

LAWO  
CLASSICS

HENRIK  
HELLSTENIUS

OPHELIA:  
DEATH BY WATER  
SINGING

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## OPHELIA I OPPLØYSING

Librettist Cecilie Løveid har til dette verket teke den danske myten om Hamlet og Shakespeare sitt skodespel med same namn – og fjerna stort sett alle menn. Ho har også fjerna mange ord. Shakespeare sin djupsindige og ytringssterke grublar er blitt ein nokså stotrande figur, og i musikken understrekar komponisten dette skjøre. Hamlet er i grenselandet, kanskje mellom barn og vaksen, kanskje like gjerne mellom delar av sitt eige medvit.

Komponist Henrik Hellstenius let Hamlet jodla mellom stemmeleie. Prinsen vert ført i raske skifte frå ein barnsleg melodi og via talesong til fullstemt brystklang. Dermed blir han også ustabil. Om Hamlets ord er færre, er vokalregisteret blitt breitt, det reduserer og det kompliserer karakteren endå meir. Ei slik kopling mellom ord og lyd kan sjåast som ei utviding av begge uttrykksformer – i det det eine ikkje understrekar, eller einast stadfestar det andre.

Mykje handlar om å rufsa til. Der Hamlets altomfattande «To be or not to be» pirkar inn

mot kjernen av vår eksistens, blir Ophelia sitt spørsmål «Am I a Mouse?» meir ureint og subtilt. Spørsmålet vert barnleg når det musikalske peikar mot eit ekko av ein barnesong. Det har i seg noko både dyrisk og fornektande, alt etter den musikalske nyanse som kjem på: Også Ophelia pendlar mellom røynd og galskap. Med blikket til Ophelia går operaen om eit vere og eit ikkje-vere, men funderer òg på kva ein er, for kven – heilt frå starten når Ophelia står der, fast i elva og syng.

Det fanst ei utklippsbok til grunn for dette arbeidet: ei bok som samla kunst og postkort, bilete frå vekeblader, sette dei i møte mellom eksplisitt og implisitt, den kanoniserte kunsten og det meir vulgære, av pasteltonar og sterke neonfargar. Det er desse bileta eg ser føre meg i første møte med den lyden komponisten teiknar kring Ophelia, ein lyd som openbart og fysisk har struktur som vatn. Lyden rører seg som det den er; ei bylgje, det er som om den gjerne vil vera visuell; eit bilete i ei utklippsbok.

Fleire av vekebladsbileta dukkar opp i minnet når eg møter skognymfene si framferd. Også dei er dyriske og grafsar, ertar, hek-

sar kring Ophelia som midtpunkt. Nymfene rører seg over enkeltimpulsar, der abrupte enkeltstavingar frå kvar av dei er det som dannar ord og setningar. Ensemblet pulserer under i eit vell av teknisk mangfald. *Marcato, pizzicato, sul pont, spit tongue, flutter* og *breathy sounds* gjev damene eit mangfald av forkledningar, dei leikar; brytast ikkje ned, som menneska.

Mykje i verket er kontrastar. Det opplevast til dømes som eit paradoks når komponisten freistar byggja «ingenting» av tonar, slik ein kan seia han gjer i aller første scene. Her får songarane (endå utan klår personlegdom) danna par med kvart sitt instrument, og saman syng dei fraser som dei stadig byggjer opp. Og kappar av. Og startar opp på nytt, med utgangspunkt i Løveid sitt vonde imperativ om altså å vera ingenting. Men utøvarane handlar medan dei vil byggja denne tilstanden – og syner at det er vanskeleg å vera ingenting – og ingen.

Kontrastar finn ein også somme gonger mellom det som på papiret er ein kjølig, sylkvass tekst og det ein i partituret kan lesa som eit ønske om å skapa sjølv lyden av ein emosjon. Eit døme er korleis dei skumle,

men altså også tørre orda «drip, drip blood» får ein dirrande og uttalt livredd kjensle når Hamlet løftar dei i falsett. Eit anna døme finst i den enkle og konstaterande linja: «A river already a river / There's a river and there's a river already and there's already a river...». Dette er Ophelia sin aller første tekst, og ho syng mekanisk, desperat. Kortpusta og i eit ikkje-mønster vengjast nærast stemma – på ein einskild tone. Starten er slutten i dette verket. Det opnar i eit fastlåst intervall, ein avgrensa identitet, eit menneske som ikkje ser ein utveg når det møter Løveids ord. Men så følgjer nok eit paradoks: Ho rivest ut av tonen, byggjer linjer og formidlar ekspressivt om livet sitt. Det handlar nettopp om å bryta saman i ei kjernehandling: *Death by water singing*.

IDA HABBESTAD

## THE DISINTEGRATION OF OPHELIA

With this work, librettist Cecilie Løveid has taken the Danish myth of Hamlet and the Shakespeare play of the same name and virtually removed most of the men. She has also done away with many of the words. Shakespeare's deep and strongly expressive brooder has become a rather stuttering figure, with a fragility that is underscored in the music. Hamlet is in a borderline state, perhaps between adolescence and adulthood, perhaps between the parts of his consciousness.

Composer Henrik Hellstenius provides Hamlet with a wide scope of vocal articulation. The Prince's voice traverses the full range, with rapid shifts from child-like melodies through to recitatives and booming, resonant timbres. This also renders him unstable. With Hamlet's words fewer and his vocal register broader, it reduces and it complicates the character even further. Such a connection between words and sounds can be seen as an extension of both forms of expression, neither emphasising nor confirming each other.

A lot of this is about making waves. Where Hamlet's all embracing "To be or not to be" points right into the core of our existence, Ophelia's question "Am I a mouse?" is more taboo and subtle. Her question becomes somewhat more naive when the accompanying musical expression echoes that of a children's song. The musical nuances bring forward her self-denial and animalism. Ophelia vacillates between relative lucidity and madness. With focus on Ophelia, right from the start when she is standing in the river singing, the opera goes further than the mere *to be or not to be* question, touching on what one *is*, and for *whom*.

