

NAXOS

KABALEVSKY

**Preludes
(Complete)**

Preludes and Fugues

Alexandre Dossin, Piano



Dmitry Borisovich Kabalevsky (1904–1987)

4 Preludes • 24 Preludes • 6 Preludes and Fugues

An equivocal figure in Russian music of the Soviet era, Dmitry Borisovich Kabalevsky was born in St Petersburg on 30th December 1904. Having studied at the Moscow Conservatory with both Nikolay Myaskovsky and Alexander Goldenweiser, graduating in composition (1929) then piano (1930), he was appointed senior lecturer there in 1932 and full professor seven years later. Riding out the ideological ferment of the 1920s as member of the progressive Association of Soviet Musicians and also the conservative Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians, he found his mature style the following decade – notably through two works which achieved international success: the *Second Symphony* (1934), championed by such conductors as Arturo Toscanini and Malcolm Sargent, evinces the drama and lyricism that Prokofiev made central to his music on returning to the Soviet Union, while the opera *Colas Breugnon* (1938), based on the satiric novel by Romain Rolland, combines elements of neo-Classicism with Russian folk-music to potent dramatic effect.

Although his suite *The Comedians* (1940) enjoyed lasting popularity, and his work in the theatre and cinema gained official approval such that he was one of the few significant Soviet composers not to be censored by the notorious Zhdanov Decree of 1948, Kabalevsky was unable to maintain a comparable success in his music of the 1950s and 1960s. His later operas failed to hold the stage, and though certain of his piano works have managed to remain at the periphery of the modern repertoire, his greatest success was with the *Cello Sonata* (1962) and *Second Cello Concerto* (1964), whose brooding and introspective manner is essentially at odds with the rôle of the dutiful citizen to which Kabalevsky aspired as a Soviet artist, and which led him to criticize younger colleagues who chose to pursue more experimental paths in the 1960s and 1970s.

Seen from this perspective, Kabalevsky's most lasting achievement was probably in the field of music education – notably the developing in his later years of a music-programme in schools which, together with his extensive

piano and choral output for children and young people, offers striking similarities with the didactic activities of otherwise different contemporaries as Zoltán Kodály and Carl Orff. This may have been an intentional shift of priorities on Kabalevsky's part as, aside from a *Fourth Piano Concerto* and some elegiac song-cycles, he completed only a very few original compositions during the decade prior to his death in Moscow on 14th February 1987.

Abstract instrumental pieces feature prominently in Kabalevsky's earlier years, with the three piano sonatas [recorded on Naxos 8.570822] giving a good if by no means inclusive overview of his development over two decades. The three sets of shorter pieces collected here fill-out the picture still further and also share with the sonatas an ability to reflect the spirit of their time without venturing into either overtly radical or inherently reactionary musical territory, thereby enhancing over several decades the repertoires of pianists both inside and outside the Soviet Union.

The set of *Four Preludes* (1927) is among Kabalevsky's earliest published works. As with the *First Piano Sonata*, the influence of Prokofiev is never far away yet their technical and motivic resource unerringly point towards what was to come. The first piece has an unaffected simplicity in keeping with its expression marking, while the brief second piece is accordingly much more animated. With its resourceful intertwining of melody and accompaniment the pensive third piece can claim to be the most representative of the mature composer, before the energetic fourth piece rounds off this short but highly attractive sequence of miniatures in an engaging manner.

Dedicated to his teacher Myaskovsky, the *24 Preludes* (1943-4) immediately predates the *Second Piano Sonata* and likewise finds his writing at its most distinctive. The undoubted modern precedent was that of Shostakovich, which also draws on the Chopin model in alternating major and minor keys while following the cycle of fifths. Kabalevsky additionally derives the melodic material of

each prelude from folk-songs, as if to declare his Russian-ness in time of war.

