



# SILVESTROV

## Moments of Memory II

Serenade • The Messenger – 1996

Farewell Serenade • Silent Music

Iryna Starodub, Piano

Kiev Virtuosi • Dmitry Yablonsky

## Valentin Silvestrov (b. 1937)

### Moments of Memory II • Serenade • The Messenger – 1996 • Farewell Serenade • Silent Music

'I do not write new music. My music is a response to and an echo of what already exists'. This remark by Ukrainian composer Valentin Silvestrov is pertinent to many of the wistful, seemingly partially-recalled vignettes contained in this programme.

Silvestrov was born on 30 September 1937 in Kiev. He began private music lessons at the age of 15. From 1955 to 1958 he studied music at evening school in Kiev while training to become a civil engineer. For the following six years he was enrolled at Kiev Conservatoire. Here he was a composition pupil of Boris Lyatoshinsky and also took harmony and counterpoint lessons with Levko Revutsky. Under the tutelage of these two doyens of Ukrainian music he imbibed the music of, among others, Webern, Scriabin and the new Polish school. Upon graduation he taught music theory at various schools. Since 1970 he has been a freelance composer based in Kiev.

His catalogue consists mainly of orchestral, chamber, vocal and piano pieces. These have been played internationally. Early works such as the *Piano Quintet* (1961) earned him a place among the leading avant-garde Ukrainian composers of his generation. He reached artistic maturity with his *Third Symphony 'Eschatophony'* (1966). This massive score containing precisely notated passages and improvisational elements won the Koussevitzky Foundation Prize.

In the early 1970s he wrote *Music for Children, Three Pieces in Olden Style* and the *First String Quartet*. Written in 'olden style', these pieces are more firmly rooted in tonality than Silvestrov's previous output. They also denote a fresh and individual approach to traditional forms.

The *Fifth Symphony* (1980–82) is a consolidation of previous stylistic explorations. Its richness of language stems from a mastery of several contrasting modes of musical expression. There is the sense of an 'epilogue' or 'coda' throughout a work the composer himself has referred to as a 'post-symphony'. He continued to use

flickers of memory and dialogues with the past in the dramatic narratives of his subsequent scores.

In recent years Silvestrov has developed his own version of postmodernism. He describes it as 'metamusic', a shortened form of 'metaphorical music'. This universal language is acutely sensitive to other musics and acts as a kind of postlude to them.

The composer has written that 'music is still song, even if one cannot literally sing it'. His comment is endorsed by the fluently lyrical quality which graces the instrumental works presented here.

In *Two Dialogues with Postscript* for piano and string orchestra (2002), Silvestrov engages with two composers from an earlier age as he refashions and elaborates upon their material. *Wedding Waltz* (1826 ... 2002) is a realisation of a short piece Franz Schubert composed for a friend's wedding. Schubert performed the waltz but never wrote it down so its existence is dependent upon oral tradition, a process of great interest to Silvestrov. *Postlude* (1882 ... 2001) is a haunting realisation of a fragment of music by Richard Wagner. The concluding piece in this tiny triptych, *Morning Serenade* dates from 2002. The score does not disclose any connection with pre-existing music but the superscription '... – V. Silvestrov' suggests it may be based on an idea from the composer's own past.

The *Serenade for String Orchestra* (1978) is dedicated to composer and musicologist Vadim Khrapachov (b. 1947) who has written music for numerous films, animations and documentaries. It is scored for five first and five second violins, four violas, three cellos and two double basses. These groups are divided so the piece is written in 19 individual parts. The opening section has a numinous quality as the listener is presented with a hushed skein of strings of indeterminate tonality. Gradually the texture coalesces sufficiently to define certain recognisable elements – a rising figure in the bass and a triplet motif. Both of these ideas will play a crucial role in the ensuing musical argument. The triplet

motif begins to dominate the material and the music gains in intensity, culminating in a sequence of sonorous cluster chords. In the wake of this climactic episode, there is a gentle, finely wrought passage in E flat minor. The closing section is avowedly tonal. After a brief moment of bitonality, the work ebbs away in F major.

The *Farewell Serenade* for string orchestra (2003) is cast in two unbroken sections. The first has a baleful air and serves as an extended introduction to the second section. This feels like the serenade proper and has the air of a sorrowful reminiscence. The score is a memorial tribute to Ivan Karabits (1945–2002), one of Ukraine's leading 20th-century composers.

