

MASS TRANSFORMATION

Transformation Anton Bruckner's 3rd Mass in f minor

Ohad Talmor (USA) – composer, leader, tenor saxophone

Judith Berkson (USA) - vocals, keyboards

Shane Endsley (USA) - trumpet

Pete McCann (USA) – e-guitar

Mark Ferber (USA) - drums

Spring String Quartet (AUT):

Christian Wirth – 1st violin, e-violin

Marcus Wall – 2nd violin

Julian Gillesberger - viola

Stephan Punderlitschek – violoncello

This Transformation wants to go beyond one style or another. Simply beautiful music with powerful texts, new or original, played with conviction, a foot in Bruckner's world, and another in today's world. By looking at the original Mass as a masterful "lego" construction, Ohad Talmor then tried to re-construct it for a flexible 9 piece orchestra, atypical for either the Classical or the Jazz world and for musicians who are not only strong instrumentalists but gifted improvisers.

"By exploring a wide array of stylistic genres, changing some of the texts to words having a personal meaning – while allowing for the musicians to freely express themselves during written and improvised moments - I aimed to bring together cohesively, distinct musical worlds.

I treated each one of the 6 movements differently. Each having evoked something different in me, I decided to not only transform the music but in some cases, to change the lyrics altogether. For that purpose, and because of the very spiritual nature of the original texts, I chose poetry which had a strong personal resonance to me: poems written by my late father, Yehuda Talmor, which frame the Mass by being used in the first (Kyrie) and last movements (Agnus Dei). They are written in Hebrew but translated and sung in 3 languages, including English and German. These are dark texts, dealing with either the nature of God or the futility of our existence; an atypical subject matter for a Mass yet a true expression of spirituality to me! Musically, the Kyrie is the most "deconstructed" movement, where some of the form and the content can be improvised. The Agnus Dei is treated with much respect to the original music. It follows the symmetrical structure of the poem and allows for an exploration of the simple yet powerful qualities of each of the words declaimed by Judith or the group as a whole.

My original text of the Gloria builds on what is most glorified today, the money. It is written in English and focuses on themes relating to money, greed and instant gratification. The movement is anchored musically in the "Straight ahead" Jazz tradition and swings all the way to the Mass's famous double fugue, where improvised and written lines intermingle freely.

Though it is the shortest movement, the Sanctus serves as an intro and coda to the beautiful Benedictus. Even though some of the music is almost a literal translation of the original, Judith is free to improvise her role as a live commentator of the performance as it is happening.

The Benedictus, sung in latin, is the cornerstone of the Mass. Probably the most recognizable moment, it is treated both respectfully and impertinently.

The Credo, with a text borrowed from Charlie Chaplin's final scene of "The Great Dictator" is the longest and most surprising movement. Never settling into one style, it jumps from James Brown funk to death metal or gospel while always keeping true to Bruckner's spirit.

All of this music and texts are either sounds or words of hope or despair, a cry out for understanding and love or an angry shout at society's greed. But what they have in common is an expression of the world we live in today; beautiful, pathetic, absurd or balanced-echoing as I heard it Anton Bruckner's original vision."

(Ohad Talmor)

Ohad Talmor (composer, leader, tenor saxophone)

Ohad Talmor is a Saxophonist, Composer and Arranger. He is originally from Israel but grew up in Switzerland and is now a long time New York/Brooklyn resident.

He plays regularly with his own group; OHAD TALMOR NEWSREEL (with Shane Endsley, Dan Weiss, Jacob Sacks, Matt Pavolka) as well as musicians such as Jason Moran, Dave Douglas, Carla Bley Big Band, Billy Hart and many others, most of whom do not have major recording contracts, which is just as well.

He is the Musical Director of 3 Lee Konitz led projects for which he writes, arranges and plays with: the Lee Konitz New Nonet, the Konitz-Talmor String Project and the Konitz-Talmor Big Band. He also plays with the Steve Swallow 6tet & Trio and has written music for many different situations, including the Brecker Brothers, Portugese Big Band Orquestra Jazz Matosinhos, Big Band de Lausanne as well as leading classical musicians such as Martha Argerich, the Spring String Quartet from Austria and the Axis String Quartet from New York.

Ohad Talmor holds a Composition Degree from the Manhattan School of Music, now deeply buried in a trunk in his basement.

Every day Ohad spends a considerable amount of time playing the bansuri (Indian bamboo flute) for no other purpose than playing it.

Judith Berkson (vocals, keys)

Judith Berkson is a soprano, pianist, accordionist and composer living in Brooklyn, New York. She studied voice at New England Conservatory with Lucy Shelton, theory and composition with Joe Maneri, and piano with Judith Godfrey and Viola Haas.

