



Alexander **TCHEREPNIN**

Piano Music 1913-61

Sonatas Nos. 1 and 2

Préludes Nostalgiques

Prelude

Alexander Tcherepnin, piano

Moment Musical

Rondo à la Russe

La Quatrième

Expressions

Petite Suite

Entretiens

Scherzo

Polka

Mikhail Shilyaev, piano

INCLUDES FIRST RECORDINGS

ALEXANDER TCHEREPNIN AND HIS PIANO MUSIC

by Benjamin Folkman

At the conclusion of his biography of Alexander Tcherepnin (1899–1977), Willi Reich hailed the composer as a *musikalische Weltbürger*, a ‘musical citizen of the world.’¹ The label is apt, for in a creative career spanning almost seven decades Tcherepnin composed and performed in many lands, and even served some countries as an artistic spokesman. Son of the prominent composer Nikolai Tcherepnin, whose best-known works are the ballets he wrote for Diaghilev,² Alexander penned his first music of permanent value in his native St Petersburg while still in his early teens, and began his public career as a composer-pianist in Tbilisi, Georgia after moving there in 1918. Relocating to Paris in 1921, the young Tcherepnin rapidly found French publishers for his works through the influence of his illustrious piano-teacher Isidore Philipp. Early international successes followed: in London in 1923, with a ballet, *Ajanta's Frescoes*, Op. 32, composed for the legendary Anna Pavlova, and in Germany, with his *Concerto da Camera*, Op. 33, for flute, violin and chamber orchestra, which won a prestigious prize offered by the publishing firm Schott.³ In 1927, his ultra-modern First Symphony, with its all-percussion Scherzo, provoked a riot at its Paris premiere.

Between 1934 and 1937 Tcherepnin spent much of his time in China and Japan. There he taught Asian students, sponsored composing competitions in order to foster the development of national Chinese and Japanese concert-music styles, and founded a publishing house – the Collection Tcherepnine – to issue the scores of Asian composers. In the late 1940s he came to the United States to teach at DePaul University in Chicago, and there he produced symphonic

¹ Willi Reich, *Alexander Tcherepnin*, M. P. Belaieff, Bonn, 1970, p. 105.

² His ballet *Le Pavillon d'Armide* was composed in 1907, before Diaghilev's dance company, Ballets Russes, was launched, but Tcherepnin conducted the work for their opening performance two years later. He conducted frequently for Diaghilev and composed two more ballets for him, *Narcisse et Echo* (1911) and *The Masque of the Red Death* (1915). Later (1922–24) he acted as composer and conductor for Anna Pavlova's Paris-based ballet troupe, writing *Bacchus* (1922), *A Magical Russian Fairytale* (1923) and *The Romance of the Mummy* (1924) for her.

³ The competition is remembered in particular because another prize-winner, the *Concerto for Nine Instruments* for violin, clarinet, horn and string sextet (1925) by the Finnish composer Aarre Merikanto (1893–1958), from then on bore the name ‘Schott Concerto’.

works commissioned by America's major orchestras (among them the Chicago Symphony and the Boston Symphony) while concertising extensively as a pianist. Four of his American pupils later became noted composers: Gloria Coates, John Downey, Robert Muczynski and Phillip Ramey. After taking US citizenship in 1958, Tcherepnin continued to live in America but subsequently found his professional activities increasingly centred on England and Switzerland. Indeed, Tcherepnin seems to be the only composer ever to have done significant work in all five permanent UN Security Council nations: Russia, Britain, France, China and the United States.

Largely self-taught as a composer until his late teens, Tcherepnin came to Paris in 1921 carrying a trove of more than two hundred short piano pieces. The cream of these works reached print in such collections as the *Petite Suite*, Op. 6, (which appears on this CD) and his celebrated *Bagatelles*, Op. 5. A restless innovator, he developed in the 1920s a symmetrical nine-step scale (C, D flat, E flat, E, F, G, G sharp, A, B), in which one of his favourite sounds is implicit – the major-minor triad (C, E flat, E natural, G). He regarded this chord – flouting textbook strictures – as harmonically stable, even though it contains a harsh dissonance (produced by the clash between E flat and E natural). In the 1920s Tcherepnin also devised a technique he called 'Interpoint', which places a premium on transparency of musical texture, not least through off-beat accents. Interpoint dictates methods of combining two or more independent musical lines as well as the process of deploying tones through the various registers. Subsequently he continued to explore unusual scales, chiefly the Far Eastern pentatonic modes and a special eight-step scale.

