



trumpet; (Classics for Pleasure CD-CFP 4547). Their presence definitely adds bite to the frenetic *Presto*.

The music from the comedy film *The Adventures of Korzinkina* has only been recorded twice before, by Rozhdestvensky (BMG/Melodiya 74321 59058 2; reviewed in *DSCH* No. 11; deleted) and Mnatsakanov (Citadel CTD 88129; reviewed in *DSCH* No. 11; deleted). Polyansky's recording is definitely superior, with the most impressive *pianissimo* ending - well done to the Chandos sound engineers for capturing this. In comparison, Rozhdestvensky's recording is hampered by poor recording conditions; Mnatsakanov's suffers from bad intonation in the opening movements and a pedestrian *Restaurant Music*. Eric Roseberry's liner notes need clarification: the "concertina tune borrowed from the Leningrad Circus" heard in *Finale* was used by Musin, a popular clown and star of the film; Shostakovich's orchestration of Musorgsky's *Song of the Flea* was used in the film (see John Riley, *Dmitri Shostakovich: A Life In Film*; reviewed in *DSCH* No. 22). Though identified by Roseberry as the suite assembled by Rozhdestvensky, both Polyansky and Mnatsakanov actually perform the five movements as published in Volume 41 of the old Collected Works series: the brief *Intermezzo* (No. 5 in Rozhdestvensky's suite) is missing and the ending of the *Finale* is different. For example, in Rozhdestvensky's version there is a G minor chord one bar before the final interjections of "Yanya" (the diminutive form of Korzinkina) and a shift to G major as the tenors enter; in Volume 41 this bar has a G major chord.

This CD may well be attractive to collectors chiefly because of op. 124, but I would also recommend it for the concerto and *Korzinkina*. Roseberry's notes, with a thought provoking description of Symphony No. 9, are

available in German and French translations, together with the texts for op. 124 and op. 59 (*Finale*) in English, German, French and Cyrillic Russian.

Fiona Ford

Symphony No. 15 in A major, op. 141; Suite from *The Age of Gold*, op. 22a.

Vakhtang Jordania, Russian Federal Orchestra.

Angelok1 CD-9914. DDD. TT 64:02. Recorded in the Bolshoi Hall, Tchaikovsky Conservatory, Moscow, 18 & 19 January 2003.

Symphony No. 15 in A major, op. 141[a]; Piano Concerto No. 2 in F major, op. 102[b]; Overture, Romance and Galop from *The Gadfly*, Suite arranged by Lev Atovmyan, op. 97a[c].

Vassily Sinaisky, BBC Philharmonic, Martin Roscoe (piano)[b].

BBC Music Magazine BBC MM263. DDD. TT 77:45.

Recorded at Studio 7, New Broadcasting House, Manchester, 30 June and 1 July 2005[a,b], 8-9 April 2003[c].

Cover CD to *BBC Music Magazine*, Vol. 14, No. 6, February 2006.

It is difficult to assess any new recording of the Fifteenth Symphony in the wake of Mravinsky's searing 1976 account with the Leningrad Philharmonic (MELCD1000770), or Kondrashin's equally white-hot 1974 reading with the Moscow Philharmonic (reviewed in *DSCH* No. 10 on Icone ICN-9408-2; deleted; reissued on Aulos AMC2-043-1-10). Both performances, individually arresting, leave me little choice but to recommend them as essential listening. Comparing any of the recordings released in their footsteps gives plenty of reasons why they have yet to be surpassed. What sets Mravinsky and Kondrashin's versions apart is the absence of the "toy-shop" syndrome that afflicts many modern interpreters. Both veterans attack this final symphony with as much anger and

vengeance as they would the Fourth or Eighth Symphonies, for example, and this is the secret ingredient to their success.

Thus, the current entries have very high standards to live up to. The more special of the two is Vakhtang Jordania's exciting outing, on a modestly packaged disc that scores many points. The conductor's tragic recent passing has left only a handful of discs as testimony to his great insight. This is a Fifteenth with a deep feeling for Shostakovich's symphonic world and a passionate sympathy for what the symphony is about, steeped in the Russian sound with its requisite grittiness and a certain degree of ugliness.

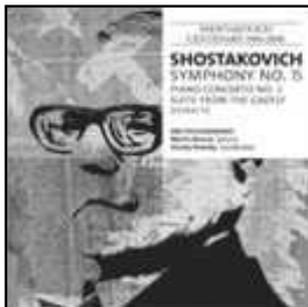


Jordania takes us to a world that is dark and horrifying. The composer smiles as he walks to his gallows, his inexorable march towards death playing out with as little dignity as life itself had afforded him. With this irony in mind, he pens his own death scene not as a glorious apotheosis but as a curious whirring of percussion tick-tocks, a mechanical device winding down to a stop. Encompassing these complex emotions, Jordania provides a powerful reading that is not without flaws but that deserves a hearing.

