

The next composer I would like to introduce is Valentin Silvestrov, one of the most distinctive voices in Ukrainian contemporary music.

Silvestrov was born in Kyiv in 1937, and his music has developed in a very personal way. Although he is a contemporary composer, his music often looks back — towards melody, harmony, familiar musical forms, and memories of sounds that seem to belong to another time.

One of the most important parts of his later work is the series of piano pieces he calls *Bagatelles*. He began working extensively with this genre in the early 2000s, and over the following years created a very large body of these short pieces.

The word *bagatelle* traditionally means something small or seemingly unimportant. But for Silvestrov, these little pieces are anything but insignificant.

He is interested in the musical moment itself — a melody that suddenly appears, a brief gesture, a fragment of a waltz or a serenade, and then disappears again. The short form allows him to capture something very fragile: a moment that cannot really be held, but that music can preserve for a little longer.

There is also a very special relationship between sound and silence in these pieces. The pauses, the resonance of the piano, the tiny changes of tempo and dynamics are not simply spaces between the notes. They become part of the music itself. Silvestrov has described his *Bagatelles* as a kind of dialogue with silence — or even as “melodies of silence.”

Many of the *Bagatelles* have very simple titles: a Waltz, a Serenade, a Lullaby, a Pastoral, an Elegy. These are forms and genres we already know, almost as if they were remembered from somewhere.

And this is perhaps what makes Silvestrov's music so touching. It often feels familiar, even when we cannot say exactly why. It is as though we are hearing the echo of music that we have known before — not a quotation of the past, but a memory of it.

So, rather than presenting the *Bagatelles* as a traditional musical narrative, I would invite you to listen to them as a sequence of small moments: some appearing almost like a distant memory, some disappearing into silence, and others remaining in the air for a little longer.

For Silvestrov, even the smallest musical moment can become meaningful when we stop and truly listen to it.