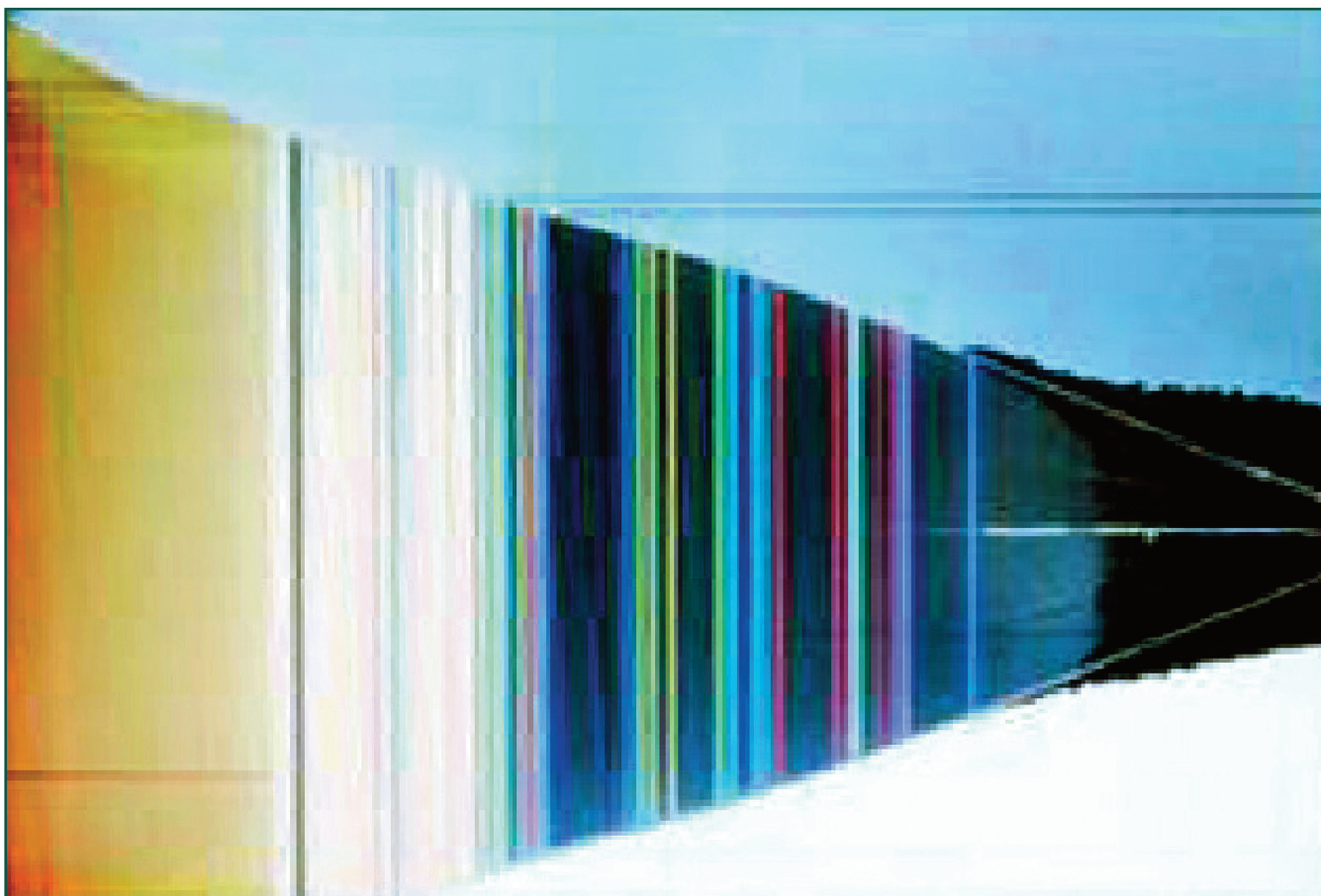


# 20th Century Music for Flute and Harp

**PIAZZOLLA • LIEBERMANN  
SHAPOSHNIKOV • ROTA**

**Nora Shulman, Flute • Judy Loman, Harp**



## 20TH CENTURY MUSIC FOR FLUTE AND HARP

### Piazzolla • Liebermann • Shaposhnikov • Rota

#### Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992)

