

# Britten reimaged...

marts 2018



Jacob Shaw - cello

Ask La Cour Rasmussen - dans

Ask La Cour Rasmussen, solodanser på New York City Ballet og Jacob Shaw, internationalt prisvindende solocellist, arbejder sammen med produktionsleder Anne-Maria Dobsa, for gennem musik og dans, at skabe en unik fortolkning af den dramatiske 3. solosuite for cello af Benjamin Britten.

## **Projektbeskrivelse for Britten reimagined:**

### **Baggrund:**

Projektet tager udgangspunkt i Brittens Cellosuite No. 3, Opus 87. Cellosuiten er baseret på 3 russiske sange, arrangeret af Tchaikovsky.

Suiten er Brittens sidste værk for cello og dette er, ligesom hans andre værker,, komponeret til den store russiske cellist Mstislav Rostropovich.

Man siger ofte, at når en person nærmer sig døden, passerer hele hans liv revy for hans øjne på bare et splitsekund. På samme måde udspiller formen for denne komposition sig baglæns gennem ni sekvenser, med variationer over temaer, der genopstår i codaen i slutningen af suiten.

“At se musikken og høre dansen”. Dette berømte ballet citat, vil her virkelig komme til sin ret.

Brittens 3. Cellosuite er et meget ekspressivt stykke musik, som udmærket kan stå alene. Dog giver både historien bag musikken, samt værkets form, plads til, efter vores mening, at blive fortolket yderligere rent visuelt. Til dette formål er Ask La Cours specifikke dansestil ideel i samspil med Jacob Shaws enestående, musikalske udtryk.

Publikum vil få en helt enestående mulighed for at overvære 2 fremragende kunstneres individuelle udtryk smelte sammen og fortolke, et efter vores mening, oversat stykke musik til et bredere publikum.

### **Forestillingens koncept:**

Forestillingens varighed er 45 min.

Konceptet for denne forestilling er bygget op omkring en indledning, bestående af en historisk beskrivelse af den samtid, hvori Britten komponerede suiten.

I skæret af lanterner, spiller celloen og danseren vækkes til live. Forestillingen tager sit publikum igennem 9 forskellige sekvenser før den endelige forløsning. (Uddybende kan Jacob Shaws fortolkning af de 9 sekvenser ses herunder).

Forestillingen vil have et meget rå og minimalistisk udtryk, således at det falder i tråd med den rå politiske virkelighed, i hvis kontekst musikken er komponeret. Musikken og dansen understøtter hinanden, smelter sammen for kort efter, at spille op mod hinanden.

Det rum vi har valgt, Kuppelsalen på Dansekapellet, en fantastisk ramme for fortællingen. Det ovale rum, hvor publikum omringer kunstnerne, understøtter på bedste vis den intimitet, der skabes mellem musik og dans. Med meget få virkemidler som lys og skygge, vil musikken og dansen således fortolke historien rå og poetisk på samme tid.

Formålet er at finde den perfekte symbiose mellem musik, dans og historie, uden at der indgår for mange forstyrrende elementer.

## **Planlægning:**

Prøverne finder sted i Dansekapellets prøvesal i København i marts 2018. Der vil være 6 prøvedage og 3 mindre showcases/pilotopførelser for ca. 75 publikummer pr. forestilling.

Hele forløbet, vil blive dokumenteret på film af en dokumentarfilminstruktør. Lige fra den sidste konception hen over prøverne, til det endelige resultat, med det formål at skabe bevidsthed omkring projektet. Vi håber derved at kunne skabe en solid platform for at tage produktionen med til foreløbig Berlin, London og New York, som er steder, vi hver især har en tilknytning og forbindelse til.

Herefter er det meningen at vende tilbage til København i slutningen 2018 med den færdige forestilling i en pakkeform, med dokumentarfilm og forestilling, der både kan anvendes sammen eller hver for sig. På den måde, vil vi have et færdigt produkt, der først og fremmest har stor underholdningsværdi, men også kan bruges som platform for proces læring på forskellige kreative uddannelsessteder, skoler o.l.

Derfor håber vi at Fonden vil støtte os med et beløb på 20.000.kr. og hjælpe os med at virkeliggøre vores drømmeprojekt.

