



Alexey  
**SHOR**

## **Composer's Notebook • 3**

**Childhood Memories, Suite for Piano and Orchestra No. 3**  
**Verdiana – Fantasy on Themes by Giuseppe Verdi**

**Remi Geniet, Piano • Fabrizio Meloni, Clarinet**  
**Kyiv Virtuosi**  
**Massimiliano Caldi • Daniel Raiskin**



## Alexey Shor (b. 1970)

### Composer's Notebook • 3

Alexey Shor was born and raised in Ukraine. He left the Soviet Union to study mathematics in the United States. He currently spends most of his time in New York.

His compositions have been performed at some of the most prestigious concert halls in the world, including the Wiener Musikverein, Philharmonie Berlin, Carnegie Hall (New York), The Kennedy Center (Washington, D.C.), Kyiv Conservatory, the Concertgebouw (Amsterdam), Gasteig München, Wigmore Hall (London) and Teatro Argentina (Rome), among many others.

Concerts featuring his music have been broadcast on medici.tv, Mezzo and Euronews, among others. Shor's music has also been showcased on Fox Business news and the websites of Bloomberg News, *The New Yorker*, Yahoo and the Huffington Post. The *Overture* to his ballet *Crystal Palace* was performed at the 40th *Gramophone* Classical Music Awards ceremony in London. In 2018 he was awarded an honorary professorship at the Komitas State Conservatory of Yerevan. In 2022 Shor was appointed as the Yehudi Menuhin School's first associate composer. He has been the composer-in-residence for the Armenian State Symphony Orchestra since 2017, and in the 2024–26 seasons he will also perform that role for the Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra. Shor's scores are published by Breitkopf & Härtel and Universal Edition. Albums featuring his compositions have been released on Naxos, Warner Classics, Decca and Sony Classical, among others.

Many internationally acclaimed artists have performed Shor's music, including Behzod Abduraimov, Salvatore Accardo, Gautier Capuçon, Ray Chen, James Ehnes, Steven Isserlis, Clara-Jumi Kang, Evgeny Kissin, Denis Kozhukhin, Shlomo Mintz, Mikhail Pletnev, Gil Shaham, Yeol Eum Son, Yekwon Sunwoo, Maxim Vengerov, Nikolaj Szeps-Znaider and many others. Shor also holds a PhD in mathematics.

[www.alexeyshor.com](http://www.alexeyshor.com)



### Childhood Memories, Suite for Piano and Orchestra No. 3

*Childhood Memories, Suite for Piano and Orchestra No. 3* can trace its roots back to 2016, when the original version of the work, initially created for solo piano, was composed by Alexey Shor. Consisting of fourteen movements at the time, this piece would later be adapted by the composer himself, who arranged the work into a nine-movement suite to be performed alongside an orchestra. A highly original composition, this suite can be seen as performing the function of musical *bildungsroman* of sorts, in that it traces the persona's path from early childhood to adolescence as it progresses. Evoking a nostalgic reflection on youth, the work blends traditional orchestration with emotional elements, inviting the listener into a vibrant yet intimate world of memory.

Each of the nine movements sets out a different scene for audiences to experience, bringing forth different musical ideas, with Shor utilising changes in tempo and dynamics to paint varying landscapes that reflect different facets of youth. The opening movement, *Chasing Fireflies*, introduces a playful and lively atmosphere, marked by its sprightly tempo and whimsical interaction between the piano and orchestra. The rhythmic drive and light textures resemble the fleeting, unpredictable nature of fireflies, symbolising the curiosity and excitement of childhood. *Blooming May*, then, contrasts this, presenting a more serene and lyrical character conveyed through flowing melodies and lush harmonies that symbolise growth and the passage of time. The piano plays a leading role, carrying a graceful melody that reflects warmth and optimism, capturing the beauty of spring and the innocence of youth.

