

Stevan Kovacs Tickmayer



Divertimento (2013)

- I. Transylvanian-Bulgarian
- II. Fragments from the Enchanted Garden
- III. Passamezzo Ongaro

Length: approx. 15 minutes

World Premiere by ZOFO: 3/7/2014, Old First Concerts, San Francisco, California

LIVE PERFORMANCE VIDEOS:

- [Movement I](#)
- [Movement II](#)
- [Movement III](#)

Notes from the composer about *Divertimento*:

"The work on this duet began in October 2012 and was finished in the end of January 2013 the same year. The musical exploration in this composition, continues with my last fifteen years "obsession" that lays in the deeper levels of ethnic music of the Transylvanian and the Balkans geographic area, not loosing in the same time, the tight, but hidden relations with the certain aspects of urban musical forms - most notably experiences I gained (next to classical) in the field of free improvised and also in avant-garde rock music.

I had no intention - by any means - to offer a kind of East European musical panoplies with catchy and nicely arranged folk melodies, but rather a deeper insight of the richness and weirdness of these traditions to the Western ears. I think, the fundamental nature of those traditions still stay hidden from the large audience, partly due to the overwhelming, so called *World Music* movement, which mostly gives the privilege to the commercial and easy consuming forms of the folk music.

Ligeti once stated that, as very opposite of his western colleagues, he grew up in the environment extremely rich in various folk music - due to that fact, his listening experience was quite different of those of his contemporaries in the West. I think that Ligeti's case is not the lonely one. More or less, we in East Europe all experienced this sensation as well. I was always much interested in folk music in general (Bartók employed rather the term of *peasant music*) and especially those of Transylvania and the Balkans - so, instead of looking relentlessly forward and seeking after the "definite modernistic truth" I started to travel back in time, as very profound in that tradition - as we dig deeper and deeper - we are more and more faced with an incredible world of bitonal, polyrhythmic and non-tempered systems, which stand more closer to the world of new music esthetics than many of fast aging modernistic constructions.

This composition consists of three movements imagined and entitled as:

I. (Transylvanian-Bulgarian)

As the title suggests, this stave is entirely based around Transylvanian and Bulgarian folk music motives. However, those originals are often transformed and rewritten in a "non-appropriate" manner regarding the traditional sources, adding with this a "surrealistic" feeling to this very rhythmic and virtuoso movement.

II. (Fragments from the Enchanted Garden)

The second movement represents a homage to a controversial and prolific Hungarian writer, composer and psychotherapist Geza Csath (alias Josef Brenner) who tragically deceased at the age of thirty one, leaving behind him a substantial body of work in the field of literature, music criticism as well as psychology. In this, rather meditative movement that paraphrases the title of one short novel of this author, occasional far echoes of the piano music of Debussy are also hidden, not by merely chance, but rather as a remembrance of one of the writer's favorite musician: Csath was the first who drew attention of the Hungarian public of that time to the work of the French composer.

III. (Passamezzo Ongaro)

The third movement is based on an imaginary folk melody that was crystallized during one of my improvising (non-jazzy) sessions - those regularly precede my compositional work. Conceived in the omnipresent 3+2+3 rhythmic model, the main slowly disintegrates into the jubilating isorhythmic labyrinths that demand from the players a great interpretative as well as rhythmic precision (just as many passages of this composition).

For a copy of the score please contact the composer:
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Stevan Kovacs Tickmayer

Composer, multi-instrumentalist, improviser and essayist was born in 1963 Novi Sad, Vojvodina, ex-Yugoslavia as a member of Hungarian national minority. Since the outburst of the civil war in his native country (1991) he lives and works in France.

During the early years of his music education he studied piano & double bass. Later on graduated in composition at the *Academy Of Arts* in Novi Sad under Rudolf Brucci, and completed his studies with Louis Andriessen & Diderick Wagenaar at the *Royal Conservatory* of The Hague (Netherlands). At the *Rotterdam Conservatory* he attended lecturers of Witold Lutoslawski and received a scholarship from the Polish Section of ISCM. Since 1997, he studied with György and Márta Kurtág, as well as world premiered Kurtág's *Six Pieces for Trombone & Piano*.

Upon the invitation of world renowned violinist Gidon Kremer, Tickmayer was twice the composer in residence at the *Kammermusikfest Lockenhaus* (2003 and 2009) and Sigulda/Latvia as well (2009), where several of his compositions were performed as well as world premiered. Some of his compositions are published on labels as ReR Megacorp, *Nonesuch*, *ECM New Series*, *Leo Record* and *BMC Records*. He has also served residencies at *Art Omi* (USA - 1999) and *Civitella Ranieri Center* (Italy/USA -2007).

His compositions have been performed by Gidon Kremer, Martha Argerich, Kremerata Baltica, Yuri Bashmet, Roman Kofmann, Keller Quartet, David Geringas, Tatiana Vassilieva, Khatia Bunaitshvili, ZoFo Pianoduo, Alexei Ogrintchouk, The Netherlands Wind Ensemble, De Volharding, Concerto Budapest, Seattle Chamber Players and many others. As an improviser and

experimental musician he collaborated with musicians and groups as: Chris Cutler, Fred Frith, Robert Drake, Valentin Clastrier, Wu Fei, Peter Kowald, Szabados György, Paul Termos, Grensó István, Dresch Mihály and The Science Group (one of the founder and composer).

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Photographer: Pawel Karnowski