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A scene from Aulis Sallinen's opera *Ratsumies*, Savonlinna Opera Festival

Photo by Heikki Toivane

NEW MUSIC OF THE NORDIC COUNTRIES

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EDITOR'S FOREWORD

Bound together philosophically, geographically, and to a significant extent ethnically, the five Nordic countries hold a unique place in today's world. There is no other group of several contiguous nations which have so much in common culturally, politically and economically; and there are no other countries on this Earth which seem to get along so well together as these five sovereign states of the far north. They are peopled by talented humane achievers, not least in the fine arts, yet each national aspect of this pentagon possesses its own special qualities. This is certainly true of music, yet little of Nordic "tone art"¹ is widely known outside of Northern Europe, especially music of the late twentieth century.

Thus, the purpose of this book is to impart information about contemporary art music in the Nordic countries to a wider world readership—concert audiences and home listeners as well as the professional and scholarly musical community. Being of Norwegian descent, I have always held a predilection for things Scandinavian, but the seeds of the project were planted in 1986 on my first visit to Iceland. Ten years later I was to

hold a Fulbright Research Fellowship to Reykjavík, but in the meantime I and my colleagues at the University of Florida Department of Music² carried on several exchange programs with musical institutions in Nordic countries. These involved bringing Nordic students and faculty to our institution to present concerts and lectures on several occasions, and our musicians traveling for similar purposes to the Nordic institutions including the Reykjavík Conservatory, the Royal College of Music in Stockholm, the Norwegian State Academy of Music in Oslo, the University of Turku and the Sibelius Academy. In this day of the "Global Village" it is a practice which I highly recommend, and for me and my American colleagues and students it has greatly expanded our international understanding. No doubt this is also true of the Nordic musicians who joined us in these exchanges.

For me, no less than a dozen extended visits to northern Europe over the past twelve years have established many Nordic contacts for me which, directly or indirectly, led to the joint authorship of this book. One of my co-authors is Professor Jean Christensen

¹Literal translation of *Tonlist*, the Icelandic word for music. The Icelandic language has changed little over the past millennium and is the Nordic counterpart of Middle English and Altdeutsch.

²Arthur Jennings, Janna Lower, James Paul Sain, Boaz Sharon, Kevin Sharpe, and Terence Small

PART I

NEW MUSIC OF DENMARK

by Jean Christensen

Research for this survey of Danish music since 1950 was partially supported by grants from the American-Scandinavian Foundation and the Office of the Vice President for Research at the University of Louisville.

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1. DENMARK'S MUSICAL IDENTITY

The Music Act

In 1976 the Danish national legislature passed the world's first Music Act establishing procedures for governing and distributing tax revenue to support the creation and performance of music and the education of musicians and audiences—as a matter of law. As such, the Act reflects the principle that has directed virtually all public subsidies in the country since the policy took shape in the 1930s: public funds should be used for public welfare. In the difficult days of the great depression this meant shelter, food and health care, but after World War II the concept of welfare was developed to progressively embrace issues of the quality of life, and in the 1970s it was extended to include cultural assets—music, theater, film, museums, libraries, and visual arts. The laws that were formulated to distribute these funds to the citizens embody the ideal that governs and encourages the remarkably productive intellectual and creative life in the nation. According to this ideal such activities deserve support from state funds, and the support must be given without state censorship.

The Music Act seeks to spread resources throughout the country and to provide equal access to musical activities. A versatile instrument of public policy devised to curtail one-sidedness in musical life, it embraces the development of diverse types of expression in all genres and forms, composed or improvised, in any conceivable repertory, that is, classical, contemporary, rhythmic (jazz, beat, rock), experimental,

folk and traditional musics including those from other cultures. Since its passage the law has had a strong impact on the musical life of the country; noticeably, it has been the critical factor in the decentralization of cultural life so that it is no longer concentrated in one or two major cities. It has also brought an overall increase in the level of activity and the quality of performances. The latter is felt with each new graduating class of young performers and is clearly the result of enhanced possibilities across the nation for early involvement and expanded opportunities in beginning as well as in advanced study. The Act is focused on live performance as the most important means of expressing and experiencing music which has led to the encouragement of music education for amateurs, both listeners and performers, and to continuing education for professionals. With the trend toward decentralization of musical life from the cities to regional locales, and the increased support of education and performance, concert life has become a genuinely democratic spectacle.

Operation of the Music Act

Financial support for musical activities is levied from tax revenue and may be used at any authorized level—local, regional or national. The kinds of music genres and musical organizations, institutions and ensembles eligible for assistance are determined under a grants policy that has been approved by the political majority. The practical

responsibility for these decisions is given to an independent group, the Danish Music Council, a body of nine members of whom five are elected by the various musical organizations in the country and four are appointed by the Minister of Cultural Affairs; the latter are chosen from the ranks of respected music professionals with national reputations. Thus the Council comprises politically independent, qualified individuals who represent and are responsible to organized interests in music. Their charge is to recommend action on the applications for funds and to advise public and private authorities, including the Ministry for Cultural Affairs, on matters of international musical interest. They also may initiate discussion of questions and make statements concerning Danish musical life. This model has been functioning successfully since the late 1970s and has had a visible effect on the quality and volume of music activities in Denmark.

The Music Act is not directly concerned with music education in the public schools (*folkeskolen*) and institutions of higher education, for those policies were already in place and governed music instruction from primary school through the gymnasium (upper secondary school) and in the teacher's colleges. Rather, the Music Act provides support for independent music schools that give music instruction for recreational purposes, offer continuing education for teachers, and

prepare students for study at the state music academies. In addition, the original Music Act of 1976 created a pool of expensive equipment that may be loaned to amateur groups for performances, and as a top priority, an academy was established in Copenhagen for teaching rhythmic music (jazz, beat, rock, folk). Frequent references throughout the document clearly indicate that performances and the creation of new and experimental music, particularly new works by Danish composers, is of central importance. The effect of the Music Act may be assessed from the raised level of music education. In 1970, before the Act, there were about 50 music schools in the country, by 1981 a great increase was noted taking into account the involvement of all ages, and in 1999 there were 230 registered music schools with 110,000 pupils under the age of 25, approximately 2.2% of the population. Nearly every county in the country has at least one music school.¹

Long-term Effect of the Music Act

Copenhagen has been the center of Danish professional musical life for centuries. The state institutions in the capital include the two very old ensembles of the Royal Theater, The Royal Danish Orchestra (traces beginnings to 1448) and the Opera Chorus (est. ca. 1790), and the more recent ones of Danmarks Radio, the Radio Symphony Orchestra (est. 1925), Choir (est. 1932),

reported by Steen Christian Steensen, music editor of *Berlingske Tidende* in his speech, "Music in Denmark," during the Danish Wave Festival in New York City, October 1999.

¹"Notes to the Act," *The Danish Music Act* ([Copenhagen:] The Danish Music Council, September 1981), p. 10. The figures on 1999 were

and Big Band (est. 1964). These ensembles have traditionally enjoyed state support with the result that for hundreds of years the capital city has provided the prime opportunity to work as a professional musician and for audiences to listen to professional performances of music. The provisions of the Music Act were expressly directed toward a more equitable spread of musical professionalism throughout the country, and provided, for instance, enough immediate support to secure five permanent regional symphony orchestras. Several of these that had been founded in the previous decades were now raised to professional standing. In addition the Music Act provided for a regional opera company to be based in Århus and to tour and perform with regional orchestras.

Later, a revision of the law (1981), directed support toward the establishment and operation of small "mini"

symphonic ensembles to perform classical as well as popular music. Several of these groups already existed (the Esbjerg Ensemble was formed in 1967, for instance), but in the 1980s and early 1990s, a number of vital young performers emerged to change the landscape of musical performance in the country.² Ensembles with unusual instrumental combinations challenged composers to respond with new works.³ Mirroring the explosive growth of new ensembles in the regions, similar ones were established in Copenhagen.⁴

Over the years large-scaled structures for music and art have been built in Odense, Århus⁵ and Esbjerg⁶ to provide home bases for the new major ensembles, and local venues have been built for activities throughout the provinces. Subsidized subscription tickets have made it possible for large numbers of listeners from a variety of backgrounds to attend concerts in the splendid new facilities.

phone(s) and percussion, 1992; Scandinavian Guitar Duo, 1993; Ensemble Tukukah...[sic] four percussion and flute, 1993.

⁴Among them, the Danish Wind Octet, 1987; the Athelas Ensemble, 1990 (sinfonietta); Figura, mentioned above. Contemporánea, a mixed ensemble (bass clarinet, percussion, violin, string bass, electronic sound mixer) established 1997, works in theatrical and musical venues.

⁵Musikhuset Aarhus and the Concert and Congress Hall in Odense were built in 1982 by Danish architectural firms. Both feature a large auditorium seating over a thousand persons and a small one for chamber music seating somewhat more than 300.

⁶Birgitte Schmidt Andersen, "Musikhush med forhindringer (Om Musikhush Esbjerg A/S)," *Dansk Musik Tidsskrift* 71, 7 (1996/97), discusses the "Music House" in Esbjerg designed by the famous Danish architects Jørn and Jan Utzon.

In the wake of the Music Act, quite a few music festivals have been inaugurated. Spread throughout the year, they often highlight new music by Danish composers performed by Danish musicians. Several have been broadly successful, the standard for success being set by the NUMUS Festival started in Århus in 1978. The Århus City Festival with a notable segment of music takes place in the fall, and the NUMUS Festival in the spring. MUSIKHØST (music harvest festival), held every fall in Odense, is sponsored jointly by the Carl Nielsen Academy of Music, the Odense Concert Hall, Vor Frue Kirke (an old church in the city), the jazz hall and the Odense Music School. The world's largest rock festival, the Roskilde Rock Festival, begun in 1971, continues as a summer event in an old city not far from Copenhagen.

Two festivals focus nearly exclusively on music by living Danish composers. The Composers' Biennale, begun in 1990, is quite extensive. It lasts 4-6 days, is scheduled during the spring in Copenhagen and features music drama whenever possible. The other is the New Music Festival in Suså begun in 1993; it takes place on a single weekend and favors first performances of music for chamber groups and soloists by Danish composers. However, the festival scene is not without some missed opportunities. The Lerchenborg Music Days, a festival workshop of exceptional merit, was held for a period of about twenty years (beginning irregularly in the early 1970s) at Lerchenborg, a baroque manor house and park in western Sjælland. One of the guiding principles of the festival was to create opportunities for Danish mu-

sicians to meet composers and performers from other nations (France, Holland, Poland, England, Japan, Italy and Russia) for exchange of ideas via performances, discussions, presentations and informal encounters. Unable to secure permanent funding, the festival workshop had to cease operation in the mid-1990s and is sorely missed.

Most important, the Act also supports ancillary activities directed to the preservation of Danish music: documentation, export, publication and so on. It encourages contemporary, experimental and new work, granting subvention to composers for publication of expensive scores, documentation of performances and recording newly-composed music. Funds from the Music Act subsidize the Danish State Art Foundation, an autonomous support organization for the creative arts that dispenses scholarships, work and travel grants, commissioning fees, and distribution of recordings—an important resource for new Danish music.

Roots of the Danish Music Tradition

The ideal that animates the cultural situation in contemporary Denmark has roots far back in the country's history. Looking for precedents for the current situation, it is hard to miss Christian IV (1588-1648), the colorful Renaissance monarch whose court-life was enriched by his interest in the arts. During his reign the two forces that have historically determined the character of Danish musical life—attention to the developing national tradition and appropriation of the international musical culture—were

already manifest. Christian IV not only imported well-known musicians for his court, he also sent Danish musicians abroad to study composition. John Dowland and Heinrich Schütz both spent time working at Christian's court in Copenhagen, and the Dane Mogens Pedersen went to Venice and learned to compose Italian madrigals. As rich and interesting as Christian IV's cultural life was, the level he attained was not sustained by his successors, and for more than 100 years following his reign, political and economic interests prevailed over artistic ones with the result that the foundation of the present state of music arts in Denmark may more directly be traced to the particular mix of cultural and political developments that occurred in the late-eighteenth century and through the nineteenth century. It is in this period that one finds the origins of a repertory and a musical language that have served as the well-spring of Danish musical identity.

The declaration of absolute monarchy (1660) broke the medieval system of aristocratic privileges and made way for the new ruling class of wealthy merchants and landowners. But the change in the power structure occurred slowly, and it was not until the end of the eighteenth century that the ideals of Enlightenment took hold in Denmark. Then crucial agricultural reforms were introduced, not the least of these being the abolition (in 1786) of the laws of compulsory residence and forced labor that had kept the peasants in a state of virtual serfdom. In perhaps the only permanently successful case of enlightened despotism in Europe, members of the Danish land-owning class, together

with a benevolent crown prince began a series of reforms that were completed in 1813: the landed gentry's privileges of private jurisdiction were abolished, much land was redistributed and made into independent farms and the majority of the peasants became landowners. With the establishment of the people on their own tracts of land they became deeply interested in social and political issues and in the exercise of rights of freedom. The result was a cultural development in nineteenth-century Denmark that led to cooperative farming, development of workers' unions, political democracy and general education, all of which became characteristic of the Danish way of life.

The beginning of the cultural awakening was carried to fruition in the first half of the nineteenth century and was manifest in literature and in the arts and music. These years are often referred to as the nation's "Golden Age." A happy period, it was tinted by incipient romanticism and largely dedicated to the celebration of bucolic life in music, song and theater. The spread of musical societies and the continued development of a national music tradition through song were central to the educational reform that swept the country and laid the groundwork for the current amalgamation of arts and education.

Schulz and the Refinement of Popular Song

In the earliest phase of the cultural revival of the late-eighteenth century, the composer J.A.P. Schulz (1747-1800) came from Berlin to work in Copenhagen. He was invited because his

songs, *Lieder im Volkston* composed in the spirit of popular art, appealed to the enlightened circles of the city. Though he stayed only eight years (1787-95), he is remembered for both his music and his position on theoretical and aesthetic issues. With their effortless nobility and simplicity, his melodies provided a blend of lyrical poetry and music that was embraced by people of all classes.

However, Schulz had a deeper and lasting influence on the musical life of the nation by virtue of an essay in which he introduced the idea that music was essential to education. In *Thoughts Concerning the Influence of Music Upon the Culture of a Nation*, published in Danish and German, 1790, his response to a commission studying plans for a public school system (the *folkeskole*, est. 1814), stressed the importance of song in the development of a popular culture and offered specific reasons for introducing music into the educational system.

That music, when it is used and practiced according to its intention, softens manners, refines sentiments and disseminates joy and sociability among the people, and everywhere has great influence on the formation of the moral character, can be doubted only by those who have not had the opportunity to reflect over the essence and effects of this art, and by those who have yet to understand that a nation's culture promotes its happiness.⁷

Schulz's recommendation to enliven the senses and train musical abilities of the entire populace was adopted in preference to the traditional teaching in the "Latin schools" that promoted intellectual understanding of music's theological or philosophical aspects. Schulz believed that the beneficial effects of music education had to begin early in life and be sustained with practical training. Therefore the education of school teachers should include "teaching notation, singing, playing the organ and other instruments together with [cultivating] insight into the principles for the appropriate use of music."⁸ When H.O.C. Zinck, Schulz's associate, instituted these recommendations at the teacher's college, Blågaard Seminary (est. 1791), he emphasized the importance of understanding music's effect as well as developing practical skills. This established a foundation in teaching that went far beyond what was practiced anywhere else and one that has been honored ever since.

Schulz's successors built up the repertory of song and musical theater that served the new upper and middle classes in a development that coincided with the growth of a wealthy and politically powerful bourgeoisie. Notably in Copenhagen, this clientele supported concert series, music clubs and societies, and a thriving opera. During his twenty years as musical director in the city F.L.Ae. Kunzen published the first collection of Danish songs by a single composer, *Viser og lyriske Sange*, composed the first

tions in the present text are by author unless otherwise noted.

⁸Ibid.

Danish opera, *Holger Danske*—soon to be superseded by F.D.R. Kuhlau's still-popular *Elverhøj*—and was responsible for a marked improvement of musical standards. The quest for a national "tone" was launched by Kunzen's successor, C.E.F. Weyse (1744-1842), who contributed powerfully to the creation of a national musical idiom. Born in Altona in the southern-most part of Denmark, as a fifteen-year-old he travelled to Copenhagen to study with Schulz. Weyse's vocal music, his *syngespil* with romances and ballades, were very popular, and the intimate and simple *Morning and Evening Songs* (1837-38), composed for children on texts by the romantic poet B.F. Ingemann, are still part of the living song tradition.

Grundtvig and the People's High Schools

During this period the colorful Lutheran pastor N.F.S. Grundtvig (1782-1873) was inspired by the optimistic and ethical thought of the Enlightenment to raise the spiritual level of the people. His philosophy of history expressed in his writings, texts for songs and hymns, sermons and political activities, was that the spirit as a life force is manifest through the power of the word. In consequence of this view he designed a framework for continuing education that pressed for expansion of knowledge, and the cultivation of the national spirit, joy of life and the bounty of the earth, and cultural freedom.

One of the means to convey all aspects of these goals was the singing of Danish song, and to this end Grundtvig wrote some 1400 texts, many of which are known and sung today. Through

this means the untrained ear of the peasant became tuned to the word. Building on the newly-won liberation of the farmers and the expanding cooperative movement, Grundtvig's design for the People's High School, or the *folkehøjskolen*, emphasized the infusion of singing into learning as an integral part of education and socialization. Nationalistic songs became a means of raising the communal spirit of the population.

In the nineteenth century with the demise of the "Latin schools" (or, the "black schools" as Grundtvig called them) and the growth of public schools on one hand, and schools for continuing and free education (*folkehøjskole*) on the other, music education and performance progressively became the concern of the populace. It was the ambition of the rising middle class to encourage music education in the public schools. Traditionally, cities contracted musicians (*Stadsmusikanter*) with the stipulation that they teach apprentices on whatever instruments they knew how to play. This system was inadequate for sustaining the growing public interest in concert life with the result that private music societies sprang up during the nineteenth century to provide activity on an ad hoc basis. These societies survived independently of the larger centers of culture; often their success and failure was dependent on the energy and vision of a few individuals.

The Consolidation of Danish Musical Life

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the process of emulating the European traditions was carried further by

⁷Finn Gravesen, ed., *Musik og Samfund* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1977), p. 144. All transla-

composers of local origins, particularly by the dynamic organizer and composer Niels Gade (1817-1890) whose international success was assured when Mendelssohn noticed his First Symphony and appointed him as his assistant at the Gewandhaus in Leipzig. In 1848 Gade returned to Copenhagen and from that point on he dominated the scene; until his death in 1890, he applied his energy and organizational skills to fortifying the city's musical culture. The Music Conservatory was established in 1866, and the Society for the Publication of Danish Music in 1871. Also during this time an enduring and characteristic feature of the country's musical profile, the broadly popular performance of all kinds of music from a wide range of repertory for the entertainment of the general audience, was established and became integrated into public life. H.C. Lumbye (1810-1874), musical director of the Tivoli amusement park (opened in 1843), who composed music for ballet, dancing and entertainment and brought unsentimental elegance to his waltzes, polkas and galops (nearly 500 in all), started the custom of playing symphonic and contemporary music together with lighter works at Tivoli. By this means he introduced highly diverse audiences to a repertory of art music ranging from the classics to the contemporary forms, from Haydn and Mozart to Wagner and Gade, together with music composed for simple diversion. From the beginning Tivoli was embraced by the whole Danish nation. More than a simple amusement park, Tivoli struck a resonating chord in the Danish people who identified with its blend of entertainment and imagination.⁹

Into the Twentieth Century

The changing currents in the late-nineteenth century found expression in the field of song, as the opposition to romanticism was initiated by the composer Thomas Laub (1852-1927). In the 1890s and the beginning of the twentieth century, he reformed the hymn tradition by restoring the Renaissance protestant church melodies, adopting more flexible rhythms and simplifying the chromatic harmonizations. To this repertory Laub added his own new hymns and songs with texts that embraced issues of social reform, preservation of national heritage, pacifism, and other modern themes. Laub's model was adopted by his contemporaries, notably Carl Nielsen and Oluf Ring. Two collections of songs (1915, 1917) written alternately by Laub and Carl Nielsen were accepted into the new *Folkehøjskolens Melodibog* (The Songbook of the People's High School, 1922), which went through many revised editions and became the standard songbook of the public schools where it was used on a daily basis as part of the obligatory curriculum. In following decades, younger composers (Poul Schierbeck, Poul Hamburger, Otto Mortensen) continued to update and renew church and communal songbooks. Singing became ever more important to the public when in the late 1920s Fritz Jöde, a

⁹In retaliation for an act of Danish resistance during the Occupation, the Nazis blew up the concert hall at Tivoli.

music pedagogue from Germany, was invited to Copenhagen to demonstrate his ideas about community singing (or, *alsang*) and its role in the Youth Music Movement. Introduced in Copenhagen, his ideas took root and spread throughout the country. The renewal of the Danish hymn and communal song tradition initiated by Laub became the basis for a continuing refreshment of the repertory that is still reflected in all aspects of Danish choral tradition: collections are constantly renewed, updated, refreshed with music people like to sing. Today's 500 amateur choral organizations as well as the many professional choral groups cultivate the old repertory and encourage the composition of the new.

Carl Nielsen and Modernism

Denmark possessed a solid popular musical tradition by the time twentieth-century modernism arrived in the 1920s. The further development of this tradition became subject to the musical idiom of Carl Nielsen who rejected the sentimentality and bombast of late romanticism in his First Symphony, in early song collections, and in several string quartets and other chamber music, on his way to becoming the acknowledged leader of new composition in Denmark. By the early 1920s, in the course of composing three more symphonies and many other works, he had effectively developed his own approach to classical forms and genres. This

¹⁰Michael Fjeldsøe, "Organizing the New Music: Independent organizations for contemporary music in Copenhagen, 1920-1930," *Musik og Forskning* 21 (1996): 249-73.

independence was mirrored in developments taking place on a national level: having declared neutrality during World War I, Denmark began to move into a position of independence from Central Europe, and in the post-war period was experiencing a development on its own terms.

Interested in what was happening elsewhere, the Society for Young Composers (DUT, est. 1920) dedicated to producing concerts of new music, invited foreign composers to visit and introduce their work in the capital. New music from Central Europe was introduced; Schoenberg, Stravinsky and Bartók established contacts and became honored visitors in the city.¹⁰ But overriding these impulses, Nielsen, victorious after his battle with late romanticism, retained the national tone in his own music and rejected both the chromatic language of Schoenberg's circle and the neo-classical eclecticism of Stravinsky. Nielsen summed up his position thus:

The plain and simple has become mysterious because the world of art as a whole has been so full of unrest, din, excitement, and delirium for so long.

. . . The drunkard finds it hard to be content with spring water, the harlot with morning prayers, the gambler with playing forfeits. Yet they were all unspoiled at birth. But they have forgotten it, and it is hard to get back to the simple and primitive.¹¹

The force of Nielsen's influence and the power of his impact on musical life had the effect of codifying and

¹¹Carl Nielsen, *Living Music*, trans. Reginald Spink (London: Hutchinson, 1953), p. 60.

canonizing the basic idea of this statement even in the period after his death in 1931. The circumstances of the German occupation (1940-45) reinforced his concept and extended its impact into the early years of the post-war period. Looking back, it seems ludicrous that even Nielsen's own later, more adventurous works were considered strange (Three Piano Pieces, op. 59, for example). Even the Sixth Symphony was neglected in favor of the more obviously "Danish" Symphonies. In the 1930s and 1940s the leading composers, those born before the turn of the century, adopted Carl Nielsen's formulation and readily balanced the national tradition—cast in stone as per Nielsen's words—with loosely assimilated international influences (*Neue Sachlichkeit*, French neoclassicism, some early Stravinsky or Bartók). Significantly, they shied away from a profound re-interpretation of the functions of music.

The Radio and the New Age

Meanwhile, realizing the cultural significance of radio soon after it was introduced in 1922, the state assumed the administration of the national broadcasting system. Music was the principal focus of the radio's first program director, Royal Opera singer Emil Holm, who set ambitious standards and cultivated a nuanced policy of responsibility to the Danish public. Early transmissions included operas from the Royal Theater, orchestra concerts from the Odd-Fellow Palais, jazz from the best dance restaurants in Copenhagen, and concerts of visiting international artists like the Pro Arte and Budapest Quartets. It was one of

Holm's highest goals to create a fine orchestra of excellence that would rival all others—even on an international scale—with ninety-two musicians and first rate conductors. He set about achieving his objective with stealth. The first radio transmission of the Radio Orchestra took place with fourteen players in 1925, and by 1931 Holm had nearly succeeded in his plan: the orchestra counted fifty-six members (which included a number of women musicians) and conductors like Malko, Busch, Walter, Erich Kleiber and Egisto Tango were to be among the regular conductors in the next couple of seasons. In 1932 a radio chorus of professional singers was established and the Thursday Concerts were initiated.

The growth of the radio's importance and presence in the public's musical life coincided with other large-scale changes, and before the next ten years were past cultural life had been altered irrevocably. Films with sound had replaced movie theater orchestras, the recording industry was growing rapidly, and many of the local and regional musical societies had folded because of the accessibility of high quality performances on radio and recordings. On the positive side was the great spread of appreciation for serious music to the farthest corners of the country and the creation of a modern orchestra, organized according to democratic principles.¹² Eventually as the excitement and interest in early technology wore off and it became a regular feature of daily

¹²See Martin Granau, "Holms vision," *Dansk Musik Tidsskrift* 72, 3, (1997/98): 74-81, for a description of the establishment of the Radio Symphony Orchestra and details about this advanced musical organization.

life, a revived interest in live performance of classical music inspired the recurrence of music societies in provincial centers¹³ a trend that became important in post World War II developments.

World War II: Occupation and Liberation

Prior to the Nazi attack in April 1940 the cultural situation in Denmark was a fluid mixture of progressive tendencies and nationalist conservatism. The populace was comfortably positioned to participate in the expansion of modern ideas, but generally inclined to pursue greater national identity in commercial and artistic endeavors.

It will be clear from the above exposition that Denmark's ability to resurrect its cultural life at the end of the German occupation (1945) and to expand into the post-war musical revival was rooted in the country's established institutions, ensembles and traditional values. Even before the years of Nazi rule, this foundation was slanted in the direction of nationalism, a disposition that was deeply engraved in the public sentiment since the near-fatal loss of territories to Germany in 1864. One of the more spectacular traditions that manifested the depth of nationalism was the communal singing of Danish songs by crowds of thousands (*alsang*) during those years of occupation.