With *Sandbox*, the composer returns to a lively and energetic rhythm, mirroring the imaginative nature of childhood. The interplay between the piano and orchestra creates a vivid soundscape that evokes images of children at play, with a light, percussive orchestration, and staccato articulations that capture the restless energy and spontaneity of playful children. *Hourglass* then introduces a more contemplative and reflective mood, focusing on the passing of time and the fleeting, transient nature of youth, which in turn leads perfectly to *Last Days of Summer*, a movement tinged with a sense of nostalgia and bittersweet farewell. The music here is warm and melancholic, with a piano line that is highly lyrical and expressive, creating a sense of longing for carefree days that are swiftly fading away.

With *Naiveté*, Shor brings the spotlight back to the innocence and simplicity of childhood, with a delicate, light tone, and clear melodies. The straightforward harmonic progressions and unembellished textures presented here create a fresh atmosphere that celebrates the purity of youth. This is immediately followed up with more mature musical themes and darker harmonic progressions in *Coming of Age*, as the composer explores the transition from childhood to adolescence. The piece builds up to several climaxes here, representing the challenges and uncertainties that come with growing up.

The final two movements showcase some of the most emotive and expressive passages in the suite, starting with the evocatively titled *Melancholy*, which is perhaps the work's most introspective section. The piano now leads a sombre, lyrical melody, embodying a sense of sadness and reflection, symbolising moments of emotional depth as the child moves ever closer to the more complex world of adulthood. Finally, the listener is treated to *First Love*, an optimistic conclusion that brings a romantic and passionate end to the suite. The melody is tender and heartfelt, with the piano and orchestra engaging in a flowing dialogue that evokes the feelings of young love, supported by rich harmonies that help to build towards a triumphant yet intimate conclusion.

The light-hearted *Marionette Waltz* serves as the perfect encore to *Childhood Memories*. Blending traditional classical elements with accessible melodies and emotional depth, this short piece acts as a sort of *digestif* after the weighty themes of *Childhood Memories*, helping to cleanse the musical palate while at the same time complementing the preceding work in a similar fashion to that employed by Modest Mussorgsky with the promenades he uses in *Pictures at an Exhibition*. Built around a Classical waltz structure, the piece showcases the composer's trademark focus on melodic clarity, championing a tonal and lyrical approach that is pleasing to the ear. While lighter in tone than some of the deeper movements of *Childhood Memories*, the work still exhibits an underlying introspective quality that should ensure that it lingers in the listener's mind long after the echo of the final note has passed away.

### **Verdiana – Fantasy on Themes by Giuseppe Verdi**

Composed on the occasion of a tour of Latin America, Alexey Shor's *Verdiana*, as its name implies, is both a homage and a musical tribute to the famous 19th-century Italian composer, Giuseppe Verdi, taking a number of his most famous melodies and reimagining them in the Latin styles of samba, bossa nova and tango. The result is a work that is both accessible and deeply expressive, appealing to both classical music aficionados and casual listeners alike.

Filtering Verdi's music through his contemporary sensibilities, Shor creates a vibrant and emotionally rich composition with lush orchestration, dramatic rhythms, and lyrical melodies that capture the grandeur and emotional intensity of Italian opera. Comprising three distinct movements, the title of each section indicates which operas the main melodies within it are drawn from, while also hinting at the styles in which the respective movement is written.

The first movement, titled *Il Smbatore*, is based primarily on the melodic material from Verdi's *Il trovatore*, and is driven by rhythmic energy and dance influences that derive particularly from the samba. The music opens with a vigorous rhythmic pulse, quickly setting a lively tempo that is maintained throughout, resulting in a joyful and energetic section that captures the celebratory feel of a samba dance and sets the stage for the entirety of the composition with its playful and light-hearted tone.

Conversely, *Un Bossa in maschera* is a slower work in the bossa nova style, based on an aria from the 1859 opera *Un ballo in maschera*. It is the most relaxed and least virtuosic movement of the three, with a smoother, flowing rhythm that reflects the relaxed nature of bossa nova. Here, the listener is invited to enter a more intimate and reflective musical space, with the music contrasting the lively samba of the preceding movement by offering a moment of calm, while still maintaining a sense of rhythmic sophistication.

