



Yevgeny ZEMTSOV

CHAMBER AND INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC AND ARRANGEMENTS

VIOLIN SONATA NO. 1, IN MEMORIAM SERGEI PROKOFIEV

FIVE JAPANESE POEMS

THREE INVENTIONS

STRING QUARTET

OHNEMASS

BALLADA

PIAZZOLLA ARR. ZEMTSOV

THE FOUR SEASONS OF BUENOS AIRES

LE GRAND TANGO

Ekaterina Levental, soprano

Daniel Rowland, violin

David Zemtsov, violin

Julia Dinerstein, viola

Mikhail Zemtsov, viola

Anna Fedorova, piano

Björn Lehmann, piano

Utrecht String Quartet

YEVGENY ZEMTSOV Instrumental and Chamber Music

String Quartet (1962, rev. 2004)	19:19
① I <i>Lento – Allegro agitato – Lento doloroso –</i>	9:07
② II <i>Allegro molto –</i>	6:14
③ III <i>Allegro agitato – Lento maestoso</i>	3:58
④ Ballada for violin and piano (1959, rev. 2015)	5:46
Violin Sonata No. 1, in memoriam Sergei Prokofiev (1961, rev. 2001)	17:17
⑤ I <i>Moderato</i>	6:59
⑥ II <i>Lento cantabile</i>	4:35
⑦ III <i>Allegro vivo</i>	5:43
Three Inventions for piano (1965, rev. 2005)	6:25
⑧ No. 1 Fughetta (<i>Allegro</i>)	1:56
⑨ No. 2 Intermezzo (<i>Adagio molto capriccioso</i>)	3:11
⑩ No. 3 Toccatina (<i>Presto</i>)	1:18
⑪ Ohnemass for piano (2004)	3:43
Five Japanese Poems for soprano, two violins and cello (1987, rev. 2005)	8:47
Poetry by Matsuo Bashō (1644–94) and Ryota Oshima (1718–87); Russian translations by Vera Markova (1907–95)	
⑫ No. 1 How silent is the garden (Bashō)	1:20
⑬ No. 2 On the naked branch of a tree sits a raven (Bashō)	1:40
⑭ No. 3 Shudder, o hill! (Bashō)	0:36
⑮ No. 4 O, this path through the undergrowth (Bashō)	3:00
⑯ No. 5 All is filled with silver moonlight (Oshima)	2:11

ASTOR PIAZZOLLA

Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas

(‘Four Seasons of Buenos Aires’; 1965–69)	16:08
arr. Yevgeny Zemtsov for string quartet (2003–16)	
¹⁷ I Verano Porteño (‘Buenos Aires Summer’; 1965)	4:28
¹⁸ II Invierno Porteño (‘Buenos Aires Winter’; 1969)	2:48
¹⁹ III Primavera Porteña (‘Buenos Aires Spring’; 1970)	4:44
²⁰ IV Otoño Porteño (‘Buenos Aires Autumn’; 1970)	4:08
²¹ <i>Le grand Tango</i> (1982)	11:32
arr. Yevgeny Zemtsov for solo viola and string quartet (2004)	

Daniel Rowland, violin ⁴

TT 89:02

David Zemtsov, violin ⁵–⁷

Anna Fedorova, piano ⁴ ⁸–¹¹

FIRST RECORDINGS

Björn Lehmann, piano ⁵–⁷

Ekaterina Levental, soprano ¹²–¹⁶

Mikhail Zemtsov, solo viola ²¹

Utrecht String Quartet

Eeva Koskinen, violin ¹–³ ¹²–²¹

Katherine Routley, violin ¹–³ ¹²–²¹

Mikhail Zemtsov, viola ¹–³, ¹²–²¹

Sebastian Koloski, cello ¹–³, ¹²–²¹

with **Julia Dinerstein, viola** ²¹

YEVGENY ZEMTSOV AND HIS MUSIC: AN INTRODUCTION

by Mikhail Zemtsov

My father, Yevgeny Zemtsov, was born on 27 August 1940 in the town of Rasskasovo, near the old Russian city of Tambov, into a family of workers. His own father, Nikolai Zemtsov, was killed in battle in 1944, towards the end of the Second World War. Although living in extreme poverty with his mother, Klavdia, and sister, Alevtina, Yevgeny managed to begin violin lessons in his native town and later entered the Music College in Tambov. His exceptional musical talent was soon noticed, but after a couple of years his excessive exercising caused serious injury to his left hand, and so he was forced to stop his violin studies and he began to study composition instead. Two years after that, he was accepted into the Musical College of the Tchaikovsky Conservatoire in Moscow, and four years later into the Tchaikovsky Conservatoire itself.

There he studied with Dmitry Kabalevsky and Aleksandr Pirumov, graduating with distinction in 1967. The most important works composed in those years of study are a *Ballade* for violin and piano (1959, revised in 2001), *Autumn Moods* for bass and piano, with texts by the Bulgarian Peyo Yavorov¹ (1960), his Sonata No. 1 for violin and piano, ‘in memory of S. Prokofiev’ (1961, rev. 2001), a *Dptych* for violin and piano (1962, rev. 2007), his only string quartet (1962, rev. in 2004), *Hiroshima* for mezzo-soprano and piano to lyrics by Nâzim Hikmet² (1965, rev. 2013), *Three Inventions* for piano (1965), the oratorio *Flames and Rhythms* to texts by African

¹ Yavorov (1878–1914) was a *fin-de-siècle* Symbolist. He supported a number of revolutionary movements in the Balkans and Caucasus.

