

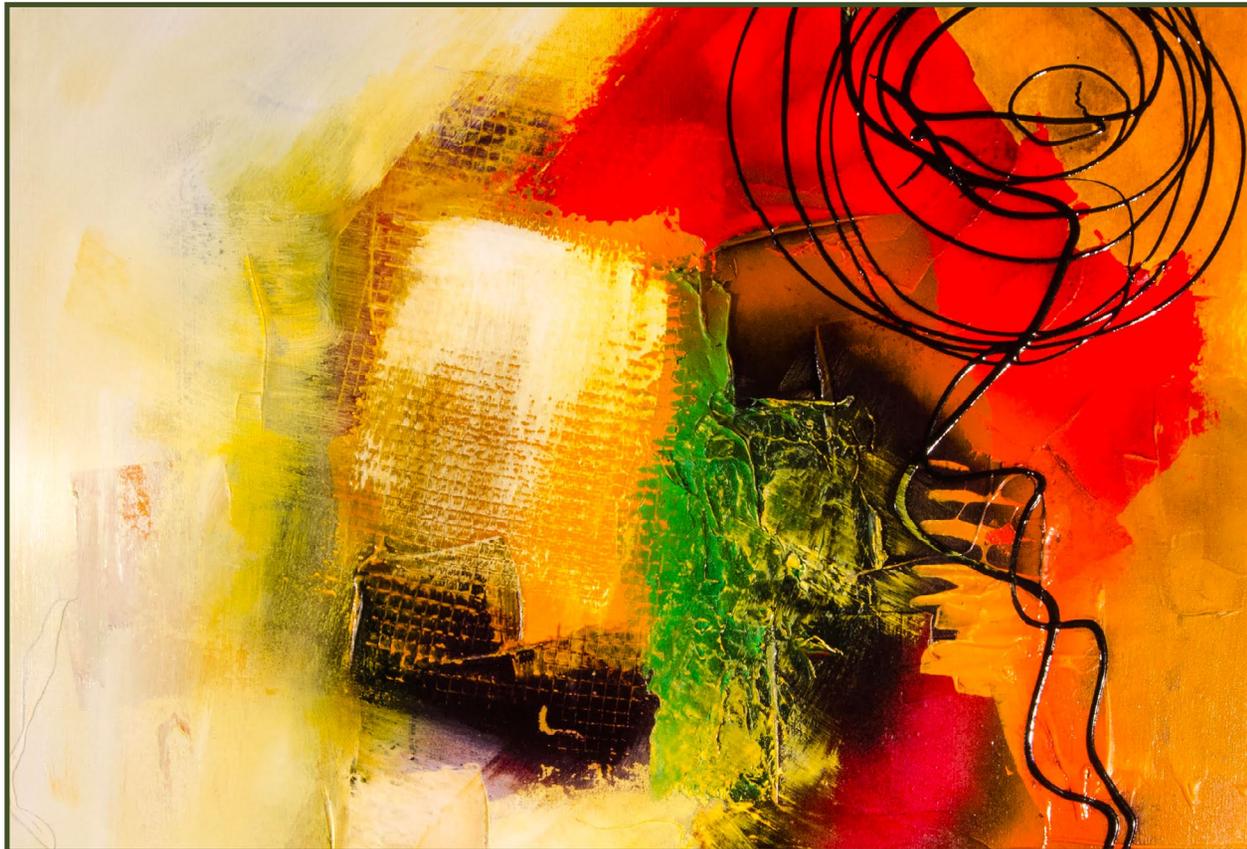
# Nikolai KAPUSTIN

## Complete Chamber Works for Flute

**Immanuel Davis, Flute**

**Adam Kuenzel, Flute • Pitnarry Shin, Cello**

**Käthe Jarka, Cello • Timothy Lovelace, Piano**



## **Nikolai KAPUSTIN (b. 1937)**

### **Complete Chamber Works for Flute**

Surely, one of the most interesting and admirable musical collaborations in recent years has been that of American flautist Immanuel Davis and Ukrainian (though long resident in Moscow) composer-pianist Nikolai Girshevich Kapustin (b. 1937). Both artists identify as classical musicians while being passionate about jazz. Kapustin's compositions are seamless fusions of the tonal and rhythmic language of jazz, as well as of its unabashed virtuosity, with the forms and disciplines of the Western art music tradition. Davis, a versatile performer, whose many and varied interests also include early music and period instruments – and whose proclivity for authentic performance practice extends formidably also to the language of swing – has been the leading advocate for Kapustin's works for flute. With his colleagues, Davis offers the first recording of all Kapustin's flute works on a single disc – including the world premiere recording of *A Little Duo*, written expressly for Davis and this recording.

