

**Sergey Akhunov**  
*Songs & Poems*

**Dmitry Sinkovsky**  
Julia Lezhneva Olesya Petrova  
**La Voce Strumentale**

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Andrei Revenko (O. Petrova, p 15), Emil Matveev (J. Lezhneva, p 15)

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## **Dmitry Sinkovsky**

countertenor (1, 3-6, 8-10, 12, 13)

## **Julia Lezhneva**

soprano (10, 11, 13)

Julia Lezhneva appears courtesy of Decca Classics

## **Olesya Petrova**

contralto (2-6)

# **La Voce Strumentale**

on baroque instruments

as guest

**Alexei Goribol** piano (1-3, 5, 6)

**Dmitry Shchelkin** percussion (1-6, 8-10, 12-14)

**Maria Krestinskaya, Svetlana Ramazanova** violin I

**Elena Davidova, Christina Traulko** violin II

**Vlad Pesin, Polina Babinkova** viola

**Igor Bobovich** cello

**Ilya Panichkin** double bass

**Luca Pianca** theorbo & lute (9-14)

## **Dmitry Sinkovsky**

conductor

# Sergey Akhunov

(b. 1967)

## Poems (in English)

on selected poems by Edward Estling Cummings (1894–1962)

- |   |                                |      |
|---|--------------------------------|------|
| 1 | Though your sorrows not        | 7:01 |
| 2 | There is a moon sole           | 2:53 |
| 3 | Who sharpens every dull        | 6:40 |
| 4 | Rain or hail                   | 1:29 |
| 5 | I carry your heart with me     | 5:28 |
| 6 | D-re-A-mi-N-gl-Y               | 5:44 |
| 7 | <b>The Imprint</b> for strings | 5:58 |

## Songs (in Russian)

from "Chinese travelogue"

on selected poems by Olga Sedakova (b. 1949)

- |    |  |      |
|----|--|------|
| 8  | These things amazed me (И меня удивило)                | 1:34 |
| 9  | Homeland! my heart shouted (Родина! вскрикнуло сердце) | 2:24 |
| 10 | The pond says (Пруд говорит)                           | 5:45 |
| 11 | In falling, they fall not (Падая, не падают)           | 2:22 |
| 12 | There—on a mountain (Там, на горе)                     | 4:28 |
| 13 | Do you know (Знаете ли вы)                             | 5:10 |
| 14 | Not in this world (Не под этим небом) instrumental     | 5:33 |
| 15 | <b>Cherubic chant</b> for strings                      | 4:04 |



**Sergey Akhunov** was born in Kiev in 1967. A graduate of the Kiev State Conservatory, Sergey started as an oboe player before moving on to other genres, including electronic music and Rock 'n roll.

He made a decisive break from this style of music in 2005 to exclusively concentrate on orchestral and chamber music. "It has taken me almost 40 years to understand what kind of music I really want to write," Sergey says.

His musical works include a wide range of compositions for chamber ensembles and symphony orchestras. His prizes and awards include the 1st International Classical Music Award "Pure Sound" for his "Victor Hugo's Blank Page" audio recording, a 2017 Gramophone Critics' choice for his "In Schubert's Company" CD, and a nomination for his CD "Sketches" in the prestigious International Classical Music Awards, 2017.

Sergey Akhunov's music is distributed by Fancy-music, Alfa classics, Melodya, Onyx and others.



## Songs & Poems

by Sergey Akhunov

*First Dmitry Sinkovsky invited me to write compositions for his ensemble La Voce Strumentale, and he wanted it to be music for voice and instruments. Although song is not my favourite genre, in the context of Dmitry's idea – contemporary music for baroque instruments – it seemed attractive.*

### Poems

When I got acquainted with Cummings' poetry for the first time, I was not impressed – perhaps because it was in Russian translation.

But later, when I found in the internet his poem "Though your sorrows not", I suddenly heard how these verses may sound. I could imagine a long, harmonically varied introduction interrupted by a voice singing "Though your sorrows not any tongue may name..." It was enough to find a connection to Cummings' poetry.