The "New Breed" of Composers

The members of the post-war generation of musicians were old enough

¹³In Aalborg, Århus, Randers, Kolding, and Thisted, among others.

to have been marked by the experience of the occupation, but too young to have been seriously engaged by the cultural trends of the pre-war era. When their time came, they were no longer content to funnel international impulses into the national tradition but were eager to attempt a re-definition of the internal, spiritual basis of their art. Born mostly in the early 1930s, on the eve of the country's great social reforms, their political horizon was delineated by the new constitution that in 1953 abolished the *Landsting*, the Danish equivalent to the "House of Lords," and their cultural ambitions led them to demand that music, like the visual arts and literature, should embrace environmental concerns and should be incorporated into a new definition of the national health, and thus partake of the expansion of public awareness.

While the Social Democrats in the 1930s had widely believed that the broad layers of the population gradually would adopt the traditional culture of the bourgeoisie, the example of Nazi Germany provided a lesson for the next generation about the need for active education of the masses and served to enhance the efforts to generate wide appreciation for refined forms of culture. Public libraries were built everywhere and became locations for art exhibits, concerts and lecture series. Expanded collections of books, musical scores and sound recordings were made available to the public on loan. In 1961, Julius Bomholt became the first leader of a newly established branch of government, the Ministry of Culture, the purpose of which was heatedly debated, but the relevance of which was not seriously questioned.

The young composers were predestined to play an integral part in the reinterpretation of the role of the artist in this new society. They were also in a position to redefine the response to musical developments beyond the national boundaries. In this process Denmark moved from its historical position as the northernmost outpost of mainstream European culture to that of a center for

exploration of the radical and experimental waves that emanated from Central Europe and from North America. In the ensuing decades the country expanded even those boundaries to become eventually a fertile field for impulses from Asia, South America and Africa. The following essays are devoted to exploring the developments in this period that began in 1950.

2. MUSIC SINCE 1950: DANISH TRADITION VERSUS INTERNATIONAL MODERNISM

Vagn Holmboe

The situation in post-war Denmark differed from the one in Central Europe where the musical leadership had been largely depleted of seasoned musicians by recent mass emigration to the USA and to Great Britain. It was also different from the USA where American composers and music students in the 1940s were confronted by a large influx of highly-trained composers, musicologists, editors, and performers, mostly emigrants from Germany and Austria, who settled down and started disseminating their rich intellectual tradition. The situation in Copenhagen was more comparable to that in Paris, where Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992) was the leading composer whose expansive theories about his own musical language and analytical thought attracted a classroom of gifted students. In Denmark, Vagn Holmboe (1909-1996) emerged as the leader whose theory of composition assumed a distinctive profile ca. 1949-50 somewhat later than Messiaen's, but coincident with Denmark's economic recovery from the war years.

At that time Holmboe gathered around him a new generation of students, among them Per Nørgård (1932-) and Ib Nørholm (1931-) who, together with Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen (1932-), were to take Danish music into a new era. No history of music in Denmark in the second half of the twentieth

century could be written without tracing the development of these four composers who progressively dominated the musical scene after the early 1950s.

Holmboe's Path

Even though Holmboe established his reputation already before the war with the secure command of the orchestra evident in the Second Symphony, op. 15, 1938-39, he did so from a position still somewhat on the periphery of Danish musical life. Originally from Horsens, a provincial city in Jutland, he studied composition at the Conservatory in Copenhagen under two composers, Finn Høffding (1899-1997) who was deeply involved with the school music movement at the beginning of the 1930s, and Knud Jeppesen (1892-1964) the renowned Palestrina expert,¹⁴ both of whom had strong ties to Carl Nielsen. Holmboe's regional roots and his post-graduate activities soon separated him from the Conservatory and the prevailing Nielsen epigonism there. In 1931 he travelled to Berlin where he studied with Ernst Toch for a year, and he then went to Eastern Europe to research the Hungarian, Romanian and Arabic folk music traditions. When he returned to Denmark in 1934, he followed his penchant for vendor's street calls and continued his folk music studies in the streets of Copenhagen, taught at the School for the Blind, and composed

¹⁴Jeppesen's Ph.D. dissertation, University of Vienna, was a study of Palestrina's treatment of

dissonance. He also founded the Palestrina Chorus in Copenhagen in 1922.

music. As soon as he was able he purchased land in northern Sjælland near Lake Arresø, and began to build a home in the midst of a beautiful country landscape so that he could compose surrounded by nature, somewhat separated from the Copenhagen scene.

An ingrained respect for nature and its forces and an equally deep skepticism of purely intellectual constructs was basic to Holmboe's world view and determined his desire to balance instincts and emotions with intellect and contemplation, or as he referred to them, the Dionysian with the Apollonian. He was a classicist in his concern for balance, but no neo-classical stylist; his polyphonic style was rooted in masterful counterpoint.

Holmboe's interest in folk music was directed more toward inherent expressive qualities than toward specific melodic or formal features, and though he openly used Balkan (notably Romanian) rhythms and meters, he did not quote ethnic melodic materials directly in his work. More pointedly, his goal was to integrate the ethics (*ethos*) he discovered in this music into his own artistic procedures taking these qualities as a point of departure for his personal aesthetic principles. His search led him to couple a high standard of technical skill with emotional expressivity. Not surprisingly his model was Haydn, whose position with respect to the vernacular and to inherited form he found

comparable to his own in several ways. But in the years just preceding World War II, as a musician Holmboe had to face the fact that the Fascists also claimed ethnic and folkloristic ideals for their cause, and he had to search his own soul for the true spiritual sources of his music.¹⁵

At the end of the 1930s when the political crises were mounting, something happened, there was an emotional tenseness. My own music had been based on a certain matter-of-factness, a kind of clarity because I had searched for something elementary . . . but the goal itself became something else, a spiritual goal in the soul and that was not the least due to the beginning of the war and Nazism's negative impact.¹⁶

After the war, Holmboe was very active as a writer and gained respect for his thoughtful and evenly-critical reviews in the daily newspaper *Politiken* (1947-55) and for his articles on aesthetics, new music and folk music in music journals, especially in *Dansk Musik Tidsskrift*. His contributions served to raise the level of discourse by their strong conviction and set a new standard for current criticism. In 1950 he became associated with the official musical establishment as he began to teach at the Conservatory in Copenhagen which had acquired status as the Royal Academy of Music in 1949.

¹⁵Niels Aage Skov comments generally on the situation in which the Danes found themselves relative to their Germanic cultural heritage in his essay, "The Use of Historical Myth: Denmark's World War II Experience Made to Serve Practical Goals," *Scandinavian Studies* 72, 1 (2000): 89-110.

¹⁶Quoted in Anders Beyer, "Mit uopnælige mål: Samtale med Vagn Holmboe," *Dansk Musik Tidsskrift* 71, 2 (1996-97): 41. Also in this author's translation as "My Unattainable Goal: A Conversation with Vagn Holmboe," in *The Voice of Music* (London: Ashgate Press, 2000), pp. 107-8.

The Compositional Technique of Metamorphosis

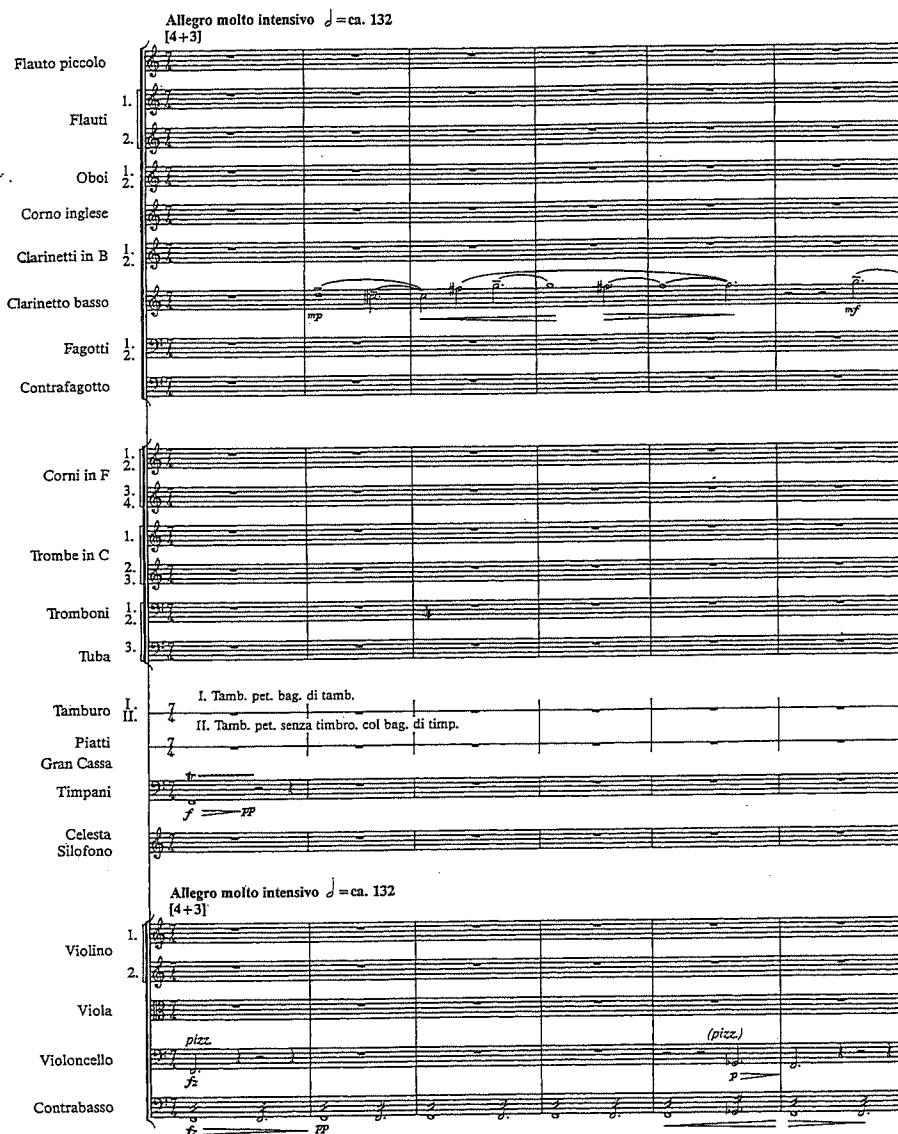
By 1950 Holmboe's early work was behind him. His Fourth Symphony had been commissioned for the opening of the new concert hall at the radio in 1941; the Fifth Symphony, op. 35, was premiered in June 1945 within a month of the Liberation. The Sixth Symphony, op. 43, was composed in 1947, and his portfolio included several string quartets, numerous concertos, cantatas and other instrumental and vocal works. His personal approach to composing was evolving to the point of putting it to the test in two works, the *Suono da bardo, symphonic suite for piano*, op. 49, 1949-50, and the Seventh Symphony, op. 50, 1950. This was to become known as the *metamorphosis* technique. Backed by his substantial body of work in all the classical genres and his status as a writer, this theory of artistic creation identified him as a leader in the Nordic musical world.

Holmboe's cultivation of the idea of a unifying force in life and art and his steady pursuit of this ideal made him a beacon of enlightenment for the next generation. A composer and teacher who guided by example, Holmboe attracted the younger generation of composers with the unflinching integrity of his musical thought and his consequent treatment of musical elements. His independence of prevailing musical styles was also a factor in a historical situation where his contemporaries were tempted to mix elements of the accepted (Nielsen-based) tradition with influences of everything from early Stravinsky and Bartók, jazz and the French Six, to the *Neue Sachlichkeit* of Hindemith and Weill.

Inspired by his own observation of biological processes, Holmboe understood his technique as a transforming, developmental process in which one musical substance, following inherent tendencies, becomes another one and, by implication, generates the evolution of form. The starting materials—a musical motive, or a theme, an interval group, a cadence or a timbre—are comparable to elementary natural phenomena. But since nature "cannot produce meaningful music that speaks to our sense of sound . . . intellect . . . memory and sense of form," the composer's obligation according to Holmboe, is to draw limits and exercise logic so that each link in the process appears to be an unavoidable necessity. The composer makes inner connections, creating the "higher order which characterizes every musical masterpiece."

In the 1930s, the vital challenge to the humanistic basis of the arts and sciences in the wake of advancing Nazism had compelled many Danish intellectuals to review their own cultural tradition. Some, like the influential architect Poul Henningsen, were radical in their acceptance of contemporary idioms and felt no need for creativity to be rooted in organic processes, but for Holmboe an interpretation of the meaning of physical phenomena was at stake and involved an altered view of reality. Holmboe's position and ideas bore a certain resemblance to those of the Danish nuclear physicist Niels Bohr whose discoveries concerned the transformation of materials following processes that elude logical

Figure 1. Vagn Holmboe, Symphony No. 8 (Sinfonia boreale), op. 56, mm. 1-6. Printed by kind permission of Edition Wilhelm Hansen.



explanation. At this time Bohr was deeply engaged in the public debate concerning the goals of cultural developments and the moral implications of exploiting nuclear power. His popularized explanation of "complementary" forms of energy was comparable to "metamorphosis" in so far as Bohr's relativity model could not be understood in terms of single, defined events, but required consideration of the totality of the process for comprehension.

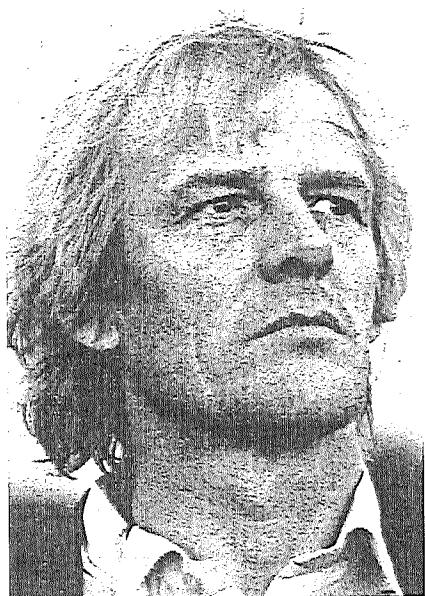
The Seventh Symphony, op. 50, premiered by the Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra in 1951, represents a breakthrough with respect to the composer's control of musical material using the *metamorphosis* technique. In a work of about 26 minutes, three intermezzos, three main movements and a coda are interlaced into one continuous sweep: *Allegro con fuoco - Intermezzo I - Adagio - Intermezzo II - Presto - Intermezzo III - Coda*. The first movement opens with a forceful, rhythmically abrupt statement of the principal motive played by the full orchestra: a descending major third is followed—starting a half-step lower—by an ascending minor sixth; the third is reiterated and followed this time by a rising major seventh. This stark idea in its bare form, two "snapped" notes followed by a slurred pair, is the rhythmic and melodic resource from which tunes, counterpoint and contrasting motives are drawn throughout the work, but notably in the main movements. The floating and melodious intermezzos feature delicate celeste and woodwinds and broadly harmonized string passages to bind the movements together into a fluid whole.

On the borderline between the youthful works and the mature works, the Seventh Symphony retains traces of earlier influences. The Adagio with its singing woodwinds and strings comes closest to the Nielsen legacy, the conversation between the inner parts and the clarity of the formal elements shows Holmboe's reverence for Haydn, and the treatment of the brass speaks to the composer's familiarity with Bartók. Overall there is a serious Nordic tone that harks to the symphonies of the Finnish titan, Jean Sibelius. In exemplary fashion, the work represents a synthesis of the past with the present and demonstrates a novel idea—the most progressive one in Danish music at the time; thus, it is an excellent work with which to begin a discussion of Danish music since 1950, for as Holmboe's first students grew to maturity things began to change rapidly.

From the quite different vantage point of the mid-1960s, the rising young critic Poul Nielsen challenged the integrity of the *metamorphosis* technique on the basis that Holmboe never clearly defined what the idea entailed and that, in technical terms, what was put forth was too vague to serve as a rigorous guide for composition.¹⁷ However, for Holmboe the process of creating balanced, organic forms was undoubtedly more important than the systematic formulation of a method. In fact, he never ceased to refine his ideas or to expand his capability to synthesize. His fascination with the *metamorphosis* technique lay largely in its

¹⁷Poul Nielsen, "Some Comments on Vagn Holmboe's Idea of Metamorphosis," *Dansk Aarbog for Musikforskning* (1968-72): 159-69.

intellectual potential: exercised as an instrument of thought it encouraged a progressive renewal of the musical idea at the same time preserving the identity of the original source. As an attempt to unite thought and creativity this procedure was a bold move in post-war Denmark. The endeavor served as an inspiration, in particular for Per Nørgård, who in the late 1960s experimentally arrived at his own brand of serial technique in which the distinguishing feature was the organic self-generating power of its formulation—ironically, much to the chagrin of his former teacher, who found the approach too constructivist at the expense of emotion.



Per Nørgård.
Photograph by Helle Rahbæk.

Per Nørgård and the “Nordic Mind”

In his Eighth Symphony, *Sinfonia boreale*, op. 56, 1951, Holmboe's continued refinement of the *metamorphosis* technique was made to accommodate a pronounced Nordic mood (*boreale* meaning “Northern”). The four-note motive heard at the beginning in the bass clarinet (two half-steps that fall within an augmented fourth) (see Figure 1, p. 20) is more pensive than the motive in the Seventh. Even the impact of the strong Balkan rhythmic pattern (4+3) and influence from Bartók (audible particularly in the brass and strings) is gradually neutralized by the working of the motive.

The *Sinfonia boreale* had an immediate impact beyond Holmboe's circle. The following comment by the Danish lyric poet Paul La Cour provides a sense of the response it engendered in the minds of the composer's contemporaries and an indication of the fascination the Nordic mind held for some:

[I]t was a symphony where a Nordic character fought to understand its nature more deeply, to objectify itself and obtain deliverance . . . a strong sense of personal involvement accounts for its seriousness and purity. . . . this struggle for objectivity and liberty became something that involved the individual listener and inspired him to a renewed self-analysis. . . . Holmboe's . . . great polyphonic passages seem to me to be more closely related to the majestic monotony of nature . . . A modern person . . . recognized the relativity of everything whilst equally being unable to escape

his experience of that which is permanent.¹⁸

Nørgård, whose own *Metamorfosi* for strings was composed in 1953, also had a lingering sense of an identity yet to be discovered, of a particularly Nordic character too, though not quite the tone struck by Holmboe's Eighth Symphony. Soon the younger composer was to see beyond the boundaries of the world as defined by his mentor and expand his own vision to embrace the whole of Nordic culture, or, as he came to call it, the “universe of the Nordic mind.” His first reach beyond Danish boundaries was to Sibelius, the Finnish master. In 1954 the 22-year old Nørgård, in the midst of working on his own first symphony, *Sinfonia Austera*, op. 13, boldly wrote a letter to Sibelius in which he stated his position in the context of the times and explained how he had found what he was looking for in the music of the Finnish composer. Skirting Stravinsky, the dodecaphonists and Hindemith, he paused at the tonal and melodic qualities of Bartók's music but concluded that they failed to match the challenges of the present (for Nørgård, in other words, they never became what they had been for Holmboe). Then he acknowledged that he had found what he had been seeking—a universality that transcends history—in Sibelius' music, and associated it with the “elementary, innermost and quite timeless forces of existence.” Reflecting the new idea of human welfare in post-war Denmark, he then added (something that would have been

uncharacteristic of Holmboe) that encountering this power, the “open human mind . . . will feel a new surge of the primal sources of life which always . . . stimulate it to lead a simpler, prouder and ineffably richer life.” Finally, resonating with Poul La Cour's commentary to *Sinfonia boreale*, he praised Sibelius' musical thought that “although constantly transformed in expression, character and material, still preserves its ‘I.’”¹⁹ In short, he was inspired by Sibelius' form-creating principle that appeared to be genuinely symphonic and new, and one in which his own cultural identity was preserved within a system of organic transformation.

Pursuing this ideal, Nørgård proceeded to find his own compositional means for which he coined a new term, *lytdidsbilleder* (untranslatable, but meaning the “image of sound in time”). In 1955, having finished the *Sinfonia Austera* and completed his studies at the Royal Academy, he headed to Paris for a year's study with Nadia Boulanger (1956–57). Though his stay coincided with momentous avant-garde activities in Paris such as the concerts of Boulez' *Domaine musicale* and Messiaen's classes at the Conservatory, Nørgård was too deeply absorbed by the search for his personal and cultural identity to become involved. Enrossed in his exploration of the “universe of the Nordic mind,” he completed a couple of vocal works, including one on texts by the Swedish poet Pär Lagerkvist whose poetry he had used earlier for two choral pieces dedicated to Sibelius. In 1957 he returned to

¹⁸Paul La Cour (1902–56), in a 1954 lecture quoted by Knud Ketting in his liner notes to *Vagn Holmboe: Symphony Cycle 4*, BIS CD

¹⁹Per Nørgård, “Dear Mr. [Sibelius],” *Nordic Sounds* 3 (1997): 4–5.

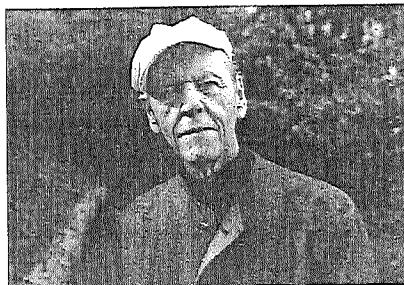
Copenhagen to teach, review concerts for *Politiken*, and compose.

Vagn Holmboe's Legacy

The continual evolution of technical means in Holmboe's works, notably during the 1970s, belongs properly to a thorough-going study devoted to the composer and his oeuvre of more than 400 compositions.²⁰ In 1965, when Holmboe, supported by an honorary stipend that made it possible for him to compose full time, quietly retired from teaching at the Royal Academy to his home in rural north Sjælland a great change was taking place in Danish music, one that was largely instigated by his students and their close associates but one with which he had little personal sympathy. Although he philosophically supported the younger generation's succession to dominance as a natural course of events, he was artistically opposed to the modernist ideas and trends espoused by the new composers, a position he made clear in his collection of essays, *Mellemspil - Tre musikalske aspekter* (Interlude, 1961) and his chamber opera *Kniven* (The Knife) for which he wrote the libretto that focuses on the avant-garde and tradition.

Into the 1960s

When Per Nørgård's first essentially independent composition, *Konstellationer*



Vagn Holmboe
Photograph by Marianne Grøndahl

for twelve solo strings, 1958, was accepted for performance at the ISCM Music Days in 1959, he and several other young composers travelled to Rome and attended the festival where they suddenly realized that developments in musical composition on the continent had far outpaced those in Denmark. Shaken by the depth of the Danish composers' isolation from mainstream European developments, Nørgård, on his return to Copenhagen, instigated the formation of a study group to discuss the new directions. The group included the composers Poul Rovsing Olsen, Axel Borup-Jørgensen, Jan Maegaard, Ib Nørholm, Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen, Tage Nielsen (then deputy head of Denmark's Radio), and the musicologist Mogens Andersen (who was employed at the radio and arranged for use of the Radio Council's meeting room).²¹ Intense and

²⁰Holmboe's work list includes thirteen symphonies, twenty-one string quartets, thirteen chamber concertos for solo instruments, a large number of compositions for solo and chamber vocal and instrumental ensembles as well as *a cappella* choral works. Paul Rapoport has translated, edited and introduced the composer's major writings and compiled a catalog of all but the very last of the composer's works: *Vagn*

Holmboe: a Catalogue of his Music, Discography, Bibliography, Essays (Copenhagen: Edition Wilhelm Hansen, 1979). See also Vagn Holmboe, *Experiencing Music: A Composer's Notes*, trans., edited, with an introduction by Paul Rapoport (Exeter: Toccata Press, 1991).

²¹Private communication from Mogens Andersen, 2/11/00.

regular meetings included study of the still unfamiliar scores by Webern and Schoenberg and newer ones by prominent living composers from the continent, Stockhausen, Boulez, Nono, Castiglioni and the up-to-date Swedish composers, Karl-Birger Blomdahl and Ingvar Lidholm. Subsequently, Mogens Andersen became editor of *Vår tids musik* (Music of Our Time), a radio series that made an immediate impact and became an essential resource for composers and students of new music. In the spirit of the Danes' long-established propensity for debate and for airing positions, Andersen adopted an interview format that provided the ideal forum for exchange of opinions and information concerning performance of new music, and for discussion of the relevant aesthetic and technical points. Eventually the radio began a series of what was called Gallery Concerts with performances of newly-composed music and jazz; here, for example, Stockhausen's *Gruppen für Drei Orchester* was performed for the first time in the Nordic countries.²²

When the time came for the 1960 ISCM World Music Days in Cologne the young Danish composers were primed to go, and what they encountered was a well-organized festival with performances of works that have since become classics of the twentieth century, among them, Stockhausen's *Kontakte*, Ligeti's *Apparitions*, Castiglioni's *Après-ludes*, Boulez' *Pli selon pli*, Pousseur's *Mobiles* for two pianos, Dallapiccola's *Canti di Liberazione*, Kagel's *Anagrama*, Nono's *Cori di Didone* and Stravinsky's *Movements* for piano and orchestra.

²²Bo Wallner, *Vår tids musik i Norden* (Stockholm: Nordiska Musikförlaget, 1968), p. 278.

This event had a definite influence on the ensuing period of Danish music during which the leading composers created a multi-faceted and often unique response to international trends.

The Early Independent Modernists

Oft-quoted stories about the burst of provocative activities following the now-famous trip to Cologne in 1960 by several young Danish composers in a Volkswagen bus have assumed a legendary character that, in turn, has tended to simplify the intricate complex of issues and currents of thought that characterized the period. Often overlooked are the activities of a few independent pioneers who before 1960 had challenged the established preference for the light, internationally acceptable styles. While it is true that the works and ideas of these early campaigners for modernist trends were not able to effect a substantial change, they were, nevertheless, the ones who broke the ground and prepared for the next generation of composers.