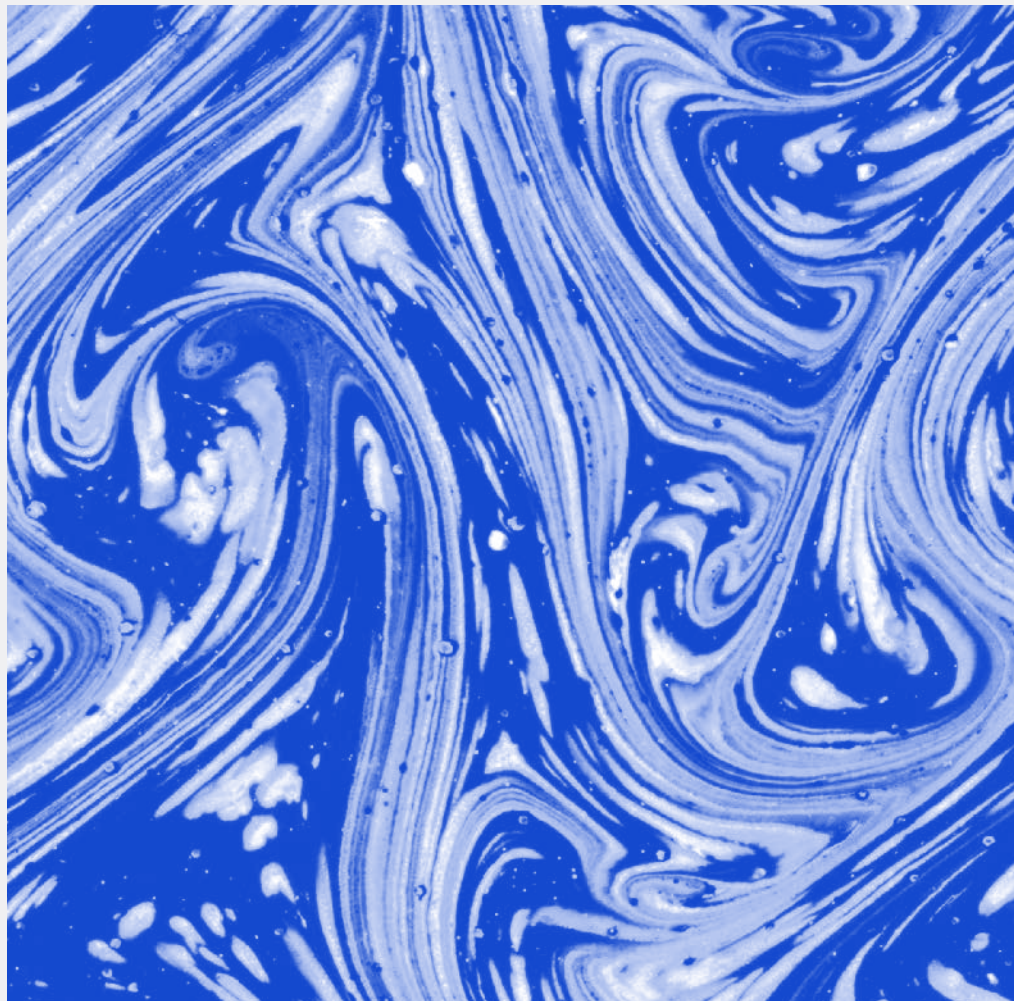
It is as if a scrapbook is the basis for this work, one that collects art, postcards and clippings from newspapers and arranges them together between the explicit and implicit, the venerated art forms with the more vulgar, and of pastel colours with strong vivid colours. It is these images I see that lead me through my first encounter with the sounds that the composer creates around Ophelia, sounds that are clearly inspired by water. The sound moves along like a rolling wave. It wants to be visual, as if it were an image in a scrapbook.

When I first meet the forest nymphs and the way they behave, I am reminded of images from weekly gossip magazines. These woodmaidens are also animal-like, snatching, teasing and cajoling around Ophelia. The nymphs move in impulses, where abrupt single utterances from each of them form the words and sentences. The ensemble pulsates under a multitude of technical terms. *Marcato, pizzicato, sul pont, spit tongue, flutter and breathy sounds* provide the women with a wealth of different guises. They are mercilessly playful, and unlike humans, cannot be broken down.

This is largely a work of contrasts. Paradox is experienced in the very first scene when Hellstenius is tempted to build a tonal "nothingness". Here the songstresses (still not yet given their identities) form in pairs with their own instrument and together sing the phrases they gradually build up, then cut out and start up again, in tune with Løveid's painfully nihilistic imperative. However, the performers move around while building up this aspect, illustrating that it is hard to be nothing, or no-one.

Contrasts are also found in what on paper reads like a frosty, acerbic script, but whose score on manuscript can be seen as an attempt to create the sound of an emotion. One example of this is how the chilling but also dry words "drip, drip blood" are given a tremulous and clearly terrified sensitivity when Hamlet sings them in falsetto. In another instance, there is the simple, self-evident line: "A river already a river / There's a river and there's a river already and there's already a river..." These are Ophelia's very first words, which she sings mechanically and desperately with short breaths and in a linear, distorted voice on one note. In this oeuvre, the beginning is the end. It opens with a deadlocked interval, a constrained identity, a person who does not see any way out when met with Løveid's words. And herein lies yet another paradox. Ophelia breaks out of her monotone and then builds up her lines and expressively begins to convey stories about her life. This expresses the core theme of her disintegration: *Death by water singing*.

IDA HABBESTAD



CECILIE LØVEID  
AND HENRIK HELLSTENIUS

OPHELIA:  
DEATH BY WATER  
SINGING

A LIBRETTO

RECASTING:  
OPHELIA  
HAMLET  
GERTRUDE

INTRODUCING:  
THE WOODMAIDENS

**OPHELIA'S:  
DEATH BY WATER SINGING**

**INTRO** – while the audience enters the hall  
*The King moves around on the stage in darkness.*

**SCENE 1 – Let's be hopeless**

*Cataract roar, water. Feeling of space, landscape, as well as a clean inside room.  
Contemporary young woman. Contemporary mature woman & young man.  
Young woman fills a tube with water. Thinking of both bath tub and the morgue. It takes its  
time. The tub is transparent. The young man lights a light bulb. It shines through the water.*

**ALL** (in a cacophony of voices)

Let's be hopeless  
Let's be objects  
Let's be things  
Let's be things  
You can handle  
Let's be things  
You can know  
Let's be no-one  
Let's be nothing  
Let's be hopeless  
Let's be without  
Let's be dreamers  
Let's be hopeless

Hey thing!  
Hey thing!

