



CHAMPS HILL
RECORDS

DANCER on a TIGHTROPE



BARTOSZ WOROCH *violin*

BACEWICZ PROKOFIEV HINDEMITH
SCHNITTKER GUBAIDULINA CAGE

with Mei Yi Foo *piano / keyboard*

The violin repertoire went through a considerable makeover in the 20th century. Once a melodic instrument cherished for its ability to sing as well as for its virtuoso quality, the violin has evolved into a much more diverse and unpredictable medium. Melody and harmony became secondary to rhythm and articulation; humour was replaced by sarcasm, lyricism by grief, nostalgia by resignation. The sound world expanded, fuelled by composers' curiosity and their desire to unlock all of the violin's secrets and hidden qualities. Thus, each piece is a journey into the unknown, where every composer creates a unique set of requirements for the violinist. The performer is no longer a hero, on his noble quest; instead he resembles a dancer on a tightrope, who emanates elements of danger, uncertainty and suspense. The dancer knows how to embrace the risks, taking one step at a time, yet strives to amaze, stun and inspire his watchers to awe. I invite you to explore the wonderful depths and diversity of the 20th-century repertoire for violin with the same fearless approach.

Bartosz Woroch



TRACK LISTING

SONATA NO.2 FOR SOLO VIOLIN | GRAŻYNA BACEWICZ (1909–1969)

- | | | | |
|---|------------|------------------|------|
| 1 | <i>i</i> | Adagio - Allegro | 6'30 |
| 2 | <i>ii</i> | Adagio | 3'43 |
| 3 | <i>iii</i> | Presto | 2'21 |

SONATA FOR SOLO VIOLIN, OP.31 NO.2 | PAUL HINDEMITH (1895–1963)

- | | | | |
|---|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 4 | <i>i</i> | Leicht bewegte Viertel | 2'12 |
| 5 | <i>ii</i> | Ruhig bewegte Achtel | 3'31 |
| 6 | <i>iii</i> | Gemächliche Viertel | 1'22 |
| 7 | <i>iv</i> | Fünf Variationen über das Lied "Komm, lieber Mai", v. Mozart | 5'15 |

8 DANCER ON A TIGHTROPE | SOFIA GUBAIDULINA (b.1931) 15'31

SONATA FOR SOLO VIOLIN IN D MAJOR, OP.115 | SERGEI PROKOFIEV (1891–1953)

- | | | | |
|----|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 9 | <i>i</i> | Moderato | 5'44 |
| 10 | <i>ii</i> | Theme and Variations | 4'19 |
| 11 | <i>iii</i> | Con brio – Allegro precipitato – Tempo I – Allegro precipitato | 4'23 |

12 FUGA FOR SOLO VIOLIN | ALFRED SCHNITTKKE (1934–1998) 5'25

SIX MELODIES | JOHN CAGE (1912–1992)

- | | | | |
|----|-----|--|------|
| 13 | I | | 2'31 |
| 14 | II | | 1'39 |
| 15 | III | | 2'19 |
| 16 | IV | | 2'31 |
| 17 | V | | 1'48 |
| 18 | VI | | 2'25 |

Total playing time: 73'33

Produced, engineered, edited and mastered by Patrick Allen
Recorded from 2nd–3rd July and 24th–25th August 2016 in the Music Room, Champs Hill, West Sussex, UK

Executive Producer for Champs Hill Records: Alexander Van Ingen
Label Manager for Champs Hill Records: Matt Buchanan

PROGRAMME NOTE

Billowing factory chimneys and the relentless energy of mass production belonged to Grażyna Bacewicz's childhood memories. She was born and raised in Łódź, then part of the Russian-controlled Kingdom of Poland. The city was a 'Promised Land' for economic migrants, attracting workers from across Europe to operate the vast mills that produced cotton and other textiles for the Russian Empire. Bacewicz received early lessons in piano and violin from her father, a choral conductor and composer originally from Lithuania. Fresh opportunities arose for young Grażyna with the creation of the Second Polish Republic at the end of the First World War. In 1919 she became a student at Helena Kijenska-Dobkiewiczowa's private Conservatory in Łódź. Following her family's move to Warsaw four years later, she enrolled at the Warsaw Conservatory to study composition with Kazimierz Sikorski, violin with Józef Jarzębski and piano with Józef Turczyński. Bacewicz's formative experiences were also shaped by a short period as a student of philosophy at the University of Warsaw.

