

Niklas Sivelöv Pianist & Composer

Niklas Sivelöv has around 50 piano concertos in his repertory.
5 of those are his own compositions.

Collaborated with:

*Paavo Berglund, Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Okko Kamu, Janos Fürst,
Kazufumi Yamashita*

*Kristjan Järvi, Sakari Oramo, Thomas Dausgaard, Jorma Panula, Alan Gilbert, Andrew Grams,
Mario Venzago*

*Markus Lethinen, Niklas Willén, Leif Segerstam, Kees Bakels, Sachio Fujioka, Eivind Aadland,
Petter Sundqvist*

*Giancarlo Andretta, Horia Andreescu, Ovidiu Balan, Mats Rondin, Yan Wang, Mika Eichenholz,
Florian Totan*

Eric Ericsson, Garry Walker, Grzegorz Nowak, Simon Gaudenz. a.o

With orchestras such as:

*Stockholm Radio Symphony Orchestra, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra,
Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, Danish National Symphony Orchestra, Copenhagen Philharmonic*

*MDR Orchestra Leipzig, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Rheinische Filarmonie Koblenz, Winterthur
Stadtsorkester, Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra*

*Helsingborg Symphonic Orchestra, Malmö Sympony Orchestra, Bukarest Philharmonic Orchestra
Tonhalle Orkester Zurich*

*Orkester Norden, Estonian National Symphony Orchestra, Turku Philharmonic Orchestra,
Norrbottens Chamber Orchestra*

*Swedish Chamber Orchestra, Sundsvall Chamber Orchestra, Aarhus Symphonic Orchestra,
Banatul Philharmonic of Timisoara, Västerås Sinfonietta, Norrlandsoperan Symphony Orchestra*

*Constanta Symphony Orchestra, Osnabrück Symphony Orchestra, Odense Symphony Orchestra,
South Denmark Philharmonic, Neubrandenburger Philharmonie a.o*

Collaborates with musicians such as:

Leonid Gorokhov, Zachar Bron, Eszter Haffner, The Jaques Thibaud String Trio, Mark Peskanov, Andreas Brantelid, Martin Fröst

Grigori Zishlin, Malena Ernman, Sophie Shao, The Kroumata Percussion Ensemble, Markus Leoson Patrick Gallois, Oystein Baadsvik, Mats Rondin, Olle Persson, Charlotte Hellekant, Emily Beynon, Szymon Krzeszowiec, The Silesian String Quartet a.o.

Performed in Halls such as:

The Carnegie Hall, The Barbican Center, Le Frak Hall NYC, Tonhalle Zurich, The Kennedy Center, Stockholm Concert Hall, Berwald Hall Stockholm, Gewandhaus Leipzig

Konzerthaus Karlsruhe, Tivoli Copenhagen, Atheneum Bucharest, The Barge NYC, Schaubühne Lindenfels Leipzig

Toronto Congress & Concert Hall, Malmö Concert Hall, Malmö Live, Helsingborg Concert Hall, Copenhagen Radio Hall, The Wallace Collection London, Gothenburg Concert Hall

*Camerata Hall Musiikkitalo, Finlandia Hall, Grieg Hall Bergen
S.t Georges Bristol, Great Hall of Conservatory Katowice a.o*

Sivelöv's music was performed at:

The Forcalquier Festival, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Carnegie Hall, Wigmore Hall

Barge Music Series, Berwald Hall, Båstad Chamber Music Festival, Gotland Chamber

Music Festival, Festivals in Bergen and Trondheim.

Festivals and Concerts in Germany, Austria, Japan and Australia.

Performed by:

Niklas Sivelöv, Martin Fröst, Patrick Gallois, Oystein Baadsvik, Mats Rondin, Markus Leoson, Chen Halevi, Kroumata, Mark Peskanov, Morten Zeuthen, The Swedish Radio Orchestra a.o.

Recorded on:

BIS, Caprice, Toccata Classics, A records, AMC/Amchara Classical & Simax

Reviews

Tres Danzas for tuba and piano

They open with Sivelöv's own *Tres Danzas*, written in 2005 for Baadsvik. The piece uses the rhythms and melodic devices of South American music, hence the title, but they are filtered through Sivelöv's attractively modernist personality. The result is rather jazzy at times but never lapses into pastiche. Baadsvik is called upon to be pretty light on his feet when playing this piece, something he does with ease never making a big thing of any difficulties.

The results are attractively musical make a fine start to the recital.

