

## LAST SILENCE PAUL SCHOENFIELD

**Nino Rota:** Trio (1958) for flute, violin and piano  
Allegro ma non troppo 4:22  
Andante sostenuto 5:01  
Allegro vivace con spirito 3:22

**Cesar Cui:** Five Pieces Opus 56 for flute, violin and piano  
Badinage 1:12  
Berceuse 1:54  
Scherzino 2:01  
Nocturne 2:49  
Waltz 2:41

**Paul Schoenfield:** Four Souvenirs for violin and piano  
Samba 3:07  
Tango 3:44  
Tin Pan Alley 1:58  
Square Dance 3:05

**Jacques Ibert:** Deux Interludes for flute, violin and piano  
Andante espressivo 3:35  
Allegro vivo 3:45

**Paul Schoenfield:** Last Silence for flute, violin and piano  
Overture 3:39  
Berceuse 3:23  
Polka 4:09  
Andalusia 4:21  
Serbia 4:54

TOTAL RUNNING TIME: 1:03:10

**MARTHA AARONS** *flute*  
**LEV POLYAKIN** *violin*  
**FRANCES RENZI** *piano*



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MARTHA AARONS *flute* LEV POLYAKIN *violin* FRANCES RENZI *piano*



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Front

**Nino Rota** (1911-1979) is best known for his film scores, and is especially associated with the works of Federico Fellini. However, he not only created the soundtracks of 16 Fellini films, but collaborated with most of the leading directors of postwar cinema in Europe. Most famously in the U.S., he provided Francis Ford Coppola with the soundtracks of the first two "Godfather" films, the 2nd of which garnered him an Oscar. He produced more than 150 film scores during his lifetime.

It is less common knowledge that Rota composed many symphonies, ballets, concertos, vocal and chamber works. Born in Milan into a musical family, he began composing at the tender age of 8. As a child prodigy, an oratorio written when he was 11 was premiered a year later in both Milan and Paris, to critical acclaim. His early studies at the conservatory in Milan were followed by composition studies at the Santa Cecilia Academy in Rome. It was there that he caught the attention of Arturo Toscanini, who recommended him to the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, where he also studied conducting with Fritz Reiner. After returning to Italy, he graduated from the University of Milan with a degree in literature.

Rota did not bow to pressure to compose in the avant-garde serial style of his time, though he made a point of writing an avant-garde piece or two to prove that he could do it well enough. His preferred style is uniquely imaginative, drawing from a wide array of various past styles delivered with his own original twist.

The Trio for Flute, Violin and Piano was written in 1958 for the Trio Klemm, comprised of a Swiss flutist and pianist, and a Cuban violinist. It is one of his most effective chamber works, touching on bitonality but still very accessible, both melodically and harmonically. The two outer movements are virtuosic, the finale being a spectacular perpetual mobile. The slow movement hints at baroque influence in its counterpoint between the three instruments. Likewise, the first movement also utilizes baroque contrapuntal techniques, but employs harmonies reminiscent of Messaien. Indeed, Nino Rota defies categorization thanks to his immensely rich spectrum of musical tools and ideas.

**Cesar Cui** (1835-1918) was the youngest of five children of a French father who entered Russia with Napoleon's army and settled in Vilnius, and a Lithuanian mother. Cesar studied engineering and became an expert and eventual instructor in military fortifications.

As successful as his military and academic achievements were, Cui is known in the West as a composer. Music was his hobby beginning in childhood when he studied piano, and he started to compose when he was 14. He also later became known as a prolific music critic, producing hundreds of articles and reviews published in Russia and Western Europe. However, many of them were published under an unusual pseudonym consisting of three asterisks (\*\*\*) due to his concurrent profession in the Russian military. Nevertheless, he was eventually recognizable as the author, partly due to his strong and often derisive opinions.

Cui was a member of the self-anointed group of composers known as The Russian Five, along with Balakirev, Moussorgsky, Borodin and Rimsky-Korsakov. They established themselves in the 1860's with the mission of creating a uniquely Russian style of music. Folk elements abound in all their works.