Kapustin, best known for his works for piano, is arguably – compellingly so – the classical music world's most successful synthesist of the vocabulary of jazz. Doubtless, his many years of playing the music in Russia have enabled this remarkable fusion. Simply put, jazz is the language Kapustin speaks – though in the forms (including sonatas, dance suites, and fugues) and methods (fully notated

compositions rather than improvisations) – of Western art music. While surely there are other great 'crossover' jazz-classical compositions – most famously the works of George Gershwin and several of Leonard Bernstein's musicals – it is the seamlessness of Kapustin's assimilation of jazz melody, harmony, rhythm, and phrasing into the classical idiom, a thorough blending of genres, never an alternation, that distinguishes his work from that of any other composer.

What Kapustin 'gets' about jazz as no other classical composer does, is rhythm in general and phrasing in particular. Like the compositions of the Great American Songbook that form the foundation of the repertoire of jazz standards, Kapustin's compositions are, in a harmonic sense, principally organised into periodic, four-bar phrases. For musicians and lay listeners alike, it's easy to hear this rock-solid rhythmic foundation laid down in the piano, and often cello (a favorite instrument of Kapustin), as well. Melodically, though, phrases are anything but regular, with relentless syncopation whose beginnings and endings rarely coincide with the bar-line, this the source of much of the challenge for performers and much of the joy for listeners. Apt and illuminating comparisons can be made to *Puttin' On the Ritz* and *Fascinating Rhythm*.

While Kapustin cites Canadian jazz pianist Oscar Peterson as his foremost influence (others

mention Art Tatum, Fats Waller, Herbie Hancock and McCoy Tyner), there is more breathing space in his melodies – essential in works for flute, and valuable in works that are truly chamber music and not mere solo-accompaniment showpieces. Kapustin's approach to melodic phrasing, so often against the downbeat, evokes tenor saxophonist Coleman Hawkins, in particular his classic 1939 recording of *Body and Soul*. At the same time Kapustin often sounds more modern than Peterson, often with a solid bebop feeling and occasionally something even more recent, such as the Latin sound of pianist Chick Corea's *Return to Forever* period, in the final movement of the *Trio*.

In other works, critics have drawn comparisons to Kapustin's fellow Russians, most notably Alexander Scriabin. In the most immediate detail of these flute works' melody, harmony and rhythm, it is difficult to detect anything other than the language of jazz, which has cross-pollinated with classical music throughout its history: not only Scriabin, but the impressionists, Debussy and especially Ravel, come to mind.

As a formalist, though, Kapustin is classical to the core. He is adamant that he has chosen as his mode of expression – composition – over the improvisation that is fundamental to jazz, striving for, as the composer states, perfection. But, in addition to the opportunity to edit a composition and, with it, the notation affords certain other possibilities. Among these are systematic motivic development (which tends to be fleeting in improvisations), precise thematic repetition and transformation, and, perhaps

most important, the employment of classical forms, such as sonata-allegro, *rondo*, variations, dance suite, and fugue.

The opening movement of the *Flute Sonata* is a highly sophisticated sonata-allegro, whose recapitulation, like many of Beethoven's works in the form, is far more than a modified reprise and includes a healthy dose of transformation and thematic development. The *Divertissement's* second movement *Fuga* is one of Kapustin's many nods to the Baroque, impressive in the composer's ability to combine a complex contrapuntal procedure to the language of jazz. It is an exemplar of Kapustin's proclivity for truly 'orchestrating' even chamber works for relatively modest forces, exploiting every possible instrumental combination and a plethora of textures. In this tendency, the composer displays an affinity with Ravel, often noted as an influence. This can be easily heard in *A Little Duo* for flute and cello (2015), the most recent work on this recording and arguably the most 'classical', especially in its handling of rhythm. Its fullness of texture belies its sparse instrumentation, in a manner akin to Ravel's *Sonata for Violin and Cello*. The *Duo*, the only work without piano, stands in marked contrast to the distinctly jazzy outer movements of the *Trio*, with its two-fisted keyboard tour de force. Its first movement in particular is a veritable history of jazz styles, with emphases on blues, boogie and bebop, though by no means appearing in chronological order.