² The Turkish poet, playwright and novelist Nâzim Hikmet Ran (1902–63), an enthusiastic Communist, studied in Moscow and was influenced by the Russian Futurists. Much persecuted by the Turkish authorities, he was in Moscow when he died, and is buried there.

poets (1967) and the First Symphony (1967, rev. 2004), the work presented at his final exam; it gained him the highest mark, with distinction. During those study years in Moscow, too, he met the violist Ludmila Levinson, whom he married in 1968. To her he dedicated his *Melody in the Olden Style* (1968, rev. 2005) for viola and piano,³ one of the most tender and beautiful pieces he ever wrote. Yevgeny and Ludmila had four children, and all of us have become prominent musicians.

A considerable influence on the music of my father was the trips he made to rural villages, investigating and collecting Russian folksongs and dances – research that was a compulsory part of his composition studies at the Tchaikovsky Conservatoire. Inspired by the musical material he collected, he made many choral arrangements of Russian songs – his *Three Russian Songs* (1971) were published by Sovietsky Kompozitor in Moscow in 1974, and an album of three cycles of *Russian Songs* by Jurgenson, also in Moscow, was published in 2012.

The choral tradition of the Russian Orthodox church was another source of inspiration, and he composed several sacred choral cycles, published in an album of *Chants* (including a *Tetrptych in memory of S. Rachmaninov*, 2010) by Kompozitor in Moscow in 2015. He also wrote several sacred pieces influenced by European liturgical traditions, among them *Two Madrigals on Lyrics by A. Gromov*⁴ (1987) and an *Ave Maria* for female voices (in two versions: a *cappella* in 1984 and with organ in 2000).

Another wellspring of inspiration was poetry, which my father loved, and he would recite in a strong and touching way; indeed, he could probably have recited poetry by heart for several hours. He was well acquainted not only with Russian poetry but also with the poetic traditions of other countries, and had an especial interest in Arabic, African, Chinese, Iranian and Japanese poetry, which resulted in the vocal cycles *Meditations* (1975), to texts by the Chinese poet Tao Yuanming (c. 365–427), and the *Five Japanese Poems* (1987), on poems by Bashō and Oshima, recorded here.

³ Recorded on Channel Classics CCSSA37215 by Dana Zemtsov, his granddaughter, with Cathelijne Noorland, piano.

⁴ Anatoly Gromov, twentieth-century Russian writer and poet (dates uncertain); the lyrics for the *Two Madrigals* were taken from Gromov's book *Philosophy of Love*.

After finishing at the Conservatoire in Moscow, my father was offered a teaching position in the Music College of Ulianovsk, on the Volga, not quite 900 kilometres to the east of Moscow. In Ulianovsk he composed a cycle *Alone with Nature*, for voice and piano, on poems by the Hungarian Sándor Petőfi⁵ (1969). Three years later the family moved 400 kilometres further east, when my father was appointed to the teaching staff of the Institute of Arts in Ufa, the capital of the Republic of Bashkortostan, in the Ural Mountains, which is where we grew up. The city of Ufa has long been an important cultural centre, with a rich musical life: it has a beautiful concert hall, an opera theatre and a very good choir. In this period, from 1970 until 1995, my father composed his Second Symphony (1972) and a number of vocal and choral cycles: *Three Romances on M. Lermontov*⁶ for tenor and piano (1974), *Six Strophes of F. Sologub*⁷ (1985), *Six Poems of I. Bunin*⁸ (1971) for baritone and piano, *Five Choruses on Lyrics by M. Lermontov* (1973), *Three Jewish Songs* (1974) for soprano and piano, the *M. Lermontov Album* (1980) for baritone and piano, *Five Choruses on Lyrics by A. Blok*⁹ (1981), *Lyrical Poetry by A. Fet*¹⁰ (1982) for soprano, baritone, flute and string quartet, as well as many of the vocal and choral works I have already mentioned. In the same period he composed his Second Sonata for violin and piano (1970) and worked on an opera, *Cain*, based on the play by Lord Byron.¹¹

Zemtsov was also interested in Bashkirian folklore, arranging *Two Bashkirian Songs* (1979) and *Three Bashkirian Songs* for choir (1984) (all published by the Bashkirian State

⁵ Sándor Petőfi (1823–49) is considered the Hungarian national poet, and was one of the central figures of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848. Boris Pasternak translated much of his poetry into Russian in the late 1940s.

⁶ Mikhail Yurevich Lermontov (1814–41) is generally considered one of the most important Russian Romantic poets after Pushkin.

⁷ Fyodor Sologub (1863–1927) was a Symbolist writer who introduced the pessimism of European *fin de siècle* into Russian literature.

