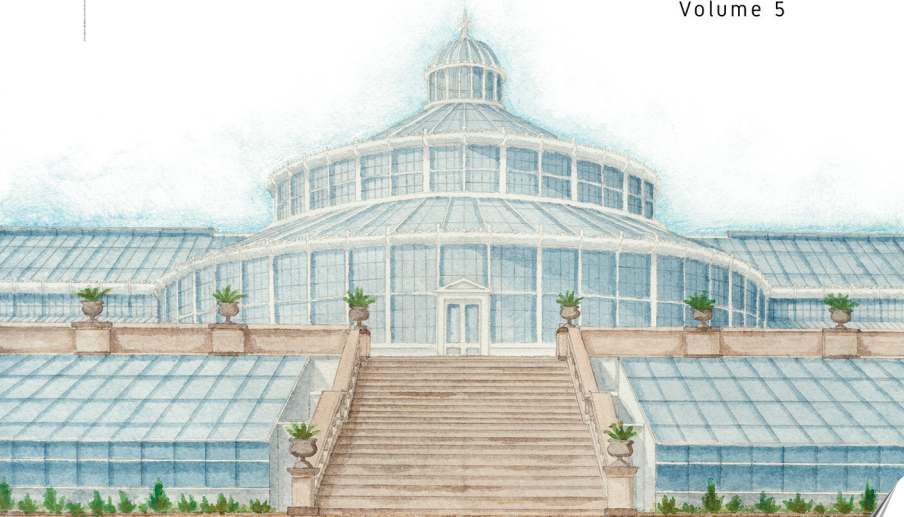




THE LAUNY GRØNDAHL
LEGACY

Volume 5



Danish Symphonies

CD 1

Louis Glass (1864-1936)

Symphony No. 5 in C Major, Op 57

"Sinfonia Svastica" (1916) 33:46

[1] I. Dagvirke (Day's Work). Allegro energico, ma non troppo vivace 9:49

[2] II. Hvile (Rest). Andante tranquillo 7:51

[3] III. Skygger (Shadows). Presto 5:23

[4] IV. Morgengry (Dawn). Adagio, ma non troppo 10:32

Recorded October 22, 1957, Danish Broadcasting Corporation, Studio 1

P.S. Rung-Keller (1879-1966)

Suite in D Major (1947) 12:18

(Arranged for orchestra by Leif Kayser (1954-55))

[5] I. Preludio. Largo e cantabile 1:52

[6] II. Scherzo. Allegretto 1:07

[7] III. Aria. Adagio 3:01

[8] IV. Intermezzo. Andantino 2:23

[9] V. Arabesco. Sostenuto e grazioso 1:59

[10] VI. Finale. Gaio 1:59

Recorded April 9, 1956, Danish Broadcasting Corporation, Studio 1

Herman Sandby (1881-1965)

Symphony No. 4 (1947) 27:43

[11] I. Andante con moto 11:10

[12] II. Andante 6:30

[13] III. Allegro Marcato 10:01

Recorded March 19, 1956, Danish Broadcasting Corporation, Studio 1

CD 2

Hakon Børresen (1876-1954)

Symphony No. 2 in A Major, Op 7

"Havet" (The Sea) (1904) 33:10

[1] I. Brænding (Surf). Allegro con brio 9:22

[2] II. Sommer (Summer). Molto vivace 7:02

[3] III. Tragedie (Tragedy). Adagio maestoso 8:50

[4] IV. Lystsejlad (Yachting). Poco andante.

Allegro con fuoco 7:49

Recorded June 3, 1954, Danish Broadcasting Corporation, Studio 1

Johannes Andersen (1890-1980)

Suite No. 1 for Orchestra in B Major (1937) 25:11

- [5] I. Forspil (Prelude). Allegro assai 7:06
- [6] II. Nocturne. Andante lento 5:54
- [7] III. Intermezzo. Moderato 4:17
- [8] IV. Elegi (Elegy). Largo affettuoso 3:09
- [9] V. March. Allegro moderato 4:31

Recorded April 9, 1956, Danish Broadcasting Corporation, Studio 1

Rudolph Simonsen (1889-1947)

Symphony No. 2 in A Major

"Hellas" (1921) 20:20

- [10] I. Orestien (The Orestie).
Allegro moderato 7:24
- [11] II. Ensomhed ved Templerne (Solitude by
the Temples). Andante tranquillo 7:42
- [12] III. Sejersgudinden Pallas Athene
(Pallas Athene, The goddess of Victory).
Poco maestoso. Allegro 5:05

Recorded September 5, 1954, Danish Broadcasting Corporation, Studio 1

The Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra Launy Grøndahl, conductor

The Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra followed the same schedule of work from its foundation in 1925 through to the late 1950s. Pre-season rehearsals in August and September prepared repertoire for public concerts which were organized in several series: the *Torsdagskoncerter* (Thursday Concerts), *Folkekoncerter* (Popular Concerts), *Søndagskoncerter* (Sunday Concerts) and *Ungdomskoncerter* (Young People's Concerts). The season ran from October to April, broken up by studio broadcasts which required less rehearsal time. With the season over, the orchestra gave a weekly 'studio concert' until its summer break in July, freeing up time for preparatory rehearsals of more demanding repertoire which might be scheduled for performance at a later date.

