



MICHAEL HERSCH

ZWIS **LEBEN**
UND TOD **SCHEN**

TWENTY-TWO PIECES AFTER IMAGES BY PETER WEISS

PETER SHEPPARD SKÆRVED - Violin

RODERICK CHADWICK - Piano

MICHAEL HERSCH - ZWISCHEN LEBEN UND TOD

Between Life and Death

Twenty-two pieces after images by Peter Weiss (2013)

Disc one

1. I.	7:08
2. II.	7:09
3. III.	10:30
4. IV.	1:17
5. V.	7:35
6. VI.	3:14
7. VII.	2:17
8. VIII.	5:28

Total playing time 44:41

Disc two

1. IX.	4:41
2. X.	3:05
3. XI.	3:28
4. XII.	7:04
5. XIII.	3:50
6. XIV.	3:03
7. XV.	6:28
8. XVI.	2:45
9. XVII.	2:42
10. XVIII.	2:14
11. XIX.	4:09
12. XX.	2:08
13. XXI.	5:08
14. XXII.	6:18

Total playing time 57:10

Peter Sheppard Skærved – Violin
Roderick Chadwick – Piano

Titles of associated Peter Weiss artwork

1. **Selbstporträt zwischen Tod und Schwester** (Self-Portrait between Death and Sister) 1935
2. **Sketch from Parade** 1945
3. **Abschied von den Eltern** (A Farewell to Parents) 1962
4. **Im Musikzimmer** (In the Music Room) 1937
5. **Anatomie** (Anatomy) 1946
6. **Junge im Garten** (A Boy in the Garden) 1938
7. **Mysterienspiel** (Mystery Play) 1934
8. **Die Maschinen greifen die Menschheit an** (The Machines Attack Mankind) 1935
9. **Die Dampfwalze und der Drache** (The Steamroller and the Kite) 1940
10. **Illustration from Traktat von der ausgestorbenen Welt** (Illustration from Treatise of an Extinct World) 1938/39
11. **Meine Gefängnisse** (My Prisons) 1938
12. **Im Hof des Irrenhauses** (In the Courtyard of the Asylum) 1937/38
13. **Jahrmarktsleben** (Carnival) 1940
14. **Das Gartenkonzert** (The Garden Concert) 1938
15. **Der Baum** (The Tree) 1936/37
16. **Der Krieg** (The War) 1946
17. **Das Quartett** (The Quartet) 1944
18. **Illustration from Traum, Dämmerung und Nacht** (Illustration from Dream, Dusk, and Night) 1934
19. **Das grosse Welttheater** (The Great World Theater) 1937
20. **Im Hinterhof** (In the Backyard) 1938
21. **Die Kannibalenküche** (The Cannibal Kitchen) 1942
22. **Selbstbildnis** (Self-Portrait) 1946

Zwischen Leben und Tod - Between Life and Death

Twenty-two pieces after images by Peter Weiss (2013)

by Michael Hersch

I first learned of the artwork of Peter Weiss (1916-1982) years ago while reading *On the Natural History of Destruction* by W. G. Sebald (1944-2001). Sebald's writing—as it has on many others—made a deep impression on me, so much so that fragments from his poem *After Nature* form a framework for the second part part of my three-part cycle *sew me into a shroud of leaves* (2001-2016). Isolated words, lines, or groups of lines from the poem came to mind as I was writing the music. Particular verbal imagery captured in shape or texture much of what I felt. When the cycle is performed, however, Sebald's texts are not sung or recited. All three sections intersect with poetry in this manner. It is purely instrumental music. I placed the texts at designated junctures in the written score before various, but not all, movements of music. In this case the texts did, and still do, represent a kind of private communication between Sebald's words and me, though the dialogue is an imaginary one. This kind of conversation between composers and poets is nothing new, of course. There are many examples across the centuries of composers writing music with outside texts acting as ignition point, foil, or mirror, living in various states of co-existence.