SCENE 1

You are so ...  
You are so without  
You are nothing  
You are nothing  
You are so ...  
Without

**ALL** (together) Hey!

**ALL** (repeated in a cacophony of voices)

Hey thing! Let's be objects

**ALL** (together) Hey!

**ALL** (repeated in a cacophony of voices)

Hey thing!

Let's be objects

+ + + +

**SCENE 2 – Already a river**  
*Skull singing down the river.*

**ALL** (together)

Hey!

Thing!

**OPHELIA**

A River

Already a River

There's a River

And there's a River

Already

SCENE 2



And There's already a River  
And There's already a River  
A River  
Already  
My my my River  
My my Silence  
The same river  
The same silence  
It's the same  
It's the same  
It's the same  
River  
It's the same silence  
River, my river  
My river  
Was already was  
It is not it is not  
It is not the same  
It is another another another  
World  
It's another world  
It's another river  
Already a river  
Still another river  
It's not the same river  
It's already not the river  
It's not the same river  
Already not the same river  
Still it's not my river

SCENE 2

It's already not the same river  
It's already not still my  
Not my river  
My silence my river my silence my river my  
Love

Why?  
My love  
Why?  
My love  
My river  
My river true  
My river Green  
My river Blue  
Silence  
My river  
True  
My love  
I am already  
The river  
Rest

*The cast present themselves.*

**GERTRUDE**  
I am Gertrude, the Queen

*HAMLET appears, swinging his sword.*

SCENE 2

**WOODMAIDENS**

Hamlet  
Hamlet  
Hamlet is here

**OPHELIA**

I am Ophelia  
I am Ophelia

**WOODMAIDENS**

We are the woodmaidens  
We are the woodmaidens

+ + + +

**SCENE 3 – Hi, Ophelia!**

*Boat to Elsinore. OPHELIA sits alone. Suddenly the WOODMAIDENS arrive, dressed up in the latest fashion.*

**WOODMAIDENS**

Hi!  
Hm  
Hi!  
Hi!  
Ophelia!  
Await and Await  
For the love and the lover  
And wait to be wife  
And wait for the waves

And wait for the waves  
And wait to be wife  
And for the Lovely Nights  
Waiting for the love and the Lover

*OPHELIA does not answer, they go on chatting, go further into a play with words.*

**WOODMAIDENS**

No Angel  
No Angel  
No Angel  
No death  
No death  
Just a Ghost  
Just a Ghost  
No Ghost  
No Ghost, just a Doormat  
No Doormat  
Just a Dormouse  
Just a woman  
Just a-cry Closer  
Not a Cock just a Suck fulfilled  
Just a Sweet sixteen  
Wants to be a Queen  
No mouse  
No queen  
No mouse  
No queen  
She is

**WOODMAIDENS**

//: Just a woman  
A woman ://

*OPHELIA sits listening in silence. The boat arrives at Kronborg castle.  
Dances out.*

*GERTRUDE in the castle alone after guests, drunk.*

**GERTRUD**

Sea Zig Zaw Sea Zig Zaw Sea  
Saw Zig Zaw Sea (etc.)  
Zig Zag in the house  
In the Zig Zag in the house  
O Valiant Hamlet  
See the black staircase  
zig zag in the house  
See this great green funeral meats  
On the table  
The black tiles  
The black books  
The black bed  
The black tiles  
The black bread  
This pouring and leaking  
Stones  
Sculptures  
Furnitures  
This black pouring and leaking

SCENE 3

The black staircase  
The pouring and leaking  
Zig zag in the Castle  
Happy is the one that has no home  
Happy is the one that has no home  
Happy is the one that has no!

+ + +

**SCENE 4 – I am a mouse**

*By the river. OPHELIA is bathing, idyll, birds singing, HAMLET comes by,  
observes her secretly.*

**OPHELIA**

Am I a Mouse  
Am I a Monkey  
The little Mountain  
The big Sky  
Am I a Mouse  
I am a Donkey  
Am I a Monkey  
Am I the blue Sky  
Am I a Mountain  
La la la la  
I don't know why OPHELIA  
I am a mouse  
I am a monkey  
The high high mountain  
The big big big sky

SCENE 4



La la la la la  
I don't know why

**HAMLET**  
Not just your hands  
Not just your eyes, your eyes  
My desire

**OPHELIA**  
I am a mouse

**WOODMAIDENS**  
His desire

I am a monkey  
The little mountain  
The big big big sky

She is a sheep

**HAMLET**  
You're my happy singing  
You're my happy happy voice

La la la la la la

**WOODMAIDENS**  
She is a sheep

I am a mouse

**HAMLET + WOODMAIDENS**  
Limb lamb chops

I am a monkey

**HAMLET**  
You're my singing  
Space

The little mountain

**WOODMAIDENS**  
Limb lamb chop

The big big sky

SCENE 4

**HAMLET**  
You're my happy happy voice

**OPHELIA**  
La la la la la

**HAMLET + WOODMAIDENS**  
Limb lamb chops

What?  
Is there anybody?

*OPHELIA discovers a skull in the grass.*

**HAMLET**  
I can see you tremble  
Space Space Space  
When can we embrace

**WOODMAIDENS**  
She does not want  
to do

+ + + +

#### SCENE 5 – Rainbows

*GERTRUDE in Castle alone. Clean but very low and distorted.  
The WOODMAIDENS imitate sounds from GERTRUDE.*

**TAPE VOICE**  
Rainbows  
Ice  
Heath  
Or running water

**GERTRUDE**  
Rainbows

In autumn leaves

Ice  
Heath  
Running water  
Leaves  
On the pool  
Winter came

And when the winter came

SCENE 5

The water froze

Where the cherry blossom  
Comes out  
A month later

**WOODMAIDENS**

The little  
The big big sky

Ice hung from the trees

Comes out  
Later

**OPHELIA**

I am a mouse  
I am a monkey

The little mountain  
The big big sky  
I am a mouse

I am a donkey  
I am a sweet anus venus  
I'm an anus venus

The only things I am religious about I don't know why  
Are drinking lots of water and  
Using Sunscreen

+ + + +

**SCENE 6 – The drip of blood**

*Night, morning, fog.*

*Fog lifts, a murder is about to take place:*

*HAMLET is approaching the King to kill him.*

**HAMLET**

Drip drip blood  
Drip drip blood  
In the midst of the fields

In the midst of the night

This place melts away

The drip  
The drop  
The drip  
The spill  
The spill  
The Spell  
Of blood

Doomed  
To silence  
To silence

*The WOODMAIDENS get in-between.*

**WOODMAIDENS**

Step back  
Step back  
Step back  
You can still have your fun  
You can still have your fun  
You can still have your fun  
Step back  
Step back  
Step back  
You can still have your fun  
You can still have your fun!