##### Histoire du Tango, arr. flute and harp

The roots of Piazzolla's music lie in multi-cultural Buenos Aires, with its exuberant fusion of extrovert cultures: Spanish, indigenous, American, German, Jewish, Italian and more. His chosen idiom was a dance – the urban tango from his native Argentina. From it, Piazzolla created music for solo instrument, concertos, operas and film scores. His group, the Quinteto Tango Nuevo, included violin, guitar, piano, bandoneón and bass. The five instruments allowed him a wide range of emotion. "I wrote all kinds of music", Piazzolla said of his dramatic, soulful music, "but never happy music". Although he was tremendously prolific with over one thousand compositions to his name, his music avoids overt commercialism and has the stamp of authenticity. His nuevo tango revolutionized tango as an art form and moved it from the dance floor to the concert hall. It represents a powerful fusion of dark, urban colour and universal human feeling.

Piazzolla was not without his critics, particularly amongst traditionalists. So it is not surprising that he sought to remind detractors that the tango, like all music, was constantly evolving. His *Histoire du Tango*, originally written for flute and guitar, explores the history of the dance from its earliest times – around the same time that ragtime began to evolve North of the border – to the more recent. The opening movement, *Bordel 1900*, Piazzolla says, portrays the dance's origins in the bordellos of Buenos Aires. The usual tango instruments in the late nineteenth century were flute and guitar, the instruments the composer originally chose for this four-movement suite. A lively, sensual dance, based on the more respectable *milonga* and faster than it is today, the tango would rapidly evolve and become more sophisticated. *Café 1930* portrays the tango as a separate art form, no longer danced. You listen to it, Piazzolla says, with a heavy dose of melancholy and even despair. This is the traditional tango that Piazzolla knew from his youth. With the third movement, *Night-Club 1960*, the tango becomes cross-bred with the bossa nova from Brazil, jazz elements from his time in the United States, and, with it, the beginnings of the nuevo tango. "Revolution or evolution?" Piazzolla asks. "In any case, sophistication." The last movement, *Concert of our*

*own Times*, follows the tango into the concert hall, weaving a path through Bartók and Stravinsky towards the tango of tomorrow. "For me," Piazzolla said, "tango was always for the ear rather than the feet."

#### Lowell Liebermann (b.1961)

##### Sonata for flute and harp, Op.56 (1996)

"I've had an awful lot of flute commissions because my music has gotten well known in the flute world", says Manhattan-born composer Lowell Liebermann. The first work, which quickly became standard repertoire for flautists, is the *Flute Sonata* of 1987, now one of the most recorded 20th century compositions for the instrument. Three commissions – a concerto, a double concerto with harp and a flute trio – followed for James Galway. Other chamber works have also become established in the repertoire of flautists around the world. Liebermann, however, is not a flautist (he is a pianist and conductor), neither does he collaborate closely with the virtuoso performers he writes for. He learnt the fundamentals of flute technique in his composition studies at Juilliard and listened to some of the repertoire. "I believe in the continuum of traditions," he says. "I think you should work with the strengths of the instrument rather than fighting against it to turn it into an instrument it's not. If you're unsatisfied with what it can do, then build a new instrument."

Formal balance and clarity of expression are hallmarks of his music and are evident throughout the single-movement *Sonata for flute and harp, Op. 56*. The music is tightly developed as it unfolds from ideas inherent in the opening phrase – through long sustained flute lines and chromatic pedal glissandi from the harp into a running, triplet accompaniment as the Grave introduction gives way to the *Allegro* middle section. Here the chromatic opening theme and triplet pattern are combined in a running theme from the flute. When it is taken up by the harp, the flute introduces a further chromatic theme, closely related to earlier material and shortly evolving into a four-note DSCH-like motif (the notes D – E flat – C – B). [Shostakovich, whose music incorporates this musical signature, is the composer whom Liebermann acknowledges as the biggest single influence on his music]. The motif, in turn, punctuates two brief major-

key episodes and a reprise of the opening *Allegro* theme. As the music slows to the tempo of the opening, a particularly striking chorale evolves from the flute, together with left hand harmonics from the harp and the duo sonata softly unwinds.

