

## Shostakovich

New

Symphony No. 4 in C minor, Op. 43  
(arr. composer).

**Rustem Hayroudinoff, Colin Stone** (pianos).

**Chandos CHAN10296** (full price, 59 minutes).

Website [www.chandos.net](http://www.chandos.net). Producer Rachel Smith.

Engineers Jonathan Cooper, Michael Common. Dates  
May 12th-14th, 2004.



Rustem Hayroudinoff

Marat Ketie

The background to Shostakovich's Fourth Symphony – its completion under the cloud of the *Pravda* (hence official) condemnation, its withdrawal from performance in 1936 and belated rehabilitation in 1961 – is by now well known. Less familiar may be the circulation, during the quarter-century of its 'non-existence', of a two-piano transcription made by the composer at the time of its completion. He and his pupil Moisey Vainberg gave a private performance in 1946 and it was published in an edition of 300 copies the following year. A further airing – organized by and featuring Boris Tishchenko – came in 1960, and though the work's subsequent



Colin Stone

Drew Millar

première may have limited the transcription's importance, its publication in Volume 19 of the *New Collected Works* was well overdue – as was its commercial recording.

As Eric Roseberry points out in his informative booklet note, this is a straight transcription – aimed at presenting the music's workings and formal design in a direct and 'non-interpreted' fashion. Those who value the symphony for its expressive reach and visceral impact may be surprised – even disappointed – at the containment herein, though the expertise of Shostakovich's piano-writing can be taken for granted. Most valuable is its laying bare of what makes the Fourth stand alone in its composer's symphonic output – a Bachian contrapuntal rigour combined with a Mahlerian emotional fervour which Shostakovich was to refine but never recapture with such immediacy. An immediacy that Rustem Hayroudinoff and Colin Stone convey in full measure: whether in the pile-driving tutti (from 14'41") or searching inwardness (7'11") of the first movement; in the quizzical unease of the central intermezzo, taken at an ideal tempo; or in the defiant contrasts of the finale, which is made to yield an unusual degree of thematic, and hence formal, cohesion (listen, for instance, to the abounding interconnections in the *divertissement* section from 9'32").

The reading is accorded spacious yet detailed sound – the carefully rethought dynamic range rendered with exemplary clarity, and the placing of each piano within the aural picture readily enhancing the most complex passagework. That this is a major Shostakovich release goes without saying, but, more than that, it will hopefully lead to frequent hearings, during the composer's centenary year and beyond, of what is here revealed as an absorbing and perceptive transcription.

*Richard Whitehouse*