Soon after her graduation in 1932, Bacewicz was awarded a grant that supported two periods of study with Nadia Boulanger in Paris. She returned to the French capital in 1934 for violin lessons with Carl Flesch and made a striking impression the following year at the first Henryk Wieniawski International Violin Competition in Warsaw. The young musician's exceptional skills as a performer were recognised not least by the conductor Grzegorz Fitelberg, who invited her to join the first violins of the newly formed Polish Radio Orchestra. Bacewicz, who spent two years with the orchestra, freely admitted that she took the job to deepen her knowledge of instrumentation. Her solo career gathered pace in the late 1930s at home and abroad, propelled by the success of a fine duo partnership with her pianist brother, Kiejstut, and also by an acclaimed appearance as soloist with the Polish Radio Orchestra in her own Violin Concerto No.1. She continued to perform after the Second World War until the mid-1950s, when she took the decision to devote her time exclusively to composition.

Bacewicz's first sonata for solo violin dates from her student years in Warsaw. In 1941 she completed her Solo Sonata No.1 and gave its first performance at a concert in Warsaw organised by the Polish underground during the Nazi occupation. Her Solo Sonata No.2, written in 1958, combines elements of the elegant neo-classicism of its predecessor with a tougher, more acerbic style. The brief work, cast in three distinct movements, develops from an introspective exploration of a sustained unison and neighbouring intervals. Bacewicz repeatedly builds and dissipates tension in the opening *Adagio*, contrasting formal patterns of held notes and dance-like figures with wilder improvisatory outbursts and a yearning central melody that fragments as it gradually unfolds. The sonata's second *Adagio*, prefaced by the disconcerting energy of harsh *pizzicato* chords and an extended silence, suggests the contemplation of some great truth about existence, something beyond the restricting limits of words. After such an interlude, only silence or subversion will suffice; Bacewicz delivers both, allowing the *Adagio* to resolve into peace before unleashing the *moto perpetuo* whirlwind of her sonata's finale, a headlong dash of double-stopped scale figures.

Paul Hindemith made his name as a formidable viola virtuoso and as one of the brightest young composers of the Weimar Republic's early years. He began his career in 1914 as a violinist with the Frankfurt Opera orchestra, rising to become its leader before he was conscripted into the German army and sent to serve on the Western Front. Hindemith returned to his old post in Frankfurt at the end of the First World War and also became viola player with the Rebner Quartet, then with the Amar Quartet. He swiftly developed his reputation as a free-spirited composer, thanks not least to a series of Expressionist operas and song-cycles, *Mörder, Hoffnung der Frauen* (1919), *Sancta Susanna* (1921) and *Des Todes Tod* (1922) among them, while gradually incorporating into his work aspects of the so-called *Neue Sachlichkeit*, the 'new sobriety' or 'new objectivity', considered to be in tune with the rational ideals of Germany's post-war democracy. The emerging

clarity and classical poise of Hindemith's brand of neo-classicism can be heard in his Sonata for solo violin Op.34 No.2, written in 1924 for the Amar Quartet's second violinist, Walter Caspar.