#### Adrian Grigor'yevich Shaposhnikov (1887-1967)

##### Sonata for flute and harp (1925)

Adrian Shaposhnikov was born in St Petersburg and graduated from the St Petersburg Conservatory after studies with Glazunov among others. He worked in Moscow as an engineer-economist for the first fifteen years of his career, with composition as a freelance pursuit. During the Second World War he moved to Ashkhabad where he directed the Composers' Union of the Turkmenistan Soviet Socialist Republic. Here, with the Central Moscow government encouraging the use of indigenous folk-music and folk-tales in composition, Shaposhnikov wrote a Turkmen orchestral *Rhapsody and March*, arranged Turkmen folk-songs, wrote Turkmen army songs and, in 1941, composed what is acknowledged as the first Turkmen opera, *Zokhre i Takhir*. The opera was revived in 2010 and was well received, according to the internet newspaper turkmenistan.ru: "It features folk-songs and original tunes similar to the folk-songs. The opera is simple and expressive thanks to the musical language, national colour and richness of sound. Both sophisticated and unprepared audiences could easily understand it. Every show of *Zohra and Tahir* enjoyed a full house." Shaposhnikov was well versed in Western musical traditions and wrote chamber music, songs, other instrumental music and operas when he returned to Moscow in 1949. His three-movement *Sonata for flute and harp* dates from 1925, during his early years in Moscow. The opening movement grows from a brief melodic theme heard low on

the flute at the outset. Often elaborately embellished, the sustained flute line carries much of the melodic interest in this monothematic movement, with echoes of Debussy in the whole-tone harmonies that support it. The short, elegant minuet middle movement pays further homage to the French classical style. The finale is inspired by folk material, with the harp taking more of lead in developing its thematic ideas.

#### Nino Rota (1911-1979)

##### Sonata for flute and harp (1937)

Italian composer Nino Rota left a large legacy of film scores, many of which endure internationally in such classics as the first two parts of Coppola's *The Godfather*, Visconti's *The Leopard*, Fellini's *La strada*, *La dolce vita* and *Casanova* and Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet*. A prolific composer, with a thirty-year association with Federico Fellini, Rota scored music for more than 150 movies in all. Many of them are said to draw on an equally large output of music for the theatre and concert hall. This includes a dozen operatic works, many ballets and much incidental music, a large quantity of symphonies, concertos, vocal works and chamber music. The *Sonata for flute and harp* dates from 1937. Its opening movement is based largely on a pastoral, gently fluid theme with occasional modal colouring. A quicker moving episode adds dynamic contrast. The slow movement has a similar serenity. "If I could make everyone around me have a moment of serenity, I would do all I can," Rota once said. "Basically, this is the sentiment that animates my music." The finale has a distinctly neo-classical feel, following the tripartite structure of the opening movement, with a broad, slow-moving central section framed by lively, good-humoured outer sections.

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#### About this Recording

Nora Shulman and Judy Loman have been making music together since the 1970s. Over their long happy collaboration as a duo, they have performed on countless occasions, toured extensively, and commissioned new works for flute and harp. This recording is a compilation of some of their favourite recital repertoire.

Photo: Sian Richards



#### **Nora Shulman**

Regarded as one of the pre-eminent flautists of her generation, Nora Shulman has been the Principal Flautist of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra since 1986. Before becoming a member of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra she was an associate fellow at the Berkshire Music Center in Tanglewood, co-principal flute of the Aspen Chamber Symphony at the Aspen Music Festival, and a member of the Denver Symphony. She has often been a soloist with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, also being featured on major Canadian tours. She has also appeared as a soloist with the National Arts Centre Orchestra, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, the CBC Vancouver Orchestra and the Denver Symphony. She has participated in numerous chamber music concerts including the Amici, Guelph Spring Festival, Colours of Music Festival, Ottawa International Chamber Music Festival, and the Faculty Artist Series at the University of Toronto. Her recordings for Naxos include the critically acclaimed Berio *Sequenza I* as well as the best-selling *Dance of the Blessed Spirits* with the harpist Judy Loman. Her recordings also include works for the CBC, Centre Disc, and Marquis Classics labels. She is an Adjunct Associate Professor in the Faculty of Music at the University of Toronto and is also on the faculty of the Glenn Gould Professional School.