The concluding movement, *Don Tangoletto*, takes the majority of its material from two of Verdi's most famous works – *Don Carlos* and *Rigoletto*. Making significant demands of the soloist, this movement is a playful take on the tango, and combines the dramatic flair of this style with virtuosic writing that creates a climactic ending to the composition.

**Julian Francalanza**

## Rémi Geniet



Photo: Jean-Baptiste Millot

French pianist, Rémi Geniet, was propelled to international attention through becoming a laureate of numerous competitions, most notably as the Second Prize winner of the 2013 Queen Elisabeth International Piano Competition at the age of 20. As a guest soloist he appears internationally with orchestras such as the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Barcelona Symphony Orchestra, Luxembourg Philharmonic, Belgian National Orchestra and St Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra. A frequent guest artist in Asia, he has been invited to perform with the Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra, KBS Symphony Orchestra and Hong Kong Sinfonietta, among others. In recital, he has performed at Carnegie Hall (Zankel Hall), The Morgan Library, Gasteig München, NDR Radio-philharmonie Hannover, Konzerthaus Berlin, Tokyo Bunka Kaikan, Seoul Arts Centre and the National Concert Hall in Taiwan. Geniet studied with Brigitte Engerer and Rena Shereshevskaya in Paris, and Evgeni Koroliov in Hamburg. His debut album of works by Bach, which received a Diapason d'Or of the year in 2015, and a subsequent recording of Beethoven sonatas, were unanimously critically acclaimed. [www.remigeniet.com](http://www.remigeniet.com)

## Fabrizio Meloni



Fabrizio Meloni has held the prestigious position of *first solo clarinet chair of the Orchestra and the Filarmonica of the Teatro alla Scala in Milan* since 1984. He graduated summa cum laude from the Conservatorio di Musica Giuseppe Verdi, with a special mention for his artistic achievement. Meloni has won dozens of national and international prizes, including the ARD (Munich) and Prague Spring international music competitions in 1987. In 2009 he released several recordings, including the DVD *Duets* (Warner), and clarinet concertos by Françaix, Nielsen and Copland (*Amadeus*), as well as *Oi ari Nyiro Diary*, which took inspiration from novels by Kuki Gallmann. During the summer of 2015, Meloni toured Japan with Takahiro Yoshikawa, where they performed at Tokyo's prestigious Suntory Hall, with NHK subsequently producing a documentary for its 'Classic Club' series, and in the same year the duo released the album *Vief et Rythmique*, featuring French clarinet and piano repertoire, on Deutsche Grammophon. Meloni is the author of *The Clarinet*, (Zecchini Editore), which features a preface by Riccardo Muti. SKY Classica dedicated a documentary, *Notevoli*, to his artistic life.



## Kyiv Virtuosi

**Artistic Director and Chief Conductor: Dmitry Yablonsky**



Photo: Pino Giannini

Based in the capital of Ukraine, Kyiv Virtuosi has gained national and international recognition from listeners and critics as one of the country's leading orchestras. With an average age of 30, this youthful ensemble unites talented musicians from all over Ukraine, most of whom are competition winners. The orchestra built its reputation by bringing Western music to Ukrainian audiences and has also become known for its collaborations with outstanding contemporary composers such as Krzysztof Penderecki, Valentin Silvestrov and Myroslav Skoryk. Many internationally acclaimed soloists and conductors have performed with the ensemble over the years. Under current artistic and musical director Dmitry Yablonsky, Kyiv Virtuosi continues to bring Ukrainian musical talent to audiences the world over, most recently to Switzerland, France, Spain and Azerbaijan, among other countries. [www.kyivvirtuosi.org](http://www.kyivvirtuosi.org)