Niels Viggo Bentzon (1919-2000)

Already in spring of 1945, on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of DUT (Society of Young Composers), the whirlwind phenomenon, pianist and composer Niels Viggo Bentzon lectured on and performed unfamiliar music by Arnold Schoenberg and Josef Hauer. Four years later he again lectured on Schoenberg, recorded both opus 19 and opus 25 for piano, and toured Sweden and Denmark with the main part of Schoenberg's works for piano. Then in 1950, having composed

dodecaphonic works, albeit, neither persistently nor consistently, Bentzon published a small book on composing with twelve-tone techniques. It is characteristic of Bentzon's volatile spirit that he, in the same year, having finished his Fourth Symphony subtitled "Metamorphosis," asserted in an article that "Metamorphosis is the form of our time."²³

Conspicuously productive—although not in the focused and thorough manner of the similarly productive Vagn Holmboe—Bentzon stubbornly explored the domain of the multi-stylist in order to satisfy his curiosity and expend his intellectual energy. His immense capacity for improvisation led him to explore all forms of extemporary performance: jazz, conceptual and performance art, fluxus events and happenings, all this meshed together with activities and compositions of more conventional cast. Among his most comprehensive works is *Det Tempererede Klaver* (*The Tempered Piano*), ca. 1964-, a collection of 13 volumes each containing 48 preludes and fugues arranged in ascending chromatic order starting with C Major. As such it is a work that demonstrates Bentzon's scope. The "tempered" of the title has little to do with previous models and certainly nothing to do with tuning or intonation (unlike La Monte Young's *The Well-Tuned Piano* of 1964), but refers to the highly improvised character of not only the preludes, but also the fugues which are modeled on the fugues of the classical period, to the extent that a model can

be found at all. The instances of rigorous baroque-styled fugal technique according to the standard succession of exposition and episodes are unpredictable. In earlier volumes the texture is two-part with a *dux* and a *comes* at the fifth or octave, as often as not repeated without any episodic material between statements, and in the later ones, ideas are treated with even more freedom. To examine the plethora of approaches to the basic idea of prelude and fugue in the 624 pieces is tantamount to reading Bentzon's musical mind. Bentzon's work list counts 630-odd compositions. In imitation of the old masters he made no effort to sift his work according to any standards. He composed, he explained, because that was his profession and he was perfectly at ease with the thought that, in the natural course of events, the better works will be sifted out for posterity.

Jan Maegaard (1926-)

In the beginning of the 1950s Jan Maegaard's discovery of Arnold Schoenberg's *Serenade*, op. 24, which had been published in Copenhagen by Edition Wilhelm Hansen in the lively days of the 1920s, began his exploration of the music of the Second Viennese School. From that point on, as a composer and as an author, he persisted in efforts to promote awareness of modern Central European music. Between 1956 and 1958, as chairman of DUT, the Young Composers' Society, Maegaard instigated a campaign to introduce the musical public in Copenhagen to works from the essentially

Bengtsson, ed. (*Stockholm: Natur och Kultur, 1957*), pp. 177-93.

unknown repertory of the Schoenberg school and of the contemporary avant-garde. In the spring of 1958, Stockhausen was the featured guest for the season's final program, which was a rousing success. As a musicologist, Maegaard has written a number of books about modern music²⁴ and published numerous analytical and research articles and innumerable reviews of music and books on all aspects of contemporary music in Danish, German and American music journals. He developed an international reputation for his specialization in studies of Schoenberg's music with the publication of his Ph.D. dissertation on Schoenberg's development of twelve-tone composition²⁵ and then, succeeding the esteemed Danish musicologist Jens Peter Larsen, he became a Professor at the Musicology Institute of the University of Copenhagen.

In addition to his academic activities, Maegaard has been an active and productive composer. His early works were atonal and dodecaphonic. In *Jævndøgnselegi* (*Elegy of Equinox*, 1955), influence from Schoenberg's music extends to the treatment of the row and musical forms in a careful exploration of the meaning of the text. As his own language evolved, Maegaard opted for more flexibility and began to investigate the potential of open, or variable, forms to become part of his own approach to organization. In *Octomeri*, for violin and piano, op. 40, 1962, eight leaves can be played in any order, and aleatoric

passages co-exist with strictly serial ones; a mixture of units are played as solos or in ensemble. While there is a rule guiding some part of the succession, there is also free order that does not controvert the work's identity. In his more recent *Musica Riservata I-III*, he has poured his experience as a composer together with a miasma of reference gained from research and musicological study into a free combination of earlier forms, varied performance techniques and extended compositional procedures. He personally finds these exercises in music-about-music very satisfying.

Else Marie Pade (1924-)

A pioneer in the field of composition, Pade is the only woman in her generation to have made a mark in the Danish musical world as a composer, and as a composer she was one of the very first to be involved in the field of electronic music. She completed her studies in music with piano as her major, studied composition with Vagn Holmboe, Jan Maegaard and Leif Kayser, and began to compose with the dodecaphonic method; 1952 dates the beginning of her interest in electronic music. Her first composition in the genre used "concrete" sounds recorded by her and a group of sound engineers from the Radio at Bakken, a famous amusement park north of Copenhagen. This material served as the basis for the score of a TV transmission, *A Day at Dyrehavsbakken*, 1955. In the same year she was commissioned to produce music for a series of

²⁴The books include *Musikalsh modernisme*, a concise introduction to new music, and *Preludier til musik af Arnold Schönberg: 19 Værker*, a series of essays that were written to introduce nineteen works by Schoenberg being broadcast on the radio.

²⁵*Studien zur Entwicklung des dodekaphonen Satzes bei Arnold Schönberg* (Copenhagen: Edition Wilhelm Hansen, 1972) in 3 vols.

radio broadcasts of readings from fairy tales (1955-59). Work on this project brought her into contact with Holger Lauridsen, an engineer in the Radio's Acoustical Laboratory who taught her the principles and technology of electronic music. In 1956 she and Lauridsen lectured at DUT on the issue of music and technology and Pade demonstrated her first works produced in Lauridsen's sound studio. In an essay, "Lydprofetier?" ("Prophecies about Sound?"),²⁶ she revealed her familiarity with the history and development of *musique concrète* in France under Schaeffer and Henry, and *Elektronische Musik* in Germany under Stockhausen. She was clearly more conversant with the field than many of her contemporaries as she discussed Stockhausen's music and scores for his *Studien I-III*, Schaeffer's and Henry's technical bases, Cahill's electro-acoustical instrument, Schoenberg's interest in timbre (*Klangfarbenmelodie*), Busoni's influence, and Messiaen's *Timbres durées*. In 1958 Pade co-founded "Aspekt," a short-lived but active society focused on experimental forms of art (poetry, film, painting) that during the course of its existence (until 1960) invited Ernst Krenek, Karlheinz Stockhausen and Karl-Birger Blomdahl to Copenhagen to discuss their work. International contacts were important for Pade's continuing work: she went to Paris to meet Pierre Schaeffer; together with Mogens Andersen she went to the Brussels World's Fair to collect material for his radio series, *Vor tids musik*; she attended the ISCM Festival in Cologne in 1960 where she met Stockhausen; and

she was in Darmstadt for the Summer Courses four times between 1962 and 1972.

In 1959 she premiered *Symphonie Magnetophonique* composed collaboratively with Sven Drehn Knudsen, and *Syv cirkler* (Seven Circles) of her own authorship. In the 1960s she was significantly more active with a series of works produced in Jørgen Plaetner's studio (discussed later): *Glasperlepiel I-II* (Glass-bead Game), *Elektronisk musik til et lysorgel* (Electronic Music for a Light Organ) and *Excerpts I-III for Three Groups of Speakers*, 1960, *Vikingerne*, premiered at DUT, 1961, and *Goethes Faust*, 1962. In the mid-1970s Pade worked at the National Research Hospital (with Prof. Dr. Preben Plum) on experimental audio-visual programs for teaching handicapped children. The more recent electronic work, "Syv billedsange om Teresa af Avila" (Seven Character Pieces About Teresa of Avila), 1980, was composed for performance in church with music, text, choreographed movement, light and color.

Gunnar Berg (1909-1989)

A sad chapter in the story of modern Danish music concerns the career of Gunnar Berg, who was born in Switzerland to Danish-Swedish parents. Though he began his musical studies in Denmark in the late 1930s, he was to remain an outsider in the country's musical life. In 1948, discouraged by the lack of receptivity to his rather radical ideas, he left for Paris where he studied with Arthur Honegger and attended

²⁶Dansk Musik Tidsskrift 74, 5 (1957): 38-41. This issue was devoted to electronic and twelve-tone music. A survey of the chronology of electro-acoustic music in Denmark from the

1800s to 1965 by Ivar Frounberg is found in Dansk Musik Tidsskrift 73, 1 (1998/99): 6-15.

Olivier Messiaen's courses in analysis. Adopting serialism in 1950, he attended the Summer Courses in Darmstadt and became associated with the advanced European composers. Then, he returned to Denmark in 1957 as an established musical figure to perform on the DUT concert series and to lecture in the *folkehøjskole* on the music of the avant-garde (in concert with his wife, the pianist Béatrice Berg). Though largely ignored by the establishment, he alerted audiences to contemporary music and influenced some younger composers, among them Jan Maegaard who briefly studied with him. Two of Berg's many works have gained a kind of notoriety. One of them is the completely static *Filandre* for flute, clarinet and violin that explores combinations of treble timbre—played non-vibrato and *ppp*—to evoke the sunlit gossamer threads of a spider's web (hence, the title), quite an advanced idea for 1943. The other is an extended work for solo piano, *Gaffky's I-X*, 1958-59. This peculiar name refers to a microbiological method for describing flourishing colonies of variant microbes, an idea that contributed to the work's formulation involving a serial treatment of a row of five to ten notes in each of the ten separate segments ("assortments"), which are further subdivided into ten sections ("variants"). The structure was apparently related to Berg's complex drawings in which forms result from the interaction of planes that are indicated by crossing lines.²⁷ In spite of some support in Danish music circles,

²⁷Three very different drawings are featured as cover illustrations of the third, sixth and eighth issues of Dansk Musik Tidsskrift 48 (1973/74).

notably from Mogens Andersen who wrote analytic articles about Berg's music, he left Denmark in 1980 to live in Switzerland where he died in 1989.

Axel Borup-Jørgensen (1924-)

Since the modernist movement in music was accepted earlier and more decisively in Sweden than in Denmark, Borup-Jørgensen's enduring ties with Sweden where he grew up may partly explain the persistent modernist aspects of his work. He was one of the few Danish composers to attend the Summer Courses at Darmstadt in 1959 and 1962. His early works employed a strongly dissonant, expressionistic style, and over time they evolved into an exploration of sound masses projecting naturalistic images. The large-scale evocation of the sea in his masterpiece for orchestra, *Marin*, 1963-70, achieves its effect by the combination of minutely-scaled instrumental timbres. In *Marin*, and again in *Musica Autumnalis* for wind ensemble, percussion and electric organ, 1997, Borup-Jørgensen calls for aleatoric choices with indeterminant notation for players and conductor.

Listening to Borup-Jørgensen's works for piano that cover a thirty-five-year period—*Winter Pieces*, 1959, *Summer Intermezzi*, 1971, *Epigrams*, 1976, *Thalatta! Thalatta!* 1987-88, and *Raindrop Interludes*, 1992-94—one is struck by the encroaching stillness and silence beginning in the 1970s. There is a perceptible narrowing of the field of sound marked by few strongly expressive outbursts, and a move from a large expressionistic palette to a minimal one as melody progressively disappears from his music. This is heard quite

literally in *Peripeti: In memoriam Poul Borum* for guitar trio, 1995-96. The scordatura tuning allows for varied harmonic possibilities and, thoroughly familiar with the responsive character of the instrument, the composer builds up to the dramatic moment that, in turn, progressively dissipates into pensive melancholy to the point of complete dissolution.

Poul Rovsing Olsen (1922-82)

Composer and ethnomusicologist Poul Rovsing Olsen was unique among his contemporaries because of his early and enduring interest in non-western music. Specializing in the traditional musics of Greenland and the Middle East, he gained significant recognition in the field and served several terms as President of the International Folk Music Council (now known as the International Council of Traditional Music).

Rovsing Olsen studied at the Royal Academy of Music in Copenhagen and simultaneously took a degree in law at the University. He then studied with Nadia Boulanger and Olivier Messiaen in Paris in the early 1950s. His earliest works are in a French neo-classical mode, for example, *Préludes*, op. 12, with an occasional nod toward Stravinsky as in *Serenade*, op. 14. The three *Nocturnes* for piano, 1951, dedicated to Debussy, Ali Akbar Khan (the world-famous sitar-player) and Chopin, show an intelligent synthesis of styles and use of conventions that elegantly evoke the past without the pall of imitation. In the first nocturne, the hint of the Debussian arabesque is deflated by the alternation of aggressive low registers and light, high ones. In the "

Chopin" nocturne the pianism is taken a step further: it is Chopinesque only in the abstract, as the hint of pastiche is dispelled by the exotic augmented seconds and geometric tracery in the ornamentation. Rovsing Olsen's Sonata for Cello and Piano in five movements, op. 34, 1956, is a sober and serious work. The formal and textural economy, the occasional flashes of incisive rhythms, and the elegiac quality of melodic lines evoke early Prokofiev.

One of the *Images* for piano, 1965, "Svara Mandala," refers to an Indian instrument, another, "Jhap-Tal," to an Indian rhythm of ten beats. They make no attempt to sound Indian, nor does the third piece, "Maya," with its highly concentrated and dramatic explorations of the instrument, sound Native American. The "Dance of Radha" (an allusion to Krishna's favorite lover) uses sweeping strokes across the freely vibrating strings, yet it sounds more like Stockhausen's late *Klavierstücke* than anything remotely oriental. In compositions from the late 1960s and mid 1970s, for example the Second String Quartet, op. 62, with movements subtitled "Aktion I," "Interludium" and "Aktion II," the cleansing effect of New Simplicity (discussed later) is evoked, however without affecting the characteristic intensity of the writing. Rovsing Olsen's span of interests led him to compose some very early examples of cross-over music but also to absorb essential ideas of other musical cultures into his own with few surface indications. This may help explain why his music is performed and recorded in Denmark long after his untimely death: it continues to sound fresh.

Tage Nielsen (1929-)

During all of the changes in the post-1960s music, a number of composers and musicologists were instrumental in restructuring laws, implementing programs and building audiences. Tage Nielsen was a model example in this effort. After completing studies at the Musicology Institute in Copenhagen, he worked at the Radio where he became Assistant Director. When the Jutland Music Conservatory became a state institution in 1963, he was installed as the Director (1963-83), and his direction became a crucial factor in establishing the reputation of Århus Academy as a focal point for new ideas in music.

Not surprisingly Tage Nielsen's compositional productivity as a composer was limited by his administrative work at this time, but he made a mark with *Il giardino magico*, 1967-68 for large orchestra (with both harpsichord and piano), a colorful piece in which expressionistic traits and refined sensibility are moderated by elements of aleatory choice. Inspired by a large, somewhat neglected garden in Italy where he encountered a quote from Wagner on the wall, Nielsen composed a work that reflected the lost tradition of the nineteenth century with references to *Tristan*, Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht* and fragments that sound as though they might be quotations—a kind of film score without images. By contrast, a later large orchestral work, *Passacaglia*, 1981, is a self-contained fantasy.

In 1983 when Tage Nielsen became Director of the Danish Institute in Rome, his work list began to grow, particularly with compositions for chamber

ensembles and solo instruments. His comic chamber opera, or, as he calls it, "realistic" opera based on Nabokov's novel, *Laughter in the Dark (Latter i mørket)*, 1989-92, has played successfully in theaters in and outside of Denmark. Characteristic of Nielsen's work is his ability to capture the poetry of a moment as in *Ballade* for percussion (glockenspiel, vibraphone and marimba), 1984, *Salon* for harp trio, 1984, *Uccelli* for clarinet, 1992, *Lamento & Koralfantasi* for organ, 1993, 1995, and the *Fantasy Pieces* for cello, 1997.

Church Music

A special group of composers from this generation have set themselves apart with compositions that enrich the repertory of the Catholic Church (note: the state church in Denmark is the Lutheran Church). Leif Kayser (1919-), who is a Catholic priest, has composed concert music for orchestra and instrumental ensembles alongside his more comprehensive oeuvre of instrumental and vocal music for the church. In all of his work Kayser combines his interest in the technical and expressive limitations of the performing medium with an approach that is light but reflective. His work is praised for the same rigor and thoughtful clarity that characterize his teaching in the fields of analysis and instrumentation at the Royal Academy in Copenhagen. Bernhard Lewkovitch (1927-) has always been highly regarded for the conciseness of his choral music, and for the varied relationship between music and text. Though the compositions for both mixed groups and men's choral

groups, *a cappella* and accompanied, reflect the impact of Stravinsky (*Symphony of Psalms*), the overall character of his work is refined. Modern techniques employed by the composer include a kind of antiphony of speech and singing as in *Improperia per voci*, 1961, as well as rhythmic recitation and improvisation in his setting of St. Francis' Sun Hymn, *Il canto delle Creature*, 1962. Niels la Cour (1944-) studied at the Royal Academy of Music, graduating in 1969, and continued his compositional studies, first with Leif Kayser, then at the Conservatory of St. Cecilia in Rome in the 1970s. His early second string

quartet, *Mild und leise*, 1969, is often mentioned as a classic of New Simplicity but the young composer's imaginative use of plain chords that return cyclically, and varied textures created by a bemused exploration of treatments (high meandering melodies in the first violin, little inconsequential ostinati, pizzicati and high flageolet tones, sustained pitches) leave room for doubt about his lack of total commitment to the movement. Since the mid-1970s, he has been principally involved with composition of sacred music for chorus and organ, and for chorus *a cappella*.

3. ESTABLISHING DANISH MODERNISM

The Triumvirate of the First Generation

Per Nørgård and Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen, both born in 1932, have been called the "twins" of today's Danish music, but this configuration is incomplete for it is essential to consider Ib Nørholm, born in 1931, as one of the central figures of the post-1960 development of music in Denmark. In a sense, he is the force that balances the two opposites found in Nørgård and Gudmundsen-Holmgreen. All three studied with Holmboe at one time or another (although Holmboe is not regarded as Gudmundsen-Holmgreen's principal teacher), and trace their lineage back to Nielsen via Holmboe and his teachers, Høffding and Knud Jeppesen. The paths travelled by Nørgård, Gudmundsen-Holmgreen and Nørholm, as they drew away from the tradition of the Nordic universe and encountered Central European and international modernism in the arts, will endure as the most interesting episodes in the history of twentieth-century Danish music. Not only is the story itself fascinating, but it spins into a lively sequel since these composers have influenced generations of younger Danish composers, most of whom have studied with at least one of them. Many of these students have by now become teachers themselves, and have established an enduring legacy. The outsider who becomes acquainted with Danish music will find the pronounced differences between these three men fascinating because it would seem that they have much in common.

Nørgård's music seeks to extend our frames of references in an unceasing process of expansion and contraction of the physical and mental parameters of existence; he is, to paraphrase Blake, always able to see the stars in a raindrop and infinity in a grain of sand. He pursues elusive shades of meaning present in ordinary situations to the limits of comprehensibility and reveals again and again that the seemingly normal is deeply mysterious. Where Nørgård seeks meaning and context in all aspects of life and music, Gudmundsen-Holmgreen is a profound skeptic who balances precariously between harsh rejection of the notion of hope, beauty and meaning, and, at the other extreme, delights in the odd, the incongruous, and the bizarre. He is a moralist determined to enjoy life's strange pleasures disregarding the lack of reason and rationality. Nørholm is far removed from either of these two modes. He takes new impulses as they come and works with them until they fit together within the system of references he has inherited. Neither interested in explaining the mystery behind the unity of all phenomena, nor given to contemplation of meaninglessness, he accepts new sounds and techniques without interfering signs of disturbance or devotion.

Perhaps because (but not exclusively) of their cultural situation, these composers are concerned with their audiences, and looking at their careers over the last four decades, it is clear that they intentionally invested in the country that invested in them, and that they

cultivated the audience that was being developed as part of the cultural program. Each composer chose to establish his own dialogue with the audience and to maintain it, threading his way between the lyricism of the national heritage and the perceived rigidity of international modernism.²⁸

Per Nørgård and Infinity—1960s and 1970s

Beginning in the 1970s and increasingly since then, Nørgård has become accepted as the most influential and important Danish composer since Carl Nielsen. His compositions, leadership in public and professional organizational activities, musical investigations, and teaching have had a singular effect not only on his students, but also on groups of dancers, singers, percussionists, professionals and amateurs.

When, following the Rome ISCM Festival in 1959, he was involved in the study sessions at the Radio, Nørgård was as yet heading in no specific direction. He began by reconsidering the concept of a "work," and introduced an open-ended, almost improvisatory character into his thinking. His *Sketches* (I-IV) and *Nine Studies*, op. 25a and b, from 1959, use serialized melodic and rhythmic structures. Mere wisps of musicality, they seem like loosely-defined musical thoughts when compared

to the fully-worked out compositions of the earlier years. The melodic shapes still resemble Nørgård's earlier work, but the effect of the new approach can be seen in the rhythm, which is much freer and hints at Nørgård's later characteristic rhythmic style from the works of the 1970s. The rigorously constructed piece, *Fragment VI for six orchestra groups*, 1959-60, that won the Gaudeamus Prize for new composition in 1961, shows the composer moving away from the national tone and approaching continental developments. In this work, he came to terms with the challenge of serialism, but like some of his Danish contemporaries, he continued beyond that with experiments that took a different direction.

Yes, for us the new ideas worked like a colossal x-ray—almost like an x-ray beam on the Danish tradition. And we became unpopular, for example, for criticizing the Danish milieu in our reviews. A new piano concerto by Koppel—as stated in my review—was a farewell from the old world, yet another demonstration of how some thought music should be screwed together. We certainly had the feeling that it couldn't continue like that, but it wasn't because we came up with a new goal, in imitation—so ein Ding müssen wir auch haben—it wasn't that: it was the soul-searching that was important.²⁹

ences (and perhaps also similarities) of the three approaches to composing music.

²⁹Quoted in Anders Beyer, interviewer, "Per Nørgård: En komponist på skråplaner" (unpublished). Published in this author's translation, "Per Nørgård: A Composer on Inclined Planes" in *The Voice of Music: Interviews with Composers* (London: Ashgate Press, 2000), p. 128.

In a sense, face to face with the Central European—primarily Germanic—line of thinking, Nørgård and his fellow composers felt pressed to establish a kind of independence and were motivated to explore the challenges that were coming from all directions: the ideas of Xenakis, Ligeti, Penderecki and electronic music from Europe, the experimental and conceptual thinking, Cage, Feldman, sculptural minimalism, Nam June Paik and the Fluxus movement. Nørgård's interests were particularly inclined toward visionary thinkers like Buckminster Fuller and Arthur Koestler, and he continued to explore serialized thought but on his own terms and in search of a kind of freely-expanding, non-mechanical process. Sensitive to the flood of ideas occurring in music and art circles outside of Denmark in the early 1960s, Nørgård composed a series of innovative works: the opera *The Labyrinth*, 1963, which pioneered the use of musical collage in Denmark and furthermore introduced pop musicians (Sir Henry & His Butlers) and an electronic score into the august atmosphere of the Royal Theater; a *sangspiel* (based on a text by Georg Büchner), 1963, with electric guitars and steel drums in the accompanying ensemble; the oratorio *Babel*, a musical happening, 1965, revised 1968; various works that used spatial notation or called for improvisation; a number of early excursions into electronic music; a set of variations on a Beatles melody for brass band, and so on. Two of these works took on a life of their own: *Du skal plante et træ* (You must plant a tree), 1967, a simple song to a text by Piet Hein, was

³⁰For a fuller explanation of the infinite row and the varied extensions into rhythm and harmony see Erling Kullberg's "Beyond Infinity: On the infinity series—the DNA of hierarchical music,"

in *The Music of Per Nørgård: Fourteen Interpretive Essays*, edited by Anders Beyer (London: Scolar Press, 1996), pp. 71-93.

²⁸An excellent juxtaposition of these three composers may be heard on Erling Møldrup's recording, *The Frosty Silence . . . Music for Guitar by Danish Composers*, dacam DCCD 9316, on which Nørholm's *Sonata for Guitar*, op. 69, 1976, Gudmundsen-Holmgreen's *Solo for Electric Guitar*, 1970-71, and Nørgård's *Tales from a Hand, 3 Clubs Among Jokers*, 1989 are performed with complete understanding of the essential differ-

and the material of a symphonic movement. In this succession of compositions, Nørgård was also finding an open-ended improvisatory approach to composition in a series of works that explored single ideas until they were either exhausted or transformed into others.

Nørgård as Teacher

In Denmark it is customary for students in composition to have a principal teacher, but also to study with others, and, when possible, outside of Denmark. In this way the Danes avoid forming schools of composers who closely share techniques and aesthetics based on the ideas of forceful leaders. Even in the earlier decades, Nørholm, Gudmundsen-Holmgreen and a legion of others, including Nørgård, studied with Vagn Holmboe as well as Finn Høffding, Poul Schierbeck and Jørgen Jersild at the Royal Academy. Most of the teaching was carried out in Copenhagen, the center of the professional music world, but a few students, including Nørgård, Poul Rovsing Olsen and Axel Borup-Jørgensen, went abroad to study—with Boulanger or Messiaen in Paris, or with composers in Darmstadt.

A landmark transition in the history of music education in Denmark began in 1964. It was initiated by a controversy between Nørgård and the faculty of the Royal Academy of Music in Copenhagen and it erupted over that institution's rejection of student "X" who had submitted a composition that was accepted with high praise by the composition faculty, but whose chorale harmonization on the entrance exam was judged faulty. Nørgård's objection to the decision sparked a confrontation with the old guard at the conservatory which led him

to resign his position in protest. Almost immediately, Tage Nielsen, rector of the Music Academy in Århus, Jutland, called and offered Nørgård a position which he readily accepted. The result was that his students in composition, Fuzzy (Jens Wilhelm Pedersen), Erik Norby, Ingolf Gabold, Svend Nielsen, and of course the young Mr. "X"—Ole Buck—moved to Århus with him. Speaking of the environment that spawned the controversy and the students who followed him, Nørgård explained:

I realized that the instruction that I had gotten before was—to say it in a nice way—incomplete. I mean: to get a cup of tea and sit and chat generally about music—yes, fine enough. But there should obviously have been seminars. "Here take this, listen to it. What in the world did Schoenberg do?" We heard nothing about him. They held to a post-Nielsen aesthetic, and so if you asked about Webern you were shown a score where anyone could see that "there were holes in his head." So, I wanted to try to get beyond that. This was the background for the confrontations, and with that, the shift of the 1960s. We were no longer willing to accept older persons's versions of things. Now we wanted, ourselves, to find out about it. This didn't please the theory staff, which, aside from me, consisted of older men. Some were more "quiet" than others, but the more vociferous of them said, for example, "Damn, now we will have to think things over before we let things like 'workshop concerts' get going!" Basic things such as the workshop concerts that I wanted to establish in Copenhagen—and which I started in Århus as soon as I moved my teaching there—were stopped every time by the group. And when figures such as Ligeti or Lutosławski came to Copenhagen, I had to hire them—the

Academy "had no money for such things." My students contributed to paying their costs and we simply arranged private seminars. So the tension was already quite intense when the "Ole Buck-affair" set things off.³¹

The Shift to Århus

As an outcome of the controversy the concentration of activity in contemporary Danish musical life shifted from Copenhagen to Århus, which was still quite a provincial center.