Peter Weiss's writing, in particular its themes of alienation and terror, of often nightmarish landscapes living and dead, had an impact as well. Seeing many characteristics of his writing in his little known paintings and drawings was instructive. Weiss's spectrum of color and motion, of proportion and spacing, struck me as particularly musical. I found this both provocative and inspiring. While Sebald's texts had acted as companions, reinforcing and heightening my own state of mind, Weiss's visual environments seen through the prism of his writing included both familiar and alien worlds that I wanted to engage in some manner with sound.

I had only known of Peter Weiss as a playwright before reading Sebald's essay about him. While I was familiar with some of his searing and often disturbing stage dramas, I did not know that from the time he was a young man he was a serious visual artist as well. One of his earliest works, *Selbstporträt zwischen Tod und Schwester* (Self-portrait between Death and Sister), was completed in 1935 after the death of his sister in an accident. The drawing has many of the hallmarks of his later writing and artwork: pronounced disquiet, looming threat, longing. From one work to the next Weiss can careen between active engagement or

overt passivity with and toward his subjects, his orientations often leaning toward violence or grief or, as is often the case, both of these states simultaneously. Throughout his work there are also recurring, and at times incongruously, subjects disarmingly lost in thought.

In his essay on Weiss, subtitled *On Memory and Cruelty in the Work of Peter Weiss*, Sebald discusses several of the paintings, including *Das grosse Welttheater* (The Great World Theater), which he describes as

“...a pandemonium of transgression in front of a background of capsizing ships and lit by the reflection of a conflagration...it denotes a now permanent state of destruction. What is seen, here and now, is already an underworld beyond anything natural, a surreal region of industrial complexes and machines, chimneys, silos, viaducts, walls, labyrinths, leafless trees, and cheap fairground attractions...”

In Weiss’s *Gartenkonzert* (Concert in the Garden) Sebald sees

“...figures with lowered eyelids...including the young harpsichordist with his blind gaze, are among the harbingers of a life surviving at best only in the sensation of pain, in unreserved identification with the despised, scorned, crippled, and fading, with those who sit weeping in their concealment...”

Though each of these paintings is quite different, below the surface similar tensions roil.

While I did not know him personally, W. G. Sebald provided me two great gifts: his writing itself, which has been, and continues to be, a source of solace and inspiration, and an introduction to this unexpected dimension of Peter Weiss’s output. At the conclusion of his essay, Sebald quotes a passage from Weiss’s *Ästhetik des Widerstands* (The Aesthetics of Resistance):

“O Herakles, the light is dim, my pencil blunt. I would have wished to write it all differently. But the time is too short. And I have run out of paper.”

Translation of W.G. Sebald from the original German into English by Anthea Bell

Between Hersch and Weiss: Sound and Image

by David Hackbridge Johnson

Not sonatas by Mozart, Beethoven and Franck. With encores by Sarasate and W. Kroll. Not a five minute *world dernière* buried between warhorses. But a 22-movement cycle for violin and piano. Extremes of tempi, technique, perhaps even endurance. And accompanying paintings: depictions of loneliness, asylums, war, prisons, cannibalism, but also a string quartet, a garden concert, a boy in the grounds of a country house. Not your normal violin and piano recital then. Here is a stage set: the two instruments, yes, but also a screen for projecting the images of painter and playwright, Peter Weiss. And a sound world at first tentative, fragmented, but one that ultimately coheres as it progresses, revealing itself as a rich counterpoint to images and expression. This is the work I heard just yesterday (15th November 2018) at St. John's Smith Square, a work played with expressive and scarcely believable virtuosity by violinist Peter Sheppard Skærved and pianist Roderick Chadwick.

The composer Michael Hersch wrote his *Zwischen Leben und Tod* as a cycle to the paintings of Weiss, not I think as mere description of images but as a way of exploring the musical realisations of, as Hersch himself puts it, 'color and motion, of proportion'. This suggests a deeper engagement with image than might be the case with a programmatic approach. This isn't to imply that the music is dispassionate, quite the contrary, more that it seeks to plunge into an essence - how sound and image interact, one might almost say on the level of the vibrational spectrum. Yet, thoroughly engaged is sound to picture, viscerally so.

