

jazz

akhunov poulenc messiaen

julia igonina

maxim emelyanychev



Julia Igonina violin

Maxim Emelyanychev piano Blüthner 1908 (Piano Museum, Rybinsk)

SERGEY AKHUNOV (*1967)

Jazz

1. Lagoon I	2'15
2. The Knife Thrower	2'03
3. The Horse, the Rider and the Clown	3'48
4. Forms	2'07
5. Pierrot's Funeral	5'51
6. Toboggan	0'56
7. Lagoon II	1'55
8. The Nightmare of the White Elephant	3'01
9. Forms II	1'52
10. The Swimmer in the Tank	3'34
11. Destiny I	3'59
12. Flight of Icarus	2'38
13. Destiny II	2'17
14. The Heart	3'23
15. Lagoon III	2'20

FRANCIS POULENC (1899-1963)

Violin Sonata FP 119

16. Allegro con fuoco	6'13
17. Intermezzo	5'41
18. Presto tragico	5'31

OLIVIER MESSIAEN (1908-1992)

19. Louange à l'Éternité de Jésus (Quatuor pour la fin du temps)	7'07
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We are delighted to present here a programme consisting of French masterpieces of the 1940s – Poulenc’s Sonata for violin and piano and Messiaen’s “Louange à l’Éternité de Jésus” from his *Quatuor pour la fin du temps* – together with a contemporary composition: Sergey Akhunov’s *Jazz* cycle, inspired by the cut-outs of Henri Matisse that in 1947 were collected together in a book, also entitled “Jazz”. It was very interesting for us to compare three different styles of composition, and to take a close look at the twentieth-century works, now almost eighty years old, with the aim of trying to find out how they were performed at the time, how they actually sounded then to audiences, and to their composer. We know that when Poulenc and Messiaen were alive, many musicians were still using gut strings. And that was our choice for the violin part.

The piano I play is a beautiful 1908 Blüthner from the Rybinsky Piano Museum, founded by Alexey Stavitzky, whom I wish to thank warmly for making that possible.

Of course, a recording is not only about the performance by the musicians: it is also about the work in the studio with the sound engineer. We are happy to have embarked on this adventure with Maximilien Ciup, with whom it is so easy to explore new sounds and ideas.

Maxim Emelyanychev



I have always wanted to premiere a new work for violin. When Maxim and I decided to team up for a recording, I knew straight away who I was going to ask to write a piece for violin and piano. And that is how the “Jazz” cycle came into being, composed by Sergey Akhunov and inspired by the Matisse cut-outs brought together under the same name. But there is nothing jazzy either about Matisse’s collages or about the composition!

I first encountered the music of Sergey Akhunov more than ten years ago through his chamber compositions. Then in 2014 I recorded his “Seasons”, inspired by Kim Ki-duk’s film of 2003, *Spring, summer, autumn, winter... and again spring*, which explains why the piece is in five parts. Performed quite regularly, this work – of which I am the proud dedicatee! – is now well established in the violin repertoire.

Sergey’s music captivates the listener right from the first notes; it leaves no one indifferent. As with all music that goes straight to the heart, there is no artificiality.

On the other hand, the performance on gut strings of the pieces by Francis Poulenc and Olivier Messiaen takes us back to almost a century earlier. Which is not so long ago, considering that my teachers, like most of the violinists of that time, used gut strings, but the timbres and the colours are still new to our modern ears, and very interesting to explore, especially in French music.

Julia Igonina



I first discovered the Matisse cut-out paper collages in 2013 at an exhibition held at the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow entitled “East West Jazz”. Looking at those works then, it occurred to me how interesting it would be to compose music that has nothing to do with jazz, and to call it “Jazz”, like his book of cut-outs. And the titles of Matisse’s works – *L’Enterrement de Pierrot* (Pierrot’s Funeral), *Le Cheval, l’écuyère et le clown* (The Horse, the Rider and the Clown), *Le Cauchemar de l’éléphant blanc* (The Nightmare of the White Elephant), *La Chute d’Icare* (The Fall of Icarus) – seemed to be begging a musical interpretation. How would it sound? What tools should be used? I had no idea, but I liked the concept.

