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N. TCHEREPNIN  
A. TCHEREPNIN

COMPLETE WORKS FOR  
VIOLIN AND PIANO • 1

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GIORGIO KOUKL, *piano*  
KLAIDI SAHATCI, *violin*  
JOHANN SEBASTIAN PAETSCH, *cello*

**NIKOLAY TCHEREPNIN (1873–1945)**  
**ALEXANDER TCHEREPNIN (1899–1977)**

**COMPLETE WORKS FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO • 1**

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*Violin Sonata in C minor* at the Paul Sacher Foundation, Basel, Switzerland

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Tcherepnin Society of New York



## ALEXANDER TCHEREPNIN (1899–1977)

	<b>VIOLIN SONATA IN C MINOR (?1918–21) (ed. G. Koukl)*</b>	<b>17:05</b>
<b>1</b>	I. Adagio – Allegro drammatico	08:08
<b>2</b>	II. Allegretto	01:19
<b>3</b>	III. Adagio	02:24
<b>4</b>	IV. Vivace	05:14
<b>5</b>	<b>ARABESQUE FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO, OP. 11, NO. 5 (1920–21)</b>	<b>02:15</b>
	<b>PIANO TRIO, OP. 34 (1925)*</b>	<b>08:24</b>
<b>6</b>	I. Moderato tranquillo – Allegro	03:24
<b>7</b>	II. Allegretto	02:48
<b>8</b>	III. Allegro molto	02:09
	<b>TRIO CONCERTANTE, OP. 47 (1930/1960)*</b>	<b>16:16</b>
<b>9</b>	I. Allegro marziale	05:17
<b>10</b>	II. Lento	03:38
<b>11</b>	III. Allegro	02:13
<b>12</b>	IV. Presto	05:06

## NIKOLAY TCHEREPNIN (1873–1945)

<b>13</b>	<b>CADENCE FANTASTIQUE, OP. 42bis (1915, rev. 1926)*</b>	<b>14:17</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>PIÈCE CALME (PASTORALE) (1935) (version for violin and piano)*</b>	<b>02:58</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>AZBUKA V KARTINKAKH ('THE ALPHABET IN PICTURES'), 14 SKETCHES AFTER BENOIS, OP. 38 – NO. 4. VILLEGIATURE (1910)*</b>	<b>02:44</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>UN AIR ANCIEN (1935) (version for violin and piano)*</b>	<b>05:02</b>

\* **WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDING**

**TOTAL TIME: 69:34**

**NIKOLAY TCHEREPNIN (1873–1945)**  
**ALEXANDER TCHEREPNIN (1899–1977)**  
**COMPLETE WORKS FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO • 1**

Through his son Alexander and grandsons Serge and Ivan the dynasty Nikolay Tcherepnin founded – *fin de siècle* Tsarist, emigré Russian, Russo-American – spearheaded modern cross-cultural exchange. Serge (born 1941), America’s ‘legendary electronic mastermind’ whose teachers in Europe included Boulez and Stockhausen, went on to pioneer the Serge Modular Music System in the early seventies. Ivan (1943–1998) was director of Harvard University’s Electronic Music Studio. His sons Stefan (born 1977) and Sergei (born 1981) continue the line. Stefan is a mixed media creative focussing on immersive, meta-narrative installations. Sergei operates at the intersections of sound, sculpture and theatre.

In his memoirs *Under the Canopy of My Life*<sup>1</sup> Nikolay wrote that his forebears were ‘from the vicinity of Izborsk, an ancient Russian town in the Pskov province [close to the border with Estonia] ... Our lineage is not of the old aristocracy ... the first mention of the family appears only in the early 19th century’. His ‘lively, very gifted’ disciplinarian father was a physician whose social circle, belonging ‘mostly to the capital’s “intelligentsia”’, embraced Dostoevsky and Mussorgsky (attending the former during his final hours). Nikolay graduated in law in 1895, then in composition three years later, studying with Rimsky-Korsakov. From 1902 he conducted Belyayev’s Russian Symphony Concerts. In November 1907 he premiered his one-act ballet *Le Pavillon d’Armide* dedicated to Liadov – Pavlova, Nijinsky and Karsavina in the cast – directing it again during the inaugural 1909 Paris season of Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes. Having previously essayed his own orchestrally masterful response to the same *conte de fée* in the ‘symphonic sketch’ *Le Royaume enchanté* (1904), he declined Diaghilev’s invitation to write the *Firebird* (endorsing Stravinsky for

