

ET IN ARCADIA EGO

BY PAU FERNÁNDEZ BENLLOCH

This Latin idiom comprises with utter perfection the irreconcilable positions that arise when music unfolds as a social function towards the power of reality itself. This program was a beautiful dialectical fight between two men who passionately shouted out loudly what music meant for them, and it made us make a choice, or, at least, make the effort to understand the possibilities that were so honestly presented at us, poor audience, which peacefully entered the cozy concert hall. Paradise and death, evasion and confrontation, memory and reality. Not any simple words to get acquainted with.

Hillborg's music inhabits a distance place, foreign to us all, but at the same time profoundly wished and desired. A landscape that almost appears as imaginary of waves of all colors, endless plains, and whirling winds. A kind of earthy Arcadia, a way of escaping reality in reality, a sort of meta-reality. In a convulse time, this is the biggest aim of desires, it fulfills a certain self-condescendence and fetishism which somehow guides daily life and utopia. It is the dream of the common man, the wish of improvement, the promise of paradise, but alas it is only real for a few. This is music that plays on the border between reality and dream, and in that border is where the pantomime of all kinds of utopia are displayed, a pantomime which can be translated into many languages and names, a cloud which makes reality appear as a product of will.

But *ego sum*. Like in the Poussin's paintings, even in the most elusive of Arcadias, death reigns as an almighty anti-God, as the germinator of life and its cycles. And in that sudden opening of eyes after the dream is where Shostakovich's music finds its most natural ecosystem. The continuous dialectics between will and possibilities, desire and fact make a certain truth arise: material conditions limit ourselves to the deepest of our perception, and in that unmerciful violence is where life takes place. And that life is also brutally depicted in sounds, it becomes almost awfully intimate: we read a personal diary which appears to show itself as a complete inner world. In that sense, Mahler shadow overlooks at the symphony where private details are cryptically revealed: prohibited love stories, personal statements, bitter irony of reality as a closure... But when putting all of that in between the boundaries of reality, his inner self doesn't just observe or apprehend, it fights, it speaks up against the terrible conditions of that time and place. Now, in the contrast between that engrossed world of the ego and the punitive qualities of reality is also where the contradiction between conflict/resolution, teleological, universalist dialectics of XVIIIth and XIXth Century form idioms and the almost pornographic revelations of the symphony take place. If Shostakovich is a formalist, he will only be it in that sense.

This program was definitely music for our times, a way of acquiring a deeper understanding of what war, compromise, need of protection and self-care mean. It was music that spoke directly to us and our reality without interferences.