

Works by Agnes Ida Pettersen, Ørjan Matre, Herman Vogt
Trad. arr. by Sven Nyhus

Den annen sang

TERJUNGENSEMBLE

Ingebjørg Lognvik Reinholdt, *alto/folksinger*

Åshild Breie Nyhus, *nyckelharpa*

Anders Rensvik, *viola*

Lars-Erik ter Jung, *conductor*

TERJUNGENSEMBLE's second release

There is a long history of incorporating traditional music into art music. Recurring themes and motifs can be found in the works of several Norwegian composers, from Edvard Grieg's peasant dances for piano to Lasse Thoresen's *Yr* for solo violin, not to mention the many accompaniments to folk songs. Folk music has been incorporated into jazz, both as frameworks and as tunes. Composers seek to draw on the melodic, rhythmic, tonal and harmonic characteristics of the traditional music, but their works also reflect contemporary tastes and their own fascination for the original material, which since the mid-19th century has become increasingly known outside the cultures where it had been passed down.

Both composers and performers are influenced by changing musical tastes. Viewed from that perspective, you could say that this project in part reflects the recent trend towards – and perhaps yearning for – simplicity and clarity of form, more conventional tonality and generally less complexity. Whereas many modern pieces draw on past works by other composers, the compositions here have traditional folk music as their starting point.

This release presents various ways of approaching that task; you could call them different aesthetic perspectives or preferences, or different attitudes towards what is authentic. How explicit the link to Norwegian folk music is varies, with the pieces ranging from subtle arrangements of folk melodies to compositions inspired by folk music – highlighted through the use of the 'kvedar' (unaccompanied singer) and 'nyckelharpa' (keyed fiddle). One of the ideas behind three of the commissioned works was to allow composers free rein to explore the relationship between the rich possibilities offered by string instruments in interplay with, and as an accompaniment to, folk song. The harpsichord provides an extra voice in Pettersen's piece, perhaps augmenting the associations with the past. Timelessness, which in the commissioned pieces is represented by the folk song, is one of the key themes of the project.

TERJUNGENSEMBLE premiered the works by Pettersen, Matre and Vogt at the Ultima Oslo Contemporary Music Festival in September 2020. In spring 2020, the ensemble released the album *Kimen*, with music by Magnar Åm. The recording is

also available as a CD. TERJUNGENSEMBLE, led by Lars-Erik ter Jung, wants to establish itself on the music scene by bringing to the fore various expressions – or perhaps impressions – of contemporary art music, through concerts and recordings, including in juxtaposition to relevant existing repertoires. The selection criteria used for both newly commissioned works and ones from the existing repertoire include musical relevance and power of expression.

Ingebjørg Lognvik Reinholdt and Åshild Breie Nyhus are two leading folk musicians. Nyhus, who also performs classical music on the violin and viola, is employed by the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, as is the viola player Anders Rensvik.

LARS-ERIK TER JUNG

Å vere i livet

(To be in life – three verses for my mother), by Halldis Moren Vesaas

When this project was presented to me, Halldis Moren Vesaas' poem *To be in life* immediately leapt to mind. I encountered it several years ago, and since then I had been saving it for a suitable occasion. The combination of string instruments with the harpsichord and, importantly, folk songs created an acoustic space in which to explore the various layers of meaning of the text.

The music has been written specially for Terjungensemble and the folk singer Ingebjørg Lognvik Reinholdt. An important part of the process was to get to know her voice, and the music is inspired by folk song techniques and styles. Although the tonality may conjure up associations with Norwegian folk music, the voice ventures slightly outside the bounds of traditional folk song. The text is reworked by breaking it up and drawing it out, with the ensemble providing an accompaniment that is constantly changing. The work consists of four interconnected parts – a free and expressive introduction, followed by the three verses set to music, each in different ways.

