

Chamber Ensemble Kyiv

Benefit Tour 2024



10-8/20:00 Lochem - Gudulakerk

18-8/15:00 Hoorn - Oosterkerk

14-8/20:00 Kampen - The Burgwal

21-8/20:00 Arnhem - Koepelkerk

15-8/20:00 Amsterdam - Amstelkerk

24-8/20:00 Nijmegen - Stevenskerk

16-8/20:00 Ravenstein - Garnizoenskerk

25-8/16:00 Zaltbommel - Engelenbak

17-8/20:00 Zwolle - Academiehuis

27-8/20:00 Alphen a/d Rijn - Oudshoornsekerk

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Programmes

Kampen, Zwolle,
Zaltbommel

Z. Almashi: Maria's City

-

V. Silvestrov:

Fugitive visions of Mozart

for piano trio

-

R. Schumann: Piano Quintet

Lochem, Ravenstein,
Alphen a/d Rijn

V. Barvinsky: String Quartet

-

M. Shalygin:

'Angel' for string quartet

-

M. Shalygin:

'drop after drop' for piano quintet

-

A. Dvorak: Piano Quintet

Amsterdam, Hoorn,
Arnhem

Z. Almashi: Maria's City

-

V. Silvestrov:

Fugitive visions of Mozart

for piano trio

-

C. Franck: Piano Quintet

Concert in honour of the
Independence Day of Ukraine
24-8 Stevenskerk Nijmegen

Z. Almashi: Poltava for string quartet

M. Shalygin: 'Angel' for piano quintet

M. Shalygin: 'drop after drop' for string quartet

V. Silvestrov: Three pieces from 'Kitsch-Music' for piano solo

V. Silvestrov: Fugitive visions of Mozart for piano trio

Z. Almashi: Maria's City for string quartet



Chamber Ensemble Kyiv

History

The **Chamber Ensemble Kyiv**, formed 30 years ago under the umbrella of **National House of Music of Ukraine**, is one of the country's most renowned ensembles. Formed in **1989** (then under the name '**Kharuk Quintett**'), they won the International Chamber Music Competition in Florence the same year.

Several awards and subsequent concert tours followed, including a final place at the **International Chamber Music Competition in Tokyo** with a subsequent tour of Japan with a performance at Santory Hall in Tokyo in 1992, and first place at the **International Festival Vladimir and Regina Horowitz** in Ukraine in 1994.

Former members of the ensemble include cellist **Anna Nuzha**, violinists **Olena Tsurkan** and **Kyrylo Sharapov**, viola player **Nataliya Kuleba** and pianist **Roman Repko**.





Festivals

Members of the ensemble have an active role in several international festivals of contemporary music, such as the 'Musical Dialogs', the 'Kyiv October Festival' and the 'Kyiv Music Festival', where they performed alongside other well-known ensembles such as the Britten Quartet and the Mendelssohn Quartet.

Repertoire

The repertoire includes more than 100 works from various genres, from well-known classical to contemporary Ukrainian and international composers, from piano trios to piano quartets and quintets. They collaborated with composers such as Myroslav Skoryk and Valentyn Silvestrov and play pieces by Lysenko, Meytus, Lyatoshinsky, Shamo and Barvinsky, as well as the classical ensemble repertoire of well-known composers. Their sophisticated interpretation of quintets by Schumann, Dvorák, Elgar and César Franck are loved by audiences. CD recordings of the ensemble made by Ukrainian National Radio are included in the Radio Golden Discoveries collection.

Tours and concert halls

The Chamber Ensemble Kyiv had successful concert tours to Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, France, Belgium and Bulgaria over the years. In Ukraine, they perform in the various renowned chamber music halls in Kyiv, such as St.Nicholas Cathedral (former hall of the National Organ and Chamber Music Hall), St.Andrew's Church, St.Sophia Church, the House of Scientists and the National Philharmonic Hall of Ukraine.

War

The Chamber Ensemble Kyiv fell apart in February 2022 as some of the musicians had to flee at the beginning of the war. Violinist **Mykhailo Bilych** and pianist **Andriy Vasin** rebuilt the ensemble by supplementing their regular concert series in Kyiv's concert halls with guest musicians. The search for new members paid off with the recruitment of **Kyrylo Bondar, Andrii Chop and Mykola Liubenko**. This makes the Chamber Ensemble Kyiv complete again.



