

CIKADA LIVE

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CLASSICS



HUDDERSFIELD

/

DONAUESCHINGEN





LOOKING BACK AT THE PRELUDE

DONAUESCHINGEN

The day after Cikada's concert at Eclat Festival in Stuttgart in 2016, we made sure to have a meeting with Björn Gottstein, the director of Donaueschinger Musiktage, about a Cikada concert at his festival two and a half years later. Most of the works presented at the festival are world premieres, and we met up to discuss which composers we wanted to commission works from.

Gottstein was well informed about relevant composers, and he had a personal connection to the music. He even looked Norwegian in his anorak and rucksack, and the conversation flowed easily. Both of us suggested several names. Some were struck off the list straight away, either because one of us said no or because they were already

busy with other projects. Klaus Lang was an obvious choice for both of us. Rolf Wallin was suggested. It was years since Cikada had last worked with Wallin, so this was a good occasion to collaborate again. The third composer we chose, was Agata Zubel. She was a new acquaintance to me, but on Gottstein's suggestion I listened to her music and liked what I heard.


Performing completely new works of music is a particular discipline. You often encounter completely new instrumental or musical challenges. Sometimes, things need to be rewritten. Our concert was to take place in October 2018. I had asked the composers to deliver their scores by April, to allow time for some rehearsals before the summer. Klaus Lang was the first to finish.

His pieces often pose no difficulties when rehearsing on your own, but in a concert setting they can be quite challenging. There are often extreme demands on controlling for example sonority and microtonality.

Rolf Wallin's original plan was to write a scenic piece based on the situation of endangered bird species. This would later become a whole Cikada/Wallin concert entitled *Large Bird Mask*. However, Wallin and I talked several times that summer and came up with a new idea: We had from before already talked about the possibility of turning his big work for piano, *Seven Imperatives* (2001), into a piano concerto. This is what he suggested doing now. Before long, the scores were sent to us, movement by movement.

A couple of days after we made the decision to turn Wallin's work into a piano concerto, we suddenly received an email with Agata Zubel's work—which also turned out to be a piano concerto. I now had two concertos to prepare, and less than two months to go. It might have worked out, but it somehow felt wrong with such a big focus on me, and I thought the audience might find it more interesting if we were two piano players. Therefore, we contacted a talented piano colleague of mine, Ingfrid Breie Nyhus, who was happy to take on Zubel's piece.

Donaueschingen turned out to be a village. We stayed in a hotel in walking distance from everything. In front of the hotel, we could see the Brigach river—no wider



than to give you the impression that you could jump across it. The place was lovely, the food as well, with zander filets, Flammkuchen, Spätburgunder, and those lovely potato salads. And in the middle of it all: was the festival. Impressive, big concert halls, and audience consisting of festival directors, composers, and music lovers. Cikada played two concerts with the same program, the first of which was broadcasted live by SWR. We had arrived the day before the concert and had the opportunity to rehearse at the venue. The technical personnel, both from the venue and the radio, did their job brilliantly and discretely. SWR's producer even sat in on all our rehearsals to really get to know the music. He walked around talking to all of us to prepare for a thirty-minute-long interview before the concert.

Both concerts were wonderful. The audiences were great, the music was brilliant. We were tired afterwards, but the party was good.

In the weeks following the Donaueschingen festival, we performed the program again at a new festival in Rockenhausen, and at

Sound of Stockholm. Agata Zubel's piece was released on another live album with works from the festival and is therefore not included on this album. Wallin later finished his *Large Bird Mask*, which we premiered the year after at the opera house in Oslo. has, in the meantime, written a new piece for Cikada—*Koto-in*—this time based on a Japanese temple. Together with *parthenon.*, these two pieces for Cikada will make up a whole concert.

HUDDERSFIELD

Cikada's conductor, Christian Eggen, went to Australia to conduct the Elision ensemble. He came home full of impressions and inspiration. We decided to do a project together, so when Christian had a concert with Elision in Brussels, Cikada's producer at the time, Sten Cranner, and I went with him to meet with their leader, Darryl Buckley, and some of their musicians. In some ways, it went against any common sense to do a project with musicians from two different continents, but we got along so well with the members of Elision—same humour, same love of parties, same views on music—it was all working in our favour. Richard Barrett was willing to compose the music, and we all met in Oslo shortly after:

Buckley, Barrett, and Cikada. The project, *DARK MATTER*, soon started taking shape. Barrett was to compose 90 minutes of music where one part was for Cikada alone. The artist Per Inge Bjørlo was hired to make installations that were going to frame both the musicians and the audience.

Barrett wrote quickly, and at the Ultima festival in 2001, Cikada premiered *The Empire of Lights*, *khasma*, and *stirrings*. We then travelled to Brisbane, Australia, to premiere the whole *DARK MATTER*. I perceived Barrett's music as very melodic. Melodies in layers on top of each other—flowing towards each other. Naturally, this is difficult to notate, the rhythms looked intimidating.