**SCENE 7 – On a windy day**

*Open landscape by the sea. OPHELIA by the sea.*

**OPHELIA**

Close to the Sea  
On a windy day  
Very little to do  
But read  
Will I ever be Prince Hamlet's wife?  
Looking into the Sun  
Exposed by the Tide  
Here and there  
Here and there  
The Sea and the high high Cliffs  
Sometime inaccessible Beaches  
Sometime places  
Where the Sea the Sea  
can be  
Approached

**GERTRUDE + WOODMAIDENS**

From a queen to the would-be-queen  
And to the daughter I never had

*She is showing us a slide album.*

**GERTRUDE**

Here is a monkey climbing a tree  
The tree again  
A monkey again  
She is one of a kind creation  
Supported by wires  
With no use of moulds

Her features are all hand-painted  
Her hair is hand-dyed mohair  
She has beautifully detailed hands and feet  
She is expected  
To recline  
On her back  
And gaze at the sky

**GERTRUDE + WOODMAIDENS**

I am (she is) Gertrude  
Silly and shallow  
Like a sheep in the sun

**GERTRUD**

My Son my Sun oh my Son and my Sun  
I am worn out  
I'm like a jewel on my first husband's finger  
From the queen...

**OPHELIA + GERTRUDE**

Very little else to do  
But read  
Will I (you) ever be Prince Hamlet's wife

**OPHELIA**

Very little else to do  
But read  
Am I really supposed to be  
A girl all my life  
Will I ever be  
Prince Hamlet's wife



**SCENE 8 – The black prince is back**

*Lots of pictures of hunters riding. HAMLET is also on a hunt. The fog comes, suddenly he finds himself outside the house of the WOODMAIDENS.*

**WOODMAIDENS**

Hamlet is hunting in the woods  
He enters a fog  
Suddenly he is outside this house  
OOOOOO!  
The Prince, the black Prince is back!  
Ack!  
Ack!  
Ack!  
Quack!  
How black  
Smack  
Ham, Ham, Hamlet  
Hamlet is here ladies  
We have a Love-forecast for you!

**HAMLET**  
What?  
Love-forecast?  
Who are you?

We are the Woodmaidens  
We know the arts of Magic  
The arts of Magic  
The arts of War  
The arts of Victory  
The arts of Silence

We have a Love-forecast for you  
The young Ophelia

**HAMLET**  
My heart is set on fire

The young Ophelia  
The Monkey?  
The Bird?  
The Donkey?  
Or the little Cat too?

She is too young  
She is a Monkey  
She is a Mouse  
She is an Ass-Donkey  
She is a Virgin

I am kindled by her fair  
and lustrous body  
Not just her eyes...

She is too young  
She is a Monkey  
She is a Donkey

Her hands  
The drips of Water  
I want this love  
Might not be delayed  
In the enjoyment of its desire

She is no child  
Not an infant anymore

No child!  
Does she go  
Does she go all the way?

Reverend Hamlet was troubled by  
The sight of Ophelia bathing, hi hi  
And was seized by  
Boundless Love



Boundless Love  
How lovely!  
Like Musicke of diuision  
What should we think  
Brightness of beauty  
Boundless Love  
His heart's on fire  
Like Musicke of diuision  
Brightness of beauty

**HAMLET + WOODMAIDENS**

Boundless Love  
My (His) heart's on fire

*From the castle GERTRUDE is dressing up OPHELIA.*

**GERTRUDE**

The dress is a splendid lady's  
An ancient dress  
All flowered over  
In silver embroidery  
Ophelia!  
Do you go  
All the way  
All the way  
Ophelia!  
Old and dirty  
But rather good  
The dress belongs to a splendid lady  
Oh valiant Hamlet

**HAMLET**

Does she go all the way?  
Does she go all the way?

SCENE 8

**WOODMAIDENS**

Speed speed speed speed Hamlet  
Lay your hand upon  
a food  
of extraordinary  
Delightsomeness  
Hamlet  
Speed speed speed  
Speed speed speed speed Hamlet

+ + + +

**SCENE 9 – I tremble and listen**

**HAMLET with sword**

I tremble and listen  
No mouse is stirring  
The night has grown late  
I gird my armour on

Does she go all the way?

This place melts away

I can see you tremble  
See you tremble  
Space

When can we  
embrace

When can we  
embrace

And worthy of immortal fame  
Who being armed  
Shrewdly armed  
With a feint of folly  
Covered with wisdom too high for human wit  
Under a marvelous disguise  
Of silliness  
Silliness  
Get dressed to  
Silliness

Ophelia  
The second  
lady in the land  
A toy in blood  
An ever crying stone  
Break my heart  
Break my heart

SCENE 9

*OPHELIA is taken through the woods, the blindfold is taken off, and instead she is given a mask. She is left alone posing on a lovely bed in the middle of the woods. The wolves howling, trolls and all kinds of beasts, old fashioned fairytale.*

*HAMLET enters.*

**OPHELIA**

Oh my Lord  
I tremble and listen

I have been so afraid

I am ready

Melting into I

am melting into green

I  
am ready  
I am melting into the  
I  
Click click click I

Melting into I

**HAMLET**

Not just your hands  
Not just your eyes

Act as you do not know me

I tremble and listen

Little snow white  
Little snow green  
Little snow blue  
Little snow red

I am Silly-Tom sometimes  
I float along the floor like  
Icebergs  
I have something for you for  
Joy click click click

Sometimes I bang my head  
against the tree

am melting into  
Me

Melting into  
You

**WOODMAIDENS**

*in the background*

//: This night she will never forget  
She just wants to be herself  
The girl who wanted to do  
The impossible  
She was transformed  
Into an animal  
She had never been before  
A woman ://

Strong  
Weak  
Seductive  
Inadequate  
Oppressed  
What about Virginal, is it old fashioned?