⁸ Ivan Bunin (1870–1953) was the first Russian to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, in 1933. Considered a follower of the classical Russian tradition of Chekhov and Tolstoy, he nonetheless lived most of his life in exile in France.

⁹ The lyric poetry of Alexander Blok (1880–1921) inspired settings also by Loulié, Shostakovich, Sviridov and Weinberg.

¹⁰ Afanasy Fet (1820–92) is the other great Russian lyric poet, alongside Lermontov.

¹¹ As it happens, *Cain* was published in the same volume (by John Murray, London, 1821) as Byron's *The Two Foscari*, which was the basis of Verdi's opera, and *Sardanapalus*, which Liszt set as an opera and which inspired the last of Berlioz's four *Prix de Rome* cantatas, *La mort de Sardanapale*.

Publishing House, Ufa, in 1988), and composing *Two Bashkirian Pieces* for violin and piano (1980) and a *Bashkirian Diptych* for string orchestra (1984, rev. 2005).

In common with many other Soviet composers, he also composed several piano pieces and songs for children, as well as a *Small Triptych for Children's Choir* (2009) and *Songs and Games* (1983; published by Kompozitor in 2015). His cycle *Eight Songs for Children's Choir* won first prize at the competition 'Choir Laboratory of the XXI Century: Music for Children and Youth' in St Petersburg in 2011.

His numerous arrangements, for a variety of instruments, include the string-quartet versions of Piazzolla's *Four Seasons of Buenos Aires* and *Le grand Tango* (with solo viola or cello) that are heard here, and a piano version of Messiaen's *Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum* (Kompozitor, Moscow, 2008), as well as many orchestrations of miniatures for violin, viola or cello and string orchestra.

In 1987 he moved to Moscow, to teach at the highly respected Gnesin Institute. He became a member of the Union of Composers of the Soviet Union, and was later awarded the title of Composer Emeritus of the Russian Federation. But in 1995 a major change occurred when my father, mother, two brothers – Dmitri and Alexander – and sister Dina moved to Germany, settling in Hamburg in 1996 (I had already moved to Mexico in 1991): the extremely unstable and dangerous situation in Moscow in the early 1990s had persuaded the family to emigrate. There my father became a member of the Deutscher Komponistenverband and GEMA, the Germany copyright agency. The next years he dedicated mostly to the detailed revision of earlier works and to their publication.

In 2006 he joined the literary association Istotchnik ('The Source'), the members of which were largely Russian immigrants interested in poetry. In due course the Russian-language NG Verlag in Berlin published two collections of his poems: *Podyemy y spady* ('Ups and Downs') in 2013 and *Ya eshe doma* ('I'm still at home') in 2015. He died unexpectedly, during his sleep at home in Hamburg on 26 September 2016, at the age of 76.

Although his original works and arrangements are frequently performed and broadcast in Europe and North and South America,¹² this recording is the first to be dedicated entirely to his music, and there are plans for more to follow, not least with the two symphonies.

String Quartet (1962, rev. 2004)

Yevgeny Zemtsov's only string quartet was written in 1962, when he was just 22 years old, although he subjected it to a thorough revision in 2004. The work was the result of a minutious study of the string quartets of such great composers as Haydn, Beethoven, Bartók and Shostakovich, although some passages might also recall Stravinsky and Messiaen. However audible these influences might be, his own voice was already beginning to make itself heard. An important emotional impulse for the writing of the piece was bitter regret after a failed love-affair. The opening *Lento* [1] starts with a desperate cry in high register, the parallel voices of four instruments chromatically sliding down with an *accelerando* and crashing into a brutal quick march. That Bartókian frenzy makes a stark contrast with the fragile and tender theme which follows, its lyricism prophetic of his later music. The *Allegro molto* second movement [2] is a *perpetuum mobile*, played *pianissimo* *ponticello*. The motion is suddenly interrupted by irregular rhythms, the atmosphere sombre and threatening. The third movement [3] starts, *Allegro agitato*, with a brief recapitulation of the material of the first movement, and the piece is concluded by the lyrical theme, sounding *forte* as a hymn, *Lento maestoso*. All three movements are performed *attacca*, without a break.

Ballada for violin and piano (1959, rev. 2015)

Although my father began his professional musical studies as a violinist, the injury he sustained at the age of seventeen through overzealous practice resisted all attempts to heal it, in spite of treatment in a specialised sanatorium. It was after that that he began to study composition, and the *Ballada* for violin and piano [4] was one of the

¹² The Zemtsov Viola Quartet, consisting of myself (Mikhail Zemtsov), my brother Alexander, my wife, Julia Dinerstein, and our daughter Dana, has released an album with some of his arrangements on Navis Classics NC14001.

first pieces to result; he was nineteen years old at the time. It was also one of the first pieces he considered good enough for performance and publication. It is written in a late-Romantic style, though with some modernist touches. It has a melancholic, longing character, and even if one can hear the influence of Tchaikovsky, my father's favourite composer at the time, his own personal style is already beginning to emerge. One might also regard the *Ballada* as a passionate and touching farewell to his beloved instrument. It was revised and published in 2015.