Benefit concerts in the Netherlands

Mykhailo Bilych and Andriy Vasin, in collaboration with Galyna Bilych (violinist of the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine) and Alexej Pevzner (second concertmaster of Phion, Orkest van Gelderland & Overijssel), have given more than 30 benefit concerts in the Netherlands under the name of 'Chamber Ensemble Kyiv & Friends' since April 2022. At some concerts, they collaborated with former cellist of the ensemble, Anna Nuzha, and violists Kostiantyn Kuleba and Mikhail Zemtsov. These concerts came about with the support of ClassicalNow Foundation, Zemtsov Foundation and Soloveyko Foundation.

They played in the Cultuurfabriek in Ulft, Concertzaal Oosterbeek, Gasthuiskapel in Zaltbommel, the Bethlehemkerk in Amsterdam, the Domkerk in Utrecht, the Davidsbündler Academy in The Hague, the Garnizoenskerk in Ravenstein, the Dorpskerk in Rheden, the Koepelkerk and the Waalse Kerk in Arnhem, the Oude Jan in Velp and in various other churches, among others.

With these concerts, Ensemble Kyiv & Friends raised money for Giro 555, various Ukrainian causes of Heart for Children Foundation, Kyiv Ambulant Hospital, Davidsbündler Academy for the benefit of refugee Ukrainian music students, and Netherlands4Ukraine for humanitarian aid to their homeland. Besides the benefit causes, they introduced Dutch audiences to the rich Ukrainian classical music repertoire with works by Lysenko, Skoryk, Silvestrov, Berezovsky, Meitus and Pokland.



The Musicians

Kyrylo Bondar is a modern Ukrainian violinist, awarded as Merited Artist of Ukraine (2022). He is the first violinist of the Chamber Ensemble Kyiv, soloist with Kyiv Camerata, the concertmaster of the Kyiv Chamber Orchestra and also a much sought-after soloist with various ensembles.

Besides performing in the regular concert series and national and international festivals, he is active internationally, such as as ensemble player with "La Chesta" and "Exultate" Baroque Ensembles in Italy, Morphing orchestra (Vienna) and I,Siedici (Germany). As a soloist, Kyrylo has premiered works by Y. Shevchenko, A. Levkovich, R. Hryhoriv, R. Horobets and other contemporary Ukrainian composers. He is one of the initiators of the Ukraina Incognita Project, aimed at promoting music by Ukrainian composers. With the chamber orchestra Kyiv Camerata, he undertakes many concert tours, including recent performances at New York's Carnegie Hall and Leipzig's Gewandhaus. As a member of the Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra, Kyrylo Bondar performs on the leading stages worldwide.

Kyrylo Bondar has been the new primarius of the Chamber Ensemble Kyiv since 2023 and brings his broad experience to a fruitful collaboration.



Upon graduating from the National Music Academy of Ukraine, **Mykhailo Bilych**

joined the National House of Organ and Chamber Music of Ukraine (now the National House of Music) as violinist of the Chamber Ensemble Kyiv. With this ensemble followed numerous radio and CD recordings, concert tours to countries in Europe, North Africa and Asia, performances at festivals and concert series in the best concert halls of Ukraine.

With the Chamber Ensemble Kyiv, Mykhailo Bilych has collaborated with renowned contemporary Ukrainian composers such as Myroslav Skoryk and Valentin Sylvestrov. He is also a member of the Kyiv Soloists chamber orchestra and won the Grand Prix of the International Competition in Vienna, Austria, with this ensemble. He has performed several times as soloist with the Kyiv Soloists, performing Vivaldi's Seasons, as well as works by Bach, Mozart, Massenet, Kreisler, Piazzolla, Saratsky and Skoryk, among others. He has performed with both ensembles in more than 20 countries worldwide.

Since April 2022, Mykhailo Bilych and his colleague Andriy Vasin have been working for humanitarian aid to their homeland, performing more than 30 benefit concerts in the Netherlands in collaboration with other musicians. Despite the harsh conditions in Ukraine, the ensemble has managed to expand again with new members to become a top ensemble under the umbrella of the National House of Music.



