mihailo trandafilovski

diptych

peter sheppard skærved | roderick chadwick
longbow | kreutzer quartet
Mihailo Trandafilovski (b.1974)

Diptych (Violin Concerto No. 2) 18:18
1  I.  Dance-Ascent  7:34
2  II.  Song-Rotation  10:44

Peter Sheppard Skærved (violin) and Longbow

3  Duo 1  11:34

Peter Sheppard Skærved (violin), Roderick Chadwick (piano)

Duo 2 – White  19:51
4  I.  2:12
5  II.  2:29
6  III.  2:09
7  IV.  3:05
8  V.  3:25
9  VI.  2:30
10  VII.  3:57

Peter Sheppard Skærved (violin), Roderick Chadwick (piano)

11  Duo 3  9:49

Peter Sheppard Skærved (violin), Roderick Chadwick (piano)

12  Fibers AND Coils  15:24

Kreutzer Quartet

Total playing time  74:59
Peter Sheppard Skærved writes:

In 2006 I met Mihailo Trandafilovski in the Macedonian capital, Skopje. It was one of the most fortuitous encounters in my artistic life. He would become my collaborator, a friend, and a teacher; his extraordinary approach to the instrument, as a player, composer and pedagogue, has had a profound influence on my physical and spiritual relationship to our instrument.

Mihailo is a performer-composer in the mould of Telemann, Bartók, Joachim and Liszt. Like them, it is quite impossible to separate his compositional and instrumental imaginations, and he exhibits a gyre-like interdependence between the energies of each. His contribution to the violin is extraordinary—his violin-piano duos (sonatas in all but name), concerti, violin duos, chamber works and pedagogical works are gifts for audiences and players alike.

Mihailo Trandafilovski writes:

This album is about journeys: my collaborative relationship with Peter Sheppard Skærved, who is central to this recording; with the Kreutzer Quartet, Roderick Chadwick and Longbow; the ways in which these collaborations have shaped my musical language over the last 10 years or so; my relationship with the violin, both as a player and composer; and the journey which I hope the album as a whole will offer to the listener.

I met Peter when he first performed my DUO 1 (with the pianist Aaron Shorr) in 2005, at the contemporary music festival Days of Macedonian Music, in Skopje. We did not have a chance to work on the piece before the concert; but I still remember my feeling of excitement during the performance: this was a case where the players instinctively felt and communicated the music.
DUO 1 (2004) is the oldest piece in this programme – intensely chromatic; reflecting, I believe, some of my early influences, both in terms of the language, and the type of virtuosity required from the two instruments. When we talked about the piece after that concert, Peter mentioned Bartók’s 2nd sonata – and indeed, I had played that masterpiece several years before, and it was very influential to me, both as a player and composer.

When Peter suggested I write a continuation, I wanted to try a contrasting approach, but one that would complement, rather than oppose, the first duo. Thus, DUO 2 (2008) is completely diatonic (white), in seven short movements, and the more ‘traditional' treatment of the instrumental lines in the earlier movements gradually disintegrates throughout the piece. If DUO 1 is one, DUO 2 is many; the first is an organic, continuously transforming piece; the second is more like stained glass.

DUO 3 (2016) continues this journey. After the ‘austerity' of the diatonic world of DUO 2, an ‘explosion' in terms of harmonies and colours felt natural, and this coincided with some of my more recent preoccupations. The language in this piece could be described as leaning towards a spectral approach; but more importantly, I love exploring sonorities that are inherent to the instruments, and techniques that likewise feel organic, albeit not in a traditional sense; I am excited by sounds and techniques that are not part of the usual training for instrumentalists (I am generalising, of course) – but that can be integrated by our bodies, ears and minds.

The three duos are framed by two crucial string pieces for me:

The album opens with Diptych (2010-12), written to celebrate the fabulous acoustics and atmosphere at Wilton’s Music Hall, where we have played many concerts with the Kreutzer Quartet; Peter’s unique playing style, with all its virtuosity and richness in expression; and our dear friend Richard Bram, who is regularly there to share with us (the Kreutzers), and document, these moments with some remarkable photographs. I have written several pieces in which the acoustics of Wilton’s have played a
significant role; the material has often covered, for me, new areas of sound – but this
time, I started by deliberately limiting the building blocks, as I wanted to explore some
specific aspects of a more traditional/idiomatic type of instrumental virtuosity. These
blocks, both in terms of the harmonic world and employed techniques, grow and
develop as the piece unfolds.

I have a fascination with opposing but complementary elements, which found its
expression here in two movements – they could be played as separate pieces, as there
are forms of duality contained within each; but played together, they work as two
cycles within a larger cycle: the first one a grounded dance, which gradually gives rise
to sustained, ‘ascending’, but perhaps somewhat angular lines; the second offering a
more lyrical and smoother approach, which nevertheless has a rhythmical side ...

