

Concerto for violin and chamber orchestra (2006-7) 24.52

1	I.	Preludio	1.53
2	II.	Lento	3.07
3	III.	$\text{♩}=126$	6.24
4	IV.	Chorale, Canone & Passacaglia	6.46
5	V.	Finale	6.33

Emanuel Salvador (violin)  
Sudecka Philharmonic Orchestra  
Conducted by Bartosz Żurkowski

6 Violin Concerto No. 2 (2011-12) 25.04

Marta Magdalena Lelek (violin)  
Sudecka Philharmonic Orchestra  
Conducted by Bartosz Żurkowski

Total CD duration 49.56

Recorded at Sudeten (Sudecka) Philharmonic Concert Hall, Walbrzych, Poland  
30 May – 2 June, 2012  
Engineered edited and mastered by Grzegorz Stec

Listening carefully to the *Concerto for violin and chamber orchestra* (2007) and the *Violin Concerto no. 2* (2012) by Karl Fiorini (1979), it is not difficult to imagine him as a child, who in Malta, his country of birth, listened to and grew up with the wonderful, magical and powerful world of the richness of sound of his first piano. From that moment on, when fascination and surprise joined with his vital and irrepressible impulse to make and create music, his whole life took a new path towards the *ars sonora* until, at just 33 years of age, he attained quite a significant, multi-faceted, international reputation. Indeed, personal circumstances and his own prevailing need to grow and learn, to drink in the world beyond geographic limits and the conservatism of his place of origin, led to his endless progression and the path towards discovery (and consequently, perhaps his estrangement in such a restless search) being the most particular features of his music.

There is no doubt that if anything has characterised – and is still characterising – our composer, who is still in the midst of dazzling youth despite his already long career, it is due to his farsightedness and his need for freedom. Therefore, once his studies in his home country were completed, he had no hesitation in moving to England, where he trained in the *Guildhall School of Music and Drama* in London and afterwards in the *Royal College of Music* in the same city. He then moved to France where, after approximately one year in Lyon, he settled in Paris, where he currently lives and works; he has also served as composer-residence at the conservatoire in Avignon. Throughout this long journey, and up to the present time, his performance from a musical point of view has been conducted in two fundamental ways.

From a composition point of view, his catalogue has increased with works ranging from those dedicated to the solo instrument to others for orchestral music, among which, to cite just a few, we could perhaps mention *Rêves Obscurs* (2008/09), *La nuit commence à tomber* (2010/11) or *Cadavre Exquis for three voices and ensemble* (2012), through chamber music and concertos for soloist instruments, such as those on this recording, in addition to the *Concerto for cello and orchestra* (2005), and even collaboration on the short film *Fênêtre, Fênêtre*.

However, it is not only Karl Fiorini's work as a composer that is notable, not only the fact that he has received various awards including, among several others, ALEA III International Composition Competition, Boston (2005) or the corresponding prize in the IX Edition of the Composition Competition of the Sinfonietta of Luxembourg (2010), and the fact that his work has been interpreted by orchestras and soloists of some prestige in the very best concert halls that give us an illustration of his work, but also the fact that, aware of the need to open horizons in his native country, he showed no hesitation, some seven years ago, in organising and directing the *International Spring Orchestra Festival*. This was quite a challenge and a big risk for someone undertaking such an enterprise alone in a world full of difficulties, where battles must be fought – not only against the inconveniences and problems arising from its very infrastructure, but also against – and this is the most significant aspect – prejudices of all kinds, mainly those of an aesthetic nature.

However, in order to focus ourselves on and briefly get close to his music, and more specifically the concertos that concern us, let's return to the beginning and to the "estrangement" we alluded to earlier, which merges with or is evident in the two fundamental features that have frequently and successfully been seen in Fiorini's music: eclecticism and the neo-romanticism.

His eclecticism is a direct result of the restlessness of his character and his continual intellectual curiosity. His steady approach to everything, which has provided him with the substance he has been able to feed off – whether in the field of music, dance, literature or art – has led to the influences and references in his work being varied and constant.

However, it appears that the most peculiar aspect – and the point where his "estrangement" starts – is that through these fields he manages to use the substance of sound through alienation and even mutation, as if it did not exclusively concern sound, by adding perspectives taken from other artistic expressions – a kind of denaturing, which results surprisingly in music which is pure and of enormous expressiveness.

With dance, we can perhaps look not to the control of the rhythm and the mastery of time in general, but rather a method of inserting or distributing the substance of sound within space. This is how the relationship with the spoken word also goes beyond the use or inspiration of texts, as perhaps we find in those by Dante (*Rêves*

*Obscurs*) or in contemporary poetry (*Cadavre Exquis*). In the works that have no textual references, as is the case with the concertos that we are dealing with here, the musical message exhibits its concepts that are only explainable and understandable within the mystery of pure sonorous code by means of (and in that sense they are as real as they are unattainable) a declamatory method, which in principle is more typical of the spoken word.

Art, on the other hand, also leads to such a shift. An artificial manipulation of sound is produced, primarily in the *Concerto for violin and chamber orchestra* starting from the eternal dichotomy between what is and what appears to be, between what is perceived (colour) and what actually is (a combination of pigments, which together produce the feeling). For that reason, it is conceived more from a timbric perspective than from fine tuning, resulting in an overall orchestral sound which moves and expresses itself as a set of timbres, acting as a foundation for and, at the same time, in opposition to the soloist instrument.

