Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)

24 Preludes & Fugues Op. 87

Disc 1

	Book 1	
1	No. 1, in C Major: Prelude	2. 40
2	No. 1, in C Major: Fugue	3. 18
3	No. 2, in A Minor: Prelude	0. 57
4	No. 2, in A Minor: Fugue	1. 27
5	No. 3, in G Major: Prelude	1. 39
6	No. 3, in G Major: Fugue	2. 09
7	No. 4, in E Minor: Prelude	3. 00
8	No. 4, in E Minor: Fugue	4. 47
9	No. 5, in D Major: Prelude	1. 49
10	No. 5, in D Major: Fugue	2. 03
11	No. 6, in B Minor: Prelude	1. 34
12	No. 6, in B Minor: Fugue	4. 04
13	No. 7, in A Major: Prelude	1. 24
14	No. 7, in A Major: Fugue	2. 40
15	No. 8, in F-Sharp Minor: Prelude	1. 12
16	No. 8, in F-Sharp Minor: Fugue	7. 16
17	No. 9, in E Major: Prelude	2. 30
18	No. 9, in E Major: Fugue	1. 40
19	No. 10, in C-Sharp Minor: Prelude	1. 55
20	No. 10, in C-Sharp Minor: Fugue	4. 52
21	No. 11, in B Major: Prelude	1. 17
22	No. 11, in B Major: Fugue	2. 09
23	No. 12, in G-Sharp Minor: Prelude	3. 13
24	No. 12, in G-Sharp Minor: Fugue	3. 36
	Book 2	
25	No. 13, in F-Sharp Major: Prelude	2. 12
26	No. 13, in F-Sharp Major: Fugue	4. 27
27	No. 14, in E-Flat Minor: Prelude	4. 58
28	No. 14, in E-Flat Minor: Fugue	2. 29

Total playing time Disc 1: 77. 30

Disc 2

1	No. 15, in D-Flat Major: Prelude	2. 54
2	No. 15, in D-Flat Major: Fugue	1. 57
3	No. 16, in B-Flat Minor: Prelude	2. 23
4	No. 16, in B-Flat Minor: Fugue	7. 33
5	No. 17, in A-Flat Major: Prelude	1. 42
6	No. 17, in A-Flat Major: Fugue	3. 54
7	No. 18, in F Minor: Prelude	1. 59
8	No. 18, in F Minor: Fugue	2. 58

9	No. 19, in E-Flat Major: Prelude	2. 42
10	No. 19, in E-Flat Major: Fugue	2. 28
11	No. 20, in C Minor: Prelude	4. 08
12	No. 20, in C Minor: Fugue	5. 05
13	No. 21, in B-Flat Major: Prelude	1. 24
14	No. 21, in B-Flat Major: Fugue	2. 56
15	No. 22, in G Minor: Prelude	2. 14
16	No. 22, in G Minor: Fugue	3. 35
17	No. 23, in F Major: Prelude	3. 13
18	No. 23, in F Major: Fugue	2. 47
19	No. 24, in D Minor: Prelude	3. 16
20	No. 24, in D Minor: Fugue	7. 12

Dmitri Shostakovich / Krzysztof Meyer (b. 1943)

Prelude & Fugue in C-Sharp Minor

21	Prelude	1. 45
22	Fugue	1. 38

Total playing time Disc 2: 69. 52

Yulianna Avdeeva, piano

My first encounters with the music of Shostakovich go back to my childhood, when I performed some of his pieces for children, for example, the cycle *Dances of the Dolls*. These works are full of delight, humor, and dancelike characteristics, so my first impressions of Shostakovich were of a very upbeat kind of music.
Later I realized that those were quite rare instances in Shostakovich's music — but they exist, alongside his usual mood of dark and desperate moments.

Shostakovich's *24 Preludes and Fugues, Op. 87*, represent the entire spectrum of his soul. There are 48 various characters in the cycle; some of the pairs of Preludes and Fugues are more similar to each other, while others are built on a greater contrast.
In my opinion, this cycle is a final statement through which Shostakovich expressed his deepest feelings and thoughts very honestly, without affectation. Maybe this also applies to the music of J.S. Bach, which influenced Shostakovich significantly.

What we know is that Shostakovich visited Leipzig in 1950 to participate at the music festival dedicated to the bicentennial of Bach's death and to be a jury member of the First International Johann Sebastian Bach Competition, which was part of the bicentennial. Inspired by the music of Bach and particularly by the interpretations of Soviet pianist Tatiana Nikolaeva — the gold medalist that year, who was prepared to perform any of the 48 Preludes and Fugues from Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*, Book 1 & 2 — Shostakovich started to create a cycle of 24 Preludes and Fugues of his own. He completed the piece rather quickly, which Nikolaeva premiered in 1952. In my opinion, it is one of the greatest works for piano of the 20th century.

Unlike the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, Shostakovich's 24 Preludes and Fugues are arranged in the order of the circle of fifths — a visualization of all the possible major and minor keys, showing how they relate to each other. To me, the music in this cycle

Shostakovich signs the certificates for the winners of the first Bach Competition, Leipzig 1950

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encapsulates the very essence of Shostakovich's soul and personality — no fewer than 48 distinct characters are brought to life within the cycle. As a whole, the cycle is an intimate, deeply honest expression of the composer's most profound emotions.

Shostakovich/Meyer Prelude and Fugue in C-Sharp Minor

In 2005, Olga Digonskaya, the chief of the Shostakovich Archive in Moscow, found the original sketch of a C-Sharp Minor Prelude that Shostakovich had intended to include in the cycle of 24 Preludes and Fugues but ultimately put aside. You can imagine my excitement to hear about the great discovery. Though the sketch was left unfinished, it still gives a clear indication of Shostakovich's intention. Digonskaya was immediately taken by the music, but it wasn't until 2018 that she set to reconstructing the sketch, finishing it and enlisting Krzysztof Meyer — a Polish composer who was a close friend of Shostakovich's — to help. Between 2019 and 2020, Meyer made the complementations to the draft and composed a Fugue to go with it, obviously in the style of Shostakovich. Irina Antonovna Shostakovich, the composer's third wife, gave her blessings.

It was a great honor for me to premiere the recently found and completed Prelude and Fugue in C-Sharp Minor in 2020 at the *Internationale Schostakowitsch Tage* Festival in Gohrisch, Germany, where Shostakovich composed his well-known String Quartet No. 8. I feel very grateful and privileged to have had the opportunity to talk with Krzysztof Meyer about his completion of the piece, and about Op. 87 in general. Thus, I am delighted to include the Prelude and Fugue C-Sharp Minor on this album; it's the first recording of it in the context of the entire Op. 87. The score will be published by Sikorski in 2025.

Finally, it's an absolute privilege to have recorded this music at the Gewandhaus in Leipzig — the city where Shostakovich was inspired to compose the Preludes and Fugues in the first place — under the auspices of the Gewandhausorchester. I am extremely proud to include this masterwork in my repertoire, initiated by the extensive Shostakovich Festival in Leipzig to honor the 50th anniversary of the composer's death in 2025, and look forward to my lifelong journey with it!

Yulianna Avdeeva

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