Over the years, Tcherepnin built a successful career as a pianist based almost entirely on performance of his own works, which included six concertos along with a large body of solo pieces. He composed continually for keyboard throughout his career, and the music included on this CD spans almost half a century, ranging from the *Moment Musical* of 1913 to the Second Piano Sonata, written in 1961. His earliest pieces reflect the keyboard skills of a gifted adolescent more interested in pure music than in virtuosity. In his late teens, his growing digital command brought *Sturm und Drang* thunder into his piano compositions, but his subsequent theoretical innovations left no room for such effects, resulting in the ultra-lean neo-Classical textures found in such works as the *Entretiens*, Op. 46. A far more massive and virtuosic keyboard style informed Tcherepnin's works from the 1940s, but the 'orchestral' sonorities of these appeared far less frequently in his later piano music, serving mainly as leavening elements.

What lends this CD a special cachet is, of course, its inclusion of Tcherepnin's own performances

of his two piano sonatas (central works in his output) along with two pieces that were favourites in his concert repertory: the *Préludes Nostalgiques* and the Prelude, Op. 85, No. 9. On the remainder of the programme, the Russian pianist Mikhail Shilyaev performs an array of pieces, many little known, that illustrate additional aspects of Alexander Tcherepnin's multifarious achievements as a composer for piano.

Piano Sonata No. 1, Op. 22

When Tcherepnin began composing his First Sonata in Petrograd in 1918, he entitled it 'Sonata No. 14': not until later would he discard most of his immense juvenile output, selecting only several dozen early pieces for publication. This Sonata was the last score the nineteen-year-old composer undertook before his family left for Georgia in July 1918 to avoid growing revolutionary turmoil; he completed the piece in Tbilisi the following year. When first selecting works for publication in Paris several years later, he gave precedence to his 'Sonata No. 13', which appeared as his Op. 4 under the title *Sonatine Romantique*. Sonata No. 14, published in 1924, perforce became his Sonata No. 1, issued as Op. 22. Tcherepnin premiered the First Sonata at the Salle Érard in Paris on 4 November 1924, and it served as a staple of his recital repertory for the remainder of his career. Although the First Sonata does not display the nine-step scale experimentation of *Sonatine Romantique*, it is an inventive piece that does not really sound like the work of any other composer, occasionally callow but full of exuberance and very Russian in tone.

Cast in four movements that traverse an odd tonal path (A minor, G major, G sharp minor, A minor), the piece opens with a sonata-allegro movement [1]. The rhythmically fretful first subject (12/8 scanned as 3/8+3/4+3/8) is cadentially punctuated by a harmonically ambiguous series of extremely slow descending single notes – a gesture at once completely unconventional and completely convincing. The second group commences with crystalline lyricism and builds to triumph. Thematic augmentation launches the development section, and rapid alternations between subjects follow. The recapitulation reaches a surprisingly quiet coda. In the second movement [2], fragmentary melody competes with a single obsessively repeated chord. The splendidly barbaric third-movement toccata [3] follows without pause, based on a transitional first-movement theme. It proves too brief for a finale, and so a closing *Grave* suggesting solemn Slavic liturgy [4] resolves the work in elegiac meditation upon the vastly slowed-down first-movement theme. Deep bells toll at the conclusion.



Tcherepnin at home in Paris in 1977

Piano Sonata No. 2, Op. 94

Although Tcherepnin composed a multitude of piano works for his recitals over the years, he did not produce his Second Piano Sonata until the First was more than four decades old. His Sonata No. 2, Op. 94, was written in a hurry over ten late-summer days in 1961 and completed barely in time for him to perform its scheduled premiere at the Berlin Festival in late September. One reason Tcherepnin succeeded in composing the score so quickly was that he had recently been exploring manipulations of a new, symmetrical eight-step scale (E, D sharp, D, B, B flat, A, G sharp, F – with modes downward from D sharp, D, etc.), and now effortlessly incorporated these into the Sonata. Left with insufficient practice time, Tcherepnin suffered a major memory-lapse in the finale at the first performance – although, as is natural with a new modernistic piece, it went unnoticed. The Sonata was published in 1962 with a dedication to the composer's second wife, Hsien Ming.

