



UKRAINIAN PIANO QUINTETS

LYATOSHYSKY • POLEVA • SILVESTROV

Bogdana Pivnenko, Taras Yaropud, Violins
Kateryna Suprun, Viola • Yurii Pogoretskyi, Cello
Iryna Starodub, Piano

Ukrainian Piano Quintets

Boris Mikolayovich Lyatoshynsky (1895–1968) • Victoria Poleva (b. 1962) • Valentin Silvestrov (b. 1937)

The early 20th century saw the Ukrainian region suffer considerable political instability and oppression. Following the long and bitterly fought war of independence (1917 to 1921), the Soviet government introduced a new policy of *korenizatsiya* ('putting down roots') which allowed the Soviet republics much greater freedom. This resulted in a vibrant yet short-lived cultural renaissance, and the emergence of a new generation of artists, writers, and musicians who drew variously on Eastern and Western models while looking to their national heritage.

Boris Mikolayovich Lyatoshynsky (1895–1968):

Ukrainian Quintet, Op. 42

Born on 3 January 1895, Boris Lyatoshynsky was a leading member of this new generation of Ukrainian composers. Arriving in Kyiv from his native Zhytomyr in 1913, he enrolled first in the law school of Kyiv University, then at the recently founded Kyiv Conservatory, where he studied composition with Reinhold Glière. Having rounded off his law studies in 1918, he graduated in 1919 from the Conservatory and assumed a teaching post that year – becoming a professor in 1935. From 1935 to 1938 and 1941 to 1944 he also taught at the Moscow Conservatory, later acting as adjudicator for the Tchaikovsky Piano Competition. He wrote in a variety of genres, his early pieces lyrical in style with frequent reference to Schumann and Borodin. At the time of his *First Symphony* (1919) (Naxos 8.555578) he became interested in Scriabin, and in his *First Piano Sonata* (1924) he turned to new European developments. This lasted until 1929, when he began combining Ukrainian melodies with contemporary harmonic and formal traits. Considered as the father of Ukrainian music, Lyatoshynsky died in Kyiv on 15 April 1968.

The expansively conceived *Ukrainian Quintet* (1942) finds Lyatoshynsky at his most overt emotionally. The first movement opens with a sombre theme on violin, soon taken up by the other strings in intense polyphony, with the piano providing more than mere accompaniment. A spirited transition leads into the second theme, rendered expressively on cello before again migrating to the other strings. The piano affects a gentle winding down, from where the intensive development builds to an opulent restatement of the initial theme for the start of a modified reprise – the music duly heading into a coda which brings about the warmly regretful close. The emotional heart in all senses, the second movement begins with ruminative strings over which the piano unfolds a limpid melody, at length becoming the accompaniment for an elaboration on solo strings. A rocking motion on viola introduces the more restive central section, the piano responding with fatalistic chords on the way to a sustained climax affording the work's deepest expression. This dies down in a return to the initial melody, no longer as unruffled as on its first appearance, while bringing the music round to its beginnings with satisfying symmetry.

The third movement is a *scherzo* whose forceful initial gesture reappears as a refrain in some animated dialogue between piano and strings. The central trio is more rhythmically trenchant, not least for its pronounced folk inflections, while it builds towards a heightened restatement of the initial gesture before the quintet resumes its interplay on the way to a nonchalant close. The *Finale* opens in declamatory manner across all five instruments, proceeding in a forceful dialogue that at length makes way for an eloquent theme introduced by the viola. This at length builds in intensity, then a pensive interlude on piano brings a resourceful treatment of ideas already heard and gives way to an intensified reprise of the opening theme. From here the music surges on to a climactic reappearance of the second theme, then an angrily decisive ending.

The relative cultural freedom in Ukraine reached a sudden halt towards the end of the 1920s, as Stalin rapidly took control of the USSR and Socialist realism became the guiding tenet. Ukrainian national music was repressed, Western European developments condemned, with systematic purges and censorship often employed to enforce the new regime. It was not until the mid-1950s that a younger generation of Ukrainian composers, nearly all of them pupils of Lyatoshynsky, was able to pursue a more radical direction with assistance from their mentor.

