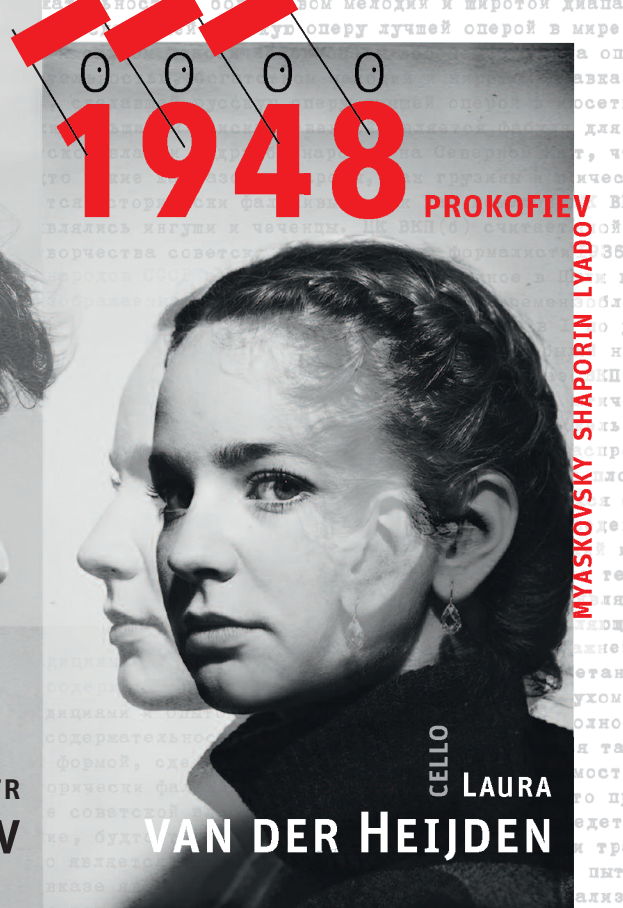



 **CHAMPS HILL
RECORDS**




1948

PROKOFIEV

PIANO
**PETR
LIMONOV**

CELLO
**LAURA
VAN DER HEIJDEN**

MYASKOVSKY SHAPORIN LYADO

When deciding what to record for my debut CD, I felt it was very important to find a theme that meant a lot to me. My relationship with Russian culture began with my first cello teacher, Marina Logie, whose father is the great Russian-Romanian cellist Vladimir Orloff. This relationship was strengthened further when I began having lessons with the Russian cellist Leonid Gorokhov. Not only is he helping me to achieve the quality of playing I aspire to, but he has also introduced me to many aspects of Russian culture, including music, literature and art. Thanks to him, I have made many Russian-speaking friends, inspiring me in turn to start learning Russian with Olga Scott. This complex and wonderfully expressive language gave me a deeper understanding of Russian culture. I began to appreciate the immense value of great art, music, and literature in Russian-speaking countries, and discovered the link which exists between the 'Russian soul' and the spiritual virtue of art. I perceive Russian culture, its literature, art and music as a huge web of interconnecting subtleties, together forming vast natural structures.

Nature plays a vital role in Russian music: folk-songs born of Russian soil are ingrained within every Russian-speaker I have met so far. These folk-songs, as I understand them, are often a combination of respect and love for mother earth, the acceptance of the power of fate, and the unbreakable bond with a higher realm. I strongly feel that each of the pieces on this CD reflect these themes, along with subtle Russian irony, and a melancholic perception of the transient beauty of the world.