At this stage in his life, Tcherepnin had become subject to bouts of tinnitus, with two pitches – D and E – constantly whistling in his ears. His affliction became grist for the Sonata, where the two pitches serve as a recurring and often obsessive motif.

By then Tcherepnin was apt to discard sonata-form elements involving repetition and orthodox recapitulation, replacing them with continuous thematic evolution – a procedure that

Reich termed 'novelistic'.⁴ Amid the slow introduction's sepulchral low-register brooding [5], Tcherepnin elaborates a moaning theme that unfolds from a three-note cell (C sharp, D, C sharp). In the ensuing *Animato*, this shape compressed into the two-note formula, D–E, exploited in spiky figurations with impressive energy. New material derived from both sections, centres on a four-note descending figure, which is deployed in both vigorous *ostinato* and introverted song. This movement reaches a hushed close in the highest registers of the piano.

Asymmetric yet fluid rhythmic flow marks the slow movement [6]. A descending third begins many of the melodic phrases. Later this interval widens to a descending fourth as lush keyboard colours inform a lyrical climax, before the movement again retreats into introversion. From three closing slow-movement notes, a perky finale-theme emerges [7]. After an episode on a jubilant descending theme, intensive development reduces an ascending scale pattern to its simplest elements. The coda withdraws into mystery, concluding with a reminiscence of the D–E motif.

Quatre Préludes Nostalgiques, Op. 23

In late 1922 Tcherepnin left his new home in Paris for a lengthy stay in England, where he made his western concert debut. Separated from his family in France and disquieted by the hot-and-cold hospitality extended him by the British, he vented his malaise in the *Quatre Préludes Nostalgiques*, written in November and December and published as his Op. 23 in 1923. These pieces do not lend themselves to being performed separately, but constitute a single entity. The two middle preludes, [10] and [11], are extremely brief. The first [9] is larger in scale, as is the last [12], which shows a more developmental character than the other three. The prevailing nostalgia of the score is leavened by tempestuous outbursts in the last two preludes.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 84.



Préludes Nostalgiques sketched on the stationery
of a London patron

Prelude, Op. 85, No. 9

Tcherepnin's set of Twelve Preludes, Op. 85, dating from 1952–53, is one of four piano-cycles written during his earliest Chicago years – and the only one he did not premiere, instead allowing the young pianist Robert Howat to introduce the group in Chicago in 1954. Prelude No. 9 [12] became one of Tcherepnin's regular concert-offerings. It is a riotous affair, exploiting demonic *moto perpetuo* in grotesque register extremes, now in low thuds, now in clangorous bell-jangles.

Moment Musical

A product of Tcherepnin's fourteenth year, this atmospheric little *Moment Musical* [13] reached print in 1925 as No. 4 of the composer's *Pièces sans titres*, Op. 7, thus appearing without its original title and with a few very small changes in the music. A comment on the piece in Reich's biography, probably supplied by Tcherepnin himself, reads: 'The appearance of the theme a semi-tone lower on its return, while the accompaniment remains in the same key as in its original statement, is quite unusual.'⁵ The odd chromaticism that makes such a harmonic treatment possible lends a touch of genuine weirdness to the naïve main theme.

Petite Suite, Op. 6

Tcherepnin composed his *Petite Suite*, Op. 6 in 1918–19. It somewhat postdates his *Bagatelles*; and although it shares their youthful charm, the composer by now is working in somewhat larger, if still miniature, forms. A certain *Sturm und Drang* element has also surfaced in his music, but this throwback to late Romanticism will disappear in the mid-1920s. Tcherepnin himself thought highly of the *Petite Suite*, which was published in 1923. He premiered it at his aforementioned Érard Hall concert in Paris on 4 November 1924, and continued to include it in his mature repertory. The Suite begins with a sprightly D major march [14] featuring repeated-note fanfares, which grows grandiose before fading into the distance. The ensuing 'Song without Words' [15] opens nostalgically in D major and, after a somewhat Borodinesque central section, builds unexpectedly to a tragic F sharp minor climax. The Berceuse in F sharp major [16] is set in 5/8 metre. Here, too, there is a *Sturm und Drang* climax, after which Tcherepnin artfully avoids the expected return to the opening, instead promising a luminous ending before a rather bleak close. A nose-thumbing B minor Scherzo follows [17], its athletic determination twice yielding to a theme of bubbling,

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

childlike humour. Reverting to D major, the 'Badinage' [18] initially evokes Prokofiev's way with the neo-Classical gavotte but soon displays Tcherepnin's personal wit in a passage of droll obstinacy. The D major Humoresque finale [19] scampers about in high spirits before reaching a quiet, playful conclusion.

