



Ivan Vukosavljević
a mind in the heart
Joana Gama





1	a mind in the heart	10:14
2	a citadel	6:42
3	ninia sili	6:32
4	an announcement	5:58
5	a virgin	5:55
6	a wife	7:23
7	for Nata	6:24
8	a child	8:11



These eight pieces became a growing companion to a chapter of my life determined by many serious transformations. A chapter that ultimately concluded with the most impactful event in my life so far - the birth of my daughter. The album itself finally came out as a fragmented vision of a spiritual reverberance sourced, in part, from a humble understanding of the Orthodox Christian ethos and the musical heritage surrounding it; in part by the sermons of Meister Eckhart (c. 1260 - c. 1328); and in part by a manner of living through which raising my own child in the world becomes the highest spiritual confirmation of it. These piano pieces mysteriously accompanied this process, which was laid out in my life seemingly in a perfectly arranged procession. As if my spiritual realizations have been conditioned by my fatherhood to come.

"Intravit Jesus in quoddam castellum et mulier quaedam, Martha nomine, excepit illum in domusua" (Luke 10:38)

In a rather free translation of this passage, Eckhart begins a sermon:
"Our Lord Jesus Christ entered a citadel and was received by a virgin who was a wife"

A mind in the heart is a phrase that I keep carrying with me, although I cannot remember anymore where I got it from. Regardless, I find it the most poetic way of describing humility and love born out of humility. For what describes humility better than a mind that is pulled from the heights of self-willing, to the low grounds of the heart? Where only love abides.

For me, this phrase and its meaning were not only a constant reminder of the efforts required of a humble heart, but a precondition for any serious spiritual endeavour.

"So entirely one and simple is this citadel [...] that no power or manner can ever look into it, not even God himself. Therefore, if God is ever to look in there [...] he must be simple oneness, without mode or individual nature [...] See, as he is one and simple, that is how he can enter this oneness, which I call citadel in the soul [...] In that part, the soul is like God, and in no other."
- Eckhart

The piano is an instrument that I have been avoiding throughout my compositional career. The musical thinking that marked my earlier career could not find a use for such a non-malleable instrument. But, as I relearned to appreciate traditionally conceptualized harmony in recent years (especially since my previous album), the piano in my apartment suddenly transformed from a piece of decorative furniture into a vessel of a new music within me. And in a surprising turn of events, the sounds from my homeland of Serbia that have been an inspiration for this new album - especially the sacred chants of the Orthodox Church - became transformed on an instrument that is as far away from those sounds as it possibly could be. The horizontal world of melody and drone became induced through the vertical environment of this harmonic instrument.



"Virgin means someone who is free of all alien images, as free in fact as the person was before he or she existed. The fact that someone is a virgin does not take anything away from the works they have done, but rather leaves them free and virginal, unhindered with respect to the highest truth, just as Jesus is empty and free and virginal in himself. We too must be virgins if we are to receive virginal Jesus, since [...] the foundation of union is the meeting of like and like"
- Eckhart

The Orthodox chant from the Balkans is a type of music that has always been close to my heart. I often think of incorporating elements of this sacred music into my own. And even though these elements keep manifesting themselves within my work unconsciously (the melodic attributes, the seemingly boundless development, the unmeasured performance practice, and its overall emotional qualities), I find the tradition so rounded, that it makes it very hard to incorporate into any new music, in a manner that is in no way lesser than the original. A breakthrough came at one point with a simple idea that resulted in the third track of the album, *ninia sili*. It is my humble attempt at capturing the sacred in music by reinterpreting an existing hymn, in this case, the oldest surviving piece of music from the Serbian Orthodox tradition (written by Kyr Stefan the Serb in the 15th century).

*"Now the Celestial Powers with us invisibly do minister.
For lo! The king of glory entereth now.
Behold the Mystical Sacrifice, all accomplished, is ushered in.*

Let us with faith and love draw near, that we may become parttakers of life everlasting. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia."
(Ninia Sili, Kyr Stefan the Serb)

When I came across **Joana's** playing, my intuition started ringing in the tone of confirmation that I had known from before. I was easily convinced that she would be an ideal partner for the creation of this album. So I trusted that this music, and the way in which I had conceived it, could transfuse itself perfectly into another mind, who would then play it not just in the way that I wanted to, but in the way that it needed to be played. Accompanying Joana in the preparations for the recording sessions was a confirmation that every single note is resonating within her mind in the same way as they do within mine.

"If we were only ever a virgin, we would produce no fruit. If we are to be fruitful, then we must be a 'wife'. 'Wife' is the noblest name that can be applied to the soul. A virgin, who is a 'wife', who is free and unhampered by any attachment of the ego, is always as close to God as she is to herself. She brings forth many fruits, which are substantial, for they are neither more nor less than God himself."
- Eckhart

Finally, if *to put a mind in the heart* is the great humbling of the self, it may possibly be a humbling through which Eckhart's wifely fruit can be born. However, not out of reason, but in love.



Therefore in this love, there is a child being continuously born in the soul, that is God himself (as in Eckhart's vision). But on a more concrete level, and through this love also, my own daughter being born into the world feels like the only certainty that one is, at least in this one instance, hitting the bull's eye of the divine purpose of human life.

*"I affirm that had the Virgin not first borne God spiritually,
He would never have been born from her in bodily fashion."*
- Eckhart

Acknowledgements

This album has been made possible in part through the generous financial support from the **SENA muziekproductiefonds** and **Fonds Podiumkunsten**. Special thanks go to the **National Museum of Serbia** for allowing us to use an exhibit from their collection as the cover artwork; to **Pete Harden** and **Ensemble Klang** for letting us use their piano; to Joana's neighbours for enduring months of insistent practicing; and, most importantly, to my wife **Lise**, who has been the greatest companion in this entire process.

The album is dedicated to my daughter **Hannah Morrison Vukosavljević**.

Cover image: *Descent of the Holy Spirit* (fragment), fresco, 1371-75 AD, 98 x 66,9 cm, south side of the west wall of the naos, Monastery Djurdjevi Stupovi, Novi Pazar, Serbia.

Quotes by Eckhart: *Selected writings* by Meister Eckhart. Penguin Books (1994)







trptk

To move you, to surprise you. That is the heart of TRPTK. As an award-winning label, we bring forgotten masterpieces and brand-new compositions to life. With sound so pure, it feels as if the musicians are performing right before you.

Not a repetition of the familiar, but unheard creations by visionary artists. From innovations of today's composers to Medieval chants and dances, every recording touches you. Because of the artists, who follow their own instincts and perform with total devotion. But also because of our unique recording technique, which reveals every detail, raw and unpolished. In doing so, we draw you into other worlds of sound and emotion. With TRPTK, you'll always find what you're looking for: music of unheard beauty.

Brendon Heinst

founder & senior recording and mastering engineer

Credits

Producer & recording/mastering engineer Brendon Heinst

Editors Ivan Vukosavljević & Brendon Heinst

Recording dates September 25th to 26th 2025

Recording location Westvest90 Church, Schiedam (NL)

Recording format PCM 352.8kHz 32bit

Equipment

Microphones Josephson Engineering C617, Josephson Engineering C42

Microphone preamplifiers Grace Design m802mk2

AD/DA conversion Merging Technologies Hapi MkII

Headphones Audeze LCD-X

Loudspeakers Grimm Audio LS1be (main), Genelec 8030CP (height)

Cabling Purecable Optimus Series

Tuning Pura Power Supplies linear power supplies and power conditioners

PURECABLE

PURA
POWER SUPPLIES

W
WEISS

Grimm | AUDIO



tropik

