

Photo by Peter Schaaf

JORGE FEDERICO OSORIO



RUSSIAN RECITAL
MUSSORGSKY PROKOFIEV SHOSTAKOVICH

CEDILLE

Producer James Ginsburg

Engineer Bill Maylone

Recorded June 23–25, 2014, Fay and Daniel Levin Performance Studio at 98.7 WFMT, Chicago

Steinway Piano

Piano Technician Charles Terr

Publishers

PROKOFIEV Piano Sonata No. 6 in A major, Op. 82 ©1940 Sikorski

PROKOFIEV *Romeo and Juliet Before Parting* ©1960 Sikorski

SHOSTAKOVICH Prelude and Fugue No. 24 in D minor, Op. 87 ©1957 Sikorski

Cover Art Natalja Goncharova, Backcloth for Diaghilev's production of Stravinsky's *Firebird* © 2014 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

Cover Design and Inside Booklet and Inlay Card Nancy Bieschke

Cedille Records is a trademark of Cedille Chicago, a not-for-profit organization devoted to promoting the finest musicians and ensembles in the Chicago area. Cedille Chicago's activities are supported in part by contributions and grants from individuals, foundations, corporations, and government agencies including the Irving Harris Foundation, MacArthur Fund for Arts and Culture at Prince, Mesirov Financial, Negaunee Foundation, NIB Foundation, Sage Foundation, and the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO CEDILLE CHICAGO MAY BE MADE
AT CEDILLERECORDS.ORG OR 773-989-2515.

CEDILLE RECORDS trademark of
Cedille Chicago
1205 W. Balmoral Ave.
Chicago, IL 60640, USA
773.989.2515 tel - 773.989.2517 fax
WWW.CEDILLERECORDS.ORG
CDR 90000 153 © & © 2015 Cedille Records
All Rights Reserved. Made in U.S.A



JORGE FEDERICO OSORIO RUSSIAN RECITAL

SERGEI PROKOFIEV (1891–1953)

Piano Sonata No. 6 in A major, Op. 82 (27:07)

1 I. Allegro moderato (8:19)

2 II. Allegretto (4:23)

3 III. Tempo di valzer lentissimo (7:22)

4 IV. Vivace (6:51)

PROKOFIEV

5 *Romeo and Juliet Before Parting* (7:41)

from *Ten Pieces from Romeo and Juliet*, Op. 75

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH (1906–1975)

Prelude and Fugue No. 24 in D minor (11:47)

from *24 Preludes and Fugues*, Op. 87

6 Prelude (4:36)

7 Fugue (7:11)

MODEST MUSSORGSKY (1839–1881)

Pictures at an Exhibition (31:22)

8 Promenade (1:18)

9 I. Gnomus (2:24)

10 [Promenade] (0:52)

11 II. Il vecchio castello (4:10)

12 [Promenade] (0:26)

13 III. Tuileries (0:58)

14 IV. Bydlo (2:35)

15 [Promenade] (0:52)

16 V. Ballet of the Chicks in their Shells (1:09)

17 VI. Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle (2:06)

18 Promenade (1:15)

19 VII. Limoges—The Market Place (1:24)

20 VIII. Catacombae (1:46)

21 Cum mortuis in lingua morta (2:08)

22 IX. The Hut on Fowls' Legs (Baba-Yaga) (3:17)

23 X. The Great Gate of Kiev (4:32)

TT: (78:15)

JORGE FEDERICO OSORIO RUSSIAN RECITAL

Notes by Andrea Lamoreaux

Two works on this CD may be thought of almost as surprises, since they're much better known in their symphonic incarnations. Sergei Prokofiev completed his *Romeo and Juliet* ballet in 1935, but neither the Kirov Ballet in then Leningrad or Moscow's Bolshoi Ballet was willing or able to mount it at that time. To make use of the music and keep the project in the public eye, the composer constructed two orchestral suites, which remain among his most frequently played scores, and a somewhat lesser-known ten-piece piano suite. (The full ballet was premiered in the Czech city of Brno in 1938 and finally made it to the Kirov stage in 1940.)

