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CLASSICS

PARAPRAXIS
BASSOON CONCERTO

Stephen Frost

SERENATA
Kjell Mørk Karlsen

Sigyn Birkeland
bassoon

Ensemble 96
Øystein Fevang
conductor

**Belarusian State
Chamber Orchestra**
Ingo Ernst Reihl
conductor

PARAPRAXIS

Parapraxis

Stephen Frost (b. 1959)

- | | | |
|---|--------------|--------|
| 1 | Pie Jesu | [6.50] |
| 2 | De Profundis | [8.57] |
| 3 | In Paradisum | [4.40] |

Soloists: 1st and 2nd Movement, Hilde Refvem, *soprano* / 3rd Movement, Beate Kronen, *soprano*

Concerto for Bassoon (revised 2004)

Stephen Frost

- | | | |
|---|------------------|---------|
| 4 | Allegro Moderato | [6.03] |
| 5 | Lento | [14.30] |
| 6 | Allegro | [6.23] |

Edvin Østvik & Cathrine Nyheim, *percussion* / Jan Fredrik Heyerdahl, *piano*

Serenata per fagotto e archi Op. 113

Kjell Mørk Karlsen (b. 1947)

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------|--------|
| 7 | Lento espressivo e Deciso | [5.41] |
| 8 | Lento | [5.32] |
| 9 | Vivo | [6.23] |

Total timings: [65.01]

SIGYN BIRKELAND BASSOON
ENSEMBLE 96
ØYSTEIN FEVANG CONDUCTOR
BELARUSIAN STATE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
INGO ERNST REIHL CONDUCTOR

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What first caught my interest when Kjell Mørk Karlsen introduced me to his *Serenata per fagotto e archi*, was the slow middle section. It sounded as though it should have been sung, preferably in a church. I became fascinated by the vocal quality of his instrumental composition, and by the strong sense of becoming absorbed in a piece of sacred music while I was working on this seemingly secular concerto.

Mørk Karlsen later told me that this theme in fact originally came from a liturgical vocal composition: his *St. John's Vesper* for choir, string quartet and organ. He said that this is something he often does: to transpose elements and content from church music into instrumental music, and not necessarily for liturgical use. He also spoke of his strong relationship to Russian Orthodox sacred music, with its "warm authenticity, romantic without being sentimental." Nor does he shy away from borrowing elements in music that has meant much to him.

In this particular work he aims to "present the great span of the bassoon, also its lyrical qualities, and to challenge the bassoon as an instrument, in the same way, and on the same level, as other instruments are challenged." The final section, therefore, evokes the mood of

Mørk Karlsen's compositions for strings. Here you can feel the influence from Shostakovich, and the "playful musicality" that appeals so much to him.

At the same time there is a simple, harmonic landscape, with what he calls "stationary movement". The inspiration for this comes from the vocal polyphony of the Renaissance, where numerous moving voices create variations over the same chords. This simplicity runs like a contemplative undercurrent throughout the composition and it has become a work, in my opinion, of great emotional force.

With elements from different periods and genres, Kjell Mørk Karlsen has created music with its own specific character. He uses his own human and musical experience to seek new understanding, and demonstrates that within a traditional framework, new forms of expression can emerge.

Stephen Frost, too, creates a synthesis of elements in his own musical and personal background. His music, with its inspiration from classical music, rock and pop music, film and folk, has attracted me since I got to know him many years ago.

His choral work *Parapraxis* is written in accordance with our mutual wish to make music where the human voice and the bassoon meet. He has written the text himself, a mixture of secular, personal poetry and Latin liturgical texts. *Parapraxis* was premiered in June 2003 at Bryn Church in Bærum, by Ensemble 96 and Øystein Fevang, with myself as soloist.

The Bassoon Concerto is a re-orchestration of the concerto he wrote for me several years ago. Its form is now closer to chamber music; it has fewer performers, and lends itself better to the span of expression of the bassoon.