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<sup>1</sup> Bowdlerized edition Leningrad 1976; unexpurgated manuscript Issy-les-Moulineaux/Seine c 1942–44, translated John Ranck (Tcherepnin Society, [www.tcherepnin.com](http://www.tcherepnin.com)).

preference), but helped with the piano rehearsals of *Petrushka* (1911). A completion of Mussorgsky's *Sorochintsi Fair* was staged in Monte Carlo in 1923.

Between 1905 and 1918, during Glazunov's tenure as director, he taught at the St Petersburg Conservatory, 'Of all my teachers,' Prokofiev enthused, 'Tcherepnin was the liveliest and most interesting ... Although I didn't learn all I should have about orchestration in Rimsky-Korsakov's class, I made up for it in Tcherepnin's class. His talks about conducting [he was the first to teach the discipline in Russia] were always meaningful; his talk about the future of music was no less interesting: he struck me as such an innovator that it made my head swim.' In 1918 he briefly became Director of the National Conservatory in Tbilisi. But with the Red Army occupying Georgia in February 1921, he left for Europe that August, via – like Nabokov, Bortkiewicz, Nicolas Slonimsky, countless others – the Black Sea route to Constantinople. Settling in Paris, he worked with Pavlova as composer and conductor; helped Rachmaninov establish the new Russian Conservatory (director 1925–29, 1938–45); and undertook concert tours around Europe and the United States, including a spell in 1932 as guest conductor of Serge Koussevitzky's Boston Symphony Orchestra. From 1937 until his death he was president of the Belyayev publishing house in Leipzig, witnessing *in absentia* its wartime destruction in consequence of the RAF's 1943 bombing of the city: 'God only knows how much time, talent and work will be required to compensate for the truly immense damage that was inflicted on the world's musical culture as a result of that brutal, senseless, ruthless attack during those calamitous December days.' Surviving Nazi-occupied Paris, cessation of hostilities, and the US handover of Leipzig to the Soviets, Nikolay died within weeks of the war ending in Europe.

'Music was religion.' Religion *per se* was Greek Orthodox/Roman Catholic<sup>2</sup>. Growing up in a heady environment, mentored by the writer and critic Alexander

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<sup>2</sup> 'A Short Autobiography', *Tempo*, issue 130, September 1979.

Ossovsky (linked with Belyayev), Tcherepnin *films* studied with Nikolay Sokolov at the St Petersburg Conservatory (a pupil of Rimsky-Korsakov) and, privately, the pianist Leokadiya Kashperova (who'd had lessons from Anton Rubinstein). Abandoning famine, cold, cholera and Revolution Russia in 1917, then Georgia in 1921 (surviving Spanish flu), he settled with his family in Paris, completing his studies with Paul Vidal, an early associate of Debussy, and Isidor Philipp, head of piano at the Conservatoire, in addition, as he put it, to 'mingling with such people as Ravel, Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Honegger, Milhaud and Martinů'. He made his UK debut in 1922, Pavlova the following year presenting his first ballet, *Ajanta's Frescoes*, at Covent Garden, 'integrating Eastern and Western musical conceptions' and inspired by pre-Christian Buddhist cave paintings. Some dismissed Pavlova's initiative as amateurish and tedious. But the *Daily Mail* thought it was 'worked out with brilliance, with a colour of its own', while the *Times* admired the plentiful 'rhythmic character' of the music. Up to the war, Alexander spent time in America, Palestine, Egypt, China and Japan, in Shanghai meeting his second wife, the pianist Lee Hsien-Ming (1911–1991, trained by an old friend of his father's, Boris Zakharov). Following the wartime Parisian years (writing 'lots of [utility] trash for dancers, for music halls, etc. – which had to be signed by another name because I was Russian'), he moved to America in 1949 ('the great change in my life'), settling in Chicago and teaching at De Paul University. Among the rewards of the fifties were world premieres with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Rafael Kubelík (*Second Symphony, in memoriam Nikolay*) and Fritz Reiner (*Divertimento*), and with the Boston Symphony and Charles Munch (*Fourth Symphony*). Acquiring US citizenship in 1958 and moving to New York in 1964, touring, playing and conducting his music widely – including a fêted return to the Soviet Union in 1967 (Emil Gilels and Sviatoslav Richter exalting his presence), and a 75th birthday London concert in 1974 partnering Paul and Yan Pascal Tortelier – he died from a heart attack in Paris.

