

Åsmund
Feidje

LAWQ
CLASSICS

Chamber
Works



Chamber Works

Etüde für Violoncello solo was composed and premiered in 1989 during a seminar in Bad Ischl, Austria, under the auspices of Polish composer and professor Bogusław Schaeffer. It was Schaeffer's inspiring ethos and extensive know-how that opened up the opportunity for me to explore the cello's full potential for virtuosic development and exploit its rich tonal potential. The piece is an etude for both composer and performer and is dedicated to Bogusław Schaeffer, who, however, felt that the title was a bit too modest!

Sonnet No. 8 for Women's Choir was commissioned and premiered by Christiania Damekor in 2010. In my search for a text that suited my needs, I found this beautiful and very inspiring re-interpretation of Shakespeare by Erik Bystad, which was just asking to be turned into a choral piece:

Hvorfor så nedslått når musikken lyder?
Alt skjønt vil skjønnhet, glede vil ha fest.
Kan du da elske det som ikke fryder,
og glede deg ved det som kjeder mest?
Hvis toner som er ett i harmoni
fornærmer øret ditt med renstemt klang,
da refser tonene deg mildt, fordi
du aldri søker samspill noen gang.
Hør hvordan enkeltstrenger inngår pakt,
og i gjensidig veksling faller inn,
lik far og mor og barn i nær kontakt;
én samklang toner gjennom alles sinn,
en flerstemt, ordløs sang som sier deg:
Alene gjør du intet av ditt jeg.

Music to hear, why hear'st thou music sadly?
Sweets with sweets war not, joy delights in joy.
Why lov'st thou that which thou receiv'st not gladly,
Or else receiv'st with pleasure thine annoy?
If the true concord of well-tunèd sounds
By unions married, do offend thine ear,
They do but sweetly chide thee, who confounds
In singleness the parts that thou shouldst bear.
Mark how one string, sweet husband to another,
Strikes each in each by mutual ordering,
Resembling sire, and child, and happy mother,
Who all in one, one pleasing note do sing;
Whose speechless song, being many, seeming one,
Sings this to thee: 'Thou single wilt prove none'.

William Shakespeare, Norwegian translation by Erik Bystad

1905—*Duel for String Quartet* is an adaptation of the ballet *Kvinner selv stod opp og strede* (Women stood up and fought) by choreographer Sølvi Edvardsen from 2005, commissioned by the 'No to EU' movement and performed to coincide with 100 years of Norway's independence. The music focuses on the duel between Sweden and Norway, mainly using the two respective national anthems in a type of contrapuntal scherzo. You will gradually recognise more Norwegian musical elements creeping in: Grieg and Ole Bull hover over the waters, and other small surprises shift the centre of gravity towards a Norwegian dominance.

Contrabbacchus per contrabbasso solo is, as the name suggests, intended to be a joyous feast for the double bass, the performer and the audience. When put in the right hands, the double bass can swing from great heights to deep valleys, with a range of tonal possibilities like few other instruments. This piece is dedicated to Bjørn Ianke, who after having premiered it in Berlin in 1991, played it in several venues around Europe as well as on his CD release *The Contemporary Solo Double Bass II*. Håkon Thelin performed *Contrab-*

bacchus at his diploma exam concert at The Norwegian Academy of Music, and I am delighted that we can now enjoy his exciting interpretation through this recording.

Kort møte (*Brief Encounter*) for Chamber Ensemble consists of tender, intense and confrontational musical encounters within the ensemble, between each instrument's small solo wanderings, before finally uniting harmoniously. I would like to dedicate this piece to my close friend and colleague Alfred Janson, who played the melodic part at the premiere performance, but who unfortunately passed away by the time this recording became a reality. The piece was commissioned by the Norwegian Ensemble for Contemporary Music and was premiered in 1991.

Fragment for Double Bass Quartet was commissioned by Bassissimo 2000 in Odense, Denmark, a large, international double bass convention with seminars, master classes and concerts. Material from *Contrabbacchus* is further explored here and performed by an ensemble consisting of two solo-tuned (F# B E A) and two orchestral-tuned (E A D G) basses. This

consequently doubles the natural flageolet (string harmony) possibilities, so that new chords and timbral possibilities arise. The double bass is particularly suitable to micro-tonality due to the considerable physical distances between semitones.