At first the instruments seem to lay out rules for engagement. Placid double stops on the violin, plucked strings on the piano, harsh explosions of discord, stillness, *senza espressivo*-ghosts. A sense in which certain pitches remain locked into specific behaviours. Gestures in search of coherence or brushstrokes of a painter unsure what to paint. As the work progresses, however, it becomes apparent that these gestures return, not bound by the surface structure determined by the 22 Weiss pictures, but threaded through - an additional interleaving that runs in and out of what the listener might perceive otherwise as 22 discrete entities. This entwinement a kind of musical double helix. The gestures retain character and even pitch fixity regardless of the context in which each is found.

It becomes clearer throughout the work that 'gesture' is not merely a metaphorical descriptor; there is a tendency for the very nature of sound production to force the

musicians into postures distinct to each sound, whether a certain contortion of the violinist as an extreme double stop is essayed, or the twisting of the body of the pianist as strings are plucked or harmonics obtained from inside the piano. I thought of Samuel Beckett's extreme directions for the actor in *Not I* – as if posture and expression are fused. This shaping of the bodies of the performers by the material itself is an additional expressive layer and becomes more noticeable with time; in movements like the disturbing *Cannibal Kitchen*, the contortions of the performers seem to parody the lopped limbs and whetted cleavers of Weiss' painting. Short, stabbing, yet somehow futile flicks of *sul ponticello* or snaps of piano strings put bodies into positions suggestive of dismemberment. Sounds are wrenched into *crescendo*; several of these finding the violinist throwing his torso down to knee level as if about to self-dislocate at the hips.

What we have here is almost an opera without words; there is the scenery of Weiss and the characters of the performers, but also the fixed motifs running through and appearing like cartouches on an ever changing rock face - not really in the manner of a *leitmotif* technique as in Wagner but rather like a frieze that is glimpsed through the surface plot of the opera. A set of carved figures standing for themselves. A mute hierarchy. Although much of the music is disturbing, even shocking (but never in the mere 'shock-value' sense of the word) the overall effect of this huge but ultimately compact odyssey through the world stripped bare by Weiss' images, is one both moving and offering of solace. The little modal chord figures, the open strings that plaintively grate over them, the wisps of folk song, the lullaby figures – all these are a welcome balm to sooth the sores of an atrocity exhibition. What tenderness amid the haunted landscapes! – the hints of succour in the wasted colours of *In the Courtyard of the Asylum*, or the violin's keening sixths and thirds of *In the Backyard* falling over the piano's intervals like a slowly tipped bowl of apples.

In case the impression given here is of an etiolated display of anaemic shadows, it ought to be pointed out that Hersch knows when to jolt the listener out of the starved reverie; there are two huge boluses of clotted action in the 8th and 19th movements. Here the two instruments tumble over each other in a dizzying display of *moto perpetuo* madness – an Hieronymus Bosch world of orgiastic symbolism physically realised in sound and posture. Tonalities racing headlong into ravines. A raucous kettle-ing of material whose only escape is the collapse into puffs of rosin and clusters of pianistic evaporation.

Despite these scenes of peril, after over 90 minutes between living and dying in Hersch and Weiss' world, a curiously cathartic sense is achieved; a procession of bleak images in sound

that somehow resist despair. It is to be hoped that this moving work reaches more listeners. *Zwischen Leben und Tod* is a unique multi-layered creation and if milestones are needed in the violin and piano repertoire, then this surely is one.

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Roderick Chadwick & Peter Sheppard Skærved rehearsing *Zwischen Leben und Tod* at St Johns St Johns Smith Square, London



Michael Hersch © Marco Borggreve

Between Life and Death – approaching Hersch's 'Zwischen Leben und Tod'

by Peter Sheppard Skærved

'No sooner came, but gone, and fall'n asleep,
Acquaintance short, yet parting caused us weep'[i]

A piece of music begins from silence. Is there for a moment. And then is gone. I think that we can all relate to that.

