

The beautiful game. The ballet of the masses. The real university. Soccer! Fútbol! Such a microcosm of the crushing disappointments, the exuberant triumphs, the grueling struggles that make up life. GRAMMY® Award-winning Ukrainian-American pianist Nadia Shpachenko has enlisted composers to capture the sounds, rhythms, spirit, and culture of the game. You will be on the edge of your seat laughing, crying, and cheering with all the tensions and intensity of matchday. Details: <https://bit.ly/ShpachenkoSoccerProgram>

Nadia Shpachenko, piano, voice, cleats, electronics

Ian Dicke (b. 1982)

Telstar Loops for piano and electronics (2021)

1. *Tensegrity* [3:53]

Harold Meltzer (b. 1966)

Dribble for solo piano (2022) [4:13]

Christopher Cerrone (b. 1984)

Corridor of Uncertainty for piano and electronics (2022) [3:35]

David Sanford (b. 1963)

La Pulga Variations for solo piano (2021) [15:54]

1. *Total Football* 2. *The Professional Irritant* 3. *The Impossibly Long Shadow*
4. *Il Classico* 5. *Celia* 6. *Baila Ahora* 7. *Magisterial*

Oliver Dubon (b. 1997)

The Hand of God for solo piano (2022) [5:20]

Pamela Z (b. 1956)

Balón for solo piano, tape, voice, and electronics (2021)

With Pamela Z, pre-recorded and sampled voice [5:36]

Dana Kaufman (b. 1989)

Honeyball for speaking pianist and soccer cleats (2021/2023)

1. *An Ungraceful Jog Trot* [4:41]

Tom Flaherty (b. 1950)

Goal Mining for piano and electronics (2022) [9:54]

GRAMMY® Award-winning Ukrainian-American pianist **Nadia Shpachenko** enjoys bringing into the world things that are outside the box – powerful pieces that often possess unusual sonic qualities or instrumentation. Described as a “gifted and versatile pianist” (*San Francisco Chronicle*), “one of today’s foremost promoters of contemporary music” (*Textura Magazine*), and “a great friend and champion of new music” (*Fanfare Magazine*), Nadia performed recitals at Concertgebouw, Carnegie Hall, Disney Hall, on the Piano Spheres and Los Angeles

Philharmonic's Green Umbrella and Chamber Music Series, and with numerous orchestras in Europe and the Americas. She premiered more than 100 works by Armando Bayolo, Elliott Carter, Christopher Cerrone, Paul Chihara, George Crumb, Ian Dicke, Daniel Felsenfeld, Tom Flaherty, Annie Gosfield, Yuri Ishchenko, Dana Kaufman, Leon Kirchner, Amy Beth Kirsten, Hannah Lash, James Matheson, Missy Mazzoli, Harold Meltzer, David Sanford, Isaac Schankler, Adam Schoenberg, Lewis Spratlan, Evan Ware, Gernot Wolfgang, Iannis Xenakis, Peter Yates, Pamela Z, Jack Van Zandt, and many others.

Nadia's new Reference Recordings album *Invasion: Music and Art for Ukraine* was released on September 23, 2022, with 100% of proceeds being donated to Ukraine humanitarian aid charities. *Invasion* album features chamber and solo music by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Lewis Spratlan, recorded with Anthony Parnter, conductor, Pat Posey, saxophone, Aija Mattson-Jovel, horn, Phil Keen, trombone; Yuri Inoo, percussion, and Joti Rockwell, mandolin, as well as artworks by Ukrainian artists Yurii Nagulko, Lesia Babliak, Kati Prusenko, Olena Papka, and Aza Nizi Maza Studio children artists.

Described as "superb... evocative... pure magic" (*I Care If You Listen*), Nadia's 2019 Reference Recordings CD *The Poetry of Places* features premieres of solo and collaborative works (performed with LA Phil pianist Joanne Pearce Martin and LAPQ percussionists Nick Terry and Cory Hills) inspired by diverse buildings. *The Poetry of Places* album won the 62nd Best Classical Compendium GRAMMY® Award. "Sure to remain a mainstay of the contemporary discography for posterity" (*New Classic LA*), Nadia's 2018 Reference Recordings CD *Quotations and Homages* features premieres of solo and collaborative works for 6 pianists (performed with Ray-Kallay Duo, HOCKET and Genevieve Feiwen Lee) inspired by a variety of earlier composers and pieces. Nadia's Reference Recordings CD *Woman at the New Piano: American Music of 2013* was nominated for 58th GRAMMY Awards® in 3 categories. She is also featured on José Serebrier's 2021 Reference Recordings album *Last Tango Before Sunrise*, Wouter Kellerman's 2021 South African Music Award winning album *We've Known All Times*, Isaac Schankler's 2019 Aerocade Music album *Because Patterns*, and Gernot Wolfgang's 2019 Albany Records album *Vienna and the West*. Nadia's recording projects are supported by grants from The Aaron Copland Fund for Music, The Alice M. Ditson Fund at Columbia University, and New Music USA, among others.