Before the war BBC London broadcast a half-hour recital by Alexander programming his own and some new Chinese works. 'Considering ... that Alexander 's music shows a good deal of paternal influence, it is hardly surprising that the son's compositions are occasionally attributed to the father and vice versa. But Alexander has often betrayed a leaning toward bold harmonic experiment, not shared by Nicholas' (3 December 1937<sup>3</sup>). An elevated, luminously impressionistic orchestrator, drawn to theatre (notably a dozen ballets, nine of them unpublished, and two late operas), descriptive music, smaller self-contained forms, and song, Nikolay grew out of the (imported) Minkus, (indigenous) Borodin/Liadov, Tchaikovsky/Rimsky-Korsakov tradition. 'A journey fraught with surprise: sometimes disappointing, sometimes highly gratifying – never quite predictable' (Benjamin Folkman).

'Music is a uniting of people; that is its ultimate goal.' A tonal synthesist, Alexander traced his evolution in a 1962 manifesto, *Basic Elements of My Musical Language*<sup>4</sup>, mooted originally in a 1950 letter to Slonimsky. First – alongside polyphony and counterpoint in 'primitive' and 'developmental' phases – there was the 'nine-step scale', an 'equality of flats and sharps' proposed in 1918 but only 'consciously theorised' in 1922. This 'Tcherepnin scale' (so-called, thirty-six forms of which are permutable) 'results from [combining] two major-minor hexachords based on three interlocking major-minor tetrachords'. 'Major-minor tetrachords are constructed within the interval of a major-third using two half-steps [semitones] and one whole-step [tone] ... Major-minor hexachords are constructed within the interval of a major seventh using alternations of half-step and one-and-a-half-step intervals'. 'Since my early youth I had the tendency and urge to combine major and minor chords. Only a [vertical] major-minor "tetra/chord" [sic] gave me the sensation of finality and stability. Gradually I extended the 1½-tone-½-tone-1½-tone row to reach the octave. By [combining] the ascending [Mode I] hexachord with [its descending

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<sup>3</sup> Radio Times, issue 739.

<sup>4</sup> Benjamin Folkman, *Alexander Tcherepnin: a Compendium* (1995), New York 2008.