## Massimiliano Caldi



Photo: Dariusz Kulesza

Winner of the Grzegorz Fitelberg International Competition for Conductors in 1999, Massimiliano Caldi is active as a conductor in both Italy and Poland, and in 2018 was awarded the Gazzetta Italia Prize for the cross promotion of Italian and Polish music within both countries. From 2021 to 2023 he conducted recitals across Italy at the Teatro alla Scala, Teatro La Fenice and Teatro Petruzzelli, and in 2023 and 2024 led two new opera productions at the Opera i Filharmonia Podlaska in Białystok, Poland, directed by Michał Znaniecki. From 2006 to 2022 Caldi held conducting positions across Poland at the philharmonic orchestras of Katowice, Gdańsk, Koszalin and Rzeszów. In recent years he has also been invited to lead orchestras such as the Konzerthaus Kammerorchester Berlin, St Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra, Istanbul State Symphony Orchestra, İzmir State Symphony Orchestra, Baltic Opera (Gdańsk) and Sinfonia Varsovia.

[www.massimilianocaldi.it](http://www.massimilianocaldi.it)

## Daniel Raiskin



Conductor Daniel Raiskin cultivates a broad repertoire, and often looks beyond the mainstream in his strikingly conceived programmes. He has served as chief conductor of the Slovenská filharmónia since the 2020/21 season. In addition, he has been music director of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra since August 2018, and principal guest conductor of the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra since the 2017/18 season. Regular guest appearances include the Athens State Orchestra, Copenhagen Phil, Düsseldorfer Symphoniker, Iceland Symphony Orchestra, Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, Japan Century Symphony Orchestra, Kanagawa Philharmonic Orchestra, Malmö Symphony Orchestra, Mozarteum-orchester Salzburg, Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de México and NDR Radiophilharmonie Hannover, among many others.

[www.danielraiskin.com](http://www.danielraiskin.com)



Alexey Shor was born in Ukraine but now lives in New York pursuing a distinguished career filled with prestigious performances and recordings in collaboration with leading international musicians. *Childhood Memories* traces a path from early childhood to adolescence in a nostalgic reflection on youth, while *Verdiana* is a musical tribute to Giuseppe Verdi that reworks his famous melodies into Latin dance styles including samba, bossa nova and tango. Both of these works feature Shor's trademark of melodic clarity and emotional depth.

Alexey  
**SHOR**

(b. 1970)

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**Childhood Memories, Suite  
for Piano and Orchestra No. 3**  
(2019) (version for piano and  
string orchestra, 2021)

**48:57**

- |                                     |             |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>1</b> I. Chasing Fireflies       | <b>5:11</b> |
| <b>2</b> II. Blooming May           | <b>5:06</b> |
| <b>3</b> III. Sandbox               | <b>4:45</b> |
| <b>4</b> IV. Hourglass              | <b>5:36</b> |
| <b>5</b> V. Last Days of Summer     | <b>4:07</b> |
| <b>6</b> VI. Naiveté                | <b>4:28</b> |
| <b>7</b> VII. Coming of Age         | <b>4:45</b> |
| <b>8</b> VIII. Melancholy           | <b>4:30</b> |
| <b>9</b> IX. First Love             | <b>5:39</b> |
| <b>10</b> Encore – Marionette Waltz | <b>4:25</b> |

**Verdiana – Fantasy on Themes  
by Giuseppe Verdi (2015)**  
(version for clarinet and  
string orchestra, 2022)

**13:05**

- |                                    |             |
|------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>11</b> I. Il Sambatore          | <b>3:45</b> |
| <b>12</b> II. Un Bossa in maschera | <b>3:46</b> |
| <b>13</b> III. Don Tangoletto      | <b>5:31</b> |

### WORLD PREMIERE RECORDINGS

**Rémi Geniet, Piano 1–10 • Fabrizio Meloni, Clarinet 11–13**

**Kyiv Virtuosi • Massimiliano Caldi 1–10 • Daniel Raiskin 11–13**

Recorded: 26 11–13 and 28 1–10 March 2023 at the Teatro Marrucino, Chieti, Italy  
Producer: Andriy Mokrytskyi • Engineers and editors: Andriy Mokrytskyi, Oleksii Grytsyshyn  
Booklet notes: Julian Francalanza • Editions: composer's manuscript  
Cover painting by Abstract the Studio ([www.shutterstock.com](http://www.shutterstock.com))

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