Dedicated to Manfred Eicher, *Silent Music* consists of three movements: the delicate *Waltz of the Moment*, the mournful *Evening Serenade* and the vivid *Moments of the Serenade*. *Silent Music* was scored from bagatelles originally written for piano (first movement) and cello (movements two and three). All three, in the composer's view, represent 'still metaphors of silence' because 'the melody is a symbol of something that cannot be expressed, rather than something that can imply some kind of life-affirming happiness'.

*The Messenger – 1996* is scored for piano, string orchestra and a synthesizer. This last instrument is used at the beginning and end of the piece to represent the gentle sighing of the wind that marks both the arrival and the departure of the eponymous emissary. The work is dedicated to Silvestrov's wife, the musicologist Larissa Bondarenko, who died in 1996.

The title of the piece is taken from the writings of the existential philosopher Yakov Druskin (1901–1980), a scholar from St Petersburg. Druskin's 'messenger' is a fictional character who represents a link between this world and the world beyond. This figure is portrayed in the score by a series of honeyed, remote-sounding,

Mozartian phrases, marked 'as if enveloped in mist'. These shadowy statements give the piece the flavour of a pure and delicate 18th-century sonatina. However, Silvestrov is not content merely to offer an effective pastiche. He recasts his classical melodies as a series of shifting impressions by constantly altering minutely the dynamics and pulse of the material. The whole score requires the most delicate realisation and is required to be played with a 'light touch'. Silvestrov also stipulates that the lid of the piano must remain completely closed throughout. The sustaining pedal is used specifically so that 'the preceding sonority reverberates', creating the illusion of an echo permanently enveloping the music.

*Moments of Memory II* (2003) is a collection of evocative miniatures for piano and string orchestra. They all suggest a yearning for an unreachable past. *Serenade of Childhood* (1954 ... 2003) is a melancholic, halting presentation of a Chopinesque idea, half-remembered. It is dedicated to the Kiev-based poet, musicologist and cultural historian G. Khoroshilov. Written for the Ukrainian composer Oleg Kiva (1947–2007), *Elegy* is a hesitant recollection of a lament. *Farewell Waltz* painstakingly welds its splintered phrases into a valedictory theme. The dedicatee is Vadim Khrapachov. *Postludium* conjures up a delicate postscript to a bygone event. It was written for the prolific Ukrainian composer Yevhen Stankovych (b. 1942). For Larissa Bondarenko, *Autumn Serenade* presents vivid impressions of time past in a few short paragraphs. The closing item in this collection, *Pastoral*, epitomises Silvestrov's art. From its blurry, imprecise phrases a precious souvenir of a shared memory is precariously but exquisitely assembled. The score is dedicated to Inga Nikolenko, daughter of Ivan Karabits.

Paul Conway

## Notes on the Dedicatees

### Serenade for String Orchestra: Vadim Khrapachov (b. 1947)

Composer and musicologist, awarded the title of Honoured Artist of Ukraine in 2008. He began to work in film in 1937, having written music for 49 films, 19 animations, and 13 documentaries. Many of his films are prizewinners of a number of international film festivals.

### Farewell Serenade: Ivan Karabits (1945-2002)

The musical output of Ivan Karabits – one of Ukraine's leading 20th-century composers, includes a number of stage, vocal, symphonic and chamber works. Following the tradition of Mahler and Shostakovich, the musical language of Ivan Karabits is also deeply rooted in Ukrainian and Slavonic symphonic and folk tradition of past centuries, and has left a lasting influence on various generations of Ukrainian composers of the second half of the 20th century. His *Concertos for Orchestra Nos. 1-3* can be heard on Naxos 8.572633.

### Silent Music: Manfred Eicher (b. 1943)

*Silent Music* is related to bagatelles [...] which, in my view, represent metaphorical silence. This silence can be expressed through some elegant melodious serenades, but bagatelles are still metaphors of silence. Metaphors, because the melody is a symbol of something that cannot be expressed, rather than something that can imply some kind of life-affirming happiness. I call it 'flowers, gathered in the meadows of Elysium'. It can be deemed 'music of the shadows' [...] because profile is as important here as in the theatre of shadows. In music, profile is melody.'