As orchestrated by Maurice Ravel, Modest Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* is in the repertory of virtually every orchestra in the world and has been recorded, often multiple times, by at least half of them. The undeniable vigor and brilliance of Ravel's version has tended to obscure Mussorgsky's original conception of the work as a pictorial suite for piano. It's a highly original work in its strong linkages between the sounds of the keyboard and the vivid images that inspired them.

Prokofiev's Sixth Sonata and Dmitri Shostakovich's D minor Prelude and Fugue, by contrast, are completely pianistic — although the chord structures in the first movement of the sonata and the fugue's massive ending could certainly be construed as implications of orchestral sonority. Both composers were outstanding pianists, and the instrument appears prominently on both of their work-lists.

Pictures at an Exhibition was inspired by the death of Mussorgsky's friend Viktor Hartmann in 1873. The following year, St. Petersburg housed a memorial exhibition of this painter/architect/stage designer's works. Mussorgsky's attendance at the exhibit produced two memorial compositions: this piano suite and his *Songs and Dances of Death* for bass voice and orchestra.

It's interesting to observe a difference between *Pictures at an Exhibition* and Debussy's Preludes (recorded by Osorio on Cedille Records CDR 90000 098), which also evoke pictorial images, including a sunken cathedral, fog, and Dickens's Mr. Pickwick. Debussy appended his descriptive titles only after he'd written the music, and while they may remain in our thoughts as we listen, we don't necessarily need them to appreciate

the sounds. Mussorgsky's *Pictures*, by contrast, were directly inspired by specific works of art, and his intention was to re-create these visual images in sonic terms. He succeeded brilliantly, whether we hear the suite in its original piano version, Ravel's orchestration, or the orchestrations by so many others.

The suite is unified by its use of a passage called Promenade, which opens the piece and recurs several times as an interlude between portraits. The Promenade also provides source material for motives heard in the other movements. In the Promenade, we hear and envision Mussorgsky walking around the exhibit hall, perhaps humming to himself. The tune is laid out in irregular meters, so he's not marching through the galleries, just strolling.

The Promenade gets us under way.

Gnomus is Hartmann's design for a children's toy, perhaps a wooden nut-cracker, the figure a humorous caricature of a gnome or elf.

[Promenade]

The Old Castle depicts a watercolor in which we see a castle and a singing medieval troubadour. This movement evokes the gently rocking rhythm of a barcarolle.

[Promenade]

Tuileries: a kind of scherzo with children romping in a famous Parisian park.

Bydlo presents a very different sound world. This picture portrays a Polish farm wagon drawn by oxen that plod along as its heavy wheels drag through the thick mud.

[Promenade]

The Ballet of the Chicks in Their Shells is another scherzo-like interlude, inspired by Hartmann's drawings of costumes for a ballet. The chicks dance playfully for about a minute, chirping all the while.

Once again the mood shifts as we visit a Jewish ghetto somewhere in Poland; the characters in this sharply-etched dialogue are a rich merchant, Samuel Goldenberg, and his poverty-stricken companion, Schmuyle.

Promenade

From Poland we return to France, for *The Market-Place in Limoges*. A third scherzo, this depicts not children or chicks but bustling women selling their wares at the famers' market.

Catacombs and *With the Dead in a Dead Language* are inspired by Hartmann's self-portrait against the backdrop of the underground catacombs of Paris. In the second portion, the motives of

the Promenade are echoed, this time mournfully.

We're back in Russia for *The Hut on Fowl's Legs*. This was inspired by Hartmann's design for a clock depicting the fanciful home of the Russian witch named Baba-Yaga.

To conclude, Mussorgsky gives us his re-creation of one of Hartmann's architectural drawings, the full title of which is *The Heroes' Gate in the Imperial City of Kiev*. Usually shortened to *The Great Gate of Kiev*, this towering structure was never actually built. To represent it, Mussorgsky uses powerful repeated chords and heavy octave progressions that proceed to a mighty climax. Incorporating once again the theme of the unifying Promenade, he evokes not only the gigantic structure of the gate itself but also the sound of bells pealing out in triumph.

Winter 1945: Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin at the Yalta Conference; the Battle of the Bulge in Western Europe; Soviet forces moving westward toward Berlin. In January of that year, Prokofiev took the podium at the Moscow Conservatory to conduct the first performance of his Symphony No. 5, in which one can almost hear artillery fire and can definitely sense both the war's frenzy and its fears. Audience members later recalled that

they could hear actual gunfire during the performance: celebration of the news of an important Soviet advance.

