

audite

# signals from heaven

salaputia brass | jeroen berwaerts







solo trumpet / vocals Jeroen Berwaerts

trumpet Anton Borderieux • Markus Czieharz • Peter Dörpinghaus • Jonathan Müller • Lukas Reiß

horn Felix Baur • Andreas Pöche • solo flugelhorn (Swing Low) Julian Wasserfuhr

trombone Aaron Außenhofer-Stilz • Felix Eckert • Philip Pineda Resch

bass trombone Jonas Burow • tuba Joel Zimmermann • percussion instruments Severin Stitzenberger





**Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643)**

Toccata from „Orfeo“ (1607) 1:32

**Giovanni Gabrieli (1557–1612)**

Sonata „Pian e Forte“ C175 from „Sacrae Symphoniae“ 4:43

**George Gershwin (1898–1937)**

„Summertime“ from „Porgy and Bess“ (1935) / arr. Boris Netsvetaev 8:07

**Giovanni Gabrieli**

Canzon primi toni C170 from „Sacrae Symphoniae“ 3:28

**Spiritual** / arr. Boris Netsvetaev

„Sometimes I feel like a motherless child“ 4:13

**Tōru Takemitsu (1930–1996): Signals from Heaven**

I Day Signal 1:51

II Night Signal 2:56

**Giovanni Gabrieli**

Canzon noni toni C173 from „Sacrae Symphoniae“ 2:48

**Spiritual** / arr. Boris Netsvetaev

„Nobody Knows the Trouble I’ve Seen“ 3:21

**Giovanni Gabrieli**

Canzon septimi toni C172 from „Sacrae Symphoniae“ 3:13

**Duke Ellington (1899–1974)**

„Come Sunday“ from „Sacred Concerto No. 1“ (1943/1965) / arr. Boris Netsvetaev 4:55

**Giovanni Gabrieli**

Canzon per sonar prima „La Spiritata“, C186 from „Canzoni“ 2:39

**Spiritual** / arr. Peter Dörpinghaus

Swing Low (4:05-4:42: feat. Julian Wasserfuhr, flugelhorn) 6:20



### The breath of the spirit

In order to clothe the substance of the spirit in words, the wind metaphor has been employed since time immemorial. According to St John, “the spirit breathes where he will”. More prosaic translators prefer to use “wind” for the Greek term “pneuma” (“spiritus” in Latin). The same bible passage then reads “the wind blows where it will”. Both interpretations, however, have in common that the airy phenomenon to which they refer cannot be limited or enclosed. Openness is its very essence. It blows where it pleases. The Japanese composer Tōru Takemitsu felt its waft mainly in the great outdoors: “The wind begins. The mists lift”, Takemitsu wrote in his essay *Gardener of Time*, continuing: “In such moments I feel, within, the musical impulse.” This inspirational experience led him to examine his existence: “But I am not alone. I live – and at the same time am made to live. By what? By whom?”

Rather than answering these questions, Takemitsu referred to his music: “My music is something like a signal sent to the unknown. Moreover, I imagine and believe that my signal meets another’s signal, and the resulting physical change creates a new harmony different from the original two.” This thought was the guiding principle for this recording. The music of a twentieth century Japanese composer, African-American spirituals, early seventeenth century Venetian *maestri di cappella*, and jazz big band star Duke Ellington – what could they have in common? If one listens closely, it becomes clear that their signals do not come to nothing: they respond to one another, defying the confines of epochs, continents and genres, forming a “new harmony”, possibly in the manner that Takemitsu imagined.

Tōru Takemitsu’s relationship with music was decidedly inclusive. He was Japan’s pre-eminent composer of new music in the twentieth century, but he also arranged songs by The Beatles and was a self-declared fan of Prince and Madonna. His film scores feature electronic avant-garde sounds, Bavarian beer tent music, jazz and ancient Japanese music traditions. For Takemitsu, music was as rich and contradictory as life itself. The diversity of styles and influences in his oeuvre reflect the lively diversity of the world as he saw it. Concerning the technical side of composing, Takemitsu was largely self-taught. “Nature and Duke Ellington were my teachers”, he is said to have explained once.

His two *Signals from Heaven* from 1987 clearly reveal Takemitsu’s models, including the father of twentieth century French music, Olivier Messiaen, and also Duke Ellington. There is great





enthusiasm for complex yet sonorous chords, and for rich, colourful sounds. Messiaen compared the effect of his harmonies to the blaze of colours in church windows. Takemitsu wrote his *Day Signal* for the Live Under the Sky Jazz Festival in Tokyo; *Night Signal* was first heard at Scotland's Contemporary Music Festival in Glasgow where Takemitsu was Composer in Residence in 1987. Both pieces are characterised by alternating signals and responses. Following the example of the early Venetian church music composers, Takemitsu also divides the wind ensemble into two groups who engage in a musical dialogue with each other, bridging a considerable spatial gap. The opening sections of his two *Signals* demonstrate these dialogues especially clearly.

