

By Alexandra Ivanoff

“Sei Solo 2020” – a musical journey through lockdown

Leave it to musicians – composers to be precise – to tell the unvarnished truth. Klasik Keyifler has released their premiere CD, “Sei Solo 2020,” a collection of 12 short pieces (6 for violin, 6 for cello) which express the collective confusion and shock of the unprecedented lockdown of society in 2020. The resulting existential angst provides the momentum in this unusual album, recorded Aug-October of that year.

[Klasik Keyifler](#), the 14-year-old NGO that has presented their yearly chamber music summer festival in Cappadocia since 2008, created the Composers Cauldron Program to be able to commission and showcase new works. For this project, 12 of them wrote specific pieces to be performed and recorded by six accomplished soloists: cellists Poyraz Baltacıgil, Gökhan Bağcı, and Dorukhan Doruk; and violinists Muhammedjan Sharipov, Ayşen Ulucan, and Kerem Tuncer.

Composers İdil Özkan, Alican Çamcı, Can Kazaz, Aida Shirazi, Hakkı Cengiz Eren, Senay Uğurlu, Camilio Mendez, Engin Dağlık, Can Bilir, Mert Kocadayı, Mert Moralı, and Didem Coşkunseven, created sound tapestries inspired by the string suites of six solos by Bach as the fundamental source of the title “Sei Solo,” which also translates to “You Are Alone” in Italian, and “Be Alone” in German.

Many of the pieces exhibit a personal “cri du coeur” via the use of frantic tremolos, special bow effects, and spooky harmonics to paint strong personal portraits of deprivation and despair alongside quirky idylls of inspired improvisation during isolation.

Extreme beauty was in abundance as well, especially in cellist Baltacıgil’s superb performance of Özkan’s eloquent “Passage to Ghostland,” and through violinist Sharipov’s extraordinary rendering of Kocadayı’s compelling “non- whispering” — two works that stand out for both pulsating drama and exquisite intimacy.

Several pieces channel various quotes from Bach’s string suites, stretching them into the abyss or letting them fly by like a blip on the horizon, such as Uğurlu’s “The Feeling of Déjà-Vu” executed by cellist Bağcı, while other scores suggested quirkier survival mechanisms. “I think I’ll paint the wall now...” is a feeling generated in Çamcı’s “Galantine Redux,” (skillfully played by Doruk) a spacious work where randomness and subliminal signals rule.

The spirit of anarchy takes over in Bilir's "Ephemeral Qualia" where glass-shattering and fireworks pepper the atmosphere, and Morali's "Economic Offering" where disenfranchisement ends with a take-no-prisoners pizzicato snap. Both scores were fearlessly delivered by violinist Tuncer.

Violinist Ulucan sang and played simultaneously in her rendition of Mendez' "5 Fragments for a Vocalizing Violinist" — a daunting task. Her wordless and almost childlike threnody accompanied a minimalistic effect-driven palate of sounds that suggested a contrast between a child's innocence versus the adult's sense of horror.

"Sei Solo 2020," recorded in Ada Studios in Istanbul and supported by the Chamber Music Exchange, ADA Classicalia, and the Engel Family Foundation, is a remarkable document, not only for Klasik Keyifler's prominence in the contemporary music world, but for providing a fascinating soundtrack to the pandemic era's bizarrité. It also serves as a brilliant showcase for all the musicians involved, giving them the global spotlight.

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Link to the Turkish version of this article in Andante Magazine:

www.andante.com.tr/tr/11073/Sokaga-cikma-Yasaginda-Muzikal-Bir-Yolculuk-Sei-Solo-2020