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**RUSSIAN  
VIOLA SONATAS**

**Eliesha Nelson, viola   Glen Inanga, piano**

# RUSSIAN VIOLA SONATAS

**Eliesha Nelson, viola   Glen Inanga, piano**

## Suite for Viola and Piano, Op. 8 – Varvara Gaigerova (1903-1944)

- |                        |      |
|------------------------|------|
| 1. I. Allegro agitato  | 2:36 |
| 2. II. Andantino       | 3:06 |
| 3. III. Scherzo: Prest | 4:25 |
| 4. IV. Moderato        | 4:47 |

## Two Pieces for Viola and Piano, Op.31 – Alexander Winkler (1865-1935)

- |  |      |
|--|------|
| 5. I. Méditation élyséique (Andante mesto poco mosso)        | 4:22 |
| 6. II. La toupie: scène d'enfant: Scherzino (Allegro vivace) | 2:44 |

## Sonata in D Major for Viola and Piano, Op. 15 – Paul Juon (1872-1940)

- |                                       |      |
|---------------------------------------|------|
| 7. I. Moderato                        | 7:09 |
| 8. II. Adagio assai e molto cantabile | 6:13 |
| 9. III. Allegro moderato              | 6:50 |

## Sonata in C minor for Viola and Piano, Op. 10 – Alexander Winkler (1865-1935)

- |                                    |      |
|------------------------------------|------|
| 10. Moderato                       | 9:59 |
| 11. Allegro agitato                | 6:28 |
| 12. L'istesso tempo ma poco rubato | 4:24 |

## Variations sur un air breton

- |   |      |
|---|------|
| 13. Thème: Andante                            | 1:06 |
| 14. Variation 1: L'istesso tempo poco rubato  | 1:39 |
| 15. Variation 2: Allegretto                   | 1:06 |
| 16. Variation 3: Allegro patetico             | 1:10 |
| 17. Variation 4: Andante molto espressivo     | 1:23 |
| 18. Variation 5: Allegro con fuoco            | 1:18 |
| 19. Variation 6: Andante sostenuto            | 1:47 |
| 20. Variation 7: Fuga (Allegro moderato)      | 1:50 |
| 21. Coda: Poco più animato – Maestoso pesante | 1:05 |

# MUSIC IS, as are all the arts, sensitive to social change.

In the early 20th century, composers Varvara Gaigerova, Alexander Winkler, and Paul Juon, reflect different aspects of Russian music at this historic time of intense social and political revolution.

The Russian Revolution of 1905, the February and October Revolutions of 1917, in concert with the complex dynamics involved in the two great World Wars, created instability and hardship for most.

Of the three composers, only Gaigerova remained in Russia during the social upheaval mirrored in the realm of music.

Mikhail Glinka (1804-1857) led the way to a definitive Russian style in music composition that reflected the greater part of society by incorporating folk tunes and rhythms into art music. Prior to the 1830s, the composition of art music in Russia was dominated by imitation of French and Italian music, primarily opera. In my opinion, this was in keeping with the social structure entrenched in the second half of 18th century Russia. The four main strata of social hierarchy were: the imperial court, the nobility, urban population, and peasants.



Mikhail Glinka (1804-1857)

The music of the imperial court and the Russian nobility was heavily influenced by the conventions of Western Europe. The imperial court was rigid against any modifications. However, in the course of employing many foreign composers, the dominant culture of the Russian nobility exhibited more flexibility in allowing outside influences.

Urban musical life was also flexible, revolving around merchants, artisans, servants, and foreign enclaves like German town or Chinatown. The peasant music was characterized by complex polyphonic singing, resistant to urban or European influences. These hundreds of Russian folk tunes were an inexhaustible source of inspiration for the art music composed after the 1830's.

Though making use of Western structure, Glinka composed music that was undeniably Russian. He was the first Russian composer to successfully write operas of a quality competitive with their Western counterparts. Typical indicators of the Russian style are folk songs and rhythms, motivic development, rich orchestral color, drone basses, and chromatic or modal harmonies. In contrast, Western European music of that time relied on formal structure, and rarely used folk elements.