*Cuts from porn film on Hamlet at Elsinore is shown, in a twisted version.*

**OPHELIA**

I am melting  
You pass away Love  
The world  
Is your

**HAMLET**

Go to a nunnery!  
Little Ladyfinger

Dreaming silver leafs  
Brick sand silk  
Marble birds milk  
Wooden mountain  
With glass sky  
Everything fountain  
You and I

And your little mouse  
too!

I hope it can be

Handled  
Discreetly  
Swear!

I swear  
This is in my memory locked  
And you  
Yourself shall keep  
Saving it for eternity

Swear!  
And I and you  
The key of it  
Saving it for eternity

I am linked forever  
Like a willow  
Made of stone  
I will wait for you

Wait for me  
Wait for me  
Wait for me

+ + + +

#### SCENE 10 – Where are you?

*The WOODMAIDENS are playing the mouth harp.*

**OPHELIA**

I am here  
Where are you

SCENE 10

Reverend you?  
The animals  
I am here  
Where are you?  
A river  
Already a river  
There's a river  
And there's a river  
Already and there's already a river  
A river and there's already my, my, my river  
My, my, my, my River  
My, my silence  
My, my silence

La la la la la  
I am Ophelia  
I am Ophelia  
Where are you?

+ + + +

#### SCENE 11 – Murder and waiting

*HAMLET kills the king.*

**HAMLET**

Drip drip blood.  
Drip drip blood  
In the midst of the fields in the midst of the night

SCENE 11



This place melts away  
I can see you tremble see you tremble.  
Space  
When can we embrace?

*OPHELIA is waiting and singing ornamental figures: winter/ spring time/ autumn  
The glass tube fills with water, they put flowers in the water. OPHELIA is waiting  
in a very uncomfortable way, like she tries to be in the river.*

**OPHELIA**  
A –

*Words divided among the*  
**WOODMAIDENS**  
Get thee to a nunnery, said He  
And be free  
Free to sing  
Or to die?  
A rose and a candle  
Be the queen of Water  
Of Valentine's day  
The Birds will  
Meet their valentines,  
Will she  
Will she meet the love  
//: And the lover  
And the love ://

**WOODMAIDENS I & II**  
Get thee to a nunnery, said He  
And be free to sing  
Poor Ophelia

**WOODMAIDEN III**  
Play music along with it

**OPHELIA**  
No  
Speak no more  
I do not believe you  
This can not be  
This can't be

Divided from herself  
And her fair judgement  
Without that we are  
Pictures

She feels too much  
Sweet graceful Ophelia

He has killed The King my Lady  
Murd'ring the King  
Your lover has murdered his father  
The Prince  
Cut him in pieces  
And gave it  
To the swine

By accident

Gave it to the

Swine

Tell her!

Tell! Tell her the news.

By accident – he took him to  
Be the big swine – I mean he took him  
to be the King.

I mean he was not a swine but a king  
No he was not, he just  
It was by accident the King my dear  
Lady Willow



**SCENE 12 – To get bigger eyes**

*OPHELIA enters in a long veil, pregnant, with scattered wisps of straw in her hair.  
Spreading the veil on the ground and while singing, she spreads flowers upon it in the  
shape of a cross, as to make her father's grave, and mimes a burial.*

**OPHELIA + WOODMAIDENS**

To get bigger eyes  
Get big eyes  
I put on a falconer's glove  
I send my falcon  
Into the sky  
The blue sky  
The falcon kills doves  
And the falcon eats doves  
Before my eyes  
And it places the dove rings  
Before my feet  
As empty wedding rings

**RECORDED VOICE**

Rainbows  
Ice  
Or running water

The water froze  
And icicles hung

**GERTRUDE**

Look at my hands  
Look at my hands

from my fingers

**GERTRUDE + HAMLET**

Happy is the one that has no lover

Happy is the one that has no home

Happy is the one that has no home

Happy is the one that has no son  
When I mount  
The zig zag stairs  
I'm like a star cloud  
How heavy this cloud is!

The black tiles  
The black bed  
The murky fucking  
A cold battlement  
Of luxury of cold incest

The black curtains  
The black candles  
The incestuous sheets

Happy is the one that has no home

The black staircase in the house  
Don't search for something  
That may not occur

Happy is the one that has no home

Happy is the one that has no home

**SCENE 13 – I'm a little happy**

*Outside the castle. HAMLET arrives from England in a boat with the company of two beautiful women: The Princess of England and the Queen of Scotland – both his mistresses and wives. OPHELIA, pregnant, in Wellington boots, is climbing a willow tree over the river. She is hanging gifts for HAMLET from the branches...*

