



" There is no absolute point in time. Any point in time is merely a logical abstraction. In fact, it is, roughly speaking, a chord of points - moments - that embodies hours and days, rather than a second... The way to capture this at once, exists beyond this physical world. One can imagine a second that embraces everything - past and future. The whole world rolls up into one point. And then these countless times and places depart, diverge, and unroll... "

**Alexander Ivashkin** *Conversations with Alfred Schnittke*

This album discusses the invisible connection between Alfred Schnittke, Pēteris Vasks and Arvo Pärt, and my personal connection with them. It explores three pieces, each written approximately at the end of the 1970s, during the period of the Soviet Union.

History always creates an imprint on the composers' output. However, apart from a possible historical link between Schnittke, Vasks and Pärt one might imagine, I felt something more than that. In these three pieces, I felt a sense of timelessness and an urge for an ultimate truth, to be explored through a juxtaposition of extreme emotions, and found in the musical representation of silence.

When I heard Schnittke's *Sonata for Cello and Piano* for the very first time, I envisioned an endless circle of birth and death, with a quick disastrous gallop of life in between. This sonata has had a deep and transformative influence on me, and it epitomized to me what I was looking for in music: the experience of catharsis.

To me, the music of Vasks has a certain resolute force of veracity as told straight from the heart, a truth that can only be found through investigating the biggest opposites: peace through unrest, light through darkness. *The Book*, in its two movements, is about one's voice emerging and elevating above the turmoil of one's psychological reality.

*Fratres* feels to me like two brothers going through life, side by side. One frantically and emotionally trying to grasp the secrets of life and death, the other ever so still and stable, providing a frame of reason for his sibling. One brother as the instant, the other portraying eternity, and the two of them represent the perpetual struggle within oneself.

*The Invisible Link* is not only about the invisible connection between Alfred Schnittke, Pēteris Vasks, and Arvo Pärt, or about the relationship between the three pieces. It is about the invisible link connecting the purest and most extreme of emotions, with the everlasting stillness of time itself.

**Alfred Schnittke** (November 24th, 1934 – August 3rd 1998) was a postmodernist Russian composer who created serious, dark-toned musical works characterized by abrupt juxtapositions of radically different, often contradictory styles, an approach that came to be known as *polystylism*.

Schnittke's father was a Jewish journalist who had been born in Germany but was of Latvian descent, and his mother was a Volga-born German Catholic; he found inspiration for his music in his German origins and in his homeland. From 1946 to 1948 the family lived in Vienna, where Schnittke learned to play the piano and studied music theory. His studies were completed at the Moscow Conservatory, where he later taught composition. Like most Soviet composers, Schnittke was required to produce many works in easily digestible Socialist Realist style, particularly film scores, of which he wrote more than 60 between 1961 and 1984.

Like his great predecessor Dmitry Shostakovich, Schnittke intermingled disjointed elements within a single work, but his combinations were far more jarring – an offhand Beethoven quotation, a distorted folk song, fragments of a medieval chant, and passages of ferociously dense, dissonant serialism might appear within the space of a few minutes.

**Pēteris Vasks** (April 16th, 1946) is a Latvian composer, born into the family of a Baptist pastor. He trained as a violinist at the Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music, as a double-bass player with Vitautas Sereikaan at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, and played in several Latvian orchestras before entering the State Conservatory in Vilnius in the neighbouring Lithuania to study composition with Valentin Utkin.

He was prevented from studying composition in Latvia due to Soviet repressive policy toward Baptists. He started to become known outside Latvia in the 1990s, when Gidon Kremer started championing his works, and is now one of the most influential and praised European contemporary composers.

Vasks feels strongly about environmental issues, and a sense of nature, both pristine and destroyed, can be found in many of his works, which are also often associated with his country's struggle for independence. Critics who discuss Vasks in the context of his Latvian inspiration and artistic debt to Witold Lutoslawski nevertheless acknowledge his originality, his characteristic soulfulness, and melodic subtlety, as well as a universality of expression that identifies Vasks as a major European composer.

**Arvo Pärt** (September 11th, 1935) was born in a small town in the Estonian countryside. According to a biographer of the composer, he grew up playing an ancient grand piano that lacked a middle register, so that he made music only at extremes of high and low.

His first serious study came in 1954 at the Tallinn Music Middle School, but less than a year later he temporarily abandoned it to fulfill military service, playing oboe and percussion in the army band. While at the Tallinn Conservatory, he studied composition with Heino Eller. As a student, he produced music for film and stage. From 1957 to 1967, he worked as a sound engineer for Estonian radio.

In 1976, Pärt discovered a new, radically simplified language of composition, which came to be called *tintinnabuli*, after the Latin word for *bell*. In its basic form, it involves the interweaving of two voices, one of which moves by melodic steps, while the other rotates through the pitches of a major or minor chord. The *tintinnabuli* works were also informed by an intense religiosity, flowing from Pärt's embrace of Russian Orthodoxy. Pärt is often identified with the school of minimalism and, more specifically, that of mystic minimalism or *holy minimalism*.

