

LAWO  
CLASSICS

KJELL HABBESTAD

SONGAR OM KJÆRLEIK  
SONGS OF LOVE

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## SONGS OF LOVE

Looking through my songs I discovered that most of them deal with love, often lost or unrequited love; yes, even with the same aspects that one finds in Edvard Munch's central themes: love, angst and death.

With one exception, the songs in the album are arranged more or less chronologically according to the date of the source, from the Bible to poems by contemporary Norwegian poet Paal-Helge Haugen. Surprisingly, this sequence results in a dramaturgical movement from the love described in the Song of Songs, through the angst-filled life, to death. In order that the album not end on a negative note, however, I have placed the poem by Olav H. Hauge (1908–1994) after the Haugen (1945–) poems.

And there is one more coincidence: Almost without exception the chronological sequence coincides with the order in which the songs were composed—from “3 Canticles” in 1984 to “It is that Dream” in 2015.

### 3 Canticles, op. 12 (1984)

The musical material here is inspired by the Yemenite-Judaic song as written down and recorded by Yehiel Adaqi, Uri Sharvit and Ovadya Tovya in Jerusalem. This material has functioned primarily as a creative point of departure and in varying degrees has been altered as I have adapted it to my own tonal language and to the contours of the text. The songs have also been clad in a “jazz-harmonic” dress; this is especially alien to the source culture, which uses drums and copper tray as the sole accompaniment.

The texts as sung come from the biblical Song of Solomon in the nynorsk version by Alexander Seippel and Ragnvald Indrebø published in 1938. (Nynorsk is the written Norwegian derived from rural dialects.) The English versions are from the King James Bible.

#### I sleep, but my heart waketh

The melodic starting point, Wa(l)nabi Law Dirit, is a four-measure tonal formula that is repeated. The song belongs to the Yemenite-Judaic repertoire for women. It is sung in the home of the bride on Monday of the wedding week, accompanied by drums and a copper

tray. The bride's mother and mother-in-law light wax candles and place them in a masraja, a deep and wide marble bowl. One of the dancers places the masraja on her head and dances. In my version the song is more meditative than jubilant but with an undertone of blessedness.

**" By night on my bed I sought him**

The melodic source here is also a Yemenite-Judaic song for women in 7/8 time with short phrases endlessly repeated and with only the slightest variation from one iteration to the next. The original melody was in effect a round in which the singer could start wherever she wished: from the beginning, from the middle, or from the concluding phrase. The original text describes how the woman longed for her lover as he was away on dangerous journeys. When he returned home the rain came, the blessed water for a dry earth—or as the source song expresses it, "the rain came, and with the rain the beloved." In my version the beloved is far away and the song does not conclude with his homecoming. Quite the opposite: I use the static quality of a round to depict the aimlessness and hopelessness in the woman's anxious searching.

**"" I am the rose of Sharon**

The thematic material in this piece is borrowed from two Yemenite songs for women: "Wahin Ya Galbi" and "Hin Ya Galb. Wahin Ya Galbi" is sung with drum and copper tray accompaniment in the bride's home on Monday evening of the bridal week. This occurs while Alnaksh—the coloring of the hands of the bride—is being performed. "Hin Ya Galb" is sung in connection with henna, another step in the Monday ceremony. The henna is ground and mixed with water. One of the female dancers places a copper bowl containing the henna mixture on her head and dances as the singers sing accompanied by drum and copper tray. Thereafter the bowl of henna is given to another woman who applies it to the hands of the bride. This dance is also in 7/8 time. In my version the lovers find each other after this song and confirm the bond between them in dance, in burning love, in ecstasy.

This cycle was composed in fulfillment of an assignment at the Bergen Music Conservatory in 1984.

**12 Leaves from an Eastern Garden,  
op. 46 (1995)**

The texts of the songs in this cycle are literal Norwegian translations by Paal-Helge Haugen of 12 Japanese haikus. The first two are by Matsuo Basho (1644-1694), the rest by Kobayashi Issa (1763-1827). Haugen writes regarding these poems, "It may seem brutal to pull a rare exotic plant up by its root and replant it in an alien and less receptive milieu, and there is every reason to believe that it won't survive such treatment. A haiku is such a rare plant that . . . is firmly bound to its original milieu and the idiosyncracies of the language in which it was born." In spite of these caveats, however, Haugen has tackled the job. The 12 haikus used in my song cycle are taken from *Haiku, 200 norske versjonar* (Haikus, 200 Norwegian Versions), 1992, which also includes *Leaves from an Eastern Garden*. Haugen did not attempt to preserve the 5-7-5 haiku metric pattern in his translations. The English version accompanying these notes restores the 5-7-5 metric pattern, albeit with some unavoidable alterations in meaning. Most of these haikus are not love poems in the ordinary sense. They are pithy, insightful observations about nature and life.

How should one set little gems like this to music? Whereas a poem, painting or sculpture can be viewed countless times and from many angles, music is bound to time. The information flows past, the moment is quickly over, and one must rely on one's memory to assess what one has experienced. One frequently used compositional technique is to expand, repeat, develop, recapitulate the text. It is very tempting, when one is dealing with a short text, to linger over it for awhile, plumb its depths, explain it.

I chose the opposite route: to clothe the text in music and, with few exceptions, not repeat a single word. This results in very short performance times for each song—about 30 seconds for most of them. Because the texts are so short and finely hewn I took this route in the hope that the listener will remember the gist of the text even if s/he is not looking at it while listening.

Each haiku has a unique insight or value. Many of them also contain a contrast, a surprise, a mood that varies from line to line. I have tried to honor these characteristics through musical expression and tempo shifts, to interpret the texts in a kind of musical recreation.

This piece was composed as a gift to Paal-Helge Haugen in honor of his 50th birthday on April 26, 1995. I presented it to him with the following greeting:

"Dear Paal! I sneaked through the gate into your easternmost garden one dark night and plucked 12 leaves. Here you get them back, carefully packed in fresh tones and thin paper. Congratulations upon reaching half a century!"

