

Thursday, November 16, 2006, 8pm
Zellerbach Hall

Gidon Kremer, *violin*
Andrius Zlabys, *piano*
Andrei Pushkarev, *vibraphone*

PROGRAM

After Bach

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) Fuga canonica from *The Musical Offering*,
BWV 1079 (1747)

Gidon Kremer, *violin*
Andrei Pushkarev, *vibraphone*

Arvo Pärt (b.1935) Fratres (1980)

Gidon Kremer, *violin*
Andrius Zlabys, *piano*

Bach (tr. Andrius Zlabys, b.1977) Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland
(G minor), BWV 659

Bach (tr. Max Reger, 1873–1916) Ich ruf' zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ (F minor),
BWV 639

Andrius Zlabys, *piano*

Béla Bartók (1881–1945) Sonata for Solo Violin (1944)

Tempo di ciaccona
Fuga
Melodia
Presto

Gidon Kremer, *violin*

INTERMISSION

Stevan Kovacs Tickmayer (b.1963) Three Variations on a Theme of J. S. Bach
(2005)† (*Brunnquell aller Güter*, BWV 445)

Religioso e molto tranquillo
Dolce, l'istesso tempo
Deciso, acuto, ben ritmico

Gidon Kremer, *violin*
Andrius Zlabys, *piano*
Andrei Pushkarev, *vibraphone*

Bach (arr. Andrei Pushkarev, b.1974) Three Two-Part Inventions

Invention in C major (in the mood of
Bill Evans)

Invention in D minor (in the mood of
Oscar Peterson)

Invention in B major (in the mood of
Dave Brubeck)

Andrei Pushkarev, *vibraphone*

Astor Piazzolla (1921–1992) Le Grand Tango (1982)
(arr. Sofia Gubaidulina, b.1931)

Gidon Kremer, *violin*
Andrius Zlabys, *piano*

Piazzolla (arr. Pushkarev) Milonga loca, *for violin and vibraphone*

Milonga del Angel, *for piano and vibraphone*
(1965)

Milonga de la Anunciacion, *for violin, piano
and vibraphone*, from *Maria de Buenos Aires*
(1968)

Gidon Kremer, *violin*
Andrius Zlabys, *piano*
Andrei Pushkarev, *vibraphone*

† *Dedicated to Gidon Kremer, Katia Skanavi and Andrei Pushkarev.*

*Mr. Kremer has recorded for many labels, including Deutsche Grammophon,
ECM, Teldec, Philips, Sony Classical, EMIL/Angel and Nonesuch.*

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Program Notes

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

Fuga canonica from *The Musical Offering*, BWV 1079 (1747)

As a keyboard virtuoso, Bach was second to none. At the source of his legendary reputation was his ability to improvise at the keyboard for hours on end. This was where Bach could indulge what his earliest biographer, Johann Nikolaus Forkel, referred to as “his urge to run or leap up and down the instrument, to take both hands as full as all the five fingers will allow and to proceed in this wild manner till he, by chance, finds a resting place.” Bach’s feet were said to be able to move more swiftly over the pedals of the pipe organ than could the fingers of many an organist. The improvisatory character of his creativity comes down to us in his preludes, toccatas and fantasias. Then there’s another side to his creativity. Bach’s fugal writing was what his second son, Carl Philip Emanuel, referred to as music that was “composed without instrument, but later tried out on one.” The two sides co-existed throughout Bach’s career and resulted in such epic collections as *The Musical Offering* of 1747.

This glorious summing up of Baroque fugal practice had its origin in one of the most memorable and best documented events of Bach’s rather uneventful life. In May 1747, he visited the Prussian Court of Frederick the Great in Potsdam. Carl Philip Emanuel had a position there as court harpsichordist, and usually accompanied the king, who played flute, in the evening’s music-making. On May 7, however, maybe to respect “old” Bach’s reputation as a formidable keyboard improviser, Bach was asked to improvise in front of the court. The newspaper reports of the time describe the king’s gracious reception of Kapellmeister Bach. He gave Bach a rather awkward theme to improvise on and, in return, was impressed by Bach’s skill at fugal improvisation. The matter could have rested there were it not for the fact that Bach felt that he could do better. He announced to the court that he intended “to set Frederick’s exceedingly

beautiful theme to paper in a regular fugue and have it printed by means of copper engraving.”