By the late seventies, as Pärt began to acquire international fame, he found that he was not permitted to travel freely abroad, and that his works were being taken off the market. In 1979, at a meeting of the Estonian Composers' Union, Pärt denounced official policy while wearing a longhaired wig. The following year, he was able to obtain an exit visa to Israel.

Later, Arvo Pärt and his family were able to stay in Vienna – and later, Berlin – thanks to the help of the musician playing the prepared piano in his first Western performance of *Tabula Rasa*, Alfred Schnittke.



Born on November 7th, 1989 in Moscow, Russia, **Maya Fridman** is a talented young cellist residing in The Netherlands.

From her early years of playing the cello, Maya was recognized as a prodigy and was taken under the hood of the Foundation of Yuri Bashmet, where she took part in TV and radio programs. While studying at the Moscow State College of Music named after Alfred Schnittke, she was awarded as the First Prize Winner in the International Festival of Slavic Music among many other reputable awards.

In 2010, Maya has been granted admission at the Conservatory of Amsterdam where she studied under Dmitry Ferschtman. Here, on the 10th of June, 2016, she successfully finished her Master's Degree with honours.

During these six years of studying, Maya has participated in several masterclasses and has worked with artists such as David Geringas, Pieter Wispelwey, Gary Hoffman, Frances-Marie Uitti, Anner Bylsma, Ernst Reijseger, and many more.

For the last five years, Maya has been performing regularly in The Netherlands and Germany. Her projects include a successful collaboration with singer-songwriter Jyoti Verhoeff. In December 2013, Jyoti and Maya became finalists of the Grote Prijs van Nederland, where Maya was awarded the Best Musician of 2013 Prize.

She has also accompanied legendary guitar virtuoso Harry Sacksioni on his Jubileum tour and joined bands such as Faun and Cesair as a special guest.

Furthermore, Maya performs together with Aengus Hackett and Mauricio Ramirez under the name of Dinosaur Trio. Dinosaur plays a variety of rock, jazz and improvised music and has toured through Ireland in the summer of 2014.

In 2015 she released her debut album *The Invisible Link* which she recorded together with Daniël Kool and released under TRPTK.

Her next album will feature her own arrangement of Prokofiev's opera *The Fiery Angel* for cello and piano, on which she worked together with pianist Artem Belogurov. Her arrangement received an acknowledgement during her graduation exam and was nominated for the Amsterdam University of the Arts Graduation Prize 2016 as best work.

Dutch pianist **Daniël Kool** (1986) started playing the piano when he was five years old, and after four years of playing, he won a regional competition. In 1997, he was admitted to the Young Talent department of the Conservatory of Amsterdam, where he studied with Majes Benoist. He finished his Bachelor's and Master's degree at the Conservatory of Amsterdam with Mila Baslawskaja. Next to this, Daniël participated in different courses in The Netherlands and abroad.

Daniël has won several national and international prizes, and was praised for his refined and clear style of playing. Daniël is a respected and frequently asked soloist and chamber musician, and he is part of several ensembles. He forms a duo with soprano Nora Fisher and with cellist Ketevan Roinishvili with whom he performs regularly.

Daniël frequently performs in The Netherlands and abroad. In 2003, he made his debut in Carnegie Hall, New York. He made tours in the United States, United Arab Emirates, Indonesia and The Netherlands with varied programs and performers. Daniël regularly performs in The Netherlands and Europe. Furthermore, he also performed with different orchestras as a soloist.

**TRPTK** was founded in 2014 by audio engineer Brendon Heinst, music producer Luuk Meijssen, and cinematographer Nicky Regelink, as a movement against degradation of sound quality and emotional impact in the music industry.

Involved in more than 90 recordings to date, audio engineer Brendon Heinst felt it was high time to change the way music is recorded nowadays, and to create modern-sounding recordings with completely transparent equipment and techniques.

By using state-of-the-art recording technologies such as the DXD recording and mastering format of 352.8 kHz 24 bits, custom-built recording equipment and ultra-high-end cabling, TRPTK strives to create a completely emotionally transparent path between the artist and the listener.

By using 5.1-channel surround sound recording techniques, TRPTK creates an immersive experience, acoustically and emotionally conveying the recorded performance.

TRPTK's recordings are always recorded, mixed and mastered by TRPTK's engineer Brendon Heinst and producer Luuk Meijssen, and CDs are created directly from the DXD 352.8 kHz 24 bits stereo master, without any intermediate steps involved.

TRPTK proudly uses **Furutech** cabling at their mastering facilities.

<b>MICROPHONES</b>	Sonodore RCM-402 ( <i>main</i> ) Sonodore BLM-21 ( <i>surround</i> ) Brauner VM-1 ( <i>cello, vocals</i> )
<b>PREAMPLIFIERS</b>	Sonodore MPB-508
<b>CABLING</b>	Siltech custom mono-crystal cables Furutech FA-220 interlinks Furutech FS-Alpha loudspeaker cables
<b>AD/DA CONVERSION</b>	Merging Technologies Horus
<b>MONITORING</b>	Avalon Professional Mixing Monitors Spectral DMA-100

**Recording, Mixing & Mastering** Brendon Heinst

**Assistant Engineering** Luuk Meijssen

**Photography & Artwork** Brendon Heinst

**Liner Notes** Maya Fridman & Brendon Heinst

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