The highly persuasive Russian Federal Orchestra play far more impressively than their credentials would lead one to expect. There must be something in the Russian blood. The trumpets have the same wry tone that inhabits Mravinsky's Leningraders, although neither of the present teams (nor anyone else since) manages to negotiate the infamous *William Tell* quotes with as much finesse and character as Mravinsky's or Kondrashin's. Jordania and others quite often sound



out of place or contrived here. Elsewhere, Jordania's violins are not as incisive as the great masters' in drilling out the accented offbeat rhythms, and his percussion do not deliver the precision needed in the key solos (the glockenspiel fails to play its crucial counterpoint to the xylophone at 2.33 into the first movement). Despite their shaky coordination in these sections, the players deserve applause for continuing with audacity and gusto, ensuring that the spirit of the music is uninterrupted.



The recording has plenty of atmosphere, its dark richness revealing much detail even in the soft, solo string sections. And look out for the huge climax, which is appropriately apocalyptic - remember to warn your neighbours in advance!

Vassily Sinaisky and the BBC Philharmonic are beautifully recorded, with a little more fidelity and clarity, but their performance does not quite achieve Jordania's spirit of defiance and undercurrent of terror. Afflicted perhaps by the aforementioned toyshop syndrome, the first movement chugs along amiably, without a trace of the sinister or the mischief that drenches the Mravinsky and Kondrashin versions.

The BBC Philharmonic are a technically fine orchestra, their execution spirited and skilful, yet they fail to offer significant insights in most places. The first movement should be a roller coaster of emotions that run from manic to obsessive, tension building towards the finish, but the BBC Philharmonic seem happy to have a sunny day at the fair.

This is not a joyride, after all; it should not sound like one.

The third movement benefits from some menacing playing from the woodwind and the string soloists, and is the most convincing of the four. The Finale, however, sounds lost. With no clue what has happened to the toyshop, the orchestra unwind aimlessly and the percussion play dutifully but without much expression, not realising that this wind-up toy is none other than the composer. Compare, for example, the violin solos at 5:48 of the first movement - although the Russian plays with less finesse than his British counterpart, his teetering anxiety is so much more engaging than the latter's flawlessly rendered display.

In conclusion, of the two new recordings I recommend Jordania's far more highly, if only to experience the art of this late conductor (it is heartbreaking to read the CD notes which refer to him in the present tense) and his very fine Russian band.

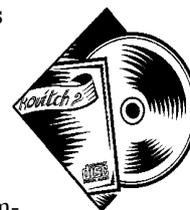
The coupling is a boisterous performance of the four-movement *Age Of Gold Suite*, which supplies a delicious clarinet solo in the second movement and a cheeky *Polka*.

Sinaisky's disc offers a lovely, bright reading of the Second Piano Concerto with Martin Roscoe at the keyboard. As if that isn't confection enough, *BBC Music Magazine* throw in three of the breeziest extracts from *The Gadfly*, which do nothing to lend perspective to a decently executed but not very engaging Fifteenth.

[Recording Editor's note: *BBC Music Magazine* were unable to supply a review copy of their February 2006 issue with Sinaisky's recording, having run out of stock. I am grateful to reader Chris Logan from Australia for obtaining a copy from a retail outlet and forwarding it to our reviewer.]

CH Loh

Recording News



Regis Records are reissuing on July 24th Yevgeny Mravinsky's 1982 recording of Symphony No. 8 (reviewed in *DSCH* No. 11). Previous releases of this recording by Philips, Philips Virtuoso and Icone were approximately a semitone sharp and are no longer in the catalogue. Regis have consulted with *DSCH Journal* to ensure the correct transfer pitch for their reissue (RRC 1250).



To commemorate the Shostakovich centenary, Universal Classics have released five boxed sets of recordings drawn from the Decca, Philips and Deutsche Grammophon catalogues. The entire edition occupies 35 CDs. The first two sets, released in April, comprised the complete symphonies conducted by Bernard Haitink (Decca 475 7413; 11-CDs) and the quartet cycle by the Emerson String Quartet (Decca 475 7407; 5-CDs; from Deutsche Grammophon 289 463 284-2; reviewed in *DSCH* No. 13). May releases surveyed the concertos, orchestral suites and chamber symphonies (Decca 475 7431; 9-CDs); piano music and other chamber works (Decca 475 7425; 5-CDs); and song cycles (with orchestra or piano) and opera (Decca 475 7441; 5-CDs).

Hyperion have reissued the complete Shostakovich quartet cycle from the St. Petersburg Quartet, reviewed in these pages in single-CD issues, as a 6-CD set (CDS44091/96).

