

Shostakovich, Mozart, Bach piano concertos
Constantine Orbelian, Pianist • Moscow Chamber Orchestra

SHOSTAKOVICH: Piano Concerto No. 1, Op. 25 • MOZART: Concerto for Two Pianos
in E-Flat Major, K. 365 • MOZART: Piano Concerto No. 12 in A Major, K. 414
J. S. BACH: Concerto No. 5 in F Minor for Keyboard and Strings, BWV 1056

By the late 1980s, San Francisco native Constantine Orbelian's burgeoning career as a brilliant young pianist had taken him all over the world – including what was still the Soviet Union. There, he quickly forged a strong and mutually respectful artistic rapport with the vaunted Moscow Chamber Orchestra (MCO), with which he was soon touring and making recordings like those preserved on this CD. Then, in the fateful year of 1991, the collapse of Soviet Russia also threatened the survival of many Russian artistic institutions, the MCO among them. This threat was compounded the same year by the sudden death of its director, Andrei Korsakov – whereupon its musicians immediately asked Constantine to take over as their new director, making him the first American to ever lead a major Russian ensemble.

It turned out to be the perfect match: under his leadership, the MCO quickly returned to artistic prominence, and was soon touring throughout the world while collaborating with top international instrumental and vocal soloists – all to tumultuous critical acclaim. His work – documented by the thirty-plus CDs he has recorded for Delos – has made this “American original” one of Russian culture's most prominent and charismatic ambassadors to the musical world at large. As *Fanfare* critic William Zagorsky put it, “Constantine Orbelian stands astride two great societies, and finds and promotes synergistic harmony from the best of each.” Ultimate recognition of his accomplishments came in 2012, when he was awarded the Russian Order of Friendship Medal: an honor that had been bestowed upon only one other American musician, the pianist Van Cliburn.

Constantine has continued to perform intermittently as a pianist and appears as such on two other Delos CDs. We at Delos hope that these concerto recordings, made with the MCO over twenty years ago, will provide our listeners with a more complete picture of his artistic origins, manifold talents and musical versatility.



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