



**CICCOLINI  
PRIZE**

online recording competition  
for pianists:

*Piano album debuts*

# VIOLETTA FIALKO

*piano*

**LYADOV:**

*Biryul'ki*

*Prelude in B minor*

**MEDTNER:**

*Sonata-Reminiscenza*

**PROKOFIEV:**

*10 Pieces from Romeo & Juliet*

**SCRIABIN:**

*Piano Sonata No. 4 in F sharp*



DIVINE ART 'DEBUT' SERIES



CICCOLINI PRIZE WINNER 2021

VIOLETTA FIALKO PIANO  
CICCOLINI PRIZE WINNER 2021



RECORDED IN KYIV, UKRAINE, IN JANUARY 2022

**Anatoly Lyadov (1855-1914)**

<b>Biryul'ki, Op. 2</b>		<b>13:09</b>
1 I. <i>Presto</i>	0:56	
2 II. <i>Allegro</i>	0:30	
3 III. <i>Allegretto</i>	1:10	
4 IV. <i>Allegro con fuoco</i>	1:11	
5 V. <i>Vivace</i>	0:57	
6 VI. <i>Allegro</i>	0:32	
7 VII. <i>Moderato</i>	0:38	
8 VIII. <i>Allegro moderato</i>	0:51	
9 IX. <i>Allegretto tranquillo</i>	1:31	
10 X. <i>Allegro</i>	0:56	
11 XI. <i>Tempo di valse</i>	0:55	
12 XII. <i>Prestissimo</i>	0:46	
13 XIII. <i>Vivace</i>	0:43	
14 XIV. <i>Presto</i>	1:26	
15 <b>3 Morceaux, Op. 11 – No. 1: Prelude in B minor</b>		<b>2:59</b>

**Nikolai Medtner (1880-1951)**

16 <b>Piano Sonata 'Reminiscenza', Op. 38 No. 1</b>		<b>13:03</b>
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**Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)**

<b>10 Pieces from Romeo and Juliet, Op. 75</b>		<b>32:49</b>
17 I. Folk Dance	4:06	
18 II. Scena: The Street Awakens	1:25	
19 III. Minuet: Arrival of the Guests	2:43	
20 IV. Juliet as a Young Girl	3:31	
21 V. Masks	2:29	
22 VI. Montagues and Capulets	3:51	
23 VII. Friar Laurence	2:45	
24 VIII. Mercutio	2:13	
25 IX. Dance of the Girls with Lilies	2:39	
26 X. Romeo and Juliet before Parting	7:03	

**Alexander Scriabin (1872-1915)**

<b>Piano Sonata No. 4 in F sharp major, Op. 30</b>		<b>8:01</b>
27 I. <i>Andante</i>	3:00	
28 II. <i>Prestissimo volando</i>	4:59	

<b>total playing time</b>		<b>70:17</b>
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# THE CICCOLINI PRIZE

The Ciccolini Online Competition for Pianists was inaugurated by the Aldo Ciccolini European Arts Academy and its associated Foundation, based in Trani, Italy.

The 2021 competition attracted entrants from many countries and was held in 'virtual' format due to the then strict restrictions on travel and assembly during the worst of the Covid pandemic.

The prestigious jury consisted of:

Professor Pierluigi Camicia (President): international concert pianist and previous Director of the Tito Schipa Conservatory, Lecce.

Professor Alfonso Soldano (Artistic Director): international pianist, musicologist and professor at the Umberto Giordano Conservatory in Foggia.

Professor Tatjana Cratonjic: international pianist, Director of the Gaetano Braga Conservatory in Teramo.

Professor Giuseppe Greco: international pianist, Professor at the Umberto Giordano Conservatory.

Dr. Attilio Cantore, pianist and senior music critic for Amadeus Magazine and many others, Doctor of Musicology from Milan University.

The prizes for First and Second Place included a recording with Divine Art, funded by the Ciccolini Foundation. Second place was awarded to 22-year-old Italian pianist Gabriele Michele, while the very worthy winner (then aged 24) was the brilliant Ukrainian virtuoso Violetta Fialko.

We hope that this recital album, issued in the wake of the devastating invasion of Violetta's home country, will enable her to find international recognition.

*Stephen Sutton, CEO of Divine Art, March 2022*

## **Anatoly Lyadov: Biryul'ki, Op. 2**

Anatoly Lyadov (or Liadov) (1855-1914) is rightly considered a master of the miniature. His works are the embodiment of the subtle and refined aristocratic atmosphere of the nineteenth century. In his work, the composer did not strive to embody real images in impressionistic style, but his artistic ideals were unquestionable beauty, playfulness, fairy tale and mysticism. This is indicated by his fascination with the tales of Hans Christian Andersen, about whose work he said: "at his three pages more love for people than in Tolstoy's volumes" (from the composer's letters). Lyadov's preference for the Danish storyteller was due to his special passion for invention, fairy tales, games, dreams and fantasies, which allowed the composer to create his own world, mostly inhabited by fairy-tale characters, game sketches and music landscapes. Such artistic ideals are observed in Lyadov's works from the early *Biryulki* to the fabulous symphonic paintings of the late period.