When Bach came to print the fugue several months later, it had grown to include ten canons (one of which is the *fuga canonica*), the original improvised three-part *ricercare* (another, rather antique term for a fugue) and a six-part *ricercare*. Bach did not specify any instrumentation for his masterpiece. Although the dedication was to Frederick the Great, Bach’s use of religious symbolism in this non-religious instrumental music and its very concept as music that celebrates Baroque ideals of music-making runs counter to Frederick’s enlightened anti-Christian view of the world. Frederick’s musical tastes ran to more tuneful, less complex *galant* music to the point where, on another occasion, he is known to have said that such old-fashioned music “smells of the church.” Bach seems to have had in mind a dedication to the greater glory of God rather than to the king.

Arvo Pärt (b. 1935)

Fratres (1980)

The reclusive Estonian composer Arvo Pärt has consciously rejected complexity in music. Much of his music seeks to uncover a simple truth, using repetition as a foundation for its building blocks. Religious or spiritual feeling, drawing on sources that go back to Gregorian chant, has added to its wide appeal. His earliest works in this style date from 1976—after Pärt had worked his way through various techniques such as serialism, pointillism, aleatoricism, and the “borrowed” music of his “Bach” collages. A self-imposed period of reflection included the intense study of much mediaeval and Renaissance music. It led to one of his earliest pared-down pieces, *Fratres*, first composed in 1977 for five unspecified wind and five string parts, for the Estonian early music group Hortus Musicus. Later versions of what is now his most performed piece have been published for violin and piano (1980), 12 cellos (1982), string orchestra and percussion

(1983), string quartet (1989) and several other combinations.

The violin and piano version is the most radical reworking of the material. Pärt prefaces his score with a brilliant, across-the-strings variation of the yet unstated theme. The intensity of the music builds, but quickly chills out when the piano enters with a ritualistic, gong-like entry. A cooler, sparer statement of the theme follows, high in the piano. The solemn, chant-like melody is then put through a sequence of nine contrasting, often virtuoso variations around a drone, sometimes heard, sometimes implied. The structural transparency of the original remains clear. The Latin title means “brethren” and adds to a quasi-religious feel underlining the music.

Béla Bartók (1881–1945)

Sonata for Solo Violin (1944)

Just as Bach’s Second Partita concludes with a mighty *Chaconne*, so Bartók’s Solo Sonata opens with a formidable homage to the great Baroque master. Bartók’s challenging *Tempo di ciaccona* is a virtuoso cross between a chaconne and the more customary sonata form. Its technical demands are tremendous and its ancestry in the music of Bach is clear. As in the Bach Partitas, the Bartók sonata has four movements, with a Fugue placed second, a more relaxed third movement and a complex, virtuoso fourth. Bartók wished to create a work that was worthy of being played alongside Bach. His performer was not one of the Hungarian violinists he had already collaborated with but another musician 35 years his junior.

In November 1943, Yehudi Menuhin performed both Bartók’s Second Violin Concerto and First Violin Sonata in New York. Bartók, hearing the concert in exile from his war-torn homeland, was impressed. He began work on a commission from Menuhin for a solo sonata right away. He wrote it while spending the winter months in North Carolina. It was to be Bartók’s last chamber work; 18 months later he died. He

did, however, attend the premiere that Menuhin gave to an unimpressed New York audience in November 1944. Olin Downes, writing in *The New York Times*, found the work itself “a test for the ears, the intelligence, the receptiveness of the most learned listener.... On initial acquaintance,” he concluded, “we take none too kindly to the piece.” Bartók, himself, however, experienced a “wonderful performance.”

More than a half-century later, the Bartók Solo Sonata stands as the main successor to Bach. The first movement opens with the bold gestures of a chaconne but, structurally, it follows the outlines of sonata form. The Hungarian writer László Somfai hears the opening in a sort of neo-Baroque Hungarian idiom. The extremely difficult piece, he says, “seems inspired in the same way that a great preacher might read the Bible and build up his poignant sermon out of quotations from the holy text.” The *Fuga* opens with four entries at different pitches and then proceeds to a freer working-out of the material already introduced. The third movement is muted, shadowy, eloquently drawn. Its mood springs from the sort of night music that helped win Bartók’s *Concerto for Orchestra* success with both audience and critics at its premiere the previous year. Bartók originally intended that the Finale introduce quarter-tones, to add to the exoticism of its bravura opening. But the published score (and Menuhin’s première performance) omitted them and the issue was never resolved before the composer’s death. The music grows out of the opening movement and concludes with a flourish.