The programme closes with the string quartet *Fibers AND Coils* (2015). It was
composed as one of the pieces/movements for *Music of the Spheres* (Peter Sheppard
Skærved composed the other) – a project/installation by the artist Charlotte Jarvis,
utilising new bioinformatics technology developed by the scientist Nick Goldman to
encode a new musical recording by the Kreutzer Quartet into DNA. There were
various starting points in generating the musical material for my piece: the time spent
in the European Bioinformatics Institute (EMBL-EBI) server rooms (i.e. the
improvisations that emerged among the machine noise); the middle, already existing
(encoded) movement of the larger composition; and, on a fundamental level,
Charlotte’s idea of drawing a parallel between the universal qualities of DNA and
music.

I found some of the arising concepts and symbolic associations very exciting to work
with: for example, throughout the piece, the four players (‘nucleobases’) weave a
textural and harmonic fabric together, as if they are all contributing towards a superior
string instrument; in the process, there is frequent (but varied) pairing of the
instruments; on a larger scale, the material is organised in clear waves/spheres
(as beads on a string, and as in chromosomal DNA packing), smaller coils are embedded within larger coils, etc. At the same time, the ‘Music of the Spheres’ idea seemed to find a natural manifestation in the context of the string quartet, given the fundamental presence of Pythagorean tuning (i.e. the prominence of the pure fifth, 3:2 frequency ratio), which was then combined with other pure intervals and organised within a network of harmonic series, related to the open strings. Finally, this piece is an exploration of some physical aspects of sound and the mechanics of its production on string instruments – aiming not to ‘extend’, but to enhance their natural sonority, and that of the string quartet as a group.

Perhaps one can look at Diptych and Fibers AND Coils as being alternative approaches to generating musical material, and to instrumental virtuosity. The former starts with a limited number of notes (the open strings), and gradually adds others from our equal temperament palette to build a harmonic world. The latter also takes the open strings as the starting point, but in this case the harmonies arise from the vibration of the strings (i.e. the harmonic spectrum). The instrumental techniques, and more generally, ways of hearing and producing sound are similarly of a different nature in the two pieces.

But, there are shared features too, and these are fundamental. Again, rather than opposing these two approaches, I see them as complementary. If the starting focus point is open strings, these two systems are on either side – one is looking/zooming out, and the other in – thus they are both parts of another, larger-scale ‘diptych’.

Finally, there is an obvious linear journey throughout this collection of works, in terms of the harmonic language and instrumental techniques; at the same time, there are many ‘non-linear’ parallels between the pieces. I like to think that these links, and the one between the first and last work, offer a balancing journey – a circle.

I also want to thank Monika Machon for her generous support which made this recording possible.

His music has also been released on Clarinet Classics, SOCOM/Macedonian Radio-Television, Avalon Production (Macedonia) and Alliance of MSU Composers (USA). Performers include pianists Aaron Shorr, Ana Gaceva and Hajdi Elzeser, violinists Darragh Morgan and Mihkel Kerem, cellist Sophie Harris and clarinettist Linda Merrick, as well as leading contemporary music groups Pierrot Lunaire and Reconsil ensembles (Austria), Ensemble Horizonte (Germany), Quatuor Diotima (France), Moscow Contemporary Music Ensemble (Russia), mmm... (Japan), ConTempora (Macedonia) and the European Contemporary Composers Orchestra.

Mihailo studied at Michigan State University (BMus) and the Royal College of Music in London (MMus, DMus). His studies and research have been supported by the Open Society Institute, the Macedonian Ministries of Science and Culture and the British Government (with a Chevening scholarship); among other awards are the United Music Publishers Prize for composition at the RCM and the Panče Pešev Award for best new work at the contemporary music festival Days of Macedonian Music.

He is a violinist in the Kreutzer Quartet, with whom he has performed and recorded extensively and held residencies at Tate St Ives, University of York and Goldsmiths College, among others; he has an avid interest in the application of new music to pedagogy, for which he was awarded his doctorate; and has led a number of shared projects among the arts promoting contemporary artistic creativity to a wider audience.

www.trandafilovski.com
Kreutzer Quartet in performance

Longbow at the *Diptych* recording session
The Performers

Kreutzer Quartet
Peter Sheppard Skærved, Mihailo Trandafilovski – Violins
Clifton Harrison – Viola, Neil Heyde – Cello

The Kreutzer Quartet has been critically acclaimed for its performances and recordings of works from our time and from the great quartet literature. This has resulted in cyclic performances and recordings of works ranging from Anton Reicha and Beethoven to Michael Tippett and Roberto Gerhard. They are the dedicatees of hundreds of new works. Composers who have written for them include Gloria Coates, Hans Werner Henze, Michael Finnissy, Haflidi Hallgrímsson, Poul Ruders, Edward Cowie, Jörg Widmann, and George Rochberg, and in the next six months they will present new works by composers including Robert Saxton, Laurie Bamon, Elliott Schwartz, Peter Dickinson, Roger Redgate, Robin Holloway, Jeremy Dale Roberts, Gary Carpenter, David Matthews, Paul Pellay and Rosalind Page, to name just a few.

