

TODOS LOS FUEGOS EL FUEGO

“Ces yeux ne t’appartiennent pas... où les as-tu pris?”

Julio Cortázar

DISC ONE

I.C.E. [INTERNAL COMBUSTION ENGINE]

DEATH OF A MOSASAURUS

SPRING, BREAKING

ASHES IN BIRTH

DISC TWO

RAISING WAVES

CRABCADE [WATERFALL IN CANCRIZANS]

STAIRWAY TO DECAY

ENDLESS MORDENT

ABOUT THE ALBUM

Writing music for specific orchestras that consists of various instruments, as became the default during the 20th century, has lost its appeal to me over the last couple of years. My musical language is more suited to ensembles that have an unconventional configuration, for example in *Marian Antiphons* for 12 voices a cappella, *Insane Dances* for saxophone quartet, *Six Bagatelles for Two Violins*, and *Suite — Homage to Alfred Schnittke* for three cellos. This is why I have begun to work on a cycle, *Similar*, that will keep me occupied for years to come, starting from its first chapter *Lacrimosa or 13 Magic Songs* for seven violins.

Back in 2006, when writing *Trio* for violin, cello and piano, I named the draft after *The Devil's Drool*, a collection of short stories by the great Julio Cortázar. Now, eleven years later, the trio is still in its draft stage, but my affinity with Cortázar's art has only become stronger, and I felt a great need and urge to enter into a creative dialogue with this author. Therefore, the second chapter of the life-long *Similar* cycle constitutes a mysterious and exciting link between music and literature.

My inspiration was *Todos Los Fuegos El Fuego*, arguably the most enigmatic book by the great Cortázar. All the short stories in this collection share an exit into a parallel, magic reality, sometimes near to our own, sometimes strikingly different from it. Their forms provoke peculiar musical dramaturgic solutions, whereby an abundance of pseudo-musical forms enables for the creation of a unique atmosphere, using an expanded variety of performance techniques.

The suite's overall structure consists of eight parts, performed by eight saxophone players — as many as there are stories in the book (and syllables in its title, which, incidentally, sounds like a saxophone phrase by itself). The saxophone is chosen for a reason, since, for all his knowledge and passion for music, jazz claimed most of Cortázar's attention. Jazz, and accordingly the sound of the saxophone, was his muse and a constant presence in many of his most well-known fiction. Moreover, the saxophone is involved in many mystical moments in music, literature, and, last but not least, cinema — another fascination I share with the author.

Maxim Shalygin



MAXIM SHALYGIN

THE LINK BETWEEN LITERATURE AND MUSIC, WRITER AND COMPOSER

Musicalised prose is not uncommon in world literature, but for fairly obvious reasons, music has exerted considerably more influence on poetry than on prose fiction. By its very nature, poetry demands the conscious search for form to a much greater degree, including a constant attention to sonic issues, and thus is likely to suggest musical analogies to its creators. Musicalisation of prose is manifest mostly not in a symbolist way, by subordinating sense to sound, but on a larger scale, in constructions, in the intertwining of the lives and musings of characters, in transitions and modulations, not merely from one key to another, but from mood to mood, as a theme being developed and deformed.

Cortázar's works are musicalised and their sonority penetrates the heart. His narratives innovated literary structure, his prose attempted to evoke the rhythms and harmonies of music, and his playfulness led him to take risks with linearity that can still turn the heads of readers. In a lecture on musicality in literature, given in 1980, he says that the prose he like to write and read prioritises a definite rhythm. His deepest idea about the presence of music in his works is "the feeling more than the awareness, the intuition that literary prose [...] can manifest as pure communication and in a perfect style, but also with a certain structure, a certain syntactic architecture, a certain articulation of words, a rhythm in the use of punctuation or separation into sections, a cadence that the reader's internal ear can recognise more or less clearly as a musical element."

For this kind of prose, Cortázar invented a special word: *encantatoria* or *incantatoria*. It's a word that encompasses two different concepts. The first is that of 'enchantment' (charm in English) in the magical sense of a spell, the creation of a hypnotic or enchanted atmosphere we might consider magical, a pure image. The second is that of 'chant,' as in song; song is contained in enchant. "I'm talking about prose mixed with and based on a series of latencies, of pulsations, that hardly ever come from reason and that make a writer organise his discourse and syntaxes in a way that goes beyond transmitting the message of the prose, they also transmit a series of atmospheres, of emanations, content that has nothing to do with the message itself but enriches it, amplifies it and often deepens it," says Cortázar.