Bach

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland (G minor), BWV 659

Ich ruf’ zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ (F minor), BWV 639

Among Bach’s many formal innovations was the chorale prelude, a brief contrapuntal setting for organ of a single chorale melody

Program Notes

intended to introduce the hymn to be sung by the congregation. The chorale prelude *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland*, BWV 659 (*Come Now, Savior of the Heathen*), derives from a well known cantata and is found in a hand-written collection of 18 chorale preludes by Bach (*The Eighteen*) made in Leipzig, though probably written earlier. The music unfolds like a solemn aria revealing Martin Luther's Advent chorale. In transcribing this favorite chorale prelude for the single keyboard of the piano, Andrius Zlabys aims to stay true to the spirit of the original.

Some of Bach's most celebrated works in this form were collected in the *Orgel-Büchlein*, BWV 599–644 (*Little Organ Book*), written in Weimar between 1713 and 1716. Bach had planned for the collection to include 146 preludes arranged to correspond to the seasons of the church calendar, but he completed only 46. In contrast with nearly all of the pieces in the *Orgel-Büchlein*, which are composed in four voices, *Ich ruf' zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ*, BWV 639 (*I Call to You, Jesus Christ*), is written in three.

The chorale prelude was further developed during the 19th and early 20th centuries, most prominently by Johannes Brahms and Max Reger, whose aesthetic of historicist modernism informs Reger's faithful yet forward-looking transcription for piano.

Stevan Kovacs Tickmayer (b.1963)

Three Variations on a Theme of J. S. Bach (2005) (*Brunnquell aller Güter*, BWV 445)

Georg Christian Schemelli was cantor in the old Saxon town of Zeitz, the birthplace of Anna Magdalena, Bach's second wife. Schemelli's son attended the Leipzig Thomasschule and came under Bach's instruction for three years beginning in 1731. Shortly after this, Schemelli published a collection of 954 hymn texts, including the melody and bass line for 69 of them. This collection is now known as the Schemelli Songbook. Its preface indicates that all 69 melodies had "in part been newly composed completely also, in part, improved in the basso

continuo by Bach." The hymn *Brunnquell aller Güter*, BWV 445 (*Source of All Blessings*), is based on a melody by Johann Crüger from 1653 and is the basis of Stevan Kovacs Tickmayer's *Three Variations*. Tickmayer was born in the former Yugoslavia, now lives in France, works as a composer, pianist and music essayist and was composer-in-residence at the Lockenhaus Chamber Music Festival in 2003.

Tickmayer writes: "This definitive 2005 version of *Three Variations* was conceived over a 20-year period. My former composition teacher Rudolf Brucci brought the chorale to my attention and suggested adding contemporary harmonies between the soprano and the bass lines. My original version was written for viola, cello and celesta. It basically shapes the chorale and enriches it with harmonies that preserve the original harmonic functions. It has a kind of indeterminate, floating dimension—a sort of a stray musical bolide on its undetermined temporal path.

"In the next version, ten years later, I concentrated on rhythmic interest. After the world premiere of the first version the cellist David Geringas felt—absolutely correctly—that there was a missing link. The composition needed a final part which would emphasize the cycle more eloquently. When Gidon Kremer proposed a further version for his new trio, 10 years later still, I added the final *perpetuum mobile* variation. Now, the harmonic contours are even more distant."

Bach

Three Two-Part Inventions

Invention in C major

Invention in D minor

Invention in B major

Bach first presented his *Clavierbüchlein*, or *Little Keyboard Book* to his eldest son shortly after his ninth birthday, in 1720. This instruction book contains the earliest drafts of the works we now

know as the Two-Part Inventions. The term Invention comes from the Latin “*inventio*” and is given to 15 short pieces arranged, much like *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, in ascending order of keys. The preface to the collection is found in Bach’s handwriting: “Sincere instruction in which lovers of the keyboard, especially those who are keen to learn, are shown a clear method, not only (1) of learning to play clearly in two parts, but also, after further progress, (2) of dealing well and correctly with three obbligato parts. At the same time they are shown not only how to come by good ideas but also how to develop them well. Above all, however, they are shown how to arrive at a *cantabile* [singing] style of playing, while also acquiring a strong foretaste of composition.” Andrei Pushkarev has made a number of arrangements of these inventions, bringing, in the words of a British reviewer, “jazz, smoke and swing both tastefully and deeply musically to the music of Bach.”