Violin Sonata No. 1, *in memoriam Sergei Prokofiev* (1961, rev. 2001)

Although its composer was only 21 years old, this piece shows a thorough knowledge of the instrument and its technical and expressive possibilities, as well as a mastery of sonata form and the necessary compositional technique. My father was an admirer of Sergei Prokofiev, to whose memory he dedicated the work, and one can hear in it the influences of Prokofiev's violin works: the two sonatas and two concertos, as well as the *Five Melodies*.

The first movement *Moderato* [5] opens with a simple, attractive rising melody, creating a youthful, fresh atmosphere, which he characterised to me as 'the breath of springtime'. The second movement, a *Lento cantabile* [6], is a slow, meditative song in the style of Russian folksong known as протяжная (*protiazhnaya*; 'lingering'). The *Allegro vivo* third movement [7], a kind of scherzo, has a cheerful, brisk, humorous and mischievous character.

Three Inventions for piano (1965, rev. 2005)

My father was a good pianist, and used to accompany his instrumental and vocal works in concert. Even so, he wrote very few pieces for piano solo. The most brilliant is probably the *Three Inventions* (1965, revised in 2005) recorded here, a cycle of three contrasting polyphonic miniatures where his mastery of polyphonic writing and his knowledge of the piano are evident throughout, with his knowledge of the music of Bach and other masters of Baroque polyphony combined with the influence of Russian folklore.

The first movement – a Fughetta marked *Allegro* [8] – has a restless, nervous, impulsive motion. Its musical material foreshadows that of the First Symphony, written only two years later. As with the slow movement of the First Violin Sonata, the second movement – an Intermezzo marked *Adagio molto capriccioso* [9] – is influenced by the *protiazhnaya* of Russian folksong. The qualification *capriccioso* probably refers to the freedom in rubato and timing that the music permits. Although *intermezzi* usually have a relaxed character, this one is crowned by an intense and dramatic climax. The third movement – a *Presto Toccata* [10] – is a little polyphonic scherzo with a grotesque, almost nasty character, finishing with a short, brisk cluster in the low register.

***Ohnemass* for piano (2004)**

Ohnemass [11], from 2004, is dedicated to Björn Lehmann (who can be heard in the First Violin Sonata in this recording). It was one of the few pieces my father wrote after the death of my mother in 2002. The title, *Ohnemass*, could be translated as ‘Without measure’, and it is indeed written in a free, improvisatory way, with no defined metre. But I suspect there is more to the name: in Russian the term *безмерно* (*bezmerno*) means not only ‘without measure’ but also ‘immensely’, as in the expression of an emotionally overwhelming experience – for example, you could use it to say ‘to love without measure’ or ‘to suffer without measure’. The thematic material of the piece is based on the idea of three notes used in two different ways: as a longing motif, and as a percussive rhythm on one note. The piece starts very quietly but finishes with a fierce climax and abrupt ending.

***Five Japanese Poems* for soprano, two violins and cello (1987, rev. 2005)**

It was the brilliant translations of Japanese haiku by Vera Markova (1907–95), one of the most important Russian specialists in Japanese poetry, that inspired my father to compose this cycle, using texts by Matsuo Bashō (1644–94) and Ryota Oshima (1718–87). Bashō was recognised as a master of the haiku even in his own lifetime; Oshima enjoyed similar status a century later, and was reputed to have had 3,000 disciples.

The character of every song is brilliantly depicted in the music with modest but precise and efficient expressive tools. In combination with the juxtaposition of two high and one low instrument, the sharply outlined and precise melodic lines recall the sober and ascetic style of Japanese *ukio-e* paintings. The scoring for two violins and cello was probably also intended to liberate the middle register for the mezzo-soprano voice.

In the first song, 'How silent is the garden' [12], the trills of the violins imitate the rustle of a garden at night, while the cello imitates a cicada, dropping the bow on the strings – the bow-stroke known as *ricochet*.

In the second song, 'On the naked branch of a tree sits a raven' [13], the two violins imitate the 'scratchy' cry of the corvid, while the long double-stopped notes of the cello suggest the bare tree branches. The short *secco* notation of the vocal line, separating the syllables of the words with silences, gives this song an ironic, grotesque character.

Tumultuous semiquaver (sixteenth-note) movement in ascending and descending passages in the third song [14] evokes the quaking of the earth and bursts of wind – a gloomy background for the desperate cries of the voice.

The fourth song, 'O, this path through the undergrowth' [15], suggests the desperate loneliness of an autumn evening: it combines slow *pizzicato* movement in the cello with long painful chords in the violins and the cello.

The last song, 'All is filled with silver moonlight' [16], brings real purification, catharsis. The slow, lullaby-like ostinato of swinging motifs in the strings and the long, soaring melody of the voice paints the silver of the moonlight spreading all around, bringing a feeling of peace and unconditional unity with the universe. The piece ends with a very peculiar pentatonic chord of high harmonics in the strings, imitating a *sho*, the Japanese mouth-organ.

12 1. Как безмолвен сад

Bashō

Как безмолвен сад
Проникает в сердце скал
Тихий звон цикад

13 2. На голой ветке ворон сидит

Bashō

На голой ветке
Ворон сидит, одиноко.
Осенний вечер.