Likewise, composers often draw inspiration from literature, with or without the aspiration to create a fixed system for transferring the portent and dramaturgy of books into the language of music. Around 1721, Vivaldi wrote a set of four violin concertos based on four sonnets describing the seasons. It is one of the earliest and most detailed examples of what would come to be called program music — i.e. music with a narrative element. However, the obvious starting point for any discussion of descriptive music is Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony*, a work which established descriptive music as a recognised and respectable type of composition (later developed by Berlioz, Liszt, Wagner, Mendelssohn, and others). It is worth emphasising that the *Pastoral Symphony* is not a picture, but a work expressing the emotions aroused in men by the pleasure of the countryside, or in which some feelings of country life are set forth.

Mendelssohn, who wrote a great deal of program music, once said in a famous letter that music is not too indefinite to be put into words, but rather too definite. "For a word does not mean the same thing to one person as it does to another; only a piece of music can awaken the same mood, or say the same thing, in every case: a feeling which not everyone would call by the same name..."

Music goes beyond words. Cortázar's greatest regret was that he was not a musician. He said, "If I could choose between literature and music, I'd choose music." At particular moments in a narrative he would not be satisfied with the syntactic possibilities offered by prose and language, and both consciously and subconsciously resort to the more 'musical' instruments in his literary toolkit. In this way, he reached results that challenge Shalygin as a composer to compete on a poetic level, using similar musical means. In other words, *Todos Los Fuegos El Fuego* for saxophone octet is Shalygin's attempt to create a system of coordinates, a space, in which he can converse with Cortázar on an equal footing.

That is why, although this composition takes a verbal text as its base, it doesn't have a direct program. Advocates of program music will admit that music without verbal aid cannot convey an external idea with any precision or certainty, and that program music is still, essentially, music. Absolutists, on the other hand, will concede that following a program may add a certain interest to hearing a piece of music, though they may deny that this extra interest is really 'pure' music. Shalygin's intuition is that both positions somehow miss the point. But first of all he was curious: where would he end up if he tried to use, expand and enrich this composer's toolkit in ways similar to those adopted by Cortázar in literature? Transforming literary techniques into the language of music, using intrinsically musical means of expression such as tempo, dynamic changes or facture, may evoke comparable tensions and moods and make up for equally intense experiences. The composer's aim was to enable the creation of equivalencies, if only once — not to find dogmas or rules that should be valid for anybody else, or for himself into eternity, for that matter.

Anna Reshetniak

AMSTEL QUARTET & KEURIS QUARTET

The *Todos los fuegos el fuego* project was initiated by two Dutch saxophone quartets, representatives of the two different generations, Amstel Quartet & Keuris Quartet. It brings together musicians of 7 nationalities, who have all studied at the Conservatory of Amsterdam and, therefore, represent "the Amsterdam saxophone school."

TLFEF fits within the artistic frameworks and ambitions of both quartets: cooperating intensively with good composers on new compositions that are relevant in the current musical field. Never before have two saxophone quartets collaborated on a piece of such difficulty and length, using saxophones from the soprano down to the bass saxophone. With this project, the creators aim to expand the possibilities of saxophone performance and to contribute to the creation of an international saxophone repertoire. *TLFEF* was a good opportunity for exchanging expertise and making sound together.



REMCO JAK



OLIVIER SLIEPEN



HARRY CHERRIN



BAS APSWOUDE

AMSTEL QUARTET

Chameleonic and passionate, that would be the best way to describe the four saxophonists that make up the Amstel Quartet. Whether it is old music or the very latest sounds, pop music, jazz, classical or world music — once you hear the Amstel Quartet play, all borders between these genres simply fade away. Technical limitations appear non-existent and musical boundaries are there merely to be crossed.

This adventurous attitude has brought the foursome a multitude of admirers worldwide. And justifiably so, because a performance by the Amstel Quartet has the thrilling energy of a pop concert. The quartet takes you along on a breathtaking and moving journey time and again. It is not without reason that the Dutch press has dubbed the Amstel Quartet 'The most colourful saxophone quartet in the world.'

"Before and during the composing process, Maxim was in frequent contact with the performers. 'What is possible with your instrument?' 'Can you make this sound?' 'Can you try this for me once?' 'I want a certain type of sound...'

It is quite rare that we, as saxophonists, discover new sounds from our saxophones. This composer seeks out the limits (technical, musical, and physical) and pushes us there with inescapable enthusiasm. That really says a lot about Maxim's imagination: he takes the performers along with him in his unrestrained fantasy. We hope, and expect, that the listener will go through something similar by experiencing this impressive piece."