Bjørlo had been working on his installations for quite some time. Five months before the world premiere in Brisbane, they were shipped off in a container weighing several tons. Bjørlo was sponsored by the company, Norske Skog, who transported the container on board one of their ships.

We arrived in the Brisbane heat for one week of rehearsals, and one week of performances. Bjørlo was already there and had

put up several iron sculptures that both the musicians and the audience were to sit in, on, and under. The piano was placed at the front of the stage, the rest of the musicians were seated behind it, in some sort of an amphi. Eggen, was placed in front of me on a high sculpture—so high that I was struggling to see him. The audience was seated in various metal cages and funny metal chairs. It was all quite hard, uncomfortable, and somewhat depressing—but also part of the experience.

The concerts went well. We had a lovely couple of weeks there. One day, we suggested to go for a swim—a river ran right outside of the venue. Our Australian colleagues were not fond of swimming, there were crocodiles in the river and sharks in the sea. We took a trip to Bondi beach, anyway.

Many of us struggled with jet lag, and percussionist Bjørn Rabben and I thought it would be a good idea to get a massage before one of our concerts. Unfortunately, it brought all the tiredness to the surface. Right after *The Empire of Lights*, which opens *DARK MATTER*, followed 20 minutes without piano. I hunched over the instru-

ment and fell asleep instantly. I don't think I have ever slept that well, surrounded as I was by musicians and the audience. I was, however, brutally awakened by the violinists Henrik and Odd Hannisdal poking me in the back with their bows before the next movement.

The month prior to our departure for Australia, I had been asked by Susanna Eastbourne at the Huddersfield festival to play Rolf Wallin's new work *Seven Imperatives*. I had too much to do that autumn, but in an over-inspired moment I figured that saying yes would not change the situation—I would still have too much to do. I was able to learn everything except the second movement before leaving for Brisbane. The festival in Huddersfield took place right after our trip to Australia, and I wondered how I would get the time to learn this last part. In my desperation, I bought a little Casio synth and a set of headphones at the airport in Oslo. I then practiced all the way over to Brisbane, and then all the way back home. Before leaving for Huddersfield, I had time to play through all the movements for Wallin, who seemed happy about it all.

We also played Barrett's pieces in Huddersfield. I remember the chaos before our concert. There were problems with the electronics, and Barrett was almost two hours delayed while an audience of a couple of hundred people was waiting for him to hold a pre-talk in another room.

The concert took place in Saint Paul's Hall, one of my favourite concert venues. The acoustics are fabulous. The place is big, yet intimate and close to the audience. BBC recorded us. Later in the evening, I performed Wallin's *Seven Imperatives*. It went well, and I was relieved.

KENNETH KARLSSON

PER INGE BJØRLO





ABOUT THE WORKS

ROLF WALLIN (*1957):
SEVEN DISOBEDIENCES

Seven Imperatives is my answer to the tradition of character pieces for piano, such as Debussy's *Préludes* and Grieg's *Lyric Pieces*; short, relatively simple but concise miniatures with a motto, and usually with one prevalent sentiment—like a musical short story. The title of each of the seven pieces is an imperative consisting of four letters: *Seek! Push! Lean!* Etc.

One of the pianists who has taken the *Imperatives* into his repertoire, is Kenneth Karlsson—central to the founding and artistic development of Cikada. So, when Donaueschinger Musiktage asked me to write a work for Cikada for their concert

there in 2018, I seized the opportunity to explore another cornerstone of the piano literature: In a solo concerto, you see a whole orchestra dutifully following a brilliant ego that is completely dominating the stage. Beethoven's last piano concerto was even called the Emperor Concerto, an epithet the thoroughly anti-authoritarian composer would have hated.

As I transformed *Seven Imperatives* (2001) into the "concert" *Seven Disobediences* (2018), I looked into Cikada's beautiful collaborative social and artistic structure. When Kenneth, "The Emperor" (Italian: *imperatore*) gives his imperatives to his fellow musician, how do they react?


Well, when he tells them to spin, they happily spin together with him, but when he says "SINK!"; they do the opposite and rise gracefully towards the sky. Towards the end, they all leave their positions and their instruments and gather around the piano's big body to caress it and make it purr by fondly knocking on its shiny, black surface in loving disobedience.

—Rolf Wallin

KLAUS LANG (*1971):
PARTHENON.

Parthenon, or the construction of beauty. In my work as a composer, the two main influences were the Greek and the Japanese tradition of art and thought. Both traditions found ways of representing their worldviews in great pieces of architecture. Architecture mirrors a worldview. *parthenon*. is reflecting basic assumptions of Greek aesthetics.