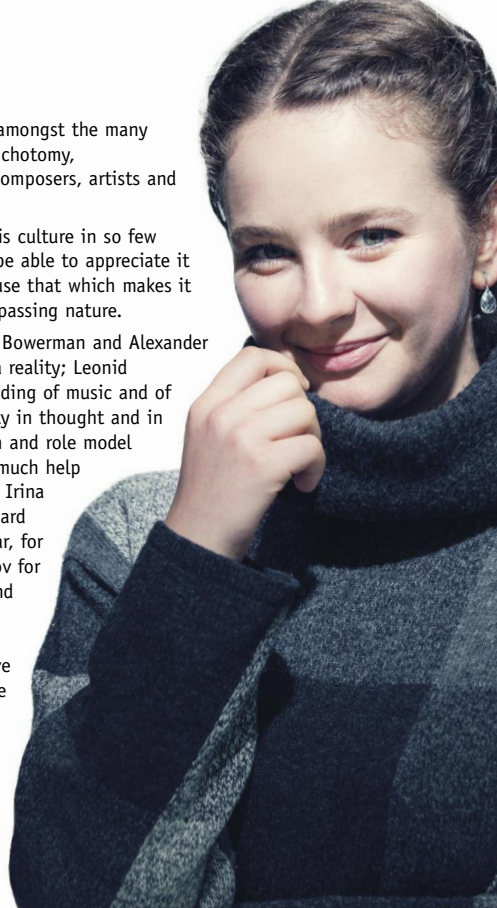
The Soviet Era imposed new characteristics on this lyrical style, shifting the focus onto enforced optimism, state-induced patriotism (often bordering on isolationism) and Socialist Realism. The pieces on this album are in many ways a response to the decree issued by the Communist Party on 10 February 1948, which further restricted composers' freedom of expression. Prokofiev's Sonata for Cello and Piano reflects the amalgam of the Russian soul in the light of these new stylistic 'requirements' superimposed upon it.

His response, however, was only one amongst the many different reactions to this apparent dichotomy, demonstrated in the huge output of composers, artists and writers of this period.

I cannot express the true depth of this culture in so few words, not only because I will never be able to appreciate it fully as a non-Russian, but also because that which makes it so special is its intangible, all-encompassing nature.

I would like to thank Mary and David Bowerman and Alexander Van Ingen for making this recording a reality; Leonid Gorokhov for deepening my understanding of music and of the cello, for encouraging individuality in thought and in play, and for being a great inspiration and role model to me; Alison Rhind for providing so much help and understanding; Stephen Goss and Irina Walters for teaching me so much; Hazard Chase and Sibylle Jackson in particular, for their continuous support; Petr Limonov for being a wonderful partner in music and in life; and last but not least, my parents, Ido and Daniela van der Heijden, for being endlessly supportive and without whom I would never have had this life in which I receive so much joy.

Laurand FT



TRACK LISTING

SERGEI PROKOFIEV (1891–1953)

CELLO SONATA IN C, OP.119 (1949)

- | | | | |
|---|-----|------------------------|-------|
| 1 | I | Andante grave | 11'46 |
| 2 | II | Moderato | 05'04 |
| 3 | III | Allegro, ma non troppo | 07'54 |

YURI SHAPORIN (1887–1966)

FIVE PIECES FOR CELLO AND PIANO, OP.25 (1956)

- | | | | |
|---|-----|------------|-------|
| 4 | I | Prelude | 02'57 |
| 5 | II | Valse | 04'46 |
| 6 | III | Intermezzo | 03'48 |
| 7 | IV | Aria | 06'41 |
| 8 | V | Scherzo | 01'59 |

NIKOLAI MYASKOVSKY (1881–1950)

CELLO SONATA NO.2 IN A MINOR, OP.81 (1948)

- | | | | |
|----|-----|---------------------|-------|
| 9 | I | Allegro moderato | 09'39 |
| 10 | II | Andante cantabile | 06'10 |
| 11 | III | Allegro con spirito | 06'19 |

ANATOLY LYADOV (1855–1914)

PRELUDE IN B MINOR, OP.11 NO.1 (1885) (arranged for cello & piano)

- | | | | |
|----|--|----------|-------|
| 12 | | Moderato | 03'33 |
|----|--|----------|-------|

Total time: **70'42**

Produced and engineered by Alexander Van Ingen

Edited by Alexander Van Ingen and Claire Hay

Mixed & mastered by Alexander Van Ingen

Recorded on 12th–13th & 16th–17th January 2017 in the Music Room, Champs Hill, West Sussex, UK