### 6 Ibsen Songs, op. 50 (1996)

These seven songs are part of my 14 Ibsen-sanger (14 Ibsen songs), op. 50. The songs in the present album were selected because they deal with love and longing. They were commissioned by Norwegian baritone Njål Sparbo for a concert in Skien (Ibsen's home town) in 1996. Grieg's op. 25 (1876), Six Songs to texts by Henrik Ibsen, was also performed at this concert. The commission specified that I was to use some of the same texts that Grieg had used. The overlapping titles are "With a Water-Lily," "A Swan" and "Departed!"

It may seem presumptuous of me to write songs using texts that Grieg had set over a hundred years earlier. That is what I had been asked to do, however, and I took comfort in knowing that a poem can inspire different people in different ways. I decided to venture forth without looking into Grieg's treatment of these texts beyond what I already knew about them. It seems reasonable to think that a distance of over a century would result in songs dramatically different from Grieg's. To my surprise, however, the result was much closer to those 19th-century songs than I had imagined they would be. Part of the reason may well be that the texts incorporate strict rhyming and metric patterns and are written in an archaic (Danish) form of Norwegian. On several occasions I have found that my treatment of texts is influenced by the milieu in which those texts originated. Modern, abstract, free verse, for example, often engenders a more avant-garde musical expression.

In my cycle "With a Water-Lily," "A Swan," "Thanks" and "Moonlight Wandering After a Ball" are neo-romantic in character, "The Eider Duck" is more impressionistic, while "Departed!" is somewhat more expressionistic.

In what follows I shall attempt to explain the sometimes hidden meaning of the texts of the various songs. The individuals and published works that have contributed to my understanding of these texts are acknowledged at the end of these notes.

In most cases the underlying theme is that the poet could not find a way to reconcile his art and his love within the moral norms and principles that prevailed at that time. The artist stands apart, a solitary figure—with both fame and envy—but perhaps most important in these poems, without an opportunity for love, without a woman with whom to share love, or in a marriage that is in shambles. (The exception is the poem "Thanks.")

#### <sup>1</sup> With a Water-Lily

The poem is a serenade to the young Maria. The poet brings her a blossom "on the water gently streaming" and encourages her to display it on her bosom. But—the blossom also contains a danger; it has long roots reaching down into the murky depths, roots that are difficult to detach: a symbol of the mysterious world of eroticism that lies beneath the surface. Something that appears to be simple and innocent has a deeper dimension where

dangers lurk. This vertical axis is a recurring theme in Ibsen—from the starry skies to the bottom of the sea, with the surface of the water as an important midpoint. A mountain pond with water lilies can look innocent on the surface, but under the lilies swirl dangerous currents; yes, perhaps even a scheming water-sprite.

#### <sup>2</sup> A Swan

The poem has to do with a secret tryst with an innocent young woman who is enticed into an experience of passionate love. The northward flight of the swan is a metaphor for humankind's longing for love. The legend of the mute swan that finds its voice only when it is about to die is a common theme in Greek and Roman literature. Death may symbolize the woman's transition from maiden to mature woman. The poem depicts a complicated love affair in which "promises given were meant to be riven," where unbeknownst to the young woman the water-sprite—eroticism—is luring her downward. The concluding line is a tender acknowledgement of what has happened: "Ah—(she was) truly a swan, then."

### III The Eider Duck

The poem can be read as an autobiographical depiction of a disillusioned poet whose genius is unappreciated in his homeland. He “builds a new home in the cool springtime” but time and again his home is plundered: a greedy fisherman “steals the down from the eider duck’s nest.” Finally the duck has had enough of Norway’s clime: “Then southward he flies with bleeding breast: In a sun-drenched land he will build his nest.” For Ibsen, that sun-drenched land was Italy, where he lived in self-imposed exile for many years. The poem can also be interpreted as a commentary on repeated disappointments in love.

### IV Thanks

Notwithstanding his infidelities, Ibsen genuinely appreciated Suzannah’s many contributions to his life and art. This poem expresses that appreciation. When he showed it to her he asked, “Do you know for whom this was written?” She didn’t know. Then he said, “Read the title backwards.” The Norwegian title is “Tak” which is an archaic spelling of the Norwegian word for “thanks.” So: Kat (meaning Cat), which had been Suzannah’s

nickname since childhood. Thus the poem was written as a gesture of thanks to Suzannah for all she had meant for his work as a playwright. It could have been placed last in this cycle, but the thought of ‘the golden ratio’ and the lure of the transitory—in ABA form—won the day.

### V Moonlight Wandering after a Ball

The text refers to a ball during which Ibsen dances with a woman who had caught his eye. He apparently danced rather hesitantly to start with, but an observer wrote, “We tried to get a little life into Ibsen, and we succeeded. With the willing assistance of his partner and others the couple set off in a lively gallop—with a little difficulty at first, to be sure, but without any notable mishaps—and soon it went swimmingly . . . Later he tried a few other dances with equally good results.”

### VI Departed!

The poem may have been written in memory of Thea Bruun, the model for Agnes in *Brand*. Dealing with a major theme of the overall mood—the transitory, the inevitable, the fact that we shall lose each other—it depicts a feeling of melancholy following a party.

Something was real for a moment but is no more. The place is the same, but the glamor and merriment of the party have been replaced by “an empty sadness.” The young woman the poet has in mind left the party without responding to his overtures. His apparent indifference stands in contrast to the depth of feeling that he had for her. And if “but an evening” is interpreted as a metaphor for a lifetime, the weightiness of the contrast becomes even greater.

### Jenny—a tone poem, op. 62 (2001)

*Jenny* is a novel by Sigrid Undset (1882-1949), written after a stay in Rome and published in 1911. With this novel, which is regarded as her artistic breakthrough, Sigrid Undset inaugurated the realistic style of writing that she would practice for the rest of her career. With her fearless openness about erotic relationships she aroused both attention and indignation. Nowadays *Jenny* is considered one of the classics in Norwegian literature.