All my students "moved" with me to Århus and it had the effect of spreading Danish music, decentralizing it. That was one consequence of the events. The students became teachers and active composers in Århus, and, later on, in other places in the provinces. It wasn't very long before I suggested that we should have a new music society in Århus. So AUT (Århus Young Composers Society) was established [in 1966].³²

Nørgård's students were a new force in the life of the city and soon others joined them. Nørgård always enjoyed an environment rich with intellectual and artistic exchange and thrived on the input of others—his own students, his elders, peers and colleagues. Correspondingly, his teaching was not limited to the classroom and studios in the academy but included every other kind of educational encounter imaginable, from a private seminar that continued in Copenhagen for

³¹Quoted in "Per Nørgård: A Composer on Inclined Planes," p. 129.

³²Ibid., p.130.

³³Described by Hans Gefors who was a student at Århus, in Anders Beyer, "Kunstværket som virkelt nærvær: Samtale med komponisten

some fifteen years, to special short seminars for teachers in training or classes offered at the *folkehøjskole*, which were geared to amateurs and offered as continuing education.

Not only the level of activity increased at the Århus Academy, but the teaching expanded in new directions, which, in turn, had far-reaching effect. For example, electronic music, which had fallen on fallow ground in Copenhagen, received a jolt from two of Nørgård's students, Fuzzy and Gunner Møller Pedersen, who explored the new field with Bent Lorentzen. The establishment in 1987 of the state-of-the-art Institute for Electronic Music (DIEM) located in Århus can be traced to this turn of events.

In 1967 Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen joined the faculty at the Music Academy in Århus and shared in the teaching of promising students who were to become leaders in the next generation of composers, among them Karl Aage Rasmussen, and Hans Abrahamsen. The Århus Young Composer's Society (AUT) was a counterpart to the one in Copenhagen (DUT), but from the beginning it had a different character—one of exchange, active engagement in new ideas all of which fostered camaraderie.³³ The scene was also enlivened by new performing organizations, and supported by the principal institutions of music education and the local musical organizations. Århus, the second largest city in

Hans Gefors," *Dansk Musik Tidsskrift* 65, 4 (1994/95): 146-157, translated as "Hans Gefors: The Work of Art as a True Presence," in *The Voice of Music* (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2000), pp. 221-238.

Denmark, became an important location for the performance of new music and the proving grounds for a new approach to pedagogy, one that matched the spirit of the times.

The shift of the center of gravity in performance of new music from Copenhagen to Århus was complete with the founding in 1975 of the Elsinor Players, a hot-shot group devoted to performance of new compositions under the direction of Nørgård's student Karl Aage Rasmussen. Rasmussen was also the *primus motor* of the NUMUS Festival (founded in 1978) that initially focused on new and experimental Danish music performed by Danish musicians.³⁴ This festival began with high ambitions and has not failed to supersede expectations in the succeeding twenty-two years. In this situation the Music Act of 1976 was functioning according to its lofty purposes.

Nørgård's Early Maturity: Hierarchy and Order

In the 1970's, Nørgård produced a burgeoning mass of compositions, including the first setting of the beautiful *Vinter Kantata*, a work "for a few or several" on a text by Ole Sarvig, and groups of works, many involving percussion, dance, mime, or song—or a combination of any of these elements—for amateurs often combined with

professionals. Three large works stand out: *Gilgamesh, an opera in six days and seven nights*, 1971-72, which was awarded the prestigious Nordic Music Prize in 1974 and brought wide recognition to the composer; the Third Symphony, 1972-75, which was received with near-universal acclaim and later received numerous performances and several recordings—a classic; and the opera-ballet *Siddharta* (text by Ole Sarvig and Nørgård), 1973-79, revised 1983, which was premiered in Sweden and restaged in Denmark. These three luminous masterpieces³⁵ exemplified the monumental scope made possible by the resources of the infinite row and, in spite of the explicit criticism of materialism in the two operas, they projected a belief in the idealism of the model welfare state through the hierarchical balance of the music.

Gilgamesh was composed for staging in an arena with the singers and costumed musicians, chorus and actors moving around in a large arc, creating a mythical space ruled by gods who are less agents of conflicts than guides for Gilgamesh's journey through time. In this drama, the oldest story of the quest for humanism and civilization, Nørgård harnesses nature's harmonic series to portray Enkido, the man of the forest, and counterposes this with music derived from the infinite row for the semi-divine hero, Gilgamesh. Nature

They also included works by the internationally-known composers, Steve Reich, Morton Feldman and Louis Andriessen, whose works had seldom or never been performed in Denmark.

³⁴Recordings of all three are available, *Gilgamesh* in two different recordings and the Third Symphony in three different ones.

takes on various shapes, now the jungle, then a raging bull—actually a masked and costumed trombonist who leaps out of the orchestra to confront the two heroes. Harmony and melody, resources of nature, are eventually brought into agreement with the civilizing influence of balanced hierarchical order as *Gilgamesh* is brought to accept his human nature.

But it was the Third Symphony that was to become the watershed work in which the composer was able to amalgamate the results of his investigations of interference and hierarchical structures. When working on the symphony, Nørgård referred to it as a "being" coming into its own existence and the insightful musicologist Jørgen I. Jensen writes:

...it is sustained by a vision of organic coherence reminiscent of Goethe. The aim is to show a world in growth, balance and interplay—both between musical emotion and understanding, and between ascending and descending forces.³⁶

Woven into the last movement of the Third Symphony is Nørgård's 1974 choral setting for eight-part chorus of Rilke's poem, "Singe die Gärten, mein Herz," from the Second Series of the *Sonnets to Orpheus*. In the midst of setting the last line of the text, "fühl dass der ganze, der rühmliche Teppich gemeint ist," (feel that the whole, the glorious tapestry is meant) Nørgård was inspired to weave a quotation, the first stanza of Schubert's "Du bist die Ruh" into the texture (see Figure 2, next page).

³⁴In the first year there were eight concerts in five days with thirty Danish works, about half of which were premieres. These pieces were performed alongside "classics" of recent and older vintage: *Aventures* by Ligeti, *Sette Foglie* by Bussotti, the Danish premiere of Kagel's *Kantri-miusik* from 1975, Webern's arrangement of Schoenberg's Chamber Symphony, op. 9, Stockhausen's *Kreuzspiel*, John Cage's *Variations*.

³⁵Jørgen I. Jensen, "Per Nørgård: Symphony No. 3," brochure notes for recording by Danish

All was well. It hardly seems coincidental that this symphony, the embodiment of hierarchical order and the perfected model of a world view, should have been composed in the same years that the public subsidy of music was being coordinated into the Music Act (1976). The scope of Nørgård's undertaking constituted an argument for a law to organize public support, and extensive public funding made the demanding project feasible.

Nørgård, having inspired—and, in turn, having been inspired by—the new law's inherent encouragement for activities that involved amateurs in music, was more active than ever. His essays devoted to educating the public, his advocacy of public support for advanced popular music, and his compositions that joined amateurs and professionals in performance were important activities that helped to pass the Music Act. Once it passed Nørgård was prepared to put it to use in the spirit in which it was conceived. Attracted by Bali's extant tradition of communal music-making, Nørgård went to the island in the mid-1970s and returned to Denmark bursting with ideas that built on newly-expanded objectives that involved working with groups of performers. In 1976 the vocal group of singers, Ars Nova, was started and at least a portion of its activity was devoted to performing Nørgård's still-unfamiliar music and taking part in exploring his ideas. A drumming group, *Sol og måne* (Sun and moon), was formed using the gamelan instruments that Nørgård had ordered from Bali with tuning that particularly

National Radio Symphony Orchestra, Leif Segerstam, conductor, Chandos 9491.

Figure 2. Per Nørgård, *Singe die Gärten, mein Herz, die Du nicht kennst* for 8-part choir and piano, 1974, mm. 116-122.

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The musical score for 'Singe die Gärten, mein Herz, die Du nicht kennst' features eight staves of music. The top section (measures 116-120) shows a complex polyphonic arrangement with lyrics in German. The bottom section (measure 121) begins with a solo piano part (SOLO, placed separately) in reliefo, followed by the choir continuing the vocal line. The lyrics include: 'ge-meint ist fühl das der gan-ze, der rühm- li - che Tep - pich', 'ge - deckt, der Tep - pich', 'ge - st, ge - mei - nt ge - mei - nt, ge -', 'der rühm - li - che Tep - pich ge - meint ist. Fühl dass der rühm- li -', 'ge - mei - nt, ge - mei - nt, ge -', 'pi - ch ge - mei - nt, ge -', and '121 SOLO (placed separately) Du bist die Ruh', der'. Measure 121 also includes dynamic markings such as *p*, *p*, *p*, *sub.*, *f*, *sub.*, *mp* (in reliefo), and *fp*.

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interested him; and the choreographer-solo dancer from the Danish Royal Ballet, Dinna Bjørn, devised a choreography based step by step on the principles of the infinite row that she called "infinity dance." She also established a dance ensemble to work in close cooperation with the composer. In one grand sweep all of these ideas and experiments were joined together in *Den afbrudte Sang* (The interrupted song), a scenic piece composed in 1977 for equal voices and instruments based on the drama of Orpheus and Euridice. In an ambitious project, amateurs and professionals (dancers, singers and instrumentalists) joined school children from Denmark and Sweden for a performance choreographed by Dinna Bjørn and co-directed by Nørgård and several members of his circle.

The ultimate statement of Nørgård's hierarchic music of the 1970s was the opera-ballet *Siddharta*, 1979; however, when the end of that work was revised in 1983 the composer had moved on to a new world of ideas. Throughout the first two acts of *Siddharta*, infinite rows cast in transparent polyphonic layers dance in a rhythmic, pulsating form and seductively project the world of artificial bliss in which the King encapsulates his son, the young prince, the future Buddha. But in the third act when the deception fails and the prince is subjected to visions of unspeakable horror, Nørgård faced the need for a new compositional technique to express the chaotic breakdown of a harmonious world and to reflect the mental confusion that forces the young Buddha out into the world to seek enlightenment. Unlike the layers of polyphony, each defined by its own

tempo and correlated within the hierarchical model, the new approach had to use opposition and conflict. In answer to the question, "why the change?" Nørgård answered by referring to the mad outsider artist, Adolf Wölfli, whose work became symptomatic of the composer's reorientation:

[T]he music became too single-minded. In the Third Symphony, there is, for example, one rhythmic layer that uses the golden proportions grouped in two, in four, in eight and so on, but the *junctions* are still noticeable. Actually, for a couple of years I composed works with tools that I used in the Third Symphony. I believe that was the most stable period in my life—then I found Wölfli. On the way to the Third Symphony I composed *Sub Rosa*, 1970, which is based on melodies from the infinite row in one way or another, and out of the Third I composed *Turnering*, 1975, and *Twilight*, 1976-77... That kind of composing can't be repeated, so if I had not found Wölfli then I would have been forced to invent him because I already had the commission for the Fourth Symphony.³⁷

The "Wölfli" Works and After, 1980's-1990s

Adolf Wölfli's tormented understanding of the world portrayed in his paintings and writings provided insight into a world of deprivation and chaos, far from the ideal world that was envisioned in the Third Symphony with its hierarchical and orderly layers, or indeed from Nørgård's own experience. It was,

³⁷Quoted from "Per Nørgård: A Composer on Inclined Planes," pp. 132-33.

however, a vision of the world that was encroaching on Denmark in 1980, one in which the idealism of the 1960s and 1970s was being put to the test by escalating foreign debts and outbreaks of social unrest brought on by the problem of assimilating large numbers of foreigners—called “guest workers”—who emigrated to Denmark in the 1960s. Numerous works from these years bear the marks of a new capacity on Nørgård’s part to describe conflict and to accommodate social misfits who, by their existence, challenged the vision of the ideal world. *Wie ein Kind* with texts by Rilke and Wölfl, 1980, by now a classic in vocal chamber music, and The Fourth Symphony, 1980-81, subtitled *Indischer Roosen-Gaarten und Chinesischer Hexensee* after an idea of Wölfl, were two lasting results of the composer’s studies of Wölfl’s legacy. Both works used clashing oppositions to propel the music into a new arena, opening up new areas of expression. Then everything—drumming, dance, drama, new tunings, rhythms, stage settings and polyphony of characters drawn from Wölfl’s nightmarish autobiography—was combined in the extraordinarily rich chamber opera, *Det guddommelig Tivoli* (The Divine Pleasure Fair), 1982.³⁸

Having worked his way through the existential crisis in the early 1980s, Nørgård emerged empowered with new means, and in the mid-1980s he initiated an important cycle of works in

which he, seemingly without effort, could express abrupt contrasts and yet, as needed, accommodate the hierarchies of the infinite row. This was characteristic of his approach at the time. Then Nørgård described his new work, *Tintinnabulary*, the Sixth String Quartet, 1986 as

a small world of its own based on one single tone row, which in various rhythms winds through the work’s single movements—with constantly new bends, accents, tempo variations and sound characters.³⁹

A new supply of formal means became available as the infinite row came to be seen as one realization among many within the greater resources of the “lakes of tones” (*tonesøer*) that took the concept of row-work into the age of chaos theory. This development came on the heels of concentrated work with contrasting and changing tempos (particularly simultaneous accelerandos and ritardandos) and complex rhythmic structures that are correlated, yet distinct—as in nature. In one of the early studies, *Achilles og Skilpadden* (Achilles and the Tortoise) for piano, 1983, the two tempos implied in the title are constantly in play causing both accelerations and decelerations in a constant state of catching up only to fall behind. Intuition and calibration are inter-twined at this stage of work, and pursuing an intuition, Nørgård composed his first concerto, *Helle Nacht* for violin and orchestra, 1986-87, and

³⁸The *Divine Pleasure Fair* has been performed successfully in Denmark, Scotland, Switzerland, Iceland and Norway.

³⁹Per Nørgård, “Composing String Quartets Through 34 Years,” liner notes for *String Quartets No. 1-6, The Kontra Quartet*, Kontrapunkt 32015, 1988.



Figure 3. Photo from performance of Per Nørgård’s opera, *Nuit des hommes*.
Photograph by Bent Ryberg/Holland House.

the Fifth Symphony, 1990. The largely intuitive works *Night-Symphonies*, *Day Breaks* for sinfonietta, 1991-92, and *Mattinata* (“Tongues of Light”) for organ, 1992, explore areas where the simultaneity of order and chaos force calculation and intuition to cooperate. The *Concerto e due tempi* for piano and orchestra, 1996, is a masterpiece of tempos, references, comprehensible order and disconcerting chaos.

In summation of Nørgård’s work, as these words are being written, the Sixth Symphony, *At the End of the Day*, has recently been premiered by the Danish Radio National Symphony Orchestra on its first concert in the new

millenium, January 6, 2000. This is fitting for a composer whose works have often been firsts: the first young composer to appear on the Anthology of Danish Music by Deutsche Grammophone, the composer of the first Danish work to be released on CD, the first Danish composer to receive the Nordic Music Prize, the Sonning Prize, and the University of Dresden’s Henrik Steffen Award and the Medal for Art and Science from the city of Hamburg.

In the late 1950s Nørgård’s interests had led him to abandon the “Nordic” direction of his search, but not the search impulse itself, and in a less biased, more open form, he continues that quest today. More specifically

he has been involved in a decades-long investigation of the world and of the mind that he finds mirrored in music—not the other way around. Each new discovery compels him to compose so that he can continue his exploration; in this sense, he is in a persistent state of having been, being, and becoming. As a critic and essayist he has been driven to explain what he has discovered, and in this double role of composer and author, he has served as the standard-bearer in a veritable campaign to modernize the Danish musical milieu based on the belief that artists must show social commitment, and that social progress in its widest definition finds expression in the arts. Accepting the modern humanistic ideal that the artist is both the expert explorer of new concepts and the conservator of traditional values, he has forged paths into fields of cognition and interpretation that were not openly approached by composers in the past. His impressively large oeuvre in all genres has reached new and young audiences, professionals and amateurs, in and outside of Denmark. Nørgård can say with full



Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen
Photograph by Jeppe
Gudmundsen-Holmgreen

justification, that "our field of vision has expanded so that today we have no world center, but deal with multiple centers. The North today is just as good a center as Paris or Vienna." His latest works, such as the chamber opera *Nuit des hommes* (libretto after Apollinaire), 1996, concerns Europe at large as much as Denmark in particular.

Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen

Being identified as "odd man out" is nothing unusual for Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen (1932-) for he is a musician in a family that has been recognized for generations in the field of visual arts—his father, Jørgen, the son of a sculptor, was himself a well-known sculptor. A composer whose vision and approach are quintessentially Danish—as he has been quick to note (and others have agreed)—he has not been taken quite seriously in Denmark, even less so in Sweden, and on the continent he risks being accepted or understood at all. Gudmundsen-Holmgreen studied at the Royal Academy of Music where his principal composition teacher was Finn Høffding, though he also studied with Vagn Holmboe. The first public performance of one of his compositions, a set of variations on an original theme for cello solo, was in 1955. His early works, covering a broad spectrum of genres are derivative; the earliest have the air of Carl Nielsen about them, and two slightly later string quartets show the influence of Bartók and Stravinsky. Gudmundsen-Holmgreen was one of the members of the radio station discussion group in 1959 following the ISCM festival in Rome, an experience that probably inspired the Webern-like third string quartet, 1959, and *Two Improvisations* for chamber ensemble, 1960.

Gudmundsen-Holmgreen's first independently ambitious work, *Chronos*, 1962, for twenty-two to twenty-four instruments, was composed after he attended the 1960 ISCM festival in Cologne where he heard works by Boulez, Stockhausen and Ligeti. In a work that is based on a kind of serial technique but uses optic notations, *Chronos* employs set modules of structurally identical masses of sound and a determination of intervals of time with no reference to meter, the better to approximate the natural sense of time that moves "quickly and slowly at the same time."⁴⁰ This piece and *In terra pax* for clarinet, two percussionists and piano, 1961, mark a dividing point in the composer's development: they are both the first and the last of his works to show the impact of modernism from Central Europe and they are also the first ones in which his own individuality may be detected. Soon after, Gudmundsen-Holmgreen in all seriousness began to develop the personal musical language that he has been exploring ever since.

The search began at a time when the art world in Denmark—and indeed everywhere in Europe—was being heavily impacted by diverse American movements in dance, theater, music and visual arts including the artists Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns, and of course, John Cage, whose thought was essential to these artists' work.

The signals that came from these painters were strikingly different from what I had gotten into in my *Chronos*; however, not a direct denial thereof, but more a change of perspective. Like Cage, Rauschenberg and Johns want to make reality more accessible for us, to make us more receptive to the things around us. When Jasper Johns carefully paints the American flag completely frontal on a canvas, the experience brings out the tension between the motive's familiar character, its almost expressionless banality, and his own care in painting it correctly; the observer is forced to speculate about the artist's intent.⁴¹

At this time when Nørgård was developing the infinite row and Nørholm was working with impulses from Darmstadt, Gudmundsen-Holmgreen was beginning to create an amalgam that would suit only his own aesthetic purposes. In *Mester Jakob*, 1964, for chamber orchestra, impulses from the art world began to take hold: the use of collage was inspired by Rauschenberg's *combines*, and the stubborn rhythmic repetition—though in no way similar to American minimalist music—just might be traced to Johns' work. According to the composer, the piece

is called *Mester Jakob* because the first violin throughout plays the *Mester Jakob [Frère Jacques]* melody, however so that each tone is spread out in time—in very long or very short note values—to the effect that the melody is played through only once in the 10-minute piece. The *Rhythm* of *Frère Jacques* in the percussion is in "cor-

⁴⁰Quoted in Bo Wallner, *Vår tids musik i Norden: Från 20-tal till 60-tal* (Stockholm: Nordiska Musikförlaget, 1968), p. 292.

⁴¹Quoted by Søren Hallundbæk Schausen in "Konstruktion - kollision - om Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen," *Musikhøst 93, Festival for ny musik* (Odense: Fyns Unge Tonekunstner-selskab, 1993), p. 68.

rect" values, proportionally lengthened so that it lasts 10 minutes. That is the skeleton. . . . Around this are mixed materials that don't have a shared source to make them fit together, as in a major-minor movement by Mozart or a serial movement by Webern. One could almost speak of different beings; each one has its own expression and through the work each one circles around itself without getting farther. Already in *Mester Jakob* the repetitions constitute an important part of the music. These beings that, in the beginning, seem to have different origins, different characters, get used to each other and each other's stubbornness. In the course of the work one could say that they act out a communal ritual that in the end becomes a way of existence.⁴²

Largely under the influence of the work of the Irish playwright, Samuel Beckett, Gudmundsen-Holmgreen began a campaign to rid music of affects and affectations, to develop a language that abjured pretence and convention.

I was immediately captivated by Beckett when I saw his *Endgame* at the end of the 1950s . . . Beckett is preoccupied with meaninglessness, which has the strange power of releasing new ways of experiencing the world. By getting rid of all that well-meaning speech one is surrounded by, and knocking down point by point—including the love of gods, the love of one's mother, the love of one's children, the love of love, all the things we get so crammed full of that finally we don't know what we mean ourselves—

then we end up in that catastrophic situation which has something deeply liberating about it.⁴³

Ever since the 1960s and early 1970s Gudmundsen-Holmgreen has been challenging "normalcy" in music and has openly risked ridicule by seeking the liberating effect of setting texts and selecting instrumental combinations that require major adjustments from his audiences. Inspired by Beckett's plays and novels he began a project to take "musicality"—lyricism and hyper-expression—out of his music. Like a sculptor working from all angles, he cut down sound to bare essentials and welded form to content, honed subject matter and language, and did away with convention. The rigorous elimination of expression entailed radical solutions, even, at times, obnoxious ones. Inspired by this agenda he found a new term, "concrete music," to offer as an explanation. With a nod to the oblique meaninglessness of Satie and the silliness of Spike Jones, Gudmundsen-Holmgreen uncovered purity—but also renewed complexity—beneath seeming simplicity.

New Simplicity and Henning Christiansen

In an essay that spoke directly to the spirit of the times, "Omkring den ny enkelhed" (About New Simplicity),⁴⁴ the young critic and musicologist Poul Nielsen discussed the new tendency toward simplification that he found in the

Established Outsider," in *The Voice of Music* (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2000), pp. 211-12.

⁴⁴"Omkring den ny enkelhed," *Dansk Musik Tidsskrift* 67, 2 (1992/93): 93, translated as "Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen: An

music of three Danish composers: Gudmundsen-Holmgreen, Ib Nørholm and Henning Christiansen, the latter two of whom had also been involved in the Fluxus movement. In Nielsen's opinion the simplicity of this music reflected provincial inertia and amounted to a reaction against the complexity of Darmstadt serialism. Adapting the term New Simplicity from contemporary trends in literature he warned that audiences would have just as much trouble with the new simplicity as they did with the complexity of Darmstadt modernism: listeners would become as easily disoriented by the one as by the other. But he welcomed New Simplicity as a response to the conflict that was current in modernism at the moment, that of "total control versus total chance," for the mechanistic repetition of short musical phrases challenged both the complexity and expressionism embraced by Boulez and the idea of chance advocated by Cage.

New Simplicity didn't disguise significant differences between the composers in question: Henning Christiansen, who authored the slogan "one must accept simplicity" in answer to Boulez' "Il faut accepter le complexité," had a background as a performer rather than a composer, and he took a more radical position than Gudmundsen-Holmgreen who was, at first, somewhat toward the middle. Ib Nørholm was at the opposite end of the spectrum from Christiansen.

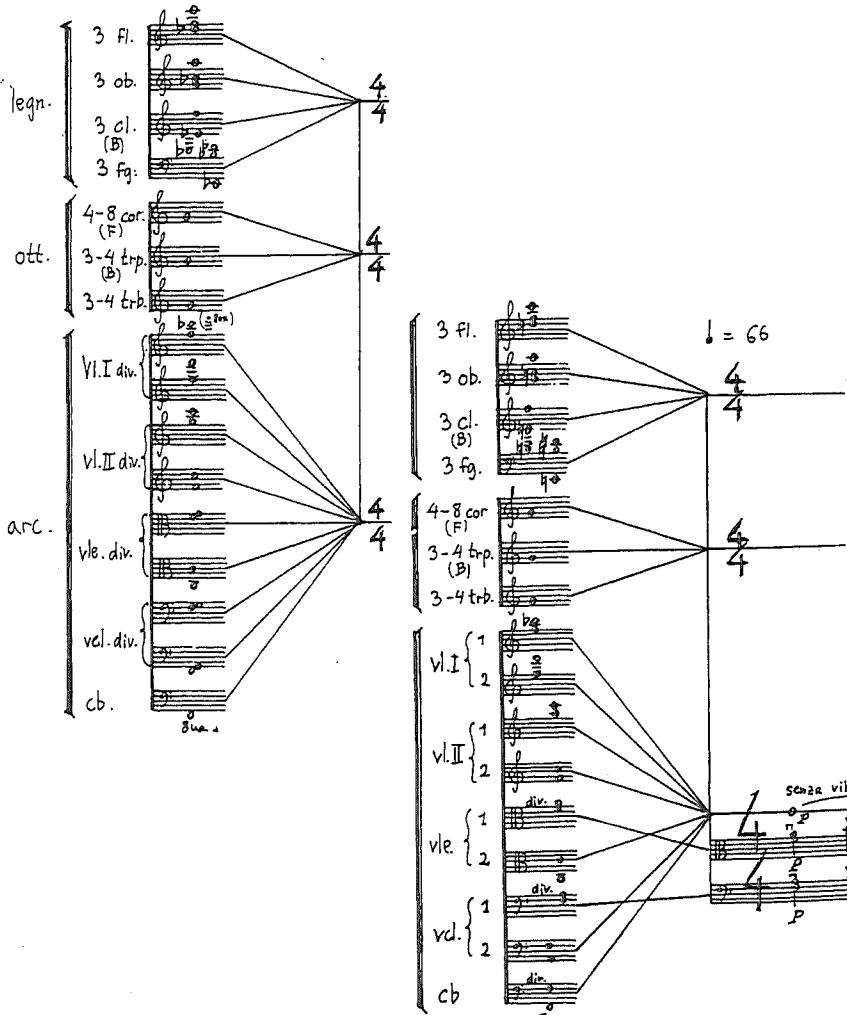
In 1964 Henning Christiansen composed what is often considered the ultimate work of the New Simplicity movement, his *Perceptive Constructions*, op. 28, for eight players. It is in four parts: "space and object," "next

point," "on the line," and "point-blank." "Space and object" comprises a chord repeated fourteen times in different voicings for ten seconds each, with ten seconds' pause between each chord. In "next point" six of the instrumentalists paired in changing combinations, play short fragments, one after another, for a specified number of seconds, while the violin and cello play minute-long segments comprising, mostly, eighth-note trills on specified d's and e's in different registers. "On the line" comprises eight sections in which the same chord is played fortissimo, each instrument holding the given pitch a different number of seconds in each section (as few as five seconds and as many as twenty-four). In "point-blank" each instrument is given a different fragment and is instructed to play it for six seconds. Thus the parts of the work are undisguised and unrelated sound constructs without any messages, neither overt nor implied. They are devices to be received, or perceived, hence the title.