The performances on this recording are stylistically and technically impeccable. It hardly

seems surprising that Immanuel Davis and jazz flute legend Hubert Laws were both students of Julius Baker, at The Juilliard School. Equally delightful to hear is the fact that Davis's collaborators – who also share his passion for jazz – swing like mad when the music demands

it. Listeners are truly blessed that kindred spirits Kapustin and Davis have found each other and formed a lasting collaboration, even while they have never met.

**Alex Lubet**

'This may be the best recording of my music to date.' *Nikolai Kapustin*



### **Immanuel Davis**

Flautist Immanuel Davis is a highly versatile performer who enjoys playing the entire span of the flute repertoire. He has performed as a recitalist and masterclass teacher worldwide. He has appeared as a recitalist and chamber musician at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, MoMa's Summer Garden Series, Noonday Concerts at Trinity Church, and the Meet the Virtuoso series at the 92nd St Y. Orchestral work has included performances with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Minnesota Orchestra, the Oregon Symphony, the Riverside Symphony, the Hudson Valley Philharmonic, the Jupiter

Symphony, and the Buffalo Philharmonic. Davis has also played on Broadway in *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Show Boat* and *Ragtime*, among others.

A proponent of new music, Davis has had works written for him by such composers as Nikolai Kapustin, Ronn Yedidia, and Inessa Zaretsky. His first album, *Prevailing Winds*, was a recital of world premiere and rarely recorded 20th-century pieces for flute.

In 2005, he was a recipient of a Fulbright Grant for study of Baroque flute and performance practice with Wilbert Hazelzet at the Koninklijk Conservatorium in The Hague. Since then he has performed as soloist and chamber player with such early music ensembles as Early Music New York, ARTEK, Lyra Baroque and the Bach Society of Minnesota. He has also had the pleasure of performing on NPR's *Performance Today* and in numerous recitals with Barthold Kuijken.

Educated at The Juilliard School, Davis received both bachelor's and master's degrees as a student of Julius Baker. Immanuel Davis has been the flute professor at the University of Minnesota since 2001. He is also an AmSAT-certified teacher of the Alexander Technique.



## **Timothy Lovelace**

Pianist Timothy Lovelace heads the Collaborative Piano programme at the University of Minnesota and is an active recitalist. He has performed at the Sala Cecilia Meireles in Rio de Janeiro, the Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center in Washington, Merkin Concert Hall in New York, at the Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concerts in Chicago, and on chamber music series sponsored by the symphony orchestras of Chicago, Cincinnati, Detroit, Minnesota and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. As a soloist, he has performed with the Minnesota Orchestra conducted by Osmo Vänskä. The roster of internationally known artists with whom Lovelace has appeared includes Miriam Fried, Nobuko Imai, Robert Mann, Charles Neidich, Paquito D’Rivera and Dawn Upshaw. For 13 years, he was a staff pianist at the Ravinia Festival’s Steans Institute, where he played in the classes of Barbara Bonney, Christoph Eschenbach, Thomas Hampson, Christa Ludwig and Yo-Yo Ma, among others. A proponent of new music, Lovelace has performed the works of many living composers, and he presented the world premiere of Osvaldo Golijov’s *Third World*. He has recorded for the Albany, Arabesque, Blue Griffin, Boston Records and MSR labels. His principal teachers were Harold Evans, Gilbert Kalish, Donna Loewy and Frank Weinstock.



## **Pitnarry Shin**

Pitnarry Shin was a member of the Minnesota Orchestra cello section from 2001 to 2006, then spent six years in New York and, after returning to the Twin Cities, won reappointment to the Orchestra in 2012. In the interim she performed regularly with the New York Philharmonic and worked on a doctorate at Stony Brook University. Shin, who was born in Korea, has participated in international festivals from Edinburgh, Colmar and Evian to Ravinia, Tanglewood and Banff. She has toured the US, Europe and Korea, served as guest co-principal of the London Symphony Orchestra and performed as soloist with ensembles including the Korean Broadcasting System Symphony Orchestra, her native country’s largest orchestra. Shin completed undergraduate music studies at the Curtis Institute, followed by graduate school at Yale University, additional work at The Juilliard School and, when she won a Fulbright scholarship, further studies in Germany.