Hindemith gave his work a suggestive subtitle, 'Es ist so schönes Wetter draußen' ('It's such nice weather outside'). The Sonata's playful first movement projects and sustains a suitably sunny atmosphere, suspending time through repetition and subtle variations of two contrasting phrases before soaring high in its final bars and closing with three *pizzicato* chords. There's something unsettling about the work's central movement. Hindemith's melodic material here gradually loses its geniality to take on a mysterious quality as the soloist gives voice to a high-lying trill, its accelerating rhythm harnessed to a dynamic diminution into silence. The reprise of the movement's main theme feels familiar yet somehow otherworldly, charged now with an air of foreboding. The music's hollowed-out quality flows into the brief third movement, where the melodic line is incised throughout in *pizzicato* detail, only for its full life to be restored in the final. Hindemith brings his work to a close with five variations on Mozart's *Komm, lieber Mai*. The original song, to a text by Christian Adolph Overbeck, longs for the coming of spring from the perspective of winter gloom. Hindemith's variations, by turns energetic and wistful, amplify the common sense of yearning for new life, for nature's resurgence and the return of warmth. Even the cuckoo plays her part in the penultimate variation, anticipating the headlong rush of birdsong that brings the sonata to its conclusion.

Born in the Tatar Autonomous Peoples' Republic, Sofia Gubaidulina showed considerable promise as a pianist during her childhood. She enrolled at the Kazan State Conservatory in 1949 and subsequently studied composition at the Moscow Conservatory with Nikolai Peyko and Vissarion Shebalin. It was Gubaidulina's creative independence that, despite the so-called 'Thaw' in official Soviet attitudes

to the arts and literature, attracted censure during her conservatory years. Although the authorities expressed reservations about her work, Shostakovich praised the symphony Gubaidulina composed for her final diploma examination in 1959 and told her: "Be yourself. Don't be afraid to be yourself. My wish for you is that you should continue on your own, incorrect way". She readily took the revered composer's advice, weathering harsh criticism during Soviet times, gaining international recognition in the years of perestroika, and securing her place among the most distinctive composers of her generation.

Dancer on a Tightrope was commissioned by the Library of Congress in Washington D.C. and completed in 1993 on the back of a near-overwhelming floodtide of creativity. Gubaidulina wrote the piece for Robert Mann to mark his forthcoming retirement as first violinist of the Juilliard Quartet. He gave its first performance at the Library of Congress in partnership with Ursula Oppens in February 1994. "The [work's] title stems from a desire to break away from the confines of everyday life, inevitably associated with risk and danger," the composer observes in her original programme note. "The desire to take flight, for the exhilaration of movement, of dance, of ecstatic virtuosity. A person dancing on a tightrope is also a metaphor for this opposition: life as risk, and art as flight into another existence."

The composition's piano part initially requires the player to stroke the instrument's strings with a glass, establishing a texture of shimmering keyboard harmonics over which the self-absorbed violin pirouettes and preens. Any sense of support dissolves as the pianist digs the tumbler's serrated bottom into the bass strings, launches a barrage of repeated rhythms and pedal notes, and opens up an abyss of silence. The latter is punctured by a series of monumental keyboard chords and the violin's skittish interjections. *Dancer on a Tightrope* finally abandons its flirtation with danger in favour of a state of rest.

Prokofiev's Sonata for Solo Violin in D Major Op.115 evokes the stylised gestures of Baroque dance and early classical chamber music, albeit presented in modern melodic fashion. The work was written in 1947 in response to a commission from the Committee on Arts Affairs for a work suitable for talented young players. Prokofiev responded with a three-movement sonata that could be performed either by solo violin or by violins in unison. It seems likely that both Committee and composer had in mind the pastiche pieces of Fritz Kreisler, elegant and refined in style yet never extreme in their technical demands. The Sonata's opening movement is cast in sonata form, complete with a swaggering first subject and sonorous coda. Prokofiev crafts the second movement from a wistful theme with five variations, and crowns the work with a mazurka-like finale flecked with double stops and driven by apparently limitless energy.