Valentin Silvestrov (b. 1937):

Piano Quintet (to Boris Lyatoshynsky)

Valentin Silvestrov was born on 30 September 1937 in Kyiv. He came to music relatively late and was initially self-taught. From 1955 to 1958 he took evening courses while training as a civil engineer, then from 1958 to 1964 he studied composition and counterpoint with Lyatoshynsky and Levko Revutsky at Kyiv Conservatory. After teaching at a music studio for several years, in 1970 he became a freelance composer based in Kyiv. He was considered one of the leaders of the Kyiv avant-garde, which came to wider attention around 1960 and was strongly criticised by the Soviet officialdom. In the 1960s and 1970s his music was hardly played in his native city, premieres being mainly in Leningrad and the West. His *Spectrums* for chamber orchestra was given to great acclaim in 1965 by the Leningrad Philharmonic under Igor Blashkov who, in 1968, gave the premiere of Silvestrov's *Second Symphony*. Silvestrov was awarded the Koussevitzky Composition Prize in 1967, while *Hymn for Six Orchestral Groups* secured an honorary title at the Gaudeamus Festival in 1970, yet his music gained little response in his own country. Both in his earlier radical period and across his stylistic transformation, Silvestrov preserved his independence of outlook. In later decades he discovered an idiom comparable to Western post-Modernism that he came to call 'meta-music', the abbreviated form of 'metaphorical music'.

Dedicated to Lyatoshynsky, the *Piano Quintet* (1961) finds Silvestrov somewhere around the start of his Modernist odyssey. The first movement commences with rhetorical piano chords, which the strings counter in uncertain terms. The contrast thus established pursues a hesitant yet imaginative course, pursuing its oblique tonal trajectory toward a brief but potent climax before heading into a ruminative dialogue that brings with it the subdued close. The second movement stands in greatest contrast, its angular main theme provoking a heated discussion between piano and strings, but the middle section brings a return to more serene expression. At length, the animated music returns to steer the discourse to its energetic ending. The final movement is again inward, unfolding its fugitive interplay with cello to the fore. Gradually the instruments fall silent to leave ghostly violin harmonics above somnolent piano chords.

Victoria Poleva (b. 1962): **Simurgh-quintet**

Victoria Poleva was born in Kyiv on 11 September 1962 to a family of musicians. She studied with, respectively, Ivan Karabyts and Levko Kolodub at the Kyiv Conservatory, where she herself taught composition from 1990 to 2005. Her earlier works, such as the ballet *Gagaku*, *Transform* for large orchestra and *Anthem* for chamber orchestra, favour avant-garde and polystylistic aesthetics. From the late 1990s, she became ever more drawn to spiritual themes and musical simplicity and so developed a style which has latterly been identified as 'sacred minimalism'. Her works have been commissioned by numerous exponents of new music, not least Gidon Kremer in 2005 for *Sempre Primavera* and 2010 for *The Art of Instrumentation*, and the Kronos Quartet for *Walking on Waters* in 2013. In 2009, her *Ode to Joy* was heard at a concert to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Its title alluding to the winged creature of Persian mythology, *Simurgh-quintet* (2000) seems to be a transitional work in Poleva's output. Cast in a single movement, its content is for the most part withdrawn and often secretive in character. This is evident from the very opening, when soft dissonances on the strings emerge over halting piano chords. Gradually a sense of tonal focus begins to take hold, as strings coalesce into a chorale-like texture, even if there is no parallel emotional fervour. What feels most striking are the ways by which those repeated motifs and phrases assume the role of motivic building blocks, thereby affording a measure of cohesion despite (or even because of) the absence of any more definable thematic evolution. Dynamics remain at and around *piano* until a sudden burst of ricocheting strings and bird-like piano gestures usher in an emotional apex as the music wistfully fades away with the closing bars.

Richard Whitehouse

Bogdana Pivnenko



Photo: Oleh Pavliuchenkov

Violinist Bogdana Pivnenko is head of violin at the Tchaikovsky National Music Academy of Ukraine, where she studied with Bohodar Kotorovych. She is a laureate of competitions including the Interpreters Performers Competition (Moldova) and IBLA Competition (Sicily). As a soloist she has appeared with leading Ukrainian orchestras and presented Ukrainian music at venues including Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall and Palau de la Música Catalana, and several festivals. She has premiered works by contemporary Ukrainian composers and performed Valentin Silvestrov's *Melodies of the Moments* with the composer. She is the author of the *Anthology of Contemporary Ukrainian Music* and is the People's Artist of Ukraine.

