



LAWO
CLASSICS

VINTERSONG

VAAGE / VOGT / KARLSEN

DANIEL SÆTHER — COUNTERTENOR

CREATIVITY ON THE BRINK

We have seen countless developments in the history of music. Each generation has experienced trends in music composition that would have appeared unthinkable to the generations before it. Composers through the ages have found themselves reinventing the musical wheel while others have done away with the wheel altogether, only to spawn a new trend that others have emulated or followed.

To the ears of a dedicated listener in the early 21st century, any music that uses the twelve notes of the equally tempered chromatic scale will tend to sound “tonal” in some way. In spite of the efforts of several composers at the beginning of the 20th century and the forceful campaigning against the predictable and familiar carried by the Serialist generation after WWII, the human ear still searches instinctively for a stronghold of some kind. The concepts of harmony — i.e. the way disparate pitches or sounds relate to one another simultaneously — and melody have experienced vast changes in the past ten odd centuries. All the same, it only takes one note to be held longer than the ones around it for a listener to compute some kind of hierarchy, whereby the longer note acquires predominance over the others. If the longer note appears in a low register or is held as a drone, the tonal connotations are inescapable. This is simply because any deep note is, in essence, perceived as a sound pyramid amounting to a major triad. If one listens attentively one can also discern a just major seventh above the ground note, and a major ninth if one listens even more intensely. The tenth overtone is the first one to challenge a “safe” sense of tonality. Only the most devoted listener will notice, or simply care about any overtones above the fifth one.

It is sobering for a serious composer — of any period — to realize that most people are perfectly content with a pleasant, hummable melody and some kind of discernible pulse to hold it together. Such people — let’s call them casual listeners — are unwittingly made to love such simple tunes by the harmonies that accompany them. If they are sung to a text, the latter is often perceived as more important than the music itself. There is nothing wrong with this manner of unconscious listening as such. Everyone needs to disconnect and relax every once in a while. The problem with the kind of music described above is the murky apparatus that lies behind it. Like in any commercial endeavour, the music industry will manufacture addictive music that many will buy. While millions are enraptured by the latest “hit”, our lords and masters concoct further delights to make our daily lives ever less tolerable.

What is a composer to do when faced with this reality? The music in this album provides some possible answers to this question. There are two main roads to follow: sell out or follow one’s inner voice, only seeking to please oneself. Of course, it is perfectly possible to take the second path and experience immediate success. The pursuers of this path can also experience genuine success in the form of general acceptance over time. Alas, this tends to happen long after they are gone.

The three composers represented here are all honest seekers who choose to adopt different musical approaches according to their temperaments. In some cases we hear an explicit adherence to more traditional tonality. In others the connection to a tonal root is tenuous at best. Yet, each and every piece in these recordings has a particular beauty born of its inner necessities. And it is all recognizable as music.

All the music on this CD has the countertenor as a common denominator. There is something beautifully

unsettling about hearing a male singing in the register of a female singer. It throws us back to a, fortunately, bygone time when the same vocal properties were reached by the barbaric practice that produced the male “castrati”. Nowadays, male singers who wish to sing in this register develop their falsetto and head voice techniques in a natural way.

It is equally odd, in a pleasing way, to hear instruments meant for the performance of ancient music being subjected to contemporary techniques of sound production. This is very much the case in **Knut Vaage’s *Vintersong***.

Initially trained as a carpenter, Vaage studied piano and composition, graduating from the Bergen Conservatory in both capacities. In his creative work he has often tried to erase the boundaries between improvisation and written music. He has also explored the possibilities offered by the mixture of acoustic and electronic sounds.

Vaage initially composed *Vintersong* for the Norwegian mezzo soprano Tora Augestad and the Berlin-based early music ensemble Lautten Compagney. The second version — heard on this album — was the initiative of Daniel Sæther. Vaage made small adjustments to the vocal part. The line-up of the ensemble remained nearly the same, the oboe being substituted by a traverso flute. The rest of the instrumentation includes sopranino, soprano, alto, tenor and bass recorders, all played by one performer; a percussionist handling a number of pitchless instruments as well as six Medieval bells, a Jew’s harp and a bird whistle; guitar and lute — one player — and the-orbo; a keyboard player on harpsichord and organ positive; a string quintet. The entire ensemble is tuned to A = 415.

The projected first performance of this version in March 2020 had to be cancelled due to the ongoing

pandemic. Sæther and Ensemble Freithoff, conducted by Kai Myrann, made a video recording of the work in January 2021, subsequently convening at Sofienberg Church in Oslo for the present CD registration.