(Valentin Silvestrov. Waiting for the music. Lectures-conversations. Kiev. Dukh i Litera, 2010.)

### The Messenger – 1996: Larissa Bondarenko,

the composer's wife, who died in 1996.

'In my life there were a number of meaningful meetings [...] but the most meaningful was with my wife, musicologist Larissa Bondarenko. She was my first

listener, understanding and very critical – without even a tiny drop of flattery, which composers often receive from their relatives. I do not know what kind of music I would have written without Larissa. Even when I am simply writing my surname, I feel that I am some kind of an impostor – this is how great a role she played in my life.'

(Valentin Silvestrov, 'Any genius can become lifeless...' Weekly Mirror. *Ukraine* No. 22, 13 June 2008.)

### Moments of Memory II:

#### G. Khoroshilov (1953–2005)

Friend of Valentin Silvestrov, Kiev-based poet, musicologist, and cultural historian. Silvestrov set three of his poems to music.

#### Oleg Kiva (1947–2007)

Composer, awarded the title of Honoured Artist of Ukraine Soviet Socialist Republic in 1986, and a national artist of Ukraine in 2001. He was a composer of ballets, chamber cantatas, piano concertos, symphonic, chamber, and choral music, music for theatre and film.

### Yevhen Stankovych (b. 1942)

Yevhen Stankovych is one of the central figures in contemporary Ukrainian music. A prolific composer, he has, since 1966, composed six symphonies (*Symphonies Nos. 1, 2 and 4* are available on Naxos 8.555741), operas *When the Fern Blooms* and *Rustici*, six ballets, a large number of works in the oratorical, vocal and chamber genres, as well as incidental music to six music theatre plays and over 100 films.

### Inga Nikolenko, the composer's daughter:

'Every day is the same. He wakes up and puts the kettle on. Whilst the water is heating up, he has nothing to do, so he writes down a melody that is invariably in his head. Then he starts writing and forgets about everything, including the kettle. This long-suffering kettle...'

(Inga Nikolenko, for the music festival in Davos.)

## Iryna Starodub



Iryna Starodub is a talented Ukrainian pianist, representative of the modern piano school. She received her diploma from the Tchaikovsky National Academy of Music and is a laureate and diploma winner of international piano and chamber ensemble competitions. Iryna Starodub has collaborated with Ukrainian composers such as Valentin Silvestrov and Myroslav Skoryk, among others. She teaches in the Ukraine National Academy of Music and has been a competition jury member. She has performed at many international festivals and is a permanent member of Kiev Virtuosi.

## National Chamber Ensemble 'Kiev Virtuosi'

### Violin I

Taras Iaropud  
(concertmaster)  
Oleksandra Savchenko  
Tatyana Khomenko  
Halyna Korinets  
Igor Andriievskyy  
Olga Chornokondratenko

### Violin II

Anastasia Chop\*  
Ekaterina Boychuk  
Pavlo Mohylevskyy  
Sukhovyi Yevhenii  
Roman Kholmatov

### Viola

Kuleba Kostiantyn\*  
Valentyna Bugrak  
Natalia Onishchuk  
Oleh Trunov

### Cello

Yuri Pogoretskyi\*  
Natalia Yaropud  
Mariia Yasinska

### Double bass

Anton Zhukov  
Volodymyr Grechukh [4](#)–[5](#)

### Piano

Iryna Starodub

\* Section leader



## Kiev Virtuosi

Artistic Director and Chief Conductor: Dmitry Yablonsky



Based in the capital of Ukraine, Kiev Virtuosi has earned national and international recognition by both listeners and critics around the world as one of the country's leading orchestral ensembles. With an average age of 30, this youthful orchestra unites talented musicians from all over Ukraine, most of whom are winners of various competitions. The ensemble gained its reputation by popularising the music of Western composers in Ukraine, as well as enjoying a very close collaboration with such outstanding contemporary composers as Penderecki, Silvestrov, Skoryk, and others. The orchestra's unique sound and virtuosity have attracted many internationally acclaimed soloists and conductors to appear with them over the years. Kiev Virtuosi bring their high level of artistry together with their Ukrainian pride to a wide range of audiences. Their recent tours have taken them to countries such as Switzerland, France, Spain and Azerbaijan, to name but a few.