"Five Short Pieces" is a charming example of such typically Russian style in the form of miniatures. Though Cui was less overtly nationalistic than his counterparts, one can easily detect harmonic and melodic features in these movements that are identifiable as distinctly Russian. The Nocturne is particularly touching and the choice of including a nocturne may have been inspired by Cui's youthful fondness for Chopin. The last movement, Valse, is reminiscent of Tchaikowsky for its balletic nature, which is rather ironic given the disdain Cui-the-critic expressed for Russian contemporary composers outside of The Five.



#### Four Souvenirs

□ Violinist Lev Polyakin commissioned “Four Souvenirs” in 1990, and first performed it in 1991 with the composer as pianist. Its inception dates back to when Lev heard Paul Schoenfield’s trumpet concerto and was instantly smitten with one of its themes. Lev asked Paul to write something for violin based on that melody, which became the “Tin Pan Alley” movement of this set of short pieces.

The four movements comprise contrasting dance styles.

“Samba” is vivacious and Brazilian-inspired, full of syncopation and swagger.

“Tango” begins with a melancholy, sentimental introduction before launching into its main theme, which is characterized by the typical, sensual rhythm of the traditional tango.

“Tin Pan Alley” was the nickname for a New York City neighborhood in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, where publishers of popular music set up shop with pianos on which composers could play their songs, in hopes of selling them. This romantic ballad harks back to the style of popular tunes of that bygone era.

The final movement, “Square Dance”, is a riotous showpiece in perpetual-motion, featuring elements suggestive of country-fiddle music along with honky-tonk piano techniques. It provides a brilliant finale that calls on virtuosic skills from both violinist and pianist.

**Jacques Ibert** (1890-1962) was a composer whose wide range of styles defies categorization. Born in Paris, his mother—a pianist—encouraged his early studies of violin and piano.

The first World War, during which Ibert served as an officer in the French navy, interrupted his studies at the Paris Conservatory. Not long after his return, he won the Prix de Rome, which was the top prize granted to students.

Ibert played an artistic ambassadorial role for France in addition to being a prolific composer. After being appointed director of the Academie de France at the Villa Medici in Rome, he proved to be a talented administrator and successful representative of French culture. In 1940 war again interrupted Ibert’s career. Thanks to sanctions from the Vichy government, he was forced to leave Paris until 1944, at which time he was summoned back to Paris by General Charles de Gaulle. He spent his remaining years composing and again as an administrator; this time of the umbrella organization of the Paris Opera.

From ballet to film scores, incidental music to classic orchestral forms, concertos to chamber music—Ibert did not restrict himself to certain genres or styles. He was one of the most versatile composers of his generation.

“Deux Interludes” was composed as part of the incidental music for a play called “Le Burlador” (The Seducer). These pieces, particularly the 2nd interlude with its obvious Flamenco allusions, are exemplary of the Spanish influence upon French art (both visual and musical) during the Impressionist era.

**Last Silence** is a suite of five pieces based on a diverse collection of melodies, drawing from both religious and secular backgrounds.

The work was commissioned by pianist Rita Sloan with assistance from the University of Maryland. It is dedicated to the memory of Ms. Sloan's parents, Nathan and Molly Sloan, who were Holocaust survivors. It was premiered at the Lotos Club in New York City on September, 2017 by Martha Aarons, Lev Polyakin and Rita Sloan.

1. Overture, the first of the pieces, takes an old Breslov nigun and a Chasidic wedding song as its starting material.

2. The second piece, Berceuse, makes use of the well-known Ashkenazic nigun "Yedid Nefesh," but in addition to that it also incorporates a little-known nigun from Modritz.

3. Polka, the third of the pieces, brings two nigunim into relationship with one another. The first, "Yahaloma," is a Sephardic song one might hear on the streets of Jerusalem, while the second, an unusual Chabad nigun, makes use of a Bulgarian rhythm in 7/8, a meter which is quite uncommon in Hassidic music.

4. The fourth of the pieces, Andalusia, is a set of variations à la Ysaÿe on a beautiful Andalusian tune.

The last of the five pieces, Serbia, features an old tune by the name of Opa Cupa and a Sephardic tune sung on Motzei Shabbat.



**Martha Aarons'** professional career began with her appointment as principal flute of the North Carolina Symphony. Subsequently she played with the Cleveland Orchestra for 25 years.