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Executive Producer for Champs Hill Records: Alexander Van Ingen

Label Manager for Champs Hill Records: Joanna Wilson

IN THE SHADOW OF 1948

The Soviet-era works for cello featured on this disc may seem united in style to listeners today, since they are all richly lyrical and share a conservatism that avoids any clearly modernist gestures. The Prokofiev, Myaskovsky and Shaporin were also the fruit of the composers' collaboration with Mstislav Rostropovich, whose talent and energy catalysed them into writing for cello, and his direct intervention is probable in the most virtuosic passages. Even so, these pieces would have been perceived as highly disparate at the time of their composition, from the close of the 1940s through to the mid 50s. The original Soviet audience would have been well aware of the divergent paths the three composers had followed, and the different ways in which they had overcome or circumvented recent troubles.

The troubles in question began in January 1948, when Communist Party officials headed by Andrey Zhdanov began to examine and question the work of composers who seemed to be flirting with Western musical trends (this was an early low point in the Cold War). By 10 February, the initially vague and arbitrary accusations had congealed into a Party Resolution that declared the six leading Soviet composers to be 'formalists', meaning that they were supposedly preoccupied with innovations in the form, the technical aspects of composition, at the expense of the socialist content that was expected of them. At the head of these six composers were Shostakovich and Prokofiev, whose modernist leanings were always at odds with the Socialist Realist mainstream, but had sometimes been tolerated. Next in order of importance was Myaskovsky, a surprising choice, since he had abandoned his modernist elements in the early 1930s. For all three, this was a huge fall from grace, since just a year earlier, they stood seemingly secure at the very top of the Soviet music hierarchy, with strings of awards and honours to their names and hefty fees in their bank accounts.

While Prokofiev and Myaskovsky found themselves in disgrace, Yuri Shaporin's career was in no danger. He was one of the few significant Soviet composers who

had never been tempted by modernism, and of his own accord wrote in a style that could almost be taken for some late 19th-century Russian petit maître, a cocktail of Borodin, Tchaikovsky, and Rimsky-Korsakov. In 1948, Zhdanov even selected Shaporin as an ally in his attack on formalism, and Shaporin consented, although he had no relish for the damage this was likely to cause in his personal relations with his 'formalist' colleagues. His career, it should be said, instantly benefited when Shostakovich and Myaskovsky lost their positions in the Moscow Conservatoire, because their former composition students were now transferred to Shaporin.

Each one of the disgraced composers took the blow differently. Prokofiev was at first defiant and in what was supposed to be his letter of repentance, he actually argued back at his accusers. This led to a second humiliation, when his new opera, *The Story of a Real Man*, was rejected in the autumn of 1948, even though Prokofiev had chosen a patriotic subject, and had made an effort to write in the more accessible and melodic style that had been demanded by the authorities. When even this failed, he began to despair. Myaskovsky took a different approach, completely ignoring all requests for a letter of repentance. He excused himself on grounds of illness from most of the denunciatory meetings. He had probably contributed more than any other individual in shaping and establishing musical Socialist Realism, whether through his own pieces, through his teaching or through his ceaseless work in evaluating others' compositions for awards. He understandably felt that his great efforts had been repaid with perverse ingratitude.

Myaskovsky's Second Cello Sonata, written in 1948, shows no clear signs that the composer intended it as an act of repentance, and in no works of the period did he seem to be currying favour with the authorities, in contrast to the patriotic or Stalinist film scores Shostakovich was writing. The Cello Sonata may be more transparently melodic than many of Myaskovsky's works, but its predominantly elegiac tone and its abundance of moderately slow music remain true to his habitual mode of expression. The winningly beautiful opening theme is an updating

of 19th-century Russian salon-music idioms, even looking as far back as Glinka. This audibly Russian music would have done him no harm at the time, since the 1948 Resolution steered composers away from cosmopolitanism and back to their national roots; but this need not be interpreted as significant, since the movement remains within the general stylistic spectrum Myaskovsky had already established for himself. The second movement continues the lyrical character of the first, but offers the cello some passages of passionate declamation. The finale's anxious *moto perpetuo* provides a clear contrast, but through all the bustle, Myaskovsky manages to introduce more elegiac material looking back to the beginning of the sonata, and also includes a more optimistic lyrical theme that seems rooted in the Francophone world of Fauré, Franck and Poulenc.