Perceptive Constructions is the best known of Christiansen's many pieces. In the earlier Sonata for Violin and Piano, op. 13, and in the three songs on Beckett texts, op. 14, for baritone and chamber ensemble (violin, celesta, harp, vibes with and without motor, percussion, including drum set), 1963, are moments that recall *Le marteau sans maître*. In *den rokадiske*, op. 34, for string quartet, 1968, four elements are rotated and exchanged between the four instruments for the duration of four movements. The purely mechanical aspect of the rotations is contravened by constant deviations from the scheme, which, however,

Figure 4. Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen's *Tricolore IV*, 1969: chords of the first and the second movements. After Søren Hallundbæk Schausen, "Konstruktion - kollision - om Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen." *MUSIK- HØST 93, Festival for ny musik* (Odense: Fyns Unge Tonekunstnerterselskab, 1993), p. 71.

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because of the uniformity, are largely imperceptible to the ear.⁴⁵

Gudmundsen-Holmgreen the "Established Outsider"

From the start Gudmundsen-Holmgreen's objectives were of a different cast from Christiansen's, as Poul Nielsen recognized in his comments on the *Repriser* (Recapitulations) for chamber ensemble, 1965. Nielsen noted the neutral bits of scales and repeated two-note motives devoid of expressivity and the sparks struck by the meaningless repetition, the radical down-sizing in material, ensemble and expectations, the combination of simple rhythmic and melodic figures and unrefined timbres, the polyrhythmic layers of undifferentiated material, and the persistent monotony. Sensing that it entailed something beyond the ideological perfection of Christiansen's *Perceptive Constructions*, Nielsen remarked that in Gudmundsen-Holmgreen's *Repriser* the music is

split and fragmentary . . . because two tendencies are pulling in opposite directions: the drive to clarify and distill the instrumental sound and the drive to be expressive. This music moves on the edge between sound as being and sound as music, between muteness and articulation in spite of everything. It is music that speaks, but with a refracted voice.⁴⁶

Though audience reaction was often negative and there was no guarantee

⁴⁵Henning Christiansen, who has been a Visiting Professor at the Art Academy in Hamburg, has continued to work as a composer in multi-media, performance and conceptual art circles in Germany and returns to Denmark occa-

sionally to perform. *Dansk Musik Tidsskrift* 71, 4 (1986/87), p. 193, has an article on Christiansen, "Flere verdener mellem to tog," by Helmer Nørgaard.

⁴⁶Nielsen, "Omkring den ny enkelhed," p. 142.

I didn't want to interpret Samuel Beckett's three poems word for word, but to give them a uniformly ash-grey appearance. The texts are definitely perceived as monologues. I was attracted to the idea of making the texts anonymous by means of a 13-part choral sound.⁴⁷

In this music, form is equal to content, and the shape made is the shape perceived. In each piece, Gudmundsen-Holmgreen creates a language specifically to express a subject from which it is inseparable, and in doing that he uses conventions well enough for the audience to take part, but not so well that the audience becomes bored.

What I also have inherited from my father is the quest for the consummate form . . . that can be reached by gradually peeling away layers. I also have the classic need for balance . . . [not] the balance in the music of the classic period, but like a . . . balancing act. I feel that my pieces are like a tight-rope walk. One may be a clown on a rope, fall down innumerable times, have big shoes on and wear a strange hat. But it is very elegant that after all the clown stays on the tight-rope.⁴⁸

The compositions of the late 1960s and early 1970s include some of Gudmundsen-Holmgreen's best-known works; they have not lost their brashness or freshness with time. In *Tricolore I-IV*, a series of works for full orchestra in three groups, 1966-69, the composer moved

towards an increasingly systematic treatment of notes that eventually brought greater freedom to his work. In *Tricolore IV*, each of the three orchestral groups (no percussion) plays only one element as seen in Figure 4: the strings play a widely spaced chord with only three notes, *f*, *g*, *c*, the winds play a dense seven-note cluster built up from a low *e*, and the horns play a tightly-spaced *f*, *g*, *c*. In the second movement the strings play only an F major chord, the winds a different seven note cluster and the brass the same *f*, *g*, and *c*. The rhythmic patterns are derived from the Fibonacci series.

These elements are sounded *forte*, then *piano* or *pianissimo* in the first movement. Sometimes they overlap and, finally, they get slower and quiet down to nothing. The second movement is slightly more textured with a slow and unremarkable two-note ostinato running through much of it, but it, too, is simplified and changes only when the movement ends.

The grid. In the 1970s Gudmundsen-Holmgreen began to use a grid of pitches: a symmetrical sequence of ascending and descending intervals spanning the distance of an octave and an augmented fourth, that is, an augmented eleventh, in each direction from a central pitch. Starting from, for example, *d* as in Figure 5, the grid moving in both directions follows the same interval pattern.⁴⁹

⁴⁷Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen, "Tre Digte af Samuel Beckett," booklet for the NUMUS Festival Program (Århus: Musikhøjskolen Aarhus, 1997), p. 44.

⁴⁸Beyer, "En etableret outsider," p. 39, and "An Established Outsider," pp. 212-13.

⁴⁹Demonstrated by Gudmundsen-Holmgreen in his lecture at Indiana University, Bloomington, October 1999. Also cited in Schausler, "Konstruktion - kollision," p. 74.

Figure 5. The grid of tones used by Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen



The grid held two attractions: first, the mechanical aspect of using a pitch collection satisfied the need for intervals; second, moving up and down from the center tone provided the opportunity to pass through areas of chromaticism, diatonicism, pentatonicism and major-minor triads, all within a small range of pitches. This appealed to the composer's sense of style and form, and by means of frequent repetitions he could weaken the importance of the initial motive and the feeling of stylistic pluralism implied by mixed scale types. But most of all, it was efficient.

A limited tone supply leads to the melting together of the different stylistic expressions, numerous repetitions weaken the motive's original content, and the frequent long drawn-out overlapping of heterogeneous materials abolish the momentary effect of the encounters.⁵⁰

The grid has been at the root of the noticeable expansion in size and richness of Gudmundsen-Holmgreen's work since the late 1970s, and the device came to fruition in his masterly work, *Symfoni, Antiphony*, 1974-1977, for which he was awarded the Nordic

⁵⁰Quoted in Schausler, "Konstruktion - kollision," p. 74.

Music Prize in 1980. Here the composer succeeded in retaining the clear construction characteristic of all his work, whereas the expression was richer and more substantial than before. The very short *Symphony* (approximately 2' 30") begins with an exposition of the pitches of the grid, very hesitantly, with stops and starts, in ascending and descending melodic shapes, and numerous rhythmic dispositions. *Antiphony* is a movement in six parts, with a profusion of material that is broadly and variously adapted, including a childlike song in the piano, ragtime snatches, various kinds of Alberti bass, diatonic passages, big-band-like outbreaks, massed sounds, post-Darmstadt formulae, and so on. These widely different ingredients and a corresponding range of instrumental colors are important in a new purely abstract concept called *varighedsblokke* (blocks of durations):

In this way you can build up an architecture by adding and subtracting and combining, where a sudden presence and a surprising collision is more important than the coherence obtained by "small transitions . . ." [as is conventional]⁵¹

⁵¹Ibid., p. 75.

Antiphony is an unpredictable but balanced piece in which a number of very unequal segments are perceived as a continuum; it is not formally balanced through the usual sectional repetition of parts, but works it out as it goes, rather like Gudmundsen-Holmgreen's clown in the tight-wire act.

Gudmundsen-Holmgreen in the 1980s

The warmer tone noticed in *Symphony-Antiphony* and the expansion of resources noticed in a number of pieces from the 1980s was achieved without any loss of the concrete aspect of the music. The increased flexibility also made it possible for the composer to adopt more conventional approaches. For instance, *Spejlstykker* (Mirror Pieces) for clarinet trio, 1980, begins large and dissolves progressively to the end:

[The] trio has three movements. The first is quick, pointillistic, playful or more determined. The second rests dreamily in itself with a long-winded slowing down. The third lasts only 28 seconds. It crackles and ritards on a diminuendo during which the tones that are associated with the first movement are transformed to noise.⁵²

A comparison with an earlier piece, *Solo for El-Guitar*, 1971-72, which also dissolves at the end, reveals an element of connection between the movements in the later work that does not

exist in the earlier one. In the guitar piece each of the seven parts is focused on one single idea: for example, part IV is only about (re)tuning the guitar, part V is all about outbursts, and part VI is a concrete presentation of the pitches *d*, *e*, and *f*. A work that follows *Spejlstykker*, *Album: Four Relatives* for saxophone quartet, 1994-96, contains a complex network of variations and variation techniques in four interrelated movements. We find extended performance techniques (slap tonguing, a Ben Webster-styled vibrato, key clicks, honking, multiphonics, and more), rhythmic permutations, use of contrapuntal manipulations, and timbre exploration (cross-fingerings, microtonal slides, use of beats)—all applied to working out the thematic elements of the basic ideas in the first movement.⁵³

In the late 1980s and 1990s, the works also became noticeably longer and more involved, so that, oddly, complexity began to hide simplicity. The concerto for percussion, *Triptychon*, 1985, calls for three large batteries of percussion divided into families.⁵⁴ In the first movement the soloist plays metal percussion accompanied by the wind instruments (brass and woodwinds); in the second the wooden percussion is played with the strings; and in the last movement the soloist playing percussion with skins is accompanied by the entire ensemble. In the third movement the winds and the strings repeat the music they have already

⁵²Ibid., p. 74.

⁵³Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen, "Album: Fire slegtninge," Booklet for NUMUS Festival (Århus: Musikhuset Aarhus, 1997), p. 11.

⁵⁴Initially the composer imagined a chamber percussion concerto using only three or four

small pieces of wood but was convinced by Gert Mortensen, the soloist for whom the concerto was commissioned, to expand his notion exponentially. See Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen, "Om Triptykon," *Dansk Musik Tidsskrift* 61, 3 (1986/87): 104-110.

played, which is possible because the first two movements (although notated in different meter and tempo) are the same length (and consequently, also the third, discounting a twenty-one measure addition at the end). Many features of *Triptykon* recall Gudmundsen-Holmgreen's earlier work, for example, the crude opening sound low in the contra-bassoon, blaring brass chords and stoic strings, the use of the Fibonacci series in the rhythmic pattern of the solo segments, the mirroring of melodic and rhythmic figures, the generalized rejection of rapture, and the blocks of sounds, rhythms and colors—all goes back at least to *Tricolore IV* of 1969. Only, the sum is of much greater consequence. In a correspondingly outlandish manner, the composer's composition for organ *Oktopus*, 1989, calls for two organists and one or two assistants for a piece that is a twenty-five minute colossus requiring calculated stage action on the part of the performers to pull it off: the assistant(s) must pull and push powerful stops—like the trumpet 8' and the Bassoon 16'—at conspicuous moments, while notes and chords are being sustained, creating rhythms that contravene expectations. It is music that "steamrolls along unstoppably and which yet comes to a halt in a long central passage where you hear a squawking reed sound, puffing indefinable chords and sheer noises from the organ."⁵⁵ In *Concerto Grosso* for string quartet and large symphonic ensemble, 1990, the composer works with oppositions: overgrown collage versus

⁵⁵Eva Feldbæk, "It sounds too much like an organ," *Musical Denmark* 54 (1998/99), p. 13. Feldbæk has recorded this piece and works by

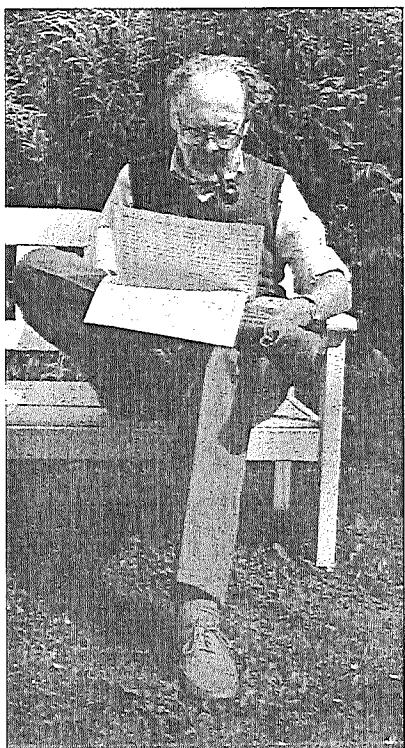
serialism, block disposition versus polyrhythm, and the classic opposition between the two ensembles, a refined and well-behaved chamber ensemble versus a brassy, noisy wind ensemble, calling forth the composer's own descriptive term, "jungle baroque."

Finally, in some of the most recent works, complexity and simplicity are put on equal terms, as in *The Creation - The 6th Day*. The text is based on a thirteenth-century Danish monk's account of the origins of the creatures of the earth, complete with a list of the animals (worms, crocodiles, ants, and so on) that finally winds down to the last creature, man. In what is essentially a violin concerto accompanied by double choir, the treatment of the choral ensemble captures all the humor, simplicity, and seriousness of the author's endeavor in a constantly varied texture, balanced between the natural and the absurdly complex. In the beginning the violin—now antagonist now protagonist—cavorts almost shamelessly in its own fashion, but becomes progressively entangled with the text, until the point when the recitation of the long list arrives at "human beings" and it begins to softly play Beethoven's hymn, the *Ode to Joy*. The effect is uncannily like that moment in the Ninth Symphony when the choir begins to sing.

Ib Nørholm

Having begun to compose while still in secondary school, Ib Nørholm completed his training at the Royal Academy in Copenhagen where he

Borup-Jørgensen, Maegaard, Hvidtfelt Nielsen, and Holmboe on *dacapo* 8.224018.



Ib Nørholm
Photograph by Høm.

studied composition with Vagn Holmboe. After receiving diplomas in organ, theory, history and church music and conducting in 1956, he worked as a music critic for *Information* until 1964 when he was appointed organist at Bethlehem Church in Copenhagen. He taught history and theory between 1963 and 1972 at the Odense Academy on the island of Fyn and since 1972 at the Royal Academy in Copenhagen; here he was appointed Professor of Composition in 1981. Largely because of Nørholm's

presence in the early and mid-1970s, Copenhagen regained some of its former prestige as a place for compositional studies, counterbalancing Århus's position as the most vital center since Per Nørgård's move in 1965 and Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen's arrival in 1967. Nørholm attracted students to Copenhagen, and thus diversity in composition studies in Denmark was preserved. By now, several waves of younger composers have passed through his hands. Poul Ruders, Ivar Frounberg, Steen Pade, Andy Pape, and Mogens Christensen are among his many students. A number of them are now teaching at the Royal Academy and elsewhere.

Nørholm's earliest works for chamber ensemble reflect Holmboe's approach to form and the inspiration of Carl Nielsen. Both can be heard, for instance, in his *Movements for Quartet and Two Trios* (for three or four recorders) from 1958. Between those early works and the recent ones lies a substantial production which has attracted sustained attention from music reviewers, audiences, performers and musicologists. Nørholm has composed relatively few works for his own instrument the organ, rather he has been most engaged in large works for the stage or for symphonic orchestra. In recent years, his output of string quartets has been very substantial.

Nørholm's first essays for orchestra included a symphony, op. 10, for a large ensemble (triple winds, brass) that was finished in 1958. About that time his work changed as a consequence of his interest in new and alternative ideas. Since then his approach to composition has been diffuse and fluctuating—it would seem, even as an improvising

organist might reach for any of several current ideas to use in his performance. Nørholm has eventually settled into a central position where he seems perfectly comfortable with the persistent observation that his work is well-wrought and clear. Not impenetrable nor too difficult, it is also neither simple nor simplistically accessible.

One of the persons involved in the study group at the Radio, he was the first to try out the most conspicuously new compositional techniques and he produced his first strict serial piece, a *Trio*, op. 22, in 1959. His experience at the 1960 ISCM Festival in Cologne left its mark on his next large work, *Fluctuations*, op. 25, for thirty-four strings, two harps, harpsichord, mandolin and guitar, a seventeen-minute composition that was awarded the Gaudeamus prize in 1964. Though his mature style reflects a more direct and unaffected mode of expression, in retrospect *Fluctuations* is in keeping with much of Nørholm's work, its complexity and inaccessibility notwithstanding. A tense piece that seems to defy definition, it has been likened to the mysterious and foreboding flutterings of nature—like the leaves of trees—a view suggested by the title and supported by the subtitle, "The unseen Pan."

Fluxus

Nørholm was prepared to be involved when two of the most heatedly debated events in the musical life of post-war Denmark occurred with the visit of Nam June Paik in 1961 and the Fluxus festival in 1962. Paik's

performance in the recital hall at the Louisiana Art Museum was a calculated assault on establishment values and included some of Paik's classic gestures (such as cutting the tie of a member of the audience, in this case, the music reviewer from *Information*). In spite of the general resistance and negativity inspired by Paik's appearance, Nørholm persisted in his open-minded acceptance of outside influences and in 1964 he supported a return engagement of the Fluxus group, this time scheduled at Nikolaj Church, a venue centrally located in Copenhagen. This occasion went by with a much more subdued response, but 1964 was a productive year for Nørholm and for Fluxus-related works. For some, his Fluxus-inspired work for solo violin, *Direction: Inconnu*, op. 26, which was performed at the 1964 ISCM festival, was a signal for the future with its radical simplification of writing and a title that appeared to summarize the state of Danish music at the time: no-one seemed to know which of the possible directions it was going to take.⁵⁶ Other works by Nørholm included *Serenade to Cincinnatus*, op. 28, a twenty-minute collage work from 1964 scored for a symphonic group with sax (instead of clarinet), harmonium and piano, and *Exile*, op. 29, a theater piece that flirts with the absurd when the conductor enters the auditorium, proceeds directly to the audience and personally greets the persons sitting in the first row.

⁵⁶Klaus Lynbech, "Strygekvartetten i Danmark efter 1960," Thesis, Århus University, 1998, pp. 15-16.

But Nørholm's immediate future was to be more thoroughly influenced by the New Simplicity, the ideas of which became central to several works from the mid 1960s, in particular, an extended piece for solo piano, *Strofer og marker* (Stanzas and Fields) op. 33, and two string quartets, respectively, the third and fourth, *From my Green Herbarium*, op. 35, and *September-October-November*, op. 38. Unlike Gudmundsen-Holmgreen, who early adopted an experimental and provocative, essentially isolationist position for his New Simplicity agenda, maintaining a somewhat cold, constructionist approach to composition, Nørholm increasingly leaned toward humanism, evoked cultural roots, and composed music with homely references.⁵⁷

Not that these ideas were more easily assimilated by audiences with a preference for easy and conventional music. In these works we already find the composer working persistently with ideas that were to characterize his mature work: symmetry is extremely important and enters as a principle of formal order and a factor in melodic structure and rhythmic design; the use of contrasts is crucial, be it a matter of dynamics, expression, register, or character. Also Nørholm mixes elements such as combining total chromaticism with major/minor tonality and modality, or he composes a twelve tone

melody for a dance, attaches a program or inserts a quotation into formal design based on a historical model used in modern context. While for some, Nørholm's decisions have been surprising and unexpected and have earned him the reputation of being unpredictable, it might be more accurate to say that he rarely strays far from his classic sense of form which he applies equally to the extended relationships of formal parts and to other musical entities. Though he is no romantic sentimentalist, he uses the syntax of any of the received forms.

In an essay on the composer, "Der står en hjort ved en skovsø" (A deer stands on the edge of the lake in the woods),⁵⁸ Poul Nielsen attempts to sort out the difficulties that Nørholm's pragmatic eclecticism presents to the listener. Nørholm claims that he does not just put things together, that he composes with them so that the elements relate to each other in spite of the different origins and oppositional qualities. But this fails to explain the ambiguity that always seems to be present in Nørholm's work in spite of clear definition and formal order. According to Nielsen, Nørholm's music isn't just retrospective but has multiple perspectives. *From my Green Herbarium*, The Third String Quartet, is an uncomplicated case in point; with its mixing of modern with old, incorporation of

⁵⁷Noting that he appreciated the "fantastique freedom and excitement" of his more experimental days, he "still felt restrictions against the use of all different resources." Nørholm quoted by E. Kullberg in "Da modernismen kom til Danmark (Samtale med Ib Nørholm om

60'ernes danske musik og musik- miljø)," *Dansk Musik Tidsskrift* 60, 3 (1985/86): 117.

⁵⁸Der står en hjort ved en skovsø - (Om Ib Nørholms musik)," *ta' 1*, 1: 4-8. The reference in the title is to the kind of dark painting found in old-fashioned sitting-rooms.

found objects, and treatment of classic forms. To cite a simple example: in the first section of the third movement, "Postscriptum - arcade," a pleasantly syncopated melody runs through all twelve tones, then turns around (in the fourth measure) and returns to the starting pitch in retrograde motion. Meanwhile the simple, almost inane accompaniment runs along in a diatonic mode. In the contrasting section that follows, the relationship between the melody and accompaniment is maintained even as everything else (texture, "tonality," dynamics, phrasing) is obviously different. In keeping with romantic convention, following a reference to the opening, a coda completes the work with a nod to a secondary idea in the first movement.

In this and other works by Nørholm, close readings of scores uncover consistent use of compositional ordering and worked-out procedures: symmetry between the large and small sections coexist with aspects of classical handling of texture, form and orchestration. Very often movements (or entire works) are palindromes; ascending melodic lines are answered by descending ones; thin orchestration calls forth soloists; calls get responses; a repeated ostinato may well be four times as fast as it was the first time; if first a trumpet then a violin are heard, then later a solo violin is answered by a trumpet; the close of imposing statements get a roll on the snare drum. Frequently, themes are found to contain all twelve tones. Consider the first tune of the second movement of the Fifth Symphony, "The Elements," op. 80 (Figure 6). In the bass clarinet the first eight notes of the melody use that many different

pitches and three more are found in the rapid turn on the low *E*. Then the melody suddenly leaps upwards and lands on the twelfth pitch as the final note in the phrase. Then the next phrase begins on the second note of the first one and follows the same sequence of pitches until it comes to the rapid ornament. This is clearly an extended variant of the first phrase and calls to mind an antecedent-consequent relationship. (See Figure 6, next 2 pages.)

Complexity and banality, moments of New Simplicity and dodecaphony all get the same conscientious treatment. By means of consistent confrontation of styles and treatments Nørholm achieves integrity in his work.

The Symphonic Decade

Following the success of the TV opera, *Invitation to a Beheading*, op. 32, a collage-work in five acts on a text by Nabokov, 1965, Nørholm composed two more musical dramas, *The Young Park*, op. 48, on a text by the Danish poet Inger Christensen, 1969-70, and *Orfeus' Metamorphosis*, 1967-71, on a text by another well-known Danish poet, Poul Borum. In the early 1970s it seemed that after three operas in five-six years, Nørholm was set to compose more works for the stage, but in that decade he turned more and more to composing for symphony orchestra. *Isola Bella*, op. 50, his second symphony, was finished in 1971 and as this work uses another text by Borum it marked the continuation of an active collaboration that lasted until the poet's death in 1996. *Day's Nightmare*, op. 57, Nørholm's Third Symphony, followed in 1973.

Figure 6. Ib Nørholm, Symphony No. 5, Op. 80, Movement II, mm. 1-16.
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II

$J = \text{ca. } 60$ Con sforza

mm. 1-16

mm. 17-22

The Fourth Symphony, *Modskabelsen*, op. 76, 1978-79, was commissioned for the celebration of the 500th year of the University of Copenhagen. *Modskabelsen* (the title, a difficult word in Danish, has been translated as *Decreation*, whereas in retrospect, *Deconstruction* might make more sense) has been referred to as a semi-cantata; it requires a reciter, soprano, tenor, bass soloists, double SATB choruses and orchestra. Commentators Jens Brincker and Mogens Andersen admired the structure of the work and praised Nørholm for contravening the symmetry of Borum's text with a symphonic treatment involving a developmental process that he achieved when he incorporated additional texts by Inger Christensen and Heraclitus.

With his next symphony, No. 5, op. 80, Nørholm turned to a grand-scale contemplation nature. The first of a symphonic triptych exploring man's re-

lationship with the earth, the Fifth is a large four-movement kaleidoscopic reflection on the natural elements (air, earth, water and fire). Skirting symphonic conventions, it functions like a lavish prelude to the Sixth and Seventh Symphonies that, in turn, reflect the political and psychological dimensions of the ambitious subject.

Now, as of the year 2000, Nørholm has completed ten symphonies, very substantial numbers of works for chamber ensembles—including nine string quartets—and four operas. In summing up this impressive undertaking, we might draw on John Warnaby⁵⁹ who, looking at the symphonies, finds a common thread in the presence of a few basic metaphors. Place, man's relationship to nature, and the composer's own psychological complexities are at the heart of the inspiration for this extensive production of large-scale works.

⁵⁹"A Meeting with Ib Nørholm," *Nordic Sounds* 4 (1993): 10-13.

4. PLURALISM

Nørholm, Nørgård and Gudmundsen-Holmgreen, the three composers discussed above, constitute the present-day older generation, a term however, that must be understood to include the fact that they have kept up their productivity and never ceased to expand and renew their creative means. To this day they remain the dominant leaders of the musical scene. Born before World War II, they came to maturity in the decade following 1950 and acquired, through their upbringing and via their schooling, a direct connection to the generations that had experienced the blossoming of the tradition of communal singing and the influence of the epoch-making generation of composers (Nielsen and Laub, in particular) and organizers (Holm, Høffding, among others) of the first decades of the century. They were taught by the traditional methods of an older generation but because they matured in the very different world of post-war Denmark, it became their task to break free from these traditions and establish new means to meet new objectives. In addition to their music, the legacy they bequeathed to the following generations was a completely new approach to teaching that we may term the "new pedagogy." However, preceding the new crop of young composers who were nurtured with the ideas of the "Triumvirate," is a group of older composers, who fell between the "first" and the "middle" generations of modernists, who, in fact, resist the notion of generations. Born between 1936 and 1943, they were influenced by Nørgård, Gudmundsen-Holmgreen and Nørholm but not to the extent that they

could be called followers, even though three of them were among Nørgård's earliest students. They constitute a small and diverse group with differing educational backgrounds and approaches to music and composition who, seemingly, were destined to become the first exponents of the pluralism that has increasingly characterized Danish music since the 1960s.