It was another great American composer, George Rochberg, who introduced me to Michael Hersch in 2004, and impressed upon me the necessity to work with him. George died the following year. In the initial year of our meeting, Hersch wrote a first small piece for me, *Five Fragments*. This was the beginning of our friendship and collaboration, and the first step of my journey with his music and into his imaginative universe. George was right: Hersch's music became essential to my creative life, each journey into a new work offering new challenges and insights.

Zwischen Leben und Tod [Between Life and Death]: the title of Hersch's cycle for piano and violin reaches out across my understanding of all of his work. In the two decades that I have played his music and been able to work with him, it is the transience of humanity, its attendant beauties of joy and pain that is all pervasive and is, perhaps, its over-arching theme. Consequently, it is impossible for me to think about any of his works in isolation: *Zwischen Leben und Tod* exists in concert, in my hands and understanding, in a great conversation with his other works so important to me.

As I write this, there is a drama outside my window, in the Victorian apartment block opposite. First, a fire brigade official arrives, responding to a query about a locked flat, which remains silent, unresponsive to his knocking: there's the hanging around. Then an ambulance crew, who also cannot get a response. Things escalate and they try to force (it proves) sturdy window frames and door. A moment of comedy, as a paramedic tries to get through a gap in the window, gets stuck - and is rescued.

Neighbours hang over balconies: Then the police arrive with notebooks and radios, but nothing useful, until two officers smash the door and window. Glass shatters, wood splinters, and the medics clamber in. There is a flurry of chatter on radios, and then a lull: Shoulders sag, and the rescue equipment is put to one side. There is nothing to do but fill in forms and to pull what is left of the curtains over the ragged gap where there was once an elegant window: to wait for the black undertaker's van to arrive. A pall settles over our cul-de-sac. People go back to their tea. Officers drift away, and by this afternoon there will just be boards across the empty window space - In lieu of this life, this death.

Back to the silence.

This everyday drama is repeated in every town, village, and city around the world, again and again. It is the stuff of which music, art is made.

The second piece Hersch wrote for me in 2008, *Fourteen Pieces*, was woven around poetry fragments by Primo Levi. Until the time that I received it, he and I had not had a conversation about writing, about poetry, nor, by extension, about how vital such 'reaching out' is, to the other arts. I realised then, that both of us failed to acknowledge any divide between the ways that humans express themselves, and look mortality in the face, and the beauty that is to be found there, *in extremis*.

'[...] in the shade of Death I shall find joy' [ii]

It was at this moment that mortality first found its way into my conversations with Hersch. Which is to say, that we started to really talk.

For our generation, the mention of Primo Levi evokes so much. I can turn to the bookshelves behind me here, and touch the row of his titles that have been with me for decades: from *The Periodic Table* ... up to *The Wrench*. Levi's visions, horrific yet joy-filled in gryre-like counterpoint, of past, present, and future, are part of our vernacular. So even the idea of using his words is heavily laden: Freightened - fraught.

Back then most of our conversations took place by fax. Some of those faxes survive, taped into my working copies of Hersch's music. They, like the psalmists' grass, are curling, their text fading away. Soon they will be blank (I have made copies). This fragility, friability, is a necessary part of what art does, is. Jean-Louis Guez de Balzac (1597-1654), in conversation

with Catherine de Vivonne, Marquise de Rambouillet (1588-1665) wrote:

'Even all that is written down is not certain to survive, and books perish, just as tradition is forgotten. Time, which can conquer iron and marble, does not lack strength against more fragile things.'

One of Hersch's *Fourteen Pieces* includes the following Levi text:

'I won't go far; just to the other shore.
I want to observe at close hand that dark cloud ...
...And find the source of this strange light.
Quick, get the boat ready, it is already night.
Of course I'll come back quickly'.[iii]

As soon as I read this, I recognised it, and a small light went on in my mind as I played. Thinking about it, my reading is:

'I will take the boat/Over there/To the other side/Visit the Apocalypse/Just to see /What it's like/I will only be a little while.'