For over a year that idea remained, with all the others, at the back of my mind, waiting for its time to come. The opportunity to use it came with the commission from the brilliant musicians Julia Igonina and Maxim Emelyanychev for a composition for piano and violin.

The cycle in its present form has little in common with the works of Matisse, one of the finest artists of the twentieth century. And it is certainly not an illustration of the works by Matisse that inspired it. No one should be able to find any analogies between this music and the artist’s paper collages, for indeed none were intended. What really attracted me was the experimental, improvisational nature of his paper compositions. Matisse made a transition to a new type of medium, and I followed his path in creating my own musical images. The music and the cut-outs exist in parallel, driven by a common idea. Apparently, in choosing the title for his book of prints, Matisse, hesitated between “Jazz” and “The Circus”. I am glad he made the choice he did, otherwise this music would not have existed!

Sergey Akhunov

Nous sommes très heureux de présenter ce programme, qui mêle des chefs-d'œuvre français des années 1940, avec la *Sonate pour violon et piano* de Poulenc et la *Louange à l'Éternité de Jésus* de Messiaen, tirée de son *Quatuor pour la fin du temps*, à une composition contemporaine, le cycle *Jazz* de Sergei Akhounov, inspiré du recueil de collages éponyme d'Henri Matisse.

Confronter l'interprétation historiquement informée de ces œuvres, qui ont près de quatre-vingts ans maintenant, au regard que nous portons sur elles aujourd'hui est absolument passionnant : en cherchant à retrouver la sonorité qui était celle pour laquelle les compositeurs ont écrit leurs pièces, on trouve des éléments tout à fait contemporains.

On sait que beaucoup de musiciens faisaient encore usage des cordes en boyaux à l'époque de Poulenc et de Messiaen. Aujourd'hui, on peut choisir de régler nos instruments différemment selon le style, le son ou la prononciation que l'on recherche. Je suis ravi d'avoir eu la chance d'enregistrer sur un magnifique piano Blüthner de 1908, appartenant à la collection Alexey Stavitzky du musée du piano de Rybinsk – et je souhaite l'en remercier ici. Mais bien évidemment, un album ne consiste pas qu'en la performance des musiciens : c'est également le fruit d'un travail en studio avec l'ingénieur du son. Nous sommes heureux de nous être lancés dans cette aventure aux côtés de Maximilien Ciup, avec lequel il est si aisé d'explorer de nouvelles sonorités et idées.

Maxim Emelyanychev

J'ai toujours voulu graver une création pour violon. Lorsque nous avons décidé d'enregistrer ensemble avec Maxim, j'ai immédiatement su vers quel compositeur me tourner pour commander une pièce pour violon et piano. C'est ainsi qu'est né le cycle *Jazz*, inspiré des planches de Matisse du même nom, composé par Sergei Akhounov – dont la musique n'évoque, pas plus que les œuvres de Matisse, rien de jazzy.

J'ai découvert Sergei Akhounov il y a plus de dix ans avec ses compositions de chambre, avant d'enregistrer, en 2014, ses *Saisons*. Cette œuvre est inspirée du film de Kim Ki-duk *Printemps, été, automne, hiver... et printemps* (2003), et reproduit la même structure en cinq parties – cinq parties pour cinq saisons. Il est depuis entré au répertoire des violonistes, et interprété presque tous les mois. Je suis très honorée d'en être la dédicataire.

La musique de Sergei captive dès ses premières notes, et ne laisse personne indifférent. On n'y trouve aucune artificialité, et ainsi en va-t-il de toutes les musiques qui vont droit au cœur.

Les interprétations des pièces de Poulenc et de Messiaen sur cordes en boyaux nous ramènent pour leur part près de cent ans en arrière. Ce qui n'est pas si lointain, si l'on considère que mes professeurs étaient contemporains de cette période, mais ce sont tout de même de nouveaux timbres et de nouvelles couleurs pour nos oreilles modernes, qu'il est particulièrement intéressant d'explorer – surtout dans la musique française.