Plato was very much influenced by the philosophy of Pythagoras. For Pythagoreans, mathematics describes the structure of the cosmos and define the laws of beauty. As we have seen, beauty draws lines, it discriminates: it is discrete numbers that



make limits and beauty definable. Numbers make order perceivable; they represent order and make order easily reproduceable, thus, they cannot only be used to clearly define the laws of beauty, but the idea of beauty is always linked to the concept of numbers. One example for these ideas is the Parthenon temple in Athens which was constructed as a symmetrical structure (symmetrical 4:4 (front) 8:8 (sides)) but also uses golden mean proportions for the design of all internal structures.

A very interesting element of Greek temples is their friezes. A Greek temple is a strict abstract geometrical form that encloses in the frieze an element made of naturalistic representations of persons animals etc. The contingent world of objects is thereby enclosed in a world of geometrical necessity. This confers perfectly with the definition of beauty given in Plato's dialogues. It is also a principle that I used in my composition *parthenon*. and that is important for my work in general. For me, the basic idea of how to translate from one field of art into another, is not to imitate the surface (like Programmmusik) but to find underlying abstract principles and give them an

acoustical representation. In the case of *parthenon*., the boundlessness of nature as depicted in the frieze is represented by numbers taken from the endless Fibonacci-series whereas the principle of order and lawfulness is present through the usage of static and confined Pythagorean number proportions. The structure of the temple is mirrored by a narrow band of sound, full of life and constantly changing (the frieze), that is enclosed by simple, linear structures in the very low and the very high registers mirroring the shape of the building.

In a sense my piece is something like a photographic negative of the Greek structure: In the Greek frieze, marble is used to represent everchanging life; my piece uses the most ephemeral material – sound – to represent architecture.

— Klaus Lang

RICHARD BARRETT (*1959):
THE EMPIRE OF LIGHTS / KHASMA / STIRRINGS

One of the highlights of my compositional activity at the beginning of the 21st century was my collaboration with Cikada and Christian Eggen, which culminated in several runs of performances, and a CD recording, of the extended composition *DARK MATTER*, a collaboration also with installation artist Per Inge Bjørlo and the Elision Ensemble from Australia. The three pieces recorded here were written for Cikada and performed several times as a "triptych". The performance at Huddersfield was particularly memorable.

Of course, it's not unusual for schedules to be unrealistically tight in festival conditions ... On the day of the concert, we first had to wait until the venue had been cleared after the lunchtime event, which involved an entire stage full of percussion instruments, and the sense of urgency and chaos escalated, until we were finally doing our soundcheck while an audience was waiting in another space for me to give a pre-concert talk. In the midst of this, someone's phone behind me suddenly gave out a

ringtone of Terry Riley's In C—I turned with a murderous look on my face to find that the someone was my composition teacher Peter Wiegold ... but, as often happens in situations like this, the actual performance was a liberation from all that tension into some incandescent playing from all concerned.

— Richard Barrett



KENNETH KARLSSON

Kenneth Karlsson was born in Åmål, Sweden. In his youth, he started playing impro and rock music with friends, and soon, an interest also in classical music was born. After a few years, he took up studies at the Norwegian Music Academy before continuing his musical education in the Netherlands. Since then, Karlsson has worked as a classical and contemporary classical pianist. In the 1980s and -90s, he was a member of groups like Ensemble K4, Oslo Sinfonietta, and Aquarius. He also had a more than 20 year long collaboration with mezzo-soprano Hilde Torgersen. Throughout the years, Karlsson played in several improvisation ensembles such as the quartet Point 4 with Jon Balke, Ingar Zach, and Bjørn Rabben.

Since 1989, Karlsson has been the pianist and artistic director of Cikada. In addition to this, he is currently playing in an improvisation duo with percussionist Ingar Zach, as well as a duo with soprano Elisabeth Holmertz. Together with Holmertz, he leads Vollen United, an experimental, genre-

crossing group mixing baroque, classical contemporary, pop, and improvisational music.

Karlsson has done several multimedia projects and often worked with dancers and video artists. He has initiated a great number of commissions and world premieres, having worked with composers and musicians such as Klaus Lang, Clara Iannotta, James Dillon, Carola Bauckholt, Liza Lim, Bent Sørensen, Richard Barrett, Lasse Marhaug, and Rolf Wallin. Karlsson also plays the Indian harmonium and synthesizer.

Kenneth Karlsson has toured the world extensively and recorded a number of albums. In 2001, he received a Grammy for his solo album "sofferte onde serene".





C I K A D A

Cikada has been a key player on the Nordic contemporary music scene since its formation in 1989. Never afraid to follow its own path, the ensemble continues to renew itself through astute, innovative programming, and the ever-present desire to let audiences experience some of the best music of our time.