Sigyn Birkeland

BASSOON CONCERTO

It is a long time ago now, when I first put pen to paper (or more accurately cursor to computer screen, as it was even then in 1996!) and started work on a Bassoon Concerto for Sigyn Birkeland. The idea was to use a microphone and amplification system on the Bassoon in order to be able to open up the orchestration. This worked well enough for the recording we made in 1999, but for live performance it was, frankly, a mistake. Time passed and when, almost a

decade later, the opportunity presented itself to re-orchestrate the piece for a new recording, I grabbed at it. Some decisions about resizing and reconfirming the piece were easy, some less so, but any regrets in that area were overridden by my wish to make the piece more accessible and, quite simply, performable. Some sections have been re-written to make sense of the smaller ensemble, and some have been re-written because they had always troubled me a little in terms of their musical content as well as their function in the overall shape and architecture. Whilst much still remains the same, I think it also has the feel of an entirely different piece, and as such I don't wish one to replace the other. They are rather like non-identical twins!

I would also like to say this: the events of 13th March 1996 affected me more than any other public tragedy or disaster had before or since, probably because at the time I had a four-year-old son of my own and found myself strongly identifying with the parents of Dunblane. I was in the middle of writing my Bassoon Concerto and was just starting work on the second movement. I know now that the music began to reflect my state of mind: the brooding Scottish landscape; the lone piper on the hill; the innocent children being taken away (a theme

I would return to in my Flute Concerto: "The Pied Piper of Hamelin"). And finally the image that haunted me most of all: the bereft mother.

It would be quite wrong to describe my Bassoon Concerto as being inspired by the events of that day and it is certainly not "about" them. The first movement, after all, was already written, and the last is a party. It is just that Dunblane changed me, and therefore some of this piece changed too, behind my back as it were. I mention it simply because the subject still seems to infect almost everything I do. I often think about the implications of that day and what it means to be a human being: some people leave, and some people stay behind to remember their leaving.

PARAPRAXIS

Why use a mixture of sacred Latin text and secular English text? Partly, I suppose, because I believe the boundary between the two worlds is an illusion. Walls and fences have, in my opinion, always caused conflict and I like to demolish them when I can. But I think also the choice of texts was, in itself, a *parapraxis*: "a psychical conflict that prevents direct expression of one's feelings or intentions and diverts it along indirect paths". Otherwise known

as a "Freudian slip" – saying one thing when intending to say another but, deep down, *wanting* to say what actually comes out. Or, accidentally leaving your umbrella at a friend's house, which really means you want to go back, or never wanted to leave. In other words: a mistake, in word or deed, that reveals your true intentions.

So the piece does represent conflict – something we all face throughout our lives and which I was certainly facing at the time of composing (and is the cause of all *parapraxes*) – but it is also an attempt to resolve it. Perhaps the Latin text represents my heart, and the secular text my head. Or vice versa. Or perhaps, as an atheist, I am leaving my umbrella in the church.

In defining the word *parapraxis*, Freud said that no human behaviour is truly accidental. Whilst I probably don't subscribe to such a categorical view, I do sense a kernel of truth there.

The English text is not poetry, in the sense that I don't expect it to stand alone without the music, of which it is an integral part. I shall be eternally grateful to Sigyn for giving me the opportunity to express the themes contained within it.

Stephen Frost

PARAPRAXIS

Pie Jesu

*Pie Jesu Domine, Dona Eis Requiem,
Sempiternam Requiem.
Pie Jesu, Domine,
Dona Eis,
Sempiternam Requiem.*

So let the glistening white, white snow
Fall down upon these fallow years,
And on the shallow plains,
The hill,
The dell.

And let the bitter, wild, white wind
Fill out these unexpectant sails,
While the brave proud Captain sleeps,
Till port,
Till harbour's calm.

And let the frozen wastes preserve our dreams until
we wake,
Inside the night-time darkness that we make;
Lest we would otherwise be quiet and alone
Keeping council with our friends:
The storm,
The rain.
O let the glistening white, white snow

A-melting go,
So the grass beneath our feet may grow.
And passing through this dark terrain
Where we might fall in love again,
Upon the hill,
The dell.