Closely contemporaneous with the Symphony No. 5 are three piano sonatas that likewise convey belligerence in their aggressive dissonances and strong emotions. Hence the Sonatas Nos. 6, 7, and 8 have come to be known as Prokofiev's War Sonatas.

Earlier works than the Fifth Symphony, these sonatas date from 1939 and 1940, a time when the composer was beleaguered with troubles. His marriage was in jeopardy because of his love for another woman; a friend and close collaborator was inexplicably arrested and disappeared; and he'd been asked to write an homage to Josef Stalin, a superficially upbeat cantata known in English as "Hail to Stalin." According to Prokofiev biographer Daniel Jaffe, the composer subsequently "expressed his true feelings" with the sonatas. Since two of them later won Stalin Prizes, it appears the Soviet music czars didn't listen very perceptively.

"Brutal" is a word often used to describe the harmonies and textures of the War Sonatas. Certainly they are forceful — at one point in No. 6's Allegro moderato first movement, the performer is directed to punch the keyboard with his fist. But

brutality is not the intention. "Implacable" might best describe this movement's sense of inevitable forward propulsion, its mood and themes dominated by the assertive opening rhythmic motive. The movement's almost ceaseless energy and drama are occasionally interspersed with quieter moments, but the overall sense is one of demonic power.

Prokofiev cast his Sonata No. 6 in four movements, mimicking the structure of some of Beethoven's big sonatas, and he uses this expanded layout to convey a wide range of moods and emotions. In the Allegretto second movement, a kind of scherzo, the mood is light-hearted compared to the Allegro, but even here a sense of discontent creeps in due to its wandering tonal centers. More straightforward is the Tempo di valzer lentissimo (very slow) that has a soft dynamic throughout. In this waltz, Prokofiev speaks frankly of human feelings and longings, reminding many listeners of his *Romeo and Juliet* ballet music. The sonata's finale, Vivace, returns to the almost incessant percussiveness of the first movement, while also recalling some of its themes. The sardonic flavor of the composer's early piano *Sarcasms*, Op. 17 is felt here in the movement's towering chords and crashing dissonances that threaten to spin off into chaos.

"A theme is an elusive thing," Prokofiev once remarked. Perhaps for this reason, he always carried notebooks to record any musical idea that might occur to him (akin to Beethoven's famous sketchbooks). And like Handel, his predecessor by some 200 years, Prokofiev hated to waste a good tune. He returned to youthful pieces for sonatas subtitled "From Old Notebooks"; he re-used ballet music in chamber music; and he created orchestral suites from operas and ballets — suites that are more often-heard than the original large-scale works. As noted before, the piano suite called Ten Pieces from *Romeo and Juliet* arose partly because of difficulties and delays in getting the complete ballet performed. The movements chosen for piano reproduction only vaguely follow the sequence of the ballet movements and the story. Instead, they're a study in contrasts: the violence of the Montague-Capulet feud juxtaposed immediately with the gentleness of Friar Laurence, for example. Most of the movements — Minuet, Masks, Mercutio — are very short, but in the finale, "Romeo and Juliet Before Parting," Prokofiev allows a more expansive statement. This final portion of the suite expresses all the tenderness and pathos of the star-crossed lovers. It shows Prokofiev as a composer capable of great lyricism and beauty; no more telling

contrast to the powerful Sixth Sonata could be imagined.

Shostakovich produced cycles of symphonies and string quartets, 15 each, that are among the major achievements of 20th-century classical composition. In them may be heard not only his brilliant creativity and compositional skill, but also a kind of history of his tortured, back-and-forth relationship with the Soviet system under which he toiled his entire life (unlike Prokofiev, who left Russia in the wake of the 1917 Revolution and lived in the U.S. and France until returning home in the early 1930s). A rule of thumb in commentary on Shostakovich is that the symphonies represent the public composer while the quartets portray his inner life — and it's a useful way to look at the works. Another quintessentially personal and private project for Shostakovich was his set of 24 Preludes and Fugues, Op. 87, written in the early 1950s as a kind of homage to Bach.

Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* is a cycle of preludes and fugues in all of the major and minor keys that represents a towering achievement in the history of keyboard composition. Among his successors, Chopin wrote 24 Preludes in all the keys, but did not couple them with fugues.

Debussy's two sets of Preludes were never intended to follow any key progression; their intent was quite different. Shostakovich, who also wrote a set of 24 preludes without fugues, Op. 34, set out to follow the complete Bach model with his Op. 87. It's been suggested that one inspiration for this set was a trip to Leipzig in 1950, for ceremonies and concerts honoring the 200th anniversary of Bach's death. Another motivation might have been to challenge himself by creating music in perhaps the strictest form there is: the fugue. Still another was to write a major cycle that would not attract much official notice in the aftermath of the Soviet authorities' public denunciation of his larger-scale works (e.g., Eighth Symphony) in 1948.

While long regarded mainly as teaching compositions, Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* preludes and fugues are also profoundly musical. Likewise, Shostakovich doesn't limit himself to technical exercises; he created in his Op. 87 a masterly suite of musical vignettes that sometimes take Russian folk music as their inspiration, and which everywhere show the genius of his musical imagination.

To follow the circle of fifths of traditional Classical-Romantic harmony, you begin

with C major and proceed to its relative, A minor, then onward to G major, E minor, and so on. You end with D minor, the relative of F major. Shostakovich's Prelude and Fugue No. 24 in D Minor is thus the grand finale of the entire set. Both Bach and Shostakovich used a wide range of styles and forms for their preludes; their comparative freedom of structure contrasts strongly with the prescribed layout of the fugues. Shostakovich's Prelude No. 24 is slow, stately, even majestic, with a subsidiary theme developed in left-hand octaves that the composer transforms into the main subject (theme) of the ensuing four-voiced fugue. After these voices are introduced and combined, Shostakovich proceeds through several key changes and arrives at the rather remote key of A-flat, with a new fugal subject that's eventually amalgamated with the original one for a striking and powerful conclusion.

Andrea Lamoreaux is Music Director of 98.7WFMT, Chicago's Classical Experience.

JORGE FEDERICO OSORIO

Jorge Federico Osorio has been internationally acclaimed for his superb musicianship, powerful technique, vibrant imagination, and deep passion, and hailed as “one of the more elegant and accomplished pianists on the planet” (*Los Angeles Times*). He has performed with many of the world’s leading orchestras, including the Symphony Orchestras of Chicago, Dallas, Detroit, Milwaukee, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Seattle, and the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de México; the Israel, Warsaw, and Royal Philharmonics; the Moscow State Orchestra, Orchestre Nationale de France, Philharmonia Orchestra, and Amsterdam’s Concertgebouw Orchestra. Osorio’s concert tours have taken him to Europe; Asia; and North, Central, and South America. He has collaborated with such distinguished conductors as James Conlon, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, Bernard Haitink, Manfred Honeck, Lorin Maazel, Klaus Tennstedt, and Jaap van Zweden, among many others. American festival appearances have included the Hollywood Bowl, Ravinia, Newport, and Grant Park Festivals.

One of the highlights of Osorio’s long and distinguished career was the performance of all five Beethoven Concertos over

two consecutive nights with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at the 2010 Ravinia Festival. During the past several years, Osorio has performed in Berlin, Brussels, Düsseldorf, and Stuttgart; at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam; and at the Gewandhaus in Leipzig. Recent American recitals have taken him to Boston, the San Francisco Bay Area, and Chicago, where he performed on the prestigious Bank of America Great Performers Series at Symphony Center. Osorio has also given two highly acclaimed New York City recitals at Lincoln Center’s Alice Tully Hall.

A prolific recording artist, Osorio has documented a wide variety of repertoire, including a solo Brahms CD that *Gramophone* proclaimed “one of the most distinguished discs of Brahms’ piano music in recent years.” Recordings with orchestra include Beethoven’s five Piano Concertos and Choral Fantasy; both Brahms concertos; and concertos by Chávez, Mozart, Ponce, Rachmaninov, Rodrigo, Schumann, and Tchaikovsky. Osorio’s acclaimed solo recordings on Cedille Records include *Salón Mexicano*, comprising music of Mexican composers Manuel M. Ponce, Felipe Villanueva, Ricardo Castro, and José Rolón; an entire disc devoted to music of Ponce; a 2-CD set of Debussy and Liszt; and

Piano Español, a collection of works by Albéniz, Falla, Granados, and Soler that received glowing reviews internationally and marked Osorio as one of the world’s great interpreters of Spanish piano music. Osorio’s recorded work may be found on the Artek, ASV, CBS, Cedille, EMI, IMP, and Naxos labels.