### **Adam Kuenzel**

Since joining the Minnesota Orchestra in 1990, principal flute Adam Kuenzel has regularly appeared as soloist at Orchestra Hall. In 2007 he gave the world premiere of Stanislaw Skrowaczewski's fantasie for flute and orchestra, *Il Piffero della Notte*, with the composer conducting. In 2009 he performed Bernstein's *Halil*, earning acclaim from *The New York Times* and *MusicalAmerica.com*. He premiered Manuel Sosa's *Eloquentia: Espacio para Flauta y Orquesta* in 2010; the work, which was written for Kuenzel, garnered the composer a John Simon Guggenheim

Fellowship in 2011. In 2017 he was selected to premiere Laura Schwendinger's *Aurora for Flute and Piano*, commissioned by the National Flute Association for its annual convention, which was held in Minneapolis. Kuenzel has been a guest artist with the Aspen Music Festival, the Grand Teton Music Festival, the Spoleto Festival, the St Bart's Music Festival in the French West Indies and the Oregon Bach Festival. He has also appeared as guest principal flute with the Boston, Chicago and Dallas symphony orchestras, and the Seattle Opera.



### **Käthe Jarka**

Käthe Jarka has performed to critical acclaim in major concert venues across the United States, Canada, and in Europe as a recitalist and chamber musician. She has collaborated with such artists as Yo-Yo Ma, Ruth Laredo, Grant Johannesen, Donald Weilerstein, and the Juilliard String Quartet, and has participated in the Marlboro Music Festival. She has appeared several times as a guest with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. While

a member of the Shanghai Quartet, she toured extensively, appearing at the Tanglewood, Norfolk, and Ravinia festivals. She has performed with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. Since 1990 she has been an artist member of the Garden City Chamber Music Society, performing a wide range of repertoire with some of the finest chamber musicians of the day. She is also a member of cello trio Vc3, with cellists Elizabeth Anderson and Robert LaRue. Käthe Jarka holds bachelor's and master's degrees from The Juilliard School where she was a scholarship student of Leonard Rose. She was also the recipient of a Fulbright Grant, for study with William Pleeth in London. Recordings include works by Debussy, Roberto Sierra, Gaubert and Copland on the Pickwick, New Albion, MSR and MMC labels.

Nikolai Kapustin's music is renowned in contemporary circles for its witty and seamless fusion of jazz idioms and formal classical structures. In recent years, the composer has forged a formidable association with American flautist Immanuel Davis, who here interprets his highly sophisticated *Flute Sonata, Op. 125* with great virtuosity. *Divertissement* explores the different jazz harmonies available from the four instruments, contrasting with the textural transparency of *A Little Duo*.

# Nikolai KAPUSTIN

(b. 1937)

## Complete Chamber Works for Flute

	<b>Flute Sonata, Op. 125</b> (2004)	<b>19:56</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>A Little Duo, Op. 156</b>	<b>6:23</b>
<b>1</b>	I. Allegretto	6:36		for flute and cello (2014)*	
<b>2</b>	II. Andantino grazioso	5:04			
<b>3</b>	III. Scherzo	2:45		<b>Trio, Op. 86</b> for flute,	
<b>4</b>	IV. Allegretto	5:26		cello and piano (1998)	<b>19:58</b>
	<b>Divertissement, Op. 91</b>	<b>17:09</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>I. Allegro molto</b>	<b>7:31</b>
	for two flutes, cello		<b>10</b>	<b>II. Andante</b>	<b>6:03</b>
	and piano (1998)		<b>11</b>	<b>III. Allegro giocoso</b>	<b>6:20</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>I. Preludio: Andantino</b>	<b>5:10</b>			
<b>6</b>	<b>II. Fuga: Allegro moderato</b>	<b>5:16</b>			
<b>7</b>	<b>III. Finale: Allegro</b>	<b>6:41</b>		<b>*WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING</b>	

### Immanuel Davis, Flute

**Adam Kuenzel, Flute** **5-7** • **Pitnarry Shin, Cello** **5-7 9-11**

**Käthe Jarka, Cello** **8** • **Timothy Lovelace, Piano** **1-7 9-11**

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