

A black and white close-up portrait of a man with short, light-colored hair and a light beard. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. He is wearing a light-colored, open-collared shirt. The background is dark and out of focus.

# 15 FABLES

HOLGER  
SKEPENEIT





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The majority of these pieces were written during the dark and slightly surreal days of 2020, so a certain amount of melancholy and a yearning for the freedoms we so unexpectedly lost is undoubtedly reflected in the music. However, since I am usually of a cheery disposition, first and foremost this is a celebration of things beautiful, past and present.

As the name suggests, **Butterfly Prelude** is a short introduction to the album, of fleeting nature and nimble, like the animal it represents, the elegant Morpho Menelaus.

Fans of Arnold Schönberg will hopefully forgive me for shamelessly nicking the title of one of his pieces – albeit translated from German – but the nocturnal images the word **Moondrunk** conjures up fit the atmosphere almost perfectly.



**Aeolian Chant** is based around a recurring melody, played in its purest form during the opening bars, and which later returns in numerous variations and metamorphoses. I could not resist the temptation of adding a hint of polyphony and, towards the end, a slightly more virtuosic passage.

I actually never knew **Lough Abisdealy** under this name, fishing there as a boy we simply called it the Pike Lake. One particular autumn morning springs to mind, when no wind ruffled the glassy surface and the reeds on the opposite shore were reflected in the water, occasionally obscured by wisps of mist. A stunning image I remember vividly to this day.

There are numerous tidal races and **Overfalls** dotted around our islands. Crossing them in a small sailing craft can be an exhilarating experience in the right conditions. The unsettled nature of the water is reflected in the Brahmsian textures of the opening and closing parts, interspersed with the more floating and calming nature of the Japanese elements used for the middle section.



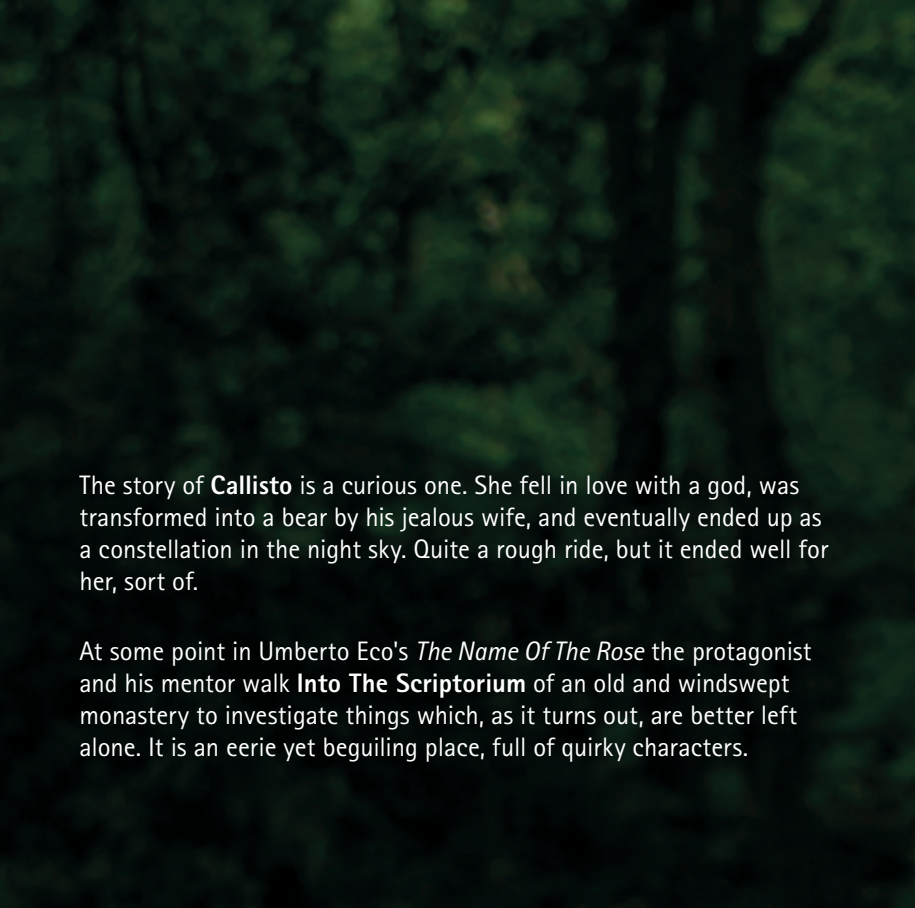
When I composed **NGC 6611**, I was primarily inspired by some pictures the Hubble space telescope beamed back to earth a while ago. They showed the Pillars of Creation, three vast and strangely graceful nebulae, surrounded by the infinity of space. Captivating as they are, watching them can have the unpleasant side effect of making one contemplate one's own insignificance...

In the far west of Brittany, a stone's throw from the infamous Ushant, lies a small island. In **Letter From Molene** I try to imagine what it must feel like to live in this lonely, beautiful and untamed place, with nothing but the Atlantic between oneself and America.

Although **She May Smile** is quintessentially a contemporary piano ballad with a few funky chords thrown in for good measure, for some reason it seemed appropriate to add a little dance groove from the Western Balkans as a bridge. It shouldn't really work, but it does!

What Heisenberg calls The **Uncertainty Principle** is a fascinating concept, dealing with the completely erratic behaviour of very small particles. I would never claim to understand the finer points of quantum mechanics, although I do find it reassuring that some things cannot so easily be predicted.





The story of **Callisto** is a curious one. She fell in love with a god, was transformed into a bear by his jealous wife, and eventually ended up as a constellation in the night sky. Quite a rough ride, but it ended well for her, sort of.

At some point in Umberto Eco's *The Name Of The Rose* the protagonist and his mentor walk **Into The Scriptorium** of an old and windswept monastery to investigate things which, as it turns out, are better left alone. It is an eerie yet beguiling place, full of quirky characters.



What could possibly be nicer than being in the south of France during the summer months, sitting in the shade of a pine tree, a glass of ice-cold Pastis in one's hand, with no breeze or sound disturbing the perfect **Afternoon Stillness**? Very few things indeed.

First and foremost **Byzantine Waltz** is a homage to Warsaw's famous son, although harmonically it is probably closer to modern Scandinavian jazz than 19th century romanticism. Playing in 3/4 time appears to be a little out of fashion these days, which is a shame, really.


When I watch my children play, I am often astonished at how completely engrossed they are in their activities, totally oblivious to their surroundings. Most of us grown-ups have sadly forgotten how wonderful it is to lose oneself in **Idle Pleasures**, luckily the kids haven't.



Finally, no album of mine would be complete without at least one reference to Tolkien's *The Lord Of The Rings*. Gimli the dwarf sounds uncharacteristically poetic when he describes **The Caverns of Helm's Deep** to his friend Legolas: 'Crystals glint in the polished walls, the light glows through folded marble, dark pools covered in clear glass, avenues and pillared courts, into dark recesses where no light can come'. I'd like to visit!







All compositions written and performed by Holger Skepeneit