



Through the Looking Glass

ALPHA

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Dedicated to the memory of Daniel Hage

Bolette Roed, recorder

Peter Navarro-Alonso, saxophone

David Hildebrandt, percussion

POUL RUDERS (b. 1949)

STAR PRELUDE AND LOVE FUGUE (1990) 5:57

1 Star Prelude 3:23

2 Love Fugue 2:35

Arr: Alpha

PER NØRGÅRD (b. 1932)

3 HEYDAY'S NIGHT (1981, rev. 1982) 8:28

Arr: Alpha

HANS ABRAHAMSEN (b. 1952)

4 FLOWERSONGS (1973) 10:00

Arr: Alpha

HANS ABRAHAMSEN

5 SCHNEE, CANON 2A: LUSTIG SPIELEND, ABER NICHT ZU LUSTIG,
IMMER EIN BIßCHEN MELANCHOLISCH (2008) 7:57

Arr: Alpha

BENT SØRENSEN (b. 1958)

6 LOOKING ON DARKNESS (2000) 9:16

Arr: Peter Navarro-Alonso

POUL RUDERS

7 CARNIVAL (1980) 5:39

Arr: Alpha

PER NØRGÅRD

8 ISTERIA (1979) 9:24

Arr: Peter Navarro-Alonso

To reduce a group of works from a variety of different scorings to fit just three specific instrumentalists is a most unusual process: especially in contemporary music, where normally the composer's original scoring is assumed to be sacrosanct. In these cases, however, the composers have all acquiesced in their treatment, and no wonder! The resulting music reveals the form and richness of each composer's imagination in a way that is both startling and joyful. It is like comparing a winter woodland to its appearance six months earlier. Gone is the profusion of colour and sensuous abundance, but instead underlying shapes emerge that were concealed before, and a more muted range of colours displays itself, each one intimately compelling in its singularity. Eventually a new sense of richness is created as the mind and the eye – and the ear – adjust themselves to the world about them. What seems at first glance to be only grey and brown begins to show elements of red, and yellow, and blue, and even green.

What further distinguishes this recording is the fact that the performers have had a hand in creating the music, as well as re-creating it. This aspect of music-making plays all too little role in contemporary 'art' music, apart from those instances where musicians are asked to improvise – and thus to use a skill that may virtually have atrophied from want of exercise. But improvisation is only one aspect of creative performance, and Alpha's close encounter with the musical essences of these works seems to have given the trio a precious sense of ownership of the music, even while the works mysteriously and naturally retain their identity with the composers who made them. This idea of music as something 'open' – in this case, specific notes and yet open to different instrumentation and therefore different modes of articulation (which in turn open up a cornucopia of possibilities) – is something rare and valuable.

And finally the music: it doesn't sound to me like new music with that slightly forbidding aura of something that may be good for you, but doesn't frankly quite grab your attention as you secretly want it to. This music *does* grab and hold onto you. One must therefore give honour where it's due: to the composers of course. But I think it also has something to do with the way the performers too have re-imagined it, and in the process invented a new level of meaning for the verb 'perform'.

Paul Hillier is widely known as a conductor, singer, author, and founder of Hilliard Ensemble and Theatre of Voices. He is a specialist on Arvo Pärt and Steve Reich, choir music and early music and the recipient of innumerable prizes for his work around music.

ALPHA

Alpha consists of three classical musicians, who have all made their mark on European music life – Bolette Roed on recorder, Peter Navarro-Alonso, classical saxophone, and David Hildebrandt, classical percussion. Alpha's musical concept is unique – a classical ensemble, commissioning pieces, improvising, playing folk music from all over the world, diving into electro-acoustic music, electronica and medieval music as well as composing themselves. A stylistic span from the 14th century to newly written works, from Orthodox Georgian chorals to minimalistic techno. Alpha's widespread concerts in Europe and the United States have often been broadcast by the Danish Radio and EBU. Alpha has received many prizes, and the ensemble have been finalist in Terem Crossover competition, Sankt Petersburg, and Concert Artist Guild Competition, New York. In 2009 Alpha was nominated for the Nordic Council Music Prize. Alpha's two former CD releases, *Alpha* (Dacapo Records) and *Alpha World*, were both nominated for Danish Music Awards in 2007 and 2010.

www.alphatrio.com



ALPHA – Peter Navarro-Alonso, Bolette Roed, David Hildebrandt

At bearbejde en række værker for flere forskellige instrumentbesætninger, så de netop passer til tre bestemte instrumentalister, er en højst usædvanlig proces; særlig inden for ny musik, hvor komponistens originale partitur betragtes som noget ukrænkeligt. I dette tilfælde har alle komponisterne billiget denne forvandling, hvilket er meget forståeligt! Resultatet er musik, der blotlægger form og fylde i de enkelte komponisters arbejder, på en både overraskende og glædelig måde. Det er som at sammenligne en vinterlig skov med dens udseende seks måneder tidligere: Væk er overfloden af farver og sanselighed, og frem dukker de førhen skjulte underliggende figurer, og en mere afdæmpet vifte af farver åbenbarer sig, altsammen nærværende og ægte i sin enkelhed. Lidt efter lidt fremkommer en følelse af rigdom i takt med at sindet, øjet – og øret – tilpasser sig denne verden. Så hvad der umiddelbart blot syntes at være gråt og brunt, begynder at vise nuancer af rødt, gult, blått og endda grønt.

