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**NAXOS**

Alexey  
**SHOR**

## Composer's Notebook • 1

Travel Notebook, Suite for Piano and Orchestra No. 1  
Violin Concerto No. 4

Marc Bouchkov, Violin • Anna Ulaieva, Piano  
Kyiv Virtuosi  
John Warner • Dmitry Yablonsky

## Alexey Shor (b. 1970)

### Composer's Notebook • 1

Alexey Shor was born and raised in Ukraine. He left the Soviet Union to study mathematics in the United States. He currently spends most of his time in New York.

His compositions have been performed at some of the most prestigious concert halls in the world, including the Wiener Musikverein, Philharmonie Berlin, Carnegie Hall (New York), The Kennedy Center (Washington, D.C.), Kyiv Conservatory, the Concertgebouw (Amsterdam), Gasteig München, Wigmore Hall (London) and Teatro Argentina (Rome), among many others.

Concerts featuring his music have been broadcast on medici.tv, Mezzo and Euronews, among others. Shor's music has also been showcased on Fox Business news and the websites of Bloomberg News, *The New Yorker*, Yahoo and the Huffington Post. The *Overture* to his ballet *Crystal Palace* was performed at the 40th *Gramophone* Classical Music Awards ceremony in London. In 2018 he was awarded an honorary professorship at the Komitas State Conservatory of Yerevan. In 2022 Shor was appointed as the Yehudi Menuhin School's first associate composer. He has been the composer-in-residence for the Armenian State Symphony Orchestra since 2017, and in the 2024–26 seasons he will also perform that role for the Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra. Shor's scores are published by Breitkopf & Härtel and Universal Edition. Albums featuring his compositions have been released on Naxos, Warner Classics, Decca and Sony Classical, among others.

Many internationally acclaimed artists have performed Shor's music, including Behzod Abduraimov, Salvatore Accardo, Gautier Capuçon, Ray Chen, James Ehnes, Steven Isserlis, Clara-Jumi Kang, Evgeny Kissin, Denis Kozhukhin, Shlomo Mintz, Mikhail Pletnev, Gil Shaham, Yeol Eum Son, Yekwon Sunwoo, Maxim Vengerov, Nikolaj Szeps-Znaider and many others. Shor also holds a PhD in mathematics.



### **Travel Notebook, Suite for Piano and Orchestra No. 1**

The *Travel Notebook, Suite for Piano and Orchestra No. 1* is a work of seven pieces for piano and orchestra written by Shor during his extensive travels. In doing so, Shor is continuing a long tradition that goes back centuries, with many of the great composers of the past having found inspiration in visiting new places. Franz Liszt's *Années de pèlerinage*, for instance, is inspired by his travels in Switzerland and Italy, while Isaac Albéniz wrote many piano pieces influenced by different regions of Spain. More recently Olivier Messiaen wrote his *Des canyons aux étoiles* to celebrate the bicentenary of the United States Declaration of Independence after a visit to, among other places, the Bryce Canyon in Utah. The list could go on and on...

Typical of Shor's musical approach, *Travel Notebook* is written in a neo-Classical style, with a strong emphasis on melodies and traditional harmony. All the pieces, except for the first, are inspired by specific locations, but the music is not intended to reflect the musical styles characteristic to those places but rather some of the composer's personal impressions and inspirations.

The suite opens with a lyrical *Wayfarer's Prayer*, which is not associated with any place, but rather evokes various feelings related to travel in general – sadness for a place you are leaving, excitement and hope, anxiety at the unknown that lies ahead, and so on.

The second movement, called *La Rambla*, is inspired by Barcelona, and is named after one of the most famous streets in the city, celebrated for a bustling energy that once led the Spanish poet Federico García Lorca to declare that La Rambla is 'the only street in the world which I wish would never end'. The music itself reflects the excitement and energy of the place, and will be immediately recognisable to anybody who has ever walked through the picturesque paths of Barcelona.

*Addio* was written after a visit by the composer to Rome, where the past continues to encroach on the present at every corner. The piece is formulated both as a homage and as a bittersweet musical farewell to the ancient Roman civilization, looking back on that magnificent epoch with a warm gaze while simultaneously acknowledging that the glory days of that era are now long since gone.

Luxembourg Garden is a very famous and popular garden in Paris that was further popularised through its prominent placing in Victor Hugo's seminal 19th-century novel *Les Misérables*. It is here that the principal love story of the novel unfolds, as the characters Marius Pontmercy and Cosette first meet, and as a result has become synonymous with beauty and romance, as the music here also reflects.

*Rubicon*, meanwhile, was composed in reference to a shallow river in north-eastern Italy, just southeast of Ravenna. In 49 BC, Julius Caesar infamously led a single legion over the Rubicon to make his way to Rome, thereby deliberately breaking the law and committing the country to an inevitable civil war that he would eventually go on to win. The phrase 'crossing the Rubicon' has survived to refer to any individual or group committing itself irrevocably to a risky course of action. Historians believe that Caesar was undecided as he approached the river but later came to a firm conclusion to cross it, uttering the famous phrase '*ālea iacta est*' ('the die is cast'). The music starts hesitantly but ends with the sounds of marching legions and the spirit of complete determination.