Julia Igonina

J'ai découvert les travaux de Matisse en 2019 à une exposition au Musée des Beaux-Arts Pouchkine de Moscou. L'exposition était intitulée « East West Jazz ». En regardant ses travaux, j'ai pensé qu'il serait formidable de composer une musique qui n'a rien à voir avec le jazz, et de l'appeler « Jazz », comme son livre qui réunit des collages variés. Mais les titres des compositions de Matisse y figurant étaient trop longs pour incarner des images musicales. Comment cela pourrait-il sonner ? Quels outils utiliser ? Je n'en savais rien, mais j'aimais l'idée.

Ainsi ce cycle, n'existant pas encore à l'état de musique, est resté dans ma collection d'ébauches pendant plus d'un an, dans l'attente d'une opportunité. Elle est venue lorsque les brillants musiciens que sont Julia Igonina et Maxim Emelyanychev m'ont commandé une œuvre.

Le cycle dans sa présente forme n'a que peu en commun avec Matisse – parmi les plus brillants artistes du XX^e siècle. Il est encore moins une illustration de son travail : il est d'ailleurs peu probable que l'on trouve y une analogie avec celui-ci – serait-ce le cas, il s'agirait probablement d'une erreur. Ce qui m'a vraiment attiré chez Matisse était davantage l'impulsion, ou l'inspiration qui a guidé sa main – la même qui m'a guidé par la suite. De celle-ci, Matisse a fait naître une forme, et je lui ai emboîté le pas en composant mes propres images musicales. Ainsi, musique et peinture semblent exister en parallèle, mues par une idée commune.

Il est dit que Matisse a hésité entre « Jazz » et « Cirque » pour intituler son livre. Je suis bien heureux qu'il l'ait appelé comme il l'a fait : autrement, cette musique ne serait pas née.

Sergei Akhounov

Maxim Emelyanychev

Born in 1988, Maxim Emelyanychev studied in Nizhny Novgorod, then and at the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow with Gennady Rozhdestvensky (conducting) and Maria Uspenskaya (fortepiano and harpsichord).

He made his conducting début at the age of twelve. In 2013 he was appointed chief conductor of the Nizhny Novgorod Soloists Chamber Orchestra and of Il Pomo d'Oro. In 2019 he became principal conductor of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, with which he has appeared at the BBC Proms, the Edinburgh International Festival, and all over Europe and the United States.

As well as numerous productions with Il Pomo d'Oro, his opera engagements have included *Don Giovanni* in Seville, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* in Zurich, *Rinaldo* at Glyndebourne, *Agrippina* at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, *La Clemenza di Tito* in Geneva and *Le Nozze di Figaro* in Toulouse.

Other highlights of his career so far include appearances as guest conductor with the London Philharmonic, the Philharmonia Orchestra, the Orchestre de Paris, the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Luxembourg Philharmonic, and Rome's Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia. He recently made his debut with the Royal Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, and the Deutsche Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, both of which he will again be conducting in 2023 and 2024.

His plans for the present season, 2022-23, include his debut with the Berlin Philharmonic and appearances with the Czech, New Japan, Bergen, Rotterdam and Munich philharmonic orchestras.

His recordings include two Gramophone Award-winning discs with Joyce DiDonato, Mozart Piano Sonatas (*Choc de Classica, ffff Télérama*), a highly-acclaimed recording of Schubert's Ninth Symphony with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, and Brahms Sonatas for piano and violin with violinist Aylen Pritchen. Mozart's Third Violin Concerto, with Aylen Pritchen, will be included in Il Pomo d'Oro's complete Mozart, conducted by Maxim Emelyanychev.

At the International Opera Awards 2019, Maxim Emelyanychev won the prize in the Newcomer category.

Julia Igonina

Julia Igonina is one of the most prominent and brilliant Russian musicians of her generation. Spirituality, integrity, and fine insight into the composer's intentions are the distinctive features of her mature performing style. Her ever-expanding repertoire already includes more than forty violin concertos, as well as complete chamber works and concert pieces from various different periods.