AGNES IDA PETERSEN
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Tre sanger etter Ragnar Vigdal

(Three songs after Ragnar Vigdal)

For the past fifteen years, as well as writing my own compositions, I have worked on reworking Norwegian folk music. Many of the reworkings have occupied the borderland between compositions and arrangements, and they have always reflected a desire to add something new to the original music at the same time as retaining some of its unique character. I was introduced to the three songs after Ragnar Vigdal (1913-1990) by the folk singer Unni Løvlid. Vigdal grew up near the inner part of Sognefjorden, in an atmosphere of Christian pietism. At house church meetings, he learned to sing hundreds of religious folk songs, richly embellished with ornaments and rich harmonies. In order to maintain the characteristic freedom of Vigdal's musical tradition, I have written a piece where there is not much precise coordination between the soloist and the ensemble: Ingebjørg Lognvik Reinholdt is able to sing her own highly personal versions of the songs over three virtually independent movements for strings.

ØRJAN MATRE
orjanmatre.no

Den annen sang

(The Second Song)

Den annen sang (The Second Song) is a musical arrangement of the psalm *Herre Gud, ditt dyre navn og ære* (Lord God, Thy dear Name and Honour), the most famous poem by the Norwegian priest and poet Petter Dass (1647-1707). The first version of the psalm was completed in 1698, but it was first published in Dass' *Catechism Songs* in 1715. It is based on the second line of the Lord's Prayer, which is why it is presented under the heading *The Second Song. Hallowed be thy Name*. It is considered one of the masterpieces of Norwegian psalm-writing, and it is the Norwegian psalm associated with most different melodies: over 50 are recorded, with the most commonly used ones coming from Romedal, Rana and Ørsta. Those are the three melodies that have been used here.

Gustav Jensen's 1909 version of the song was published in Landstad's revised book of psalms in 1926. That adaptation, which greatly abridges the original to just three verses, is the one that is well-known in Norway today. My work, however, is based on Dass' original version, and includes all sixteen verses. The original is far more powerful than Jensen's reworking, both as a whole and in its many wonderful rhymes. "The song is often praised for its rich sonority", writes professor of literature Jon Haarberg in the Great Norwegian Encyclopaedia. The poem is in many ways an expression of its time. It talks about the day of judgement and Lutheran virtue ethics, which probably feel rather remote, and even irrelevant, to most people today. In spite of that, the poem's cultural importance in Norway, as well as its linguistic musicality and the many powerful poetic images, meant that I wanted to grapple with the text. Moreover, the poem speaks of how people relate to nature and the elements, and

particularly of their relationship with all life at sea. This reflects the culture of Northern Norway, where fishing was such a key part of people's lives. In addition, it is as if almost the whole of creation and all life forms are presented in an existential symbiosis – which is rather modern, given the importance our current age places on nature conservation and ecology.

The composition takes the form of a theme and variations. All of the verses are presented chronologically, separated by interludes played by the ensemble. The two folk melodies from Rana and Ørsta alternate throughout the work, until in the final two verses the music “lands” on the melody from Romedal, which is perhaps the best-known one.

In a detailed textual analysis of the psalm, Haarberg stresses that both the first and last verses (1 and 16) contain invocations of God. Between them, the song can be divided into two main sections: verses 2-10, and verses 11-15. “The first main section is not an exhortation, but rather a *statement* that all of creation wants to praise its Lord for his omnipotence, which is universal: *Gud er Gud om alle Mand var døde* (5.1 God would still be God, were all Men dead). The second main section addresses itself to humankind: *ó Mennisk* (O People; 11.1), to a ‘you’. Here each individual believer is exhorted to praise God, not just in words, but in deeds, in order to promote God’s kingdom. Verse 10 acts as a kind of bridge between the two main sections. It introduces an ‘I’ figure who contemplates their imperfect body. This ‘I’ is of course part of creation, and as such belongs in part 1, but by committing to living a Godfearing life, it also points forward to part 2.”