Other First-generation Modernists

Among the composers who come into focus here are other students of Holmboe, Høffding, Jørgen Jersild, and of the young Nørgård, just back from Paris. No particular cohesion exists between them; neither common compositional techniques nor common aesthetics identify them as a group, but their work and pursuit of particular interests contributed to the musical landscape that eventually was inherited by the generation of new composers born after the war (1945-54). Among other endeavors, these "in-between" composers carried forward still-new ideas: electronic music; serious jazz composition; intuitive and alternative musics; and, a support organization for women in music.

Bent Lorentzen (1935-)

A composer who lives up to his reputation as an "unrepentant modernist," Bent Lorentzen began his education in the shadow of the Carl Nielsen era as he was a student of Knud Jeppesen in Århus and continued in Copenhagen with Finn Høffding and

Vagn Holmboe. When the flood of influences from developments in Central Europe hit Denmark in the 1960s, Lorentzen was at first influenced by serialism. Subsequently he was even more influenced by the large gestures and dramatic world of sound of the so-called "poster music," the new music coming from Poland, which has had a lasting influence in his work. He has composed in a wide range of genres including electronic music, and was the first person in Denmark to teach it as a subject. Since the early 1970s he has been a free-lance composer living in Copenhagen.

Lorentzen's numerous works in experimental lyric theater, for which he often composes both text and music, have been well-received, notably in Germany. He is also recognized for his solo instrumental works and for pedagogical works. Lorentzen mixes aspects of "high" and "low" culture in many different combinations, some grotesque or obvious, others subtle. His fifth opera, *A Wondrous Love Story (Tristan Variations)*, for soprano, baritone, tenor and pre-recorded tape, composed for the Bavarian State Opera in Munich, 1977, plays on the real-life triangle between Wagner, Matilde Wesendonck and Otto, her husband. Here Lorentzen draws on motives from Wagner's life as well as from Wagner's musical and dramatic works, and, in particular, varies themes and mixes quotations in his treatment of *Tristan und Isolde*. Aggressively but elegantly, the elements are splintered up and woven back together.

The 1970s was the decade for Lorentzen's most exuberant modernism as heard, for instance, in a set of six large works for organ: *Intersection*,

1970, *Puncta*, 1973, *Triplex*, 1974, *Groppo*, 1976, *Nimbo*, 1977, and *Cruor*, 1977. They are expressionistic and modernistic to the extreme, not the least when the score calls for a raging outburst from the organist in the last piece. Then, in 1977 an extended visit to Brazil coaxed further extroverted and spontaneous responses from Lorentzen in a number of works that are composed with a rhythmic base taken from the mambo and samba. In *Mambo* for clarinet trio, 1982, the tattoo-like scrambling of the piercing, spasmodic lines in the high registers of the cello and the clarinet are countered by the piano beating out its mambo-styled rhythms. The texture is polyphonic but not imitative, the style is repetitive but not minimalistic.

While adopting new ideas and motifs throughout his long career Lorentzen has adhered to a direct and well-defined musical style and workmanlike formal clarity. Like other modernistic composers of the post 1960s, particularly those whose work was prevailingly dramatic, later on Lorentzen rekindled an interest in tonality. It is as though the stylistic features that came forward, like the strongly profiled melodies, fluid textures, glowing orchestration and ecstatic lyricism, had been there all the time as counterparts to the more aggressive and abrupt tendencies of earlier work. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Lorentzen composed some plainly expressive pieces including *Alpha and Omega* for trombone and organ, 1989, which transfers the biblical reference to the musical form; the second half is literally the reverse of the first. The same idea is found in a concerto for trumpet, *Regenbogen*, 1991, which

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arches to the center and, after a short interlude, arches back to end where it began. The harmony has great affinity with Wagner's music for the rainbow bridge in *Das Rheingold*. In a thorough revision (1986-87) Lorentzen combined the six organ pieces from the 1970s into a set, *Organ Music I*, and transformed the original graphic scores into traditional notation. The seven pieces in the composer's later suite (from the 1990s), *The Planets*, are far less explosive in style and were made available in both graphic and traditional notation from the outset.

Mogens Winkel Holm (1936-1999)

Formally trained as an oboist at the Academy in Copenhagen, Mogens Winkel Holm also studied composition with Jørgen Jersild and Per Nørgård before following the latter to Århus. Only four years younger than his teacher, he early took an independent line and explored Central European modernism at a time when other Danish composers were interested in the aesthetics of New Simplicity. He was to maintain this independence and freedom of choice throughout his career, balancing radical impulses with a natural refinement. A productive composer in a number of genres, Winkel Holm is especially recognized in the dance world for his ballets, including *Tropismen-en korefoni*, 1963, *Tarantel*, a ritual-styled solo dance, 1975, *Eurydice tøver* (Euridice hesitates), 1977.⁶⁰ He either composed both music and choreography or worked in very close

collaboration with the choreographer Inge Jensen. With Eske Holm, his brother and a well-known dancer, he created a substantial body of work for the Danish Royal Theater and for Danish and Swedish TV.

The mode of thinking for the stage carried over to some of Winkel Holm's non-scenic compositions as, for instance, the *Sonata for Five Woodwinds*, op. 25, 1965, in which he elicits collaborative input from the performers when writing, in his introduction, that the performance would be best staged by a director like a one-act play in a theater. The work is finished only when the rehearsals have been held and when changes have been made and agreed to. Initially Winkel Holm's idea was to have the musicians perform the work by acting it, that is, with the instrumentalists as the actors playing by memory and with role-playing rehearsed by the director as in an imaginary wordless theater developed from the classical Viennese sonata form. This would be something like an instrumental version of the slightly later but more provocative *Sonata for Four Opera Singers*, 1967-68, an exercise in surrealistic absurdity, for which Winkel Holm composed everything: movement, music and vocal expression, the last element being a kind of phonetic language for basic communication, not a standard libretto. *Piping Down*, 1987-88, for solo flute is also a theatrical piece in the vein of Berio's *Sequenzas*. Virtuosic to a fault, it has been compared to an impossible acrobatic gymnastics act.

Perhaps Winkel Holm's most admired work is the *Syv breve til stilheden* (Seven letters to silence), 1976, rev. 1987, for six instruments—seven ever-so-brief messages released into the

⁶⁰Per Erland Rasmussen, "Højt at flyve, vidt at skue: Forsøg på signalement af Mogens Winkel Holm," *Dansk Musik Tidsskrift* 66, 2 (1991/92): 40.

ether, each one with exactly the right number of strokes to convey the spirit of the letter. The restriction of the material is palpable and each piece is intense and compact, like the composer's comment in his *Anti-notater*:

Silence . . . shall we resolve to go a whole year without music? Not listen, not play, not compose? And instead listen to non-sound: the sea, the grass, the wind and the heart? And slowly, completely slowly truly begin to miss it?⁶¹

Erik Norby (1936-)

Per Nørgård was Erik Norby's first composition teacher in Copenhagen, and Norby was with the group that moved to Århus in 1965 where he finished his studies. From 1966-75 he taught at the Music Academy in Aalborg, another large city in Jutland, and since 1988 he has taught instrumentation in Copenhagen. An unusual composer who follows his own muse, Norby is known for his uncomplicated treatment of form. A good example is his *Partita* for flute and organ (1981) which includes a Pavane, a Cantilena and a Gigue. He is also known for his large scale romantic-styled works. The substantial *Regnbueslangen* (*The Rainbow Snake*, 1975), widely performed in Scandinavia, the USA and Europe, is a programmatic work inspired by a Native American myth. The later *Edvard Munch-trilogi* for choir and orchestra, 1979, is an even larger work. Yet Norby is best known for his sets of orchestral songs, the *Rilke Songs* for mezzo-soprano and orchestra, 1963, and *Tre sange fra Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, 1973. A second set of Rilke songs for orchestra and mezzo

⁶¹Quoted in Rasmussen, "Højt at flyve," p. 40.

soprano commissioned by the Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra in 1985, is comparable to a late Germanic orchestral lied with its emotional text setting, and together with the *Södergran-Lieder* for voice and piano, 1992-94, succeeds in extending the tradition of the German art song to the present day.

Sven Erik Werner (1937-)

A self-taught composer with University training in musicology (master's degree) and Nordic literature, Sven Erik Werner (as his biographical sketches almost always mention) is a well educated agitator for high musical standards; and he contributed much as an administrator, in particular, during his twenty years as Director of the Academy of Music in Odense. He was a relatively late-starter as a composer. *12 Tango Studies* composed for the students at the Danish Accordion Academy, 1991-93, were conceived as pieces for teaching with varying levels of difficulty; they focus on differentiated ideas—from "Sneaking" to "Rubato fluente" and "Tango interrotto"—so that the musical ideas interact on several levels. As studies they more than fulfill their original purpose. In *Motet til tiden* (*Motet in Time*), 1991, Werner lives up to his reputation as a debater of serious contemporary issues as he sets three incompatible texts simultaneously for double choir. Psalm 36 (sung in Danish), Stockhausen's "notorious" *Freibrief an die Jugend* (sung in German), and the story by Isaac Loeb Peretz about a young rabbi's incalculable experience of ecstasy (sung in English), have enough elements in common to establish ties, yet there is no common ground for mutual understanding.

Svend Nielsen (1936-)

A student of musicology at the university and music theory at the academy in Copenhagen, Svend Nielsen was also among the group of students who went with Nørgård to Århus and soon became part of the teaching establishment there. He is especially recognized for his expertise in instrumentation. Though he wrote a master's thesis on Webern and has followed strong structural principles in his work, he is essentially a lyricist. Nielsen is an amateur meteorologist and his compositions sometimes mirror his attention to nature. Thus elements of the natural cycle are found in *Nightfall* for chamber orchestra, 1989, as the music traces a transition from harshness and uproar to lightness and transparency and then returns to darker aspects. In a sense, Nielsen's skills in instrumentation and his hobby come together in *Carillons*, 1995, an extended essay for sinfonietta in which the pealing bells, heard in the first part, are counter-balanced in the second by distorted, dense and slow-tolling bells as if heard in an uneasy dream that threatens to lose its ties to reality. Both *Nightfall* and *Carillons* go beyond the light shades of impressionism.

Alternate Paths

The early 1960s witnessed developments in four areas that had earlier been only peripheral parts of the musical life: electronic music, jazz composition, experimental or intuitive music and work by women composers. As these fields began to awaken interest and draw participants they introduced a significant diversification into the

musical spectrum, expanding activities beyond the traditional scene of composition and performance of concert music. Recognition has been slow in coming but in recent years several of these movements have gained footholds by becoming associated with established institutions.

Electronic Music

In contrast to Sweden, where a large studio was built by the Swedish Radio in the mid-1960s, the authorities in Denmark did not show much interest in electronic music early in its development. Rather than working on developments in sound, the Danes moved into experimentation with advanced visual techniques. This bore early fruit and Ingolf Gabold, whose *Syv scener til Orfeus* (*Seven scenes for Orpheus*) won first prize in the 1971 international competition for TV-opera in Salzburg, and who then exploited all possible techniques of visual imaging that paralleled those in the electronic sound medium—dissolves, superimposed images, filtering, and so on—in his second TV-opera, *Ind i Vandmandens Tegn* (*Towards Aquarius*). This experimentation in the visual counterpart to electronic music was short-lived—the only apparent consequence being the continuing interest in new chamber operas in the 1970s-1990s. Meanwhile Danes who wished to work in the idiom of electronic music found it necessary to establish small independent studios or to go to Sweden in order to have facilities for their work.

Among the early pioneers in electronic music in Denmark was Else Marie Pade (1924-) who began to investigate the work of Pierre Schaeffer in the early 1950s (as has been discussed earlier). She

was briefly associated with Jørgen Plaetner (1930-) who had studied composition with Niels Viggo Bentzon and Vagn Holmboe at the Royal Academy in Copenhagen, and with Fortner and Rohwer in Germany (1950-56). Plaetner established *Studio 60*, the first electronic music studio in Denmark in 1960, and composed extensively in the field, including an electronic opera for radio, *Den genfundne Ofelia* (Ophelia rediscovered, text by Frank Jæger), 1962. In 1967 Holstebro, a city in Jutland, created the quite unusual position of "City Composer" for Plaetner,⁶² and during the ten years that he held this post he established an electronic music studio as part of the Holstebro Music School complex. In addition to electronic music, he composed twelve volumes of pedagogical music for children, including about 400 songs and 450 instrumental compositions and arrangements, in addition to music for theater, and works for vocal and instrumental ensembles, orchestra and opera.

One of the most enthusiastic practitioners of electronic composition, Jens Wilhelm Pedersen (1939-), known more generally as Fuzzy, first studied music pedagogy with Finn Høffding at the Royal Music Academy in Copenhagen, then went with Nørgård to the Music Academy in Århus in 1965 where he also studied electronic music composition with Bent Lorentzen. His highly varied work list comprises music theater with and without electronic scores, electro-acoustic scores with and without instrumentalists, film scores (notably for

⁶²So unusual that Plaetner was featured on the front cover of *Dansk Musik Tidsskrift* 45, 2 (1969) in his electronic studio.

Billy August and Jørgen Leth), several TV series in Germany (including *Acht Stunden sind kein Tag* by Rainer Werner Fassbinder) and in Denmark (*Kanal 22*), radio dramas, theater performances, ballet, and music for children, and arrangements for improvisation, all this in addition to instrumental, solo vocal and choral music. His music is clever and lively, humorous and well-made.

Since around 1962 Fuzzy has worked in a multi-media collective under the name New Culture Quartet (Nya Kulturkvarteren) on productions involving film, slides, scenography, costumes, lights and tape music with Swedish composers Folke Rabe and Jan Bark and graphic artist and photographer, Thord Normann. Fuzzy established his own electronic music studio in 1973. Recently he received recognition for his work with the Wilhelm Hansen Foundation Prize and the Wilhelm Hansen Composer's Prize, in response to which he composed a new work, *Proverbs of Hell* for reciter, chamber choir, solo tuba, percussion and electronics, on a text by William Blake.

Gunner Møller Pedersen (1943-)

Having received his start in electronic music in Århus, on finishing his study in 1970, Gunner Møller Pedersen moved to Copenhagen. There he established his own electronic music facility, Octopus Studio, where he composes concert music and music for film. He is best known for his frequent concerts of electronic music in the atrium at the Glyptotek ("Panoptikon-concerts," 1974-). More than any other single activity these concerts have served to familiarize audiences with electronic music.

In the early 1970s, the general rejection of electronic music mounted to open hostility as was demonstrated when a highly vocal public opinion angrily rejected Per Nørgård's electronic *Kalendermusik*. This work, a year-long series of slowly-changing interludes, or *pausesignalen*, designated for performance between TV programs in lieu of advertisement, was composed in the Swedish electronic studio to accompany a slowly-changing visual pattern. The public outcry forced the programmers to first curtail, then eliminate it completely. But opinions changed with the times and by the early 1980s electronic music was beginning to be accepted by the music establishment.

In 1980-81 Finn Egeland Hansen and Andy Pape began teaching electronic music at the Royal Academy in Copenhagen. A studio was established there in 1985, and in 1986 the first composition debut with electro-acoustic music took place when *Embryo* by Ivar Frounberg was played. In the same year, Frounberg was employed as a teacher in electro-acoustic composition at the Royal Academy. This coincided with the establishment of the Danish Institute for Electronic Music (DIEM) in Århus with the American composer Wayne Siegel as the Director. Courses in electro-acoustic music and computer music workshops have been held since

⁶³Erik Wiedemann has specialized in the history of jazz in Denmark. He has written numerous articles and a doctoral dissertation on the subject (University of Copenhagen), published as *Jazz i Danmark - tyverne, tredive og fyrrerne, en musikkulturel undersøgelse* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1982), 3 vols. He is also the Director of The Archive of Danish Jazz History located at the Musicology Institute of the University of Copen-

hagen, with collections documenting jazz in Denmark in the first half of the twentieth century.

Jazz

The history of jazz in Denmark, goes back to the acceptance of American jazz during the 1920s.⁶³ Danish jazz performers were quick to develop a responsive style of playing, first inspired by recordings and later motivated by visiting jazz musicians (Louis Armstrong in 1933, Joe Venuti in 1934, Coleman Hawkins in 1935, Duke Ellington in 1939, among others). The first jazz recording in Denmark was in 1924,⁶⁴ and soon musicians like pianist Leo Mathisen, violinist Svend Asmussen and conductor Erik Tuxen established the basis for a Danish jazz culture. Moreover, in an odd twist, jazz flourished in Denmark during the occupation—enough so that the period in the 1940s is often referred to as the "Golden Age of Danish Jazz"—partly, it has to be said, in open defiance of the condemnation of the music by the Nazi government. After the war Denmark became a mecca for expatriate African-American jazz musicians because of the open receptivity and the sophistication of the audiences. The old Jazzhus Montmartre on Store Regnegade in Copenhagen was an international

center for jazz performance beginning in the 1960s and at this time Danish jazz musicians who gained international reputations included Thomas Clausen, Mads Vinding, Jesper Lundgaard, Jesper Thilo and Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen. The list of American jazz musicians who settled in Denmark for varying periods is long and includes Dexter Gordon, Ben Webster (who is buried in the central graveyard in Copenhagen), Oscar Pettiford, and Kenny Drew. Free improvisation, an enduring characteristic of both Danish jazz and psychedelic rock music, was inspired by the appearances of the avant-garde American jazz musicians who played free jazz at various venues including the well-known Club Montmartre in Copenhagen. Albert Ayler, Cecil Taylor and Archie Shepp were often more welcome in Denmark than they were in the US and made important recordings while they were there. Many performers who came to stay (at least for a while) found positions in the Radio Big Band, and played in clubs and other venues throughout the country. Thad Jones conducted the Danish Radio Big Band in the 1970s. The establishment of the Copenhagen Jazz Festival in 1979, the founding of the Rhythmic Conservatory in Copenhagen in 1986 and the opening of the Jazz House in 1991 signal the strong presence of jazz in Denmark.

Bernhard Christensen (1906-)

One of the earliest pioneers of jazz composition with a Danish national tone, Bernhard Christensen was inspired by the School Music Movement and *Gebrauchsmusik* in Germany to

compose jazz oratorios for school use beginning in the late 1920s and early 1930s and continuing through the mid-1950s. Several were co-authored with Herman D. Koppel another composer for whom jazz-inspired rhythm and lyrical melodic ideas were important. Christensen's "elegantly conceived music," in closed classical forms with jazz elements for the ballet *Enken i Spejlet* (Widow in the mirror), was performed about sixty-five times at the Royal Theater between 1934 and 1952.⁶⁵ His religious music was also jazz influenced.

Finn Savery (1933-)

A quiet, modest musician by all accounts, Finn Savery has succeeded in composing in both the modern European style and jazz idioms, and since the beginning of the 1960's he has also been active in folk and popular music genres. At the Royal Academy he studied piano with Herman D. Koppel and composition with both Niels Viggo Bentzon (who worked sporadically in jazz idioms) and Vagn Holmboe. Savery was equally drawn to Boulez and to Miles Davis, and followed the former in his composition *Afsnit I, II* for flute, viola, guitar, marimba and vibraphone, 1966, and the latter in his *Dualisme*, 1961, for octet and a concerto grosso, and *Form-63*, 1966, for jazz trio and symphony orchestra. In these two works Savery composed either with the two stylistic languages clearly alternating, or in a third-stream style where the languages are synthesized.

⁶⁵Nils Schiørring, *Musikkens Historie i Danmark: Fra 1870 til 1970'erne* (Copenhagen: Politiken, 1978) vol. 3, pp. 273-4.

In 1962 Savery composed a very successful satirical musical, *Teenagerlove*, and then began working for films and TV. In his later compositions, he has continued to synthesize styles or to play one off against the other. Work with a folk ensemble *Ringelk, Psalm and Kringellek* in the late 1970s, inspired *Kiming* for an integrated ensemble made up of a jazz trio and a string quintet of folk fiddlers. In the ballet music, *Shunting in a Peaceful Morning II*, 1982, the string and jazz ensembles are mostly separate, as the jazz group dominates the central segment while the strings take on the outside portions. Savery's compositions include two works for string quartet, with jazz trio and extra bass, *Octet-88* and *Interplay*, 1991, and big band charts, *Swan Meeting*, 1973, and *X-tract*, 1975. Chamber works include three string quartets, *Like in Everyday Life* for six percussionists, 1978, *Legering* for vibraphone and marimba, 1985, and *Synergie* for guitar quartet, 1991.⁶⁶

John Tchicai (1936-)

An African-Danish jazz musician, John Tchicai was perhaps the most important leader of avant-garde jazz in Denmark in the 1960s. As a youngster he studied clarinet, but changed to the alto saxophone, and later added the tenor sax and the bass clarinet. He went to New York in 1962-66 where he played with John Coltrane (*Ascension*) and others. Together with Archie Shepp and Don Cherry, he formed the New York Contemporary Five (1962)

⁶⁶Bertel Krarup, "Det ukendte i det kendte - Finn Savery i områds," *MUSIKHØST 94, Festival for ny musik* (Odense: Fyns Unge Tonekunstnerselskab, 1994): 87-90.

and also played with the New York Art Quartet (1964). Eventually Tchicai returned to Denmark where, together with Hugh Steinmetz, he formed the legendary group, *Cadentia Nova Danica* (1967-71), that recorded *Afrodisiaca* in 1969. Joined by Claus Bøje, Ole Mathiassen and the guitarist Pierre Dørge the group incorporated performance art, Fluxus-inspired happenings, world music, and collective improvisation into their work. During the 1970s Tchicai taught, composed and led improvisation workshops, and in 1977 he became the first jazz musician to receive the national three-year stipend for composers. Throughout the last two decades of the century he has recorded prodigiously and toured throughout the world—in Europe, America, India, Japan and Africa. Tchicai taught at the Rhythmic Conservatory from 1988-91. In 1990 he was granted a life-long stipend by the Danish government enabling him to pursue his own muse. Tchicai has been living in California since 1991 and when he returns to Denmark, he plays with Ghost-In-The-Machine, formerly the trio Clinch.

Palle Mikkelborg (1941-)

A name in Danish jazz for more than three decades, Palle Mikkelborg began to receive international recognition about 1964. Essentially self-taught, he has worked with a very broad range of musicians, many of whom are recognized leaders in a given style or genre, including the Danish jazz musicians

Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen, Kenneth Knudsen, and Bo Stief, as well as the non-Danish musicians George Russell, Bill Evans, Dexter Gordon, Jan Garbarek, Gil Evans and Miles Davis. The recording by Davis and Mikkelborg of Mikkellborg's *Aura*, composed to celebrate the award of the Sonnings Music Prize to Davis in 1984, received two Grammys. Beyond that, Mikkellborg has been adventuresome and available for collaboration: a trumpet concerto from composer Bo Holten, a concerto with Markus Stockhausen (virtuoso trumpet player and son of Karlheinz Stockhausen), and in 1993 a series of collective improvisations with percussionist Gert Sørensen in conjunction with *Nye verdens-billeder* ("New World Views"), an exhibit at Louisiana, the museum of modern art.

Mikkellborg has integrated elements from all aspects of music, choosing especially from electric jazz, jazz rock, and music of composers with whom he finds a kind of resonance—Ives, Messiaen, Terry Riley—as well as jazz musicians who have worked from scores—Gil Evans, Miles Davis, and to some extent, early Duke Ellington. These influences never amount to a montage or collage, nor are they simply cross-over, for Mikkellborg seeks to extend his stylistic reach and involvement as far as possible, but remains essentially tonal and infrequently experimental. His 1995 *Soundscape*, a large project in sound was written as a companion piece for the *Fredsskulptur* (Peace Sculpture) to celebrate the fifty years of peace after the Liberation. *My God and My All*, a choral work from the

late 1990s will appeal to audiences interested in the ritual aspect of late twentieth-century music.⁶⁷

Pierre Dørge (1946-)

One of the most inventive and persistent jazz musicians on the scene, Pierre Dørge is perhaps best recognized as a *primus motor* in the creative amalgamation, the New Jungle Orchestra (founded in 1980 by Dørge and Simon Spang-Hanssen). Dørge has, in fact, been involved in many different ventures, among which the interaction with John Tchicai and the Cadentia Nova Danica band probably left the most indelible impression. A guitarist of high repute, Dørge is a masterful showman, and a composer of increasingly ambitious original works. The New Jungle Orchestra by and large is his instrument though he is not the only bandsman who provides material for the arrangements. The group's breakthrough came in 1983/84 when the recording, *Brikama* (on Steeple Chase), brought attention from Europe and the JASA prize in 1984. A review and a portrait article in *Downbeat* (November 1986) brought more attention. The New Jungle Orchestra was the Danish State Ensemble between 1993 and 1996 and toured most of the world in that capacity. Meanwhile, the music of the Orchestra ranged in progressively wider circles adding ideas from Coleman's harmolodics, Indonesia, Nepal, Turkey and Africa to the foundation of Ellington-inspired jazz tradition. Dørge early incorporated world music resources into the band's membership with Harry Beckett, trumpeter from

⁶⁷Bertel Krarup, "Med ånden i centrum—portræt af Palle Mikkellborg." *Musikhøst* 1995

Barbados, Ayi Solomon, multi-percussionist from Ghana, Hugo Rasmussen, veteran bassist of the swing era, and Morten Clausen, who studied reed-playing in Turkey. Dørge went to the point of inviting local Chinese musicians to sit in playing traditional instruments on the *China Jungle* CD in 1997.⁶⁸ As a result of his success Dørge, who has maintained free and improvised elements in his music, has brought the public to an awareness of open-ended possibilities in jazz that are rarely pursued by standard jazz performers. In exercising his skill of drawing contrasting elements together into a musically integrated unit, Dørge has achieved a musical mutation that may best be understood as a viable response to the persistent challenge facing Danish jazz, namely, to create something other than an imitation of American jazz. Dørge's solution is a music that looks at the world at large, but from a specific Danish point of view. See photograph at the end of Part 6, p. 108.

Erik Ørum von Spreckelsen (1961-)

A jazz pianist and jazz composer who studied with Bob Brookmeyer at the Rhythmic Conservatory (1996-98), Erik Ørum von Spreckelsen is now a docent teaching at the Carl Nielsen Music Academy in Odense in a program that places as much emphasis on jazz as it does on more traditional studies. Spreckelsen represents a change. He has composed for the Radio Big Band and the Belgian Radio Orchestra

and produced five CDs with his own group. His *Sax Concerto*, 1997, was premiered in Odense. Though he primarily has composed for jazz ensembles he has departed from expectations associated with the genre in his treatment of timbre, instrumentation and other traditional elements. *Impression - Expressions* (with Thomas Blachman), 1993, and *Wider Circles*, commissioned for the jubilee concert at the Carl Nielsen Academy, explored new ways of composing for jazz band: rather than asking the musicians to improvise, he captured the effect of an improvised piece by composing out the kind of intuitive and reflective exchanges that take place when improvising musicians work on a basic idea and change it so that it emerges in a new form.⁶⁹

Den 3. Vej (The Third Way)

Sometime in 1994, composer Frans Bak (1958-) founded a new composer's association, Den 3. Vej, with the main objective of creating a project in which rhythmic composers would learn to write for classically-oriented instrumental ensembles. In January 1995, thanks to assistance from the Danish Jazz Association and the Danish Music Council, the project was launched with composer-conductor Bo Holten as the leader of a group of sixteen musicians, all of whom had substantial experience in composing, performing and producing in popular music venues. The project also entailed the cooperation of some of the country's well-established ensembles,

⁶⁸Pierre Dørge's *New Jungle Orchestra*, with various soloists, *dacapo* DCCD 9427.