I wanted to avoid any pastiche of baroque music. Yes, it is music for baroque instruments, but it is composed now and for contemporary audiences.

So I decided not to use harpsichord, but contemporary piano instead.

Besides, I wanted to create a kind of theatrical phantasmagoria: a contemplative second part ("There is a moon sole") turns into a mystical story of a wizard who fixes women's fate ("Who sharpens every dull") with an allusion to post-war American movies, fancy and at the same time naïve with musical "suspenses" without denouement. Comically militarized – like the Good Soldier Švejk – the fourth part ("Rain or hail") turns into a love story ("I carry your heart with me"). The fairy-tale "Dreamingly" is a finale of the whole cycle. It is almost theatre, a fantasy world, bizarre and baroque.

## Songs

The second cycle of this project is composed with Russian texts. I have chosen poems by Olga Sedakova. Her "Chinese travelogue" consists of eighteen verses. I used the first five of them.

The poetry has no rhyme, but is strictly rhythmically organized. Moreover, the title "Chinese travelogue" implies a certain opportunity for allusions on Eastern ceremony and Asian sonority. The music of these two cycles is subordinate to the text and not only rhythmically – it is subordinate to the mood of the poetry.

*«The pond says:  
had I hands and a voice  
I would love and cherish you»*

As Julia Lezhneva who sings three songs in this project once remarked, the first long lasting note with the word "pond" appears to be a drop hanging from a tree branch over still water. With its downfall at the word "says" the cello enters as a movement of radiating circles. So it has some inner connections with the East Asian poetry, but at the same time – and quite obviously – with Bach's music.

## Interview

with Dmitry Sinkovsky

*Why did you decide to commission a contemporary piece for baroque instruments?*

Well, it is not so new nowadays, it is a quite common practice that ensembles on baroque instruments play contemporary music. Very often composers are interested to get a special sound for their pieces, also using some specific instruments, or a combination of modern instruments and instruments with gut strings. I thought it might be an interesting experiment.

*Why did you choose Akhunov?*

I think that Sergey's musical language and his transparent and lyrical way of writing are good for a project with an orchestra on baroque instruments, the "Poems" as well as two instrumental pieces were already composed, though once we decided to make this project together, they were adjusted for our distribution. The "Songs" were written and dedicated to La Voce Strumentale. At that time we just had a long

tour with Julia Lezhneva, and when I showed her the music, she said that it would be great to do it together and it would be nice to make something completely new.

And of course it was an honour to be in one ensemble together with great Olesya Petrova, Alexei Goribol, Dmitry Shchelkin in "Poems". Producer Raisa Fomina put all of us together and somehow connected a lot of individual and strong energies through Sergey's music.

*How did your ensemble react by recording the music? Did you experience problems in approaching such a repertoire?*

I think that players of La Voce Strumentale are very skillful musicians, having been educated not only in baroque instruments and Early Music, but in all classical music genres. Many of them come

from the Faculty of Contemporary and Historical Practice of the The Moscow State Conservatory, where they deeply studied the different styles of music making.

Of course it is an adventure when you are entering into a new music material never performed before. But it is a privilege and a challenge to have a composer next to you all the time of the project. Sergey was very helpful in communicating his images and ideas, there were of course some discussions about the amount of expression, he wanted a bit less and I wanted a bit more, sometimes we also discussed dynamics and rhythm. Of course in his music all is so written in details, that it might be tricky to find the freedom you use to have in Early Music, but at the end it was an interesting and good experience. We took pretty many decisions together and many things were created during the rehearsals and the recording.