### Sacred jazz

It surely is no coincidence that Takemitsu's delicate antennae received signals from the music of Duke Ellington. Ellington, in jazz, epitomised that spirit of crossing boundaries which was also formative for the Japanese composer. The band leader and composer was, and remained, a self-confessed entertainer, but his music transcended the sphere of pure entertainment. Ellington's compositional ambitions become most apparent in his three *Sacred Concertos* which he composed from the mid-1960s, moving his music from the dance hall into church. His first *Sacred Concerto* was written for the Anglican Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, to be performed as part of a concert series which also included Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* and Britten's *War Requiem*. The thought alone that a musical form originating in shadowy clubs and dance establishments was now to be played in churches came as a real impudence to puritans (and possibly to jazz purists as well).

In his *Sacred Concertos* Ellington drew on some previously composed material which he now compiled into suites. For the move into the church space, he re-arranged the music and added a choir, as well as tap dancers, to the vocal soloists. The tap dance in particular would presumably have invoked the conservatives' holy wrath. However, the *Sacred Concertos*, as well as the entire genre of sacred jazz, proved an enormous success. When touring the first *Sacred Concerto*, Ellington and his orchestra not only appeared across the US but also in Britain, at Coventry Cathedral. *Come Sunday*, which Ellington had incorporated into the first *Sacred Concerto*, had been written as early as 1943 for his jazz suite *Black, Beige and Brown*. The title of this suite depicts its programme – it is the history of Afro-Americans which is represented in this music. In order



that the queen of gospel singing, Mahalia Jackson, would be able to perform his number, Ellington added words to *Come Sunday* in 1958.

Did Ellington therefore really transplant jazz music into a foreign sphere when he brought it into church, or did he, in fact, take it back to its spiritual origins? For all black music in North America started with spirituals, some of which, such as *Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen*, became standard jazz numbers, apparently as a matter of course. In these songs, the suffering and the religious beliefs of the Afro-American population were expressed in their most original form. George Gershwin achieved a true cultural transfer when he put (quasi) black music onto the opera stage in 1935 with *Porgy and Bess* and the evergreen *Summertime*.

### Canzonas for San Marco

On closer examination, different spheres of life and culture were rarely as neatly separated as proponents of “pure doctrines” might have wanted them to be. Claudio Monteverdi introduced his opera *Orfeo* with a grand fanfare which he re-used, years later, as the opening to his greatest sacred work, the monumental setting of the *Vespers of 1610*. In both cases it pays tribute to his most eminent patrons, the Gonzaga family, for whom this fanfare would have been something like a sonic family emblem. These signal notes announced great things. The sacred and the secular are inseparable amongst the great Venetian artists of this era; although Monteverdi's main profession was that of *maestro di cappella* at St Mark's, he was also the first great master of the newly invented art form of opera.

At St Mark's, a musical discovery had been made whose repercussions were to extend to Bach's *St Matthew Passion* or Takemitsu's *Signals from Heaven*: the polychoral style. During the mid-sixteenth century, the characteristics of St Mark's, with its many cupolas and galleries, had already been put to use for acoustic effects. Initially, two choirs would be positioned on different galleries, to the right and the left of the apse. For the listeners in the main nave these sounds, coming from an elevated position and from several directions, must indeed have seemed like signals from heaven. The spatially distant positioning of divided ensembles also led to a new form of composing. Instead of elaborate counterpoint, composers now increasingly created sonic dramas: high and low, left and right, loud and soft became categories which the masters of the “Venetian school” employed in order to create music that aimed towards a sensuous immediacy rather than esoteric erudition.





Giovanni Gabrieli perfected this new technique of thinking in sounds. Even the forms which he preferred attest to the new understanding of music. In the case of the canzona, singing and the association with a song are already indicated by the name. Instead of intricate counterpoints there are simple, melodious lines, effectively harmonised and distributed amongst the choirs. But this music, which after all was written for services, is not just song-like, but distinctly rhythmic, almost dance-like. Gabrieli's canzonas are interspersed with passages in triple time and the rhythm of a jolly galliard. They also provided ample opportunity for virtuosic displays and improvisation. Virtuosos such as the musicians of St Mark's cultivated the art of diminution, with brilliant cascades of the smallest note values gracing the melodies.