The ensemble has since the outset consisted of ten permanent members: flute, clarinet, piano, percussion, string quintet and conductor. It performs at prestigious festivals such as Donaueschinger Musiktage, Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, Klangspuren Schwaz, Sacrum Profanum, Wittener Tage für Neue Kammermusik, Bergen International Festival, Warsaw Autumn, ECLAT Stuttgart and the Ultima Festival, of which it is a founding member.

Over the years Cikada has commissioned and premiered 200+ works by some of today's leading composers both internationally and from Norway. This includes

collaborations with composers such as Carola Bauckholt, Richard Barrett, Laurence Crane, James Dillon and Liza Lim, as well as recent commissions from Georg Friedrich Haas, Malin Bång, Clara Iannotta, and Klaus Lang. Cikada is also a strong protagonist for the many exciting voices of new Norwegian music, with large commissions and portrait concerts by Eivind Buene, Lars Petter Hagen, Jon Øivind Ness, Asbjørn Schaatum, Maja S.K. Ratkje, Rolf Wallin, and Kristine Tjøgersen to name a few.

Cikada has released numerous albums for ECM, LAWO Classics, Aurora and 2L among others, as well as appearing on several split albums and compilations. Their oeuvre has garnered accolades such as the Norwegian Grammy "Spellemannprisen", the Edison Award and the prestigious Nordic Council's Music Prize of 2005, in addition to several nominations.

Cikada is funded by the Norwegian Arts Council and Oslo Municipality.

MUSICIANS

HUDDERSFIELD:

Kersti Walldén—flute
Terje Lerstad—clarinet
Bjørn Rabben—percussion
Kenneth Karlsson—piano
Henrik Hannisdal—violin
Odd Hannisdal—violin
Marek Konstantynowicz—viola
Morten Hannisdal—cello
Magnus Söderberg—double bass
Christian Eggen—conductor

DONAUESCHINGEN:

Anne Karine Hauge—flute
Rolf Borch—clarinet
Bjørn Rabben—percussion
Kenneth Karlsson—piano
Karin Hellqvist—violin
Odd Hannisdal—violin
Bendik Foss—viola
Torun Stavseng—cello
Magnus Söderberg—double bass
Christian Eggen—conductor





CREDITS

RECORDED LIVE AT HUDDERSFIELD CONTEMPORARY MUSIC FESTIVAL,
ST. PAUL'S HALL, HUDDERSFIELD, 26 NOVEMBER 2001 (*THE EMPIRE OF
LIGHTS*, *KHASMA* ^{AND} *STIRRINGS*) AND AT DONAUESCHINGER MUSIKTAGE,
STRAWINSKY SAAL, DONAUESCHINGEN, 20 OCTOBER 2018 (*SEVEN
DISOBEDIENCES* ^{AND} *PARTHENON.*).

PRODUCTION (HUDDERSFIELD): BBC

PRODUCTION (DONAUESCHINGEN): SÜDWESTRUNDFUNK / SWR2 NEUE MUSIK

RECORDING ENGINEER (DONAUESCHINGEN): KLAUS-DIETER HESSE

SOUND ENGINEER (DONAUESCHINGEN): UTE HESSE

MASTERING: THOMAS WOLDEN

BOOKLET NOTES: KENNETH KARLSSON

ENGLISH TRANSLATION: CECILIE STENSRUD

BOOKLET EDITOR: HEGE WOLLENG

COVER DESIGN: ANETTE L'ORANGE / BLUNDERBUSS

COVER PHOTO: SIV DOLMEN

ARTIST PHOTO (KENNETH KARLSSON): SIV DOLMEN

SESSION PHOTOS: BJØRN RABBEN

SEVEN DISOBEDIENCES ^{AND} *PARTHENON.* LICENSED BY:

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CIKADA LIVE

HUDDERSFIELD
DONAUESCHINGEN

ROLF WALLIN *1957
SEVEN DISOBEDIENCES (2018)
FOR PIANO ^{AND} ENSEMBLE

01 I.SEEK_____01:31
02 II.PUSH_____05:09
03 III.SINK_____02:03
04 IV.SPIN_____03:53
05 V.STAB_____00:41
06 VI.LEAN_____08:08
07 VII.QUIT_____00:20

KLAUS LANG *1971
PARTHENON. (2018)

08 I._____17:49
09 II._____03:58

RICHARD BARRETT *1959

10 *THE EMPIRE OF LIGHTS* (2000–2001)
FROM DARK MATTER_____10:41

11 *KHASMA* (1999–2001)
FROM DARK MATTER_____13:14

STIRRINGS (1999–2001)

12 I._____00:51
13 II._____00:50
14 III._____01:01
15 IV._____00:51
16 V._____00:52
17 VI._____00:53