

COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO

PASC 420

KIRILL KONDRASHIN

Pristine
XR

Concerto Conductor: Tchaikovsky, Shostakovich

The first International Tchaikovsky competition took place in Moscow last April. The sessions were held in public, and when in the finals the Texan (6 ft. 4 in.) Van Cliburn had finished, "the crowd went wild, chanting in unison, *First-prize! First-prize!" for their adored favourite, who by now had become universally known as 'Vanyusha' or 'Vanyitchka'". So the sleeve-note. Nevertheless the judges still felt able to award Vanyitchka the first prize, and recognition tempered with ecstasy followed immediately in London and New York.

Van Cliburn's recorded performance of the concerto is a very good one. He certainly brings enormous power to the many sections of the music which respond readily to it, yet is happily content to keep the power in reserve elsewhere. Always he phrases effectively, and always a faultless technique allows an agreeable delicacy in figuration. The anonymous orchestra, too, play well; grounds of style as well as of probability suggest that it is an American one. Kondrashin and Van Cliburn shape the music well, and not by any means only with the requirements of virtuoso pianism in mind; some passages indeed are taken rather more deliberately than is customary (and are the gainers from it).

The recording is well balanced, but somewhat harsh in tone. The piano, in particular, is affected; at its louder moments the clang can become unpleasant (it does so in the octave run-up to the final peroration). R.C.A. sleeves are seldom noticeable for their modesty; this one might have done well not to add to the usual "Ortho-phonics" puff, to which we are by now nearly acclimatised, an extra and actively misleading one about the disc's stereophonic adaptability.

M.M., The Gramophone, August 1958 - review of *Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 1* - RCA UK LP issue

Producer's Note

It is always fascinating to look back and see how a legendary recording was first received, and leaving aside comments on performance for this note, one can only agree with the criticism of the recording's tone, hence my decision to improve this as much as is possible using XR remastering. RCA's sound on their more recent issues is certainly an improvement over the original LP but still left a lot to be desired. Meanwhile the Shostakovich - which I originally discovered on a *Period Showcase* LP credited to a different orchestra - was considerably worse. Both have improved greatly here. While the major artistic draws of this release are of course the two illustrious soloists, it was the common thread of conductor Kirill Kondrashin which first drew me to these LPs in my collection, hence the focus on him here. A great soloist needs a great accompanist conductor at his or her side if they are to work well together to produce a truly great concerto performance. Here are indeed two great performances, with two great soloists - and one excellent conductor and master accompanist. **Andrew Rose**

FULL PROGRAMME NOTES CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM
SARL Pristine Audio, 144 Rue de l'Eglise, 24610 St. Méard de Gurçon, France

Kirill Kondrashin

Concerto Conductor

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STEREO

Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 1
Van Cliburn - RCA Victor Symphony Orchestra

Shostakovich Cello Concerto No. 1
Rostropovich - Czech Philharmonic Orchestra

Live and studio recordings, 1958/1960

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TCHAIKOVSKY PIANO CONCERTO No. 1 - SHOSTAKOVICH CELLO CONCERTO No. 1
KONDRASHIN - VAN CLIBURN - ROSTROPOVICH

KONDRASHIN *Conducts Concertos*

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XR remastering by Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on a
photograph of Kirill Kondrashin

TCHAIKOVSKY Piano Concerto No. 1 in B flat minor, Op. 23

- 1 1st mvt. - Andante non troppo e molto maestoso (20:50)
- 2 2nd mvt. - Andantino semplice (7:05)
- 3 3rd mvt. - Allegro con fuoco (7:03)

Van Cliburn *piano*

RCA Victor Symphony Orchestra

Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto
Recorded 30 May, 1958
Carnegie Hall, New York City
Issued as RCA SB-2006
A stereo recording

Shostakovich Cello Concerto
Recorded 29 May 1960
Smetana Hall, Municipal House, Prague
Issued as Period SHO ST 337
Presented in Ambient Stereo

SHOSTAKOVICH Cello Concerto No. 1 in E flat major, Op. 107

- 4 1st mvt. - Allegretto (6:17)
- 5 2nd mvt. - Moderato (10:48)
- 6 3rd mvt. - Cadenza - Attacca (4:59)
- 7 4th mvt. - Allegro con moto (5:33)

Mstislav Rostropovich *cello*

Czech Philharmonic Orchestra

(NB. Although billed as a stereo release on some issues, including the Period LP, the recording appears to be sourced from a mono Czech radio broadcast. The Period issue credits "Moscow State Orchestra" but offers no further details. We have taken the information presented here from a later Supraphon release)

Total duration: 62:35

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Kirill Kondrashin *conductor*

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