Andriy Vasin is a prize winner of the Horowitz International Piano Competition (Kyiv, 2005) and regularly performs as a soloist. Recently, accompanied by the Liatoshinsky Chamber Orchestra, he performed the Beethoven Triple Concerto and also Grieg's piano concerto in the main hall of the National Philharmonic Hall together with Mykola Liubenko.

Andriy Vasin has been a member of the Chamber Ensemble Kyiv as part of the National House of Music since 2008, and in this connection has been able to get to know leading contemporary Ukrainian composers over the years in addition to the classical repertoire. Besides a regular concert series with this ensemble, he also performs in various other chamber music ensembles, such as the programme 'An die Musik' composed at the invitation of 'Lied Basel - Internationales Festival' with the singer Roman Melish. This programme was performed in 2022 for internally displaced persons in Irpin and Kyiv, with a subsequent performance in 2023 at the festival in Basel.

In 2008, Andriy Vasin was appointed professor at the piano faculty of the National Music Academy in Kyiv. His students include rising talent Tetiana Shafran, winner of several international competitions. In July 2023, Andriy Vasin stopped working at the Academy to focus entirely on chamber music.



Andrii Chop was a member of the Chamber Ensemble Kyiv at the National House of Organ and Chamber Music of Ukraine (now the National House of Music) from 2000. Between 2003 and 2010, he joined the Collegium Quartet, winning numerous prizes at international competitions with this ensemble.

Andrii Chop has attended master classes and given concerts under the direction of famous musicians: Stefan Metz (Orlando Quartet), Miguel da Silva (Ysaye Quartet, France), Walter Levin (LaSalla Quartet, US.) -Switzerland), Tim Vogler (Vogler Quartet), Jürgen Kussmaul, Vermeer Quartet (US) and with the help of the Antonio Stradivari Foundation (Cremona, Italy) at the Fine Arts Quartet (US).

In addition to his role as an active chamber musician, Andrii Chop is also section leader of the viola group of the Kyiv Chamber Orchestra of the National Philharmonic Orchestra of Ukraine. He has performed as an invited artist in the orchestra Philharmonie der Nationen (Germany), the Würth Philharmoniker (Germany) and as section leader of the viola group of the Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra.

Andrii Chop returned to the Chamber Ensemble Kyiv in 2023 and performs varied programmes with this ensemble in a regular concert series in the capital's leading concert halls.



Mykola Liubenko studied at the Odesa National Academy of Music in the class of Valerii Kazakov and from his second year at the private academy Kalaidos Hochschule (Switzerland) with Julius Berger.

In 2014, Mykola won first prize at the Ukrainian Cello Competition in Lviv. In 2017, he gained experience in the orchestra of the Interlaken Classics Festival, where he was on the same stage as Mischa Maisky and Alice Sarah Ott. He participated in the 2019 Tsinandali International Music Festival, where he had the opportunity to work with conductors such as Gianandrea Noseda, Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Lahav Shani, Claudio Vandelli, and soloists such as Mischa Maisky, Denis Kozhukhin, Lahav Shani, and Yuja Wang. He is on the roster of the Vere Music Fund, a Ukrainian foundation for young talent.

Mykola Liubenko has held the position of solo cello with the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine since 2023. In the same year, he joined the Chamber Ensemble Kyiv as a permanent member of the National House of Music. He performs regularly as a soloist, most recently with Dvorák's cello concerto accompanied by the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine and with Andriy Vasin in Beethoven's Triple Concerto accompanied by the Liatoshinsky Chamber Orchestra.



For this Benefit Tour, Chamber Ensemble Kyiv invites violinist Galyna Bilych as a guest musician.

Galyna Bilych studied violin and masters in chamber music at the National Academy of Music of Ukraine. At the National Chamber Music Competition in Vorzel in 2023, she won the 1^e prize with her duo with pianist N. Dzuba. Still during her studies, in 1998, Galyna Bilych became a member of the National Symphonic Orchestra of Ukraine. Thereafter, she was one of the founding members of the Ricochet Chamber Ensemble together with cellist/composer Zoltan Almashi and violinist Mykhailo Bilych. Numerous performances followed, including at the Kyiv Modern Music Festival and the Kyiv Contrasts Festival, where modern works by contemporary composers were performed. Due to the war in Ukraine, Galyna Bilych was forced to seek refuge in the Netherlands with her children. She works as a freelance musician with Phion (Orkest of Gelderland and Overijssel) and the Residentie Orkest, and she is invited as a regular guest musician by the Chamber Ensemble Kyiv at their benefit concerts in the Netherlands.