Jenny is a successful young artist who longs for a husband and children. She gets tired of waiting and becomes engaged to Helge Gram, a 26-year-old student from Kristiania. They return to Norway, but Jenny’s love for Helge fades. She falls in love with Helge’s father, Gert Gram, and ends her engagement with Helge. Even though she knows that Gert is not the right one for her either, Jenny allows herself to be seduced by him. Gert is a thoughtful and tender man, but he bears the marks of the destructive circumstances of his former marriage. When Jenny realizes that she is pregnant with his child, she leaves him. When the child dies, she loses her will to live.

Returning to Rome, Jenny finds herself unable to resume her work as an artist. She rebuffs a new approach from Helge. A friend of hers, Gunnar Heggen, also courts her, but she ignores him because, in her view, their close and trusting friendship was incompatible with a romantic relationship. After being raped by Helge, Jenny takes her own life.

*Jenny* is one of the earliest depictions of female sexuality in Norwegian literature. The author deals with the interplay between gender, sexuality and marriage and in the end allows the main character to choose death. In so doing Sigrud Undset became part of a tradition of female authors writing novels in which the main character suffers a total collapse. *Constance Ring*, a novel by Undset's predecessor Amalie Skram (1864-1905), is an earlier example.

Undset said that she wrote *Jenny* because of a fascination with "the lovely and dangerous time" in which she lived. The most colorful portions of the novel take place in Rome in scenes involving Nordic artists. We meet a woman who is happy in her work and dreams of a love that fits in with that life, but when all moral bounds and social mores are uprooted the individual becomes totally

responsible for his/her own life. Gunnar Heggen compares Jenny to a lily: "She was like the lily, that cannot right itself again when its stem has been broken."

The song was composed as a gift to Ragna and Trond Dahlen in honor of their silver wedding anniversary in 2001.

#### **Epitaph, op. 75 (2004)**

An epitaph is a text, often in the form of a rhymed verse, written in honor of or in memory of someone who has died. Epitaphs are usually displayed either on a gravestone or on a plaque.

In my song cycle the honoree is no longer living. The first song (departure) states: "Then you travel through me once more; finished, turned away. . . . a weak puff of what might have been . . . You have gone and left it behind you . . . the looming, dazzling white absence."

In the second song (he embarks) we meet Kharon, the ferryman who, according to Greek mythology, transports the dead over Styx, the river that divides the world of the living from the world of the dead. An angel

interrogates the dead person before s/he goes on board.

In the last song (epitaph) we go through graveside rituals. Only the memories remain as the mourners "rock [the deceased] back through time" and carve words on the gravestone.

I have worked with Paal-Helge Haugen on many projects. He is a highly versatile poet who is also an author of prose works, a writer of librettos and a translator. Among the works on which we have collaborated are *Ei natt på jorda* (A Night on Earth, 1993); the operas *Hans Egedes natt* (Hans Egede's Night, 1995), *The Maid of Norway* (2000) and *Nenia-til minne om Fartein Valen* (Nenia—in memory of Fartein Valen, 2014).

The work was commissioned by Håkan Hagegård for inclusion in *En nordisk sangantologi for det 21. århundre* (A Nordic Anthology of Songs for the 21st Century) and was premiered at the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo in 2004.

#### **It is That Dream, op. 94 (2015)**

And lastly the dream, which we nonetheless carry in our hearts—"that something wonderful will happen . . ." Olav H. Hauge was one of the most important lyricists within the 20th century modernistic tradition and has always been my model as a poet. Hauge's diary 1924-1994, which was published in 2000, reveals his thought processes as he reflects on his own existence and the details of daily life, also his thoughts about literature and art and developments in cultural life in general. Many of Hauge's poems incorporate realistic and concrete pictures and motifs that can function as symbols or metaphors for human experience. In his later works the picture often stands by itself, without explanation, leaving it to the reader to create his or her own meaning.

The poem "It is that Dream"—from *Dropar i austavind* (Drops in the East Wind)—has many layers and deals with a dream or a longing that everyone carries in their heart. It can be a dream that the chosen one will come. It can have religious undertones. It can be read as an answer to the question, "What gives us hope when our lives are filled with

suffering and adversity?" The landscape and natural beauty of the Hardanger region of Norway are often present in Hauge's poems, both concretely and as a source of symbols. Perhaps it is appropriate, therefore, that we employ both a musical quotation from a Hardanger composer, Geirr Tveitt (1908–81), and a passage using the Hardanger fiddle as we contemplate the possibility that some morningtide we "will glide into a harbor we didn't know was there."

The audience for the NRK (Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation) program series "Dikt & forbannet løgn" ("Poems & Damned Lies") voted it the best Norwegian poem ever.

My composition was commissioned by Andreas Sønning with assistance from The Norwegian Composers' Fund. It was premiered at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC, in October, 2015.

*I am indebted to the following sources for factual information and interpretive insights that have greatly enriched my understanding of many of these texts: "A treasury of Jewish Yemenite Chants (The Israel Institute for Sacred Music, Israel, 1981), Masahiko Inadomi and Paal-Helge Haugen in "Blad frå ein austleg hage" (Leaves from an Eastern Garden), Henrik Ibsens skrifter, Bokkilden, Atle Næss, Aschehoug, Feministen, Haugesenteret, Cappelen Damm, Kritikerlaget, Store norske leksikon and Wikipedia.*

Kjell Habbestad



### 3 Canticles

I sleep, but my heart waketh

I sleep, but my heart waketh:  
it is the voice of my beloved  
that knocketh, saying,  
Open to me, my sister,  
my love, my dove, my undefiled:  
for my head is filled with dew,  
and my locks with the drops of the night.

(Song of Solomon, 5,2. KJV.)

By night on my bed I sought him

By night on my bed I sought him  
whom my soul loveth:  
I sought him, but I found him not.  
I will rise now, and go about the city  
in the streets, and in the broad ways  
I will seek him whom my soul loveth:  
I sought him, but I found him not.  
The watchmen that go about the city found me:  
"Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?"  
They smote me, they wounded me;  
the keepers of the walls took away  
my veil from me.

### 3 Høgsongar for låg røyst

Eg søv, men mitt hjarta vaker

Eg søv, men mitt hjarta vaker;  
då høyrer eg målet åt venen min  
som bankar på;  
Lat upp for meg, du mi syster,  
min hugnad, mi duva, du reine!  
For mitt hovud er fullt av dogg,  
mine lokkar av nattedropar.

