

Reflections on the recording of *Duo Granmo-Berg* by Daniel Berg

In November 2016 and January 2017 I recorded *Duo Granmo-Berg* together with Tobias Granmo. The LP, and CD, was recorded in Studio Marten, Mölndal. Sound engineer was Peter Axelsson and produced by Jörgen Olofsson and Marten Recordings. The CD was released in June 2017 (and the LP will be released in spring 2018).

The artistic challenge was:

1. The combination violin and marimba is not a very common combination and therefore I asked myself, which composers have written music for violin and marimba?
2. What pieces, written for other instrument combinations, can be arranged for violin and marimba?
3. Can this project inspire now living composers to write new music for violin and marimba?
4. How can I, through a recording, present the music in a true artistic performance and in a feeling of a live concert?

I found a couple of works written for violin and marimba, but very often other musicians already recorded the pieces. In my opinion it was more inspiring to record a piece not recorded before. Tobias and I got in contact with Icelandic composer Askell Masson who wrote the piece *Melodie* a few years ago. Before the recording we send Mr. Massons example with different ways of tempo, dynamics and choice of marimba mallets.

A very common work for two violins is the *44 duos* by Béla Bártok. I found five duos that were excellent to arrange for marimba and we played them on several concerts before the recording to get feed back from students and colleagues. The recording of these five duos has now inspired students to do their own interpretation of Bartók. I will now try to find five other duos and arrange them for future concerts and recording.

To our concerts before the recording we invited composers who got the inspiration to write new music for the combination violin and marimba. One of them was Carl-Axel Hall who now has written three *Intermezzos*. Two of them are recorded on *Duo Granmo-Berg* and the third one will probably be recorded in the future.

To the composer Torbjörn Grass I had a little odd question with a little smile. Can you write an ugly sounding piece for the recording? For the recording I think we had a good program, but we missed a piece with different sounds and a bit challenge for the listener. My opinion is you need a contrast in a program. If you have something that sounds a little bit rough, a piece like *Winter* by Antonio Vivaldi will sound even more beautiful. Torbjörn accepted to write for us and called the composition *Spektra* – a piece for live musicians and electronic music. We got a graphic open score (se attached pdf) who made us found our very own interpretation

of the music. I choose other instruments than only marimba like wood blocks, cymbals, tam-tam, bird sounds and my own voice.

It's not easy to make a recording sound like a live performance. When I met the sound engineer Peter Axelsson he suggested to record with only two microphones, like a human ear. In the studio we tried different reverberation and finally resolved around two seconds of reverberation. We also tried to play live, without too many cuttings, and choose the takes with what we think sounds most like a live performance. I think we found a good mixture - microphones, studio, reverberation and music energy that all gives a feeling of a live concert in the listener's living room.

Through this recording I think we found old music by Bach, Bartók and Vivaldi that really fit also for the marimba. We also recorded Melodie by Askell Masson, a piece not earlier recorded and we inspired new composers to write new music. After the release other new composers have got inspiration by the CD and in this moment composers like Ann-Sofie Söderquist, Erland Hildén and Anders Jormin are writing music for violin and marimba.