### **Poems**

*Dedicated to my wife Olya*

### **The imprint**

*Dedicated to Alexei & Elena Kholodov*

### **Songs**

*Dedicated to ensemble La Voce Strumentale*

Edward Estling Cummings  
**POEMS**

#### **1 Though your sorrows not**

“Though your sorrows not  
any tongue may name  
three i’ll give you sweet  
joys for each of them  
But it must be your”  
whispers that flower  
murmurs eager this  
“i will give you five  
hopes for any fear  
but it Must be your”  
perfectly alive  
blossom of a bliss

“seven heavens for  
just one dying, i’ll  
give you” silently  
cries the (whom we call  
rose a) mystery  
“but it must be Your”

#### **2 There is a moon sole**

there is a  
moon sole  
in the blue  
night  
amorous of waters

tremulous,  
blinded with silence the  
undulous heaven yearns where  
in tense starlessness  
anoint with ardor  
the yellow lover  
stands in the dumb dark  
svelte  
and  
urgent  
(again  
love i slowly  
gather  
of thy languorous mouth the  
thrilling  
flower)

#### **3 Who sharpens every dull**

who sharpens every dull  
here comes the only man  
reminding with his bell  
to disappear a sun  
and out of houses pour  
maids mothers widows wives  
bringing this visitor  
their very oldest lives  
one pays him with a smile  
another with a tear  
some cannot pay at all  
he never seems to care

he sharpens is to am  
he sharpens say to sing  
you'd almost cut your thumb  
so right he sharpens wrong  
and when their lives are keen  
he throws the world a kiss  
and slings his wheel upon  
his back and off he goes  
but we can hear him still  
if now our sun is gone  
reminding with his bell  
to reappear a moon

#### 4 Rain or hail

Rain or hail  
Sam done  
The best he kin  
Till they digged his hole  
:sam was a man  
stout as a bridge  
rugged as a bear  
slickern a weazel  
how be you  
(sun or snow)  
gone into what  
like all them kings  
you read about  
and on him sings

a whippoorwill  
heart was big  
as the world aint square  
with room for the devil  
and his angels too  
yes, sir  
what may be better  
or what may be worse  
or what may be clover  
clover clover  
(nobody'll know)  
sam was a man  
grinned his grin  
done his chores  
laid him down  
sleep well

#### 5 I carry your heart with me

I carry your heart with me (I carry it in  
my hear) I am never without it (anywhere  
I go you go, my dear; and whatever is done  
by only me is your doing, my darling)  
I fear  
no fate (for you are my fate, my sweet) I want  
no world (for beautiful you're my world, my true)  
and it's you are whatever a sun will always sing  
is you

here is the deepest secret nnoobody knows  
(here is the root of the root and the bud of the  
bud and the sky of the sky of a tree called life;  
which grows  
higher than soul can hope or mind can hide) and  
this is the wonder that's keeping the stars apart  
I carry your heart (I carry it in my heart)

#### 6 D-re-A-mi-N-gl-Y

D-re-A-mi-N-gl-Y  
leaves  
(sEe)  
locked  
in  
gOLd  
aftergL0w  
are  
t  
ReMbLiN  
g



### 8 И меня удивило

И меня удивило:  
как спокойны воды,  
как знакомо небо,  
как медленно плывет джонка в каменных  
берегах.

### 9 Родина! вскрикнуло сердце

Родина! вскрикнуло сердце при виде ивы:  
такие ивы в Китае,  
смывающие свой овал с великой охотой,  
ибо только наша щедрость  
встретит нас за гробом.

### 10 Пруд говорит

Пруд говорит:  
были бы у меня руки и голос,  
как бы я любил тебя, как лелеял.  
Люди, знаешь, жадны и всегда болеют  
и рвут чужую одежду  
себе на повязки.  
Мне же ничего не нужно:  
ведь нежность – это выздоровленье.  
Положил бы я тебе руки на колени,

### These things amazed me

These things amazed me  
the still waters,  
the familiar sky,  
the junk floating slowly within stone banks.

### Homeland! my heart shouted ...

Homeland! my heart shouted at the sight of  
willow:  
there are willows in China  
that erase their ovals with great eagerness,  
since only our generosity  
will meet us in the next world.