(Høgs. 5,2)

På lægjet leita eg um natti

På lægjet leita eg um natti  
etter han som leikar i min hug;  
eg leita, men fann han ikkje.  
Eg vil upp og sviva kring i byen,  
på gatone og på torgi;  
eg vil leita etter han som leikar i min hug.  
Eg leita, men fann han ikkje.  
Eg møtte vaktarane, som sviv kring i byen:  
"Hev de set han som leikar i min hug?"  
Dei slo meg, dei gav meg sår;  
dei tok sløret ifrå meg,  
vaktarane på murane.

I sought him, but I could not find him;  
I called him, but he gave me no answer.

(Song of Solomon 3:1-3, 5:7, & 5:6b. KJV)

I am the rose of Sharon

I am the rose of Sharon,  
and the lily of the valley.  
He brought me to the banqueting house,  
and his banner over me was love.  
His left hand is under my head,  
and his right hand doth embrace me.  
Set me as a seal upon thine heart,  
as a seal upon thine arm:  
for love is strong as death;  
jealousy is cruel as the grave:  
the coals thereof are coals of fire,  
which hath a most vehement flame.

(Song of Solomon 2:1, 2:4, 2:6 & 8:6 KJV)

Eg leita, men fann han ikkje.  
Eg ropa, men fekk ikkje svar.

(Høgs. 3,1-3 og 5,7 og 6b)

Ein engblom frå Saron er eg

Ein engblom frå Saron er eg,  
ei lilja frå dalane.  
Inn i vinhuset hev du ført meg,  
ditt merke yver meg er kjærleik.  
Di vinstre hand er under mitt hovud,  
med den høgre femner du meg.  
Set meg til innsigle på ditt hjarta,  
til innsigle på din arm;  
for like sterk som dauden er kjærleiken,  
strid som helheimen i si trå;  
han brenn som den logande eld,  
ein Herrens loge.

(Høgs. 2,1,4,6 og 8,6)



## 12 Leaves from an Eastern Garden

- 1  
The lark's warbling song  
For her is a single day  
Never long enough
- 2  
One remembers much  
When the spring-blessed cherry tree  
Blossoms once again
- 3  
The first day of spring  
Even my shadow becomes  
Young and spry again
- 4  
Blossoming plum tree  
Still are the portals of Hell  
Closed tight and bolted
- 5  
Thunderstorms coming  
Or might it rather just be  
My empty stomach

## 12 blad frå ein austleg hage

- 1  
Lerka har halsen full av song  
for henne er ikkje  
dagen lang nok
- 2  
Mangt minnest eit menneske  
når kirsebærtreet  
blømer igjen – på ny.
- 3  
Første vårdagen  
til og med skuggen min  
blir ung og sprek
- 4  
Blømande plommetre  
framleis er  
helvetes portar stengde
- 5  
Torevêr over sommarmarkene  
eller kan det vere  
den tome magen min

6  
Rainwashed summer sky  
Not a single speck remains  
To be wiped away

7  
Once upon a time  
Even the winds of autumn  
Were as young as spring

8  
Welcome shining moon  
You can rise in the sky and  
Take it as it is

9  
Where in void of space  
Is she waiting for me  
My wandering star

10  
Midwinter doldrums  
No profound introspection  
No big transgressions

6  
Reinvaska midsommarhimmel  
ikkje ein skyflekk  
å pusse bort

7  
Ein gong  
var også haustvinden  
ung

8  
Vel komen klare måne  
du får stige på  
og ta det som det er

9  
Kvar i himmelrømda  
ventar ho på meg  
vandrestjerna mi

10  
Midvinterstilt  
ingen djupe tankar  
ingen store synder

11  
This world's true heaven  
From this day forward each year  
Will be a bonus

12  
In winter's twilight  
The horse whinnies and wants home  
Just like its master

(Texts: Paal-Helge Haugen  
English versions: William H. Halverson.)

### 6 Ibsen Songs

#### I With a Water-Lily

See, Maria, what I'm bringing,  
Flow'r with snow-white petals clinging.  
On the water gently streaming  
It contentedly lay dreaming.

Sweet Maria, if you want it  
On your bosom you shall flaunt it.

11  
Denne verdens himmel  
heretter er kvart år  
ei gåve

12  
I vinterskumring og regn  
kneggar hesten og vil heim  
han óg

(frå Paal-Helge Haugen: *Blad frå ein austleg hage*, Det Norske Samlaget, 1965, og *Haiku: 200 norske versjonar*, De Norske Bokklubbene, 1992)

### 6 Ibsen-sanger

#### I Med en Vandlilje

Se, Marie, hvad jeg bringer;  
blomsten med de hvide vinger.  
på de stille strømme båren  
svam den drømmetung i våren.

Vil du den til hjemmet vie,  
fæst den på dit bryst, Marie;

'Neath its petals will be hiding  
Waves that on the stream were gliding.  
Child, beware the current streaming,  
Perils threaten one who's dreaming!  
Water-sprites pretend to slumber,  
Lilies frolic without number.

In thy heart stirs flowing water,  
Danger lurks, my trusting daughter!  
Lilies frolic without number,  
Water-sprites pretend to slumber.

#### II A Swan

My snowy-white swan,  
So silently gliding,  
By no sound e'er confiding  
Your voice of singing.

Peace bestowing, you  
Elfin in hiding,  
Ever watchful, o'er  
deep waters gliding.

A last farewell, then,  
When promises given  
Were meant to be riven--  
Yes, then it sounded!

bag dens blade da sig dølge  
vil en mindre stille bølge.  
Vogt dig, barn, for tjernets strømme.  
farligt, farligt der at drømme!  
Nøkken lader som han sover; –  
liljer leger ovenover.

Barn, din barm er tjernets strømme.  
Farligt, farligt der at drømme; –  
liljer leger ovenover;  
nøkken lader som han sover.

#### II En Svane

Min hvide svane,  
du stumme, du stille,  
hverken slag eller trille  
lod sangrøst ane.