Mode II inversion] I found the nine-step scale' – C, D flat, E flat, E, F, G, A flat, A, B, [C]. 'Firm' or 'soft' intervals varied the harmonic tension. Next came 'pure rhythm liberated from any pitch'; and, in 1924, 'the sounds of nature [bird calls, insects] the rhythm of the spoken word'. "'Eurasian" ideology [escaping "the technicalities of my musical thinking"] gained supremacy by the late twenties<sup>5</sup>, based on the idea that the Russian "Empire" inherited the empire founded by the Mongols, [with the result] that Mongols became assimilated with Russians (or vice versa)'. Turning to folklore in the early thirties, having as a student been seduced by the Caucasian inheritance and orality of Georgia and Armenia as well Azerbaijan and western Persia, he found simplification and renewal. 'Healing by folklore' he called it (1933–41). 'I felt that, what the anatomy of the human body is for a painter, folklore is for a composer. The [former] gives the lines of "life survival" ... [The latter] gives us the lines of "musical survival".' Come the mid to late 1930s ('fascinated by the instrumental, theatrical and vocal heritage of the Orient'), Chinese and Japanese major-minor pentatonic practice was a key stimulus; additionally Georgian ethnicity and quartal harmony. 'The new musical language I now [c. 1960] use to express myself ... [synthesizes] all the technical devices of the past ... [Structure] not musical language [outdated sooner or later] makes a composition long living.' 'The ultimate value of a composition is the complete balance of the "what" with the "how". The "how" can and should be analysed. The "what" is extemporaneous and can only be felt, and escapes every cerebral investigation.'<sup>6</sup>

There are no definitive details concerning Alexander's C minor *Violin Sonata* (MS, Paul Sacher Foundation, Basel), revised for this recording by the Czech composer-pianist Giorgio Koukl. But it probably dates from around the time the Tcherepnins were living in Tbilisi (autumn 1918–June 1921) when Alexander, who'd only brought with him some piano pieces from St Petersburg, was at the National Conservatory – immersed in Beethoven and Georgian popular and liturgical music. Its strength,

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<sup>5</sup> George Vernadsky, *A History of Russia*, New Haven, London 1929.

<sup>6</sup> 'A Short Autobiography' *op cit*.



tautness, rhythmic drive and climactic progression, the lyric beauty and tensile cut of its ideas – from opening *minore* Russianness to closing *maggiore* bravura, from the high tessitura piano writing and violin harmonics of the pawky second movement to the rumination of the *Adagio* third (functionally both intermezzo-like) – stamp it as a concert piece of ‘Grand Mogul’ flourish removed from juvenilia (its young author already had more than a dozen piano sonata trials behind him, not to mention symphonies and concertos). Not as intricately argued or ‘placed’ as the *Op. 14 Violin Sonata* (also written in Tbilisi) but impressive.

The energy and Mendelssohnian facility of Alexander’s self-described ‘engrossment in pianism/harmonic and scale-like searchings’ period (1918–20) underlines the fifth *Arabesque* of the *Op. 11* set, the only duo of a cycle otherwise for keyboard (1920–21). Brevity, linearity, neo-Classical clarity, incisive metric organisation hallmark the *Piano Trio in D major, Op. 34* (1925, dedicated to Albert Blondel, Parisian director of Érard) – ‘a refined opus with insinuating warmth and a folkloric finale in big boots’ (Jonathan Woolf). All three movements cadence in Tcherninesque major-minor waters. Intimations of Shostakovich surface. Anchors weighed, bar-lines are inflexible, time-signatures less so, albeit in no hurry to change. Pulse is everything.

No work of Alexander’s was revised more times than the *Triple Concerto, Op. 47*. ‘Yet,’ points out Folkman, ‘the many alterations ... six different versions of the piece ... were equivalent to little more than changes of clothes: the musical substance remained unchanged despite the many re-modellings in instrumentation.’ In its initial pseudo-Baroque *ripieno-concertante* form (1930) it took the guise of a *Concertino* for four violins, two violas, two gambas, two cellos, double bass and piano. In 1960, five re-castings downstream, the score was revisited. ‘During the autumn I made a new version for piano, violin and cello, [cuing the orchestral parts into those] of the soloists ... and called it Trio Concertante. Such [a short-score] version could

be used by the soloist[s] to study the Concertino among them, and also as a regular Piano Trio.' The last draft (1965) was for trio and chamber orchestra. Fusing 'Eurasian' aspects, vertical/horizontal major-minor acidities and nine-step elements, the four movements, opening and closing in D, traverse landscapes of energy and stasis, rhythmic attack and lyric melody, massed sonority and individualised nuance. I (Alexander's words): 'March-like in atmosphere'; II: rhapsodic '*concertante solos*' (violin, cello, piano); III: 'a type of scherzo'; IV: rondo, 'the rhythm (but not the actual notes) of a Georgian "dialogue" folk-song [alternating] with another in faster values, [ending] with a "fishtail" as the initial phrase of the first movement is evoked' – a nostalgic five-bar echo.

