



Stravinsky *Three Movements from Petrushka*; 4 Etudes Op 7; Piano Sonata in F-sharp minor; Piano Sonata (1924); Serenade in A; *Piano-Rag-Music*; *Tango*; Piano Concerto; *Movements*; *Capriccio*
Peter Donohoe (pf); Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra/David Atherton
 Somm SOMMCD 266-2, 128 mins, 2 CDs



Peter Donohoe has a way with Russian piano music, as recent, highly esteemed recordings of Shostakovich (Signum), Scriabin and Prokofiev (SOMM) confirm. Here he proves that he is adept with the most mercurial of them all, Stravinsky, in a 2-CD set comprising nearly all the major works for piano solo.

The first disc opens with the familiar, *Three Movements from 'Petrushka'* (1921), given an earthy, vibrant performance, full of clearly articulated detail, particularly in the concluding 'Semaine grasse' with its exuberant main theme. Donohoe makes more of this triptych than most, even Yuja Wang (DG) or Melnikov (Sony). Donohoe's Russian credentials shine in the Scriabinesque Etudes (1908) and Sonata in F-sharp minor (1903-4), where the fledgling composer's ambition overreached his ability at the time. Donohoe shapes the sonata's structure particularly impressively.

His touch is as sure in the 1924 Sonata, its beguiling neoclassicism carrying the listener forward in a perfect balance of form, drive and content. The *Serenade* of the following year opens the second disc, the Romanza and Cadenza finale allowing Donohoe to display his wonderful sense of line. In many ways, this is the most telling performance of all, beguiling listeners with the sheer beauty of Stravinsky's 1920s style without the spikiness that some find off-putting.

Admirers of the angular Stravinsky have plenty to engage with in *Piano-Rag-Music* (1919) and the *Tango* (1940) as well as the three concertante works. These – the Concerto (1923), *Capriccio* (1929) and serial *Movements* (1959) – are winningly performed (the latter two sparkling). A splendid and engrossing issue.

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Shostakovich Piano Trio No 2 in E minor Op 67
Auerbach Piano Trios: No 1; No 2, *Triptych: The Mirror with Three Faces*
Delta Piano Trio: Vera Kooper (pf), Gerard Spronk (vln), Irene Enzlin (vlc)
 Odradek Records ODRCD350, 63 mins

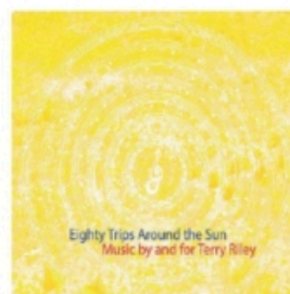


The Shostakovich is a gutsy performance, magnificent in its grasp and fully in tune with the composer's many faces. The keening gestures of the second movement are brilliantly achieved via the tightest ensemble, the third movement Passacaglia is hypnotically executed and the macabre dance of death that is the finale moves forward with chilling, inexorable momentum. The piano is superbly recorded, and the balance between the three musicians expertly judged.

While Shostakovich's Second Piano Trio is at least vaguely well-known, the music of Lera Auerbach demands to be heard. Born in Russia, Auerbach emigrated to the States in 1991. Her music is far from unknown – a disc of piano music by Ksenia Nosikova is notable – but it is a way from receiving the recognition it richly deserves.

Auerbach's Piano Trio No.1 (1992/4) is an early work that begins with a traditional emphasis on counterpoint; but its first movement ends with remarkably effective seagull imitations. Irene Enzlin's cello sings expressively in the Andante lamentoso. The virtuosity of the finale (a Presto) reaches a plateau of Shostakovich-like, post-cataclysm stasis. Moving forward some 20 years, the second trio, *Triptych: The Mirror with Three Faces* takes inspiration from a hinged mirror: three faces, but are they the same person? Contrasts are critical, from the frozen first movement to the grand gestures of the fleeting second, thence to a Shostakovich-influenced Waltz. A wonderful, enriching performance of a piece that demands attention.

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Riley *Eighty Trips Around the Sun*. Piano music for one and two pianos, plus works by **Clay**, **G Riley**, **S Adams**, **Southworth**, **Makan**, **Ruhr**, **Mattingly** and **Oliveros**. Sarah Cahill, Regina Myers (pfs), Samuel Adams (electronics/pf)
 Irritable Hedgehog IHM020M, 221 mins, 4 CDs



This four-CD set celebrates the 80th birthday of Terry Riley. The compositions span 50 years, from the dodecaphonic, pointillist *Two Pieces* (1958/9) to the 2008 *Be Kind to One Another*. The *Keyboard Studies* occupy an instantly recognisable minimalist world, heard here in a stunning performance by Sarah Cahill, who is joined for a simply gorgeous *Simone's Lullaby* by Regina Myers. The recording and its production values are superb.

The disc of music for piano, four hands, by Riley (featuring Cahill and Myers) begins with *Cinco de Mayo*, written for Henry Cowell and sounding like a deconstructed Mexican version of Milhaud's *Scaramouche*. The canonic *Tango Doble Ladiado* threatens to fragment in the manner of Picasso; the light *Waltz for Charismas* and the Latin American *Jaztine* lead to the *Etude from the Old Country*, the longest work here, cast entirely in 5/4.

Music composed for Riley's 80th includes Danny Clay's remarkable *Circle Songs*. Gyan Riley (son of Terry) contributes the crepuscular jazz of *Poppy Infinite* (Christine Southworth's *Sparkita and the Kittens* also references jazz) while Samuel Adams experiments with sinewaves in *Shade Studies*. Lovely to have *Before C* by Keetin Makan, designed to activate the high C harmonic before the beginning of Riley's *In C*. Elena Ruehr (whose opera *Touissant Before the Spirits* is so impressive) contributes *In C Too* before Dylan Mattingly's exploratory, colourful *Y E A R*.

The final, short disc contains Pauline Oliveros' *A Trilling Piece for Terry*, meditating on the very idea of a trill. There are some wonderfully dark washes of sound; quieter moments are magical.

The entire set is a treat: lovers of Riley's music should not hesitate.