14 3. Содрогнись, о холм!

Bashō

Содрогнись, о холм!
Осенний ветер в поле
Мой безутешный стон!

15 4. О, этот путь в глуши

Bashō

О, этот путь в глуши
Стушается сумрак осенний
И ни живой души!

16 5. Все в лунном серебре

Oshima

Все в лунном серебре
О, если бы родиться вновь
Сосною на горе!

How silent is the garden

*How silent is the garden
The quiet sound of the cicadas
Reaches the heart of the crags.*

On the naked branch of a tree

*On the naked branch of a tree
Sits a raven, all alone.
An autumn evening.*

Shudder, o hill!

*Shudder, o hill!
The autumn wind in the fields
Is my inconsolable cry!*

O, this path through the undergrowth

*O, this path through the undergrowth
The autumn twilight darkens
No living soul is near.*

All is filled with silver moonlight

*All is filled with silvered moonlight
Would that I could be born again
As a pine tree on the mountain top!*

English translations by Anthony Phillips

ASTOR PIAZZOLLA

Four Seasons of Buenos Aires and Le grand Tango

Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas – a suite of tango compositions by Astor Piazzolla (1921–92) – was not conceived as such by its composer: he first wrote ‘Verano Porteña’ (‘Buenos Aires Summer’) in 1965 as incidental music to the play *Melenita de oro* (‘Hair of Gold’) by Alberto Rodríguez Muñoz (1915–2004); ‘Invierno Porteño’ (‘Buenos Aires Winter’) followed in 1969, and ‘Primavera Porteña’ (‘Buenos Aires Spring’) and ‘Otoño Porteño’ (‘Buenos Aires Autumn’) were both added a year after that. They were originally scored for Piazzolla’s own quintet, which consisted of violin (or viola), piano, electric guitar, double bass and bandoneon. The inhabitants of Buenos Aires are known as *porteños* (a *porteño* is someone who lives in a port city), and Piazzolla obviously intended these four pieces to provide an echo of Vivaldi’s *I quattro stagioni* – although, of course, Buenos Aires being in the southern hemisphere, these seasons do not provide mirror images of those in the north.

Le grand Tango (it was published in France, and hence the French title, although it is often called *El gran Tango*) was written for cello and piano in 1982 and is dedicated to no less a figure than Mstislav Rostropovich, who gave the first performance, with the Russian pianist Igor Uriash (then only 25), in New Orleans in 1990.

My father did not show any particular interest in Piazzolla’s music until 2001, when he was asked to make some tango arrangements for string quartet – and the better acquainted he became with the world of tango, the more fascinating he found it. For many years he worked on these arrangements, making adjustments after every performance. The first version of his arrangement of Piazzolla’s *Four Seasons of Buenos Aires* [17]–[20] dates from 2003; the last was finalised in August 2016, only a month before he passed away. For his 2004 arrangement of *Le grand Tango* [21], he added a solo viola (or cello) to the string quartet.

The Dutch/English violinist **Daniel Rowland** has established himself on the international scene as a highly versatile, communicative and adventurous performer, with a broad repertoire, from Biber to Berio and Vivaldi to Ferneyhough. In recent seasons he has performed with orchestras from Tromsø in the north of Norway to Cape Town, in concertos from Beethoven and Brahms to Berg, Elgar, Korngold, Prokofiev, Schnittke and Weinberg, and has worked with such leading conductors as Andrey Boreiko, Lawrence Foster, Anthony Hermus, Heinz Holliger, Rossen Milanov, François-Xavier Roth and Jaap van Zweden. He loves to champion contemporary composers and is a passionate advocate of concertos such as those by Philip Glass, Magnus Lindberg, Kaija Saariaho, Michael van der Aa and Pēteris Vasks. In 2017 he premiered Isidora Zebeljan's violin concerto *Three Curious Loves*, and November 2020 saw the premiere of Roxanna Panufnik's *Songs of Love and Friendship* with the Dutch Radio Choir at the Concertgebouw. Two months before that, in September 2020, Challenge Records released his album *Distant Light*, with works by Pēteris Vasks, recorded live at the Stifffestival in 2019, in the presence of the composer.

Daniel Rowland was born in London, and started his violin lessons in Enschede after his parents moved to Twente in the eastern Netherlands. He studied with Jan Repko, Davina van Wely, Herman Krebbers, Viktor Liberman and Igor Oistrakh. Meeting Ivry Gitlis in 1995 was very important, and led to lessons in Paris and, later, to musical collaborations. His competition successes include first prize at the 1995 Oskar Back competition at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam and the Brahms Prize in Baden-Baden. He now teaches at the Royal College of Music in London.