Composers and works

Maxim Shalygin (b. 1985) one of the leading composers of his generation. His works are performed at many famous venues and music festivals around the world.

Shalygin received his master's degrees in 2010 at the National Academy of Music in Kyiv with Igor Shcherbakov, influenced by the creativity and personality of composer Svyatoslav Lunyov, and in 2011 at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague (NL), where he studied with Cornelis de Bondt and Diderik Wagenaar.

He currently lives and works in the Netherlands, the place where he has been able to successfully realise his most daring ideas. During this time, he has written more than 40 works in various genres and has been a founder and artistic member of the Shapeshift Ensemble (NL) since 2016, with which he launched the project S I M I L A R. Shalygin is not only a composer but also a conductor, poet and visual artist who impresses with striking collages. This versatile artistry seems to inspire his ability to paint vivid musical stories using a rich colour palette. For more information, visit: <https://maximshalygin.com/>





Maxim Shalygin: Drop after Drop - version for string quartet

"Since the first day of the war in Ukraine, a terrible pain has settled inside me. Every time I close my eyes, I want to wake up from this terrible dream... but alas, it is not a dream. 'Drop after drop' is a kind of an ingot of that pain and memories of my childhood, when my relatives were telling me about the war years and sung wartime songs. I hear those songs inside me again and I wish they would stop..." - Maxim Shalygin.

Shocked by the brutal Russian military invasion of Ukraine, Ukrainian composer Maxim Shalygin lets the unifying power of music speak for itself. Commissioned by Festivals for Compassion - a collaboration of more than 55 European festivals initiated by Wonderfeel - he wrote his Drop after Drop: a statement of current issues and a heartfelt plea to every world citizen, especially all fellow Ukrainians and their loved ones.

Maxim Shalygin: *Angel* - version for piano quintet

Written in 2020 at the time of the Covid pandemic, 'Angel' is a contemplation of humanity's treatment of nature and the consequences for our future. It is a 'Mene Tekel' from a time when pandemics confronted humanity with existential choices, when war on European soil was unthinkable: *'If in the twentieth century wars were a major threat to humanity, in the twenty-first century that seems to be the way we treat nature.'* (Donemus Publishing).

The piece also bridges the gap with Maurice Ravel's Sonata for violin and cello M.73, which he wrote a hundred years ago (between 1920 and 1922). Ravel wrote this composition after a turbulent period, having to recover both emotionally and physically due to both the hardships of World War I and his illness (dysentery). The new work forms a parallel to 100 years ago in several ways, not only because both follow a crisis, but also in the use of melody. As in Ravel's Sonata, melody is used as the main means of expression.

Angel is dedicated to Georgian composer Giya Kancheli.





Zoltan Almashi (born 1975, Lviv) is a contemporary Ukrainian composer, cellist, educator and music activist. He is founder and artistic director of the Levko Revutskyi String Quartet (since 2018), and a founding member of the chamber music festival Gulfstream. He is also a cellist with the National Ensemble Kyiv Kamerata and a member of the Ricochet and Nostri Temporis Ensemble.

Almashi studied cello and composition at the Mykola Lysenko National Music Academy in Lviv, assisting prominent composers in Ukraine and Poland. Since 2001, Almashi has been a member of the National Union of Composers of Ukraine. He has created more than 70 works, ranging from solo and chamber music to symphonic pieces. Almashi considers himself a polystylist composer. His compositions are a synthesis of traditional and innovative music, neo-Romantic influences and modern compositional techniques.