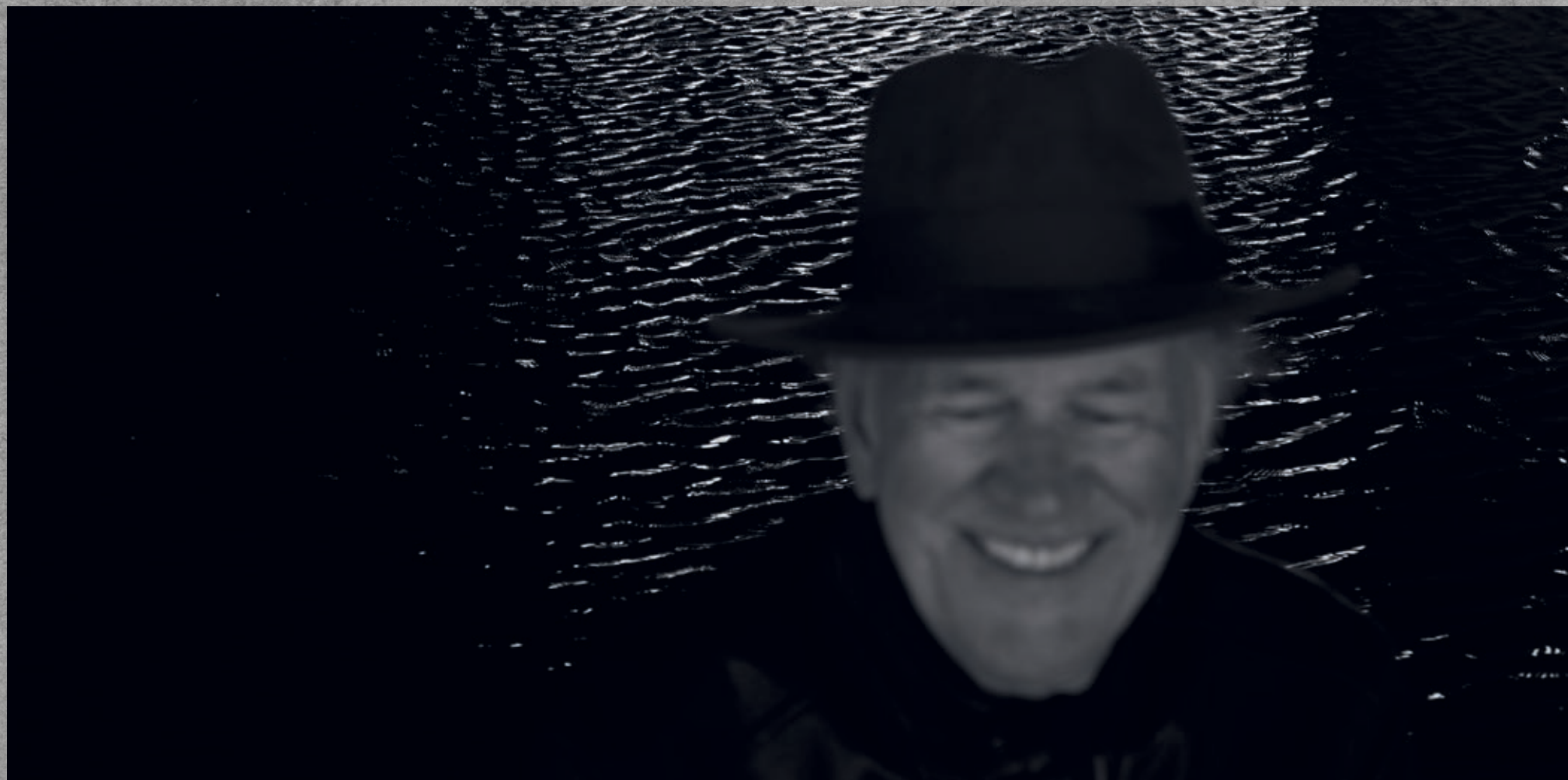
Pas de deux for Chamber Ensemble and String Orchestra is an adaptation of the music for the ballet *Access* by Sølvi Edvardsen, commissioned by the Norwegian National Ballet and performed on the main stage of the new opera house in Oslo (The Norwegian Opera & Ballet) in 2010. The ballet was indeed a *pas de deux*, and it marked Christopher Kettner's swan song as an active dancer. The music here has been abridged and condensed, owing to the fact that the visual element is no longer there, and the new title *Pas de deux* now points to the purely musicality, namely the playing—and interaction—between the chamber ensemble and the string orchestra.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the musicians who have performed on this production. When so many excellent musicians and ensembles combine to contribute on the same record,

it can be quite a puzzle, but with a bit of patience we managed to get it together.

Thank you to every one of you for finding the time to participate, and for the great work you have all been doing.

Åsmund Feidje
(translated by Paul Holden)



Åsmund Feidje

After seven years of violin studies during his childhood, Åsmund Feidje founded the Norwegian experimental rock band RAIN in 1967. In 1969, the group was employed by the National Theatre in Oslo to take part in the pop musical *Din egen vri* (Your own thing). Ever since then, Feidje has worked primarily with theatre music, both individually and in collaboration with the other members of RAIN. He was permanently employed at the theatre in 1973, playing in numerous productions over a wide range of styles, yielding him countless experiences within several musical genres. He also played with the Terje Rypdal Ensemble, and would later co-found the contemporary music ensemble Octoband.

Since the end of the 1970s he has focused more and more on composition, taking a year off in 1989/90 to study in

Salzburg with the Polish contemporary composer Bogusław Schaeffer, professor of composition at the Mozarteum. He has subsequently composed chamber music for soloists and various ensembles while maintaining his work for the stage, for which he has composed music for more than 150 productions, including for all the major Norwegian theatres, for radio theatre, and for film and TV. Many of these productions in collaboration with Carl Jørgen Kjøning, his colleague from RAIN, who, from the 1980s and onwards, became one of the leading theatre directors of Norway.