A passionate chamber musician, he has performed with artists as diverse as Gilles Apap, Michael Collins, Nicolas Daniel, Anna Fedorova, Nino Gvetadze, Heinz Holliger, Alexander Lonquich, Vladimir Mendelssohn, Alberto Mesirca, Lars Vogt, Willard White and Elvis Costello. He is a frequent guest at major international chamber-music festivals, among them



Photograph: Marco Borggreve

those at Chiemgau, Kuhmo, Osnabrück, Rio de Janeiro, Risør, Sonoro and Stellenbosch. He is a member of two duo partnerships: with the pianist Natacha Kudritskaya and the cellist Maja Bogdanovic. He was for twelve years leader of the Brodsky Quartet, performing all over the world, and making numerous recordings, including a celebrated Shostakovich cycle. He is also a founding member of a cutting-edge tango group, Chamber Jam Quintet, with the bandoneon virtuoso/composer Marcelo Nisinman. His frequent chamber-music partners include Anna Fedorova, Nino Gvetadze and Alberto Mesirca.

In 2005 he founded the Stift International Music Festival in the bucolic region of Twente in the eastern Netherlands, where he grew up, with the fifteenth-century Stifkerk as the main venue. The festival has garnered acclaim as one of intimacy, adventure and atmosphere.

His violin is by Lorenzo Storioni (Cremona 1796), and his bow is a Maline, kindly loaned by the Dutch Instrument Foundation.

Born in 1976 in Ufa, Russia, **David** (formerly Dmitri) **Zemtsov** was introduced to the art of the violin at a young age by his mother, Ludmila Levinson. Afterwards, he continued his musical education in the Gnesin School in Moscow, where his brilliant interpretation of the Glazunov Concerto in 1995 earned him invitations to perform abroad. After the family moved to Germany in 1995, David pursued his studies in Hamburg, Berlin and Belgium under Mark Lubotsky, Uwe-Martin Haiberg and Michael Kugel.

Prize-winner at the international competitions Classical Legacy (Moscow, 1994) and Henryk Szeryng (Mexico, 1994), David Zemtsov has performed in the USA, Mexico, western Europe and Russia, with artists such as Efraim Guigui, Luis Herrera de la Fuente, Michael Kugel and Wolfgang Marschner. His interest in the music of less-well-known composers led him to give the continental-American premiere of



the Lyapunov violin concerto, and to rediscover the virtuoso compositions of the legendary Mexican violinist Higinio Ruvalcaba.

In 2009 he moved to Israel with his family.

Anna Fedorova, born in Kyiv to pianist parents, is one of the world's leading young pianists. From an early age, she demonstrated innate musical maturity and outstanding technical abilities. Her international concert career took off while she was only a child, and audiences around the world were completely taken by surprise by the depth and power of her musical expression.

With over 30 million views, her live recording of the Rachmaninov Second Piano Concerto in the Royal Concertgebouw has become the most watched classical concerto on YouTube. She has performed in some of the world's most highly regarded concert-halls and appeared at some of its most prestigious festivals, at Ernen, Gstaad and Verbier in Switzerland, Annecy in France, Ravinia in the USA, Sintra in Portugal, Stif in the Netherlands, Trieste in Italy, Koblenz in Germany and others in Poland, Scotland and elsewhere.

Having mastered a formidable concerto repertoire, she performs with orchestras around the world, in Argentina, Britain, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Israel, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Russia, Switzerland and the USA. The conductors with whom she has had the pleasure of performing include Olari Elts, Jun Markl, Modestas Pitrenas, Valery Polyansky, Carlos Miguel Prieto, Christian Schumann, Alexander Shelley, Tatsuya Shimono, Benjamin Zander and Jaap van Zweden.

She has claimed top prizes at numerous international piano competitions, including the International Rubinstein 'In Memoriam' competition, the Moscow International Frederick Chopin Competition for young pianists and the Lyon Piano Competition, and she recently received the Verbier Festival Academy Award.



She graduated with distinction from the Royal College of Music under the guidance of Norma Fischer. She also studied with Leonid Margariu at the prestigious Accademia Pianistica in Imola, Italy, as well as with Borys Fedorov at the Lysenko School of Music in Kyiv. She has been mentored by a number of internationally renowned musicians, Alfred Brendel, Steven Isserlis, Menahem Pressler and András Schiff among their number.

Anna Fedorova records with Channel Classics. Since the beginning of their collaboration in 2017, four albums have been released: two solo recitals, *Storyteller* and *Four Fantasies*, a Rachmaninov album with the St Gallen Symphony Orchestra and *Silhouettes*, a duo album with the violist Dana Zemtsov. Two more recordings are in preparation: an all-Chopin solo album and a duo recital with the bassist Nicholas Schwartz entitled *Stolen Pearls*. Earlier releases include an album of Brahms, Chopin and Liszt on the label DiscAnnecy and an account of the Rachmaninov Second Piano Concerto and Cello Sonata with Piano Classics. The year 2016 saw the release of no fewer than three albums: one with the Rachmaninov Third Concerto and Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* (DRC), another with the German cellist Benedict Kloeckner of music by Chopin and Franck (Piano Classics), and the third with the Turkish cellist Jamal Aliyev, in works by Russian composers (Champs Hill Records).

In 2017 and 2018 she was artistic director of the International Chamber Music Festival in Ede, in the Netherlands, halfway between Arnhem and Utrecht.