Remco Jak - soprano saxophone

Olivier Sliepen - alto, bass and soprano saxophones

Bas Apswoude - tenor saxophone

Harry Cherrin - baritone and bass saxophones

Amstel Quartet is supported by FPK



KIRSTIN NIEDERSTRABER



EVGENY NOVIKOV



JUAN MANUEL DÓMINGUEZ



MICHAL GRYCKO

KEURIS QUARTET

Keuris Quartet is an international saxophone quartet, specializing in the interpretation of classical contemporary music. Founded in 2013 in Amsterdam, the Quartet was named after Dutch composer Tristan Keuris (1946-1996), whose oeuvre includes two highlights of the contemporary saxophone quartet repertoire. After winning the First Prize at the inaugural Strasbourg International Saxophone Quartet Competition and the Second Prize at the prestigious M-Prize International Chamber Arts Competition in Ann-Arbor, MI (USA), KQ gained international recognition and is considered as one of the brightest saxophone quartets performing today. The repertoire of KQ includes some important commissions to living composers such as Thierry Tidrow, Maxim Shalygin, Alexey Retinsky, Christian Lauba, Chichun Chi-Sun Lee and more. KQ have received grants from FROMM Music Foundation, Eduard van Beinum Foundation and Fonds Podiumkunsten.

“For the Keuris Quartet it was absolutely natural to continue our collaboration with Maxim Shalygin, since it’s for our ensemble that he wrote his very first saxophone quartet — *Insane Dances*. For *TLFEF* it was a real privilege to unite forces together with the great Amstel Quartet, and premiere a piece that had no analogues in the history of music.

It’s always very exciting to see the writing process and the development of the piece from the beginning till the end, from the very first trying sessions until the premiere... In that sense we all feel very much connected to this work, and happy being part of the process! Also interesting to remark how Maxim changed his perception of the saxophone from his first piece, *Insane Dances*, to *..los Fuegos*, how he is searching for the long lines in his textures and aiming to get an absolute maximum of sound and phrasing possibilities from each player. Beautiful, fascinating, challenging piece!”

Evgeny Novikov - soprano saxophone

Kirstin Niederstraßer - alto saxophone

Michal Grycko - tenor saxophone

Juan Manuel Dominguez - baritone saxophone



SPECIAL THANKS

Todos los fuegos-el fuego is a co-commission of the November Music festival & Festival Dag in de Branding, with financial support from the Performing Arts Fund NL & Amsterdam Fund for the Arts. The premiere of the piece took place on the 29th of June 2019 during festival Dag in de Branding at the Zuiderstrandtheater.

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maxim shalygin

 de saxofoonwinkel

Festival
Dag in
de
Branding

AF
AK
amsterdams
fonds voor de
kunst

GRYCKO
VISUALS

KQ

HENRI
SELMER
PARIS

DC NE MUS

no
vern
ber
music
muziek van nu
door de makers van nu

FONDS
PODIUM
KUNSTEN
PERFORMING
ARTS FUND NL



IMF
mteke
fonds



RECORDING DATA

This album was recorded at Muziekhuis Utrecht, The Netherlands, between 27 and 29 September 2019.

ABOUT TRPTK

TRPTK proudly uses DPA microphones, KEF loudspeakers, Hegel amplification, Merging Technologies AD/DA conversion, Furutech cabling and power conditioning, and JCAT network equipment at their recording and mastering facilities, carefully optimized by Acoustic Matters.

All recordings are done in DXD (352.8 kHz 32 bits) in immersive 5.1-channel surround sound, and all masters are generated from the original DXD Studio Master, without any dynamic compression or limiting of the signal. In both stereo and surround sound, our aim is to truly create an immersive experience.

EQUIPMENT

microphones

DPA d:dicat 4006A

DPA d:dicat 4015A

ad/da converters

Merging Technologies HAPI

Merging Technologies Anubis

monitoring

KEF Blade Two loudspeakers (studio)

KEF LS50 loudspeakers (location)

Hegel H30 amplifiers

cabling

Furutech custom microphone cables

Furutech custom loudspeaker cables

Furutech custom power cables

Furutech LineFlux XLR

Furutech NanoFlux NCF

power conditioning

Furutech Daytona 303E

misc.

Furutech NCF Boosters

CAD Ground Control GC1

RTFS Acoustics

JCAT M12 Switch Gold

JCAT NET Card FEMTO



CREDITS

Amstel Quartet

Keuris Quartet

composer/conductor

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trptk