Astor Piazzolla (1921–1992)

Le Grand Tango (1982)

Milonga loca

Milonga del Angel (1965)

Milonga de la Anunciacion, from *Maria de Buenos Aires* (1968)

Fourteen years after his death, the inventive tango composer, charismatic band leader and virtuoso *bandoneón* player Astor Piazzolla is the most popular Latin American classical composer of our times—or the most classical popular composer, however you call it. His music is more frequently played than that of his fellow countryman and teacher, the Argentinian Alberto Ginastera, or that of the Brazilian Heitor Villa-Lobos. Like Gershwin, whose music he absorbed while growing up in New York, Piazzolla first gained commercial success by revitalizing his art as a performer, before moving on to the more formal process of writing concert music. His early career peaked

as a regular with both the leading commercial New York Big Band jazz orchestras and the more experimental jazz combos of the 1950s and 60s. For Piazzolla, as for both Gershwin and Ellington—and Bach for that matter—performing and composing were closely linked. By the time he began to accept commissions from classical musicians seeking to broaden the reach of their concert repertoire, Piazzolla had a formidable technical background. It included a period of study in Paris with the legendary teacher Nadia Boulanger—a scholarship from the French government for his youthful *Sinfonia de Buenos Aires* took him there.

The roots of his music lie in multicultural Buenos Aires, with its exuberant fusion of extrovert cultures: Spanish, indigenous, American, German, Jewish and Italian. His chosen form is a dance, the urban tango from his native Argentina. “I wrote all kinds of music,” Piazzolla said, “but never happy music.” Eschewing overt commercialism, Piazzolla’s music has the stamp of authenticity. He was tremendously prolific, with over one thousand compositions to his name.

Commissioned by cellist Mstislav Rostropovich, *Le Grand Tango* was first performed in 1990 and is one of Piazzolla’s most widely played compositions. The Russian-Tatar composer Sofia Gubaidulina made a powerful arrangement of the piece for violin and piano a few years later at the request of Gidon Kremer. The *milonga* is a sort of proto-tango, an earlier dance form, popular in the 1870s. The jaunty *Milonga Loca*, or *Crazy Milonga*, was originally composed for the movie *The Exile of Gardel*. Piazzolla wrote the haunting *Milonga del Angel* (1965) for another movie about the life of the Argentinian writer Jorge Luis Borges. The lively *Milonga de la Anunciacion* comes from one of the final scenes of Piazzolla’s only stage work, *Maria de Buenos Aires* of 1968.

For the classical performer, Piazzolla offers similar opportunities and challenges to those found in both the baroque music of Bach’s day and romantic music. It inhabits a space

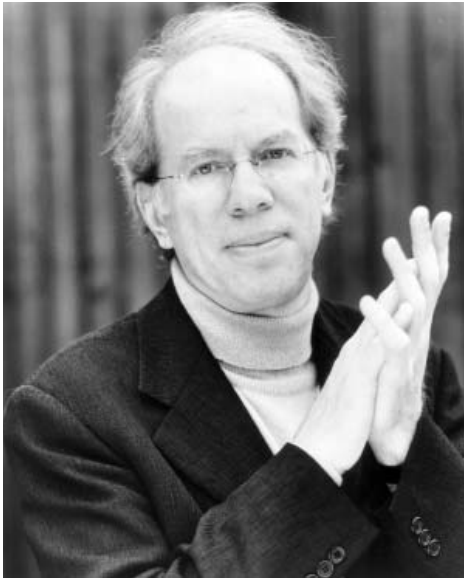
Program Notes

somewhere between composition, improvisation and performance. His music is written out, yet allows opportunity for ornamentation. Its tempo is indicated, but subtle use of rubato—a highly emotive, often even sexy, pulling back and stretching of the beat—is needed to add color and life to the music. Certain key notes deliberately start flat and slowly spiral upwards till they settle in tune and bring emotional release. His harmonic sequences flow like water over a waterfall. When delayed for emotional effect, there is much the same impact as momentarily stopping the flow of that waterfall. Piazzolla's own quintet of *bandoneón*, violin, guitar, piano and bass lacked percussion and found itself creating innovative sounds to simulate snare drums, *guiros*, bongos and whips. Similarly, in

playing Piazzolla, classical musicians are often called on to employ techniques more associated with new music than the exotic tango. The tone color from the bow ranges from high soaring poignant melodies to harsh, rasping, gutsy “scrubbing.” Piazzolla’s “Nuevo Tango” revolutionized tango as an art form and moved it from the dance floor to the concert hall. It represents a powerful fusion of dark, urban color and universal human feeling. “I make elaborated music that has nothing to do with the origins of the tango—although it contains the perfume of the tango,” Piazzolla once said. “Underneath this surface you can hear the tango.”