Rondo à la Russe

Tcherepnin's *Rondo à la Russe* [20] (published without opus number in 1946 and presumably composed about that time) is built upon a tender lyric melody, at first presented in rich, deeply coloured textures. A somewhat more animated episode leads to a crystalline high-register transformation of the main theme. A second contrasted episode brings music of a more uneasy cast, but a crescendo upon this culminates in a triumphant return of the main theme, now chanted in complex combination with materials from the two intervening episodes. The texture ultimately clears for a quiet, sparkling coda.

Entretiens, Op. 46

Entretiens ('Conversations') comprises ten pieces, some extremely brief. Although the set was completed in 1930 in Monte Carlo, it includes several movements dating from much earlier (No. 3, written in Tblisi in 1920; Nos. 4 and 10, penned during the late 1920s in Islip, Long Island, and No. 7, composed in Hagengut, Austria, in 1927). *Entretiens* was published in 1931. Tcherepnin was then in a transitional period, seeking to broaden his style beyond the abstract idiom he had developed in exploring his nine-step scale and his technique of Interpoint. He now began melding folk-like materials into his style, and *Entretiens*, as Reich observed, shows Tcherepnin evoking 'the spoken inflections of everyday conversational Russian'⁶ in several of the pieces, thus imparting a 'Eurasian' character to them. Tcherepnin, moreover, enhances this exotic aspect by incorporating Orientalisms (as had many Russian composers before him). Thus, Middle-East-like chant of increasing floridity opens the first piece (*Lento*) [21], leading to an animated seven-beat dance. In No. 2 (*Animato*) [22], a Bachian invention unfolds over a pattering independent bass. The rocking self-repetitive chordal music that opens No. 3 (*Moderato*) [23] is restricted to the middle registers, but then a rising-arpeggio motif initiates a break-out into wider ranges as the music's emotion becomes more highly charged. In No. 4 (*Allegretto*) [24], Tcherepnin brings fetching wit

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

to the abstract manipulation of piquant materials. The tiny No. 5 (*Recitando*) [25] is an aphoristic raised eyebrow, and No. 6 (*Animato*) [26] dances in irregular rhythm, with some quizzical octave-displacement interruptions. No. 7 (*Moderato*) [27], a fragmentary mid-East-inflected duet in speech rhythms, originated in a New Year's Day card penned by Tcherepnin to his first wife in 1927: 'Here,' he wrote 'is a little concentration from this morning for my little beloved.'⁷ No. 8 (*Animato*) [28] elaborates upon a wistful opening 'question.' In the forbidding No. 9 (*Grave*) [29], one of the longest pieces in the set, an extended, angular melody unfolds against a sparse antagonistic countersubject marked by jagged octave displacements and grim note-repetitions. Hushed, gossamer bell-timbres dominate No. 10 (*Allegretto*) [30], evaporating at the conclusion. Tcherepnin gave the premiere of *Entretiens* in Bucharest on 6 February 1932.

Polka

Tcherepnin composed this Polka [31] in 1944 for a dance performance in Paris. He revised it for publication in 1955 (it appeared without opus number) and played the premiere that year in San Francisco. In this score, clearly intended as a generic treatment of populist materials, Tcherepnin the jester proceeds from a lively, quirky tune to such broader antics as leg-pulling hesitations, cluster-like dissonances of good-natured mockery and improbable register shifts, before taking his flamboyant final bow.