**OPHELIA** *like a false, sad echo sounding of something passed*

I am a Mouse

I am a Monkey

The little Mountain

The big big Sky

I am a Mouse

I am a Monkey

The little Mountain

The big big Sky

I am Ophelia

I am a little...happy

*HAMLET and GERTRUDE are observing the dead OPHELIA.*

**HAMLET + GERTRUDE**

Opaque skin

She was dressed in the

Slimy clay

Struggling for freeing herself

Dressed only in the slimy clay

Slipping Slippery

Falling Muddy

Slipping Struggling

Falling Slippery clay

Struggling to free herself

Opaque skin

Body parts

Cropped by the moving

Light of Water

**WOODMAIDENS**

//:Your love has

Drown'd my

Prince drown'd

Your love my Prince

Your little snow white

Little snow blue

Your little

She has drown'd

Little snow white

Where is your winter

Where is your spring

No more tears://

**HAMLET**

Little snow white

Where is your winter

Where is your spring

Winter no more

No more tears, climbing trees

No more tears

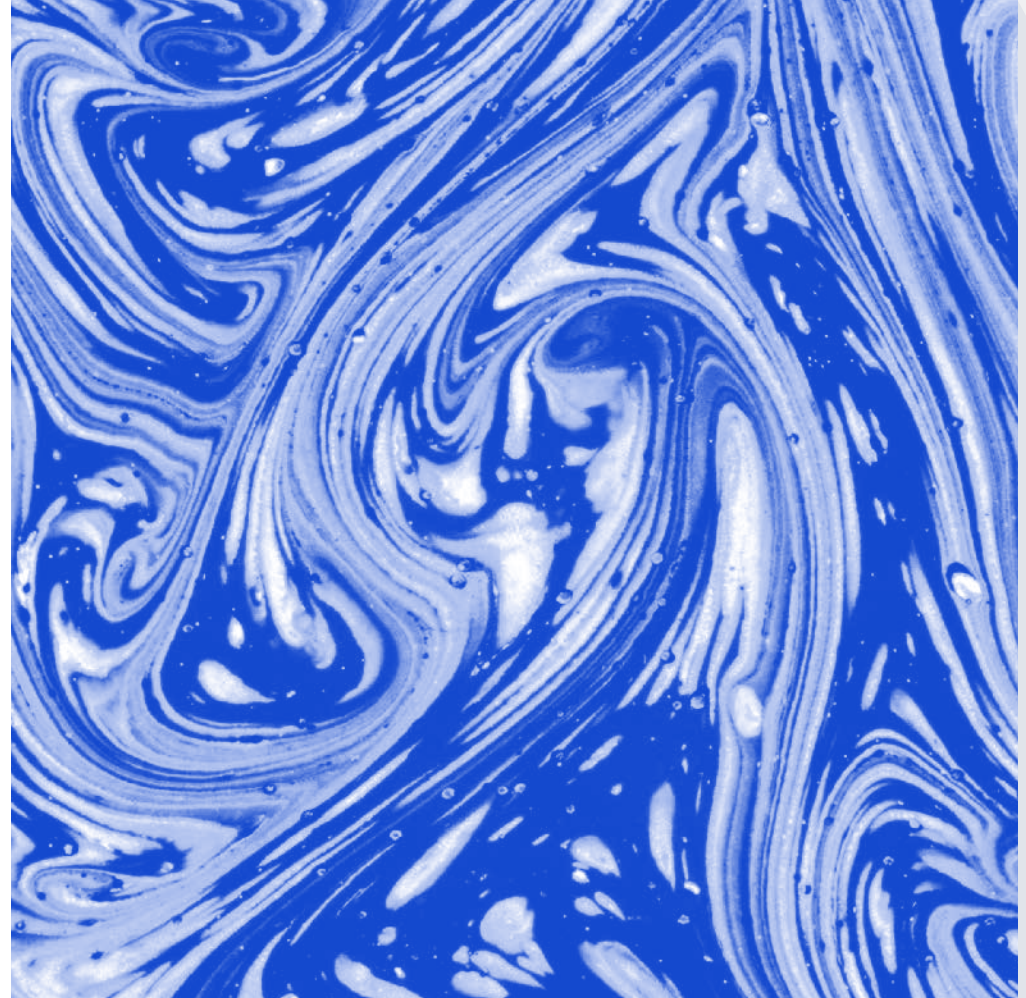
No more tears

## THE END

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THIS LIBRETTO BRIMS WITH ELEMENTS FROM OTHER WRITTEN SOURCES SUCH AS *THE MYTH OF AMLED*, *PRINCE OF DENMARK*, BY SAXO GRAMMATICUS, SHAKESPEARS *HAMLET*, AND THE VICTORIAN PICTORIAL VERSIONS, SUCH AS MILLAIS' PAINTING (*OPHELIA*, 1851–52), MILLAIS' SITUATION WHEN HE PAINTED THE PICTURE, AS WELL AS MODERN OPHELIAS, SUCH AS PHOTOS BY TOM HUNTER (*THE WAY HOME*, 2000), GREGORY CREWDSON (*UNTITLED [OPHELIA]*, 2001), GERHARD RICHTER (*OPHELIA*, ABSTRACT PAINTING).

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**HENRIK**  
**HELLSTENIUS**  
**COMPOSER**

Henrik Hellstenius (b. 1963) studied Musicology at the University of Oslo and then later Composition with Lasse Thoresen at the Norwegian Academy of Music. In 1992-93 he studied with Gérard Grisey at the Paris Conservatoire, as well as computer-assisted composition at IRCAM.

Hellstenius' output encompasses a broad range of works: chamber music, orchestral works, operas, instrumental theatre works, music for dance and staged concerts. His music is frequently performed at concerts and festivals around the world. His opera *Sera* received the Norwegian Edvard Award in 2000, and has been staged in Oslo and Warsaw. His second opera, *Ophelias: Death by Water Singing* was premiered in Oslo in 2005 and staged in Poland, Norway and Germany. He has been the Composer in Residence with the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra. Henrik Hellstenius is also a Professor of Composition at the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo.

[www.hellstenius.no](http://www.hellstenius.no)





**CECILIE  
LØVEID  
LIBRETTIST**

Cecilie Løveid was born in Mysen in 1951 and lives in Bergen, where she grew up, after a 26 year long period of living in Oslo and Copenhagen. Aside from being a writer, she works as a writing teacher at the Writer's Academy of Hordaland.

Løveid made her literary debut in 1972 and her body of work includes novels, poetry, drama, opera libretti, children's books and written composition for performance art. Her plays have been performed numerous times at home and abroad, in theaters and on radio and television. She has also performed in her own productions and collaborated with several composers and artists.

Her works for the stage include *Vinteren revner* (1982), *Balansedame* (1985) and *Dobbel nytelse* (1988), while her work *Fornuftige dyr* (1986) has been performed on stage, as well as television and radio. She wrote the libretto for the opera *DUSJ 1 opera for 2*, which was performed at the Bergen International Festival in 1984, as well as the stage performance *Badehuset* (1990).

Among her major oeuvres are the three thematically interconnected historical plays *Barock Friise* (1993), *Maria Q* (1994) and *Rhindøtrene* (1996), where Løveid portrays the role of modern women in a historical light (with music by Henrik Hellstenius). The play *Østerrike* (1998) is a dialogue between Ibsen's Brand and Ludwig Wittgenstein's life and thoughts. The theme of her chamber play *Visning* (2005, premiered at the National Theatre in 2014) is built around the viewing of a house for sale.