*The Suite for Viola and Piano*, Op. 8 by Varvara Adrianovna Gaigerova (1903-1944) reflects the prevailing Russian style most fully among the pieces presented on this album. Her music embodies Soviet and Russian folk idioms. It's highly chromatic but expressive, and the short movements require an exact character established from the beginning in order to come across musically.

Gaigerova was fascinated by the minority nationalities of the Soviet Union, and transcribed songs from groups such as the Uzbek, Tatar, Bashkir, Buryat, Kazakh, and Kirghiz, as well as composing music for orchestras of traditional instruments. Although the movements of the suites do not have names outside the tempo markings, the musical picture painted in each is well suited for a title.

The first movement is marked *Allegro agitato*, and has the feel of fleeing from desolation. It is highly chromatic with sudden dynamic and subtle tempo changes. The second movement is an *Andantino* with a much less tragic character. It feels like a walk in the summer sun with a good friend or loved one. The third movement is a brisk *Scherzo* that sounds like hunting music and galloping horses. The *Trio* interrupts the hunt with a slower, heartfelt interlude. The fourth movement *Moderato* returns to the desolation of the first movement, this time more resigned to its fate, unable to escape the final tragedy. The Suite was published posthumously in 1969.

Alexander Adolfovich Winkler (1865-1935) emigrated to France in 1924 and became the director of the Besançon Conservatory in 1925. Before that, he was a professor of the St. Petersburg Conservatory and taught piano in Kharkov (1890-96). As a student, he studied piano in Paris and Vienna, and composition in Vienna. Because of his Western education, he knew the formal

techniques of composition well enough to be able to successfully imbue the music with his Russian heritage.

The 2 Pieces for Viola and Piano, Op. 31 are also quite descriptive. *Méditation élégiaque* is a little less chromatic than the Gaigerova, but still has passion and interesting rhythms. In this short movement, Winkler explores the deeper and darker colors of the viola. *La toupie: Scène d'enfant* really does sound like children playing with a spinning top that slows down only a brief moment in the middle of the piece. The piece was written late in his career in 1933, just two years before he died in Besançon, France.



Besançon Music Conservatory,  
Besançon, France

Paul Juon (1872-1940), also known as Pavel Fedorovich Juon, was born in Russia but established his career in Germany. As his father was Swiss, upon retirement, he chose to move to Switzerland and claim citizenship.

During his formative years, he grew up in a German-speaking household and attended German primary school in Russia. His viola sonata written in 1901 is a wonderful example of why he is nicknamed the “Russian Brahms,” although the moniker also was given to other Russian composers like Sergei Taneyev (1856-1915) and Alexander Glazunov (1865-1936).

Juon was a man who straddled two opposing cultures and languages, and his sonata is a beautiful blend of these contrasting influences. The first movement is a well-structured sonata allegro form. The soaring melody begins in the viola with a syncopated accompaniment in the piano. The second theme is in 5/4, and the uneven meter creates a long line in the melody with unexpected accents. The second movement is very Brahmsian. It reminds me of the slow, solemn second movements from Brahms’ piano concerti. I find it quite moving.

The last movement, clearly drawn from Russian folk elements, begins with a haunting melody in “d” minor played by the viola and piano in unison. The second theme gives a ray of hope, as it is in a major key and a slightly slower tempo. The development section is tumultuous, but

leads back to the haunting melody of the opening. However, the second theme returns, and the piece resolutely ends in “D” major.

The album ends with the massive *Sonata in C minor for Violin and Piano* by Winkler. Written in 1902 during the middle of his life, it is a strong work that incorporates his skill as a master pianist and composer. At that time, Winkler was on the faculty of the St. Petersburg Conservatory (1896-1924). He was also a member of the Belyayev Circle, a group of composers including Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Alexander Glazunov and Antatoly Lyadov, who championed a national style of classical music. Mitrofan Belyayev (1836-1904) was a timber merchant and amateur violist who became an arts patron and publisher after hearing Glazunov's music.