The Quartet are Ensemble in Residence at Goldsmiths College London. The Quartet has a truly international career, playing at venues ranging from the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, to Wilton’s Music Hall, their London ‘home’, and regularly appearing at festivals including the Bergen International Festival and the Venice Biennale.

Longbow
Peter Sheppard Skæerved, Mihailo Trandafilovski, Aisha Orazbayeva, Preetha Narayan, Alice Barron – Violins; Diana Matthews, Shulah Oliver – Violas; Val Welbanks, Eve Heyde – Cellos; Rachel Meerloo – Double Bass

Longbow is a collective of some of today’s most virtuosic and inventive string players, specialising in multi-player ensemble works. They have made critically acclaimed recordings for the Naxos, Toccata, and Métier labels. Their recent recording of David Gorton’s ‘Lachrymae Variations’ resulted in an argument between the presenters of Radio 3’s ‘Record Release’ as to who should be allowed to take the disc home!
Grammy-nominated violinist Peter Sheppard Skærved is the dedicatee of over 400 works for solo violin. His collaboration with composers began in his late teens, working with the great Hans Werner Henze. Since then composers who have written works for him include Nigel Clarke, Judith Weir, Michael Finnissy, Poul Ruders, Jeremy Dale Roberts, Mihailo Trandafilovski, George Rochberg, Elliott Schwartz, Peter Sculthorpe, Judith Bingham, Sadie Harrison, Dmitri Smirnov, Elena Firsova, Howard Skempton, Evis Sammoutis, Jörg Widmann, Michael Alec Rose, David Gorton, Rosalind Page, Sıdıka Özdil, Ian Wilson, Peter Dickinson, John Woolrich, Edward Cowie, Jeremy Thurlow, Naji Hakim, Volodmyr Runchak, Laurie Bamon, and Douglas Young.

Peter’s pioneering work on music for violin alone has resulted in research, performances and recordings of cycles by Tartini, Telemann, Bach, de Bériot, and, most recently, his project, ‘Preludes and Vollenteries’, which brings together 200 unknown works from the 17th Century, from composers including Colombi, Matteis, Marini and Lonati, with the Wren and Hawksmoor Churches in London’s Square Mile, and is now travelling to Austria and the USA.

His work with museums has resulted in long term projects at institutions including the Metropolitan Museum, New York City, the Victoria & Albert Museum, the British Museum, Galeria Rufino Tamayo Mexico City, and the exhibition ‘Only Connect’, which he curated at the National Portrait Gallery, London. Most recently his ‘Tegner’ commissioned by the Bergen International Festival, is a close collaboration with the great Norwegian abstract artist, Jan Groth, resulting in a set of solo Caprices, premiering at Kunsthallen Bergen, and travelling to galleries in Denmark, the USA and even Svalbard/Spitzbergen.

As a writer, Peter has published a monograph on the Victorian artist/musician John Orlando Parry, many articles in journals worldwide, and most recently, ‘Practice: Walk’, part of the Camberwell Press ‘Walking Cities: London’ series.
Peter is the founder and leader of the Kreutzer Quartet and the artistic director of the ensemble Longbow. He is the Viotti Lecturer at the Royal Academy of Music and was elected Fellow there in 2013. He is married to the Danish writer Malene Skæerved and they live in Wapping. For more information, recordings, films and articles by and about Peter Sheppard Skæerved, go to www.peter-sheppard-skaerved.com

Roderick Chadwick is a pianist, teacher and writer on music. In recent years he has made a speciality of performing large-scale piano works from the last 50 years: Lachenmann’s Serynade at the first London Contemporary Music Festival; John McGuire’s 48 Variations for two pianos with Mark Knoop at the ‘music we’d like to hear’ series in London; Stockhausen’s Mantra, recorded with Knoop and Newton Armstrong on the Hathut label; [and Jeremy Dale Roberts’s Tombeau is due for release in 2018]. He has also featured on recordings of music by Gloria Coates, Michael Finnissy and Sadie Harrison amongst others. As a member of ensembles Plus-Minus and Chroma he has played at Ultima, Huddersfield, Buxton and TRANSIT (Leuven) Festivals, and his duo partnerships with several leading violinists have led to recitals from Tokyo Kioi Hall to Troldhaugen.

Roderick is a frequent performer of Messiaen's music, and in 2008 was artistic advisor to the Royal Academy of Music for their part in the Southbank Centre’s Messiaen Centenary Festival. He has recently completed a book on the genesis of Messiaen’s Catalogue d’oiseaux with Peter Hill.

Roderick attended Chetham’s School in Manchester in the 1980s, studying with the late Heather Slade-Lipkin, and later moved to London to study with Hamish Milne. He lives in South London and is Reader in Music at the Royal Academy of Music.
A treasury of discoveries from the artists on this album

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Michael Finnissy:
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Kreutzer Quartet

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George Rochberg:
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Elliott Schwartz:
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‘Tapestry’
Music by Elliott Schwartz

Peter Sheppard Skæved
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