In this arrangement, verses 9, 10 and 11 are different from the rest. An almost frozen calm, where the ensemble produces shimmering sounds, represents the axis of the piece, and contrasts with the otherwise warm tones of the string

instruments. The musical transition coincides with verse 9: *Vil de Gamle være stiv og sove, Da skal Børn i Moders Liv GUD love; De Halte, Lamme, Maal-løse, Stamme Giør og det samme, de Gromme, Gramme Og Grove*. (If the Old are stubborn and heedless, Children in their Mothers’ Wombs shall praise GOD; The Halt, Lame, Mute and Stammerers Do the same, the Bad, Bitter and Base.) Verse 14, with its virtue ethics, provides a kind of musical climax to the work, symbolising our Protestant cultural sphere, for better and worse: *Had alt det GUD i sit Ord selv hader, At Vellysten dig paa Jord ey skader, Sky Synd og Lyder, som GUD forbyder, Elsk Tugt og Dyder, som dig bepryder Og bader*. (Hate what the Word says GOD does hate, So earthly Pleasures do not defile thee, Shun Sins and Vices, that GOD forbids, Love Modesty and Virtue, that grace and enrich thee.)

In the final two verses, the work reaches an equilibrium. Humankind puts its fate into God’s hands, praying for God to prevent evil and help us to avoid ‘the path of the sinner’: *Men ó GUD! forhindre sligt at blive! Hvad som er u-gudeligt fordrive! At vi vor Tider mod Synden strider, Naar Tiden lider, hos dig omsider At blive!* (But, LORD, let it not come to pass! Cast out all that is ungodly! So we on Earth, against Sin strive, And when that Day comes, may stay by Thy side!) The end may represent a longing for existential unity and eternal rest. The work has an instrumental coda that gradually descends in pitch until it ends in a deep unison.

HERMAN VOCT
hermanvogt.com

Arrangement for nyckelharpa and string ensemble by Sven Nyhus

Koppången was composed by Per-Erik Moraes (1950-), who plays the violin in the folk music group Orsa Spelmän. The tune is inspired by the wetland and nature reserve Koppången in Orsa Municipality in the Dalarna region of Sweden.

Flodens död, polska, is a traditional dance after August Bohlin (1877-1949), a ‘nyckelharpa’ player from Uppland, Sweden.

ÅSHILD BREIE NYHUS

TERJUNGENSEMBLE

Lars-Erik ter Jung, *conductor*
Bogumila Dowlasz, *violin*
Leah Meredith Andonov, *violin* (track 1-5)
Marit Egenes, *violin*
Hanna Marie Thiesen, *violin*
Anders Rensvik, *viola*
Pål Magne Solbakk, *viola*
(track 1-5)
Ingvild Nesdal Sandnes, *cello*
Ulrikke Henninen, *cello*
Kjetil Sandum, *double bass*
Gunnhild Tønder, *harpsichord* (track 1)

Additional players on
tracks 6 and 7:
Edward Daniel, *violin*
Amanda Håøy Horn, *violin*
Elia Kaden, *violin*

Den annen sang

1. **AGNES IDA PETTERSEN** *Å vere i livet* ----- 15:23
Text by Halldis Moren Vesaas

- ØRJAN MATRE** *Tre sanger etter Ragnar Vigdal:*
2. I. *Und mig Gud et lite rom*, text by Nils O. Svee ----- 07:03
3. II. *Kilden*, text by Ole Alsmo ----- 03:16
4. III. *Nu dagens lys sig sniger hen*, anonymous ----- 05:33

5. **HERMAN VOGT** *Den annen sang* ----- 16:42
Variations on *Herre Gud, ditt dyre navn og ære*

6. **PER-ERIK MORAEUS** *Koppången* ----- 03:19
Arr. by Sven Nyhus

7. **TRADITIONAL AFTER AUGUST BOHLIN** *Flodens död* ----- 02:25
Polska, arr. by Sven Nyhus

TERJUNGENSEMBLE

Lars-Erik ter Jung, *Conductor*

Soloists: Ingebjørg Lognvik Reinholdt, *alto/folksinger*.
Åshild Breie Nyhys, *nyckelharpa*. Anders Rensvik, *viola*

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