To me, the most striking thing about this sonata is that each movement is in “c” minor. The tradition is to compose the second movement in a related key for variety. Instead, continuing in the dark and heavy of “c” minor, Winkler uses compositional voicing and rhythmic play to create different atmospheres.

The first movement is in 9/8 and has a first theme that stresses the weaker beats of the bar, creating a stormy environment. The second theme maintains this agitated feeling, but with a longer melodic line in the viola.

The second movement is a *scherzo*, which keeps the Sturm und Drang character from the first movement. The trio section is in E-flat Major, the relative major to c minor, and has a more relaxed feel. The piano has the melody for most of it, and the viola accompanies, usually beginning on the second beat, just to hold onto a slight sense of discomfort. The last movement, a theme and variations, has a title, unlike the other movements: *Variations sur un air breton*. The theme is a simple folk melody that precedes seven variations and a coda. Each variation has a different mood that winds its way to a triumphant ending.

This recording was an opportunity for me to collaborate with my colleague and friend Glen Inanga, of the award winning Micallef-Inanga Piano Duo. We first met 15 years ago at the Royal Academy of Music in London as students, and had not worked together since then! At our first rehearsal, I was relieved to find out we still had musical chemistry, and Glen's vision complemented mine. We enjoyed working through these difficult pieces, as the musical reward was enormous. I can only extrapolate that the composers must have seen the viola as a solo instrument and encountered violists capable of performing their compositions.

—Eliesha Nelson

# MORE about the COMPOSERS

This recording features three rarely heard Russian/Soviet composers. With the exception of the Juon work, the remainder of the disc presents the very first recorded performances of the music of Winkler and Gaigerova.

Chronologically, Alexander Adolfovich Winkler is the oldest of the three composers. He was born in Kharkov on March 3, 1865. Kharkov, is located in northeastern Ukraine, 400 miles southwest of Moscow, at the confluence of the Kharkov, Lopan, and Udy rivers, tributaries of the Donets. Kharkov, around the time of Winkler's birth when the coal and iron deposits of the Ukraine began to be exploited, became an important junction for major railway lines running between Moscow and the Crimea. When Winkler graduated in 1887 from the law school of Kharkov University and in 1889 from the music school of the Russian Musical Society in Kharkov, the city was experiencing enormous growth and expansion. By the time of the Russian Revolution in 1917, Kharkov was the fifth-largest city in Russia, with a population of about 350,000.

For a period of time, Winkler moved to Paris, where he studied piano with Victor-Alphonse Duvernoy (1842-1907) and in Vienna, piano with Theodor Leschetizky (1830-1915) and composition with Karl Navrátil (1836-1914). Returning to Kharkov, Winkler taught piano there from 1890 to 1896, and then joined the faculty of the St. Petersburg/Petrograd Conservatory (1896-1924). He was a professor there from 1909. Among his best-known students were Sergei Prokofiev and Alfred Swan. Winkler was also a music critic for the newspaper "St. Petersburg Zeitung" (1907-1924). As a member of the so-called "Belyayev Circle" he collaborated on compositions with Blumenfeld, Glazunov, Lyadov, Rimsky-Korsakov, Scriabin and others.

Winkler emigrated to France in 1924 and became a professor and director of the Besançon Conservatory in 1925. Winkler died in Besançon on August 6, 1935.



Theodor Leschetizky  
(1830-1915)

Winkler published a short treatise on elementary theory of music in 1895. He also arranged Glazunov's ballet "Raymonda" and his 8th Symphony for piano 4-hands (both were published by Belyayev), Scriabin's Symphony No.1 in E Major, Op.26 and other 4-hand arrangements of works by Glinka, Scriabin, Glazunov and Rimsky-Korsakov.

His compositions include three string quartets, one string quintet, one piano quartet, one piano quintet, one piano trio, songs, piano pieces (including a set of variations for two pianos) and several orchestral works. His three works on this CD represent his complete works for viola and piano and are all first recordings.