Scherzo, Op. 3

Tcherepnin began his Scherzo, Op. 3, in 1917 as a work for two pianos, but left this version incomplete. In 1926, in Islip, he recast the piece as a solo work, adding a coda. The printed score (1927) bears a dedication to the young American pianist Beveridge Webster (a protégé, like Tcherepnin, of Isidore Philipp). A *moto perpetuo* effort, the Scherzo [32] is dominated by obstinate kinetic determination yet also includes mischievous elements, showing some kinship with the 'bad boy' style of young Tcherepnin's idol Sergei Prokofiev. But its harmony sees Rachmaninovian lushness as a springboard for harsh modernistic dissonances. The piece is cast in ABA layout with coda but is continuous rather than sectional, with a decidedly developmental transition from the slower central section back to the original theme.

⁷ New Year's card pasted into Louise Tcherepnin's diary from 1926–27.

Expressions, Op. 81

Completed and published in 1951, *Expressions*, Op. 81 is the first of the piano cycles Tcherepnin wrote in Chicago. He himself played the premiere the following year in Kalamazoo, Michigan. These ten pieces represent what Tcherepnin aptly termed the ‘synthesis’ he had now achieved in his musical style, freely combining elements of his scale explorations (nine-step and pentatonic), his ‘metrical Interpoint’ (juxtaposition of contradictory metres) and hints of folk materials (which he believed served a musician in the same way that human anatomy serves a painter). Although Tcherepnin here largely dispensed with virtuoso keyboard techniques, designing the *Expressions* for the accomplished intermediate player, this limitation did not prevent him from achieving high artistic standards.

The set is unified by a simple motif that periodically reappears, sometimes in variants (Ex. 1).

Ex. 1



Bell sounds and skipping, ‘missing-beat’ mischief animate the initial ‘Entrance’ [33]. Dignified sobriety is the watchword for ‘The Hour of Death’ [34], in which recitation-like melodising is supported by repeated chords – which, when moved around the various keyboard registers, take on very different atmospheres, now grave, now ethereal, now menacing. ‘Caprice’ [35] opens joyously, as waltz-patterns repeatedly emerge from the irregular rhythms. Here the quoted motif becomes particularly prominent. The mood turns wry at the close where the treble sonorities disappear for a bare-bones debate between major and minor thirds (a favoured paradox that Tcherepnin examined in many other scores). The ‘Silly Story of the White Oxen’ [36] belies its title in its flowing lyric presentation of major-minor melody patterns based on arpeggiation and descending scale fragments. In ‘Thief in the Night’ [37] rapid stealthy *moto perpetuo* figurations dissonantly combine with one another, beginning in the low register and climbing aloft before retreating to the very bottom of the piano. A child-like ‘five-finger exercise’ theme related to the recurring motif sets the tone for the ‘At the Fair’ [38], which is cast as a free rondo; the contrasting materials include a wide-leaping array of staccato chords in unpredictable rhythm, and a lyric descending melody oft derailed by loud punctuations in contradictory keys. The melodic voices of the ‘Barcarolle’ [39]

display the traditional triple-rhythm boat-song pattern, but Tcherepnin enlivens them by devising contrasting metres for the recurring bass motifs that serve as accompaniment. The gliding aquatic flow is preserved, and in a humorous gesture toward the close, the music side-steps into a most improbable key (a semi-tone down) for a taste of Wagner's *Tristan* Prelude, before reaching the close one had expected. The players of 'Blind Man's Bluff' [40] dart animatedly about in staccato bursts, but the 'it' (blind man) soon seizes upon a victim with a triumphant trill. 'At Dawn' [41] is an ultra-delicate, whispered 'lightscape' set in the highest register of the piano, the music suggesting unpredictable glints of illumination mingled with hints of birdsong. The recurring motif appears in the main theme of the finale, 'Exit' [42] – a melody upon which Tcherepnin elaborates via rhythmic compression in a compact build-up to an emphatic conclusion.

La Quatrième

La Quatrième, a march dealing in massive keyboard textures [43], was composed in 1948–49 but only in 1954 did it reach print (without opus number). Here, with suitable pomp and circumstance, Tcherepnin celebrated the return of democracy to post-war France through the establishment of the Fourth Republic. The score was commissioned by the firm Heugel, which hoped to commemorate the national rebirth with an album of pieces by Tcherepnin and other immigrant composers of the *École de Paris* group,⁸ but this collaborative publication never materialised. Tcherepnin played the premiere of *La Quatrième* in Paris in 1959.