As an artist, he is a charismatic figure in Kyiv's vibrant cultural circles. His penchant for mushroom picking (a beloved family tradition) and his entertaining lengthy essays on Haydn's symphonies are legendary. Long forest walks are a creative process for the composer: *'Meditation, the key word. It is absolutely necessary, it is a switch of consciousness. Silence. The music with the inner ear sounds special and so unclouded.'*

Zoltan Almashi: Maria's City

The Adagio for string orchestra, composed during the siege of the coastal city of **Mariupol** in spring 2022, is a breathtaking work by Zoltan Almashi. With elegiac beauty, the composer describes the city, and despite the horrors of the siege, the piece radiates a tender sound of hope. Although Almashi describes the creation of this piece as a "very difficult process", for the listener the unwavering spirit of humanity that refuses to give in to the darkness comes through.

'Maria's City' was performed by the leading chamber orchestras Kyiv Camerata and Liatoshinky Capella in Kyiv and experienced its orchestral performances with the Youth Symphony Orchestra, the Grazer Philharmoniker and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra conducted by Oksana Lyniv. The piece was also part of the Polin Music Festival/Odessa Classics 2023 in Warsaw and will be the opening concert of the Ukrainian music festival KharkivMusicFest 2024. In March 2024, Kyiv Camerata performed the piece under the direction of Keri-Lynn Wilson at Carnegie Hall in New York. The Chamber Ensemble Kyiv performs Maria's City in its string quartet version.



History context to the string quartet 'Poltava': the Battle of Poltava

The Battle of Poltava in 1709 marked a decisive victory at that time for Russia led by Peter the Great against Sweden, ending Swedish hegemony in northern Europe. In this battle, Ivan Mazepa, the Ukrainian hetman, sided with Swedish king Charles XII.

The balance of power in Europe shifted, with Russia emerging as the dominant player on the continent. This outcome had dire consequences for Ukraine, including prolonged occupation, loss of autonomy, political repression and cultural assimilation by the Russian empire.

Mazepa's move to turn against Russia marks a benchmark in Ukraine's history. His decision symbolised Ukrainian resistance to Russian domination and inspired later generations in their pursuit of freedom and national autonomy.



Zoltan Almashi: Poltava, String Quartet no.4

1. Kant - 2. Struggle - 3. Emptiness - 4. Finale: Kant

Commissioned by the International Poetry Festival Meridian Poltava festival in 2018, Almashi wrote a reflection on the Battle of Poltava. He incorporated this tragic event in Ukraine's history as a tribute to the unwavering Ukrainian identity. This is reflected in the structure of the work's four parts.

Part one, "Kant", is named after chants and philosophical songs as they were sung by travelling folk musicians, known as Kobzars, in Ukraine in the 17th and 18th centuries. One of the best-known writers of these songs is the great poet and philosopher Hryhoriy Skovoroda. Almashi here invokes the spirit of these songs to 'convey how I see Ukraine, its melodies, its soul'. In part two, 'Battle', the solo of the second violin introduces the Swedish theme with bellicose and Scandinavian folk motifs. While this theme forms a counterpoint with the Ukrainian 'Kant', the cello and viola create a primitive rhythm symbolising the arrival of the Russians. Eventually, all three themes sound together, but fewer and fewer notes represent the dying warriors, until only the 'primitive Russian theme' remains for now. Part three, 'Emptiness', is a painful reflection on defeat and its tragic consequences. At the end of this part, however, the Ukrainian theme reappears and gradually gains strength in the Finale and finally resurrects itself courageously and convincingly.

'She was reborn, she fights time and again for her existence and self-assertion, though she endures incredible trials over the centuries. But in the end, she will win.'

Vasyl Barvinsky (1888-1963) was a leading Ukrainian composer and musical innovator. Born in Ternopil, he studied composition and piano in Lviv and later in Prague. Barvinsky's work combines elements of Western classical music with Ukrainian folk music, creating a unique and recognisable style. His string quartets are among his most admired works and are characterised by their rich harmonies and expressive melodies.

In 1948, during the Soviet occupation, Barvinsky was falsely accused of nationalism and was subsequently arrested. His scores were destroyed, and he spent almost a decade in labour camps. After his release, he attempted to reconstruct all his works, but died in 1963 before he could complete this. Vasyl Barvinsky was posthumously rehabilitated a year later, in 1964.





Vasyl Barvinsky: String quartet in g minor "Molodijniy"

1. Theme and variation - 2. Scherzo - 3. Andante - 4. Finale

The String Quartet in g minor is one of the works Vasyl Barvinsky was able to reconstruct after his release from the penal camps. Originally written in 1941, this work combines lyrical passages with powerful rhythmic movements. The nickname "Molodijniy" (youth) refers to the composition's freshness and energy.