*Biryul'ki*, Op. 2, from 1876, was Lyadov's first work for piano. This work became a sort of testing laboratory for Lyadov, where his personal compositional style was formed. Calling the work *Biryul'ki*, the composer immediately gave a creative form of "play with little things", because literally, playing biryul'ki means playing with small toys that need to be hooked back one by one, without touching the rest of the toys. And figuratively, it means "doing little things". This name immediately evokes associations with the world of childhood and carefree play.

At the same time, this work is a great challenge for the pianist, as the composer also pays with the performer from whom is required true virtuosity and the ability to play complex things very simply and with a smile! The work consists of 14 pieces, which can be called "toylike" because they are compact, miniature and quickly change one to another like in a kaleidoscope. The pieces are like toys that the composer plays with and, looking from different angles, enjoying the uniqueness and instantaneity of each.

## **Anatoly Lyadov: Prelude in B minor, from Op. 11**

Anatoly Lyadov's favorite musical form is a short instrumental or vocal piece. The composer jokingly said that he could not stand more than five minutes of music. All his works are miniatures, laconic and clear in form, small masterpieces. The prelude was one of the leading genres in the composer's work. This genre attracted him with its flexibility and ability to convey a variety of images and moods.

Lyadov's preludes tend to be very lyrical. An outstanding work of this kind is this Prelude, written in 1886, – a real gem of the composer's intimate lyrical style, and the first item in his '3 Morceaux', Op. 11. The Prelude is based on the old folk song "Why the love is so cruel in this too cruel world", which is about the feelings experienced by a girl abandoned by her beloved. Lyadov changed the rhythm of the melody, but kept the most expressive melodic inversions.

This work is special for me. When I performed it, for the first time I felt insanely inspired! I felt like a performer who speaks to the audience with sounds. Therefore, this work will forever remain for me the work from which it all began...

## **Nikolai Medtner: Sonata-Reminiscenza, Op. 38**

Nikolai Medtner (1880-1951) was one of the last romantic composers. Piano Sonatas make up most of his output. The composer usually wrote programmatic works and added titles, such as "sonata-fairy tale", "sonata-elegy", "sonata-reminiscenza", and so on.

His series of works "Forgotten Motives", Op. 38-40 was written in 1918-1920, shortly before his emigration. The *Sonata-Reminiscenza*, Op. 38, is full of songlike lyricism and sadness. In the work, the composer seems to engrave his own experiences by looking back on the life that will have to be left forever. The music contrasts with melancholy and fatal images, reproduces feelings, fears and lyrics that sound melancholy and sincere, like confession. This is also very intellectual music. The composer himself considered the work "a real creative piece of fortune" Indeed, the work is unique. Despite the generally non-contrasting material and atypical sonata form, it sounds natural and moves along the paths of the composer's subconscious, from lyrical motifs full of sadness to dramatic culminations. Undoubtedly, this sonata is one of the most beautiful of Medtner's creations.

## **Sergei Prokofiev: 10 pieces from the ballet "Romeo and Juliet"**

The ballet "Romeo and Juliet" is based on William Shakespeare's play of the same title. It is one of the most popular in the world and is still relevant today. The history of its creation was interesting and extraordinary. The composer completed the score in 1935; a "pre-premiere" presentation took place in concert format, where the composer played the score himself. The event was afforded wide coverage in the press, as the composer, so popular in Europe and America, was returning to the Soviet Union with his family. Accordingly, there were many who wanted to listen him. Among the guests was the prima ballerina of the Kirov (Mariinsky) Theater, Galina Ulanova, who had travelled from Leningrad to Moscow. When the composer finished playing, the hall was empty. The audience disliked the music so much that people simply left the hall. Galina Ulanova, who was sharp-tongued, allowed herself to say about Prokofiev's music: "there is no sadder story in the world than Prokofiev's music in ballet".

Despite this failure of a presentation, and the rejection of the work by both the Kirov and Bolshoi ballet companies, the composer in that period created several orchestral and piano suites, and a few years later, Prokofiev went on a concert tour of Europe.

