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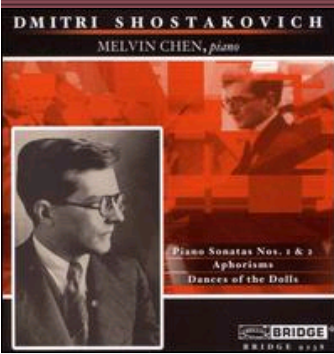

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# Shostakovich: Piano Sonatas Nos. 1 & 2; Aphorisms; Dances of the Dolls



## Review

by James Leonard

Melvin Chen makes *Shostakovich* rock. Not so much in the opening *Dances of the Dolls* – seven pieces of sugar and spice and everything nice – but from there on until the end of this all-*Shostakovich* disc from Bridge, Chen rips loose. With a steely fingered technique, a muscular attack, and indomitable stamina, Chen turns in a recital that may just singe your eyebrows. His *Ten Aphorisms* are sly, subversive, seductive, and sometimes cruel, while his single-movement *Piano Sonata No. 1* moves past cruel and into pitiless and violent. When *Shostakovich* played the *First Sonata*, it is said he broke hammers and strings in the instrument and left blood on the keyboard and Chen seems likely to duplicate the feat; it sounds like the piano is being splintered. The three-movement *Second Sonata* is not quite as vicious, but its cumulative impact is even more devastating. Listen to the buildup of tension in the enormous closing movement that then pulls back into space and silence. Recorded in sound so loud your fillings will shake, Chen's *Shostakovich* demands to be heard.

## Performances

Composer	Title	Year	Time
Dmitry Shostakovich	Dances of the Dolls (7), suite for piano (arr. from the ballet suites for orchestra)	2006	11:26
Dmitry Shostakovich	Aphorisms (10), for piano, Op. 13	2006	14:16
Dmitry Shostakovich	Sonata for piano No. 1 (October Symphony), Op. 12	2006	12:58
Dmitry Shostakovich	Sonata for piano No. 2 in B minor, Op. 61	2006	28:26

**Featured Artist**  
[Melvin Chen](#)

**Performance** ★★★★★  
**Sound** ★★★★★

**Release Date** 2007  
**Time** 67:06

**Label**  
 Bridge[9238]

**Genre**  
 Keyboard

**AMG Album ID**  
 W 161328

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