I am, at once betraying my nationality, in the echoes, of the suicide of Captain Scott's comrade, Lawrence Oates, whose stoic final words to his frozen friends in their tent are burnt into the minds of every boy of my age: 'I am just going outside and may be some time.' What immediately struck me is that Levi is speaking the words of someone else who is speaking, or at least reporting, the words of another: Pliny the Younger, reporting on his Uncle's death, at the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 AD:

'On the 24th August, in the early afternoon, my mother drew his attention to an cloud of unusual size and appearance [...] he climbed up to a place which would give him the best view of the phenomenon [...] he gave orders for the ships to be launched [...] hurried to the place which everyone else was leaving, steering his course straight for the danger zone.'[iv]

Steering a course, 'straight for the danger zone' might be a good description of one aspect of *Zwischen*, particularly for the players, for Roderick Chadwick and I. The moments of reprieve, perhaps of tectonic calm, also mark out the onset of great storms, of peril, both artistic and instrumental. And when the tempests burst, there is the palpable sense that as

players, we will have no idea whether not we survive until the hurricane passes, and we find ourselves washed up on the shore, like Odysseus on the Scherian beach.

The power of the most original things that we do is that they are shared. I play Michael's music, sing, and speak, if you like, in his voice. He speaks with Levi, who is remembering Pliny, describing his uncle, and his own nonchalance (he went on with his homework), at the world's end. And that is who I recognised first: so, a new link is forged, more is shared, exchanged.

But Michael's music, and his wild imaginings ('weave a circle round him thrice ... beware, beware'), sets me off on further huntings – after a moment with Virgil and Purcellian suicide – to the imminent catastrophe, which has always been the fear of all artists. I found what I had written then, about his music.

But/Should I not return/Remember me/Remember me/Remember/That
this crust on which we teeter/totter/Is only eggshell thin/That beneath it/
And just below us/The raging seas/Lava and Magma/Dance/And should/
Or rather when/They choose to consume us/There will be nothing left of
all/That we have made/Not so much as a wishbone/Let alone a corner
stone.

So, with this assurance of death-in-life, of the wild geological rumpus dance raging beneath us, the beautiful threat of outer space just a few miles above our heads, the bacteria that play craps with our mortality, our own propensity to accelerate our own destruction; between all these, or maybe despite all this, Scylla and Charybdis, the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea, so many Rocks and Hard places - Despite all this, amongst all this, we find the need to sing. We must sing, to tell stories, to paint, to build, to live, and to love.

All of which is bracketed, by two ends, Birth and Death.

So, we sing. But of what do we, shall we sing? It is surprising, that we choose to sing of our own destruction, to tempt the very fate which we cannot avoid. The dark places are where we must go, to dig, to delve, to find that beauty.

Hersch's music finds harbour in these edgelands. It takes me to the end of W G Sebald's last book where he noted:

'a passage in [Sir Thomas Browne's] *Pseudoxia Epidemica* that I can no longer find that in the Holland of his time, it was customary, in a home where there had been a death, to drape back mourning ribbons over all the mirrors and canvasses depicting landscapes or people or the fruits of the field, so that the soul, as it left the body, would not be distracted on its final journey, either by a reflection of itself, or by a last glimpse of the land now being lost for ever.'[iv]

When Roderick and I began to study and play (the process took a year) *Zwischen Leben und Tod* I found that Sebald had been in Hersch's mind, and was his guide to Peter Weiss's, '...pandemonium of transgression in front of a background of capsizing ships [...] a now permanent state of destruction'[v]. Just as Virgil had taken Dante's hand: 'By another path thou needs must go/If thou wilt ever leave this waste,'[vi] Hersch, of course, takes my hand, Roderick's hand, our hands, and leads us 'by another path'.