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About the Artists



In the 30-year course of his distinguished career, violinist **Gidon Kremer** has established a worldwide reputation as one of the most original and compelling artists of his generation. He has appeared on virtually every major concert stage with the most celebrated orchestras of Europe and America and has collaborated with today's foremost conductors and instrumentalists.

His repertoire is unusually extensive, encompassing all of the standard classical and Romantic violin works, as well as music by 20th-century masters such as Henze, Berg and Stockhausen. He has also championed the works of living Russian and Eastern European composers and has performed many important new compositions, several of them dedicated to him. He has become associated with such diverse composers as Alfred Schnittke, Arvo Pärt, Sofia Gubaidulina, Valentin Silvestrov, Luigi Nono, Aribert Reimann, Peteris Vasks, John Adams and Astor Piazzolla, bringing their music to audiences in a way that respects tradition yet remains contemporary.

Since making his Western debut, Mr. Kremer has appeared with the orchestras of Berlin, Boston, Amsterdam, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Philadelphia, New York, London,

Paris and Vienna in collaborations with a distinguished list of conductors that includes Leonard Bernstein, Herbert von Karajan, Christoph Eschenbach, Sir Simon Rattle, Valery Gergiev, Carlo Maria Giulini, Andre Previn, Claudio Abbado, James Levine, Lorin Maazel, Riccardo Muti, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Zubin Mehta, Sir Neville Marriner and David Zinman.

Deeply committed to chamber music, Mr. Kremer devotes a portion of his schedule to recital appearances with partners such as Valery Afanassiev, Martha Argerich, Keith Jarrett, Oleg Maisenberg, Vadim Sakharov, Tatyana Grindenko, Misha Maisky and Thomas Zehetmair.

Highlights of Mr. Kremer's 2006–2007 season include concerts with the Berlin Philharmonic and Bayerischer Rundfunk Orchestra in Munich at New York's Carnegie Hall, as well as duo recitals with Krystian Zimerman in Italy, New York, Boston, Princeton and Quebec. A recital program entitled *After Bach* with pianist Andrius Zlabys and percussionist Andrei Pushkarev in the fall will be followed in the spring by the fifth US tour with his chamber orchestra, Kremerata Baltica.

An exceptionally prolific recording artist, Gidon Kremer has made more than 100 albums for Deutsche Grammophon, Teldec, Philips, ECM, Sony Classical, EMI/Angel and Nonesuch. His recordings have garnered many awards, among them the prestigious Grand Prix du Disque and Deutsche Schallplattenpreis. His most recent, the complete Sonatas and Partitas of Bach, was released by ECM in fall 2005.

Since 1981, Mr. Kremer has been inviting a select group of artists to participate in the music festival he founded in the small Austrian village of Lockenhaus. For two weeks each summer, musicians from all parts of the world gather to perform in an intimate setting. The festival's emphasis is on the exploration of new repertoire, with unusual pairings of musicians who collaborate in an informal atmosphere conducive to discovery and communication. Lockenhaus is the realization of the violinist's belief that music can overcome all barriers of language and culture.

About the Artists

Since 1992, musicians from Lockenhaus have been touring throughout the world under the name Kremerata Musica. Tours have included a critically acclaimed *Hommage à Piazzolla* program in 1997 as well as a world tour and recording of a concert version of Piazzolla's tango opera *Maria de Buenos Aires* in 1998. Also in 1997 and 1998, Mr. Kremer was Artistic Director of the Musiksommer Gstaad in Switzerland, succeeding Lord Yehudi Menuhin. In 2002, he became the artistic leader of a new festival in Basel (Switzerland), "les muséiques."