## Dmitry Yablonsky



Dmitry Yablonsky, a GRAMMY®-nominated cellist and conductor, was born in Moscow into a musical family. He began playing the cello when he was five years old and was accepted into the Central Music School for Gifted Children. At the age of nine he made his orchestral debut playing Haydn's *Cello Concerto*. Since then his career has taken him to some of the most celebrated stages in the world, such as Carnegie Hall, La Scala, Moscow Great Hall, St Petersburg Philharmonic Hall, Taiwan National Hall, Teatre Mogador, Cité de la Musique and the Louvre, amongst others. His career as a conductor began at the age of 26 in Camerino, Italy, and since then he has collaborated with many major orchestras, including the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra (Principal Guest Conductor 2000–2004), Novoya Rossiya (Principal Guest Conductor since 2012), National Chamber Ensemble 'Kiev Virtuosi' (Principal Conductor since 2014), Israel Symphony Orchestra, Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, Belgian National Orchestra, Antwerpen Orchestra, North Netherlands Orchestra, Maastricht Orchestra, Russian State Orchestra, Orchestre National d'Ile de France, Taiwan National Orchestra, Catania Opera Orchestra, Holland Symphonia, Bologna Chamber Orchestra, and the Orquesta Filarmónica de la UNAM (OFUNAM), Mexico. In 2010 Dmitry Yablonsky received the Diploma of Honorary Academician at the Independent Academy of Liberal Arts at the Russian Academy of Sciences. He has transcribed and edited works for cello, which have been published by the International Music Company and Dover Publications. In 2008 Naxos released his recording of all forty Popper *Etudes* for solo cello (8.557718-19), to critical acclaim. He has been teaching since 2016 at the Buchmann-Mehta School of Music at Tel Aviv University, Israel. He has an enthusiastic and charismatic character that leads him to initiate many projects and organise many festivals, including the Qabala Festival in Azerbaijan and the Wandering Stars Festival, which takes place in a variety of countries such as Israel, Italy, Russia and the United States. He plays two cellos, a Joseph Filius Andrea Guarneri and a Matteo Goffriller.

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

Ukrainian composer Valentin Silvestrov has said that ‘I do not write new music. My music is a response to and an echo of what already exists.’ This is particularly pertinent to works such as the *Two Dialogues with Postscript* that engage hauntingly with Schubert and Wagner, and the evocative *Moments of Memory II* which alludes to Chopin and yearns for an unreachable past. ‘Music is still song, even if one cannot literally sing it’, says Silvestrov.

Valentin  
**SILVESTROV**  
(b. 1937)

<b>Two Dialogues with Postscript (version for piano and string orchestra) (2002)</b>	<b>8:46</b>
❶ I. Wedding Waltz (1826 ... 2002) (Fr. Schubert ... V. Silvestrov)	4:12
❷ II. Postlude (1882 ... 2001) (R. Wagner ... V. Silvestrov)	2:31
❸ III. Morning Serenade (2002) (V. Silvestrov)	2:03
❹ <b>Serenade for String Orchestra (to V. Khrapachov) (1978)</b>	<b>14:52</b>
❺ <b>Farewell Serenade (to I. Karabits) (2003)</b>	<b>6:16</b>
<b>Silent Music (to Manfred Eicher) (2002)</b>	<b>11:05</b>
❻ I. Waltz of the Moment	4:45
❼ II. Evening Serenade	3:44
❽ III. Moments of the Serenade	2:36
❾ <b>The Messenger – 1996 (to Larissa Bondarenko) (version for piano, strings and synthesizer) (1997)</b>	<b>9:26</b>
<b>Moments of Memory II (2003)</b>	<b>17:34</b>
❿ I. Serenade of Childhood (1954 ... 2003) (on G. Khoroshilov's birthday)	3:22
⓫ II. Elegy (to O. Kiva)	3:58
⓬ III. Farewell Waltz (to V. Khrapachov)	2:38
⓭ IV. Postlude (to Y. Stankovych)	2:16
⓮ V. Autumn Serenade (to Larissa Bondarenko)	2:04
⓯ VI. Pastoral (to Inga N.)	3:16

Iryna Starodub, Piano ❶–❸ ❾–⓯  
**Kiev Virtuosi • Dmitry Yablonsky**

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