About Alexander Tcherepnin's Radio Recordings

In the spring of 1965, Phillip Ramey, then completing a Master's Degree in Composition at Columbia University, presented a series of radio programmes on the school station (WKCR-FM) devoted to Alexander Tcherepnin, who had been his composition teacher at DePaul University and at the International Academy of Music in Nice, France. Ramey's personal collection of Tcherepnin LPs covered many major scores required for the survey, but neither of the composer's two piano sonatas had yet appeared on disc. Since he was loath to omit these works, Ramey asked Tcherepnin – who now lived in New York – to record them for broadcast on the Steinway concert grand in the McMillan Theater at the University. As Tcherepnin remained close to Ramey, he readily agreed to

⁸ The other members of the group were the Swiss Conrad Beck, Hungarian Tibor Harsányi, Czech Bohuslav Martinů, Romanian Marcel Mihailovici and Pole Alexander Tansman.

tape the sonatas and other music, along with interview segments and commentaries on the music that had been chosen.

Fortunately, McMillan was an excellent venue for the purpose. Its microphone lines fed into a nearby control room in the elaborately equipped Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center. For the engineering, Ramey enlisted a fellow composition student who specialised in electronic music: Walter Carlos, who already commanded the sonic expertise that would win him world-wide celebrity for his synthesizer work on the landmark 1968 electronic album *Switched-On Bach*.

The sophisticated devices of the Electronic Music Center included state-of-the-art Ampex tape machines that represented the climax of tube technology (considerably superior, many feel, to the first solid-state equipment that replaced them). Carlos recorded Tchernin in two-track stereo at the professional standard speed of 15 ips. Dolby noise-reduction was not yet in the picture, nor did the studio own a stereo pair of the newest dynamic microphones, which had recently made wide-range recording possible. Carlos accordingly elected to use his own pair of Dynaco ribbon microphones. These suffered the chief disadvantage of ribbon sonics – an inability to reproduce the extreme high-end of the frequency spectrum (13,000 cycles and higher) – but enjoyed its major advantage as well: a frequency-response curve of exceptional smoothness. Indeed the recording, compared to present-day efforts, still stands up astonishingly well. Thoroughly understanding his tools, Carlos produced a piano sound of imposing weight, brilliance, clarity and dynamic range.

The busy academic and concert schedule of the auditorium obliged Tchernin to record the sonatas and accompanying preludes late at night in a single marathon session, held on 30–31 March 1965. With Ramey serving as producer, retakes were made and spliced in to improve some problem passages, but Tchernin did not attempt to achieve the standards of absolute note-perfection that commercial recordings demand: ‘For a radio broadcast,’ he remarked to Ramey at the session, ‘I can take risks that I wouldn’t for a record.’ What emerged was an excellent likeness of the compelling if not always infallible pianism Tchernin offered in his concerts during the 1960s. In the First Sonata Tchernin took chances that he would avoid in his later EMI recording,⁹ and although the result is slightly more untidy, it also offers more visceral excitement. This quality is emphasised by the sound quality: for Carlos put the piano in much closer perspective than the EMI engineers would do in 1967.

⁹ EMI cvc 2124: *Ten Bagatelles*, Op. 5; Piano Sonata No. 1, Op. 22; *Four Nostalgic Preludes*, Op. 23; Etude, Op. 56, No. 7; *Expression*, Op. 81, No. 9; Impromptu, Op. 88, No. 4; *Burlesque*, Op. 88, No. 8.

Tcherepnin had completed the Second Sonata less than four years before the Columbia University session, and he had yet to get the score comfortably into his fingers. But the cogency and poetry of his performance compensate for any small blemishes and, as he never recorded the Sonata commercially, this radio version stands as an irreplaceable guide to his conception of it. The *Préludes Nostalgiques* and the Prelude Op. 85, No. 9, were both concert warhorses for Tcherepnin, and these Columbia University performances compare favourably with the renditions later issued by EMI.