At nearly 25 minutes, *Vintersong* is a substantial piece. It is based on a collection of verses by the Norwegian poet Hanne Bramness (b. 1959). In Vaage’s words, Bramness ‘writes beautifully about a winter landscape, almost like a collection of aquarelles I can recognize from my own childhood wanderings in the same Kvinnerherad forests of Western Norway.’ He further states ‘the music circles around the themes of the poem, resulting in impressionistic sound palettes in a varied, mosaic-like landscape. The vocal part interprets the poem in cooperation with the ensemble, but the singer also contributes effects to the instrumental sections. In this way a blending of sorts occurs between the vocal and the instrumental.’

Although the music traverses many different soundscapes and moods, it flows seamlessly from beginning to end. The vocal part is, indeed, beautifully integrated into the ensemble. It is an intensely melodic part, although the melodies are not of the type that stick in one’s memory. As Vaage implies, this is music that elicits images in the listener’s imagination. As such, a line can be traced from it back to Debussy. One is left with the sensation of having experienced something of rare beauty within the confines of a cold winter landscape. Several sections of the score are headed by different dates of the month of December. They correspond to several of the short poems in Bramness’ collection dealing with each day of the last month of the year. These are interspersed with instrumental interludes. It is not uncommon for Knut Vaage to divide his larger works into recurring sections. The titles given to these act as signposts but are not meant to be purposely underlined. They tend to have their unique character, making any demonstrative demarcation unnecessary. Besides the December dates

and the interludes, the piece has two brief “quotation” sections in which three of the opening bars of Schoenberg’s “Pierrot Lunaire” are obliquely referenced. These occur, appropriately, in those sections of the text where the moon is mentioned.

This is music of predominantly gentle character. Lacking a clear sense of pulse to begin with, it gradually becomes more rhythmical as it progresses, reaching a powerful accumulation of repeated chords — characteristic of Vaage — approximately 14 minutes into the piece. Bramness’ poetry is highly evocative and the music follows it very closely.

It would be idle to give a step-by-step description of this immensely colourful work. Listeners have every right to undertake that adventure on their own. It is, however, important to reiterate the titillating, odd feeling of hearing ancient instruments being subjected to all manner of scrapings and strokes, plucking and blowing techniques. The beginning and end of the piece are dominated by open, pentatonic harmony. In the beginning this has the property of “tuning the air”, returning to a sense of original state at the very end. For most of the work there is a sense of tonal grounding, by way of sustained harmonies and drones that undergo textural alterations. There are, admittedly, sections where such familiarity is entirely absent, creating a sense of unhinged chaos, as if being blinded by the reflection of the sun on the winter snow. There is also a brief passage toward the end where the music turns into a jig-like dance, led by the singer. All of these occurrences follow one another in an uncannily logical way. As a former jazz pianist, Vaage has a keen sense for natural flow and for the emotional possibilities available through harmony. Although he is happy to reference more traditional sound worlds, he has never taken the easy way out in his compositional work. The score of *Vintersong* is overwhelmingly rich in detail. Vaage obviously knows the sounds he expects the musicians to recreate. Lis-

tening to the piece is akin to traversing a garden of delights. All the sounds, whether tranquil and unassuming or odd and unsettling, have meaning and contribute to a rich musical tapestry that is held firmly in place by a solid structure.

After the horn of plenty that *Vintersong* represents from a purely sonic point of view, *Urlicht* is a much more austere proposition. Written for soprano, counter-tenor and piano, it draws the listener into its concentrated sound palette, which is only expanded at the end, when the pianist is asked to pick at the strings of the piano, producing harmonics that create a disembodied atmosphere.

The piece was commissioned for a special project based in Denmark called “The Modern Romantics”. The brief for the involved composers was to write new songs with texts that had previously been used by some of their Romantic forebears. In this case the text was the same that Mahler used in the fourth movement of his second symphony. Its provenance, as with much of early Mahler, was *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*. It deals with a person in great need. He or she seeks God’s light but is banished by an angel when he/she finds the road to Heaven. The person protests, claiming to be of God and to wish to return to God’s eternal light. We are not told whether the plea is heard, which makes the poem even more poignant.

As Vaage explains, in his version of *Urlicht* he wishes “to make the text valid for all humans — regardless of gender — by constantly blending the voices of the soprano and countertenor. This happens in different ways throughout the piece, so that both voices contribute to represent the person in the poem.