As a distinguished chamber musician, Nadia frequently collaborates with prominent artists, most recently including Boris Allakhverdyan, Sarah Cahill, Martin Chalifour, Jin-Shan Dai, Kevin Fitzgerald, Vijay Gupta, Dahae Kim, Jerome Lowenthal, Kathleen Supové, Ben Ullery, and the Lyris and Argus Quartets. Her recent collaborative performances were featured on Los Angeles Philharmonic's Chamber Music Series and the Hear Now Music Festival.

Nadia Shpachenko is Professor of Music at Cal Poly Pomona University, where she leads the Piano Performance program and was awarded the 2017 Provost's Award for Excellence in Scholarly and Creative Activities. She is also on the faculty of Claremont Graduate University, where she teaches Doctoral piano students. Born in Kharkiv, Ukraine, Nadia completed her DMA and MM degrees at the University of Southern California, where she was awarded the title of Outstanding Graduate. Her principal teachers included John Perry, Victor Rosenbaum, and Victor Derevianko. Nadia Shpachenko is a Steinway Artist and a Schoenhut Toy Piano Artist.

Program Notes

***Telstar Loops* by Ian Dicke (2021)**

Telstar Loops is a piece inspired by the iconic Adidas Telstar soccer ball. Made famous with its appearance in the 1970 FIFA World Cup in Mexico, the beloved pattern is a truncated icosahedron and features twelve black pentagons and twenty white hexagons. The ball's namesake references the first communications satellite with a similar alternating black and white color scheme developed by Bell Labs in 1962.

The outer playful and athletic movements of the work ("Tensegrity" and "Buckyball") make reference to the well-known polymath inventor Buckminster Fuller, whose industrial designs exploit the surprising tensional integrity of geodesic domes. Fuller is often misattributed as the soccer ball's architect, since the characteristic pattern shares many similarities with the geodesic dome's form. The middle movement "Satellite" pays homage to science and space exploration through its slow perpetual motion and strophic treatment of shape-shifting harmonies. The blurred and distorted delay effect on the piano imitates the transmission of signals to and from space throughout our daily communications.

***Dribble* by Harold Meltzer (2022)**

For years, when I was a child, I played soccer in an organized league. I was a good player, not a great one. And I was a midfielder, not a striker. Often my task was to advance the ball to strikers and then follow them as they raced away toward our opponents' goal. I could shoot reasonably well, but not dribble. So I marveled at how our strikers dribbled, and more at how professionals did. But this did not prepare me to watch Lionel Messi's superhuman ball-handling skills. This piece of music is about my watching videos of Messi dribbling.

***Corridor of Uncertainty* by Christopher Cerrone (2022)**

When I was asked by Nadia Shpachenko to write a piece inspired by the game of Soccer, I thought of a concept I had heard a number of times before: the corridor of uncertainty, defined by Collins dictionary as "an area of the pitch between the defenders and the goalkeeper, in which it is not clear who should take the responsibility of dealing with a ball played into it."

In my piece, I tried to imagine these two roles—the defenders and the goalkeepers—broken between the left and right hands of the pianist. The left hand is steady and rhythmic while the right is jagged and rhythmic. Sometimes these hands act in accord; other times, they seem to almost work against each other, creating a rhythmic interplay that is reminiscent of such a moment of confusion. Against both the left and right hand is a layer of pre-recorded piano, which, to me, represents the opposing player — a force that both hands interact with in different ways in my short composition.

***La Pulga Variations* by David Sanford (2021)**

La Pulga Variations for solo piano was commissioned by Nadia Shpachenko as part of a compendium of works inspired by the soccer. The piece consists of seven statements, or

variations, of a tonal theme (originally in F Major) stated most clearly in the fifth variation. Each section is based on a different person's character in their relationship to Messi:

- I. *Total Football* refers to Johan Cruyff, the brilliant Dutch soccer player of the 1970s whose ideal of rapid passing and constant movement was the inspiration behind the tactics of the dominant Barcelona team of the 00s where Messi's mastery was introduced to the world.
- II. *The Professional Irritant* is the title of a chapter or article on the Real Madrid defender Sergio Ramos in a book or magazine of soccer stars. Ramos, one of the world's finest defenders, nonetheless tends to play the central "villain" and "enforcer" in the yearly battles between the two rival La Liga squads (although, interestingly enough, he and Messi are now teammates on Paris Saint-Germain).
- III. *The Impossibly Long Shadow* is that of former soccer great, the late Diego Maradona, who set the bar astronomically high for all the Argentinian players who followed him by leading Argentina to their last World Cup victory in 1986 in spectacular fashion.
- IV. *Il Clasico* is Messi himself, but centering on his stellar performances in Barcelona's matches against Real Madrid – the title refers to their yearly, highly competitive contests.
- V. *Celia* was the name of both Messi's mother and his grandmother, but it was the latter who encouraged and supported his early experiences with the game, and it is in tribute to her that he points upward after scoring all of his goals. This movement features the most straightforward statement of the theme.
- VI. *Baila Ahora* literally means "Dance now", and was yelled by Messi and other Argentinian players at an opponent who had showboated after scoring a penalty kick in an earlier game, but was, this time, denied during the final shootout of a hotly contested match against Colombia during the Copa América. Messi would go on to win his first International title in this tournament.
- VII. *Magisterial* is the exuberant phrase often shouted by announcer Ray Hudson in both description of and reaction to the play of Messi and others in televised La Liga competitions. Hudson's florid commentary may represent the most fitting musical depiction of Messi's on-field artistry.

***The Hand of God* by Oliver Dubon (2022)**

The Hand of God refers to an "illegal" goal made by Argentine footballer Diego Maradona during the 1986 FIFA World Cup Quarterfinals against England. When I set out to write a piece "about soccer," I intended to have the musical materials derive from soccer moves and trajectory mimic that of getting more proficient at those moves. While writing this work, I learned of "The Hand of God" and its anti-colonial connotations in the context of the Falklands War, and how Diego later relayed that he viewed this illegal move as "symbolic revenge" against England. I found it striking to think of the hundreds of hours of work that Diego must have undergone to make it that far in the football world. It's shocking but completely correct that, even after that much practicing to that much perfection, it still took just a little bit of fair fudging and "divine intervention" to exact what he saw as a righteous revenge against England. This work metaphorically represents a vignette of both a moment and the whole of the journey that Diego took towards mastery of the art of football. As such the work is at times lumpy, uncomfortable, and viscous with many harsh and deeply dissonant cluster chords. But, out of that discomfort is

brought a clarity, as the piece seems to “learn the trick” after much repetition. Ultimately there is a moment containing consonant chords inserted just for a moment before an extremely grand gesture finishing the work. I see this somewhat as the divine intervention, but also possibly just that feeling of finally having a breakthrough where, in the midst of learning a new skill, you actually begin to make progress.

***Balón* by Pamela Z (2021)**

My motivation for composing *Balón* was the commissioning pianist Nadia Shpachenko’s fascination with the game of soccer. The main narration in the tape part explains the geometry of the classic soccer ball itself, and the lyrics in the vocal part describe a playing style (sometimes referred to as “tiki taka”) that was popularized by Barcelona’s football team. The series of spoken numbers and the three-note motifs in the piano part are drawn from historic shirt numbers of some key Barcelona players and ordered according to possible triangle passing patterns. I find numbers, patterns, and layers appealing, and I attempted, in this piece, to overlay the physical characteristics of the Telstar-style ball with the geometry of the passing patterns the players use to deftly work the ball toward the opposition’s goal.

***Honeyball* by Dana Kaufman (2021/2023)**

- I. *An Ungraceful Jog Trot*
- II. *Change is Slow*
- III. *Coquetry and Cleats*

Honeyball is named after Nettie Honeyball, who founded the first known women’s soccer team—the British Ladies’ Football Club—in Great Britain in 1895. Movement I incorporates a British publication’s review of an early women’s soccer match. The basis of movement II is a pitch collection (D-Bb-F-E-Eb-A-C-F#-G#) derived from statistics from the United States Women’s World Cup Final victory against the Netherlands in 2019. It also features a quote by Honeyball about her larger feminist agenda behind establishing a women’s sports association.

Though nearly 130 years have passed since Honeyball founded the British Ladies’ Football Club, remarkably little has changed regarding the treatment of women in global professional soccer: women do not receive equal pay, and they do not—as Honeyball wished, and in the realm of politics—have an equal “voice in the direction of affairs, especially those which concern them most.” At the same time, movement III features modern-day women’s soccer cleats, celebrating 130 years of women’s persistence on the soccer field despite the media’s fixation on female appearance and athletic wear.

***Goal Mining* by Tom Flaherty (2022)**

Goal Mining is a reflection of movements on the field during a soccer match. Framed by a ceremonial opening, halftime, and conclusion, the piece imagines tremulous dribbling, stolen balls, long shots, and a few successful goals. Underlying all is a nervous energy that never stops, as the players constantly jockey for advantage. *Goal Mining* is dedicated to Nadia Shpachenko, whose artistry and enthusiasm are irresistible.