Björn Lehmann's musical activities range from solo performances to chamber music and Lied accompaniment. He is also very active in contemporary music, participating in many first performances. He studied at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Hamburg, and then at the Universität der Künste in Berlin, in the class of Klaus Hellwig. From 1996 to 1998 he also took frequent lessons with Fausto Zadra, as well as with Wolfram Rieger (Lied) and Axel Bauni (20th/21st-century Lied). He received important artistic stimulation from Yara Bernette, Irwin Gage, Ralf Góthoni, Leonard Hokanson, Hartmut Höll, Zoltán Kocsis, Robert Levin, Ferenc Rados and the Amadeus Quartet.

He has performed throughout Europe, as well as in Latin America, Japan, South Korea and China. He has played in many important concert halls and appeared at various festivals, including Bachfest Leipzig, the Rheingau Musik Festival, Ludwigsburger Schlossfestspiele, Münchner Biennale, Schleswig-Holstein-Musikfestival, Concentus Moraviae, Flâneries

Musicales de Reims and the piano festival 'En blanco y negro' in Mexico City.

He has made recordings for various broadcasting and TV companies. His piano duo with Norie Takahashi – 'Takahashi Lehmann', with which he has performed extensively since 2009 – has released three albums on the Audite label, which were well received in the international music press.

His interest in contemporary music has led him to collaborate frequently with composers, among them Friedrich Goldmann (whose piano works he recorded), Arnulf Herrmann and Mathias Spahlinger.

He has been a professor at the Universität der Künste in Berlin since 2011, and frequently gives master-classes in Germany, France, Switzerland, Japan, South Korea and China.



Ekaterina Levental was born in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan. She moved to Holland in 1993, continuing her studies on the harp at the conservatoires in Enschede, Rotterdam and Detmold, with Alex Bonnet, Godelieve Schrama and Catherine Michel. A scholarship granted by the Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds and the Fonds voor Podium- en Amateurkunsten then enabled her to study with Germaine Lorenzini in Lyon. After graduating as a harpist, she followed her passion for singing and started a new study of classical singing at the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague, where she was taught by Rita Dams, Diane Forlano, Meinard Kraak and Barbara Pearson, and followed workshops and master-classes with Jean-Philippe Lafont, Charlotte Margiono, Nelly Miricioiu, Jard van Nes, Jean Piland, Christoph Prégardien and Leontina Vaduva. She finished both studies *cum laude*.

She now has a career as an opera singer and theatre performer. She has appeared as soloist with such companies as De Nationale Opera in Amsterdam, Jan Fabre/Troubleyn in Antwerp, the LOD Muziktheater in Ghent, the Toneelhuis Antwerpen, the Muziektheater Hollands Diep Dordrecht, Opera Trionfo and Opera Nijetrijne, both in Amsterdam, Veenfabriek

Leiden, Opera Spanga in Friesland, Holland Opera in Amersfoort, Silbersee in Amsterdam, Leine Roebana and Diamantfabriek, both also in Amsterdam, the Opéra de Calais, and others.

Together with the harpist Eva Tebbe, she formed the Duo Bilitis, which has won several international prizes and performed during numerous chamber-music series and music festivals in Holland and abroad. Their recordings have been released by Brilliant Classics, most recently the well received *Rêveries de Bilitis*, based on music by Debussy, in 2018.

With Chris Koolmees, she formed LEKS Compagnie to develop music-theatre projects such as 'Pierrot Lunaire 2.0', 'La Voix Humaine FaceTime' and the autobiographical trilogy 'De Weg' ('The Path'), 'De Grens' ('The Border') and 'Schoppenvrouw' ('Pique Dame').



Photograph: Eric Brinkhorst

Julia Dinerstein started violin lessons with her father, Boris Dinerstein, in Minsk, the capital of Belarus, and then she continued at the Tchaikovsky Conservatoire in Moscow with Elizabeth Gilels and Andrei Korsakov. She later studied viola with Michael Kugel at the Maastricht Conservatoire, where she received a Soloist Master's Degree with distinction.

As a soloist and chamber musician she has taken part in festivals across Europe, America and the Far East, her partners including Niek de Groot, Michael Kugel, Maria Milstein, Priya Mitchell, Daniel Rowland, Dmitri Sitkovetsky and the Utrecht String Quartet. She has worked as a guest principal violist with the Limburg Symphony Orchestra in the Netherlands, the Holland Symphonia, Flemish Philharmonic, Brussels Philharmonic and De Munt (La Monnaie) Orchestra, Brussels, among others.

Since 2002 she has been based in The Hague, playing numerous concerts as a member of the Hague String Trio and the Zemtsov Viola Quartet. She is often seen on TV and heard in broadcasts, and has recorded albums for Challenge Classics, Cobra and Navis.

Julia Dinerstein is one of the most prominent viola and violin teachers in the Netherlands. She works at the Rotterdam Conservatory, part of the Codarts University of the Arts, the ARTEZ Conservatoire in Zwolle, the Maastricht Conservatoire, the Hellendaal Music Institute in Rotterdam, the Academy for Musical Talent in Utrecht and the Musica Mundi School in Waterloo, Belgium. She often gives summer master-classes in China, France, Italy, Spain and the USA. She won second prize at the Beethoven International Viola Competition in Austria, and now her students win national and international competitions, and she is herself often invited to sit on competition juries.