Robert Hugill, Musicweb

Twist and Shout

had its origins in some recitals that Sivelöv played with one of Sweden's brightest young clarinet virtuosos, Martin Fröst.

At a Paris concert, Sivelöv noticed that Fröst was athletic in his performance, and also had a strong physical stage presence.

To take advantage of these qualities, Sivelöv composed this solo clarinet work with elements of mime and use of the player's voice. In five brief scenes framed by an introduction and an epilogue, the piece tells the story of the life cycle of a puppet from its construction to its end. The music is only about seven and a half minutes long, though it takes longer in live performance due to the clarinetist's miming.

The title of the piece, taken from a well-known rock 'n' roll classic, does not signify that there is any quotation from that song. Rather, it refers to the fact that the performer, in addition to playing the clarinet, moves his body in the mime and sometimes shouts, sometimes speaks, sometimes sings notes.

Although the work was devised for a particular performer who can mime and dance in addition to playing his part, it is also written such that it can be performed without the stage presentation.

The music itself sounds serial. At least for the most part, it seems to lack a central tonality, and has the kinds of leaps to unpredictable intervals that marks that technique of composition.

Its quick movement from stage to stage of the puppet's life keeps it accessible to the audience, and in the end it achieves a touching degree of pathos.

~ All Music Guide

The NY Trio for violin, cello & piano

Between the two Beethoven works, they gave the premiere of Mr. Sivelov's "New York Trio." In a brief, amusing back and forth with Mr. Peskanov before the performance, Mr. Sivelov, who is Swedish, said he had visited New York many times, and that he hoped to capture the city's energy and, as he described it, "chaotic feeling."

There wasn't a lot of chaos in the three-movement work, but there were plenty of sharp edges, starting with the series of strident chords that opens the score. There were also some jazz-influenced turns, particularly in the piano line - in both its chord voicings and its rhythmic verve - in the finale

The work's slow movement, which Mr. Sivelov said is marked *Adagio lamentoso*, began with an affecting but not overly dolorous cello solo and included an extended section for just the violin and piano, as if fault lines ran through the ensemble.

Of the three movements, this was the most diffuse, but an energetic finale soon put it back on course, catching something of the city's vibrancy in themes that circled through the ensemble, with transformations accruing as each instrument took them up."

New York Times 2005, Allan Kozinn

REVIEWS FOR NIKLAS SIVELÖV: PIANO MUSIC

Peter Burwasser :

“His broad performing repertoire, from Bach to living composers, is reflected in his music for solo piano. This is not to say that Sivelöv does not write with original flair and energy, but it is probably most useful to consider this material as homage. The very choice of a set of 24 preludes is a strong nod towards Chopin and Bach, among others, and the ghosts of both of those giants appear in this music. The strongest flavor here is 20th-century Modernism, in the manner of Prokofiev or Hindemith, material that itself is often in a Neoclassical style. As a generalization, Sivelöv sounds like both a performer and composer who works in a joyous and even humorous way. This is heard in fast, loud music and a tendency to run up and down the keyboard. Some of the music is even a bit bangy, but in a fun way. One of the preludes is described in the composer’s notes as having no key signature, and he directs the pianist to use the forearms to create clusters of notes. ...

He returns to a kind of Lisztian bravura in the *Toccatina Feroce* and finds entrancing sonorities in the *Jeux de Cordes*, which is played standing up so that the pianist can strike the strings of the piano by hand with a mallet. ... It is a fittingly interesting and enjoyable way to conclude a delightful recital by this talented young artist.” —*Fanfare Magazine*, March/April 2016

Jonathan Woolf :

“The major work here is the series of 24 *Preludes*, written between 2010 and 2015. Consciously seeking to write a cycle in the tradition of Chopin, Scriabin and Debussy is one thing but aligning, as Sivelöv says, with the influence Bach and jazz is another entirely and presents quite a potentially potent stylistic pottage. ... There’s a tangy bite to some of these preludes – a brusque little March theme, a loquacious cantilena, a *barbaro* that suggests Bartók, virtuosic panache, terse romanticism in miniature, the use of the forearms to play clusters in a *misterioso* mood, harmonic wanderings, atmospheric quasi-improvisatory passages, and even the introduction of a French Overture [No.20] that has the effect of a similar contextual moment in the Goldberg Variations. As if all this wasn’t enough we find a few Arabic-inspired phrases in the penultimate Prelude and a fittingly dramatic conclusion. The composer is his own best executant but I hope pianists pick up on this cycle or cherry-pick from it. ... The first of the *Due Notturmi* shows the dreamier side of the composer’s muse whilst its companion gravitates to active intensification of material shared between the hands. There’s a brief *Toccatina Feroce* that certainly lives up to its name, and two *Impromptus* from 2015.