Taras Yaropud



Photo: Oleh Pavliuchenkov

Taras Yaropud studied at Khmelnytskyi College of Music with Valentyna Shchur, and at the National Music Academy of Ukraine in the class of Bohodar Kotorovych and Yaroslava Rivniak. He interned at Northern Kentucky University and Nederlandse Strijkkwartet Academie in Amsterdam and won third prize at the Mykola Lysenko International Music Competition in 2007. He was a member of the Kyiv Soloists chamber ensemble before becoming the concertmaster. Yaropud has taught at the Tchaikovsky National Music Academy of Ukraine since 2006. He is the founder and second violinist of the Collegium Quartet, and concertmaster of the Kyiv Virtuosi chamber orchestra. He performs in concert both as a soloist and an ensemble player.

Kateryna Suprun



Photo: Oleh Pavliuchenkov

Violist Kateryna Suprun performs with the Kyiv Camerata National Ensemble of Soloists and is a recipient of the Levko Revutsky National Prize. She has premiered numerous compositions for viola written by Ukrainian composers and is a member of the Danapris Quartet, which promotes new Ukrainian music around the world. The group has toured Ukraine, Japan, Portugal and Austria. As a soloist and chamber player she has appeared at festivals in Ukraine, Portugal, Austria, Poland and at the Mishima Contemporary Music Days in Japan, and she has toured Finland, Germany, Portugal, the Netherlands, France, Romania, Switzerland, Lebanon, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, Israel and Japan.

Yurii Pogoretskyi

Yurii Pogoretskyi graduated from the Tchaikovsky National Music Academy of Ukraine and interned at Northern Kentucky University and Nederlandse Strijkkwartet Academie. He also received scholarships from the President of Ukraine Fund and Vladimir Spivakov Fund. As a chamber performer Pogoretskyi is a founder member of the Collegium Quartet, and led a cello group formed of players of the Kyiv Soloists chamber ensemble. As a soloist and ensemble player he has performed in Europe, Japan, the United States and Russia. He is also a former artistic director of the ChamberArtMusic festival and taught at the Tchaikovsky National Music Academy from 2010 to 2014. He has been a co-founder and solo cellist of the Kyiv Virtuosi chamber orchestra since 2016.



Photo: Oleh Pavliuchenkov

Iryna Starodub



Photo: Oleh Pavliuchenkov

Ukrainian pianist Iryna Starodub received her master's degree from the Tchaikovsky National Music Academy of Ukraine and is a first-prize laureate of several international piano and chamber music competitions. She has performed at prestigious concert venues in her home country and internationally and been associated with several renowned orchestras, including the Kyiv Virtuosi chamber orchestra led by Dmitry Yablonsky. She also appears regularly at festivals including the Nostalgia Festival Poznań (Poland) and Kyiv Music Fest (Ukraine). She has recorded music by Ukrainian composers including Myroslav Skoryk and Valentin Silvestrov (Naxos 8.573598). She is a recipient of the President's Merit Award.



Boris Lyatoshynsky was a leading member of a new generation of Ukrainian composers that emerged in the 1920s. His expansively conceived *Ukrainian Quintet* finds him at his most emotionally overt, with a heartfelt *Lento e tranquillo* second movement. Dedicated to Lyatoshynsky, Valentin Silvestrov's *Piano Quintet* dates from the start of his Modernist odyssey of the 1960s, while Victoria Poleva's withdrawn and secretive *Simurgh-quintet* is part of a style that embraces spiritual themes and musical simplicity defined as 'sacred minimalism'.

UKRAINIAN PIANO QUINTETS

Boris Mikolayovich Lyatoshynsky (1895–1968):
Ukrainian Quintet, Op. 42 (1942, rev. 1945)

40:17

- 1** I. Allegro e poco agitato
- 2** II. Lento e tranquillo
- 3** III. Allegro
- 4** IV. Allegro risoluto

11:40

12:34

5:56

9:58

Valentin Silvestrov (b. 1937):
Piano Quintet (to Boris Lyatoshynsky) (1961)

19:28

- 5** I. Prelude: Andante
- 6** II. Fugue: Allegro
- 7** III. Aria: Andante

7:39

6:31

5:18

Victoria Poleva (b. 1962): **Simurgh-quintet** (2000, rev. 2020)*

17:45

- 8** Lento misterioso – Con moto – Più mosso

***WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING**

Bogdana Pivnenko, Violin I 1–7, Violin II 8

Taras Yaropud, Violin I 8, Violin II 1–7

Kateryna Suprun, Viola • Yurii Pogoretskyi, Cello

Iryna Starodub, Piano

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