Many elements found in Vaage’s piano music are present in this work: gently arpeggiated figures, a recurring chord progression, an exploration of the dark, deep register in contrast with the highest octaves

of the instrument. Repeated rhythmical figures with a “frozen” harmony are also a feature *Urlicht* shares with other Vaage works that feature the piano. With these recognizable elements as a backdrop, the interaction between the voices becomes the main point of focus. At first they appear closely intertwined, singing the same pitches and cautiously moving in opposite directions before returning to the common note. As the song progresses the voices acquire more independence from one another. A startling event occurs one minute and fifty seconds into the piece when, after the words ‘Der Mensch liegt in größter Pein!’ (Man — or, more exactly, The Human Being — lies in greatest torment) we hear the low strings of the piano scraped by the player’s fingernails. This sends the singers to a higher register. Briefly the voices separate slightly only to gather around a lower note again. On the words ‘Ich bin von Gott und will wieder zu Gott!’ the voices pass the text back and forth in hocket fashion. It is after this that the singers move even farther away from each other only to reconvene around a single pitch at the end, accompanied by the piano harmonics.

This is not “tonal” music in the traditional sense — whatever that is. Yet there is a clear sense of centeredness created by the insistent repetition of certain pitches and the reiterated arpeggios. It is, in any case, a piece of music of rare beauty that persuasively draws the listener into its confidence.

Urlicht received its premiere at Stavnsbø Church in Farum, Denmark on 10 September 2017, with Morten Grove Frandsen and Liv Oddveig Midtmageli handling the vocal parts.

The work *Laudato si’* (Praise be to You) by **Herman Vogt**, takes its text from an English translation of St. Francis of Assisi’s famous Canticle of the Creatures. It is a beautiful and curious text that merges deep Christian devotion with pantheistic sentiments. St.

Francis refers to the Sun, Wind and Fire as his brothers; the Moon, Water, Mother Earth and Bodily Death are his sisters. Herman Vogt had initially called the present work *Laudes Creaturarum*, later changing it to *Laudato si’*. He comments on the nature of St. Francis’ text from around 1225: ‘The poem is a quiet and gentle text which praises God through His creations and all the beauty in nature and all that surrounds us. In the end St. Francis even exalts God through bodily death as a natural part of existence, alongside the life-affirming atmosphere in the rest of the poem.’ This final praise creates a clear connection to the texts in Mørk Karlsen’s *Jordens Oro Wiker*.

Herman Vogt has studied and attended courses with some of the most prominent names in contemporary music. While his language is patently of our time, it has a connection with Romantic ideals, in which the inner life and struggles of the artist stand central. Although Vogt’s work often displays drama and great energy, *Laudato si’* is, as he describes St. Francis’ poem, quiet and gentle. Rather than meditative, the music can better be described as devotional. Vogt achieves a fine balance between dissonance — which acquires a mystical dimension in the “sparse and carefully chosen” organ registrations the score demands — and recognizably major and minor triads.

Not surprisingly, the organ is the glue that holds together the singer’s unhurried delivery of the text, the recorder’s flights of fancy and the cello’s more sober interventions. After three initial, very brief breath pauses, the gentle giant remains constant for five minutes, with its sustained, suggestive harmonies. Although the organ does not entirely forgo its function as a sonic carpet thereafter, it does occasionally partake of the melodic turns of the others, and its texture becomes progressively more slender, at times playing single notes in harmony with the recorder, cello and singer. After the words ‘our Sister Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with

coloured flowers and herbs' there is an extended instrumental interlude where, for the only time in the work we hear light, gently descending staccato notes. Up until this point the text has dealt with St. Francis' devotion to God and his gratitude for the natural elements that sustain our life. The final section of the poem turns to the human plight and the inescapable certainty of physical death. Vogt underlines this change of focus by giving the recorder a more serene character and returning the lines of the countertenor to their initial austerity. The organ, as stated above, also becomes more varied and, mostly, sparser in its textures. The final minute of the piece has all the instruments gently falling, finally settling into a peaceful, sustained D flat major harmony.

Laudato si' received its first performance on 13 October 2019 in Drammen's Bragernes Church. The performers were Bragernes Barokk.

Kjell Mørk Karlsen can, at the time of this writing, look back on a prolific career as a composer spanning 56 years and over 250 documented works, with or without opus numbers, that often contain many movements or separate pieces. Although he has written for various constellations, he is best known for his sacred music, often including the organ, the instrument he has used in his capacity as church musician for many decades. He is also an oboist and recorder player and was a pioneer in the revival of historically informed performance in Norway in the late 1960s.

Jordens Oro Wiker (The Earth's Troubles Subside) is a relatively early work, written in 1975 for alto voice. The instrumentation is even sparser than that of *Meditatio Sacra*, with only a harpsichord and a recorder playing together with the countertenor. It stands as, by far, the most austere composition on this CD. The music contains no frills whatsoever. Even the relatively free wanderings of the recorder are held under strict emotional

and spiritual control. It is a very unified work, both musically and lyrically, based on texts by six Swedish poets.