Prelude No. 1 (C) provides an elegant and thoughtful entrée to the whole cycle, to which the verve of *No. 2* (A minor) offers striking contrast, its mood then continued in the tripping figuration of *No. 3* (G). The teasing harmonies of *No. 4* (E minor) are complemented by a robust left-hand accompaniment, before the increasingly charged *No. 5* (D) brings the first overly expressive music in the cycle, immediately contrasted with the surging dynamism of *No. 6* (B minor). Nimble two-part counterpoint is the basis for the pert *No. 7* (A), the mood easing further for the poetic *No. 8* (F sharp minor), before the fleet syncopation of *No. 9* (E). In its almost improvisatory manner *No. 10* (C sharp minor) is among the deepest of these pieces, unlike the skittering high jinx of *No. 11* (B), itself in pointed contrast to the seriousness and expressive plangency of *No. 12* (G sharp minor).

The second-half begins with the emotional warmth and lucidity of *No. 13* (F sharp), before the hectic passagework and even more breathless manner of *No. 14* (E flat minor), then the humorously imitative texture of *No. 15* (D flat). The powerful onward impetus of *No. 16* (B flat minor) carries all before it, whereas the calmly lapping figuration of *No. 17* (A flat) underscores its tranquil demeanour, contrasted with the highly rhetorical mood of *No. 18* (F minor). There is an insouciant quality to *No. 19* (E flat), transmuted into something understated and reticent in

No. 20 (C minor), before the dense chording and bell-like aura of *No. 21* (B flat). The term 'humoresque' might well have been invented for the spirited *No. 22* (G minor), while the call-and-response of *No. 23* (F) is endowed with real expressive intimacy, though this is at first banished by the demonstrative *No. 24* (D minor) whose highly virtuosic writing brings about a powerful yet ultimately inward close to the whole sequence.

Kabalevsky never followed Shostakovich in essaying preludes and fugues in all the major and minor keys, though the *Six Preludes and Fugues* (1958-9) gives a fair indication of what might have resulted. The first piece contrasts a prelude of the greatest poise and simplicity with a fugue that seamlessly continues its unruffled calm. The second piece has a prelude whose theme has a folk-like quality furthered in the fugue despite its greater verve. The third piece consists of an atmospheric prelude followed by a fugue that opens austere before assuming greater gravitas as it unfolds. The fourth piece commences with a prelude of melodic directness that is continued rather more trenchantly in the fugue. The fifth piece combines a charged prelude with a fugue of real emotional breadth. The sixth piece features an earnest prelude given impetus by its rhythmic profile, followed by a fugue whose rhythmic pungency carries the overall sequence through to its decisive conclusion.

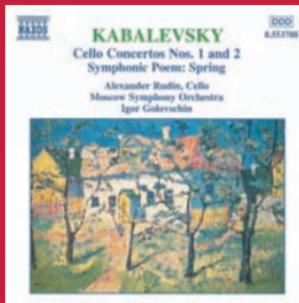
Richard Whitehouse



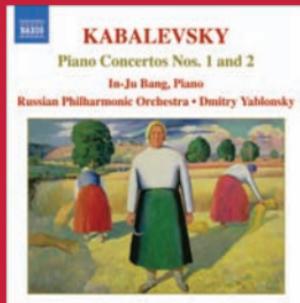
Alexandre Dossin

Acclaimed by international critics, the Brazilian-born Alexandre Dossin has already firmly established himself as a pianist of the first rank. He was awarded both the First Prize and the Special Prize at the Martha Argerich International Piano Competition in 2003 (Buenos Aires, Argentina). Other awards include the Silver Medal and Second Honorable Mention in the Maria Callas Grand Prix (Athens, Greece, 1996) and both the Third Prize and Special Prize at the Mozart International Piano Competition (Salzburg, Austria, 1995), to mention just a few of the international and national accolades received throughout his career. Conductors with whom he has performed include Charles Dutoit, Isaac Karabtshevsky, and Michael Gielen, with orchestras including the Buenos Aires Philharmonic, Brazilian National Symphony, Mozarteum University Symphony, and Tchaikovsky Conservatory Symphony Orchestras. Alexandre Dossin is a graduate of the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory, where he studied with Sergei Dorensky. He received the Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Texas at Austin, where his teachers were William Race and Gregory Allen. Currently on the faculty at the University of Oregon School of Music, he maintains an active performing, teaching, and recording career. His recordings for Naxos include an acclaimed release of Verdi transcriptions by Liszt (8.557904).

