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Preludes And Fugues For Piano



Synopsis

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Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Because copyright laws have changed since this Dover edition came out in 1991 - originally these pieces were not covered by copyright due to Russian law - it has now gone out of print. To get these wonderful preludes and fugues, republished from the original Moscow editions from 1956 and 1966, at the original price of \$12.95, seems incredible now. The volume includes the 24 Preludes, Op.34 from 1932-3 and five early preludes dating from 1920-21, but also the masterly, 24 Preludes and Fugues, Op.87, a 20th-century Well-Tempered Clavier, written between October 1950 and March 1951. Wilfred Mellers, in his essay for Keith Jarrett's recording on ECM, says the cycle "need fear no comparison with its model." It's rarely seen second-hand, so the library may be the only option.

This is probably my favorite set of 20th century piano pieces. The musical language is extremely conservative: these were written at the end of Stalinism, and Shostakovich once again had to recant of the charge of "formalism" (the Stalinists preferred the tuneful and shallow music of Khachaturian where A-B-A forms predominate). The Preludes and Fugues are not even in quality: some are profound (C Major, E Major, F-Sharp Major, g minor, d minor); in others a neo-Baroque style predominates; in still others Shostakovich works around the strictures of Soviet Realism and creates

some truly remarkable music (D Major, A Major, A-Flat Major). Some are relatively easy to play (C Major, g minor) where others are true virtuoso pieces (a minor, g-sharp minor, D-Flat Major, d minor). I have played this set of Prelude and Fugues, and every time I return to these pieces I find something new and refreshing. This Dover edition was originally \$14; it has since gone out of print because of a change in Russian copyright laws and I was lucky to find a replacement copy for \$68. The price is going to be heady and will get more expensive as time goes on -- but I enthusiastically recommend this collection for intermediate students who would like to try their hand at very accessible 20th century music as well as virtuoso pianists who would like to include some real "show stoppers" in their recitals!

So sorry this edition is out of print. It's a great compendium of important piano music by Shostakovich. The volume is thick and doesn't want to stay open on the music desk. I wish it were spiral bound; but otherwise no complaints.

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