The first song, which gives the work its title, is divided into three clear sections. In the beginning we hear a low pulsation on the harpsichord complemented by a fixed harmony. The tenor recorder responds in its lower register and the harpsichord answers with a short phrase repeated twice. In the middle we get an ascending arpeggio thrice answered by the singer: death takes away life's earthly concerns, replacing them with Heaven's bliss. In the third section we hear the same opening harmony from the harpsichord. The recorder is silent.

The second song begins with a recorder monologue again based on fixed intervals, finally settling on a repeated tritone. The song proper follows: a simple melody that arches upwards in whole tones and downwards diatonically. Each of the three short strophes is followed by a descending whole-tone recorder line ending on the earlier tritone. The song concludes with the first part of the recorder's soliloquy.

In the third song the singer and recorder are in dialogue, at times "speaking" simultaneously, in the manner of a canon. The harpsichord alternatively plays lively arpeggios — now ascending, now descending — with block chords and snippets of melody. It has a strong whole-tone component. The opening tritone in the vocal part (F-B) is mirrored by the two final notes of the recorder (B-F). This is the most sonically dense of the six songs. The message is clear: I want to be with the dead, who are closer to God.

Whole-tone is at the centre of the fourth song, where only the singer and recorder player participate. It begins with a simple melody in the low register, accompanied by mellifluous recorder figurations: everything continues to exist except I, who still remember everything.

The middle part consists of a repeated whole-tone phrase rising one tone at a time in both the voice and the recorder. It is the one moment of obvious tension in the work. The end returns to the opening dialogue between the two musicians.

The fifth song has a decidedly archaic atmosphere. It is the most strictly laid out of the six. Every note that is played or sung is on the beat, fitting into an unwavering pulse. The harpsichord part is devoid of chords, playing a single line in the three-part polyphonic writing. The song consists of two verses. Interestingly the same two keys found in *Meditatio Sacra* are implied also in this song: G minor and B minor. It cadences on an open E harmony. The text, again, extols the joys of the afterlife from an earthly perspective.

In the final song the harpsichord returns to the fixed harmonies of the first song, including the original recorder line, now played on the keyboard. The singing voice falls silent, now instead reciting the text of the poem. For the first time in the work, death is seen not as a relief from earthly sorrows but as inescapable loneliness. It falls to the recorder to finish the work alone, in an air of ambiguity, crowned by the ever present tritone.

The work *Meditatio Sacra* brings us back to the instrumentation of Vogt's *Laudato si'*. Both works were written in the same year (2019) for the ensemble Bragernes Barokk. Its sound palette is close to ascetic, with the organ at the centre, extended, in the upper register, by the alto recorder and by the cello in a wider range. As is often the case with Mørk Karlsen's music, the text — here in English — is drawn from the Bible. More specifically, Paul's letter to the Philippians, chapter 2, verses 5-11. As the title indicates, this is music of meditative quality. The piece is divided into two sections with a different tonal centre, explicitly indicated by the key signature: G minor

for the first half, B minor for the second. The music moves through time at a sedate pace, only occasionally turning stentorian, following the demands of the text. Such is the case after the well-known words 'He humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death of the cross', when the organ pulls out all the stops for a few moments. The same happens shortly after when, having changed the tonal centre from G to B, the words 'and given him the name which is above every name' elicit the second and last outburst from the organ. In fact, the great instrument falls silent after this, leaving the recorder, cello and counter tenor to conclude the work with a melodic dialogue that ultimately dissolves into timelessness; the single words of the text are separated by long pauses in the vocal line.

The music of this remarkable composition remains engaging by the reluctance of the recorder and cello to settle on any note that might consolidate the suggested tonal centres. In the first half of the piece the harmonic background is shared, in turn, by the long-held cello drones and the mystical organ chords, built one note at a time, around which the other musicians weave melodic lines that flow freely around the harmonies. In the final section of the piece, the recorder and cello play in rhythmic unison but mostly in contrary motion. In the final moments, it is as if the long notes played by the instruments provide a spiritual home for the text, allowing each word to sink into the mind of the listener.

Meditatio sacra was premiered by Bragernes Barokk on 22 April 2019 at Bragernes Church, Drammen.

– Ricardo Odriozola

KNUT VAAGE (*1961)

VINTERSONG WINTER SONG

Text: Hanne Bramness (b. 1959), excerpts from *Vintersong*,

Ei bok om desember (Nordsjøforlaget 2014)