Osorio has won several international prizes and received numerous awards, including the prestigious Medalla Bellas Artes, the highest honor granted by Mexico’s National Institute of Fine Arts; the Dallas Symphony Orchestra’s Gina Bachauer Award; and First Prize in the Rhode Island International Master Piano Competition. An avid chamber music performer, he has served as artistic director of the Brahms Chamber Music Festival in Mexico; performed in a piano trio with violinist Mayumi Fujikawa and cellist Richard Markson; and collaborated with Yo-Yo Ma, Ani Kavafian, Elmar Oliveira, and Henryk Szeryng. A dedicated teacher, Osorio serves on the faculty at Roosevelt University’s Chicago College of Performing Arts. For his own musical education, Osorio began his studies at the age of five with his mother, Luz María Puente, and later attended the conservatories of Mexico, Paris, and Moscow, where he worked

with Bernard Flavigny, Monique Haas, and Jacob Milstein. He also studied with Nadia Reisenberg and Wilhelm Kempff. Highly revered in his native Mexico, where he performs often, Osorio resides in Highland Park, Illinois, and is a Steinway Artist.

For more information, please visit
jorgefedericoosorio.com

Also by Jorge Federico Osorio on Cedille



CARLOS CHÁVEZ PIANO CONCERTO Chávez, Moncayo, and Zyman

"An excellent, and clearly under-appreciated, addition to the repertoire, delightfully exotic, [that] fortunately...receives a crisp and concentrated performance by these forces."

—FANFARE



SALÓN MEXICANO Castro, Ponce, Villanueva, and Rolón

"With his usual intense clarity and suave panache, Osorio illuminates these composers' contributions, which derive their style from Chopin, Liszt, Schumann, and Tchaikovsky, while wedding their melodic gifts to the Spanish and Mexican rhythms endemic to their native region."

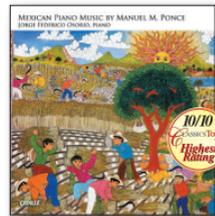
—AUDIOPHILE AUDITION



DEBUSSY & LISZT

"Osorio's performances combine . . . clarity of texture with an articulate rhythmic sense that illuminate such pieces as 'La cathédrale engloutie' (one of the highlights of the set) from within. His robust readings of the Liszt pieces benefit from the pianist's finely-chiseled detail and generous color palette."

— CHICAGO TRIBUNE



MEXICAN PIANO MUSIC BY MANUEL M. PONCE

"Osorio plays all of these pieces masterfully, with virtuosity to spare and a natural expressiveness that never compromises the music's freshness and spontaneity. . . this is an absolutely wonderful disc by any measure."

— CLASSICSTODAY.COM



PIANO ESPAÑOL Albéniz, Falla, Granados, and Soler

"Jorge Federico Osorio knows this music as well as any pianist alive, and his performances bespeak the wisdom of maturity with no loss of freshness or spontaneity. . . There's poetry aplenty, but also bravura. Sonically this recording strikes me as ideal. In short, what you hear is what Osorio does, and what he does is pretty terrific."

— CLASSICSTODAY.COM

CEDILLE PRODUCERS CIRCLE

The Producers Circle honors the generosity and loyalty of those individuals and foundations who have supported our recordings through their repeated, major annual gifts to Cedille Chicago.

Anonymous

Beech Street Foundation

Steven C. Calicchio Foundation

Fran and Henry Fogel

Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation

Jane Ginsburg and George Spera

Irving Harris Foundation

Barbara Haws and William Josephson

Andrew and Irma Hilton Foundation

Sandy and Jack Levin

Nancy Loeb and Jeffrey Colman

The MacArthur Fund for Arts and Culture at Prince

Dennis and Graci McGillicuddy

Negaunee Foundation

Pumpkin Foundation

Beverly and William Rosoff

Sage Foundation

Claire and Edward Stiepleman