Inscribed to Alexander Mogilevsky, a close friend of Scriabin's (and the future teacher of Shinichi Suzuki), Nikolay Tcherepnin's *Cadence fantastique, Op. 42bis* (1915, rev. 1926) is longer and weightier than its title might suppose. Active yet paced, harmonically entranced, it's suggestive of a Symbolist tone poem drifting phantasmagorically between dream and delirium, implicative rather than programmatic. 'An unpredictable journey where the denial of feelings, anguish, exultation and rage can burst out at any moment ... a scene from a crazy opera where the protagonist is not the usual heroine sung by a coloratura soprano but, rather, an ecstatic, hyper expressive violin in a state of agitated frenzy ...' (François Pineau-Benois).

In 1935 Nikolay published two short woodwind pieces in collaboration with Debussy's original *faune*, the New York based French flautist Georges Barrère (1876–1944). *Pièce calme (Pastorale)*, C major. Dedicated to Fernand Gillet, principal oboe of the Boston Symphony. *Un air ancien (An Old Russian Melody)*, A minor Recitative, C major Aria. Dedicated to Georges Laurent, Boston's principal flute.

*Villegiature* (Dacha), Op. 38, No. 4, D major *Allegretto giocoso*, is an arrangement of the fourth number from Nikolay's *14 Esquisses pour un alphabet Russe* d'Alexander Benois (published 1910). Lazy days, salon twilights. For anyone unfamiliar with the hedonistic *dacha* culture of summering Russians, the score is headed 'Cheerful white cottage in a garden [with ornamental pond]. Children play on the lawn.' The artist and designer Alexander Benois, seminally associated with the Mariinsky Theatre, Ballets Russes and Hermitage Museum, was Nikolay's brother-in-law. His *Azbuka v kartinakh*, scenes from Russian folklore, fairy tales, daily life and the Bible illustrating each letter, was printed in St Petersburg in October 1904.

**Ateş Orga**

## KLAI DI SAHATCI



© Daejoon Park

Violinist Klaidi Sahatci is appreciated for his beautiful and rich sound, elegant and expressive playing and his experience as a concertmaster, recitalist, soloist, violin professor and chamber musician. He was born in Albania, where he began his musical studies during the totalitarian regime in an isolated country. At the age of 20 with the fall of the regime he moved to Italy to continue to enrich his knowledge at the 'G. Verdi' Conservatory in Milan where he obtained his diploma *cum laude* and a mention of honour. Prior to becoming concertmaster of the Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich in 2009, he served as violon solo of the National Orchestra of Lyon, and as concertmaster of the Zürich Chamber Orchestra, the Teatro alla Scala Orchestra and the Filarmonica della Scala. Sahatci has performed as a soloist with orchestras such as the Orchestra Sinfonica

Nazionale della Rai, Orchestre National de Lyon, Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana, Orquesta Sinfonica de Chile, Cameristi della Scala, Albanian TV-Radio Symphony Orchestra, among others. As a passionate chamber musician Sahatci has played alongside artists such as Claire Désert, Bruno Giuranna, Bruno Canino, Roberto Prosseda, François-Frédéric Guy, Yuja Wang, and many others.

## JOHANN SEBASTIAN PAETSCH



© Yoko Paetsch

Johann Sebastian Paetsch is an American cello virtuoso. His extensive experience in chamber music began early in childhood, when he studied and performed almost the entire chamber music repertoire for strings with his family throughout the United States as The Paetsch Chamber Music Ensemble. Paetsch studied at Butler University, Yale University and the Musikhochschule Lübeck. He has participated in masterclasses with cellist such as Yo-Yo Ma, Mstislav Rostropovich, János Starker, Bernard Greenhouse and Mischa Maisky. A recipient of numerous awards, Paetsch was awarded a top prize in the Emanuel Feuermann competition and First Place in the Young Musicians Foundation Competition. He has also been highly successful in the ARD International Music Competition, the prestigious Tchaikovsky Competition and the Rostropovich Competition.