Hvad der yderligere kendetegner denne indspilning er, at musikerne tog del i både at skabe og genskabe musikken. Denne side af musikproduktionen spiller en alt for lille rolle i moderne kompositionsmusik, bortset fra i de tilfælde, hvor musikerne bliver bedt om at improvisere – og dermed tager en færdighed i anvendelse, som ellers pga. manglende øvelse stort set er forsvundet. Men improvisation er kun én side af den medskabende praksis. Alphas møde med den musikalske kerne i disse værker synes at have givet trio en særlig følelse af ejerskab over musikken, alt imens værkerne samtidig, på én gang gådefuldt og naturligt, opretholder forbindelsen til de komponister, som har skabt dem. Denne opfattelse af musikken som “åben” – og i dette tilfælde som noder, der er åbne for forskellig instrumentation og dermed forskellige artikulationsformer (i sig selv med et overflødigshorn af muligheder) – dét er noget sjældent og meget værdifuldt.

Og endelig er der selve musikken: I mine ører lyder det ikke som ny musik af den slags, hvor man sidder med en fornemmelse af, at det sikkert er vældig sundt for én at høre, men hvor ens opmærksomhed ærlig talt ikke fanges på den måde, man hemmeligt drømmer om. Denne musik griber og fastholder dig netop. Man må derfor give berettiget ros her: Naturligvis til komponisterne. Men jeg tror også, det har noget at gøre med den måde, hvorpå musikerne selv har genkaldt sig værkerne, hvor de med denne genskabelsesproces har givet ny mening til verbet “at fremføre”.

Paul Hillier er kendt som både dirigent, sanger, forfatter og stifter af Hilliard Ensemble og Theatre of Voices. Han er specialist inden for bl.a. Arvo Pärt og Steve Reich, kormusik og tidlig musik og modtager af talrige priser for sit arbejde med musikken.

ALPHA

Alpha består af tre klassiske musikere, der alle har markeret sig i europæisk musikliv: Bolette Roed på blokfløjte, Peter Navarro-Alonso, klassisk saxofon, og David Hildebrandt, slagtøj. Alphas musikalske koncept er særegent: Et klassisk ensemble, der både arbejder med partiturmusik såvel som med improvisation, verdensmusik, elektroakustik, electronica og middelaldermusik, og som desuden komponerer selv. En periodemæssig og stilistisk bredde, der går fra 1300-tallets estampier til nyskreven kompositionsmusik, fra ortodokse georgiske koraler til minimalistisk techno. Alphas omfattende koncertvirksomhed i Europa og USA er blevet radiotransmitteret ved talrige lejligheder, bl.a. via EBU. Alpha er prisvindere i flere konkurrencer og finalist i Terem Crossover Competition, Sankt Petersborg, samt i Concert Artist Guild Competition, New York. I 2009 blev Alpha nomineret til Nordisk Råds Musikpris og begge Alphas tidligere udgivelser, *Alpha* (Dacapo Records) og *Alpha World*, er blevet nomineret til P2-prisen/DMA Klassisk 2007 og 2010.

www.alphatrio.com

DDD

Recorded in Hørsholm Church in December 2009, May 2010, October 2011 and March 2012

Recorded by Timbre Music, www.timbremusic.dk

Recording producer, sound engineer, editing and mastering: Preben Iwan

Recorded in the DXD audio format (Digital eXtreme Definition), 352.8 kHz / 32bit.

Microphones: 2 x DPA 4006TL, 2 x DPA 4011TL, 2 x AKG 414 & 2 x DPA 4011TL for surround channels.

DAD AX24 converters/preamps, Pyramix DAW system with Tango Controller.

Monitored on B&W 802 Diamond speakers.

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The works on this CD were originally composed for piano solo [1]-[2]; recorder, cello and harpsichord [3]; 3 flutes [4]; chamber orchestra [5]; accordion solo [6]; flute and bongo drums [7]; cimbalom [8]

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MUSIKANTOLOGI

Dacapo Records, Denmark's national record label, was founded in 1986 with the purpose of releasing the best of Danish music past and present. The majority of our recordings are world premieres, and we are dedicated to producing music of the highest international standards.