"I feel myself to be German, Russian and Jewish, I can see my religious beliefs as Catholic, Jewish or Orthodox." Alfred Schnittke's assessment of his multiform personality lies rooted in the composer's background and family circumstances. He was born in Engels on 24 November 1934, son of a Jewish father of Estonian descent and a German-speaking mother from the Volga Republic. After spending part of the Second World War living just outside Moscow, the Schnittkes moved to Vienna in 1946. Young Alfred was given an accordion and made rapid progress on the instrument; soon after he began to study piano and wrote his first compositions. In 1948 the family returned to Moscow, where Alfred trained to be a choirmaster before he enrolled at the Moscow Conservatory. Schnittke's composition teachers included the conservative-minded Evgeny Golubev and Nikolai Rakov; he also took lessons from Filip Hershkovich, who had studied with Anton Webern before the Second World War and who introduced his pupil to works by Mahler and Webern.

Schnittke's first mature compositions reveal the influence of such Russian composers as Stravinsky, Prokofiev and, inevitably, Shostakovich. He sought to

discover more about contemporary trends in Western music as early as 1958 and especially following the first of Luigi Nono's visits to the Soviet Union in the early 1960s. Schnittke's flirtation with atonal and serial composition techniques drew censure from the Soviet authorities; however, it was the composer's self-criticisms that led him to abandon what he later described as "the puberty rites of serial self-denial". By 1968 Schnittke had cultivated a syncretic musical language that mixed a wide variety of styles – past and present – into what he described as 'polystylistic' compositions.

Schnittke was fascinated by the violin's sound and explored its ability to adopt different musical masks throughout his creative life. *Fuga*, written in 1953, dates from the composer's first year at the Moscow Conservatory. It was discovered in his personal archive after his death and published soon after. The short yet intense piece bears witness to Schnittke's prodigious technical mastery and his early debt to the influence of Shostakovich. Schnittke makes telling use of the interval of a major seventh, which serves to subvert his fugue subject's largely diatonic character and returns to haunt the composition throughout its course. He also enriches the work's texture with frequent double stops and an exquisite *pizzicato* recollection of the main subject. *Fuga* was first performed in October 1999 by Oleh Krysa in New York.

John Cage conceived *Six Melodies for Violin and Keyboard (Piano)* in 1950 as 'a postscript' to his recently completed *String Quartet in Four Parts*. Both works grew out of the composer's disillusion with mass-market commercialism and contemporary classical music's related pursuit of grand effects and extreme gestures: "There seemed to me to be no truth, no good, in anything big in society", he later observed in his 'Lecture on Nothing'. The *String Quartet in Four Parts* and *Six Melodies* address the question of how to create an aesthetic of new music for conventional instruments free from extravagance and bombast. Cage's answer can be heard in the essential stillness and concentration of the *Six*

Melodies, qualities associated with the music of Erik Satie, the philosophy of Ananda Coomaraswamy (1877-1947) and the Zen Buddhism that the composer was studying at the time.

The *String Quartet in Four Parts* and *Six Melodies* share common 'gamuts', Cage's term for a prescribed set of sonorities assigned to each instrument as the source of its melodic and harmonic material. The composer uses simple rhythmic patterns to shape the structure of each 'Melody'. His score contains precise pedalling directions for the pianist, used to distinguish elements or 'members' of the gamut; it also instructs the violinist to perform without vibrato and with the least possible weight on the bow. "My feeling," wrote Cage in 1948, "was that beauty yet remains in intimate situations; that it is quite hopeless to think and act impressively in public terms. This attitude is escapist, but I believe it is wise rather than foolish to escape from a bad situation." *Six Melodies* could stand as a metaphor for the beauty to be found in the music of intimacy and introspection.

Polish-born violinist Bartosz Woroch is a prize winner at major international competitions such as Pablo Sarasate in Spain and Michael Hill in New Zealand. As a soloist Bartosz has appeared with orchestras across the world, including the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Auckland Philharmonic, Bern Symphony Orchestra, the Bournemouth Symphony and Polish Radio Orchestras with conductors such as Michael Tilson Thomas, Libor Pešek, Łukasz Borowicz and Henk Guitart. For the past three seasons, he has led, directed and appeared as soloists with the Sinfonia Cymru, culminating in the orchestra's first ever international collaboration, 'Small Nations Big Sounds' Festival, of which he was Artistic Director.