Angst beskyttende  
alfen, som sover, –  
altid lyttende  
gled du henover.

Men sidste mødet,  
da eder og øjne  
var lønlige løgne,  
ja da, da lød det!

In song's first sighing  
Your journey was ended.  
You sang in dying—  
Ah, truly a swan, then.

### III The Eider Duck

The eider duck lives in Norway's clime,  
He builds a new home in the cool springtime.

He plucks from his breast the fluffy down,  
And feathers his nest far from village and town.

But the fisherman comes on an evil quest:  
He steals the down from the eider duck's nest.

Though the robber is smug,  
the duck knows what to do:  
He pecks at his chest and plucks  
soft down anew.

If it happens again, he has a new thought:  
He'll build a new nest in a well-hidden spot.

If it happens a third time, he'll take to the sky;  
He knows he'll be safe, for the robber can't fly.

I toners føden  
du sluttet din bane.  
Du sang i døden; –  
du var dog en svane!

### III Ederfuglen

Ederfuglen i Norge bor;  
der holder han til ved den blygrå fjord.

Han plukker af brystet de bløde dun,  
og bygger sig rede både varm og lun.

Men fjordens fisker har stålsat hug;  
han plyndrer redet til sidste fnug.

Er fiskeren grum,  
så er fuglen varm,  
han ribber igjen  
sin egen barm

Og plyndres han atter, så klæder han dog  
sit rede påny i en velgemt krog.

Men røves hans tredje, hans sidste skat, –  
da spiler han vinger en forårs-nat.

Then southward he flies with bleeding  
breast: In a sun-drenched land he will build  
his nest.

### IV Thanks

Her despair was the scree  
That obstructed my way;  
Her joy was the breezes  
That brightened my day.

She resides on the seashore  
Where freedom prevails,  
Where the poet's lithe swan boat  
Can unfurl its sails.

Her kin are the figures that  
Scurry along,  
Flags waving, voice shouting  
In time with my song.

Her goal is to kindle  
Such fire in my soul  
That no one could guess  
That she'd played a role.

Da kløver han skodden med blodigt bryst; –  
mod syd, mod syd til en solskins-kyst!

### IV Tak

Hendes sorg var de vånder,  
som knudred min sti, --  
hendes lykke de ånder,  
som bar mig forbi.

Hendes hjem er her ude  
på frihedens hav,  
hvor digterens skude  
kan spejle sig af.

Hendes slægt er de skiftende  
skikkelsers rad,  
som skrider med viftende  
flag i mit kvad.

Hendes mål er at tænde  
mit syn i glød,  
så ingen fik kende,  
hvo hjælpen bød.

Because she's expecting  
No thanks for her boon,  
I'm writing and printing  
A thank-you tune.

▼ Moonlight Wandering After a Ball

Hush, the stillness! From the ballroom  
Comes no more the sound of gladness;  
No more voices, no more music  
Pierce the night to quell the sadness.

In the west the waning moonlight  
Soon will end its nightly beaming;  
Earth, beneath its snowy blanket,  
Falls asleep in blissful dreaming.

Party's over, but in mem'ry  
I recall among the dancers  
Weaving 'round me in the ballroom  
One lithe maiden who entranced me.

Soon the moon will cease its shining,  
I will rest in slumber's bosom;  
Then my soul can yield to dreaming,  
Bathed in light from mem'ry's prism.

Og just for hun venter  
ej tak engang,  
jeg digter og prenter  
en takkens sang.

▼ Måneskinsvandring efter et bal

Tys, hvor stille! – hist fra salen  
lyder glæden ikke længer,  
Ingen stemme, ingen tone  
gjennem nattens stille trænger.

Langt i vester kaster månen  
snart det sidste blik henover  
Jorden, som i glemselsdrømme  
under sneens lillier sover.

Endt er ballet; men i tanken  
ser jeg end iblandt de hvide  
skikkelser, som svæve gennem  
rækkerne, en let sylphide.

Snart er månen dalet, da skal  
søvnens arme mig omfatte,  
da kan sjælen glide frit paa  
drømmens hav med mindets skatte.

▼ Departed!

The party ended,  
the last farewells spoken,  
the mirth suspended,  
the silence unbroken.

An empty sadness  
upon me descending,  
no sound of gladness  
the night air rending.

'Twas but an evening  
with friends all light-hearted;  
she set me dreaming,  
now she has departed.

(Texts: Henrik Ibsen.  
English versions: William H. Halverson.)

Jenny – a tone poem, op. 62

1 "Il levar del Sole"

The first rays of sunshine reflected in a  
window, the houses acquire a reddish hue.  
"Amore, baciare!"

▼ Borte!

De sidste gæster  
vi fulgte til grinden;  
farvellets rester  
tog nattevinden.

I tifold øde  
lå haven og huset,  
hvor toner søde  
mig nys berused.

Det var en fest kun,  
før natten den sorte;  
hun var en gæst kun, –  
og nu er hun borte.

(Henrik Ibsen: *Digte*, 1871)

Jenny – et tonedikt, op. 62

1 "Il levar del Sole"

Den første solstrålen fanget i et  
vindue, husene rødmer.  
"Amore, baciare!"

The spring water sparkles and glistens like gold, the town rises and shines.  
Nowhere in the world is morning like in Rome.  
As if from a sleep that becomes lighter and lighter,  
it is suddenly awake, well rested and healthy.  
"Il levar del Sole"  
Dark, narrow streets and alleys. Dingy palaces.  
Church domes that reach toward the dim canopy of the sky.  
Within is darkness, the altar shines,  
the light flickers unsteadily in candlesticks and metal cups.  
Prayers without words.  
Stillness, stillness over the soft golden luster of the lights,  
and the air is white with sunshine,  
the morning cold and pure.  
"La luna con palido canto!"

## " Jenny

There is always someone who has needed Jenny.  
But lonely is the one who always has to be the strongest.