Thus, if the Orchestra paints us a picture, then the soloist speaks to us in another dimension of time and space or depth, which, as we have already mentioned, may originate in dance, and all to give coherence and unity to such admirable works and filling them surprisingly with meaning.

The three methods of manipulating sound we have referred to allow Fiorini to have all the co-ordinates to paint specific soundscapes exhibited by both these two concertos as well as by the whole of his catalogue. His eclecticism has been rounded off with musical references, which in this case originate from the great authors of the twentieth century. Works such as the *Concerto for violin and Orchestra* by Sibelius or the *Concerto for violin and Orchestra No. 1* by Bartók show this perfectly, whereas perhaps the echoes of Lutosławski or Penderecki do not have these in evidence. This is because, like it or not, we inevitably find ourselves pervaded by a tradition that offers us a series of values and codes that are adapted to the new mood of the times. However – and we believe this is the neo-romantic aspect – the starting point is not the collapse of the world that these masters of the twentieth century witnessed and suffered; it does not concern the two world wars, nor totalitarianism; it is not Nazism or the *Gulag*; it is not despair that forces the creation of a new world in sound, a new order such as dodecaphonic pieces and a radical change in ideas, but rather a world that is expressed on the inside; one which is more intimate to the author.

The composer's estrangement, which has made sound become something else and be treated as such, is a direct consequence of the fact that the character and the personality of the artist, which permeates everything in the most nineteenth century fashion, is in turn seen as strange and alien.

This feature occurs with great clarity in both concertos even though the motivation varies. The *Concerto for violin and chamber orchestra* came about quite soon after the loss of the author's mother. Such a harsh blow for this young man suddenly awakened in him a reality, which was unknown up to that point. Life, just like colour or sound, turned out to be something else: the remoteness, the distance, the unintelligibility – these are the same "feelings" the violin undergoes against the soundscape painted by the orchestra, and against which it "speaks" and expresses itself. Its distinct character differs from the due flow of the discourse of the orchestra and so the relationship with the violin comes much closer to anguish than to serenity.

In the *Violin Concerto no. 2*, the permanence of this trait continues to flow from the feelings of the composer and so still finds itself within the neo-romantic sphere. However, it no longer obeys any isolated or specific circumstance – even though this was so significant that it surely marked the rest of his life – but rather his own temperament. This method of confronting the creation of music brings Fiorini closer to Schubert or Brahms, ultimately to the purest Central European romanticism. His anxiety, his quest, his restlessness, the unfulfilled yearning, and with so much impetus, have kept him in a state of imprisonment, from which, on this tireless journey to unravel the phenomenon that is music, there may be, by his own profession, no release.

Nevertheless, continuous research and the full awareness of the times in which he lives means that, far from being anchored in the past, he is opening up channels and always looking for new ways in which, without surrendering to fashion, he feels free to do what he believes in and stay true to the music and to himself.

These two concertos for the violin and orchestra are the beginning of the sound record of this creative career, which, without a doubt, is a significant and an accomplished one. We hope they will serve as a benchmark for generations to come.

Ana Bocanegra Briasco

**Karl Fiorini  
&  
Grzegorz Stec  
in the studio**



**Bartosz  
Żurkowski  
&  
Karl Fiorini  
discuss the score**



## The composer: Karl Fiorini

**Karl Fiorini** (b. 1979) made his first contact with music in his native country, Malta, studying composition with Charles Camilleri, before going to London to further his studies at the Guildhall School of Music and the Royal College of Music.

Fiorini's compositions have been performed in major European cities, in the US, Japan and Latin America. Some of his works were featured in festivals such as the Europamusicale Festival (2004), The Compositors a Barcelona; Spain (2005), The XII Edition of the Biennial Youth Festival, Naples; Italy (2005), The Tres Cantos Festival, Spain (2006) and the Time of Music Festival, Finland (2007).

Performances in important classical music venues include the Leipzig Gewandhaus, the Berlin Konzerthaus, the Cadogan Hall, London, the Auditorium Gulbenkian, Lisbon, the Manoel Theatre, Malta, Les Invalides, Paris and the Kyoto City Concert Hall, Japan. Among the ensembles and orchestras who have performed his compositions include the Pierrot Lunaire Ensemble Wien, the Rotterdam Ensemble, the European Union Chamber Orchestra, the Orquestra do Norte of Portugal, the Lublin Philharmonic and the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, England.

In September 2004 Fiorini co-won the 22nd edition of the ALEAIII International Composition Competition in Boston University and won 3rd Prize during the 9th edition of the Luxembourg Sinfonietta Composition Competition 2010. In June 2005 Fiorini won the Tracey Chadwell Memorial Prize for voice composition at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London. In March 2005 he was laureate with honorable mention at the Franz Schubert and the Music and Modern Times composition competition, Graz, Austria. Karl Fiorini has also been awarded bursaries by the Janatha Stubbs Trust Fund (2004, and 2008), the Garfield Weston Foundation (2005) and the Peter Moores Foundation (2006). Important commissions include a violin concerto (2007) for the leader of the Orquestra do Norte; Portugal, Harmonies Étendues (2008) for the European Union Chamber Orchestra, Kennst du das Land (2010) for voice and orchestra and Cadavre Exquis for the Ensemble Telemaque (2012).

Fiorini is artistic director of the International Spring Orchestra Festival, an annual classical music event taking place at the National Theatre of Malta, Teatru Manoel. Fiorini lives and works in Paris.

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