Cecilie Løveid was appointed the role of Festival Poet at the Bergen International Festival in 1991, and has served on the Literary Council of the Norwegian Association of Authors as well as the Drama council of the Writers' Guild of Norway and has been a Norwegian representative at the Biennale in Bonn.



**ELISABETH  
HOLMERTZ  
SOPRANO**  
OPHELIA

Elisabeth Holmertz is a classically trained soprano who began singing so-called "early music" at the beginning of the '90s and contemporary music at the end of the same decade and has, since then, distinguished herself as one of Scandinavia's boldest interpreters in both fields.

She mixes genres, styles and expressions; one day lute songs, the second day pop music, the third day avantgarde performance and experimental opera, the fourth day maybe an oratorium.

Elisabeth collaborates with and has performed music by some of the most successful composers of today: Rolf Wallin, Tansy Davies, Maja S.K. Ratkje, Georg Friedrich Haas, Helmut Lachenmann and others.

Among the numerous ensembles and orchestras she's been a soloist with are Concerto Copenhagen (DK), Cikada Ensemble (NO), the Norwegian Radio Orchestra, the Danish National Chamber Orchestra and the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra.

The list of artists she has worked with is long and contains both folk musicians, classical musicians and jazz musicians. Pianist Kenneth Karlsson, lute player Fredrik Bock, and Poul Høxbro, flute player and percussionist, are some of the musicians she works with on a regular basis. She has previously released two CDs with Fredrik Bock on the LAWO Classics label, one of them with contributions from Poul Høxbro.

She is also co-founder of the group Odd Size, famed for its interpretations of, amongst other pieces, their version of Handel's *Messiah* with just four musicians.

Her main education began in Oslo at the State academy of Music, where she studied with Prof. Barbro Marklund-Petersøne, and ended with a Konzertexamen in Cologne 2004. Her teacher at that time was Prof. Barbara Schlick.

Her home address is in Oslo, but Elisabeth feels equally at home in Gothenburg, Copenhagen and the rest of the world.

Most important is the music.

**TORA  
AUGESTAD  
MEZZO-SOPRANO**  
GERTRUDE

"Tora Augestad is far more than an academically trained singer. She lives and suffers through her songs, taking her vocal and theatrical capabilities to the max."

– Mitteldeutsche Zeitung

Tora Augestad's versatility inspires composers, theatre directors, and conductors. Through commissioning new works and collaborations with her various ensembles, she continuously seeks new challenges and the exchange of artistic ideas. She is capable of being theatrically convincing in an appropriate and compelling manner while engaging her vocal abilities, which defy easy classification.

Born in Bergen in 1979, singer/actress Tora Augestad studied classical music as well as jazz, singing in Oslo and Stockholm, devoting herself principally to repertoire of the 20th and 21st centuries. She holds a master degree in cabaret singing from the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo.

Since then, Tora Augestad has become a regular guest in the opera houses, concert halls, and theatres of her native Norway and in the rest of Europe, sharing the podium with musical partners such as the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, Ensemble Modern (the *Three Penny Opera* under the direction of HK Gruber in Athens, and Benedict Mason's *Chaplin Operas* in Dresden, Baden-Baden, Salzburg and Strasbourg), the Oslo Sinfonietta (*Pierrot Lunaire* at the Chamber Music Festival in Oslo, and Christian Eggen's opera *Eine Bitte* at the Venice Biennale), Ensemble Contrechamps (*No Thanks* by Evan Gardner), and the Klangforum Wien (Grisey's *Quatre Chants pour franchir le seuil*, conducted by Sylvain Cambreling in the Vienna Konzerthaus). In 2014 she world premiered Hellstenius' hour long piece *Loven* with the Oslo Philharmonic.

Augestad has toured theater and opera stages throughout Europe in the last years as part of her collaboration with Swiss star-director Christoph Marthaler. She is the vocalist in the ensemble Music for a while and joint Artistic Director of Hardanger Music Festival. In 2015 she was nominated for the Nordic Council Music Prize.

**IVAN  
LUDLOW**

**BARITONE**  
HAMLET

Born in London, Ivan Ludlow attended the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the National Opera Studio. He is a regular guest at some of Europe's most prestigious opera venues, including Brussels, Salzburg Festival, Naples, Spoleto, Paris, Lyon, Athens, Toulouse, Welsh National Opera, Strasbourg, Marseille, Bordeaux, Metz, Casa da Musica (Porto), Vlaamse Oper (Antwerp), Lausanne. He has worked with an array of conductors such as Christophe Rousset, Adam Fischer, Jan Latham Koenig, Jean-Yves Ossonce, Cyril Diedrich, Franck Ollu, Christoph Ullrich Meyer, Ludovic Morlot, Gerard Korsten and Gustav Kuhn. He has sung many roles including those of Don Giovanni, Guglielmo, Onegin, Iarba (*La Didone*), Escamillo, Nevers (*Les Huguenots*), the Count (*Capriccio*), Marcello, Shadow (*The Rake's Progress*), Danilo, Belcore, Aeneas, Demetrius, Traveller (*Curlew River*), Astrologer (*Burning Fiery Furnace*), Baritone (Maxwell-Davies' *No. 11 Bus*) Le Mari (*Les Mamelles de Tiresias*).

Ivan has performed recitals throughout Europe and the United States and is often partnered by Daniel Tong, pianist of the London Bridge Ensemble. He appears in concert with orchestras such as Ensemble Modern, Remix Ensemble, Seattle Symphony, Auckland Philharmonia, Estonian Symphony, BBC Symphony, Le Parlement de Musique, Orquestra Nacional do Porto, Il Seminario Musicale and Divino Sospiero.

Ivan is particularly interested in new music and new artistic forms. He has recently performed world premieres of pieces by Francesco Fillidei, Isidora Zebeljan and David Matthews as well as taking part in performances of music by Heinz Holliger, Wolfgang Rihm, Harrison Birtwistle and Peter Maxwell-Davies. His Brussels based company Room7 look for innovative ways to perform both contemporary and classical opera and music theatre often approaching works more as art installations/events than theatrical set pieces.

He has recorded for Hyperion (complete Poulenc Songs with Graham Johnson), Sonimage (Faure and Schumann discs with LBE), Dutton (Bridge songs with LBE). His DVD appearances include *La Veuve Joyeuse* from Opera de Lyon and *Lulu* from La Monnaie.