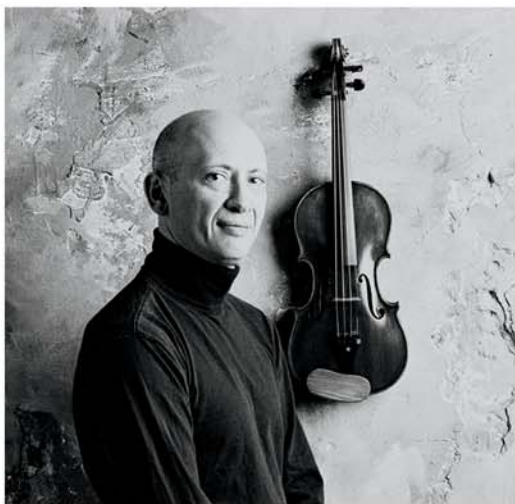
After becoming a freelancer in 2006, she performed often with the Philadelphia Orchestra. During this time she also appeared as guest principal flute with the Metropolitan Opera, Minnesota Orchestra, Milwaukee Symphony, San Diego Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, Mostly Mozart Festival, Jakarta Sinfonia, and with the World Orchestra for Peace. Ms. Aarons served as Artist Faculty with the Aspen Music Festival for 19 years, and has participated in the Grand Teton Festival in addition to festivals in Cuba and Italy.

Among her teaching credits are the Cleveland Institute of Music, Duke University, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Oberlin College.

She was Filene Visiting-Artist-in-Residence at Skidmore College and taught and performed as visiting artist and instructor at the Shanghai Conservatory. In 2002 she was guest assistant professor at the Eastman School of Music.

She has been soloist with the Cleveland Orchestra, North Carolina Symphony, Aspen Chamber Symphony, and Ohio Chamber Orchestra. In 2003 Ms. Aarons performed the Aspen Music Festival premiere of the Flute Concerto by Christopher Rouse.

Her CD, "The History of the Tango", is recorded on the Azica label. It additionally features pianist Frances Renzi and Grammy-winning guitarist Jason Vieaux.



**Lev Polyakin** was appointed co-concertmaster of the Moscow Chamber Orchestra at age 21. In that position he was regularly featured as soloist. In the U.S. he served as assistant concertmaster of the Cleveland Orchestra, as well as concertmaster of the American Academy of Conducting in Aspen Music Festival. He has also performed in festivals in Italy and Cuba.

Lev has won several prizes in international violin competitions, including the Beethoven Prize in Carl Flesch in London, and Gold Medal and Special Prize in Brescia, Italy. In addition to his solo

performances with the Moscow Chamber Orchestra, he has appeared as soloist with the London Mozart Players, Royal Philharmonic, and Cleveland Orchestra. Recording credits include Melodia, BBC, National Public Radio, and Decca. He is prominently featured on an album entitled "Cafe Music" comprising chamber music by Paul Schoenfield, which was nominated for a Grammy.

Lev has a special interest in jazz and has recorded three CDs with his group Russian Blue. The albums are entitled "Russian Blue", "The Other Side of the Road", and "Christmas Kaleidoscope".



Steinway Artist **Frances Renzi** has appeared as soloist with many orchestras including those of Dallas, Houston, Toledo, and the New Hampshire Music Festival. She has performed throughout North America, Taiwan, and China, giving recitals in Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall in New York, on the Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concert Series in Chicago, at the Phillips Collecton in Washington, D.C., at the National Concert Hall in Taipei, and at the China Conservatory in Beijing. She appears regularly as a featured guest artist on the Toledo Symphony Chamber Series, performs each summer as a soloist and chamber musician at the New Hampshire Music Festival, and has performed as a solo pianist for the New York City Ballet.

Ms. Renzi has recorded both solo and chamber music for Educo, Centaur, Koch International, the Musical Heritage Society, Azica, Audite, and Decca-Argo. Her numerous recordings have won critical acclaim and many awards in Europe and the United States including a Grammy nomination for a recording of the chamber music of Paul Schoenfield.

An experienced teacher as well as performer, she is Professor Emerita at the University of Toledo. In 2000 she received a commendation from the Ohio Senate honoring her outstanding university career.



*Left to right: Engineer Bruce Egge, Lev Polyakin, Frances Renzi, Producer Alan Bise and Martha Aarons. Photographed after final session in Sauder Hall, Goshen, Indiana.*

### CREDITS

Producer: Alan Bise

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Photograph of Frances: Karen Bowers

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