The first is deliberately Satie-like though soon moves away from that rather stifling atmosphere. The second is rather quiet and showing once again the quasi-improvisatory qualities that must have been gleaned from jazz. *Jeux de Cordes* is all dynamism and rhythm. He plays with the mallet on the strings of the piano with one hand whilst the other takes a more conventional route via the keyboard. Exciting.” —*Music Web International*, January 2016

Mikael Bengtsson :

“Recordings like this tend to develop into a tricky and problematic musical adventure. The risk is that the composer might get into a narrow box when interpreting his own work as there is no “second opinion” on the works, no chance to look at them from a different perspective. ... But Sivelöv managed it well. He let go of the music, let it live its own life, let it be outside the box but never too much. ... he finds himself in a musical borderland. He is inspired by composers such as Johann Sebastian Bach, Robert Schumann and Frédéric Chopin and sprinkles this with big, heaping measure of modernism although there are also clear and distinct jazz influences. Best track, or rather, the funniest one is the most innovative: Closing “Jeux de Cordes,” composed in 2015 and played while standing with a wooden mallet in one hand which used to strike the string.” –*Norran*, February 2016

Gerald Fenech :

“Sivelöv can be regarded as a boy prodigy, playing the organ when he was six, and winning prizes across the whole of Scandinavia while attracting attention for his dexterity both as an improviser and composer. ... This CD, interpreted by the composer himself, is his first for the Toccata label, and comprises a programme of his best piano works... His music belongs most definitely to the modern sound world, but on closer scrutiny, one can detect a certain colouring by a range of influences from Bach to jazz. ... the composer’s own description of his works in the sleeve note is certainly invaluable, and is a must read exercise if you want to appreciate this highly mature yet multi-faceted language which needs repeated listening to get to the bottom line of Sivelöv’s marvelous technique and improvisational skills. ... certainly worthy of serious investigation. Sound and presentation are first-rate.” –*Music and Vision*, March 2016

Colin Clarke :

“He’s not only a virtuoso pianist, though; he is also a virtuoso composer. ... These Preludes are all character pieces, as each one is inspired by someone who has had an impact on the composer’s life... But it is important to note that there is an individual voice here, one that holds secrets and is keen to keep the listener at a certain remove (e.g., the chorale-based but Nordic folk music influenced No. 8). ...Sivelöv is clearly his own best advocate. He possesses the full virtuoso apparatus. This is a breathtaking achievement. ... Deliberately programmed to provide respite after the Preludes, the first [Notturmo] opens with a sort of Debussian haze before moving off on a more bitonal pathway. Impressionism again informs the second of the Notturmi, its descending droplets of sounds perhaps simultaneously invoking late solo Brahms piano pieces. Sivelöv’s hushed, delicate performance, particularly of the second piece, is magical. The Toccata Feroce (2014–15) ... is an impetuous work that whirls headlong to its conclusion, ideas passing and hardly graspable, like watching the scenery from inside a high-speed train. ...

The composer describes the First Impromptu as setting off “a little like Satie”; the present reviewer found the reference immediately audible and unmistakable. ... again the composer identifies his own influence for the opening of the second Impromptu (it’s Rachmaninoff, in a darker vein). The music moves on, highly atmospherically, to sounds that seem to combine the Eastern with proto-Minimalism. Finally, *Jeux de Cordes* ... sounds very much like John Cage in *Sonatas and Interludes* mode. ... This was recorded, standing up, in one take—a remarkable achievement, as anyone who hears the recording will attest. In short, this is a fascinating, involving disc by a multi-faceted musician. The recording is terrific throughout, with plenty of presence.” —*Fanfare*, May/June 2016

Huntley Dent :

“But what I left with was a subtler enjoyment of the way his mind has assimilated so much iconic Western classical music, which then enters his own compositions like benign ghosts. The First Prelude, for example, begins so close to Schubert’s *Marche militaire* that it feels like an homage until Sivelöv’s quick, restless imagination veers off at unexpected angles. This is fascinating music that is made approachable by the composer’s lucid writing. Finally, Sivelöv plays a fine Steinway D that has been captured in flawless recorded sound.” —*Fanfare*, May/June 2016