This string quartet remains an important part of the Ukrainian musical heritage that is both traditional and innovative, illustrating Barvinsky's musical vision and talent.

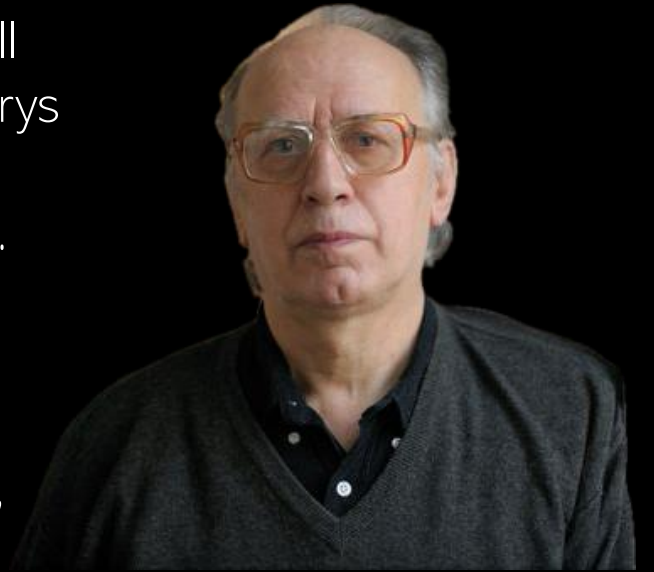
'My music is a reaction to an echo of what already exists.'

- Valentin Silvestrov

Valentin Silvestrov, born on 30 September 1937 in Kyiv, is a renowned composer known for his postmodern approach to classical music. He grew up in a Ukraine that was still part of the Soviet Union, a fact that would largely define his life. He studied under Borys Latioshynsky, the godfather of modernism in Ukraine. Silvestrov was attracted to the avant-garde and soon the young composer was expelled from the Composers' Union. Avant-garde was considered undesirable music by those in power who subjected composers to ideological pressure.

Silvestrov devoted himself to teaching and, freed from the piercing eyes of the union, also composed a wealth of masterfully hushed works. His works include symphonies, chamber and vocal music, and he is often associated with the "Metamusics" movement, in which he explores musical memories and nostalgia. His compositions are performed worldwide and appreciated for their emotional depth and subtle beauty. Silvestrov remains an influential figure in contemporary classical music and the cultural world of Ukraine.

Valentin Silvestrov fled to Berlin after the attack on his homeland in February 2022.



V. Silvestrov: Three Pieces from 'Kitsch Music' (no.1 , no.2 and no.4)

Allegro Vivace (bright and translucent, free, trembling but tranquil) 2.Moderato (bright and translucent, flowing)
4.Moderato (free, bright and translucent, introspective)

In his manuscript for Kitsch Music, Silvestrov gave instructions for the performer: 'Play very tenderly, with an intimate tone, as if you were gently touching the listener's memory with the music, so that the music resounds in consciousness, as if the listener's memory itself were singing this music.'

We are used to associating the word 'kitsch' with defiantly tacky. Thus, Silvestrov's work 'Kitsch Music', created in 1977, was not understood at its first performances. In fact, a breakthrough occurred in this very piece in the composer's new aesthetic of working with the music of the past, thanks to its careful consideration and tender touch. Silvestrov's aesthetic, loosely reminiscent of Brahms, Chopin or Schumann, cultivates reverberant echoes. He himself defined it as a 'weak style'. This new 'weakness', as well as the new simplicity and new sentimentality became the main features of the composer's works. He means the name 'kitsch' (weak, rejected, failed) in an elegiac rather than ironic sense. An aesthetic of remembrance, commemoration, tradition and revolution.



'Fugitive Visions of Mozart' by Valentin Silvestrov is a postmodern minimalist masterpiece written in 2007 that subtly interweaves the timeless beauty of Mozart's music with modern compositional techniques. He creates a dialogue between the past and the present, seamlessly integrating elements of classical structures with contemporary musical language. One of the striking aspects of this work is Silvestrov's masterful use of dynamics and silence. The music breathes, with moments of deep calm alternating with bursts of emotional intensity. This interplay gives the piece a meditative quality, allowing the listener to lose themselves in the fleeting visions Silvestrov conjures up.