1949 was not a strong year for Soviet music. Most of those criticised as formalists either produced trifles in their disorientation, or simply remained silent. Even composers who had not faced criticism in the Resolution were reluctant to put their heads above the parapet, in case they failed to second-guess what was required of them. Myaskovsky's Cello Sonata stood outside this timidity as a beautifully crafted and earnest piece, and it quickly won recognition as the best instrumental work of the year – by a long mark. Shortly after its premiere, given by Rostropovich, it was nominated for a Stalin Prize. The authorities agreed in principle, but decided to lower the prize to the second-class level, thus halving the prize money Myaskovsky was to receive. Even so, the money was still at a level ordinary Soviet workers would take decades to earn, and Myaskovsky returned to the ranks of the most highly paid members of the cultural elite. The official message was forgiveness, but the reduction to the second class marked the fact that he had only produced a small-scale work (and perhaps to indicate that he should not become over-confident).

When Prokofiev embarked on his own Cello Sonata in 1949, Myaskovsky's sonata of the previous year was one of his models. The two composers had been close

friends since their youth, and they maintained a profound mutual respect that was never eroded by their disagreements over musical matters. Prokofiev, the international musical celebrity, would chide his friend for his conservatism, for following the teachings of Conservatoire professors too dutifully. They shared much of their educational background as composers: Myaskovsky was a pupil of Lyadov and Rimsky-Korsakov, while Prokofiev had also studied under Lyadov but rebelled against what he saw as his teacher's pedantry. But now, when conservatism was the order of the day, Prokofiev needed to fall back to those useful Conservatoire precepts.

Prokofiev's Cello Sonata bears the imprint of these external pressures. He chose to add an epigraph, a well-known phrase from Maxim Gorky: "Man! – How proud the word rings", which even the least literary Soviet citizen knew through textbooks of the period. In keeping with this epigraph, the cello begins powerfully and almost heroically, in its low register. The second, lyrical theme introduces a touch of classicism and hints at a polonaise rhythm. There is also, wisely, a Russian element signalled by a quotation from the composer's own Alexander Nevsky, one of his more demotic works. In the second movement, Prokofiev avoids the style of his many grotesque scherzos, creating instead a more benign playfulness, with some folkish humour, while the central episode focuses on a strikingly beautiful lyrical theme. The finale is suitably life-affirming, with its graceful main theme and a heart-stopping lullaby. Yet despite the formal transparency and abundance of melody, it is hard to detect a spirit of compromise, since Prokofiev retains his individualism and complexity, sometimes reaching philosophical depths. The epigraph might seem like a mere sop to the authorities, but the music prompts us to interpret it seriously, as an affirmation of the composer's continued confidence in his artistic powers in spite of the humiliations of 1948.

For a composer of Prokofiev's stature, something more monumental than a cello sonata was needed as an occasion for official forgiveness and reconciliation. This finally came in 1950, when he produced the grand oratorio *On Guard for Peace*. It contains a striking lullaby section that depicts a child who is able to sleep peacefully because Stalin remains vigilant in the Kremlin, working through the night. Despite the Cantata's clear and correct ideological message, Prokofiev almost failed to pick up a Stalin Prize, because the awards committees still detected some vestiges of 'formalism'. But since they agreed that the work was nevertheless 'a step in the right direction', the acceptable compromise was to award Prokofiev a second-class prize.