Springvannet gnistrer og stråler som gull, byen hever seg og skinner.  
Ingen steder i verden er morgenen som i Rom.  
Som fra en søvn, som bli lettere og lettere,  
er den plutselig våken, utsovet og sunn.  
"Il levar del Sole!"  
Mørke, trange gater og smug. Dunkle palasser.  
Kirkekupler som svever mot himmelens lysdunkle hvelv.  
Inne i mørket, alteret skinner,  
lyset flimrer urolig i staker og metall.  
Bønn uten ord.  
Stillhet, stillhet over lysenes bløte gullglans,  
og luften er hvit av solskinn,  
morgenen kald og ren.  
"La luna con palido canto!"

## " Jenny

Det er alltid noen som har trengt Jenny.  
Men ensom blir den som alltid skal være den sterkeste.

Young, healthy, beautiful and warm,  
but different.  
Strong and independent. Alone.  
An indifferent smile in contrast to the laughter of others.  
A raging anger hidden behind a contemptuous glance.  
But it was hard.  
Be loved? Be loved totally,  
totally, so none of her potential lay unused and decayed?  
No, she didn't dare, didn't want to, not she!

## " Spring

Slowly and imperceptibly,  
Oh! --- it came as slowly and imperceptibly as spring here in the south.  
Each day a little warmer, each day a few more blossoms,  
Oh! --- this love, this slow, healthy growth,  
a dream, an anxiety, a longing to give,  
give it to him, her body's cool, healthy and juice-filled leaf.  
Tears, cold tears running down her cheek,  
as if something were gone forever.

Ung, sunn, vakker og varm,  
men anderledes.  
Serk og selvstendig. Alene.  
Et likegyldig smil mot de andres latter.  
Et fortærende raseri gjemt bak et hånlige blikk.  
Men det var vondt.  
Bli elsket? Bli elsket helt,  
helt, så ingen evne ble liggende ubrukt og råtnet?  
Nei hun torde ikke, ville ikke, ikke hun!

## " Våren

Langsomt og umerkelig,  
å – det var kommet så langsomt og umerkelig som våren her syd.  
Hver dag litt mere varme, hver dag litt flere blomster,  
Å – denne kjærlighet, den langsomme, sunne vekst,  
en drøm, en angst, en lengsel etter å gi,  
gi det til ham, sitt legemes kjølige, friske og saftfylte blad.  
Tårer, kalde tårer nedover kinnet,  
som om noe skulle være forbi.

#### IV Day of Reckoning

God knows, things have not gone  
for me as I wanted  
And I have wanted for many years.  
So stern and hard, so lonely  
was the life I thought was the most worthwhile.  
I wanted to live in such a way that I never  
needed to be ashamed,  
never had to be in doubt.  
Is it so strange to long for a little love?  
Stupid to throw myself into this man's arms.  
A storm, a love, sick with the seed of death.  
I lied, I lied to myself.  
A warmth fell over me from him.  
I despise myself.  
Before you say you love, you should know  
that you can keep your word.

#### V Feverish nights

– and now she carried his child!  
Sick from longing, behind an armor  
of opinions and thoughts,  
and then she had asked him to go.  
Jenny's son lived for six weeks,  
exactly forty-four and a half days.

#### IV Oppgjør

Gud skal vite, det er ikke gått  
meg som jeg ville  
og jeg har villet i mange år.  
Så strengt og hardt, så ensomt  
det liv jeg syntes var det verdigste.  
Jeg ville leve så jeg aldri  
behøvde skamme meg,  
aldri behøvde tvile.  
Er det så rart å lengte etter litt kjærlighet?  
Vanvittig å stupe inn i denne mannens armer.  
En storm, en kjærlighet, syk, med spiren til død.  
Jeg løy, jeg løy for meg selv.  
Det falt varme over meg fra ham.  
Jeg forakter meg selv.  
Man skal vite før man sier at man elsker  
at man kan stå ved sitt ord.

#### V Febernetter

– og nå bar hun hans barn!  
Syk av lengsel, bak en rustning  
av meninger og tanker,  
og så hadde hun bedt ham gå.  
Jennys sønn levde i seks uker,  
nøyaktig fire og førti og en halv dag.

"Little boy – mother's sweet little boy –  
You are not permitted – listen to me –  
Little boy cannot be permitted to be dead.  
"I will not, will not – and I want to,  
I don't know, get all the thoughts to stop.  
Die. Or live. Crazy, abominable."

#### VI The lily

Jenny, Jenny – as the birds returned in the  
springtime, dead and gone.  
Like a flower, buds of longing,  
thirsting for longing, thirsting for sunshine,  
delicate and full of juice, like the lily,  
that cannot right itself again  
when its stem has been broken.  
Jenny, so full of longing,  
dreams that never became reality.  
The dream, alas! the dream,  
an ecstatic music that never goes away.

(Texts: Sigrud Undset  
English versions: William H. Halverson.)

"Lillegutt – mors lille, lille deilige gutt –  
du får ikke lov – hører du –  
lilegutt kan ikke få lov til å være død.  
"Jeg vil ikke, vil ikke – og jeg får lyst til,  
jeg vet ikke, få alle tankene til å holde opp.  
Dø. Eller leve. Vanvittig, avskyelig."

#### VI Liljen

Jenny, Jenny – i vårens fuglefløyt,  
død og borte.  
Som en blomst, knopper av lengsel,  
higende etter lengsel, higende etter sol,  
skjør og saftfull, som liljen,  
den som ikke kan rette seg opp igjen  
når den er blitt knekket.  
Jenny, så full av lengsel,  
drømmer som aldri sprang ut.  
Drømmen, akk drømmen,  
en ekstatisk musikk som aldri tier.

(Fra Sigrud Undset: *Jenny*, 1911.  
Tekstutvalg: Ragna Dahlen, 2001)

### Epitaph, op. 75

#### I (departure)

Then you travel through me once more;  
finished, turned away.  
You set the air in motion, a weak puff of what  
might have been,  
Out under bare branches or barbed wire up  
against the enameled  
morning sky. You have gone and  
left it behind you  
as the boundary of pain, as a wall,  
the looming, dazzling white absence.