*Sorrow* was inspired by the composer's trip to Venice, and reflects his profound sadness at the sight of one of the most beautiful and unique cities in the world struggling to survive in the face of modern challenges that quite literally threaten to swallow it whole. Past issues of corrosion and rising water levels have been exacerbated by new issues, including increased pollution and massive tourism.

Finally, the concluding piece, entitled *Horseman*, was composed following a visit to the legendary Royal Ascot, one of the world's most prestigious horse racing events that takes place at the Ascot Racecourse in England every year. Despite the location, however, there is nothing particularly British about the music, with the primary source of inspiration being the race itself, resulting in a piece that depicts and elicits the inimitable excitement, energy and commotion of a horse race.

### **Violin Concerto No. 4 in B minor**

This violin concerto in three movements marks one of Alexey Shor's more recent works, having been composed in 2021, in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. While still bearing many of the hallmarks for which he has become most famous, including, above all, his love for melodiousness and tonality, the work is nevertheless a reflection of its era, and thus stands out in both tone and style from his earlier music.

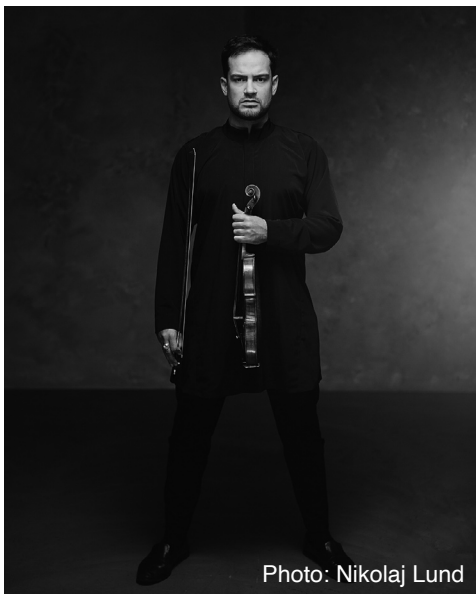
In fact, *Violin Concerto No. 4* was not merely conceived during the global pandemic, but was actually written during one of the national lockdowns that were imposed during this time, leaving the piece with a certain restlessness and intensity. Nevertheless, in spite of this, the concerto is still imbued with a romantic mood, as passionate minor melodies alternate freely with light and melancholic lines, as can most clearly be heard in the work's second movement.

Shor's musical philosophy continues to shine through as the work develops, and later on in the piece one can find the impetuous tempo alternating with a pensive solo violin, leading up to a finale that features hopefulness and the harmonious resolution of inner conflict. In the composer's world, music is a source of joy and beauty, and even in moments of anxiety and confusion, the sun will ultimately always peek out to offer a ray of hope.

Technically and ideologically more complex than his previous works, this concerto nevertheless maintains many of Shor's trademark lyrical themes, and especially his guiding principle that melody must always dominate, that even complex movements should always sound beautiful, and that music is there to be enjoyed and cherished.

**Julian Francalanza**

## Marc Bouchkov



Belgian violinist Marc Bouchkov is celebrated for his profound expression and musical depth. With performances at international prestigious concert halls, including Wigmore Hall, Teatro alla Scala and Carnegie Hall, he has captivated audiences with his emotive performances. Bouchkov has collaborated with orchestras such as the Münchner Philharmoniker and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra under conductors including Christoph Eschenbach and Mariss Jansons. A fine chamber musician, he is a regular guest of the Verbier Festival (Switzerland). A winner of numerous top honours, including a gold medal at the Concours musical international de Montréal and a silver medal at the International Tchaikovsky Competition, Bouchkov's talent is widely recognised. Alongside his performing career, he shares his expertise as a professor at the Conservatoire royal de Liège. Bouchkov's musical journey is enriched by his dedication to excellence and passion for connecting with audiences worldwide. Bouchkov's performance on this album was played on a violin by Carlo and Michelangelo Bergonzi on loan from Edwulstrad RMIC Ltd.

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

## Anna Ulaieva



Ukrainian-Austrian pianist Anna Ulaieva began her musical journey at the age of five, mastering both violin and piano. By eleven she had garnered numerous competition prizes, and chose to study piano under Nina Naiditsch and later at the Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music in Kyiv with Yuri Kot, graduating with distinction. Recognised as a laureate of the New Names of Ukraine programme, she received a presidential scholarship for her exceptional talent. Furthering her studies at the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz, she graduated with excellence under Milana Chernyavska in 2017. Ulaieva has triumphed in various international competitions, notably winning First Prize at the 2018 Malta International Piano Competition. She is acclaimed for her solo performances, chamber concerts, and collaborations with esteemed orchestras worldwide. Additionally, Ulaieva serves as a lecturer at the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz and conducts masterclasses internationally, demonstrating her commitment to nurturing young talents. She is also the artistic director of the Gifted in Music masterclass in Kapfenberg.