In November 1996, Mr. Kremer founded the Kremerata Baltica chamber orchestra to foster outstanding young musicians from the three Baltic states. He undertakes regular concert tours with the orchestra, serving as Artistic Director and soloist. He and the Kremerata Baltica were awarded a Grammy for their Nonesuch recording, *After Mozart* (2001). Their latest recording for ECM of works by Schubert is now available. Other recent releases include *Kremerland* (2004) on Deutsche Grammophon and *The Russian Season* (2003), *Happy Birthday* (2003) and a CD of works by Romanian composer Georges Enescu (2002) on the Nonesuch label.

Gidon Kremer was born in 1947 in Riga, Latvia. He began his study of the violin at age four with his father and grandfather, both of whom were accomplished string players. At seven, his formal education began with his entry into the Riga Music School as a student of Professor Sturestep. By the time he reached the eighth grade he was auditioning for competitions in Poland, Romania and France, and at 16 he was awarded the First Prize of the Latvian Republic. Two years later, he successfully auditioned for David Oistrakh and became one of the few students selected to apprentice under that master at the Moscow Conservatory.

In 1967, Mr. Kremer won his first international prize: the Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels. Following this triumph, he took a prize in the Montreal Competition, top honors in the Paganini Competition in Genoa and, finally, the coveted First Prize in the 1970 Tchaikovsky Competition.

Gidon Kremer plays a Guarnerius del Gesù, "ex-David," dated 1730. He is also the author of three books, published in German, which reflect his artistic pursuits.



Andrius Zlabys has appeared throughout the world as soloist, recitalist and chamber musician. A prizewinner at the 2003 Cleveland International Piano Competition, he performed as soloist with the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony and Cleveland Orchestra.

Mr. Zlabys made his Carnegie Hall debut with the New York Youth Symphony Orchestra in 2001 and has performed repeatedly in Carnegie's Zankel Hall. His European engagements have included the Concertgebouw (2003) in Amsterdam, the Menuhin and Salzburg festivals (2004), Austria's Lockenhaus Music Festival (2001, 2002 and 2004) and Germany's Kronberg Academy, where he performed with Yuri Bashmet.

In collaboration with renowned violinist Gidon Kremer, Mr. Zlabys recorded Enescu's Piano Quintet for Nonesuch. The recording was nominated for a 2003 Grammy Award. Mr. Zlabys has performed extensively with Mr. Kremer, including recitals in Japan, China,

About the Artists

Europe and South America. In 1998, Mr. Zlabys toured in recital with violinist Hilary Hahn.

Andrius Zlabys began piano studies at age six in his native Lithuania and studied with Laimute Jakniuniene at the Ciurlionis Art School for 11 years. Upon graduation from Ciurlionis at age 16, he spent a year at the Interlochen Arts Academy, where he studied piano with Victoria Mushkatkol and composition with Joseph DeFazio. He subsequently studied with Seymour Lipkin at the prestigious Curtis Institute of Music (1995–2000) and Sergei Babayan at the Cleveland Institute of Music (2000–2005). Currently, he is a student of Claude Frank at Yale School of Music. Mr. Zlabys will make his debut with Rotterdam Philharmonic in spring 2007.



Andrei Pushkarev was born in 1974 in Kiev and entered the piano class of the Kiev Music School as a six-year-old. By age 14, he had commenced studies in percussion and was a student of Professor Aleksandr Blinov, with whom he continued his professional development until 1998.

In 1995, as solo vibraphonist Mr. Pushkarev was awarded First Prize in the newly established New Names of Ukraine competition, at which he also performed his own musical composi-

tions. Between 1995 and 1999, he performed as solo vibraphonist with many chamber ensembles throughout Ukraine.

Mr. Pushkarev first joined the Kremerata Baltica chamber orchestra as a percussionist in 1999 and has since toured extensively with the ensemble, performing on its recordings on Nonesuch and Deutsche Grammophon. Mr. Pushkarev recorded as a solo timpanist on the CD *After Mozart*, which received a 2001 Grammy Award in the United States and a 2002 Echo Award in Germany.

Beginning in 2003, Mr. Pushkarev makes arrangements for vibraphone and violin solo with and without chamber orchestra and performs these in duo together with violinist Gidon Kremer in numerous concert halls, including Wigmore Hall in London and Tchaikovsky Hall in Moscow.

Mr. Pushkarev has performed and continues to perform with such famous musicians as Yo-Yo Ma, Yury Bashmet, Yury Temirkanov, Peter Sadlo, Katia Skanavi and Mario Brunello.

In 2004, as a solo vibraphonist he was awarded the “Pro Europe” foundation prize.

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