⁶⁹*Møder og Dialog: 1929-1999*, program booklet for jubilee concerts 1999/2000 (Odense: Det fynske Musikkonservatorium, 1999), p. 5.

including the Athelas Sinfonietta (Copenhagen), the Symphony Orchestras of Tivoli, Aalborg and Sønderjylland, the City Orchestra of Randers and the Radio Pops Orchestra, the professional choral ensemble, Musica Ficta, and the Sørensen and Arion String Quartets. Significantly, arrangements allowed the student composers to consult with conductors and the ensembles in workshops during which experienced composers, namely Poul Ruders, Per Nørgård, Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen, Hans Abrahamsen and Anders Nordentoft presented analyses of their own music. The participants received theoretical instruction and were coached in composing for string and woodwind groups by the young composer Karsten Fundal who assisted them in conceptualizing larger forms and genres.

The goal, as articulated by Bo Holten, was to find a way of preserving the spontaneity of jazz improvisation in the act of composition, to harness the energy that arises when the distance between the composer and the performance is very short, as it is in popular art forms, and to combine that with the technical facility needed by a composer to think in abstract terms over a sustained period of time. The composers were to develop the resulting ideas into large, more comprehensive works than they were used to creating. The project that began with an unspecified time frame eventually received enough funding to last four years. Two CDs were produced, one from a concert with

the Athelas Ensemble conducted by Bo Holten in July 1996 (with compositions by ten composers), and a second with an elaborate booklet produced in 1999 with examples taken from performances of works (1994-1998) by all sixteen participants.⁷⁰

Kvinder i Musik (Women in Music)

Founded in 1980 by Diana Pereiras, Birgitte Alsted and Anne Kristine Nielsen, KIM was an outgrowth of the "Red Stockings" feminist movement. The organization has been an important source of support for women musicians in Denmark.

Birgitte Alsted (1942-)

Holder of the violin diploma from the Danish Royal Academy of Music in 1970, Birgitte Alsted spent two years studying in Poland. She returned to Copenhagen to finish in the soloist violin class at the Academy, making her debut in 1970. Her work as a composer grew out of activities during 1968-69 with the Group for Alternative Music of which she was a co-founder (see below). In what constituted a kind of apprenticeship she participated in collective improvisation with fellow composers and performers among whom were Hans Abrahamsen and Carl Bergstrøm-Nielsen. By 1971 she had developed confidence and began to compose out of her experience. Her first works were *Kontakte für Elektronische Geige*,

⁷⁰Two publications resulted from the project: *Den 3. Vej på Nationalmuseet: Rytmiske komponister skriver for Sinfonietta*, CD produced by Den danske Jazzkreds, 1996; and *Den 3. Vej*, edited by Ture Larsen and Lya Moestrup (Copenhagen: Den 3. Vej, n.d.), booklet and CD.

Quartet — Anti EF Piece, and *Klumpe*, a piece of instrumental theater for strings, piano, percussion and baritone. These were followed by more theater pieces, including *Muzak* for "at least five mobile instruments," *12 toner i Zoologisk have* for five to thirty-five walking musicians, and others for varied instrumental combinations. In 1980 Alsted began to compose with tape, with or without other instruments. Following *Vækst* (Growth), 1988, and *Natterdag* (Night's Day), 1992, tape pieces in which she performed as a violinist, she began to compose electro-acoustic music at DIEM in Århus. This fruitful affiliation resulted in several electronic pieces that belong to a series, *Søgsang I-VII* (Lamentations), using her own texts or some from the Book of Job. A number of her electronic works have been combined with other media such as poetry or dance.

In addition to electronic music, Alsted's work list includes compositions for (radically) varied chamber ensembles, orchestra and soloists. One of her most ambitious works is *Højsang*, a setting of The Song of Solomon for four vocal soloists, mixed choir, oboe, four solo strings, electric bass, harp, percussion, organ and choreographed dance. In 1996 a full concert of Alsted's compositions was presented under the auspices of Kvinder i Musik. Her electronic piece, *Søgsang II*, accompanied by slides of the volcanic Icelandic terrain taken by fellow artist, Helle Nørregaard, was played at the Tycho Brahe Planetarium during the ISCM Music Days in the fall, 1996. *Søgsang II*, though based on the story of Job, has no recited text, but leaves room for dramatic interaction between the music and the powerful visual images that were projected in the planetarium.

With her experience in performance, theater and music and her long-term identity as an experimental artist, Alsted has been active as a leader of creative workshops for children in which she facilitates the students' collective compositions, rehearsal and performance of theater music, solo works and orchestral music. Birgitte Alsted has had support from the State Art Foundation and has received prizes that foster her work, but she has also relied on her membership in Kvinder i Musik.

Gudrun Lund (1930-)

A late-starter who began to compose when she was 45 years of age, Gudrun Lund has been very productive with a catalog that comprises more than 140 items. She studied composition with Svend Schultz and Mogens Winkel Holm, and she spent a year at Hartt College of Music in Connecticut in 1983-84. Lund has actively promoted performances of her own music in concerts at the music-oriented library in Lyngby and at the Hofteater (Court Theater); *Sounds in the Park*, op. 111, for soprano and mixed ensemble, was performed at the Nordic Music Days Festival in 1991 under the auspices of the Finnish committee. Technically sound and stylistically diverse, her work is often lighthearted and characterized by humorous or clever interplay between the performers, as in *Negotiations* for wind band, op. 76, and *Talks* for woodwind trio, op. 136. Lund has composed in all genres and for all media, including a musical, a mini-opera and pieces for instruction.

It seems odd that there are so few women composers in Denmark. In 1993 there were seven women composers on the list of the Danish Composer's Union; today there are fourteen, six of whom are not originally from Denmark. At least two are primarily engaged in rhythmic music. The list does not include all of those women who have at one time or another made a mark with a composition, but in any case it is a very slow development and seemingly more so in Denmark than in the other Nordic countries. Hanne Ørvad (1946-) a singer, became involved in composition through her interest in music for the voice, in particular, settings of the Maria hymn. She has composed primarily vocal music. Christina Wagner Smitt (1960-) is a pianist and teacher who studied composition with Oliver Knussen in London; one of her works was programmed on the "Peep" multi-media Festival in Charlottenberg in 1992. She composes quite a bit for pedagogical purposes.

Experimental and Intuitive Music in Denmark

Since the early 1960's Danish musicians have been active and visible in the field of experimental music, groups forming and reforming in response to new currents and ideas. Largely devoted to procedures and techniques of free improvisation and distinguished from other new musics by lack of planned outcome, experimental music has co-existed with composition of new music at the established institutions, sometimes interacting, at other times entirely independent. The concept of experimental music has survived due to the sustained interest by a circum-

scribed group of free spirits, including Carl Bergstrøm-Nielsen, Jørgen Lekfeldt, John Tchicai, Pierre Dørge, Søren Gorm, Elizabeth Klein, Vagn Olsson, and Niels Winther.

Group for Alternative Music

One of the most visible early associations was formed in 1968-69 by students at the Royal Academy of Music in Copenhagen. An outgrowth of the youth movement in the 1960s, the group was an alternative to the established conservatory-styled musical milieu and some members were interested in free and unstructured improvisation. They organized open, uncensored concerts with music composed in any style with any means. Increasingly, they became committed to introducing their brand of new music to a wider audience with concerts in unusual locations and at odd hours of the day, e.g., on a boat in one of the canals in the early morning, or in the train station. A creative venture that gave out ca. 1977, the group fostered the development of several composers who eventually moved into the mainstream of music-making; notably, Hans Abrahamsen, Niels Rosring-Schow and Birgitte Alsted.

Group for Intuitive Music

In 1974 an association committed to improvised music as process was initiated at the Musicology Institute of the University of Copenhagen by pianist Elizabeth Klein and composer Jørgen Lekfeldt (1948-). Carl Bergstrøm-Nielsen, who earlier belonged to the Group for Alternative Music, joined in 1975, and Ivan Vincze, who emigrated from Bratislava in 1956, joined in 1982.

Following the lead of the German composer, Karlheinz Stockhausen, who developed the concept of "intuitive" music in the late 1960s, they performed group improvisations based largely on verbal scores. First using pieces from Stockhausen's *Aus den Sieben Tage*, 1968, and *Für kommende Zeiten*, 1970, they soon moved on to become an improvising group of composer-performers, whose activities are based on their own open graphic scores.⁷¹ A Yearly International Intuitive Music Conference has been held since 1995 and new groups around the country have been formed, in particular, a women's group, Lærkerne (The larks, established in 1998) under the direction of Mette Stig Nielsen on the island of Fyn. In a further development Carl Bergstrøm-Nielsen has been involved in the integration of intuitive music as a core element in music therapy at the University of Aalborg (see discussion below).

SKRÆP, the Experimental Music Forum

SKRÆP was founded in 1988 by the poet, visual artist, composer, organizer and multi-instrumentalist, Niels Winther, and the American composer and events organizer, Dan Marmorstein, long-time resident in Copenhagen. In contradistinction to the other groups, SKRÆP involves musicians interested in improvised performance who have been working in the popular

music business, and as a result their performances often have a finished character, even if they are improvised. SKRÆP is a confederation of composers with a formal process for accepting members, it was organized on a par with other national music organizations that produce concerts, and it quickly established contacts with international associations in Germany, the USA and Italy. In 1996, the year in which Copenhagen was "cultural capital of Europe," SKRÆP produced thirteen major concerts, all on a large scale, established an office in Den Anden Opera, an alternative performance space in the center of the city, and produced three CDs. In 1998, ten years after SKRÆP's founding, a splinter group, Score, was created by Marmorstein, Vagn Olsson and T.S. Høeg with the goal of producing a concert series focused on the performance of scored music.

Institutions and Experimental Music

Danes active in the areas of experimental music have taken initiatives to join with other groups and with established institutions. Improvisation and new forms of expression and notation have become a part of the curriculum at several educational institutions. The curriculum for the Master's degree in Music Therapy established in 1995 at the University of Aalborg in Jutland features courses in intuitive music improvisation as a core element of music

⁷¹Carl Bergstrøm-Nielsen, "Grafisk notation i ny dansk musik," *Composer's Biennale II, Copenhagen* (Copenhagen: The Danish Composers' Society, 1992) pp. 88-100. An original unedited

recording of a conference, *Denmark's Intuitive Music Conference 1997*, was produced by AVART, DIMC 001.

therapy training. Students in the program participate in improvisation exercises; they learn to contextualize a framework for improvisation and to create aural and graphic scores. The University publishes monographs on related subjects on its web site.

In 1991 a new line of study for composer-performers was incorporated into the curriculum at the Carl Nielsen Music Academy in Odense on Fyn aimed at the exploration of the theater in music, and a new policy (1999) now commits the Academy to work with a variety of genres (contemporary and early music, jazz, rock and pop and folk) in as close a relationship as possible. To this end the Academy has begun a three-year cross-over project focused on student participation in different forms of expression.⁷²

⁷²MXP's series of promotional CDs comprises all genres. Web address: www.mxp.dk.



New Jungle Orchestra
Photograph by Gorm Valentin

Since 1980 the "Manuscript Series" of the Society for the Publication of Danish Music has published scores in nontraditional notation in photocopied format so that they will be accessible to interested performers and to the public. Several recording studios have begun to produce CDs of experimental music; among the most active are Olufsen Records (records of SKRÆP performances), DIEM, and AV-ART Records, a non-profit organization established in 1995 by a collective of musicians to promote improvised Danish music. Finally, the Danish Music Export project in collaboration with the Danish Music Information Center and sponsored by Dan Disc has produced recordings of experimental music especially for export.⁷²

5. THE MIDDLE GENERATION: FIRST WAVE

(BORN 1945-1953)

Århus and Copenhagen

The middle generation of living Danish composers is readily divided into two groups, those born between 1945 and 1953 and those born between 1954 and 1963. They are distinguished largely by the degree to which they are affected by developments in response to the provisions of the Music Act. Members of the first wave were maturing even as the Music Act was being written and put into place. They were also directly impacted by new political movements in the late 1960s and 1970s, notably, the youth rebellion, the anti-nuclear power movement and the anti-European Economic Union movement. An intense effort to revitalize Marxism as expressed by the Frankfurt School had a direct bearing on musical circles via Adorno. Musical developments at home were also influential, in particular Per Nørgård's hierarchical thinking, the infinite row, and Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen's New Simplicity—sometimes called "Danish minimalism." From the outside came the "poster" music from Poland, minimalism as articulated by Morton Feldman, and the interest in collage. However, the key formative influence on the composers of the first group was the circumstance that they were the first ones to experience and participate in the new pedagogy as it evolved first in Århus under the guidance of Per Nørgård and Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen and a bit later in Copenhagen under Ib Nørholm.

The New Pedagogy

Nørgård and his peers had yearned for a much different training than they had experienced at the Royal Academy in Copenhagen. Though Nørgård had the highest regard for his teachers, Vagn Holmboe and Finn Høffding, he had the added perspective of studying with Nadia Boulanger, the most famous music pedagogue of the twentieth century. In an interview⁷³ he expressed his appreciation for the hard school of Boulanger's teaching for which she was famous—the uncompromising standards she maintained for correct and elegant realizations of complex figured basses, exercises in species counterpoint and chorale harmonization, the experience of the intense "Wednesday afternoon" sessions that involved discussions and demonstrations of performance practice, interpretation and analysis and the insightful probing during private lessons. The move from Copenhagen to Århus (1966) forced by the conflict over the case of "X" presented a golden opportunity to effect in-depth change in the teaching of music students. Nørgård, like his peers, was "no longer willing to accept older persons's versions of things," and the new pedagogy they designed included analysis seminars to study techniques and principles of newly-composed music, and a new concept of workshops at which the Århus City Orchestra actually performed the

⁷³Anders Beyer, "Per Nørgård, Composer on Inclined Planes," 2000, pp. 123-24.

work of student composers—sometimes in rehearsal-styled arrangements, sometimes in concert for public audience. This process involved an all-around learning experience for young composers (copying, rehearsing, hearing their own music) preparing them for the professional world.⁷⁴

These new style teachers, never assumed that they were ahead of the students with respect to advanced compositional issues; to the contrary, they were, themselves, involved in the learning process. At the Århus Academy Nørgård attended the first course on electronic music (1966) together with his students. He and Gudmundsen-Holmgreen worked along with the performers and other students in large and small projects where free exchange and discussion was encouraged and where experiments and investigation of new ideas were constantly at the center of attention.

The new model was a true departure from the traditional modes of teaching, and the result became apparent with the succeeding generations of composers. Because teaching was a crucial factor in the formation of the first wave of the middle generation, it is feasible to divide them into two subgroups, one taught in Århus, the other in Copenhagen. Despite constant and close communication between them, a number of small distinctions may be

made; one concerns foreign contacts. The Århus group (Ole Buck, Karl Aage Rasmussen, Hans Abrahamsen) stayed in Denmark for their education. Karl Aage Rasmussen did travel far and wide, lecturing and performing, and his trip to the US in 1974 to attend the celebration of Charles Ives' centennial certainly did impact his thinking, however, he was no longer a student. The group in Copenhagen (Frounberg, Hegaard, Ruders) was somewhat more adventurous; for example, Ivar Frounberg studied in Italy with Xenakis and in the US with Feldman, and Ruders early developed excellent connections with England and the US.

Composition in Århus—Ole Buck (1945-)

In spite of the fact that Ole Buck lives in central Jutland far away from urban life, and despite his inclination to remain on the periphery of musical life, he has been a central figure in developments in Danish music since his student days. Buck has composed for orchestra, voice, solo performers and chamber ensemble, and his collaborations with painters, poets and choreographers insure that his work reaches beyond the physical boundaries of his isolation.

Ole Buck (alias "Case X") studied with Per Nørgård and Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen in Århus and debuted

⁷⁴The process is discussed in two interviews by Anders Beyer: "Jeg er dybt fascineret af skrot: Interview med komponisten med mere, Fuzzy, alias Jens Wilhelm Pedersen" (I am deeply fascinated by junk), *Dansk Musik Tidsskrift* 74, 5 (1999/00): 146-57; and in the interview with Hans Gefors

in 1966 with *Kalligrafi* for soprano and a chamber orchestra scored with flute, oboe, clarinet and trumpet, timpani and five percussionists, celesta, harp, violin and viola, an instrumentation that almost guarantees transparent polyphony and minute fluctuations of timbre. The extended melodies evoke fine line drawings, blend, overlap, join or meet, like lines in Asian landscapes or the Eastern calligraphy of the title. Energetic outbursts interrupt but disappear without a trace. Karl Aage Rasmussen's description evokes the poetic quality of the composition:

Tiny haiku are sung... in dense, insistent melismas... an abundance of fine tracery and sudden bursts of emotion... partly illustrative... partly dream-like.⁷⁵

Buck's own intensely personal style of minimalism might be traced to the mid-1960s' interest in trance-like or meditative states that call for a suspended, static environment. Through the years Buck has cultivated the inspiration from Far Eastern thought. Each of the five *Masques* for six percussionists composed in 1969, 1980 and 1996, takes an Asian mask as starting point for an imaginary ritual. Inspired by the primitive character of percussion instruments, Buck discovers a new expressive richness using duple-pulsed ostinatos, colorful instrumentation, alternating sets of instruments, and different beat patterns that eventually retard. Take the second piece: drum and bell alternate with a pattern on the

⁷⁵Karl Aage Rasmussen, in liner notes for *Ole Buck (b. 1945) Landscapes*, dacapo 8.224034.

mallet instruments; patterns evolve from one to another. The pattern in the mallets repeats, the last notes are long reiterations of the same pitch, and the very last one is held endlessly—hard to tell how long finally. *Rejang* for solo percussion, 1986, combines elements of East and West. In what is for Buck, a chaotic course through five sections of the piece, the characteristics of the work take on associations of a tribal ritual then revert to something that feels like a Western show of instrumental force, a "call to arms." The Balinese windmills introduce natural sounds that oppose and modulate between these forces.⁷⁶

Working with pared-down resources in his *Landscapes*, 1992-95, Buck fills out simple configurations with gradually shifting timbres broken occasionally by a delicate figure. The music moves slowly in a linear fashion, almost as if sound were being visualized. Timbres evolve like shifting shades of color. Each of the four landscapes can be read like an Asian screen with its journey that stretches across many panels, with many episodes, similar to others in the tradition, rarely unpredictable and different, still never the same. Liberation is achieved by capturing the essential sameness. "Spring" is lightweight, uncomplicated; chance encounters breed acquaintance, not competition. The indolence of "Summer" is challenged only when some small repeated motives begin to accumulate and change the density; then the dynamic level rises briefly and tremolos or short spurts of repeated

⁷⁶Ole Buck, "Rejang (1986)," Program book for the 3. Komponistbiennale (Copenhagen: Dansk Komponist Forening, 1996), pp. 51-2.

single notes interrupt the placid surface. "Summer" ends sweeping pitches rising through the wide register of the cello, followed by a very gradual regression. In "Autumn," heterophony blurs melody lines, and creates images of decay, the fraying edges of shapes indistinct and fading. Though long, "Winter" passes by on small, uneventful moments. Without clear definition, the music requires listening "into" the sustained sounds and resonances.

Curiously, Buck's music has always inspired strong advocacy among the Danish audience indicating that it is not based on religious or philosophical orientation but is wholly devoted to refined listening, attentive to nuance and finely-tuned musical expression. According to one writer, Buck is

... in the deepest sense a melodist and has a natural ear for the position of even the smallest moment and its possible function in the course of time. . . . he is first and last in harmony with the most simple and the most basic: the musical phenomenon as expression for something profoundly human.⁷⁷



Karl Aage Rasmussen
Photograph by Marianne Grøndahl

Karl Aage Rasmussen (1947-)

A central figure in present-day Danish musical life, Karl Aage Rasmussen is a Jutlander who loves discussion and verbal sparring. His work as artistic director of festivals and conductor of ensembles, composer, performer and teacher brings him into contact with musicians of all sorts, creating the interaction that is a basic ingredient of his life and creativity as a composer and essayist. Rasmussen began his music studies early with private instruction, and then attended the Music Academy in Århus where he took degrees in music history, theory and composition, Per Nørgård and Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen being his principal teachers in composition. His long work list contains substantial orchestral scores, beginning with *Symphony for Young Lovers*, 1967, and extending into the present with, for example, a *Double Concerto for Harp and Guitar*, 1998. *Movements on a Moving Line*, 1987, was followed by many compositions for large mixed ensembles. Dramatic works include two operas, *Jeptha*, 1976-77, and *The Sinking of the Titanic*, for which he also wrote the libretto based on a poem by Hans Magnus Enzenberger, a musical radio play, *Jonas*, on texts by Poul Borum (1978-80), and Majakovskij (1977-78), a "scenic concert piece" with a libretto based on Majakovskij's play. In the mid-1970s *A Ballad of Game and Dream* for chamber ensemble was the first in an almost unbroken stream of such works over the next twenty years that includes four string quartets and sets of songs.

⁷⁷Svend Ravnkilde, "Buck, Ole (f. 1945)," *Ibid.*, pp. 50-1.

In the 1970s and 1980s Rasmussen composed *Encores*, a series for virtuoso soloists or for very small ensembles that demonstrate his interest in conventions of performance. These works, with subtitles like *Beat* for muted percussion, *Strain* for piano, or *Lonesome* for a singing and acting guitarist, are individual studies of musicians in the act of performance. *Encore VII: Strain* for piano, 1984, is a six-minute-long toccata with furious repetition of notes and lightning-fast passages. In *Fugue*, *Encore VIII* for clarinet, vibraphone and piano (or in a virtuoso version for piano solo), 1984, two aspects of the composer's interests meet: it is another in the series of tests of musical traditions, but as it is a deconstruction of the fugue from Beethoven's *Hammerklavier Sonata* in which all the notes are reassembled according to four different, simultaneous tempos, it is also an intense encounter with the music of the past.

For Rasmussen it is crucial that music be as interesting for the spirit or mind that it reflects, as it is for the sound it projects. Music must resonate with what we understand, or must change the way we understand something. Composers whose music he mentions in this context include Ives, Cage, Ligeti and Nørgård. These have been important to him, although their individual musical styles—naturally—cannot be traced in his own; for him the essential is not a matter of style, but one of thought: "As it enters our ears, music is fused with something that I, for want

of a better word, have to call 'thinking,'" consequently,

[y]ou use yourself as a kind of test case, I suppose. And perhaps you discover . . . some new psychological and poetic dimensions without precisely knowing what they are or where they come from. I don't think that there are any specific tools other than personal experience. When you test a long series of possibilities, sooner or later you will be able to cope with them and maybe even express something with them.⁷⁸

Recognizing a creative resource in his penchant for interaction, Rasmussen early began to compose works that respond to ideas found in works by others. Compositions such as *Genklang* (Resonance), 1972, *Anfang und Ende*, 1973, and *Berio Mask*, 1977, were, in a sense, recycled music, but not in the manner of Gudmundsen-Holmgreen who may find poetry in a discard—a piece of musical refuse. At first, Rasmussen recomposed elements that are only just large enough to be perceived as pre-existing and embedded them in a web of new musical ideas. Later he began to limit the extent of the recalled elements to very small units—as few as four notes. These were combined with other similar, diminutive units to create *meta-music*, a music-about-music. In *Genklang*, the recalled phrases from the Adagietto of Mahler's Fifth Symphony played on an out-of-tune piano are the only recognizable elements in a field created from micro-fragments of quo-

⁷⁸Quoted in Anders Beyer, "Modviljens poesi: Samtale med komponisten Karl Aage Rasmussen," *Dansk Musik Tidskrift* 72, 1 & 2 (1997/98): 2-10, 46-54, translated as "Karl Aage Rasmussen: The Poetry of Opposition" in *The Voice of Music* (London: Ashgate, 2000), p. 40.

tations played on the other keyboards (grand piano played four-hands, prepared piano, celesta, harmonium).

Still later, consideration of these formulas and components of style led Rasmussen to search for expressive qualities that might, so to speak, have been left behind—and perhaps never had been actually expressed in earlier music. When considering the European avant-garde's rallying cry to create "never-before-heard sounds" (Stockhausen)—in essence, to compose outside any and all musical traditions—Rasmussen accepted only the first part of the argument, namely, that traditional musical language constitutes compressed elements—or clichés—from the works of past composers. He challenged the conclusion that composing with traditional resources entails working with a language that is emptied of its expressive content and he counter-argued that it is feasible that earlier music actually contains untapped expressive capacity. This led him to the extreme position in *Contrafactum*, 1980, which possibly reaches the limits for a work's use of pre-existing material: his free adaptation in the style of Stravinsky of Schoenberg's free adaptation of the Concerto in G Minor for Cello and Orchestra by Georg Monn.

Rasmussen's interest took a new direction when he began to interpret successive historical epochs as metaphors for concepts associated with both time and tempo. Gradually this turned into a fascination with the experience of time and the mark it makes on artistic material. Whereas, in his earlier works time functioned in layers with one pre-existing idea meeting another,

in the newer works the integrated montage technique called the element of time into question. Inspired by his new understanding of musical time from the standpoint of the musical score, Rasmussen composed *A Symphony in Time*, 1982, in which all four movements—*Allegro*, *Adagio*, *Scherzo*, *Finale*—use the same elementary materials, each element a basic shape, or *gestalt*. These elements are not necessarily presented in the same order or in the same form in each movement, but they do occur in all four. Several are quite noticeable, and some of these are marked by the spirit of Stravinsky: a brass fanfare, a dry repetition of a brass chord in the low middle range, a woodwind phrase. The use of shared material in all four movements suggests the possibility of multiple, simultaneous passings of time, and new ideas.

A series of new mind models emerged, and most important for many and certainly for me, probably, were the so-called "fractals." When you begin to think about infinity . . . [in those terms, it] is no longer frightening, but something almost touching. And when all of a sudden it works as a background for new thoughts, I am precisely where I want to be as a composer or artist.