English translation: Hanne Bramness and Lars Amund Vaage

1. Desember kjem så stilt med blått lys over lilla fjord. Niser sym forbi langt ute. Du kan høyre andedraga no.	11. Vindtonar trengjer gjennom veggen set svingingane i gang i glaslet med vatn.	25. Kva for tonar spelar vona? Vinden virvlar i skalaer inn og ut av alle toneartar så du blir varm om øyra.
5. Bleike stjerner i dei blanke bøljene, speglar seg i lag med ein mager vintermåne til langt på dag.	12. Kan du flyge så fort at du når deg sjølv igjen? Du lettar når du kjenner blikket til kjærasten i ryggen.	26. Den brende grana liknar ei kvit beingrind mot den mørke bakken. Eit nytt tre skal spire.
8. Skogmusa gøymt i mosen ligg og skjelv. Kjenner draget i lufta lenge før snøen fell.	13. Ein morgon har månen vakse. Du tar på deg kvite klede. I skinet frå månen vert du sjølvlysande.	29. Dag for dag på veg ut av mørkret treng du ikkje snu deg, gleda følgjer hakk i hæl.
9. Vinden byrjar som ein sped tone inne i det hole beinet i ein fugleveng.	20. Når kloten kjem inn i skuggen og sola står på det lågaste over horisonten, då teier fuglane, vintersongen stilnar.	31. No skin vintersol over fjellet. Ein svart ramn stig i det blå og liknar ein drake festa til handa di.
10. I steinura, i den bratte, blå veggen med tjukke og tynne isjuklar, spelar vinden som på orgelpiper.	22. Klirringa frå greiner langt inni skogen, brølet frå is som skurr seg til over djupna i årets mørkaste døger.	

Winter Song

(1) December breaks so still with blue light over purple fjord. Porpoises swimming by so far out. You can listen to their breathing now. (5) Paling stars in the shiny sea gazing at the waves with a skinny winter moon till tide at noon. (8) Woodland mouse hid in the heather lies trembling feeling a draft in the air long before snowflakes fall. (9) The wind starts off as a frail singing deep inside the hollow structure of a bird's wing. (10) O Stonewall blue in the slanting with sturdy and slender icicles the wind playing as on organ pipes. (11) Wind music pushing through the wall, the swinging starting off in a glass of water. (12) Can you fly so fast that you catch up with yourself? You take off as you notice your sweetheart's gaze on your back. (13) One morning the moon has grown. You dress up in white clothing In the glowing moonlight you are translucent. (20) The globe tilts into shadow the sun is hidden below the horizon, the birds are silent, the winter song dies out. (22) Clanging chiming from branches deep inside the forest, roaring of ice that locks itself over the deep in the darkest night of the year. (25) With what tones can hope be played? Wind is whirling trough registers in and out of all that can be sung and your ears become so warm. (26) The burnt out spruce tree looks like a white skeleton against the darkening hillside. A new tree shall be born. (29) Day by day a way out of darkness, you don't have to turn 'round. Joy is always at your heel. (31) Shining winter sun over mountains. A raven soars in the blue and resembles a kite tied to your little hand.

URLICHT

Text: Anon.

English translation: © Ahmed E. Ismail,
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O Röschen rot,
Der Mensch liegt in grösster Not,
Der Mensch liegt in grösster Pein,
Je lieber möcht' ich im Himmel sein.
Da kam ich auf einen breiten Weg,
Da kam ein Engellein und wollt' mich abweisen.
Ach nein, (ich liess mich nicht abweisen!)
Ich bin von Gott und will wieder zu Gott,
Der liebe Gott wird mir ein Lichtchen geben,
Wird leuchten mir bis an das ewig selig Leben!

*O little red rose,
Man lies in greatest need,
Man lies in greatest pain.
Ever would I prefer to be in heaven.
Once I came upon a wide road,
There stood an Angel who wanted to turn me away.
But no, (I will not be turned away!)*
*I came from God, and will return to God,
The loving God who will give me a little light,
To lighten my way up to eternal, blessed life!*

HERMAN VOGT (*1976)

LAUDATO SI'

Canticle of the Creatures

Text: St. Francis of Assisi

Most High, all powerful, good Lord,
Yours are the praises, the glory, the honour, and all blessing.
To You alone, Most High, do they belong,
and no man is worthy to mention Your name.
Be praised, my Lord, through all your creatures,
especially through my lord Brother Sun,
who brings the day; and You give light through him.
And he is beautiful and radiant in all his splendour!
Of You, Most High, he bears the likeness.
Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars,
in heaven You formed them clear and precious and beautiful.
Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Wind,
and through the air, cloudy and serene,
and every kind of weather through which
You give sustenance to Your creatures.
Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Water,
which is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.
Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Fire,
through whom You light the night and he is beautiful
and playful and robust and strong.
Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Mother Earth,
who sustains us and governs us and who produces
varied fruits with coloured flowers and herbs.
Praised be You, my Lord,
through those who give pardon for Your love,
and bear infirmity and tribulation.
Blessed are those who endure in peace
for by You, Most High, they shall be crowned.
Praised be You, my Lord,
through our Sister Bodily Death,
from whom no living man can escape.
Woe to those who die in mortal sin.
Blessed are those who will
find Your most holy will,
for the second death shall do them no harm.
Praise and bless my Lord,
and give Him thanks
and serve Him with great humility.

