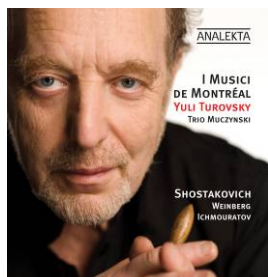


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Yuli Turovsky
I Musici de Montréal
Trio Muczynski
Shostakovich, Weinberg, Ichmouratov- AN 2 9899
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I MUSICI REVISITS THE WORLD OF SHOSTAKOVICH AND THOSE HE INFLUENCED

Featuring the World Premiere Recording of Airat Ichmouratov's Fantastic Dances

September 16 2008, Montreal - The dynamic and acclaimed chamber orchestra, I Musici de Montréal, along with its Artistic Director and Conductor Yuli Turovsky, revisit the world of the fascinating and groundbreaking 20th-Century Russian composer Dmitri Shostakovich (1906 – 1975). I Musici performs works by Shostakovich and composers he influenced: Mieczysław Weinberg, a Polish-born close associate and Airat Ichmouratov, a young composer and conductor currently based in Montreal.

Shostakovich himself is represented by two works, the first being the ***Prelude and Scherzo, Op. 11*** dated from his student days at the Leningrad Conservatory. Dedicated to the memory of the composer's close friend and poet Volodya Kurchavov, the *Prelude* is characterized expressions of mourning and anguish. In contrast, the *Scherzo* is replete with aggressive, violent and highly dissonant gestures, and may even anticipate some of the "shrieking" effects used by Bernard Herrmann for the shower scene in Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*.

This early work is followed by the ***Chamber Symphony No.1, Op. 145*** by **Mieczysław Weinberg** (1919-1996), whom Shostakovich called "one of the most outstanding composers of today." Born in Poland, he fled to Minsk in 1939, eventually settling in Moscow the invitation of Shostakovich, his close friend and mentor. A prolific composer, Weinberg integrated elements of folk-music as well as twelve-tone techniques into his work.

Airat Ichmouratov's (b.1973) ***Fantastic Dances, Op. 15*** was commissioned by I Musici de Montréal, which presented the world premiere in Pollack Hall on December 20, 2007 to a wildly enthusiastic audience. A clarinetist, Ichmouratov studied at the Kazan State Conservatory and played in several orchestras in his homeland before moving to Montreal and studying for his master's degree at the Université de Montréal, where he later obtained a doctorate in conducting. In 2000 he founded the award-winning Muczynski Trio (piano, cello and clarinet), which performs the work on this recording. The three dances were inspired by Natasha Turovsky's eponymous, surrealistic paintings.

Closing the programme is Shostakovich's ***Two Pieces for String Quartet***, adaptations for string quartet from very disparate sources: The *Elegy* is derived from Katerina's aria in the opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mzensk District*, while the *Polka* comes from the ballet score *The Age of Gold*. Katerina's *Elegy* is a profound lament on the stultifying boredom and oppressive misery this intelligent, energetic woman must endure as the wife of an uncaring merchant in feudal Russia. In total contrast, the *Polka* represents Shostakovich at his most humorous and sardonic.

Currently celebrating their 25th anniversary season, **I Musici de Montréal's** virtuosity and brilliant, distinctive sound have earned them public enthusiasm and critical acclaim. Frequently heard on the world's finest stages including New York's Lincoln Center, the Gewandhaus in Leipzig, Germany, Seiji Ozawa Hall in Tanglewood, the Tonhalle in Zürich, Kioi Hall in Tokyo and the Philharmonie in Luxemburg, the chamber orchestra of 15 musicians performs a vast repertoire from the Baroque to the Contemporary. Exclusive recording artists for the Analekta label since 2005, their recent releases include *Cello from Haydn to Bernstein* and *Violonchelo español*, which is part of the Analekta 20th Anniversary Collection.

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