Also available:



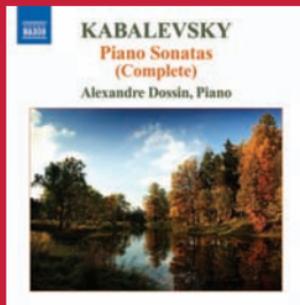
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Drawing on the Chopin model of alternating major and minor keys, as well as on Russian folk melodies, Kabalevsky's *24 Preludes* (1943-4) find the composer's writing at its most distinctive. They are coupled with the early *4 Preludes* (1927), in which the influence of Prokofiev is seldom far away, and the *Preludes and Fugues* (1958-9), six widely contrasting and expressive preludes yoked to their traditional fugal partners. This is the second recording of Kabalevsky's piano music by Alexandre Dossin, First Prize and Special Prize winner at the 2003 Martha Argerich International Piano Competition. The three *Piano Sonatas* can be heard on Naxos 8.570822.

Dmitry Borisovich KABALEVSKY

(1904-1987)

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|----------------------------|--|--------------|---|-------------|
| 4 Preludes, Op. 5 | | 6:23 | 19 No. 15 Allegro marcato | 0:47 |
| 1 | No. 1 Semplice | 1:33 | 20 No. 16 Allegro tenebroso | 1:44 |
| 2 | No. 2 Vivo e leggero | 0:43 | 21 No. 17 Andantino tranquillo | 2:02 |
| 3 | No. 3 Moderato quasi andante | 2:47 | 22 No. 18 Largamente con gravità | 1:10 |
| 4 | No. 4 Allegro molto | 1:17 | 23 No. 19 Allegretto | 0:59 |
| 24 Preludes, Op. 38 | | 47:29 | 24 No. 20 Andantino semplice | 2:28 |
| 5 | No. 1 Andantino | 1:36 | 25 No. 21 Festivamente (non troppo allegro) | 1:55 |
| 6 | No. 2 Scherzando | 0:40 | 26 No. 22 Scherzando. Non troppo allegro | 1:58 |
| 7 | No. 3 Vivace | 1:34 | 27 No. 23 Andante sostenuto | 2:14 |
| 8 | No. 4 Andantino | 1:51 | 28 No. 24 Allegro feroce | 3:52 |
| 9 | No. 5 Andante sostenuto | 2:08 | 6 Preludes and Fugues, Op. 61 22:40 | |
| 10 | No. 6 Allegro molto | 1:14 | 29 No. 1 in G major, 'A Summer Morning
On The Lawn' | 3:36 |
| 11 | No. 7 Moderato e tranquillo | 2:05 | 30 No. 2 in C major, 'Becoming A Young
Pioneer' | 2:36 |
| 12 | No. 8 Andante non troppo – Semplice e
cantando | 2:14 | 31 No. 3 in E minor, 'An Evening Song
Beyond The River' | 3:31 |
| 13 | No. 9 Allegretto scherzando | 1:21 | 32 No. 4 in A major, 'At The Young Pioneer
Summer Camp' | 2:39 |
| 14 | No. 10 Non troppo allegro, ma agitato –
Recitando, rubato | 3:30 | 33 No. 5 in C minor, 'The Story Of A Hero' | 5:43 |
| 15 | No. 11 Vivace scherzando | 0:57 | 34 No. 6 in F major, 'A Feast Of Labour' | 4:28 |
| 16 | No. 12 Adagio | 3:36 | | |
| 17 | No. 13 Allegro non troppo | 2:51 | | |
| 18 | No. 14 Prestissimo possibile | 2:13 | | |

Alexandre Dossin, Piano



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Playing Time
76:40



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