#### II (he embarks)

The boat of the dead, a flatbottomed barge,  
glides forward over the water.  
Dip your hands down into the cloudy liquid,  
lift them  
and drink, a foretaste of a heavier water,  
Someone who examines you before boarding,  
angel.

#### III (epitaph)

We have laid you down. We have carried you out.  
I and the others.

### Epitaf, op. 75

#### I (avreise)

Så dreg du gjennom meg enda ein gong,  
slutført, bortvendt.  
Du set lufta i rørsle, ein sval pust av det som  
kunne vore,  
Ut under nakne greiner eller piggråd opp  
mot den emaljerte  
morgonhimmelen. Du har reist og  
lete det etter deg  
som smertegrensa, som ein vegg det  
oppreiste, drivkvite fråveret.

#### II (han stakar ut)

Dødebåten, ein flatbotna pram  
glir fram over hav oppå vatn  
Dyppe hendene ned i den uklare væska, løfte  
dei  
og drikke, forsmak på eit tyngre vatn  
Nokon som mønstrar deg før du går ombord,  
engel

#### III (epitaf)

Vi har lagt deg ned. Vi har bore deg ut.  
Eg og dei andre.

I lift what you were into the daylight one last  
time, you are transparent.  
I draw you close to me, hold you in my arms,  
rock you back through time, untouched,  
newborn, weightless,  
before I carve you in the stone a long wave,  
a soft line that will light you down into the soil.

(Texts: Paal-Helge Haugen.  
English versions: William H. Halverson.)

### It is that dream, op. 94

It is that dream we carry in our hearts  
That something wonderful will happen,  
That it must happen—  
That time will reveal itself,  
That doors will open for us,  
That the heart will reveal itself,  
That the mountain will reveal itself,  
That fountains will freely flow—  
That the dream will reveal itself,  
That some morningtide we will glide  
Into a harbor we didn't know was there.

(Text: Olav H. Hauge.  
English version: William H. Halverson.)

Eg held det du var opp i dagen ein siste gong,  
du er gjennomsiktig.  
Eg hentar deg inn, held deg i armene,  
voggar deg attende gjennom tida, urørt,  
nyfødd, vektlaus  
før eg skjer deg inn i steinen ei lang bølge,  
ei mjuk linje som skal lyse deg ned i jorda.

(Paal-Helge Haugen: "Epitaf" frå *Sone 0*,  
J.W. Cappelens Forlag, 1992)

### Det er den draumen, op. 94

Det er den draumen me ber på  
at noko vedunderleg skal skje,  
at det må skje –  
at tidi skal opna seg  
at hjarta skal opna seg  
at dører skal opna seg  
at berget skal opna seg  
at kjeldor skal springa –  
at draumen skal opna seg,  
at me ei morgonstund skal glida inn  
på ein våg me ikkje har visst um.

(Frå Olav H. Hauge: *Dropar i austavind*, 1966)







**Kjell Habbestad** (b. 1955, Bømlo, Norway) is Professor Emeritus of Theory and Composition at the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo, Norway. He received his professional training at the same institution, after which he taught music theory at the Bergen Music Conservatory (1981–86) and the Music Conservatory of Eastern Norway (1986–96). He has been on the faculty at the Norwegian Academy of Music since 1996.

Habbestad has been a prolific composer throughout his career. His catalog of works includes: orchestral works; concertos for the following solo instruments: organ, Hardanger fiddle, flute, saxophone, oboe, and clarinet; chamber works for various combinations of instruments including two string quartets, a clarinet quintet, and a string duet; choral works; works for organ; works for piano. He has also written several dramatic works including *The Moster Pageant*, which from 1984 to 2015 was performed annually at an outdoor theatre in Moster, Norway; the oratorio *One Night on Earth*, 1993; the operas *Hans Egede's Night*, 1995, *The Maid of Norway*, 2000, *Nenia – Fartein Valen in memoriam*, 2014; all librettos by Paal-Helge Haugen; *Adam and Eve*, 2008 (Henrik Wergeland);

*Karlstad 1905–A Page in the History of Civilization*, 2016; and the musical *The Count of Monte Cristo*, 2011 (own librettos).

Habbestad has also been active as an author and editor, chiefly in connection with the Norwegian Society of Composers, in which he has played a leadership role. In 2017 he was nominated for Spellemannprisen Composer of the Year for the choral album *Et nox in diem versa* (LWC1136) with the Latvia Radio Choir, dir. Sigvards Klava. Spellemannprisen is the Norwegian equivalent of a Grammy award.

Recordings of Habbestad's works: *Ei natt på jorda* (One Night on Earth, (HCD 2911), *Mostraspelet* (The Moster Pageant) (HCD 2912), *Noahs draum* (Noah's Dream) (GRCD 4156), *Angeli* (IDACD03), *Gaudeamus* (LWC 1031), *Et nox in diem versa* (LWC1136), *Quattro stazioni* (LWC1193).

Recordings of works by Habbestad and other composers: *Echoes of Norway* (IDACD1), *Uppskoka* (The New Brew) (IDACD2), *Etwas neues unter der Sonnen* (Something New Under the Sun) (SonCD9002), *Something New* (LWC1076), *Norwegian Saxophone* (LWC1162), *Akrostikon* (ACD 5091), *Singing Oboe* (LWC1186), *Trio Brax* (LWC1248).

**Marianne Beate Kielland** (mezzo-soprano), has studied at The Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo with Ingrid Bjoner and Svein Bjørkøy and earned a master's degree in contemporary music in 2000. She has also studied with Oren Brown and Barbara Bonney. After completing her professional training she sang with the Hanover State Opera during the 2001/02 season before moving to Harstad and later to Svolvær, Norway. She quickly established a solid professional reputation and had frequent engagements with both Norwegian and foreign orchestras and is now regarded as one of Europe's foremost singers.

Kielland regularly performs on the concert stages of Europe, Asia and America under such conductors as René Jacobs, Fabio Biondi, Jordi Savall, Rinaldo Alessandrini, Masaaki Suzuki, Herbert Blomstedt and Andrew Manze. In 2012 she was nominated for a Grammy award in the category "Best Vocal Classical Album" for her CD recording "Veslemøy Synsk" by Norwegian composer Olav Anton Thommessen. With this and over 60 other professional recordings as well as her many performances on the concert stage

she has established herself as a distinguished interpreter of repertoire from the Baroque period to the present day. Ms. Kielland has been designated Artistic Leader of the Oslo Chamber Music Festival 2022–2025.





