



# VIOLIN FUTURA

21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY SOLO VIOLIN PROJECT

**PIOTR SZEWCZYK**

33 COMMISSIONED WORKS FROM  
COMPOSERS AROUND THE WORLD





Szewczyk performing at Carnegie Hall

## PIOTR SZEWCZYK *(pyo-ter chef-chick)*

Piotr Szewczyk, Polish-born violinist, hailed for “stellar technique and constantly ringing tone” (*Charleston Post and Courier*), as a composer whose music was called “magical” (*Gramophone Magazine*), has been a member of the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra first violin section since 2007.

Szewczyk has also appeared as guest concertmaster with the Orlando Chamber Soloists and has completed a three-year fellowship at the New World Symphony under Michael Tilson Thomas where he served as rotating concertmaster. He is the winner of FSU Doctoral Concerto Competition, the New World Symphony Concerto Competition, and other awards. As a soloist and chamber musician, he performed at the Weill Hall at Carnegie Hall, Aspen Contemporary Ensemble, Spoleto Festival USA, Colorado Music Festival, Santa Fe New Music, and others.

As a composer, Szewczyk has received awards from The American Prize, Project Trio Competition, Flute Consortium Competition, Shuffle Concert Competition, American Modern Ensemble, *Rapido!* Composition Contest, Third Millennium Ensemble, and others. His music was featured on NPR Performance Today, the CBS Early Show, and has been performed by Atlanta Chamber Players, Trio Solis, Alias Ensemble, Dover Quartet, Carpe Diem String Quartet, Vega Quartet, Sybarite 5, Juventas Ensemble, New Music Raleigh, New World Symphony and at Eastern Music Festival, Ravinia Festival, Colorado Music Festival, St. Augustine Music Festival, and others.

Dr. Szewczyk holds the degrees of D.M. from Florida State University, B.M. and double M.M. in violin and composition from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. He studied violin with Piotr Milewski, Kurt Sassmannshaus, Dorothy DeLay, and Corinne Stillwell, and composition with Joel Hoffman, Michael Fiday, Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon, Henry Gwiazda, and Darrel Handel.

Full biography and more information are available at [www.VeryNewMusic.com](http://www.VeryNewMusic.com).

# VIOLIN FUTURA

Please visit [www.ViolinFutura.com](http://www.ViolinFutura.com) for complete information, performance history, to contact me and all composers, and a free PDF of my Doctoral treatise covering in-depth analysis of this project from multiple perspectives.

The purpose of the Violin Futura Project is to sample the creative environment of our times by showcasing the wide variety of styles present in the 21st Century, and contribute to a body of new solo violin repertoire. It showcases how composers are re-imagining how to write for solo violin in the 21st century through the lens of a miniature. I started developing the Violin Futura Project in 2005 and it currently features over thirty solo violin miniatures written for me by composers from around the world, including my own compositions.

Within this project, the miniature format works as a building block for a self-contained recital, as if creating a larger meta-piece comprised of movements written by different composers. I frequently perform up to sixteen of the pieces in a one-hour recital, without applause in between, in different configurations for each recital. A unique aspect and creative challenge of this project is for the performer to become a meta-composer, by creating a specific narrative through a carefully chosen performance order of multiple miniatures. It also allows for great flexibility in creating different lengths of recitals with varied dramatic narratives.

Each piece in this project stands on its own, but as a group, a mesmerizing musical landscape of the 21st century emerges: an era of “post-isms” where anything goes, embracing eclectic and expressive musical languages of various styles and aesthetics for deeply personal expression. The narrow focus on solo violin miniatures gives a razor sharp insight into how composers are implementing this aesthetic eclecticism. In addition, the 5-year timeframe of this project, allows for further analysis into deeper socio-cultural questions: what causes such variety of approaches to emerge at the same time in history from different composers’ minds? And how do these works fit and relate to the abundance of solo violin repertoire across the centuries? My answers to these and more questions are further explored in my Doctoral treatise.

This project is a source of great artistic fulfillment for me: being connected with so many wonderful, creative, living composers; working on music of our time; and sharing it with audiences. This is music that directly and viscerally expresses the complex cultural and emotional milieu of our fast-changing and instantly-connected world.

I hope that this project will encourage and inspire many more violinists to reach out to living composers, learn about their music, commission them and premiere their works. The collaborative process of bringing a brand new piece to life and seeing how it matures with each performance is, to me, the most rewarding experience as a musician. New music also needs to have a chance to be performed beyond the world premieres and enter the concert repertoire. I have given over twenty performances of this project so far, and plan on continuing to share these pieces with new audiences. I also hope that works from this project will be chosen for per-

performances by other violinists, and will begin to be incorporated into the 21st century violin repertoire that will inspire generations of violinists.

- Piotr Szewczyk

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

## SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS OF THE VIOLIN FUTURA PROJECT

- All pieces on this recording were written within a 5-year period (2006-2010).
- Composers were born between 1934 and 1983, covering multiple generations of educational and musical experiences, spanning different stages of their lives and careers.
- Composers represent numerous countries and cultures: United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Mexico, Poland, Germany, China, Hong Kong, and Japan.
- All but two of the composers are not violinists and have varied instrumental backgrounds including piano, cello, guitar, sitar, and others.
- Nearly all of the pieces are programmatic; the titles vividly express something tangible – a feeling, idea, attitude, etc.

- Subsets of the pieces display common characteristics that can be categorized into musical archetypes revealed through my analysis: *moto perpetuo*, *dance forms*, *text and poetry*, *theatricality*, *crossover with popular music*, *variation form and/or quotations*, *programmatic music*, *generic forms*, *absolute music*, *nationalism*, *humor*.