After the broadcast, Ramey kept the master tapes. During the early 1980s, an attempt to copy them using semi-professional machines proved disappointing, for warpage kept the tapes from remaining in perfect contact with the playback heads. Finally, in December 2002, I proposed to Ramey that we have the tapes examined, in order to determine whether a decent digital transfer might be possible. I then brought them to Allen Tucker at Foothill Digital in New York. Tucker had often worked with old recordings, and, fortunately, had acquired a special machine capable of handling the now very brittle acetate tapes with the required combination of firmness and gentleness. The original splices proved more problematic, for they tended to fall apart. Moreover, the adhesive of the splicing tape had bled and deposited a sticky ooze through adjacent layers of the acetate, which caused lurches during playback. Tucker was thus compelled not only to clean and re-patch every splice but also to remove glue from two or three layers of tape preceding and following each join. This laborious process took many hours, but the result was a recording that amazed both of us with its lustre and immediacy. Also presenting Mikhail Shilyaev's performances of Tcherepnin works, which include several first recordings, this CD is obviously an important historical document, but its importance is musical as much as archival: here is one of the twentieth century's major composer-pianists in accounts of his own music that are as compelling as they are authoritative.



Tcherepnin c. 1926

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Benjamin Folkman is President of The Tcherepnin Society.

Mikhail Shilyaev was born in 1979 in Izhevsk, Russia. He started learning the piano at the age of six and won several regional piano competitions at a young age. In 1992 he entered the Central Music School of the Moscow Conservatoire, going on to study with Alexandr Sobolev, and in 1998 he became a full-time student at the Moscow State Conservatoire, where he studied with Olga Zhukova and Elisso Virsaladze. In October 2003 he gained a DAAD scholarship which enabled him to study at the Munich Hochschule with Franz Massinger. In 2005–7 Mikhail studied at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester with Mark Ray, Alexander Melnikov and Nelson Goerner. He has participated in master-classes given by András Schiff, Charles Rosen, Stephen Hough, Barry Douglas and Stefano Fiuzzi. In summer 2007 he took part in the Britten-Pears Young Artists Programme.

Mikhail is the prize-winner of many competitions, and has been supported in his studies by many awards. In 2005 he won both second prize in the Ibiza International Piano Competition and first prize in the Intercollegiate Beethoven Competition organised by the Beethoven Piano Society of Europe. In July 2006 he won second prize in the Amy Brant Piano Competition in Birmingham. He has also been awarded the Myra Hess Award from the Musicians' Benevolent Fund, the 2006 Ricci Foundation Award and the 2006 Maisie Lewis Award. In 2007 he was awarded the Megan Foster Accompanist Prize from the Musicians' Benevolent Fund and, as duo partner of the violinist Boris Brovtsyn, Second Prize at the Lyon International Chamber Music Competition.

In 2008–10 Mikhail served as Junior Fellow in Accompaniment at the Royal College of Music where he participated in various projects, including chamber-music concerts, master-classes, recordings and recitals. In 2009 he received a Golubovich Scholarship at the Trinity College of Music where he worked on his Master's degree with Deniz Gelenbe. In July 2010 he won the Bronze Medal at the Vianna da Motta International Piano Competition in Lisbon.

Mikhail has performed as a soloist and chamber musician in countries including Russia, England, Germany, Italy and France. He gave his Wigmore Hall debut recital in March 2007. As a soloist with orchestra, he has recently performed with the London Soloists Chamber Orchestra, the RNCM Concert Orchestra, the Orchestra of Trinity College of Music and the Gulbenkian Symphony Orchestra. In July 2008 he appeared as a soloist at the Bridgewater Hall in Messiaen's *Turangalila Symphony* with the RNCM Symphony Orchestra under Pascal Rophé. In London in March 2010 he took part in a festival in Blackheath Halls and Southwark Cathedral dedicated to the music of Bartók, performing the Third Piano Concerto under the direction of the Hungarian conductor Zsolt Nagy.

For more information please visit 'Mikhail Shilyaev, piano' on Facebook.