Born in Belarus, Julia Igonina is a graduate of the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow. Her principal teachers were Vyacheslav Khavkin, Eduard Grach and Shlomo Mintz. She went on to win first prizes at several international violin competitions. She now teaches at the Conservatory.

She is the founder and first violin of the New Russian Quartet.

Julia Igonina has played solo with many orchestras, and has performed in collaboration with great musicians including, amongst others, Shlomo Mintz, Arnold Katz, Nikolay Petrov, Alexander Knyazev, Teodor Currentzis, Alexei Volodin, Stefan Vladar, Alexander Rudin, Maxim Emelyanychev, Dmitry Liss, Augustin Dumay, and Yoel Levy.

She also takes part as a violinist in theatre productions. She had a principal role in the much-praised "dramatic concert" *The Seasons*, directed by Boris Zhilinsky, with choreography by Alexandra Rudik, and also appeared in a danced production of *Death and the Maiden*, to Schubert's string quartet of that name, choreographed by Vladimir Varnava.

Julia Igonina's recordings include, on the Melodiya label, "The Seasons" (Antonio Vivaldi and Sergey Akhunov), "Cinemaphonia" by the New Russian Quartet, and "Quintet+" by the New Russian Quartet plus Ludmila Berlinskaya and Igor Fedorov. In October 2018 the Fancymusic label released "Victor Hugo's Blank Page", another version of Sergey Akhunov's "The Seasons" (dedicated to Julia by the composer), with Alexander Rudin conducting the Musica Viva Chamber Orchestra. The latter recording received the "Pure Sound" International Award 2019.

Sergey Akhunov

Russian composer Sergey Akhunov was born in Kiev in 1967.

A graduate of the Kiev State Conservatory, Sergey began his musical career as an oboist, before turning to various genres, including electronic music and rock 'n roll. In 2005 he made a decisive break from such styles of music in order to concentrate exclusively on orchestral and chamber works.

“It has taken me almost forty years to understand what kind of music I really want to write,” he says.

Sergey Akhunov’s compositions include a wide range of works for chamber ensemble or symphony orchestra.

He has won a number of prizes and awards for his work, including the “Pure Sound” International Award for “Victor Hugo’s Blank Page” in 2019, and again for “White Balance” in 2021, performed by the Divertissement Chamber Orchestra. The CDs “In Schubert’s Company” (Maxim Rysanov, 2017) and “Piazzolla Reflections” (Ksenija Sidorova, 2021) were both Gramophone Critics’ Choice (among the best albums of the year), and he received a nomination for his CD “Sketches” in the prestigious International Classical Music Awards in 2017.

Sergey Akhunov’s music is distributed by Melodiya, Fancymusic, Alpha Classics, Onyx and Glossa.





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Direction artistique, prise de son, montage, mixage et mastering : Maximilien Ciup

Enregistré en 24 bits/96kHz

Julia Igonina joue un violon Albin Ludwig Paulus Jr.

Maxim Emelyanychev joue un piano Blüthner 1908 issu de la collection du Musée du piano de Rybinsk

Préparation et accord : Alexey Stavitsky

English translation by Mary Pardoe

Couverture : Henri Matisse, *The Swimmer in the Tank*, plate XII from 'Jazz', 1943-47. Illustrated book with 20 pochoirs, comp. 16 7/16 X 25 1/2 (41.7 X 64.8cm). Publisher: Teriade Editeur, Paris, 1947. Edition: 270. The Louis E. Stern Collection. Acc. num. 930.1964.12

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[16-18] Francis Poulenc, *Sonate pour violon et piano* © 1944 (révision 1949) Éditions Max Eschig

[19] Olivier Messaien, *Quatuor pour la fin du temps* © 1942 Durand

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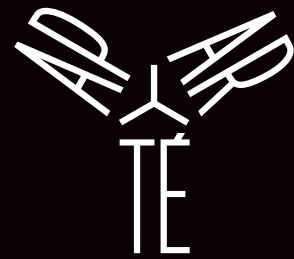
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