I was never sure that the poet Wilfred Owen had escaped from anything; and, where it seemed that he had found reprieve from the horror of battle, was the very same 'dark tunnel' where Henry Moore would later draw draped figures, sleeping in the wartime Underground. To where Dante was led, where Plath found her madness. It was there, that he met the 'Enemy that I Killed,' where they talked, of the 'wildest beauty in the World.' And, for all the talk of 'braided hair', I am pretty sure that the Truth that they found, for all that they 'mock'd the steady running of the Hour' (as the poem makes clear) was Death, which 'grieves richer than here'.[vii]

In 1914, Rupert Brooke, marching down to the sea at Dover, on the way to a war from which he never returned, noted:

'Old ladies waved handkerchiefs, young ladies gave us apples, and old men and children cheered, and we cheered back, and I felt very elderly and sombre, and full of thought of how human life was a flash between darknesses.'[viii]

This was his moment of existential realisation: Of music, if you like, where the action, the revelation, and the being, were the same thing. This is the very essence of music, and it is not possible without silence. As life is not possible without death.

[References]

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- II. William Shakespeare, Henry VI, Part 2 (Act 3, Scene 2)
- III. Primo Levi, *Plinio*, 1978
- IV. Pliny, *The Letters of the Younger Pliny*, (Translated Betty Radice) Penguin Classics, London, 1969, Pp.166-7
- V. Sebald, W. G., *The Rings of Saturn*, New Directions Books, London, 1998, P. 296
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- VI. Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, (Translated – Dorothy Sayers), Penguin, London, 1949, P.73
- VII. Wilfred Owen, *Strange Meeting* (Lines 17-21), *In Flanders Fields*, Ed. George Walter, Allen Lane, London, 2004, P.159
- VIII. Rupert Brooke – *The Collected Poems/with a Memoir*, Sidgwick & Jackson, London, 1922, P.cxxviii

Michael Hersch

A composer of “uncompromising brilliance” (*The Washington Post*) whose work has been described by *The New York Times* as “viscerally gripping and emotionally transformative music ... claustrophobic and exhilarating at once, with moments of sublime beauty nestled inside thickets of dark virtuosity,” Michael Hersch is widely considered among the most gifted composers of his generation. Composer Georg Friedrich Haas has written that Hersch “is the explorer of an unconditional, radical expressivity that reveals the human abyss without any palliation.” Recent events and premieres include his Violin Concerto with Patricia Kopatchinskaja and Ensemble intercontemporain, and at the Lucerne Forward Festival; productions of his two-act monodrama, *On the Threshold of Winter* in New York, Chicago, Salt Lake City, and Washington D.C., and his elegy *I hope we get a chance to visit soon* at the Ojai and Aldeburgh Festivals. Other premieres include his three-part chamber cycle, *sew me into a shroud of leaves*, a work which occupied the composer for fifteen years, at the 2019 Wien Modern Festival and New York City’s National Sawdust in 2023. In 2021, the composer’s opera, *Poppaea*, premiered in Vienna and Basel in a co-production of the ZeitRäume Basel and Wien Modern Festivals. During the 2019/20 season, Mr. Hersch was the Composer-in-Residence with the Camerata Bern, and in early 2020, his new work *Agatha* had its premiere performances in Bern and Geneva. The same year his work for soprano and orchestra, *the script of storms*, premiered with the BBC Symphony Orchestra. In a later recording, *Opera News* wrote of the work that Hersch’s ability “to probe the substructures of human suffering is unmatched ... and his singular vision ... makes it difficult to turn away.” In 2023, Hersch wrote a new theater work, *MEDEA*, for Sarah Maria Sun, Schola Heidelberg and Ensemble Musikfabrik, and his song cycle, *one step to the next, worlds ending* received its U.S. premiere with Ah Young Hong and the Talea Ensemble. Hersch’s newest opera, *and we, each*, after texts by Shane McCrae, was premiered in Baltimore, Washington D.C., and New York. Michael Hersch came to international attention at age twenty-five, when he was awarded First Prize in the Concordia American Composers Awards. The award resulted in a performance of his *Elegy*, conducted by Marin Alsop in New York’s Alice Tully Hall. Later that year he became one of the youngest recipients ever of a Guggenheim Fellowship in Composition. Mr. Hersch has also been the recipient of the Rome Prize, the Berlin Prize, the Goddard Lieberman Fellowship and Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts & Letters, and the President’s Frontier Award from the Johns Hopkins University.