Bartosz performs widely across Europe at venues including Wigmore Hall, Barbican, Royal Albert Hall, The Palais des Beaux-Arts (Brussels), Radio France Festival (Montpellier), Lublin Philharmonie, the Edinburgh Fringe, Brighton, Lichfield, Verbier and West Cork festivals. Further afield he has toured New Zealand, Malaysia, Australia and Singapore. He has recorded for BBC Radio 3, Radio France and Polish Radio and collaborated with a variety of artists such as Pekka Kuusisto, Sting, Caroline Palmer, Uri Caine, Nicholas Daniel, Walter Delahunt and award-winning director Tom Morris.



In 2011 he was selected for representation by Young Classical Artists Trust (YCAT) in 2011.

A committed chamber musician, Bartosz is the leader of the Lutoslawski Quartet and has given recitals throughout Europe with a recent residency at IRCAM in Paris. He continues to explore the world of the solo violin, each concert having its roots in JS Bach's Sonatas and Partitas, giving recitals throughout the UK and in Poland.

Bartosz studied at the Paderewski Academy of Music in Poznan, the Hochschule der Kunste Berne and at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, where he was guided by Marcin Baranowski, Monika Urbaniak-Lisik and Louise Hopkins.

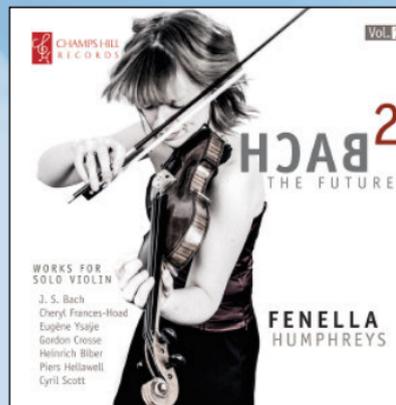
Bartosz is currently a violin professor at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Mei Yi Foo is the winner of the 2013 BBC Best Newcomer of the Year award for her album *Musical Toys*, which garnered rave reviews from *The Times*, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, *BBC Music* and Germany's *Klassik* magazines. Appearing with the Philharmonia Orchestra, London Chamber Orchestra, Helsinki Philharmonic, Fort Worth Symphony, English Chamber Orchestra, Bretagne Symphony, Remix Ensemble and the Malaysian Philharmonic, she performed alongside conductors such as Matthias Bamert, Martyn Brabbins, János Fürst, Kirill Karabits, Peter Rundel, John Storgårds and Christopher Warren-Green.



As a new music advocate, she worked with composers Dai Fujikura, Richard Baker, Chris Harman and especially with Unsuk Chin; performing at Berlin's Ultraschall Festival, Huddersfield Festival, Vienna's Schoenberg Centre, Southbank's Park Lane Group, Poznan Spring and Das Neue Werk in Hamburg. Following a season of international debuts, ranging from Hong Kong City Hall to Istanbul's CRR Concert Hall, Huddersfield to Lucerne festivals, Mei Yi's new season will continue with performances at the LG Arts Centre with the Seoul Philharmonic, Casa da Música with the Porto Symphony Orchestra, Szczecin Great Hall with the Szczecin Philharmonic and at the Royal Festival Hall with the Philharmonia Orchestra.

A native of Malaysia, Mei Yi resides in the UK and enjoys playing chamber music with Dimitri Ashkenazy, Nicolas Dautricourt, Shlomy Dobrinsky, Patricia Kopatchinskaja, Antti Siirala, Ashley Wass, Bartosz Woroch, Hugo Ticciati and Matthew Trusler. Mei Yi also teaches at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and has recently been honoured an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music as well as a Foundation Fellow at the Wells Cathedral School.



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