

Animo flute and piano duo or Animo Duo

Submission for AEMC 3rd conference book and CD publication

August 2020

‘ANIMO DECLASSIFIED’

**CD track**

**Animo perform Lukas Piel: ‘The journey of Alan Kurdi’ commissioned in 2019**

In 2019 we commissioned Lukas Piel, a German composer and sound designer, to write a piece for Animo with the brief to produce a score for live, acoustic, instruments against a pre-recorded electronic soundscape backdrop. All our commissions are in some degree collaborations between us and the composer but Lukas’ idea for this work captured our imagination from the first draft and had a profound effect on us as performers. It is also shaping our ‘declassified’ status even further.

‘The journey of Alan Kurdi’ received its online Premiere during the AEMC 3rd virtual Conference in June 2020 and its ‘Live premiere’ at our ‘Jailbreak’ concert in August 2020.

The piece is based on three-year-old Aylan Shenu’s (Alan Kurdi’s) tragic death from drowning when he and his family tried to escape war-torn Syria for a better life in another country. The image of Aylan’s washed-up little body on a Turkish beach rocketed across the globe and brought hearts and minds together and, sadly, only a short-lived promise to give refuge to those in need.

Lukas’ intention is to remind us of our own humanity. The pulsing percussion, ethnic virtual instruments interlaced with acoustic timbres, vocalisms against crushing drum punctuations, shimmering shakers and distant high pitch sustained notes create a mesmerising and powerful soundscape backdrop that supports the flute and piano’s storytelling.

In Lukas’ words “The running out of time is presented by the constant ticking of the clock and is a central element to the piece”. There is a constant pulse of electronic, virtual, manipulated sounds that interlock to create new instrumental timbres. We are quickly immersed in his timbral landscape and enter the story through a visceral connection to Lukas’ sound matrix. The piano and flute enter in turn and the story unfolds without hurry, following the unrelenting passage of time and Aylan’s tragic death as time and waves continue to beat next to him.

Even the simple clock ticking rhythm is a complex blend of smaller rhythmic impulses. Small motifs become bigger sound gestures, capsizing emotions envelop the simpler flute and piano dialogue.

Lukas’s composition is both epic and introspective and encapsulates a much bigger human story in just under 8 minutes. It is impossible to not be captured by its strength and humanity.

‘Animo Declassified’ is our essence: we embrace and amalgamate styles to stir emotion, ask universal questions, move boundaries. Music can speak for itself, without labels.

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