At the time, there was no clear musical differentiation between the canzona and the sonata, although the sonata seems to have been reserved to accompany the central liturgical action, the Elevation of the Host. The quality of the tone in a piece such as the *Sonata "pian e forte"*, C175, is therefore suitably solemn. Undoubtedly musicians had played loud and soft before as well, but in this piece Gabrieli consistently uses volume as a stylistic device to create passages of particular intimacy or grandeur.

### Connecting people

Jeroen Berwaerts' response as to what he intends to achieve with the compilation of music on this CD is "connecting people". What he does not want is also clear: "crossover". It is not a matter of mixing different styles, but of combining different voices which have something to say to one another. Tōru Takemitsu, who called himself an inhabitant of the "global ice", held a very similar view. His credo was: "Every culture should be understood as being distinctive of a particular region, yet still changeable, not bound to the concert of a nation or an institution. Is this attitude not the basis of true mutual understanding?"

*Ilja Stephan*

Translation: Viola Scheffel



## jeroen berwaerts

Belgian trumpeter Jeroen Berwaerts (b.1975) is a musical powerhouse whose all-embracing love of music knows no genre boundaries. Praised for his outstanding technical skills and sensitive musicality, his repertoire encompasses every epoch, from baroque music through contemporary music and jazz.

His musical versatility is also reflected in a rare double talent: alongside his burgeoning trumpet career, Jeroen Berwaerts has completed jazz vocal studies at the Royal Conservatory of Ghent. He has devised several programmes for small ensembles (with piano, strings, organ or brass ensemble) in which he combines trumpet and voice as well as classical, jazz and other genres in a truly unique way. He also developed the concept for “Signals from Heaven” which he went on to record with Salaputia Brass.

Jeroen Berwaerts enriches the contemporary music scene not only as a soloist but also through commissioning works: recent concert highlights include the Dutch premiere of Toshio Hosokawa’s second trumpet concerto *Im Nebel* as well as the Belgian and Swiss premieres of Francesco Filidei’s *Carnevale*. Jeroen Berwaerts did not only commission both works but also gave their world premieres in 2013 and 2015 respectively. He is the second trumpeter worldwide – after Håkan Hardenberger, for whom the work was written – to add HK Gruber’s extremely virtuosic trumpet concerto *Busking* (2007) to his repertoire.

Jeroen Berwaerts regularly appears as a soloist with international orchestras under renowned conductors as well as in chamber music recitals. He is a frequent guest at prestigious international music festivals. From 1999 until 2013 he held the position of Principal Trumpet of the NDR Sinfonieorchester Hamburg.

His discography includes recordings of Hosokawa’s *Voyage VII*, Shostakovich’s Concerto for Piano, Trumpet and String Orchestra, Hindemith’s Trumpet Sonata as well as further works for trumpet and piano by composers such as Charlier, Martinů, Honegger, Françaix, Ligeti, Takemitsu and Enescu.

Jeroen Berwaerts studied with the celebrated trumpet virtuoso Reinhold Friedrich in Karlsruhe. He was awarded numerous prizes in competitions including the Concours Maurice André and the Prague Spring International Music Competition (both in 1997).

Since 2008, Jeroen Berwaerts has been Professor of Trumpet at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Hanover.





## salaputia brass

The members of Salaputia Brass met already as young musicians while playing for the Bundesjugendorchester (German National Youth Orchestra), before forming the ensemble in 2007. Their success story began when they won First Prize at the Jugend musiziert national competition, continuing with a prize at the International Competition for Brass Ensembles in Passau. Scholarships from the Deutsche Stiftung Musikleben (German Foundation for Musical Life) and Erwin Fricke Foundation followed.

Performing engagements led Salaputia Brass to concerts and festivals throughout Germany, including the Mozartfest Würzburg, Schleswig-Holstein Musikfestival, Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Aschaffener Bachtage, and Podium Festival Esslingen. They have also toured abroad, making appearances in Mexico City, Washington, D.C., France, and China.

Today many of the ensemble's members occupy solo positions in such leading German orchestras as the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, Gürzenich-Orchester Köln, Konzerthausorchester Berlin, Hessisches Staatsorchester Wiesbaden, Philharmonisches Staatsorchester Hamburg, and Augsburger Philharmoniker. The ensemble has made a name for itself among audiences and critics alike, maintaining high artistic standards and a professional level of music-making in a way that listeners enjoy.

The ensemble's remarkable musicianship was already evident on their debut CD for audite (October 2016). The current CD is the next joint release (February 2017).



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