KJELL MØRK KARLSEN (*1947)

JORDENS ORO WIKER

Jordens Oro Wiker

The Earth's unrest subsides

Text: Johan Olof Wallin (1779–1839)

English translation: Verboo

Jordens Oro Wiker,
För den Frid som varar.
Grafven allt förliker,
Himlen allt förklarar.

*The Earth's unrest subsides,
for the peace that lasts.
The grave reconciles all things,
heaven explains all things.*

Avskedet från livet

A parting from life

Text: Elis Erlandsson (1884–1965)

English translation: Verboo

Klappa än mitt hjärta,
slå ännu min siste tid!
Snart är livets smärta ändad
uti dödens frid.

*Beat now, my heart,
beat for my last moments!
Soon the pain of life is ended
with the peace of death.*

Djupt i tysta mullen slumrar du
så ljuvt och tyst.
Stilla griftekullen
afterodnans stråle kysst.

*Deep in the quiet earth you slumber
so sweetly and quietly.
The rays of the evening sun
kiss the silent burial mound.*

Kort är dödens dvala,
snart dig Herrens budskap når.
Att din själ hugsvala:
du till evigt liv uppstår.

*Short is the torpor of death,
soon the Lord's message will reach you.
That your soul be comforted:
you will have eternal life.*

På Litslena kyrkogård

At Litslena churchyard

Text: Bo Setterlind (1923–1991)

English translation: Verboo

Jag vill vara hos de döda, som bo nära Gud;
som bo i gravarna vid tempelmuren.
Jag vil vara hos de döda,
jag vil vara död hos Gud;
djupt i jorden och av jorden buren.

*I want to be with the dead, who dwell near to God;
who dwell in the tombs at the temple wall.
I want to be with the dead,
I want to be dead with God;
deep in the earth and buried by the earth.*

Den döde

The dead

Text: Pär Lagerkvist (1891–1974)
from *Aftonland* (Bonnier, 1953).
Printed by permission of Pär Lagerkvist Estate
English translation: Verboo

All ting finns, blott jag ei längre finnes,
alt är kvar, den lukt av regn i gräset
som jag minns och vindens sus i träden,
molnens flykt och människohjärtats oro.

Blott mitt hjärtas oro finns ej längre.

*All things exist, only I no longer exist,
everything remains, the scent of rain in the grass
that I remember and the rustling of the wind in the trees,
the flight of the clouds and the unrest of the human heart.*

Only the unrest of my heart is no more.

Graven

The grave

Text: Erik Johan Stagnelius (1793–1823)
English translation: Verboo

För graven ej jag bävar.
Så fridsam kullen är.
Guds kärlek vänligt svävar
I västanfläktar där.
Så lugnt i jordens sköte,
Så gudadtrygg man bor,
Och solens ljus i möte
En värld i natten gror.

*I do not tremble before the grave.
So peaceful the hill is.
The love of God hovers kindly
in the westerly breezes there.
So peaceful in the bosom of the earth,
living so safely in the arms of God
and meeting the light of the sun,
a host in the night grows.*

Så kroppen hos sin Moder
I stillhet slumra får,
Men Anden från sin Broder
till Fadren återgår.
Med Solens gyllne öga
Kring rymderna han ser
Och svävar från det höga
I nya vårer ner.

*So the body with its mother
in silence may slumber,
But the spirit from its brother
returns to the Father.
He looks around in space with
the golden eye of the sun
and floats down from the heavens
into new springtimes.*

Vi människor

We the people

Text: Verner von Heidenstam (1859–1940)
English translation: Verboo

Vi, som mötas några korta stunder,
barn av samma jord och samma under,
på vår levnads stormomflutna nås!
Skulle kärlekslöst vi gå och kalla?
Samma ensamhet oss väntar alla,
samma sorgsna sus på gravens gräs.

*We who meet for a few short moments,
children of the same soil and the same miracle,
on the stormy headland of our lives!
Would we go loveless and call?
The same loneliness awaits us all,
the same mournful rustling of the grass on the grave.*

MEDITATIO SACRA

Text: Philippians 2:5-11 (King James Version)

Let the mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,

who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery
to be equal with God,

but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a
servant, and coming in the likeness of men.

And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled
Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even
the death of the cross.

Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him
the name which is above every name,

that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of
those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those
under the earth,

and that every tongue should confess that Jesus
Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.



Countertenor **Daniel Sæther** studied at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire (2005–2010) and the Royal Academy in Den Haag (2010–2011). He has performed as a countertenor in Norway and abroad since 2011, including concerts in Sweden, Italy, Spain, England, Vietnam and Brazil, with a wide-ranging repertoire from early music to contemporary.