Peter Sheppard Skærved – violin

Peter Sheppard Skærved is acclaimed internationally for performances of a vast range of solo repertoire. His repertoire stretches from the late 16th century to hundreds of works written for him: these include major works by composers by established 'greats' such as Hans Werner Henze and George Rochberg, to the many young composers with whom he collaborates worldwide.

Peter is a Grammy-nominated recording artist, with over one hundred critically acclaimed albums to his name. These range from concerto discs with orchestras including the Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra to the complete Tartini Solo Sonatas, 24 Telemann Fantasies, cycles of Beethoven, Mozart, and Schubert Sonatas, eight discs of solo works from the 1600s and many recordings of the works dedicated to him. Peter is currently performing, filming, and recording on great instruments in the collections of the Library of Congress, Washington DC, the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, the Metropolitan Museum, New York City, and the Paganini violins kept at the City of Genoa. Peter is Honorary Professor at the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester, Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music, London, Artist in Residence at Lund University, Sweden, and visiting Research Fellow at Goldsmiths, University of London. He regularly gives masterclasses and workshops at schools across the USA, including Peabody Conservatoire, Manhattan School of Music, Eastman Rochester, Vanderbilt University, Middlebury College, Cornell University and many more.

Peter's wide ranging 'Knowledge Exchange Violin' Project brings together institutions ranging from the National Gallery of Art Washington DC and the Museo Stradivari in Cremona, through to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds in the UK, with a linked series of concerts, recordings, residencies, films, recordings, podcasts and much more. To follow this project go to: <https://www.peter-sheppard-skaerved.com/?p=30925>

Website: www.peter-sheppard-skaerved.com

Youtube Channel (over 600 films, recordings and talks):
www.youtube.com/@PeterSheppardSkaervedviolin

Roderick Chadwick – piano

Recently described on *Fanfare* as ‘an incredibly musical pianist’, Roderick Chadwick is equally at home in experimental music and chamber music as he is playing landmark solo works of the last 100 years. Born in 1974 in Manchester, and making his BBC radio debut at the 1989 Aldeburgh Festival, he has since been heard in broadcast performing Richard Barrett, Ludwig van Beethoven, Laurence Crane, Michael Finnissy, Will Gregory, Sadie Harrison and Betsy Jolas – and most recently, Bryn Harrison’s *Towards a slowing of the past* with fellow pianist Mark Knop on the Radio 6 *Freak Zone*. He also gave a live performance with Knop of *Structures 1^{er} Livre* at the BBC’s Boulez centenary weekend.

As a member of Ensemble Plus Minus he has enjoyed performing music from Braxton to Paxton across the European new music scene: at Ultima, Huddersfield, Borealis and Warsaw Autumn festivals, regularly at London’s Café Oto, Edinburgh Reid Hall, and L’Auditori Barcelona, amongst others. He also has a long-standing association with the Kreutzer Quartet, with memorable performances including Finnissy’s completion of Grieg’s Piano Quintet movement at the 2014 Bergen Festival.

He has published writings on the music of Gloria Coates, Edward Cowie and Olivier Messiaen, including *Olivier Messiaen’s Catalogue d’oiseaux: From Conception to Performance* with Peter Hill for Cambridge University Press. Solo performances of Messiaen took place in Westminster Cathedral’s Messiaen 90th anniversary series alongside Dame Gillian Weir, and more recently at Music in PyeongChang 2023 (South Korea). His recording of the *Catalogue* on Divine Art has reached its final instalment, and a concurrent series of Edward Cowie’s *Bird Portrait* and Piano Sonata cycles has also won acclaim.

He has taught modules in scholarship and performance at the Royal Academy of Music for over two decades, and was appointed Reader of the University of London in 2013.

Recorded 26 January 2020 and 16 February 2020
Angela Burgess Recital Hall, Royal Academy of Music London
Producer – Peter Sheppard Skærved
Engineer and Editor – Adaq Khan
Piano – Steinway
Violin – Girolamo Amati 1629 (Bow by Stephen Bristow 2010)

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LC 15631



Peter Sheppard Skærved and Roderick Chadwick recording *Zwischen Leben und Tod*

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