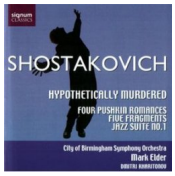
Shostakovich - Hypothetically Murdered etc (2005)



1. Hypothetically Murdered (1931) Orchestral Suite Op. 31A: Act I (Part I) – Transition to the field hospital 1:01 2. Hypothetically Murdered (1931) Orchestral Suite Op. 31A: Act I (Part I) - Gallop 3:18 3. Hypothetically Murdered (1931) Orchestral Suite Op. 31A: Act I (Part I) - Transi 1:03 4. Hypothetically Murdered (1931) Orchestral Suite Op. 31A: Act I (Part I) - The Fi 1:50 5. Hypothetically Murdered (1931) Orchestral Suite Op. 31A: Act II - Introduction 0:12 6. Hypothetically Murdered (1931) Orchestral Suite Op. 31A: Act II - Petrushka (Garmoshka) 1:12 7. Hypothetically Murdered (1931) Orchestral Suite Op. 31A: Act II - Storm 1:00 8. Hypothetically Murdered (1931) Orchestral Suite Op. 31A: Act II - The Arrival of 0:17 9. Hypothetically Murdered (1931) Orchestral Suite Op. 31A: Act II - Dance 1:17 10. Hypothetically Murdered (1931) Orchestral Suite Op. 31A: Act II - Transition to 1:33 11. Hypothetically Murdered (1931) Orchestral Suite Op. 31A: Act II - Waitresses 2:20 12. Hypothetically Murdered (1931) Orchestral Suite Op. 31A: Act III - Paradise I: 1:26 13. Hypothetically Murdered (1931) Orchestral Suite Op. 31A: Act III - Paradise II: 1:26 14. Hypothetically Murdered (1931) Orchestral Suite Op. 31A: Act III - Adagio 2:29 15. Hypothetically Murdered (1931) Orchestral Suite Op. 31A: Act III - Bacchanalia 1:41 16. Hypothetically Murdered (1931) Orchestral Suite Op. 31A: Act III - Waltz 3:32 17. Hypothetically Murdered (1931) Orchestral Suite Op. 31A: Act III - The Archangel 1:51 18. Hypothetically Murdered (1931) Orchestral Suite Op. 31A: Act I (Part II) - Polka 1:33 19. Hypothetically Murdered (1931) Orchestral Suite Op. 31A: Act I (Part II) - March 1:40 20. Hypothetically Murdered (1931) Orchestral Suite Op. 31A: Act I (Part II) - The R 4:45 21. Hypothetically Murdered (1931) Orchestral Suite Op. 31A: Act I (Part II) - Final 3:51 22. Four Romances on Poems by Pushkin, Op. 46 for Bass and Chamber Orchestra (1937): 2:13 23. Four Romances on Poems by Pushkin, Op. 46 for Bass and Chamber Orchestra (1937): 1:32 24. Four Romances on Poems by Pushkin, Op. 46 for Bass and Chamber Orchestra (1937):2:50 25. Four Romances on Poems by Pushkin, Op. 46 for Bass and Chamber Orchestra (1937): 5:27 26. Five Fragments, Op. 42 (1935): 1 Moderato 1:24 27. Five Fragments, Op. 42 (1935): 2 Andante 1:17 28. Five Fragments, Op. 42 (1935): 3 Largo 3:43 29. Five Fragments, Op. 42 (1935): 4 Moderato 2:36 30. Five Fragments, Op. 42 (1935): 5 Allegretto 1:23 31. Suite No. 1 for Jazz Band, Sans Op. E (1924): 1 Waltz 2:46 32. Suite No. 1 for Jazz Band, Sans Op. E (1924): 2 Polka 1:52 33. Suite No. 1 for Jazz Band, Sans Op. E (1924): 3 Foxtrot (Blues) 4:35 Dimitri Kharitonov - bass City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra Mark Elder - conductor

Back in the first Shostakovich boom years of the late '80s and early '90s, just about everything Shostakovich ever composed was recorded. One of the more interesting and challenging recordings was the previous incarnation of this disc by Mark Elder and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra with the world premiere of the orchestral suite from Shostakovich's musical comedy Hypothetically Murdered. Interesting because everyone in the first boom years wanted to hear anything new by the Soviet master and challenging because Hypothetically Murdered is no Symphony No. 5. Indeed, full of sleazy dances and sultry songs without words, it is more music hall than concert hall and many avid fans felt that here, perhaps, was a Shostakovich disc one could pass on.

Not so: as Elder and the City of Birmingham players proved, sleazy Shostakovich is just as compelling as symphonic Shostakovich, albeit in an entirely different way. Although more sequence than series, the numbers are self-contained but the tone and interpretation of the performance expresses the music's cogency. More to the point, Elder and the City of Birmingham play Hypothetically Murdered like it was the background music for a Soviet Cabaret, but with lots more sex and irony. While the rest of the performances on this disc vary from the fabulous -- bass Dimitri Kharitonov's passionate singing of the blunt and bitter Pushkin Romances (4) -- to the flat -- the City of Birmingham's awkward playing of the slinky and sexy Jazz Suite No. 1 -- anyone who loves Shostakovich will love Hypothetically Murdered. Signum's digital sound is better than average, but still a bit boxy and not immediate enough. ---James Leonard, Rovi

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