Sonatas Nos. 1 and 2, Op. 22 and 94; *Préludes Nostalgiques*, Op. 23; Prelude Op. 85, No. 9:

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Expressions, Op. 81; *La Quatrième*:

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Editor: Adaq Khan

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ALEXANDER TCHEREPNIN Piano Music 1913–61

Piano Sonata No. 1, Op. 22 (1918–19) 14:47

- [1] I. *Allegro commodo* 7:19
- [2] II. *Andante* 2:54
- [3] III. *Allegro* 2:01
- [4] IV. *Grave* 2:33

Piano Sonata No. 2, Op. 94 (1961) 9:50

- [5] I. *Lento; Animato; Lento; Animato; Lento* 4:27
- [6] II. *Andantino* 2:02
- [7] III. *Animato* 3:21

Quatre Préludes Nostalgiques, Op. 23 (1922) 6:48

- [8] I. *Lento* 2:34
- [9] II. *Allegretto* 0:35
- [10] III. *Tempestuoso* 0:44
- [11] IV. *Con dolore, molto sostenuto* 2:48

[12] Prelude, Op. 85, No. 9 (1953) 1:27

[13] *Moment Musical** (1913) 1:59

Petite Suite, Op. 6* (1918–19) 8:31

- [14] No. 1 March 1:13
- [15] No. 2 Song without Words 1:42
- [16] No. 3 *Berceuse* 1:33
- [17] No. 4 Scherzo 1:53
- [18] No. 5 *Badinage* 0:54
- [19] No. 6 *Humoresque* 1:16

[20] *Rondo à la Russe** (c. 1946) 2:38

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Entretiens, Op. 46* (1920–30) 12:12

- [21] No. 1 *Lento* 1:42
- [22] No. 2 *Animato* 0:26
- [23] No. 3 *Moderato* 1:36
- [24] No. 4 *Allegretto* 1:13
- [25] No. 5 *Recitativo* 0:45
- [26] No. 6 *Animato* 0:50
- [27] No. 7 *Moderato* 0:57
- [28] No. 8 *Animato* 0:49
- [29] No. 9 *Grave* 2:59
- [30] No. 10 *Allegretto* 0:55

[31] Polka* (1944) 1:59

[32] Scherzo, Op. 3* (1917) 3:28

Expressions, Op. 81 (1951) 13:21

- [33] No. 1 Entrance 0:46
- [34] No. 2 The Hour of Death 2:12
- [35] No. 3 Caprice 1:07
- [36] No. 4 The Silly Story of the White Oxen 0:56
- [37] No. 5 Thief in the Night 0:45
- [38] No. 6 At the Fair 1:08
- [39] No. 7 Barcarolle 3:02
- [40] No. 8 Blind Man's Bluff 0:46
- [41] No. 9 At Dawn 1:43
- [42] No. 10 Exit 0:56

[43] *La Quatrième** (1948–49) 2:30

Alexander Tcherepnin, piano [1]–[12]

Mikhail Shilyaev, piano [13]–[43]



This unusual album begins with archival recordings, in excellent sound, of the Russian-born composer-pianist Alexander Tcherepnin (1899–1977) playing some of his most memorable piano music. The early Sonata No. 1 (1918–19) is a brilliant, virtuosic study in dramatic Slavic romanticism; the atmospheric late Sonata No. 2 (1961), never commercially recorded by the composer, stands as a paragon of elegant modernism in continuous thematic evolution. The second part of the CD, performed by the Russian pianist Mikhail Shilyaev, presents a selection of attractive, rarely heard works from various periods in Tcherepnin's career, further illustrating his Prokofiev-like fondness for spiky humour, pungent harmony and crisp melody.



TOCC 0079

ALEXANDER TCHEREPNIN Piano Music 1913–61

1 Piano Sonata No. 1, Op. 22 (1918–19)	14:47	20 <i>Rondo à la Russe</i> * (c. 1946)	2:38
5 Piano Sonata No. 2, Op. 94 (1961)	9:50	21 <i>Entretiens</i> , Op. 46* (1920–30)	12:12
8 <i>Quatre Préludes Nostalgiques</i> , Op. 23 (1922)	6:48	31 Polka* (1944)	1:59
12 Prelude, Op. 85, No. 9 (1953)	1:27	32 Scherzo, Op. 3* (1917)	3:28
13 <i>Moment musical</i> * (1913)	1:59	33 <i>Expressions</i> , Op. 81 (1951)	13:21
14 <i>Petite Suite</i> , Op. 6* (1918–19)	8:31	43 <i>La Quatrième</i> * (1948–49)	2:30

TT 79:48

Alexander Tcherepnin, piano **1**–**12**

Mikhail Shilyaev, piano **13**–**43**

*FIRST RECORDING

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