**SILJE  
AKER JOHNSEN**

**SOPRANO**  
WOODMAIDEN

Silje Aker Johnsen was educated at the Grieg Academy of Music in Bergen, Universität der Künste, Berlin and holds a Master Degree in Classical Singing from the Norwegian Academy of Music, Oslo. She is now a performing Artistic Research Fellow at the Opera Academy at the Academy of Arts, Oslo. During her studies and throughout her career she has maintained a strong focus on contemporary music in addition to the baroque and classical vocal repertory. She works with a wide range of scenic expressions and performance settings.

She has interpreted such roles as *Io* in *The Io Passion* by Harrison Birtwistle with the Berliner Kammeroper in Konzerthaus Berlin as well as the female protagonist in *A Gentle Spirit* by John Tavener with the same company. Silje performed as a singer and performer at The National Theatre of Norway in the piece *I år skal det være moderne* by Liv Heloe. Recently in 2015 she took on the main female part *Mia* in the

new opera *Simon* by Gerhard Stäbler at the Norwegian Opera and Ballet.

Silje has given numerous vocal pieces their world premiere and has guested at festivals such as the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, Die Donaueschinger Musiktage, Ultima Contemporary Music Festival and the Bergen International Festival.

Silje was honoured with the title "Performer of the Year" 2013 by the Norwegian Composer's Union.

**JANNA  
VETTERGREN**  
**MEZZO-SOPRANO**  
WOODMAIDEN

Since graduating from the Royal Academy of Music in Stockholm in 2009, mezzo-soprano Janna Vettergren has sung all the great oratorios and sacred works throughout her native Sweden and Norway, from medieval to baroque and romantic. She is an accomplished interpreter of contemporary music and has participated in operas as well as featured in concerts and festivals with the leading Nordic contemporary ensembles such as BIT20 and KammarensembleN. Her many years' experience in the Swedish Radio Choir among other professional choirs makes her a keen ensemble musician.

She also runs the Stockholm Bach Society and works with several projects which aim to bring classical music to children and young people.

**EBBA  
RYDH**  
**MEZZO-SOPRANO**  
WOODMAIDEN

Ebba Rydh, mezzo-soprano, was born in Uppsala in Sweden. She moved to Oslo, Norway, in 2000 for studies at the Norwegian State Opera Academy. Since her graduation in 2003 she has worked as a freelance singer, with a special heart for the baroque and contemporary music genres and chamber music. She is a well-established soloist and has sung most of the great church masterpieces from the baroque and classical eras.

Ebba Rydh is one of six singers in the classical vocal ensemble Nordic Voices, which is one of the leading vocal ensembles in Europe in their genre. Their main focuses are renaissance and contemporary music, and they have a reputation of being fearless when it comes to experimenting with their voices.

Ebba Rydh is also the singer in SyrinEnsemble, a trio that mixes jazz, pop and folk music with elements from klezmer, opera, classical music and contemporary music.

**CHRISTIAN  
EGGEN**  
CONDUCTOR

Conductor, composer and pianist, Christian Eggen is one of the most influential personalities on the Norwegian music scene, ranging from contemporary music via genremerging projects, installations, television and radio drama productions to film, theatre, jazz, opera and classical music.

As a conductor, he is known as one of Europe's finest interpreters of contemporary music and has worked closely with composers such as Morton Feldman, John Cage and Helmut Lachenmann. As artistic director of the Oslo Sinfonietta, he has developed the Norwegian sinfonietta repertoire since the nineties, and he regularly appears on the European contemporary music scene with groups such as the Ensemble MusikFabrik and Ensemble InterContemporain.

Christian Eggen appears on a great number of recordings within all aspects of his wide musical horizons. He has been principle featured performer at the Bergen International Festival and in 2007, he was appointed Commander of the Royal Norwegian Order of St. Olav for his work with Norwegian and international contemporary music.

**CIKADA**  
ENSEMBLE

Since its formation in Oslo in 1989, the Cikada Ensemble has developed a refined and highly acclaimed profile on the international contemporary music scene. From the very beginning, Cikada has consisted of flute, clarinet, piano, percussion, string quintet and conductor Christian Eggen. All ten are equal, permanent members, and the ensemble has become synonymous with the Oslo Sound of fresh, vibrant, warm and virtuosic interpretations of consciously selected, contemporary repertoire.

In concerts at major international festivals and on numerous albums, Cikada's distinct ensemble profile manifests itself in strong programming. Integral to this work is a wish to develop long-term collaborations with composers and to build composer portraits with commissioned works over time. The nine musicians also form various formations within the group: Cikada String Quartet and Cikada Trio (flute, clarinet, piano) work as independent Cikada units, adding to the ensemble's international identity.

Cikada was awarded the prestigious Nordic Council Music Prize in 2005.



**CIKADA  
MUSICIANS**

FLUTE: ANNE KARINE HAUGE  
CLARINET: ROLF BORCH  
VIOLIN: ODD HANNISDAL  
VIOLA: BENDIK FOSS  
DOUBLE BASS: NICHOLAS CHALK  
PERCUSSION: BJØRN RABBen  
PIANO: BJARNE SAKSHAUG  
  
CONDUCTOR: CHRISTIAN EGGEN

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HENRIK HELLSTENIUS  
AND CECILIE LØVEID

OPHELIA:  
DEATH BY WATER  
SINGING (2005)

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01. INTRO [00:19]
02. SCENE 1 – LET’S BE HOPELESS [03:46]
03. SCENE 2 – ALREADY A RIVER [04:49]
04. SCENE 3 – HI OPHELIA! [06:49]
05. SCENE 4 – I AM A MOUSE [04:50]
06. SCENE 5 – RAINBOWS [02:50]
07. SCENE 6 – THE DRIP OF BLOOD [04:43]
08. SCENE 7 – ON A WINDY DAY [06:05]
09. SCENE 8 – THE BLACK PRINCE IS BACK [09:21]
10. SCENE 9 – I TREMBLE AND LISTEN [11:37]
11. SCENE 10 – WHERE ARE YOU? [02:23]
12. SCENE 11 – MURDER AND WAITING [08:49]
13. SCENE 12 – TO GET BIGGER EYES [04:39]
14. SCENE 13 – I’M A LITTLE HAPPY [06:33]