That is where the technical, the audible, the analytical, and the conceptual meet in an area which makes room for exploration.⁷⁹

Fractal geometry with its endless multiplications and reductions of similarly-shaped forms provided a solution to the difficulty of coordinating melody

⁷⁹Beyer, "Modviljens poesi," p. 53, also in "The Poetry of Opposition," ibid., pp. 39-40.

and harmony in works with several different, simultaneous tempos. The concerto, *Sinking Through the Dream Mirror*, for violin and thirteen instruments, 1993, uses fractal melodic lines,

that is to say, identical lines that form a veritable Chinese box of tempi, both very fast and very slow, endlessly intertwined and fitting into each other like a huge network. When such a melodic line falls, sooner or later it will flatten out. If a very fast melody falls in terms of pitch, and a very slow identical melody fits into it—well, it's clear that the slow melody cannot fall nearly as fast as the fast one can. Thus sooner or later the slow one will make the fast one level out. And this "level" I came to perceive as the water-mirror—a mirror that the melody can break through only when the composer "interferes."⁸⁰

Rasmussen's interest in shapes that are linearly arranged but have varying proportional relationships, led to the discovery of a self-generating series that retains its identity in all expansions and diminutions in a constant ratio of 2:3; this began a new strain of thought that continued to play out in the last decade of the century.

Hans Abrahamsen (1952-)

Even as a young composer Hans Abrahamsen's works were performed by important soloists and orchestras. His unusually early success led to the commission of *Märchenbilder* for the London Sinfonietta, and *Nacht und Trompeten*, 1981, was premiered by the Berlin Philharmonic under the direction of Hans Werner Henze. The

⁸⁰Beyer, ibid., p. 53, and in trans., ibid., p. 40.



Hans Abrahamsen
Photograph by Woldzmierz Echenski

latter work was also programmed by the Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra during its 1984 US tour.

Though Abrahamsen and Rasmussen were fellow students, they are studies in contrast. Abrahamsen is slightly younger than Rasmussen, and unlike him, a product of the urban environment and capital city. The difference between Abrahamsen's frame of reference and Rasmussen's is abiding and deep and began early. Rasmussen, as described, is engaged in an ever-restless intellectual search and Abrahamsen is more inclined to intuitive receptivity. In the early 1970's Abrahamsen was a co-founder of the Group for Alternative Music devoted

to experimental music and an improvised approach to performance. His *Anti-EEC Sats*, 1972, which opposed the European Economic Union, featured few notes; a melody in C major is repeated incessantly, changes slightly—and makes no attempt to be more than it is. Starting from the ideals of New Simplicity, he went on to create his own amalgam.

Two aspects of Abrahamsen's works might be discussed in the context of the compositional ideas of Nørgård and Gudmundsen-Holmgreen for he studied with both of them. Like Nørgård, Abrahamsen composes with system and stringent process. A close investigation of the notes and shapes reveals very compact forms that are often highly organized by number sequences and symmetry; occasionally he composes palindromes. Unlike Nørgård, however, Abrahamsen is not overtly fascinated by possible metaphysical associations of the ordering principles or other more philosophical areas of thought. Like Gudmundsen-Holmgreen, he rather tends to prefer simple, almost tangible sound elements that are sufficiently sensuous and inventive to fill out his forms, abstract or not. A relatively early piece, *Skum*, (Foam), 1970, is completely four-square in form, and uncompromisingly rigid, the better to afford freedom. Abrahamsen made all the sections exactly the same length so that he could fill them out with whatever imagery he liked. Unlike Gudmundsen-Holmgreen's focus on the absurd, and more in the spirit of exploring freedom versus rigidity, much of Abrahamsen's work deals with oppositions. This can take many forms: two senses of time—the unmitigated present versus historical time glimpsed through

veiled references, as in *Lied in Fall*, 1987; two different layers of music with reference to two different keys, for instance, C Major versus B \flat minor in *Märchenbilder*, 1984, or F Major versus E \flat minor in *Winternacht*, 1976-78; the immediate musical past versus expressionism and neo-classicism, as in the Second String Quartet; or, "total light and total darkness," as in the composer's characterization of *Stratifications*, 1973-75.

While it is tempting to find programmatic references in Abrahamsen's music because of its intimacy, it often assumes the abstract manner of a character piece that, however, resists interpretation in terms of narrative meaning—just as an abstract drawing or a sculptural mobile may resist interpretation. In spite of our expectations, Abrahamsen's music is finally and completely non-referential; the quality of pure expressiveness in these works is ultimately a kind of refined abstraction. *Winternacht* for seven instruments, 1976-78, has four parts, the first and last dedicated to Trakl, the inner ones to M.C. Escher and Stravinsky. In this work the concentrated idea is insistently tied to the form itself; there is no overt figuration. On another level, the music is close to total figuration because there is no sense of an "I," no personification in the strung-together images, no connective tissue, only an attitude. No mind is mirrored in the music; no music mirrors a mind. In "Escher," the second movement, the strictly-defined figures in several of the instruments accelerate and retard simultaneously, blurring the edges of the musical space the way Escher's skillful drawings blur the perception of the viewer who tries to trace down the figures with shared lines in an effort to follow the transformation of one image

into another. The sense of the "I" of the creator escapes as the emphasis is shifted to the viewer. In the third movement, "Stravinsky," highly controlled allusions to music-about-music move along in quasi-strict segments, alternatingly with and without the piano, first *marcato* then *dolce*. With the last movement—like the first, subtitled "Trakl"—a delicate trumpet fanfare from the end of the first movement returns, the only memory-provoking segment of the work. At first there is only that fanfare, repeated over and over with slight and insignificant changes, until the sensation of recognition is erased. Mission accomplished, five-note whole-tone chords erupt in the piano, grow from *ppp poco a poco crescendo* to *fff*, and bring the work to a close. Nothing is left behind but a little mechanistic clicking on two pitches a half-step apart.

Abrahamsen is a composer for whom imagery functions as a kind of reality. Elements in his musical language are comparable to those in Escher's artistic language, the recognizable-yet-unreal imagery, the evocation in timbre, and the familiar turn of phrase. They are also elusive. The lines don't quite soar or fall down completely and the filtering cobwebs of sound stop just about the same place as with Escher—or Stravinsky or Trakl, for that matter—at the edge of the page. Without any pose, this music is only about music.

The complexity of form and development ("probably the strictest structure I have ever worked with") in the *Lied in Fall* for cello and thirteen instruments, 1987, results from the multiple relationships in time between the

cello and the accompanying ensemble as well as from the effect that Abrahamsen calls *lydstyrt* (diving sound), the falling patterns generated in the ensemble from the notes of the cello. The two strands intersect, mirror and echo each other. Abrahamsen has compared the cello in this work to a character inside a labyrinth "trying to find its way out of the maze."

In the 1990s Abrahamsen took a long hiatus from composing original works, but recently he has finished a piano concerto commissioned by the NOMUS committee for the Athelas Ensemble. However, he has continued to teach and a number of his students have already joined the ranks of the younger generation of Danish composers. He has also continued to orchestrate works by other composers. Among these is certainly one of the most successful to be found anywhere, the recomposition, 1990, for ten instruments of Carl Nielsen's enigmatic posthumous pieces for piano. Abrahamsen's opus is not large, but it is replete with engaging elements: vitality, poetry, simplicity, musical integrity, charm.

Wayne Siegel (1953-)

An American from California, Wayne Siegel was studying with Edward Applebaum at the University of California at Santa Barbara when in 1974 he moved to Denmark to study composition with Per Nørgård and Karl Aage Rasmussen at the Music Academy in Århus. He went back to complete his Bachelor of Arts degree in Santa Barbara in 1975, but returned to Denmark

in 1977 to finish his diploma exam in composition at Århus and has remained there. In the early 1980's he was engaged as an administrative director of the West Jutland Symphony and the Esbjerg Ensemble and in 1986 he was appointed Director of DIEM, the Danish Institute for Electronic Music in Århus. His work at the Institute has served to integrate the genre into the musical environment; he established the Computer Music Festivals (1989-) and courses in electro-acoustic and computer music workshops. Siegel's *Livstegn (Sign of Life)*, a science fiction opera, was composed for the First International Conference for Computer Music in 1994. In 1995 he inaugurated a long-term project called "Digital Dance" to research the idea of interactive dance, in which the usual relationship between a dancer's physical movements and the music is reversed, so that the dancer directs the course of the music by interacting with a computer. The project's goal was realized in 1998 when, after several workshops to test the results, the system was proficient enough to be set into production.⁸¹

In his composition Siegel is deeply influenced by American minimalism, advanced rock and electro-acoustic music, and he has composed music in many genres—from solo works with live electronics and chamber music to pieces for orchestra and other instrumental ensembles. *Devil's Golf Course* for the Århus Symphony Orchestra, 1984-86, was one of

⁸¹More can be found out about the project on web sites for DIEM and for Wayne Siegel.

the first pieces to attract broad attention to his work. It was followed by a Concerto for Percussion and Orchestra in 1988 for the Copenhagen Philharmonic. Siegel's fascination with systems seems to play an important role in his work. In his *Domino Figures*, 1979, performers sitting in a semi-circle (from ten to 100 guitarists) respond to visual cues as they play 97 different figures in a strict canon. The combination of multiple figures in different tempi moving in waves create slowly-evolving textures and spatial effects not normally expected in guitar music. In the first segment of *Jackdaw*, the trombone and the computer interact with playful rhythmic patterns in a repetitive and shifting minimalist structure. In the middle segment, essentially a slow-moving prelude, the sound mass builds as the computer and trombone pile up layers of melodic strains and sustained pitches. Finally, the minimalist approach prevails with a segment that recalls the opening patterns. *Tunnel* for four-channel tape is a ten-minute-long composition in which the computer reworks a collection of sounds taken from numerous and diverse sources into one sustained tone that is changing constantly.

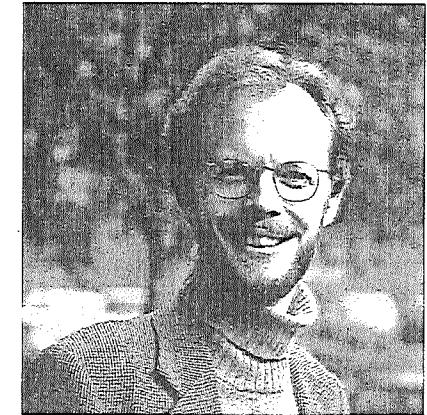
Composition in Copenhagen— Poul Ruders (1949-)

Although he had some lessons in orchestration with Ib Nørholm, Poul Ruders never actually studied composition. His training as an organist, completed at the Academy of Music in Odense also under Nørholm, provided the foundation for an accomplished

compositional technique based on his natural skills and vivid imagination. As the titles indicate, his works often incorporate strong visual images and imagined dramatic narratives. He refers to himself as a "film composer without a film."

Ruders' music is uninhibited in its technical demands. When he writes for orchestra he often requires a large virtuosic ensemble with added percussion, digital piano, synthesizer and water gongs. When he writes for the piano, he takes in the full keyboard, as in his *Dante Sonata*, 1972, or the *13 Postludes for Piano*, 1988. But even when he wants to limit the expression to very little, it can be a monumental little that is required: the whole second movement of his First Symphony, requires only two chords, B-flat minor and D-flat Major; and in the last movement there is only one, a large, wide-spread pulsing chord that thins out and slows down as time passes, leaving nothing but the imagery of the dead landscape evoked by the work's title, "*Himmelhoch jauchzend - zum Tode betrübt*" ("Rejoicing to heaven - Cast down unto death"). Early in his development Ruders was very affected by Penderecki's *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima*, a central work of the so-called poster music of the 1960s, and he adopted its striving for intensity. His oft-quoted statement says it all: "Expression has always been the main thing for me," and "the means [to obtain it] don't concern me in the least."

The idea of stylistic pluralism prevailed among composers at the time Ruders began his career, and though there was a period toward the end of the 1970s when he leaned toward



Poul Ruders
Photograph courtesy of Edition Wilhelm Hansen

medieval and renaissance music, he has remained completely free to refer to music of the present day as well as from the past. *Jargon* for guitar, 1973, with its unrestrained use of quotations from popular music, shows Ruders' early fascination with the obvious and popular, but represents only one area of his interests as revealed by other works that refer to Gabrieli (*Capriccio pian' e forte*, 1978), medieval popular song (cello variations on *l'homme armé* 1976), Vivaldi (First Violin Concerto, 1981), Monteverdi (*glORIA*, 1981), and Strauss, among others. Ruders' interest in the plurality of the moment is inseparable from his interest in the present. It would be difficult to find a composer more dedicated to the present than Poul Ruders. The total absence of nostalgia (or futurism) in his music is unique in contemporary Denmark.

In 1980 Ruders completed *4 Compositions: A chamber concerto for 9 instruments*, which summed up his development as a composer at the time. "Variations" comprises a set of seven developing forays into a jagged melody and a rhythmic complex; "Scherzo" reaches a high pitch with a modernistic waltz, and is the ultimate contrast to "Plain-song" that meditates, muted, vibratoless and pale. The last, "Sortie," is an essay in exuberance with a campy Irish reel, quotes from *Der Rosenkavalier* and pealing bells. In the chamber works that followed, Ruders directed his penchant for displaying the fullness of resources toward exploring the richness of possibilities but without extravagance. In *Nightshade* for nine instruments, 1986, the potential for extremes of high and low, dark and light in the instrumentation (alto flute, double bassoon, contrabass clarinet, piano, among other instruments) is thoroughly exploited, but within the range of conventional treatment of the instruments.

As a composer whose skills and talents are well suited for a large orchestral apparatus, Ruders inevitably faced the problem dogging compositions for orchestra, namely, the outmoded idea of symphonic development. At first he relied on a technique of recycling patterns developed in the early 1980s, based on the change ringing tradition in English bell-ringing. This he called "minimorphosis" (a word he obtained by combining "minimalism" and "metamorphosis") and he proceeded by transforming small clusters of tones and rhythmic modules into patterns that were changed from one into another. The encounter with change ringing provided a skeletal system for

composing but already with *Manhattan Abstraction*, 1982—with its long angular skyline melody and break dance rhythms—Ruders was moving in the direction of a more personal expression. This tendency became progressively obvious in the "abstract dramas" of the next years. The first, *Saaledes saae Johannes* (Thus saw St. John), 1983-84, was followed by the *Drama Trilogy: Dramaphonia* for piano and ensemble, 1987, *Monodrama* for percussion and small orchestra, 1988, and *Polydrama* for cello and orchestra, 1988, and culminated in the drama of the First Symphony, subtitled "*Himmelhoch jauchzend zum Tode betrübt*," 1989.

In the next decade Ruders turned out an astonishing twelve works for orchestra, including four solo concertos and the three grand symphonic dramas of the *Solar Trilogy: Gong*, 1992, *Zenith*, 1992-93, and *Corona*, 1993-95. In these works, the accumulation of tremolos, pedal points, solemn brass statements, static scenes, hovering violin lines, long pedal points, pulsing chordal mixtures, massed heterophony polyphony, and chaos, are more like monumental organ improvisations than symphonic expositions. Repetition serves the purpose of moving forward, not of recalling, while the uncertainty—perhaps absence—of tonality or modality, makes the accumulation of effects possible. Having honed the skills required to compose such works, Ruders was the natural choice for a commission to create a worthy successor to Britten's *Young People's Guide to the Orchestra*. His *Concerto in Pieces: Purcell Variations for Orchestra*, a set of orchestral variations

on the "Ha Ha Chorus," or, the witches' chorus, from *Dido and Aeneas*, calls for an up-dated orchestra with saxophones, synthesizer and water gongs. To further distinguish his work from Britten's, Ruders casts the variations by instrumental family rather than by instrumental soloists.

Lars Hegaard (1950-)

As he originally wanted to study guitar, Lars Hegaard began his studies with Ingolf Olsen in Odense in 1969 and followed his teacher when he moved to the Royal Music Academy in Copenhagen. Ingolf Olsen's deep involvement with contemporary music and the composers of the New Simplicity, particularly Henning Christiansen, Ole Buck and Ib Nørholm, strongly impacted his student who began to study composition with Niels Viggo Bentzon in 1975. Thereafter Hegaard studied with Nørholm to whom he credits the growth of his self-discipline and self-criticism. His catalog begins in 1974 and includes symphonies, string quartets and wind quintets.

Hegaard's early string quartet, *Five Fragments after Samuel Beckett*, 1979-80, was in the spirit of New Simplicity; its repetitive elements catch the irony and absurd humor of the Beckett quotations which are found at the beginning and end of the fourth movement: first, "I should be happy, he said to himself . . .," then, ". . . it isn't as much fun, as I had thought." By contrast, in the *Canto for Cello Solo*, 1984, the composer takes four approaches to a rather thorough and sober exploration of the expressive range of the cello. *The Four Winds* for clarinet trio, also 1984, begins to show more of the

polyvalence of the times as Hegaard works with mosaic form: elements are fitted together tightly according to the Fibonacci series; film editing procedures are adapted as the composer "cuts" back and forth between two musical ideas—each time one occurs, it is slightly changed, the development of the ideas being somewhat parallel without affecting each other.⁸² *The Great Beam of the Milky Way* for piano, 1985, is based on rhythmic and melodic patterns taken from a long aboriginal song and dance cycle; harmonization filters the melody, breaking it up so that the elements are independent of each other and separated into high, middle and low registers.

With the 1990s, Hegaard's ideas for musical order become still more esoteric but his essential originality remains unencumbered by the extravagant devices. In the *13 Short Pieces* for flute, viola and harp, 1990, inspiration is taken from a description of the structure of the twenty basic amino acid. The result is, paradoxically, an intermittently lyrical, dance-like work, that seems far removed from amino acids. The ancient Chinese book of divination, the *I Ching*, was a resource for two other works: in the *Four Square Dances* for sax quartet, 1991, the "four square," refers to the magic square of the *I Ching*, but the rhythmic emphasis in the piece derives from the idea of "square dancing." The *Seasons According to I Ching* for sinfonietta, 1994, has four movements with mythical connotations suggested by the subtitles: "Spring -

⁸²Described by Hegaard in Ivar Frounberg's interview, "Man kan gå på tonerne," *Dansk Musik Tidsskrift* 61, 2 (1986/87): 72-8.

The Thunder. The Wind," "Summer - The Sun. The Earth," "Autumn - The Lake. Heaven," "Winter - The Abyss. The Mountain."

Ivar Frounberg (1950-)

The concentration on sonority in his professional training (solo class '1976), and work as an organist (until 1983), contributed to Ivar Frounberg's preparation as a composer of electro-acoustic and computer music. He taught composition in this area at the Royal Academy of Music in Copenhagen starting in 1986. In 2000 he accepted a position at the Norwegian State Academy of Music in Oslo.

Frounberg's study of composition began with private lessons under Niels Viggo Bentzon in the early 1970s and continued with Ib Nørholm at the Royal Academy in Copenhagen from 1978 to 1986, the year of his debut. Two interludes in this study were consequential for Frounberg's approach to composition. In 1979 he took a short course of lessons with Iannis Xenakis in Siena (and visited Giacinto Scelsi in Rome), and in 1980-81 he studied with Morton Feldman at the University of Buffalo in New York. Frounberg has fully embraced these composers' interests: music as abstract structure, respectively, musical sounds as independent structural elements.

Initially, Frounberg worked with strict order: *Drei Klang* for three woodwinds (flute, oboe, clarinet) and three strings (viola, cello, bass), 1982, is based on material from three chords and is in three sections. The first two sections are identical, except that in the second one, all elements from the first one are

reversed; thus high notes in the first are exchanged for low ones in the second, winds are exchanged with strings, long progressions are exchanged for short ones, and so on. A large work for orchestra, *Multiple Forms*, 1986, might be understood as an extension of this kind of thought, for it calls for five different orchestra groups, namely, 1) three flutes, three oboes, three clarinets, six violas, four string basses; 2) two bassoons, four horns, six cellos; 3) three trumpets and three trombones; 4) vibraphone, marimba, celesta, harp, piano; 5) eighteen violins. These forces produce constellations of sound that constantly change as the instrumental groups interact and confront each other in distinct events.

Other chamber and orchestral works followed, *D* for violin and viola, 1986, *Other Echoes Inhabit the Garden* for orchestra, 1988, but work with electronic resources became increasingly important, beginning with *Embryo* for amplified violin, string trio, piano, synthesizer and tape, 1985. Here the composer uses an unordered hexachord, which prefigures his subsequent development of internal themes derived from the relationships of unordered elements. In the ensuing years Frounberg developed compositional processes using electro-acoustical materials, first working with MIDI (*At the Stillpoint of the Turning World*, 1988), then turning to the computer as both a tool for composition and an instrument in the orchestra. *What did the Sirens Sing as Ulysses sailed by?*, 1989, is the first truly large-scale work composed for computer in Denmark. This work's open form and two sets of mixing instructions, different for the radio audience and for the live audience, allude to

the ultimate elusiveness of the sirens' song: chances are that the music will never be heard the same twice.

As a teacher of computer music at the Royal Academy in Copenhagen, Frounberg was one of the leading advocates for the exploration of contemporary computer technology in composition but his explorations have taken him far beyond the consideration of the computer as a mere tool or instrument. In an essay from 1997 entitled, "A look back in three phases . . ."⁸³ Frounberg explains that in the early 1990s he began to depart from past aesthetic values, and toward the end of the decade he arrived at the full realization that for him, form as an organizing element had lost viability. This resulted in his move away from the traditional concept of music. Taking chaos as a new point of departure, he set the goal of creating completely unique works by means of filtering; consequently, he adopted the new concept of "sound art" (*lydkunst*). Since 1994, this new orientation has found expression in a changing concept of the role of the computer: from the generator of "sound design," as in *Ellenat*, 1996, to active "sound preparer" via Digital Signal Processing, as in *HYDRA*, 1996. Eventually, this brought along a complete transformation of the sound experience in *Fire udtryk i fire satser* (Four expressions in four movements), 1997, for solo cello. In this conceptual development Frounberg has gone farther than any other Danish composer of his generation.

⁸³"Et tilbageblik i tre faser . . .," MUSIKHØST 97, Festival for ny music, 12. - 16. nov. (Odense: Ny Musik Odense, 1997): 85-90.

Bo Holten (1948-)

A Conductor and self-taught composer, Bo Holten was one of the driving forces behind the Ars Nova vocal ensemble in the 1970s. He began to compose because of his fascination with the vocal polyphony of the Renaissance and as a result of his association with other composers, for instance, with Per Nørgård who maintained a keen interest in working closely with groups of performers. For Holten, as a skilled choral conductor (with a gift for marketing), Renaissance polyphony was a discovery that he nurtured to the group's advantage, building on the distinguished history of performance in Danish choral music that reaches back via the work of Mogens Wøldike, to that of Knud Jeppesen. In the 1970s, Ars Nova collaborated with innovative composers in working out new melodic and rhythmic ideas, and at the same time the singers devoted themselves to performing music of the then-less-known composers of the Renaissance, making the names of Pierre de la Rue, Gombert, Dufay, Ockegehm, Tallis, as familiar to audiences as that of Josquin. When Ars Nova and Holten parted ways in the 1990s, he established another group, Musica Ficta, dedicated to exploring a greater swath of musical styles, an orientation that also found expression in his participation as a leading spirit in *Den 3. Vej*, the above-mentioned third stream endeavor to unite jazz and slowly-composed music.

Holten's fascination with mixed or blended forms is fundamental to his compositional style that over the years has gained in clarity and accessibility. This is manifest in his latest works,

among them the opera, *Maria Paradis*, 1999, that was a box-office success. Holten endeavored to write *The Summers of Southern Jutland*, for amateur performers, 1993, in such a way that the "ordinary musical public could sing along from beginning to end after listening to it a couple of times."⁸⁴

This more recent work may seem quite far from Holten's strict *Tallis Variations*, 1976, or from his *Caccia*, 1979, which is built on complex canonic

principles. However, this turn in Holten's compositions does not seem so far from the more recent *Czerny Goes Mad*, a slow-motion exercise in minimalism for six percussionists (mostly playing mallets) who excavate Czerny's first exercise for piano. Holten's work list includes more than twenty works for a *cappella* choir, three operas, two symphonies, five concertos, musicals, songs, chamber music and film scores.

6. THE MIDDLE GENERATION: SECOND WAVE (BORN 1954-62)

The later group of the middle generation of today's Danish composers matured in the 1980s and early 1990s and had the advantage of being educated within a tried and finely-tuned version of the new pedagogy. They studied theory and composition with both their slightly older peers of the first wave and the older teachers of the first generation. This entailed intense preoccupation with the new evolution of ideas and theories both inside Denmark (Nørgård's "tone lakes," Rasmussen's *meta-music*, Abrahamsen's and Buck's new ideas of simplicity) and outside the country. This younger group has studied abroad and has been receptive to elements of musical languages taken from composers and movements originating outside Denmark. They are not just conversant with modernism in Darmstadt but also with the spectral music of the French composer Tristan Murail and the complexities of the Englishman Brian Ferneyhough. Even a cursory review of the principal Danish music journal, *Dansk Musik Tidsskrift*, can indicate the extent of these engagements.

However, at the time they came into their own, the once-new ideas of *meta-music*, music-about-music, pluralism, minimalism and New Simplicity, were closely identified with the ideas of

their older peers and it has been suggested that by the time the second wave grew up the modernism of the 1960s had become the classical language of the twentieth-century. Indeed, Anders Brødsgaard has identified modernism as his "roots."⁸⁵ Thus many works from the early 1990s by composers of the second wave typically reflect premises different from those of their somewhat older contemporaries; the younger ones unhesitatingly take up electronic resources, computers, fractals, extreme complexity.

Many compositions by the younger group dispense with any kind of narrative and any affinity with the other arts. One reviewer remarked that a number of works in the first years of the 1990s were concerned with certain shared ideas: lack of simultaneity, layers of heterogeneous time (measured with accelerandos and decelerandos), and spacial sensations (superharmonic and subharmonic).⁸⁶ Frequently these works are in one movement and have titles that indicate something specific but are accessible only on an imaginary plane: inner voices; time in the world of the dinosaurs; blurred landscapes.

In their own commentaries these composers often express fascination with the internal workings of the compositional process itself. That they

⁸⁴Quoted in Anders Beyer, "Friktion," *Dansk Musik Tidsskrift* 70, 2 (1995/96): 37.

⁸⁵Søren Hallundbæk Schausen "Med rødder i modernismen: Et portræt af komponisten Anders Brødsgaard," *Dansk Musik Tidsskrift* 70, 2 (1995/96): 38-45.

⁸⁶Jens Hesselager in his review of Svend Hvidtfelt Nielsen's music on the CD *Into the Black*, in "Nye Plader," *Dansk Musik Tidsskrift* 72, 7 (1997/98): 238.