piano Sonata** is far more advanced in terms of musical style than his first. We begin to see the emergence of his mature compositional voice even though Prokofiev was only 21 when it was written. The notion of organic unity features throughout, demonstrating how Prokofiev was influenced by the contemporary musical climate. However, his use of organic unity is rather subtle,

the most obvious example being a quote of the first movement's theme that is found in the last movement. The sonata is a fantastic piece of music that demonstrates Prokofiev's style of writing in a genre that many people consider to include his finest compositions.

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Before going to the USA in 1918, Prokofiev was already beginning to find acceptance in the musical establishment. He graduated in 1914 while winning the Rubinstein Prize by performing his first piano concerto (rather than playing a customary classical concerto). Thus, amidst growing fame and popularity, Prokofiev composed the solo piano pieces ***Visions Fugitives***, which is listed as one of his mature works.

This collection of twenty pieces for piano was originally inspired by poetry with the order of 'movements' "not in conformity with that of their origin but dictated by artistic considerations". The style of the short pieces is particularly varied, with the composer showing all the resources of his piano writing. Indeed, the specifically pure expression in some movements designed to achieve an effect of true sobriety, contrasts with "biting and witty turns of phrase" and passages of freshness and grace.

In 1935 the Moscow Theatre commissioned Prokofiev to write the ***Romeo and Juliet*** ballet suite. Two years later, Prokofiev transcribed several episodes from the orchestral version for the piano.

Juliet as a young girl (No.4) describes a scene in Juliet's room, where she playfully teases her old nurse by dancing behind her and pulling her dress. There are three themes in this piece: the first theme depicts the beautiful Juliet; the second theme is associated with the entrance of Juliet's parents and Count Paris, whom they expect her to marry; the final theme is contrapuntal and accompanies the Count and Juliet's dance.

The *Montagues and Capulets* (No.6) accompanies the ballroom scene. It starts off with some couples dancing a courtly dance, followed by the entrance of Juliet. Romeo and his friend Mercutio appear wearing masks. The phrase structure of this episode is regular, and the rhythmic vitality found here is typical of Prokofiev's music. The middle section is relatively calmer than the first section. The reprise of the first theme creeps in gently, but quickly paves the way for a grandiose ending.

In the original ballet score, *Mercutio* (No.8) is a solo number danced by Romeo's friend. Mercutio has a fiery personality, and the music, with its rhythmic vitality and lots of intervallic leaps, characterises the energy possessed by this character. Mercutio is in ternary (ABA) form.

Set in five large sections *Romeo and Juliet before parting* (*Romeo bids Juliet farewell*) (No.10) accompanies the scene of tender parting by the protagonists after their night of connubial bliss. The highlight falls on the final section, whereby Juliet's inward struggle before taking the potion is described. As the key changes back to B flat minor, she consumes the potion and it begins to take effect.

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The ***Seventh Piano Sonata*** was written between 1939 and 1942; it is shaped by the struggles of the ideological context, the Second World War. The political instability and arising tensions are mirrored in the restless and harsh nature of the work. It is perhaps due to its great virtuosity and dramatic impact that Prokofiev received the Stalin Prize for this sonata in 1943. However, this seems ironic, as the dissonant and radical language hardly conforms to the aesthetic agenda of Socialist Realism.

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Sergei Dukachev was born in Magnitogorsk, a city in the Ural Mountains on the border between Europe and Asia, where he began to learn the piano at the age of six. At the State Institute of Art in Ufa, Bashkortostan, he studied with distinguished artist Vadim Monastirsky, during which time he won many prizes in competitions in the former Soviet Union, including First Prize in the All Russia Piano Competition in 1985. He subsequently entered the Moscow Conservatoire, taking a postgraduate course in the class of Lev Vlasenko. In 1989, he distinguished himself by being a prizewinner in the International Beethoven Competition in Vienna.

Sergei, a Professor at the State Academy of Art in Ufa, was seconded in September 2005, for one year to teach at Chang-Shin College, Music Department, Masan, Korea. His Russian appointment allowed him to maintain a busy schedule of concerts in many Russian cities. He has played many piano concertos with the Ufa Symphony Orchestra, for example, those of Mozart: No.26 "The Coronation"; Beethoven: No.3 and No.5; and Rachmaninov Nos. 2 and 3 together with the *Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini*. Several Russian composers have written works for him and many have asked him to give first performance of their works, confident of his ability to convey the meaning of the composer and the spirit of the music's cultural background. Many of these works have been recorded for broadcasting on Russian radio and television.

Sergei developed close artistic links with Britain during his years at the Moscow Conservatoire, and in the late 1990s, began a series of annual visits to give concerts in England. His links with the Department of Music at Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham, Surrey, England, led to a series of concerts and masterclasses, and to his role as Artist in Residence in early 2000.

In August 2000 he turned for a period of a year to perform and teach in England based in Royal Holloway. Now a sought-after performer in England, Sergei's appearances have included illustrated talks and masterclasses at Royal Holloway and other venues. He has performed the piano concertos of Mozart: No.26 "The Coronation", and Beethoven's "Emperor" Concerto at Royal Holloway; Gershwin and Schumann at St. John's Smith Square, London, and the Grieg piano concerto in Windsor. He has been welcomed at venues as far apart as Rye and Shrewsbury, including Cheltenham, Shropshire, Surrey, the Midlands and the North West as well as in London itself.

In the summer 2005 and 2006, he accepted an invitation to join the teaching faculty of the *Fifth and Six Chetham's International Summer School and Festival for Pianists* in Manchester, England, where he received the approbation not only of his students and fellow faculty members but also of those who attended his recital during the School.

In Europe, Sergei has performed in Germany. Worldwide, from 2002 until 2005, Sergei has been Professor at the *International Summer Courses* in Brasilia City in Brazil, and in 2008 he was Professor at the *International Festival "Ex Toto Corde"* in Sao Paulo city in Brazil.



Sergei Dukachev

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Recording venues and dates

Tracks 1-4: Whiteley Hall, Chetham's School of Music, Manchester on August 28, 2005
Previously issued on Dunelm DRD0248
Tracks 5-13: The Picture Gallery, Royal Holloway, University of London on January 26, 2000
Previously issued on Dunelm DRD0146
Tracks 14-17: The Maidment Building Auditorium, The Music School, Shrewsbury on February 16, 2002
Previously issued on Dunelm DRD0183
Tracks 18-20: The Picture Gallery, Royal Holloway, University of London on July 18, 2001
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Cover image: The Peterhof: home of Peter the Great in St Petersburg, birthplace of Prokofiev

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Sergei Prokofiev

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Russian Piano Music, vol. 7

Sergei Prokofiev