In Norway he often appears as soloist and ensemble singer, both in concert settings and opera. In the autumn of 2019 Sæther had a singing engagement at the National Theatre in its production of *Forelska i Shakespeare* based on the film *Shakespeare in Love* and received glowing reviews in the Norwegian press for his contribution. From 2018–2020 he was awarded the government grant Statens Arbeidsstipend to work with contemporary music for countertenor on baroque instruments and document this in concerts and recordings.

Sæther is a founding member of Ensemble Freithoff and Christian IV Consort, both of which perform chamber music in Norway with a focus on Renaissance and Baroque music.

In 2020 Sæther's album *Unexpected Songs* (LWC1204) with music of Nordheim, Hovland, Karlsen and Baden was released on the LAWO Classics label, and in 2021 he was nominated as *Singer of the Year* for this album at the German *Opus Klassik* awards.

Mezzo-soprano **Eira Huse** has performed in Norway and abroad at venues that include Opéra de Lyon, the Verbier Festival, the Norwegian National Opera and Ballet, Royal Opera House Muscat (House of Musical Arts), Oxford Lieder Festival, Kammeroper Schloss-Rheinsberg and the Oslo Chamber Music Festival.

She has performed together with James Baillieu, Titus Engel, Henning Kraggerud, Helge Kjekshus, Oliver-John Ruthven, Clemens Flick, Ensemble Ascolta, Musica Poetica and Pocket Sinfonia, among others. In the summer of 2021 she was the young artist at the Verbier Festival's Atelier Lyrique and the Aix-en-Provence Festival's Académie Opéra de-ci de-là. In the autumn of 2019 she sang *L'écureuil/chatte/pâtre* in Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges* on the main stage of Opéra National de Lyon and on tour in Oman. Other recent highlights include *2nd Woman/2nd Witch (Dido and Aeneas)* at the Norwegian National Opera and Ballet and Grieg's *Haugtussa* at the Oxford Lieder Festival.

Eira has complemented her education by taking master classes with artists such as Thomas Hampson, Ken Noda, Edith Wiens, Anne Murray, James Baillieu, Roger Vignoles, Rudolf Jansen, Véronique Gens, Barbara Frittoli and Bo Skovhus.

In 2019 Eira was awarded Arts Council Norway's 2-Year Work Grant for Young Artists. She composed and performed the chamber opera *Scenes from a Beehive* and composed music for the Norwegian National Opera and Ballet's Quarantine Ballet by choreographer Anaïs Touret.

Kai Grinde Myrann has in a very short time established himself as one of his generation's most talented conductors. Already he has conducted all the major Norwegian symphony orchestras and military bands and has been reengaged by them all. He has also conducted Danish orchestras and a number of smaller ensembles and choirs.

Following his graduation from the Norwegian Academy of Music with a Master's Degree in conducting in 2013, Myrann immediately assumed the position of assistant conductor with Stavanger Symphony Orchestra and Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, extended by both to the maximum duration of two years. He then held a postgraduate fellowship in conducting at the Arctic University of Norway in Tromsø. Since 2021 he has been part of the Savings Bank Foundation and Talent Norge's program *Opptakt*, which promotes young conductors at the highest level.

Myrann is artistic director for Aksiom, a contemporary music ensemble of nine musicians he co-founded in 2010. Under his leadership it has become a much sought-after ensemble of the Scandinavian contemporary music scene. He also conducts Ensemble Temporum, an ensemble established in 2016 specializing in classical masterpieces of the contemporary music tradition. With Bachelor's Degrees in composition from the Norwegian Academy of Music and Hochschule für Musik "Hanns Eisler" in Berlin, and with his experience as a conductor, Myrann has become an acclaimed interpreter of contemporary music. His discography consists of a number of releases of contemporary music by the Norwegian Radio Orchestra, Trondheim Symphony Orchestra, Trondheim Sinfonietta, Aksiom and Ensemble neoN, among others.

Caroline Eidsten Dahl is one of Norway's most active recorder players. Her training took place under the auspices of Frode Thorsen at the Grieg Academy in Bergen, as well as with Dan Laurin at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm, where in 2006 she completed her studies specialising in chamber music. Caroline is a permanent member of several ensembles including the Woodpeckers recorder quartet, Ensemble Freithoff, Bragernes Barokk and the Christian IV Consort. She performs concerts regularly throughout Norway, Sweden and Denmark, both as a chamber musician and a soloist.

In the spring of 2007 she was one of three winners of Concerts Norway's launch program "INTRO-klassisk" for performances during the 2008–2009 season. Under the direction of Concerts Norway, she travelled to India and China performing Norwegian and Chinese music with musicians from Shanghai.