Photo: Tricia Koning



#### **Judy Loman**

Recognized as one of the world's foremost harp virtuosos, Judy Loman graduated from the Curtis Institute of Music, where she studied with the celebrated harpist, Carlos Salzedo. She was Principal Harpist with the Toronto Symphony from 1960 to 2002. As a soloist, Judy Loman has won the admiration of audiences and critics alike across Canada, the United States, Europe and Japan. The Toronto Symphony has featured her as soloist on several tours and she has appeared as guest artist with numerous other orchestras and ensembles worldwide. She has participated in many of North America's music festivals and several of her performances have been filmed by Rhombus Media and aired on public television. A prolific recording artist, her most recent CDs include *Judy Loman Favorites* (Marquis Classics); *Illuminations* (Marquis Classics); *Dance of the Blessed Spirits, Romantic Music for Flute and Harp* with Nora Shulman, flute, (Naxos); *Harp Showpieces* (Naxos), *A Baroque Harp* (Marquis Classics) and *Musique de chambre française* (Marquis Classics). She has also recorded for the RCA, Columbia, CBC, (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation), Centrediscs, and Aquitaine labels. Through these projects, she has been a recipient of Canada's Juno Award for best classical recording and the Canada Council's Grand Prix du disque Canadien. She is Visiting Artist at The Curtis Institute of Music, Adjunct Professor of harp at the University of Toronto, and a Fellow of the Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto, and gives master-classes worldwide.

The combination of flute and harp has enchanted listeners for millennia, and the 20th century provides a rich source for exploring new music in this most exquisite and lyrical of settings. Astor Piazzolla's *Histoire du Tango* explores the history of the Argentinian tango from its earliest times to a bossa nova and jazz-influenced *Night-Club 1960*. Formal balance and clarity of expression are evident throughout Lowell Liebermann's *Sonata, Op. 56*, while echoes of Debussy and folk-music can be found in Adrian Shaposhnikov's *Sonata*. Nino Rota found fame with film scores such as *The Godfather*, and his *Sonata* has a sentiment of serenity at its core. Nora Shulman and Judy Loman's beautiful album *Dance of the Blessed Spirits* is available on Naxos 8.554166.

## 20th Century Music for Flute and Harp

Astor PIAZZOLLA

(1921–1992)

*Histoire du Tango* (1986)

(arr. K. Vehmanen)

- |                                |             |
|--------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>1</b> Bordel 1900           | <b>4:00</b> |
| <b>2</b> Café 1930             | <b>7:58</b> |
| <b>3</b> Night-Club 1960       | <b>6:03</b> |
| <b>4</b> Concert d'aujourd'hui | <b>3:18</b> |

Lowell LIEBERMANN

(b. 1961)

- |  |              |
|--|--------------|
| <b>5</b> Sonata for flute and harp,<br>Op. 56 (1996) | <b>14:08</b> |
|--|--------------|

Adrian Grigor'yevich

SHAPOSHNIKOV (1886–1967)

*Sonata for flute and harp*

(1925) **11:24**

- |  |             |
|--|-------------|
| <b>6</b> I. Andante con moto –<br>Allegro non troppo | <b>4:48</b> |
| <b>7</b> II. Menuetto                                | <b>2:35</b> |
| <b>8</b> III. Allegro molto                          | <b>4:01</b> |

Nino ROTA (1911–1979)

*Sonata for flute and harp*

(1937) **12:38**

- |                                    |             |
|------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>9</b> I. Allegro molto moderato | <b>4:14</b> |
| <b>10</b> II. Andante sostenuto    | <b>4:46</b> |
| <b>11</b> III. Allegro festoso     | <b>3:38</b> |

**Nora Shulman, Flute • Judy Loman, Harp**

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