At one of his concerts in Paris, he presented some fragments from the ballet. On this occasion, the music received positive reviews from the public and critics alike. Among the guests was a conductor from the theater in Brno (Czech Republic) and he invited Prokofiev to make a staging. It was there, in Brno, that *Romeo and Juliet* premiered in 1938. This caused outrage among Russian compatriots over the premiere taking place abroad. However, this was a kind of impetus for a staging in the composer's homeland in 1940. Leonid Lavrovsky was the director, Galina Ulanova was given the role of Juliet. This role became the crowning achievement for the ballerina. From this history it is noticeable that the piano suite played an important role in the perception and popularization of this music. Each of the 10 pieces in the

suite is either a dance number or a portrait of one of the characters, brightly and realistically portrayed. The composer skilfully re-told the immortal love story of Shakespeare with the sounds of his music.

### **Alexander Scriabin: Sonata No. 4 in F sharp major, op. 30**

Alexander Scriabin (1872-1915) is one of the most mysterious composers of the twentieth century and one of those artists for whom their philosophy and belief system became the real basis of their creativity. Therefore, his music contains many images and symbols that embody the main philosophies of the composer. Scriabin was interested in Friedrich Nietzsche's Übermensch theory, and later became interested in theosophy, through the writings of Helena Blavatsky and Jean Delville.

Scriabin is perhaps the only composer who used his work to solve philosophical problems. From an early age he was in search of himself, and as a result said: "to become an optimist in the real sense of the word you need to feel despair and overcome it". The composer's quest was solely aimed at understanding his identity – finding and affirming his own self, and the way to achieve the culmination of this search he found in art. With the help of art, the principle declares, one can and should defeat forces of negativity and opposition, and reach the highest point of human existence. Fascinated by his own ideas, feeling the great spiritual power that he drew from his work, Scriabin even wrote in his diaries: "I am God". His mission was to proclaim to people the foundations of his worldview: "I'm going to tell people that they are strong and they can *do*". His music is thus full of transcendence and metaphysicality. Frequent themes of the works are the desire and longing of the spirit for a distant dream, beauty, idealism, which the composer seeks to achieve in a fit of ecstasy and merge into oneness.

The Sonata No. 4 is one of the works in which the main plot of Scriabin's work is embodied – the Creating Spirit overcomes the sensual world by the power of art and achieves self-serving triumph. The work consists of two parts. The first part depicts the image of languor: a distant star, whereas the second movement is a crazy flight to a gigantic climax. The Sonata has a bright texture, which marks the achievement of complete ecstasy and merging with light into one whole.

The composer often gave his works an explanation of their program through poetry. Scriabin wrote this poem after composing the Sonata that explains the work's meaning:

In a light mist, transparent vapor  
Lost afar and yet distinct  
A star gleams softly.

How beautiful! The bluish mystery  
Of her glow  
Beckons me, cradles me.

O bring me to thee, far distant star!  
Bathe me in trembling rays  
Sweet light!

Sharp desire, voluptuous and crazed yet sweet  
Endlessly with no other goal than longing  
I would desire

But no! I vault in joyous leap  
Freely I take wing.

Mad dance, godlike play!  
Intoxicating, shining one!

It is toward thee, adored star  
My flight guides me.

Mad dance, godlike play!  
Intoxicating, shining one!

Toward thee, created freely for me  
To serve the end  
My flight of liberation!

In this play  
Sheer caprice  
In moments I forget thee  
In the maelstrom that carries me  
I veer from thy glimmering rays.

In the intensity of desire  
Thou fadest  
O distant goal.  
But ever thou shinest  
As I forever desire thee!

Thou expandest, Star!  
Now thou art a Sun  
Flamboyant Sun! Sun of Triumph!

Approaching thee by my desire for thee  
I lave myself in thy changing waves  
O joyous god.

I swallow thee  
Sea of light.

My self-of-light  
I engulf thee!

# THE PIANIST

Violetta Fialko was born on October 24, 1997 in Ukraine, into a family of musicians. She began to attend music school at the age of 5, and at 9 entered the Lysenko Kyiv Specialized Music School. She graduated with top honours in 2016 and entered the Kyiv Conservatory in the class of Boris Fedorov. Throughout her studies Violetta has actively and successfully participated in competitions, winning prizes in Classic Meridian, The Fourth International Competition '21st Century Art', Modern Music Workshop, various chamber music and piano ensemble competitions and of course 1<sup>st</sup> Prize in the Ciccolini competition, after attending masterclasses at the Ciccolini Academy under Alfonso Soldano.

Since 2018 Violetta has been working at the Lysenko Kyiv Specialized Music Scholl as an accompanist, as a teacher of piano performance and music theory at the Ukrainian Evangelical Theological Seminary and at the Music Art Academy with Natalia Gordeeva. She is also a volunteer and program host on the Christian radio station 'Emmanuel'.

Album recorded at Na Hati Records Studio, Kyiv, Ukraine in January 2022

Produced and engineered by Alexander Sadovets | Executive Producer for Ciccolini Foundation: Alfonso Soldano

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