Paetsch has the pleasure of a distinguished international career, performing regularly in Japan, Europe and both North and South America. He has collaborated with prominent artists such as Vadim Repin, Gidon Kremer and Jean-Bernard Pommier. In 1992 Paetsch became the first principal solo cellist of the Orchestra della Svizzera italiana, a position he still holds today.

## GIORGIO KOUKL

Giorgio Koukl is a highly accomplished pianist known for his expressive performances, exceptional technique and profound musicality. With a passion for both traditional repertoire and contemporary works, Koukl continues to captivate audiences worldwide through his performances and recordings. A renowned specialist in Parisian music of the 1920s and 'silver age' composers from St Petersburg, he is also considered one of the world's leading interpreters of Martinů's piano music, having recorded that composer's complete solo piano music, together with five albums of Martinů's vocal music and two albums of his piano concertos for Naxos. His discography also includes an acclaimed series of the complete solo piano music of Alexander Tcherepnin, and lauded recordings of works by Vítězslava Kaprálová, Paul Le Flem (awarded a Diapason d'Or), Carl Maria von Weber, Johannes Brahms and Alexandre Tansman. He has also made world première recordings of works by Witold Lutosławski, Arthur Lourié and Tibor Harsányi. Koukl performs extensively throughout Europe, North America and Asia, and collaborates with renowned orchestras and conductors in solo performances and chamber music concerts.



GIORGIO KOUKL  
© Chiara Solari



ALEXANDER TCHERPIN and NIKOLAY TCHERPIN



# NIKOLAY TCHEREPNIN (1873–1945) ALEXANDER TCHEREPNIN (1899–1977)

## COMPLETE WORKS FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO • 1

Nikolay Tcherepnin and his son Alexander hail from a dynasty of distinguished composers spanning three generations. This first of two volumes focuses on their complete works featuring the violin and piano. Nikolay's *Cadence fantastique* is longer and weightier than its title might suggest and drifts between dream and delirium. Alexander's early *Violin Sonata in C minor* was recently discovered at the Paul Sacher Foundation archives in Basel and is heard in a new edition by Giorgio Koukl. The evocative *Trio Concertante* from 1960 is a piano trio arrangement of the *Triple Concerto* from 1930. Pianist Giorgio Koukl and the violinist Klaidi Sahatci are joined by cellist Johann Sebastian Paetsch in the *Piano Trio* and *Trio Concertante*.



GIORGIO KOUKL



KLaidi SAHATCI



JOHANN SEBASTIAN  
PAETSCH

### ALEXANDER TCHEREPNIN (1899–1977)

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|-------------|---|-------|
| <b>1–4</b>  | VIOLIN SONATA IN C MINOR (?1918–21) (ed. G. Koukl)*     | 17:05 |
| <b>5</b>    | ARABESQUE FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO, OP. 11, NO. 5 (1920–21) | 02:15 |
| <b>6–8</b>  | PIANO TRIO, OP. 34 (1925)*                              | 08:24 |
| <b>9–12</b> | TRIO CONCERTANTE, OP. 47 (1930/1960)*                   | 16:16 |

### NIKOLAY TCHEREPNIN (1873–1945)

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|-----------|---|-------|
| <b>13</b> | CADENCE FANTASTIQUE, OP. 42bis (1915, rev. 1926)* | 14:17 |
| <b>14</b> | PIÈCE CALME (PASTORALE) (1935)*                   | 02:58 |
| <b>15</b> | VILLEGIATURE, OP. 38, NO. 4 (1910)*               | 02:44 |
| <b>16</b> | UN AIR ANCIEN (1935)*                             | 05:02 |

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