De Profundis

*De Profundis Clamavi Ad Te Domine
Domine Exaudi Vocem Meam Fiant Aures Tuae
Intendentes In Vocem Deprecationis Meae
Speravit Anima Mea In Domino
Quia Apud Dominum Misericordia Et Copiosa
Apud Eum Redemptio*

Come down to the valley, cold and bright,
Behind the oak tree, out of sight,
Come down to the river, if you will,
Where the white queen lives by the water mill,
And the wheel turns round though the water is still,
And she cries from the deep, she cries from the hill.
Then she covers her eyes from the light of day,
And sings sad lullabies, so they say.

Come barefoot now and as you pass,
Step round the broken looking glass,
And climb the wretched padlocked gate
That seals the path that is your fate
While the white queen marks you down as late

Then makes you wait, makes you wait.
Then she covers her face with her veil of white
And cries unheeded through the night...

In Paradisum

*In Paradisum Deducant Te Angeli
In Tuo Adventu
Suscipiant Te Martyres
Et Perducant Te
In Civitatem Sanctam Jerusalem.
Chorus Angelorum Te Suscipiat,
Et Cum Lazaro Quondam Paupere
Aeternam Habeas Requiem.*

...Come down to the valley, overgrown,
To the palace of blue-green ice and stone,
Where the dew has settled on the dry riverbed.
With the beating wings of a heart now fled
She moans to the rhythm of the dark unsaid
A prayer of longing, a song of dread.
Then she closes the covers and turns away,
And prays that she will die,
One day.

STEPHEN FROST

Stephen Frost (b. 1959) was born in Bungay, Suffolk (England). He is a composer and filmmaker. His formative years were spent being exposed to – and performing – music of many different styles and genres, with “Stanford and Vaughan Williams in one ear and Keith Emerson and Rick Wakeman in the other”.

In addition to his Bassoon Concerto and “Parapraxis”, Stephen has written an Oboe Concerto and “The Lesson” for voice and orchestra, both recorded in 1999 for Chandos. He conducted the first performance of his Flute Concerto (“The Pied Piper of Hamelin”) in 2002. In 2009 he was awarded Best Director at the Rob Knox Film Festival for his film “Is Anybody There?” www.frostmusic.co.uk

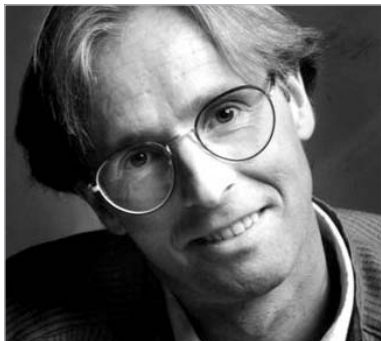


STEPHEN FROST

KJELL MØRK KARLSEN

Kjell Mørk Karlsen (b. 1947) has a varied musical background. He received a degree as organist and cantor in 1968, and later undertook further studies as a performer on both the oboe and recorder. He has studied organ with Finn Viderø in Copenhagen, and composition with Joonas Kokkonen in Helsingfors.

For more than 45 years Mørk Karlsen has been active in the musical life of Norway as orchestral musician, organist, choir conductor and composer. Today he dedicates most of his time to composition. His comprehensive output includes symphonies, oratorios, concertos, chamber music, cantatas, and music for choir and organ.



KJELL MØRK KARLSEN

SIGYN BIRKELAND

Sigyn Birkeland was principle bassoonist of the Norwegian Radio Orchestra 1992 - 2008, having previously been a member of the Trondheim Symphony Orchestra. She is an active soloist and chamber musician, with a particular interest in creating new repertoire for her instrument. Several composers have dedicated new works to her.

Of these, she made the world premiere recordings of Stephen Frost's concerto for bassoon and orchestra with the Bournemouth symphony orchestra, and of Egil Hovland's “Agnus Dei” for bassoon and mixed choir with the Oslo Cathedral Choir.