Caroline has performed at numerous festivals including the Innsbruck Festival of Early Music, where she played with Academia Montis Regalis, the Early Music Festival in London, Stockholm Early Music Festival, Oslo Early, the Stavanger International Chamber Music Festival, and the Oslo International Church Music Festival.

Caroline received the Arts Council of Norway's scholarship for newly established artists for a two-year period from 2010 to 2012. She has released several critically acclaimed albums on the LAWO Classics label.

Anne Stine Dahl studied cello at the Norwegian Academy of Music, where she completed a Master's Degree in Music Performance. She also studied early music at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm with baroque cello as her main instrument. Anne Stine is an active freelance and chamber musician in various ensembles and she has contributed to a number of recordings. As a member of Bragernes Barokk she has performed the works of numerous contemporary composers, including Herman Vogt, Kjell Mørk Karsen, Joachim Knoph and Arne Rotvelt Olsen.

Ole Christian Haagenrud is today one of the most sought-after young pianists in Norway. He is a graduate of the Norwegian Academy of Music, where he studied with Professors Jens Harald Bratlie and Håvard Gimse. He gave his debut concert in the University Aula in Oslo in 2014, and the same year he was awarded the prestigious Robert Levin Prize. In 2017 he was selected for Talent Norge's new program ArtEx (Artist in Excellence).

Ole Christian is much in demand as a chamber musician and accompanist, and he appears regularly at large festivals in Norway and abroad. Already he can point to a large number of honours and prizes he has received for his accomplishments. Among many highlights of his career thus far are appearances as soloist with Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, the Norwegian Radio Orchestra, and the Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra, and performances on notable stages such as Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Brahms Hall at the Musikverein in Vienna, the Kennedy Center in Washington, D. C., and the Shanghai Concert Hall.

Anders Eidsten Dahl graduated with a degree in church music from the Norwegian Academy of Music and later completed a Master's degree in solo organ performance at the same institution.

Following two years of solo performance study at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen, he gave debut concerts in Copenhagen and Oslo in 2003. He has studied organ with Professor Terje Winge, cathedral organist Kåre Nordstoga and Professor Hans Fagius.

Eidsten Dahl is much in demand as organ soloist, chamber musician and harpsichordist, and he has given organ concerts at festivals in a number of European countries. His repertoire spans from the Baroque to the music of today, with emphasis on J. S. Bach and organ music from the Romantic period. Since 2001 he has served as organist and director of music at Bragernes Church in Drammen, where he is artistic and administrative director of the church's organ concert series.

A recipient of the Government Work Scholarship for Younger and Newly Established Artists, Eidsten Dahl has released a number of critically acclaimed albums on the LAWO Classics label. He is also Associate Professor of organ at the Norwegian Academy of Music.

KNUT VAAGE (*1961)

- | | |
|---------------|-------|
| 1. Vintersong | 24:53 |
| 2. Urlicht | 07:58 |

HERMAN VOGT (*1976)

- | | |
|----------------|-------|
| 3. Laudato si' | 14:31 |
|----------------|-------|

KJELL MØRK KARLSEN (*1947)

Jordens Oro Wiker, op. 31

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| 4. I. Jordens Oro Wiker | 02:22 |
| 5. II. Avskedet från livet | 02:29 |
| 6. III. På Litslena kyrkogård | 01:27 |
| 7. IV. Den döde | 01:42 |
| 8. V. Graven | 01:47 |
| 9. VI. Vi människor | 02:09 |
| 10. Meditatio sacra | 11:52 |

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MUSICIANS ON THIS RECORDING:

Vintersong

Daniel Sæther — countertenor
Kai Grinde Myrann — conductor
Lynetta Taylor Hansen — traverse flute
Caroline Eidsten Dahl — recorders
Ingrid Økland — violin 1
Maria Ines Zanovello — violin 2
Torunn Blåsmo-Falnes — viola
Anna Carlsen — cello
Fredrik Blikeng — double bass
Jørgen Skogmo — theorbo
Vegard Lund — lute/theorbo
Anders Eidsten Dahl — harpsichord/organ
Kjell Tore Innervik — percussion

Urlicht

Eira Huse — mezzo-soprano
Daniel Sæther — countertenor
Ole Christian Haagenrud — piano

Laudato si'

Daniel Sæther — countertenor
Caroline Eidsten Dahl — recorders
Anne Stine Dahl — cello
Anders Eidsten Dahl — organ

Jordens Oro Wiker

Daniel Sæther — countertenor
Elisabeth Holmertz — read text
Caroline Eidsten Dahl — recorders
Anders Eidsten Dahl — harpsichord/organ

Meditatio sacra

Daniel Sæther — countertenor
Caroline Eidsten Dahl — recorders
Anne Stine Dahl — cello
Anders Eidsten Dahl — organ