She has performed with the Delphian Jazz Orchestra, Steve Coleman and the Five Elements, Wet Ink New Music Collective, The Four Bags, ASM New Music Ensemble and Theodore Bikel. She has played and collaborated at the BrucknerTage in Austria, the American Festival of Microtonal Music, and the Schumann Festival in Germany. She has premiered works by Gerard Pape, Ken Thomson, Joe Maneri, Matthew Welch, Ohad Talmor, Steve Coleman, Hans Breder, Carlos Cuellar, and Julia Werntz.

Shane Endsley (trumpet)

"Jazz keeps slowly widening, and the young trumpeter Shane Endsley is working calmly and effectively at the perimeter." - NY Times

Shane resides in Brooklyn, NY, where he is steadily building his reputation as one of the most unique voices on the trumpet today. The Downbeat Magazine named him as one of the "Top 25" trumpeters of his generation in 2007. A truly modern and dynamic musician, he can be found on recordings ranging from modern instrumentalists Steve Coleman, Dave Binney, and Donny McCaslin, to folk and rock icons like Ani DiFranco, Erin McKeown, and Pearl Jam. Shane is an accomplished drummer and composer who is constantly expanding his musical vocabulary with the rich experiences offered by New York. He dove into the intricate ornamental style of the Balkan brass bands with the powerhouse 10 piece group, Slavic Soul Party and is now venturing into the lilting rhythms of Brazilian Forro and Maracatu with Scott Kettner of Nation Beat and Maracatu NY.

Pete McCann (guitar)

Guitarist Pete McCann has been an integral part of the New York City jazz scene for over 17 years. He has three critically acclaimed recordings as a leader: *Most Folks* (Omnitone), *Parable* and *You Remind Me Of Someone* (Palmetto). His music encompasses a wide range of styles from straight-ahead to jazz-rock fusion to avant-garde.

Pete has appeared on over 50 CDs and performed with Kenny Wheeler, Dave Liebman, Lee Konitz, Patti Austin, Kenny Garrett, Peter Erskine, and the Maria Schneider Orchestra. He has performed throughout the US, Canada and Europe from clubs to jazz festivals, musicals, award shows, and even an opera.

McCann received his Bachelors of Music from the University of North Texas and also studied at the Banff School of the Arts. Pete is an adjunct faculty guitar instructor at The New School and City College in New York City. He also teaches at the NYU Summer Guitar Intensive.

Mark Ferber (drums)

A native of Moraga, CA, Mark began playing the piano at the age of four, before moving on to drumming and percussion.

Mark attended the University of California in Los Angeles, earning a B.A. in Geography. He studied classical percussion with Mitchell Peters and drums with Billy Higgins.

He has distinguished himself on both coasts and abroad in live performances and recordings. In Los Angeles, a partial list of credits includes Anthony Wilson's Organ Trio and Nonet, Billy Child's Chamber Ensemble, Wadada Leo Smith, and Bob Sheppard. In New York he has worked with Lee Konitz, Don Byron, Fred Hersch, Norah Jones, Steve Swallow, Jack Wilkins, and his twin brother, Alan Ferber, among others.

He is currently touring and recording with Ralph Alessi's group, 'This Against That', and Jonathan Kreisberg's Trio and Quintet. In addition to being an active freelance drummer, Mark teaches in the United States and Europe.

He was a faculty member for the Tavira Jazz Workshop in Portugal, the Kansas University Jazz Workshop and the Maine Jazz Camp. He currently serves as an adjunct teacher for the City College of New York and the School of Improvisational Music (SIM) in New York.

Spring String Quartet

The four musicians met each other during their music studies at Linz and Vienna. In December 1997 they presented themselves with the name SPRING STRING QUARTET and gave the first concert in the present formation.

Ever since the collaboration with jazz legend Lee Konitz, the SPRING STRING QUARTET ranks as one of the leading ClassicalCrossover-Jazz-Rock-string quartets in Europe.

In spring 2003 the SPRING STRING QUARTET performed with American jazz legend Lee Konitz on a 3-week tour of Europe. Performances in New York's Jazz club Birdland and concerts at the Int. Jazz Festival Montreal (Canada), Festival Sons d'Hiver Paris a.o. followed.

In 2004 the SPRING STRING QUARTET toured through Europe again and also produced a new CD called "Blue Smoke On Johann Strauss". The CD was released by Extraplatte (Austria) in fall.

In 2002 the debut CD "Train Songs" was released by CCn'C records (Germany) and is available worldwide.

The CD "Inventions" with Lee Konitz (alto sax) and Ohad Talmor (tenor sax, clarinet, bass clar.) has been released in fall 2006 on the New York Jazzlabel "Omnitone".

2007 the SPRING STRING QUARTET celebrated its 10th anniversary with a jubilee concert in the Brucknerhaus Linz.

Highlight of the year: concert at the Carnegie Hall, New York on June 25, 2007.

Besides the SPRING STRING QUARTET is the winner of the "Concerto Poll 2002 + 2004" in the category "Best String & Song-Artist Nationwide".

In 2009 the SPRING STRING QUARTET will be touring around again. Apart from the concerts with the German singer and song writer Konstantin Wecker there will also be a tour to Lithuania.

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