### The pond says

The pond says:  
had I hands and a voice  
I would love and cherish you.  
People, you see, are greedy and frequently sick  
and they tear other's clothes  
to make bandages.  
While I need nothing:  
after all, tenderness is healing.  
I'd place my hands on your knees

.....  
и спускался сверху  
голосом как небо.

### 11 Падая, не падают

Падая, не падают,  
окунаются в воду и не мокнут  
длинные рукава деревьев.

Деревья мои старые –  
пагоды, дороги!  
Сколько раз мы виделись,  
а каждый раз, как первый,  
задыхается, бегом бежит сердце  
с совершенно пустой котомкой  
по стволу, по холмам и оврагам веток  
в длинные, в широкие глаза храмов,  
к зеркалу в алтаре,  
на зеленый пол.  
Не довольно ли мы бродили,  
чтобы наконец свернуть  
на единственно милый,  
никому не обидный,  
не видный  
путь?

Шапка-невидимка,  
одежда божества, одежда из глаз,  
падая, не падает, окунается в воду и не  
мокнет.  
Деревья, слово люблю только вам подходит.

-----  
and through my voice I'd descend  
from above like the heavens.

### In falling, they fall not

In falling, they fall not  
the long sleeves of trees  
dip into the water but don't get wet.  
My ancient trees –  
pagodas, roads.  
How many times have we seen each other,  
yet each time's like the first,  
as I gasp, my heart heaving hard  
with a completely empty pack,  
along the trunk, over the hills and valleys of  
branches,  
into the long wide eyes of temples  
toward the mirror on the altar,  
over the green floor.  
Haven't we wandered enough  
to set off together at last  
along the only pleasant  
invisible  
path  
that bothers no one?  
Cap conferring invisibility,  
godly garment, garment of eyes,  
in falling it falls not, dips into the water but isn't  
wet.  
Trees, for you only "I love you" will do.

### 12 Там, на горе

Там, на горе,  
у которой в коленах последняя хижина,  
а выше никто не хаживал;  
лба которой не видывали из-за туч  
и не скажут, хмур ли он, весел, –  
кто-то бывает и не бывает,  
есть и не есть.

Величиной с око ласточки,  
с крошку сухого хлеба,  
с лестницу на крыльях бабочки,  
с лестницу, кинутую с неба,  
с лестницу, по которой  
никому не хочется лезть;  
мельче, чем видят пчелы  
и чем слово есть.

### 13 Знаете ли вы

Знаете ли вы,  
карликовые сосны, плакучие ивы?  
Отвязанная лодка  
не долго тычется в берег –  
и ни радость  
того, что бывало,  
и ни жалость:  
все мы сегодня здесь, а завтра – кто скажет?  
и ни разум:  
одни только духи безупречны,  
скромны, бесстрашны и милосердны –

### 12 There-on a mountain

There-on a mountain  
at whose knees is a last hut,  
and no one's gone higher;  
whose brow can't be seen behind the storm  
clouds  
so you can't say whether it's frowning or smiling  
–

someone comes and doesn't, is and isn't.  
He's the size of a swallow's eye,  
of a crumb of dry bread,  
of a ladder on a butterfly's wings,  
of a ladder thrown down from heaven,  
of a ladder that  
no one wants to climb;  
smaller than what wasps see,  
smaller than the word is.

### 13 Do you know

Do you know  
the dwarf pines, the weeping willows?  
An untied boat  
doesn't hug the bank for long –  
and there's no joy  
in what's past  
nor sorrow:  
we're all here today, but who can speak  
for tomorrow?  
and no reason:  
only the blameless spirits are

простого восхищенья  
ничто не остановит,  
простого восхищенья,  
заходящего, как солнце.

Отвязанная лодка  
плывет не размышляя,  
обломанная ветка  
прирастет, да не под этим небом.

modest, fearless, and charitable –  
simple rapture can't be stopped,  
simple rapture setting like the sun.  
An untied boat  
floats without a thought,  
a broken bough  
takes root, but not in this world.

*translation: Andrew Wachtel*



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