



Viola player Kim Kashkashian teams up with pianist and composer Lera Auerbach

## Auerbach · Shostakovich

**Auerbach Arcanum Shostakovich**

Preludes, Op 34 (transcr Auerbach)

Kim Kashkashian vs Lera Auerbach pf

ECM New Series © 481 2322 (58' • DDD)



The viola possesses a voice of inimitable mellowness and mysticism, and it is also capable of the ironic gesture, as can be heard in this absorbing programme of music by Soviet-Russian composers Dmitry Shostakovich and Lera Auerbach. The eloquent American viola player Kim Kashkashian teams with Auerbach, who is also a superlative pianist, in Auerbach's *Arcanum* and her transcription of Shostakovich's 24 Preludes, Op 34.

Few works could be more different in mood and spirit. The early Shostakovich collection, originally for solo piano but appropriated by other instruments and ensembles, comprises character miniatures ranging from the playful and lyrical to the sardonic and whimsical. They are short – some less than a minute – and pack a world of fascinating ideas into compact spaces.

(On the disc itself, the information cites the wrong Shostakovich score, the Preludes and Fugues, Op 87.)

The four movements of *Arcanum* constitute a series of haunted ruminations on death. In an interview printed in the booklet, Auerbach says the piece explores a 'constant tension between something inescapable that is beyond our control and our attempts to find meaning or perhaps find freedom from those frames that we are placed within'. Another hint about the music's essence lies in the title, which means 'mysterious knowledge'.

Nothing is mysterious about the beauty and depth these musicians bring to both works. In seamless collaborations, viola player and pianist contribute nuanced and vital artistry that heightens the varied atmospheres in the Shostakovich and conveys the quiet anguish pervading the Auerbach. **Donald Rosenberg**