Pavel Fedorovich (Paul) Juon was born in Moscow, on March 6, 1872. He was the son of a prominent Moscow official of Swiss and German descent. From 1888 to 1893 Juon studied at the Moscow Conservatory. He studied violin with Jan Hrimaly (1844-1915) and composition with Sergei Taneyev (1856-1915) and Anton Arensky (1861-1906). He completed his studies at the Berlin Hochschule in 1896 under the direction of Woldemar Bargiel (1828-1897), and was awarded the Mendelssohn Prize. After a short stay at Baku, where he taught violin and music theory at the Baku Conservatory, Juon settled down in Berlin in 1897. In Berlin, he had the good fortune of attracting the attention of music publisher Emil Robert Lienau, who, with his two sons Robert Heinrich and Friedrich Wilhelm, not only published all of the important works of Juon but also were instrumental in getting Juon's works performed.

Juon joined the faculty of the Berlin Hochschule in 1906 and became professor in 1911. In 1919 he was elected a member of the Prussian Academy of Arts. Ill health forced Juon to retire in 1934. He moved to the north shore of Lake Geneva. Juon died in Vevey, Switzerland, on August 21, 1940.

Juon actively composed from his student days at the Berlin Hochschule until his death in Switzerland, composing some two dozen orchestral works (including three violin concertos), around thirty chamber works, around 130 piano pieces, and around 20 vocal and choral works. The Sonata in D major, Opus 15 for Viola and Piano is an early work, dating from 1901. In addition to his compositions, Juon wrote and published *Praktische Harmonielehre* (1901) and *Anleitung zum Modulieren* (1929), and translated into German Arensky's and Tchaikovsky's books on harmony, as well as Modeste Tchaikovsky's 2-volume biography of P.I. Tchaikovsky.

Stylistically, Juon blended Russian and German influences in his music. "The material is almost invariably Slav in character," wrote Edwin Evans in 1927, "whilst the treatment is thoroughly



German, leaning now towards Brahms, now towards less recent writers of chamber music. His powers of development are strong, and characterized by solidity of thought, whilst the danger of heaviness is cleverly avoided by the use of an exceptional rhythmic ingenuity, probably as Slav in its origin as the themes he uses." Writing in 1926 in the *Allgemeine Musikzeitung*, Eberhard Preussner wrote: "Juon's music is not easily defined... His remarkable sense of form is the first of his characteristics... The second characteristic lies in his melodic talent; here he must be grateful to the masters of Russian folk music. Themes, of actual Russian origin, give all of his music an extraordinary charm... Further, his music is characterized by a remarkable rhythmic power."

The most biographically elusive of the three composers on this disc is Varvara Adrianovna Gaigerova. She was born October 17, 1903 in the city of Orekhovo-Zuyevo in Moscow oblast (region), western Russia, east of Moscow city, along the Klyazma River. Formed in 1917 through the amalgamation of several industrial villages, Orekhovo-Zuyevo is one of the largest textile-manufacturing cities of Russia, specializing in cotton. Soviet pianist, Yakov Flier was also born in Orekhovo-Zuyevo. She studied in the 1920s at the Moscow Conservatory. Her teachers included Heinrich Neuhaus (piano), Georgy Catoire and Nikolai Myaskovsky (composition). Among her earliest compositions is an oratorio to texts by Alexander Blok, piano pieces dedicated to her teacher Neuhaus, and a first symphony. These works from the late 1920s show influences of Scriabin. She worked as a pianist at the Bolshoi Theater and also in Orekhovo-Zuyevo. In the 1930s she began studying, collecting, documenting, and incorporating into her compositions folk music from ethnic groups of the Soviet Union (Turkmenian, Kalmyks, Udmurts, Uzbeks, Yakuts, Kazakhs, Buryats, etc.) and writing celebratory works dedicated to socialism and the anniversary of the revolution. Her two string quartets are stylistic bookends. The first from 1927 still show Scriabinesque leanings, while the second (published posthumously in 1947) is based on Yakut themes. The three symphonies (1928, 1934 (on Kalmyk themes) and 1937 (written for the 20th anniversary of the revolution)) are sadly neglected as are her three suites (1932-1935) based on ethnic themes written for folk instrument orchestra. Her piano works include sonatas and other shorter works. She also composed over 150 romances on poetry by Pushkin, Lermontov, Blok and others. She died in Moscow on April 6, 1940, just short of her 41st birthday.