Shaporin's *Five Pieces*, Op.25, were written in 1956, at a time when the acrimony of 1948 was almost forgotten, and Stalinism itself has been denounced at the 20th Party Congress. By that stage, Shaporin had finally seen the staging of his opera *The Decembrists*, whose composition had stretched out over a quarter century. While Shaporin's music was never a problem, the politically sensitive libretto had to be rewritten thirteen times. In these cello pieces, also written for Rostropovich, Shaporin seems to have been inspired by both Prokofiev and Myaskovsky: the Prelude strikes an epic-heroic tone recalling Prokofiev's opening passage, while the final piece, *Scherzo*, seems to be a spin-off from Myaskovsky's finale, developing its *moto perpetuo* idea. Shaporin's natural gift for melody and his solid technique never fails, and he is equally convincing in the folksy Russian style of the *Intermezzo* as he is in the *Aria*, an expansive lyrical piece whose melancholy beauty almost reaches the level of Tchaikovsky.



It is difficult to imagine what course 20th-century classical music could have taken had Anatoly Lyadov fulfilled Diaghilev's commission to write *The Firebird* for the 1910 Ballets Russes season (the delay on Lyadov's part led to an invitation to the then completely unknown Igor Stravinsky); some historians even doubt that he accepted the commission in the first place. Few could doubt, however, Lyadov's skill as an orchestral composer: his tone poems *Baba Yaga* and *Kikimora*, written just a few years earlier, exhibit virtuosic handling of orchestral colour and an imaginative approach to harmony. Despite this, his orchestral output remained scarce, and the main body of his work consists of

beautifully crafted piano miniatures, one of which, the Prelude from his *Three Pieces*, Op.11, we have recorded alongside larger works written by his famous pupils.

Born in 1855, Lyadov studied composition in Saint Petersburg with Rimsky-Korsakov and, in the course of his life, managed to lose his position in the Conservatory twice: first, in 1876, as a student, he was expelled for poor attendance; years later, in 1905 (by then a professor, a teacher of Myaskovsky and Prokofiev, among others) he left to show his solidarity with his former mentor Rimsky-Korsakov, who had been fired for his liberal political views. Young Sergei Prokofiev, who studied harmony in Lyadov's class, described his lectures as "dry", and admitted to "never having tried to connect his lessons with my compositional plans". According to Prokofiev's Autobiography, Lyadov applied a method which only allowed his pupils to use a very limited amount of chords to harmonise a given melody. However, Lyadov's "sharp eye" did not let any mistakes in 4-part exercises go unnoticed, and his students progressed rapidly.

Outside his harmony classes Lyadov was anything but conservative – he organised a concert to commemorate Mussorgsky's life and works, conducted performances of Alexander Scriabin's First and Second symphonies, and was actively involved in the musical life of Saint Petersburg right up until his death in 1914. His Prelude in B minor, composed in 1885 and arranged for cello and piano the following year, is marked by naturalness, humbleness and sincerity of expression, economy of texture, unmistakable "Russian-ness" of the melodic material and a complete absence of sentimentality.



■ LAURA VAN DER HEIJDEN *cello*

Born in England in 1997 as the youngest daughter of a Dutch father and a Swiss mother, Laura van der Heijden's first public performance as a cellist was at the age of nine with the Jupiter Chamber Orchestra. From 2005 to 2014 Laura was a student at the Royal College of Music Junior Department, and since 2008 has been studying with the renowned British-Russian cellist Leonid Gorokhov. In October 2016 Laura began her Bachelor's Degree in Music at St John's College, Cambridge, while continuing to perform during her term breaks.

Laura has already made a name for herself as a very special emerging talent, captivating audiences and critics alike with her insightful and faithful interpretations. Having won many prizes and awards from an early age, her breakthrough came in 2012 as the overall winner of the BBC Young Musician Competition, with a "mesmerising" performance of Walton's Cello Concerto with Kirill Karabits and the Northern Sinfonia at The Sage, Gateshead. She was soon invited to appear with many leading UK orchestras, such as the Philharmonia, BBC Philharmonic, Royal Philharmonic, European Union Chamber and English Chamber orchestras. In September 2014 Laura was awarded the Landgraf von Hessen Prize at the Kronberg Academy's prestigious international masterclasses. In 2015, the London Mozart Players named her their first ever Young Artist in Residence. A year later she was chosen by the Orpheum Stiftung in Switzerland, a foundation encouraging and assisting exceptionally talented young instrumental soloists. Under this umbrella she appeared in recital with Fazil Say at Zürich Tonhalle in September 2016.