## Med Jacobs egne ord: De 9 sekvenser

*It is often said that when a person nears death their life plays out backwards, flashing in front of their eyes for just a split second: Similarly, the form of this piece appears backwards, with nine movements containing variations on themes that appear only in the coda at the end of the suite.*

*Furthermore, I cannot help but draw parallels between the form of this piece and the personal struggle undertaken by Rostropovich in the USSR during the early 1970s: His friendship and sheltering of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn coupled with his support for dissidents led to official disgrace and eventual exile.*

*Britten quotes the G major prelude of Bach and throughout the suite intertwines variations on Russian songs, before ending almost 30 minutes of heart wrenching passion and beauty with "Hymn for the Departed". I believe this demonstrates a strong show of support for Rostropovich during such a delicate political and humanistic struggle.*

### **I. Introduzione: Lento**

Introduction: The main character. A lone voice weeping to itself - creeps in, cello almost as a whisper. Plucked strings imitate drops of water, or church bells from afar. Starts calm, growing, as a melody emerges from what seems to be nothing. The 2 lines (melodic / plucking) combine to become one... until the pizzicato grows to dominate and start to enter the next piece.

### **II. Marcia: Allegro**

A military dance - we hear the army marching, and shortly after our character escapes and we hear tiptoes, into an almost demonic dance until the military theme catches up again. As the military catches the figure - a beautiful melody of sorrow tries to break through, trying again and again until eventually the melody takes over and brings us into the next piece.

### **III. Canto: Con moto**

A lone voice now singing out with sorrow, perhaps with pity, and sometimes with anger overcoming the beauty. This spills onto the next piece.

### **IV. Barcarolla: Lento**

Quoting Bach prelude in G major, possibly the most well known cello piece of all time. This is clearly Rostropovich playing his cello despite any troubles around him. However as this Barcorolla lirts gently after a few minutes the beauty is once again disturbed as the demons within overpower the beauty, the Barcorolla is disturbed, gains speed and intensity, but as soon as it is disturbed it fades away again and the next piece takes over.

### **V. Dialogo: Allegretto**

Clearly 2 voices, as the demon and the human have almost a fight with the almost guitar like pizzicato chords and the strong battle cry of the bowed string fight for attention. Eventually they join together in a searching trip to find a path in co-existence... which eventually comes towards the end of the mvt and onwards to piece VI.

### **VI. Fuga: Andante espressivo**

Dark, brooding melodies, as a long tune spins and turns with the 2 voices once again intertwining with the cello singing out in fugal like qualities.

### **VII. Recitativo: Fantastico**

Our character is in a room. He is clearly disorientated. In this room there are numerous doors - and he constantly searches for the way out. Each door he opens has a different demon within: a living nightmare. Nothing is as it seems. Finally he chooses a door that seems calm at first but literally explodes into the next piece.

### **VIII. Moto Perpetuo: Presto**

He is swept away and everything seems unclear and too fast - passing at tremendous speed in front of his eyes. Everything is slightly out of grasp - the harmonics in the middle of the piece seem to be in reach but even those slip out of hold and the piece continues to turn and spin.

### **IX. Passacaglia: Lento Solenne.**

His fate is almost sealed. This is a long piece, with an almost religious-procession like quality to it. The 2 voices that we heard throughout the piece continue to talk with each other, like a battle inside the mind. After a long passacaglia, the tension starts to heat up and our 2 voices start to fight. We hear one voice pounding at the door - all becomes violent, before giving way to passion - one voice appears to scream as if it has been caught. Crying out for forgiveness...

After this anguish - Russian children and street songs appear. This is as we have been told by experts often the final stage before death - recollection of the earliest memories.

Finally the time comes, and the "Hymn for the Departed" starts. After this hymn, we hear a voice singing out - that of our main character praying. This prayer brings us to the penultimate phrase - with the most passion and anguish for what has been than anything else in the piece. The harmony sweeps us off our feet and a hand squeezes our last blood from the heart.

The final statement of the piece offers us the final marching rythm that we heard earlier in this Suite - in *II. Marcia: Allegro* - and it fades into the background.

..... Now it is clear that our character has passed.



Den 3. suite for solocello af Benjamin Britten er at finde på Jacob Shaws Dobbelt Debut-udgivelse, publiceret hos internationalt anerkendte Roven Records, hvor den har fået en fænomenal modtagelse.

#### **Classic-CD- Reviews**

*The Britten Third Suite invites comparisons with Rostropovich, for whom it was written, and indeed, Shaw's tone and musical sensibilities often call Slava to mind. The austere beauty of Britten's music is powerfully conveyed, without any hysterics or excess; this is playing of impressive maturity and assurance.*

#### **The Strad**

*A Mature interpretation. Clear and true... dazzlingly effective with a particular beauty in the tranquillo sections.*

#### **Strings Magazine**

*Personal, thoughtful, reflective, capturing an almost eerie sense of musical dialogue with Britten himself.*

#### **Pizzicato Magazine**

*Evocative performance of the Third Suite by Benjamin Britten. He completely immerses himself in the soundworld of the composer. Breathtaking.*

#### **BBC Music Magazine**

*A focus to Shaw's playing that holds attention... [ He] succeeds in building an undeniably profound conclusion, something that has eluded many, more experienced cellists.*