All in all, 'Fugitive Visions of Mozart' is a fascinating homage to one of the greatest composers of all time, seen through the eyes of a contemporary master. The piece is a testament to Silvestrov's ability to find new meanings and perspectives in the rich legacy of classical music.

César Franck: Piano Quintet in F minor

Molto moderato quasi lento - 2.Allegro, Lento con molto sentiment - 3.Allegro non troppo ma con fuoco

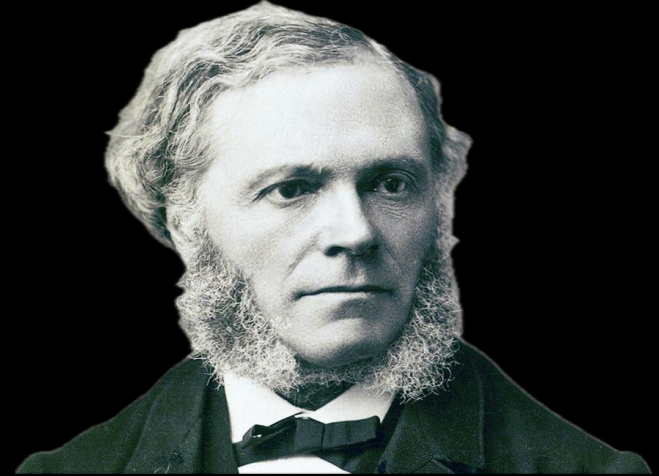
César Franck, born on 10 December 1822 in Liège, was an influential composer, organist, and music educator of Belgian descent who spent most of his career in France.

The 1879 Piano Quintet in F minor is an emotionally charged and powerful work that occupies a prominent place in the late-Romantic chamber music repertoire.

Written for piano and string quartet, this quintet consists of three movements:.

The piece opens with a dramatic and passionate theme that remains interwoven throughout the composition, a hallmark of Franck's cyclic form. The second movement is lyrical and introspective, while the last movement exudes power and intensity.

The César Franck Piano Quintet is a beloved part of the core repertoire of the Chamber Ensemble Kyiv.





Robert Schumann: Piano Quintet in E-flat major, op. 44

Allegro brillante - 2. In modo d'una marcia - 3. Scherzo: Molto vivace - 4. Allegro ma non troppo

The Piano Quintet by Robert Schumann (1810-1856) is one of the crown jewels of the chamber music repertoire. Composed in 1842, during Schumann's so-called 'chamber music year', this work displays the extroverted, exuberant side of the composer's creative genius. This quintet marked a new genre by making the piano central alongside the strings.

The work opens with an energetic main theme that turns into a sweet romantic duet between cello and viola; virtuoso piano parts then lead to a short, energetic coda. The second movement is a seven-part Rondo. Here the main theme, a funeral march, alternates with a lyrical second theme and an Agitato. The third movement is a lively combination of two Trios, testing the virtuosity of the strings. The work ends with a robust fugato that highlights the interplay between piano and strings, culminating in a jubilant and triumphant finale.

Antonín Dvořák: Piano Quintet in A major, Op.81

Allegro ma non tanto - 2.Dumka: Andante con moto - 3.Scherzo (Furiant): Molto vivace - 4.Finale: Allegro

Antonín Dvořák, born on 8 September 1841 in Nelahozeves, Czech Republic, is one of the leading composers of the romantic period. His work is characterised by the use of Bohemian and Moravian folk music, which gives his compositions a unique and recognisable sound.

The Piano Quintet, composed in 1887, is one of Dvořák's masterpieces. Written for piano and string quartet, this quintet consists of four movements: The first movement is rich in melodic and harmonic inventiveness, followed by the 'Dumka', a typically Slavic slow movement with a melancholic atmosphere. The third movement, the 'Furiant', is a lively Bohemian dance, while the Finale is the energetic and festive finale.

Dvořák's Piano Quintet combines lyricism, rhythmic vitality and folk music influences, resulting in a dynamic and expressive work that continues to enchant musicians and audiences alike. It remains an essential part of the chamber music repertoire worldwide.



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