In the past few years, Laura has given her debuts in Holland, Germany, New Zealand, and Australia with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra in the opening concert of the inaugural BBC Proms Australia, conducted by Sir Andrew Davis. Laura participated in the 2017 "Cello Unwrapped" series of concerts at Kings Place London, performing the Schumann cello concerto with the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields.

Laura's myriad chamber music performances have included collaborations with Tom Poster, Huw Watkins, Fazil Say, Petr Limonov, and Krzysztof Chorzelski. She regularly participates in chamber music courses, as well as masterclasses with David Geringas, Ralph Kirshbaum, and Miklós Perényi.

Laura plays a 1780 cello by Joseph Hill, loaned to her by the Boileau family, and is an Ambassador for both the Prince's Foundation for Children & the Arts and Brighton Youth Orchestra.

www.lauravanderheijden.uk



■ PETR LIMONOV *piano*

Born in Moscow in 1984, Russian-British pianist Petr Limonov started playing the piano at the age of five. A year later he entered the prestigious Moscow's Central Music School, where he studied under the guidance of Siavush Gadjiev, Valery Piasetsky and, later, Andrei Pisarev. After winning First Prize at the Nikolai Rubinstein International Piano Competition (Paris, 1998) he started giving concerts throughout Europe and Russia, supported by the Vladimir Spivakov International Charity Foundation. He went on to study with Hamish Milne and Alexander Satz at the Royal Academy of Music (London) on a full scholarship, followed by a year at the École Normale de Musique de Paris Alfred Cortot, where his teachers were Ramzi Yassa and Wolfram Schmitt-Leonardy.

In 2010 Petr returned to London to commence his postgraduate studies at the Royal College of Music with Dmitry Alexeev, obtaining his Masters degree in 2012. During his studies Petr took part in masterclasses given by Alfred Brendel, Stephen Hough, Cristina Ortiz, Vitaly Margulis and Stephen Kovacevich; whilst in RCM he also studied conducting under Peter Stark. In November 2013 Petr made his conducting debut at Cadogan Hall with the London International Chamber Orchestra, directing works by Glazunov and Rachmaninov.





"...Petr Limonov, avec un détachement apparent, a joué les morceaux les plus ardues avec une aisance incroyable, une simplicité et une sincérité parfaite."

La Nouvelle République

"His mastery is mesmerising..."

Rubric News

Petr frequently appears on the UK and European scene as a recitalist, chamber musician and a conductor, collaborating with, among others, Nicola Benedetti, Laura van der Heijden, Jennifer Pike, Leonard Elschenbroich, Liana Isakadze and Alexei Grynnyuk. His notable appearances include Wigmore Hall, La Roque d'Antheron festival (Boris Berezovsky's Carte Blanche, broadcast by radio France Musique), iTunes Festival 2014, Cadogan Hall, Purcell Room, St Martin-in-the-Fields, the Great Hall of Moscow Conservatory, a recital in The Duke's Hall in the presence of HRH Prince Charles, CD recordings for Onyx, Deutschlandfunk and Decca labels; TV appearances for BBC Radio 3 Extra and broadcasts for BBC Radio 3 and "Culture" TV channel (Russia). He has performed extensively with the Gagliano Ensemble, and has collaborated with the Van Kuijk Quartet. In 2017, his arrangement of the Auld Lang Syne (issued on Decca in 2014 as a part of Nicola Benedetti's best-selling "Homecoming" album) was performed in the Albert Hall at the BBC Proms.

www.petrlimonov.com



photograph: Bill Knight

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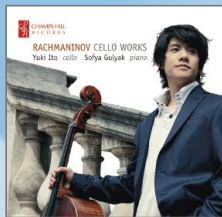
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Music and Words



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