Mikhail Zemtsov has won prominence as a solo violist, teacher, chamber musician and conductor. He began to take violin lessons from his mother, Ludmila Levinson, at the age of five and later studied viola and composition at the conservatoires of Moscow, London, Hamburg and Maastricht with, among others, Boris Dinerstein, Michael Kugel and Galina Odinets. He received a Master's Degree in Orchestral Conducting from the Lithuanian Music Academy with Juozas Domarkas and also attended conducting lessons and master-classes given by Neeme Järvi, Paavo Järvi, Lev Markiz and Gianandrea Noseda. He has performed as a soloist with the Hamburger Symphoniker, Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg, Stavanger Symphony Orchestra, Residentie Orchestra, The Hague, the Wiener Volksoper, and the national symphony orchestras of Estonia, Lithuania and Mexico, among others, under such conductors as Neeme Järvi, Kirill Karabits, Dmitri Kitajenko, Daniel Raitskin, David Shallon, Ilan Volkov and Jaap van Zweden. He has appeared as a chamber musician at international festivals throughout Europe,

the Far East and the Americas, with musicians including Boris Berezovsky, Sarah Chang, Janine Jansen and Mischa Maisky. He is a member of the Utrecht String Quartet and Duo Macondo, and also founded the unique Zemtsov Viola Quartet, with his wife, Julia Dinerstein, his brother Alexander and daughter Dana. He has made numerous recordings for television, radio and CD for Sony Classical, Chandos, MDG and Deutsche Welle. He teaches viola at the Royal Conservatoire of The Hague and the Utrecht Conservatoire, is a regular jury member at international competitions, and has given numerous master-classes. A frequent guest conductor in Europe and America, he has worked with such soloists as Atar Arad, Janine Jansen, Gavriel Lipkind, Dmitri Makhtin and Timothy Ridout. He directs the Utrecht Conservatory Strings and the Young Talent Orchestra at the Rotterdam Conservatory.



For thirty years now the members of the **Utrecht String Quartet** – Eeva Koskinen and Katherine Routley (violins), Mikhail Zemtsov (viola) and Sebastian Koloski (cello) – have been playing the most beautiful chamber music worldwide, not least in the major chamber-music venues in the Netherlands, where they are resident. The Quartet finds much joy in playing well-known works, well aware that the great composers wrote timeless masterpieces, but it has also gained its excellent reputation because of its search for lost and forgotten repertoire and its collaboration with contemporary composers. It is the mission of the Utrecht String Quartet to save composers from unjust oblivion, creating special projects to bring about these rescue missions. Albums of music by Bosmans, Mossolov, Sweelinck, lesser-known works of Britten



Photograph: Allard Willemsse

and the complete quartets of Glazunov, Gretchaninov, Lourié, Tchaikovsky and Verhulst, are amongst the sizable selection of recordings for MDG.

When preparing for a first performance, Eeva (Finnish), Katherine (Australian), Mikhail (Russian) and Sebastian (German) approach music as if it were an enigma which has to be unravelled: 'When we have new music in our hands, we just can't wait to try, understand, see and play with it, find tempos, harmonies, dynamics, discuss its intentions, listen to it, discover

its possibilities and just learn.' The versatility this approach requires has featured strongly in the Quartet's successful international tours, which have taken it as far as Australia, Canada, Finland (where the *Helsingin Sanomat* commented that 'Their performance is simultaneously intellectual, analytical, and strongly expressive'), Kazakhstan and the USA.

The Quartet teaches as Quartet-in-Residence at the Utrecht University of the Arts, and regularly holds an international chamber-music master-class in collaboration with the Utrecht University Summer School. It is also a regular guest ensemble at the renowned Canadian Music Center (CAMMAC) in Harrington, Quebec.

The Quartet has established a successful collaborative relationship with a number of notable musicians, among them Paul Cassidy, Severin von Eckardstein, Paolo Giacometti, Nobuko Imai, Aleksandar Madžar, Thomas Oliemans, Ralph van Raat and Pieter Wispelwey.

The youthful bravura of these four musicians is now enriched by an aura of strong togetherness and understanding: 'It feels like coming home, whenever we find each other at a rehearsal or performance in between our other musical activities. We cherish being able to add our own individual voices to the whole, we have learned to understand each other without the need for many words'.



Recorded on 13 January 1999 in the Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst, Hamburg (Violin Sonata); on 30 January 2016 in the Edesche Concertzaal, Ede, The Netherlands (*Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas*); on 11–12 July 2020 (String Quartet, *Le grand Tango* and *Five Japanese Poems*), on 27 January 2021 (*Ballada*) and on 21 February 2021 (*Ohnemass, Three Inventions*) in Studio 150, Bethlehem Church, Amsterdam

Producer-engineers: Jochem Geene (*Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas*), Joeri Saal (String Quartet, *Ballada, Le grand Tango, Five Japanese Poems, Ohnemass and Three Inventions*) and Mikhail Zemtsov (Violin Sonata)

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