Bolshoi Hall,  
Moscow Conservatory

# Eliesha NELSON

Grammy® nominated violist Eliesha Nelson has a passion for performing and promoting music of neglected composers who wrote masterworks for the viola. She has been critically acclaimed in international publications for her outstanding interpretive abilities. The *L.A. Times* wrote of her, “*She is a marvelous player... a ravishing violist...*”

Eliesha Nelson was born and raised in the interior of Alaska, where she began the violin at the age of six with the Suzuki Method, and piano at age 8. Her first violin teacher, Peggy Swartz, was actually a cellist, but the Suzuki method was new in the interior of Alaska, and Mrs. Swartz was one of the few teachers for beginners. Mrs. Swartz instilled a love of music and learning that began young Eliesha’s journey towards a professional career in music.

She earned her bachelor’s of music at the Cleveland Institute of Music, and an artist’s diploma from the Royal Academy of Music in London through a Fulbright award. It wasn’t until a stint at the University of Texas at Austin that she began exploring a relationship with the viola. She returned to the Cleveland Institute of Music to pursue a master’s in viola performance. Her teachers have included Robert Vernon, Linda Cerone, and György Pauk. Ms. Nelson served as acting principal viola of the Florida Philharmonic Orchestra, and is a member of the Cleveland Orchestra. She has appeared as soloist with orchestras including the Cleveland Orchestra for education concerts, the Ohio Chamber Orchestra, and San Antonio Symphony, to name a few. One of her big passions is chamber music, which she taught for several years at ENCORE School for Strings. Ms. Nelson’s 2009 debut recording, *Quincy Porter Complete Viola Works* [DSL-90911], received nominations in four Grammy® categories in 2010, and won in “Best Engineered Album, Classical.” She records on the Sono Luminus label.

For more information about Eliesha Nelson, please visit [www.elieshanelson.com](http://www.elieshanelson.com).



# Glen INANGA

Following graduation from Clare College, University of Cambridge, as a British Council Scholar where he read the Engineering Tripos and received his Master of Arts degree in 1998, Mr. Inanga studied with Martin Roscoe at the Royal Academy of Music, London, UK, where he won several awards including the prestigious Overseas Research Students Scheme (ORS) Award. He holds the M.Mus. degree of the University of London with distinction in Piano Performance and was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music (ARAM) in 2003.

As an international concert pianist soloist, he gave his New York début in September 2000, performing Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* to a capacity audience in Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Centre receiving rave reviews. Following his successful London Debut in November 2000, The Independent newspaper critic wrote: 'Sensitive playing...he placed the melodies like valuable objects against whispered accompaniments'. In addition, his piano duo partnership with Jennifer Micallef (the Micallef-Inanga Piano Duo) is reputed to be amongst the most outstanding piano duos worldwide and continues to make an increasing impact on an ever-widening international audience. The duo have appeared as soloists with orchestras, including Bournemouth Symphony, Bayerische Rundfunk, New Bulgarian Symphony and Brno Philharmonic. Following successful debut performances in Hong Kong and Singapore as well as in the Musikverein Concert Hall, performances for the 2010-2011 season include performances in Milan, Malta and the UK.

Mr. Inanga is currently a Senior Lecturer at the University College of the Cayman Islands (UCCI) which he joined in 2007 with the task of developing a music programme. As an educator, Mr. Inanga is in constant demand as a specialist coach for piano duos and provides adjudication for piano duo competitions at leading international music conservatoires. In addition, he has presented Lecture Recitals at international symposia in the UK and Asia and works on special research projects relating to rarely performed and recorded works in the piano duo repertory as well as other genres.

For more information on Glen Inanga, please visit <http://www.micallefinanga.com>.





# DSL-92136 – Russian Viola Sonatas – Eliesha Nelson & Glen Inanga

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**Editing Engineers:** Daniel Shores, Dan Merceruio

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**Additional Program Notes:** Marina A. Ledin and Victor Ledin

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**Piano:** Steinway & Sons, New York, Model D Concert Grand

**Viola:** David Carón (1986)



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