He has also composed music for several ballet companies at home and abroad, including for the Finnish and Icelandic national ballets. He has enjoyed a close working relationship with choreographer Sølvi Edvardsen, collaborating on the ballet *Access* for the Norwegian National Ballet, which premiered on the main stage at Oslo's prestigious new opera house (The Norwegian Opera & Ballet) in 2010. In 2002,

they were commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to create the ballet *Beyond Borders* in New Delhi with leading Indian and Norwegian dancers, marking 50 years of aid to India.

Åsmund Feidje has been represented at a number of festivals, including the ImPuls Dance Festival in Vienna, the Avignon Festival, the San Marino Festival, the Bergen International Festival and the Ibsen Festival.

Feidje has received the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation's *Blå fugl* (Blue Bird) prize (for artists who have given extraordinary service to radio theatre), and he also won two Edvard Prizes (named after Edvard Grieg) and awarded to Norwegian composers and writers annually.



A word about the pictures

It is not without reason that **Knut Bry** has taken the photos of me for this recording. Knut is an internationally renowned and award-winning fashion and art photographer who in recent years has devoted his life to voluntary aid work among the refugees on the Greek island of Lesbos.

Back in 1968, while he was working as a cook at Norum Hotell in Oslo and I was playing in the experimental rock group RAIN, word got round that Knut had been developing a way of creating psychedelic light. This idea appealed to us, as we were looking for an all-encompassing experience at our concerts. Using rather primitive equipment—an old-fashioned slide projector with glass frames into which he dripped liquid so that the heat from the bulb caused it to boil, bubble

up and explode—he managed to fill the entire stage, both the musicians and the backdrop, with mind-blowing psychedelic effects. He eventually got to know the music inside out, so he could synchronise releasing the drops exactly when it would bring about maximum results.

Our collaboration ended naturally enough when the band started working for the National Theatre and our musical paths took on new directions. Knut then went out into the world and on to a fabulous career. It was really great to meet up again after all these years! Seems we've come full circle, so a big heartfelt thank you for the pictures, Knut!

Åsmund Feidje

Musicians

Etüde für Violoncello solo

Björg Lewis

Sonnet No. 8 for Women's Choir

Kvindelige Studenters Sangforening (KSS)

Conductor: Marit Tøndel Bodsberg Weyde

1905—Duel for String Quartet

Vertavo String Quartet

Contrabbacchus per contrabbasso solo

Håkon Thelin

Kort møte (Brief encounter) for Chamber Ensemble

Cikada Ensemble

Conductor: Christian Eggen

Fragment for Double Bass Quartet

Dan Styffe, Kenneth Ryland, Håkon Thelin, Glenn Lewis Gordon

Pas de deux for Chamber Ensemble and String Orchestra

Violin: Kolbjørn Holthe, Viola: Jon Wien Sønstebø, Cello: Ernst Simon Glaser

Double bass: Marius Knudsen Flatby, Vibraphone: Christian Krogvold Lundqvist

String orch.: Members of the Norwegian Radio Orchestra (KORK)

Conductor: Bjarte Engeset





Credits

Recorded in: Sofienberg Church, Oslo, 1 June 2017 (*Sonnet No. 8*),
and 19 March 2018 (*Contrabbacchus* and *Fragment*)
Grorud Church, Oslo, 13 January 2020 (*1905*), and 26 April 2022 (*Etüde*)
Newtone Studio, Oslo, 7 February 2020 (*Brief Encounter*)
NRK Radio Concert Hall, Oslo, 30 November 2020 (*Pas de deux*).

Producer: Vegard Landaas
Balance engineer: Thomas Wolden
Editing: Vegard Landaas
Mastering: Thomas Wolden
Booklet notes: Åsmund Feidje
English translation: Paul Holden
Booklet editor: Hege Wolleng
Cover design: Anette L'orange—Blunderbuss
Cover and artist photos (Feidje): Knut Bry / Tinagent
Illustration photos (other): pexels.com

This recording has been made possible with support from:
Arts Council Norway—The Audio and Visual Fund
Norwegian Society of Composers

LAWO
CLASSICS

LWC1254
© 2023 LAWO | © 2023 LAWO Classics
www.lawo.no

Åsmund Feidje ^{*1948}

1. — **Etüde** ¹⁹⁸⁹
für Violoncello solo (13:31)
2. — **Sonnet No. 8** ²⁰¹⁰
for Women's Choir (12:51)
3. — **1905** ^{2005/2017}
Duel for String Quartet (06:23)
4. — **Contrabbacchus** ¹⁹⁹⁰
per contrabbasso solo (14:10)
5. — **Kort møte** (Brief Encounter) ¹⁹⁹¹
for Chamber Ensemble (08:13)
6. — **Fragment** ²⁰⁰⁰
for Double Bass Quartet (05:30)
7. — **Pas de deux** ^{2010/2017}
for Chamber Ensemble
and String Orchestra (18:40)