**Halvor Festervoll Melien** (baritone) is a Norwegian concert and opera singer. He studied at the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo. In 2015–16 he was part of the soloist ensemble at The Norwegian National Opera in Oslo. He has a broad concert repertoire, spanning from the 17th century till today, and has specialized in the music of J. S. Bach. Halvor has worked with all Norwegian symphony orchestras and with such ensembles and festivals as BBC Philharmonic, Les Talens Lyriques, Concertgebouw Kamerorkest, Innsbrucker Festwochen der alten Musik, Festival de pâques Aix-en-Provence, Musica Saeculorum, Danish National Orchestra, Oslo Sinfonietta, Trondheimsolistene, The Norwegian Chamber Orchestra and Barokkanerne. He has contributed to a number of CD recordings, including Kurt Weill's *Die Sieben Todsünden* with Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, John Frandsen's *Requiem* with Danish National Orchestra and Knut Vaage's *Høgsongen*. He has also worked extensively with new music, and has premiered pieces written for him by Ørjan Matre, Eivind Buene, Øyvind Mæland and others. He is currently working with several Lied projects, performing music by Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Mahler and Webern.



**Nils Anders Mortensen** (piano) is originally from Flekkefjord but has been employed as a regional music leader in Finnmark since 2002. He received his professional training at the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo, Ecole Normale in Paris and Hochschule für Musik und Theater i Hanover and has performed on a long list of concert stages all over the world. The album *Veslemøy synsk*, on which he collaborated with mezzo-soprano Marianne Beate Kielland, was nominated for a Grammy Award in the category Classical Vocal Solo. He has also released solo albums of music by Grieg, Debussy, Bartok and Brahms. Mortensen has been a guest soloist at Troidhaugen many times during his career. In 1998 he was soloist in Grieg's Piano Concerto in A Minor at the storied concluding concert of the Bergen Music Festival in the Grieg Concert Hall.

**The string quartet** (tracks 1-3) consists of two of the composer's children—Ingvild, 1st violin, and Erlend, cello—and two of their friends from the Norwegian Radio Orchestra, viz. Janina Kronberger, 2nd violin, and Einar Kyvik Bauge, viola. Ingvild and Erlend Habbestad both hold master's degrees following studies at the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo and the Royal Academy of Music in Stockholm. Ingvild has played in the Norwegian Radio Orchestra since 2011 and Erlend in The Norwegian National Opera Orchestra since 2014. Ingvild was appointed Artistic Leader of the Smôga Music Festival effective 2022-23, a job Erlend held during the years 2007-2012. Janina Kronberger, who hails from Freiburg, Germany, received her professional training in Karlsruhe. In 2014 she received a permanent appointment as a first violinist in the Norwegian Radio Orchestra and since 2018 has been leader of the 2nd violin section. Einar Kyvik Bauge received his master's degree from the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo and in 2017 a soloist diploma from the Royal Danish Music Conservatory. He has been a member of the Norwegian Radio Orchestra since 2015.

**Ida Habbestad** (flute). In the last track of this CD, in order to complete The Habbestad Ensemble, big sister Ida performs on the flute. Ida holds a baccalaureate degree in flute performance and a master's degree in contemporary music history from the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo. She has held a series of jobs as journalist, music critic, editor and administrator. She is currently Administrative Leader of the Norwegian Society of Composers. In addition she is a performing flutist with concert experience both in Norway and abroad as a member of The Habbestad Ensemble.

**Rob Waring** (vibraphone, drums) is a vibraphonist, percussionist, composer and teacher. Born in Yonkers, New York, he studied at the Juilliard School of Music in New York City 1974-79 and has lived in Norway since 1981. He has performed with many ensembles and is active in contemporary music both as a performer and as a composer. In 2002 Rob went to Bali to study traditional Balinese music, and that experience has been an inexhaustible source of inspiration for him ever since. Rob Waring is Associate Professor of Percussion at the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo, where he has taught since 1982.

RECORDED IN SOFIENBERG CHURCH, OSLO, 8–11 NOVEMBER 2022

PRODUCER: VEGARD LANDAAS

BALANCE ENGINEER: THOMAS WOLDEN

EDITING: VEGARD LANDAAS

MASTERING: THOMAS WOLDEN

PIANO TECHNICIAN: TONE TORINE RØIMÅL

BOOKLET NOTES: KJELL HABBESTAD

ENGLISH TRANSLATION: WILLIAM H. HALVERSON

BOOKLET EDITOR: HEGE WOLLENG

COVER DESIGN: ANETTE L'ORANGE—BLUNDERBUSS

COMPOSER PHOTO: LARS BRYNGELSSON

ARTIST PHOTO (KIELLAND): LIV ØVLAND

ARTIST PHOTO (MELIEN): INGVILD FESTERVOLL MELIEN

SESSION PHOTO: KJELL HABBESTAD

TEXTS FROM PAAL-HELGE HAUGEN: *BLAD FRÅ EIN AUSTLEG HAGE* (DET NORSKE SAMLAGET, 1965), *HAIKU: 200 NORSKE VERSJONAR* (DE NORSKE BOKKLUBBENE, 1992) AND *SONE 0* (J.W. CAPPELENS FORLAG, 1992) ARE PRINTED WITH KIND PERMISSION OF <sup>THE</sup> AUTHOR.

THIS RECORDING HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE WITH SUPPORT FROM:  
ARTS AND CULTURE NORWAY  
THE NORWEGIAN COMPOSERS' REMUNERATION FUND

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KJELL HABBESTAD (\*1955)

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- 2) II PÅ LÆGJET LEITA EG UM NATTI 05:32
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- 23) II JENNY 02:06
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- 28) I (AVREISE) 03:24
- 29) II (HAN STAKAR UT) 02:03
- 30) III (EPITAF) 05:07

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