INGO ERNST REIHL

Ingo Ernst Reihl was chief conductor of The Minsk Chamber Orchestra between 2001 and 2004, and was a permanent guest conductor for the ensemble between 1993 and 1999. He has conducted many East European and Russian ensembles and choirs, as well as many internationally renowned soloists, on CD, radio and TV broadcasts and in live concert performances. He still leads The Young Orchestra for 80 young musicians, an ensemble



SIGYN AND INGO

he founded in his student years in the mid 1980s. He received the ‘Ruhr award for Art and Science’ in 1987 and was musical director of Small Opera Dusseldorf between 1988 and 1990. He has been an assistant professor of music for the faculty of the Studium Fundamentale at Witten-Herdecke University since 1990, and was made honorary professor of conducting at the Belarusian State Academy for Music in 2001.

ØYSTEIN FEVANG

From its founding in 1996 and for the next 10 years, Øystein Fevang was conductor of the chamber choir Ensemble 96. With CD releases, numerous premiere performances, and emphasis on contemporary music, the choir soon became amongst Norway's most respected ensembles.

For the CD *Immortal Nystedt*, Fevang was nominated for the Grammy Awards in the category "Best choral performance". This record was also nominated for "Best surround sound album". In 2006 Fevang became chorus master



ØYSTEIN FEVANG

for the Oslo Philharmonic Choir, which has, by critical consensus, made remarkable progress in recent years.

BELARUSIAN STATE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

The State Chamber orchestra of the Republic of Belarus is one of the leading professional collectives in the country. Founded as the 'Minsk Chamber Orchestra' by the outstanding conductor, composer and organist Oleg Yanchenko in 1968, the ensemble quickly established a strong professional position in Belarus. In 1969 the orchestra was renamed by their new chief conductor Yuri Tsiriuk.

Many outstanding conductors have headed the orchestra since the 1970s, including Alexander Polianichko, Victor Sobolev, Misha Katz, Dmitriy Zubov, Vladimir Baidov and Ingo Reihl. Each has made a contribution to the professional life of the collective and furthered its artistic and international standing. Since 2003 Piotr Vandilovskiy has been the orchestra's chief conductor and artistic director.

ENSEMBLE 96

Soprano

Lydia Ulleberg
Beate Kronen
Siv Brovold Paus
Eli Feiring
Hilde Refvem
Ingrid Leriem

Tenor

Ingvar Ørn Thrastarson
Kai Grinde Myrann
Knut Solnes
Torfinn Kleive
Svein Rjøed

Alto

Camilla Cockman
Anne Opedal
Katrine Kristiansen
Rannveig Nymoen
Ingerd Wennemo
Ida Naper

Bass

Olav Refvem
Håvard Hegre
Magne Ytterli
Nikolai Winge
Stein Bruun

The chamber choir Ensemble 96 is among the elite of Norwegian vocal ensembles. As part of its artistic profile, Ensemble 96 has always emphasised working with contemporary composers, and the ensemble is partly funded by grants for semi-professional choirs from Arts Council Norway. Their concerts and recordings

have attracted the attention of national and international music critics. The group have released two solo albums on the 2L label: *Immortal Nystedt* – which was nominated for two Grammy awards – and *Liknarbraut*, as well as *Det lyser i stille grender* for Naxos.

Parapaxis recorded in Ris Kirke, Norway, on 22 June 2008.
Bassoon Concerto recorded in Jar Kirke, Norway, on 21 October 2007.
Serenata recorded in Asker Kirke, Norway, on 17-18 October 2006.

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Engineer (Parapaxis) - Geoff Miles
Engineer (Bassoon Concerto & Serenata) - David Walsh

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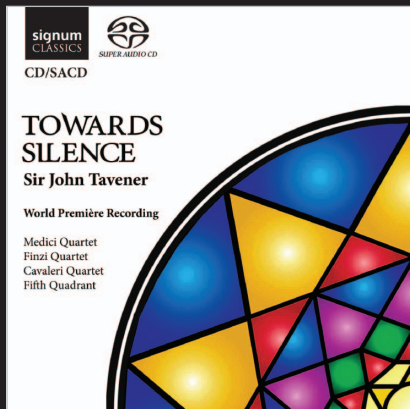
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