A table of archetypes and corresponding pieces, including historical examples from standard repertoire is available in my Doctoral treatise.

- Approaches to texture involve monophonic, polyphonic and homophonic writing. Some pieces stay purely within one approach, others move freely between different approaches.
- Harmonic language varies across and within the pieces covering all available approaches: tonality/consonance, atonality/dissonance, modality, micro-tonality, and crossover pop/jazz harmony.
- Nearly all of the available extended techniques are used across different pieces but in different contexts. Some pieces don't use any; some use them frequently.
- The levels of technical complexity span from moderate through extremely demanding, while being idiomatic for the instrument.
- The scope of interpretative freedom varies between the pieces from very free (almost no markings besides notes and tempo) to fully controlled (precise interpretative markings on nearly every note).

- The performer becomes a meta-composer by deciding on the performance order of the pieces: how they connect with each other and how they fit within the structure of the recital to create a specific dramatic narrative.
- The listeners can also become meta-composers by programming their own track orders of the recording and creating different narratives: using the shuffle function adds an element of indeterminacy.
- The listeners can narrow down the listening choices of pieces to only specific archetypes and experience how each composer expresses particular archetype.
- These pieces can also be performed separately from the project as part of different recitals. One particularly interesting possibility is to pair them with pieces from different eras, but connected by the same archetype.



## SPECIAL THANKS

I would like to thank all the composers who wrote these fascinating pieces for me and gave me the privilege of premiering them. This recording is dedicated to them all.

Photography by **Harry Hellas**

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

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**Piotr Szewczyk** violin

**All Tracks** recorded July 19 – 22, 2015 at  
the University of North Florida Recital Hall,  
Jacksonville FL

Recording Engineer & Producer **John Hadden**

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Executive Producer **Bob Lord**

Audio Director **Jeff LeRoy**

Mastering Engineer **Shaun Michaud**

Production Engineer **Nate Hunter**

Art & Production Director **Brett Picknell**

Graphic Designer **Emily Roulo**

A&R **Chris Robinson**

Marketing Manager **Ethan Fortin**

[info@navonarecords.com](mailto:info@navonarecords.com)

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

223 Lafayette Road

North Hampton NH 03862

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# 1

1	<i>Ephemeral Rhapsody</i> (2009) JASON BAHR (B.1972)	3:14
2	<i>Mister Blister</i> (2006) LAWRENCE DILLON (B.1959)	2:32
3	<i>The Doors in the Sky</i> (2007) CARSON P. COOMAN (B.1982)	3:37
4	<i>Sizzle</i> (2007) DANIEL KELLOGG (B.1976)	2:04
5	<i>Blue Berceuse</i> (2007) MASON BATES (B.1977)	1:17
6	<i>Red Bull #3</i> (2009) KARI HENRIK JUUSELA (B.1954)	3:39
7	<i>Homecoming</i> (2007) NATHAN WILLIAMSON (B.1978)	3:13
8	<i>Left for the Dogs</i> (2007) MARK GREY (B.1967)	3:23
9	<i>Fish Gotta Swim</i> (2006) AARON EINBOND (B.1976)	1:59
10	<i>Żubrówka</i> (2006) MARC MELLITS (B.1966)	1:21
11	<i>Toward the Other Shore</i> (2009) SUZANNE SORKIN (B.1974)	6:39
12	<i>Rush</i> (2008) SYDNEY HODKINSON (B.1934)	2:26
13	<i>Cirque</i> (2006) PATRICK CASTILLO (B.1979)	2:30
14	<i>Real Phone Key</i> (2007) HIRO MOROZUMI (B.1976)	3:56
15	<i>fp (For Piotr)</i> (2007) JOHN KENNEDY (B.1959)	2:24
16	<i>Midnight Dance</i> (2009) LAURENCE SHERR (B.1953)	2:53
17	<i>All Wheel Drive</i> (2004) PIOTR SZEWCZYK (B.1977)	2:50

# 2

1	<i>Buyer's Remorse</i> (2009) RICHARD BELCASTRO (B.1976)	4:27
2	<i>Coming Undone</i> (2009) LISA R. COONS (B.1979)	3:49
3	<i>Scatterbrain</i> (2009) TYLER CAPP (B.1983)	3:32
4	<i>Benediction</i> (2009) GARY SMART (B.1943)	3:43
5	<i>Caprice</i> (2009) NG WAH-HEI (B.1982)	3:32
6	<i>Respite</i> (2007) ETHAN WICKMAN (B.1973)	5:00
7	<i>Puce</i> (2006) JEFFREY HARRINGTON (B.1955)	3:22
8	<i>Swoosh</i> (2009) ADAM SCHOENBERG (B.1980)	2:31
9	<i>Memories</i> (2009) LAN CHEE-LAM (B.1982)	4:02
10	<i>Yang-Ge Dance</i> (2010) JIANJUN HE (B.1958)	1:56
11	<i>gegenschein</i> (2009) CLIFTON CALLENDER (B.1969)	4:59
12	<i>Tossing and Turning</i> (2009) JOHN OLIVER (B.1959)	2:51
13	<i>Moto Perpetuo</i> (2009) JORGE SOSA (B.1976)	3:43
14	<i>Whiffet</i> (2009) CARL SCHIMMEL (B.1975)	2:21
15	<i>Idylle (Idyl)</i> (2006) MORITZ EGGERT (B.1967)	5:14
16	<i>First Coast Groove</i> (2008) PIOTR SZEWCZYK (B.1977)	4:09

For complete information about this project please visit  
[www.ViolinFutura.com](http://www.ViolinFutura.com)



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