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

## Kyiv Virtuosi

Artistic Director and Chief Conductor: Dmitry Yablonsky



Photo: Pino Giannini

Based in the capital of Ukraine, Kyiv Virtuosi has gained national and international recognition from listeners and critics as one of the country's leading orchestras. With an average age of 30, this youthful ensemble unites talented musicians from all over Ukraine, most of whom are competition winners. The Orchestra built its reputation by bringing Western music to Ukrainian audiences and has also become known for its collaborations with outstanding contemporary composers such as Krzysztof Penderecki, Valentin Silvestrov and Myroslav Skoryk. Many internationally acclaimed soloists and conductors have performed with the ensemble over the years. Under current artistic and musical director Dmitry Yablonsky, Kyiv Virtuosi continues to bring Ukrainian musical talent to audiences the world over, most recently to Switzerland, France, Spain and Azerbaijan, among other countries.

[kyivvirtuosi.org](http://kyivvirtuosi.org)

## John Warner



Photo: Benjamin Ealovega

John Warner is founder and artistic director of Orchestra for the Earth and music director of Oxford Opera. The 2023–24 season saw Warner debut with the Berliner Symphoniker, Orquestra de la Comunitat Valenciana, Slovak State Philharmonic and State Philharmonia of Armenia. He has also conducted the London Symphony Orchestra and BBC Philharmonic, and works with soloists such as Thomas Hampson, James Ehnes and Wu Wei. Equally at home in the opera house, recent invitations include Glyndebourne, Palau de les Arts Reina Sofía in Valencia and Opéra national de Paris. His pioneering work with Orchestra for the Earth takes him around Europe, giving a wide variety of concerts that bring together music and nature, collaborating with leading environmental artists, scientists and charities. A committed advocate of contemporary music, Warner has been invited to commission and conduct world premieres at the Philharmonie Luxembourg, Het Concertgebouw and, most recently, a residency at the Beijing Music Festival.

## Dmitry Yablonsky



Photo: Lusi Sargsyan

Born in Moscow, GRAMMY Award-nominated cellist and conductor Dmitry Yablonsky has performed at Carnegie Hall, Teatro alla Scala and Théâtre Mogador, among other such celebrated venues during his career. As a conductor he has worked with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, Orquesta Filarmónica de la UNAM, Mexico, and the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. In 2010 he 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 Popper's *Forty Études* for solo cello (8.557718–19) to critical acclaim. He is a professor at the Buchmann-Mehta School of Music at Tel Aviv University and has served as artistic director of the Wandering Stars Music Festival in Israel since 2019. Yablonsky is currently music director of Kyiv Virtuosi. He plays two cellos, a Joseph Guarnerius, filius Andrea and a Matteo Goffriller.

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



*Travel Notebook, Suite for Piano and Orchestra No. 1* by Ukrainian composer Alexey Shor is cast in a neo-Classical vein. It offers personal impressions of places he has visited, with music that is harmonically traditional and melodic. *Violin Concerto No. 4*, composed during the Covid pandemic, is a restless, passionate and romantic work, displaying Shor's trademark lyricism. Both works are heard in the composer's versions with string orchestra.

Alexey  
**SHOR**

(b. 1970)

## Composer's Notebook • 1

### Travel Notebook, Suite for Piano and Orchestra No. 1 (2016)

(version for piano and string orchestra, 2019)

**32:10**

- |   |  |             |
|---|--|-------------|
| 1 | <b>I. Wayfarer's Prayer</b>  | <b>5:32</b> |
| 2 | <b>II. La Rambla</b> ( <i>inspired by visiting Barcelona</i> )     | <b>5:07</b> |
| 3 | <b>III. Addio</b> ( <i>inspired by visiting Rome</i> )             | <b>5:29</b> |
| 4 | <b>IV. Luxembourg Garden</b> ( <i>inspired by visiting Paris</i> ) | <b>3:41</b> |
| 5 | <b>V. Rubicon</b> ( <i>inspired by visiting Ravenna</i> )          | <b>4:53</b> |
| 6 | <b>VI. Sorrow</b> ( <i>inspired by visiting Venice</i> )           | <b>4:07</b> |
| 7 | <b>VII. Horseman</b> ( <i>inspired by visiting Ascot</i> )         | <b>3:21</b> |

### Violin Concerto No. 4 in B minor (2021)

(version for violin and string orchestra, 2022)

**27:21**

- |    |                           |              |
|----|---------------------------|--------------|
| 8  | <b>I. Allegro agitato</b> | <b>13:52</b> |
| 9  | <b>II. Andante</b>        | <b>6:32</b>  |
| 10 | <b>III. Presto</b>        | <b>6:57</b>  |

### WORLD PREMIERE RECORDINGS

**Marc Bouchkov, Violin** 8-10 • **Anna Ulaieva, Piano** 1-7

**Kyiv Virtuosi • John Warner** 8-10 • **Dmitry Yablonsky** 1-7

Recorded: 22 8-10 and 25 1-7 February 2023 at the Teatro Marrucino, Chieti, Italy  
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Booklet notes: Julian Francalanza • Editions: composer's manuscript

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