These studio concerts and preparatory rehearsals were mostly led by the orchestra's founding conductor, Launy Grøndahl, and (from 1936) Erik Tuxen. Grøndahl used them to perform music by Romantic-era and contemporary Danish composers: Herman Sandby, Hakon Børresen, J.L. Emborg, Ludolf Nielsen, Walter Schrøder, Rued Langgaard and many more. This volume in Danacord's Grøndahl series presents a selection of those performances from 1954 to 1957.

According to **Louis Glass** (1864–1936), his musician-actor father Christian Henrik Glass (1821–93) examined his newborn son's hands to see if he would follow in his footsteps. The boy learnt notes before letters, and composed

his first melody at the age of six, to a poem by Hans Christian Andersen. School life proving uncongenial, his parents arranged private tuition, which further enabled him to concentrate on musical studies. Following periods of instruction with the influential Niels W. Gade and the cellist Franz Neruda, and a spell at the conservatoire in Brussels, Glass set out as a piano teacher and orchestral musician. He took over his father's piano school in 1894, founded a national organization of musical education in 1898 and three years later became co-founder of the Dansk Koncertforening; he later became co-founder of a union for music teachers in Denmark.

Glass's Romantically inclined compositional style bears a greater resemblance to the music of Rued Langgaard (1893–1952) than to the dominant figure of Carl Nielsen (1865–1931). The influence of Bruckner, Franck and Tchaikovsky is writ clear in the cycle of six symphonies composed between 1894 and 1924. Perhaps the most original and inspired of them is the Fifth, the *Sinfonia Svastika* op. 57, dating from 1919, at a time when the subtitle's emblem had not gained its poisonous association with fascism and was still identified as a good-luck charm in Western culture (and in Denmark as an element of the Carlsberg brewery's logo). The sturdy main theme of the opening movement – subtitled 'Daily Toil' – jumps up the octave and proceeds with purpose before the oboe introduces a lyrical countersubject; these are contrasted and developed within a straightforward sonata-form structure complete with exposition repeat.

Cast in the pastoral key of F major, the *Andante tranquillo* ('Rest') is a nocturnal idyll. The F minor scherzo ('Shades') evokes a nightmarish mood, delicately orchestrated in the tradition of Weber and Mendelssohn, heightened by the magical sound of the celesta in the central section, and dying away to a whispered close in its reprise. The slow finale patiently achieves the symphony's home key of C major with a sunrise-like apotheosis.

Glass's music also found its way into the international, core repertoire programmed for the Thursday Concert series. Nikolai Malko conducted the Fourth Symphony in 1938, and the following year Fritz Busch led the Fifth (probably using Grøndahl's marked-up score). Grøndahl himself conducted the symphony at a Thursday Concert in 1950 and then for the present studio recording on 22 October 1957, having retired from his official post with the orchestra the previous year.

Paul Sophus Christian Henrik – known as **P.S. – Rung-Keller** (1879–1966) came from a family of musicians which included his grandfather, the composer Henrik Rung (1807–1871), his uncle, the composer Frederik Rung (1854–1914) and his mother, the soprano Sophie Keller (1850–1929). After studying piano with his uncle, and organ with one of Denmark's best-known organists, Gottfred Matthison-Hansen, he became organist of Vor Frelser Kirke (Our Saviour's Church) in Copenhagen – a position he held for almost half a century. Along with this he also became teacher at The Royal Danish Academy of Music in organ and theory.

The Suite for Orchestra (1947) began life, like most of Rung-Keller's music, as an organ work. In 1954–55 his pupil Leif Kayser (1919–2001) arranged the eight-movement Baroque Suite, omitting three of the original movements but adding a sixth from one of Rung-Keller's piano pieces. Kayser's version consists of six longer movements in which the melodic content is shared between the instruments of the orchestra. The suite was presented to Rung-Keller on his 76th birthday in 1955, eliciting enthusiastic approval from the composer, not only for the instrumentation but the new work's improvements over the original. The title-page bears the inscription: 'Leif Kayser 1954-55, for the birthday 11/3/1955, in gratitude, dear teacher and friend!' The unusual scoring is for two flutes, 2 oboes, two clarinets, one bassoon, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, violas, cellos and basses, with violins notably absent. The present recording preserves its first performance. As both a composer and organist, Kayser himself enjoyed a considerable reputation: it was even said that 'Carl Nielsen died before he was finished with us down here. He had sent us Leif Kayser instead.' The relationship between Kayser and Rung-Keller developed beyond the mutual respect typical of a teacher and talented student, through 'recorder nights' during the 1940s. On Rung-Keller's death in 1966, Kayser inherited an old chair, once belonging to the composer's grandfather and uncle. When visiting Kayser during in the late 1990s I was invited to sit 'in Rung's chair' while we discussed Danish music and Kayser's own output in particular. Having played the violin and piano as a young child, **Herman Sandby** (1881–1965) switched to the cello and, at the age of 15, was awarded a scholarship to the Frankfurt Musikhochschule, where he studied cello with Hugo Becker along with composition. His career took him across the Atlantic, becoming the Philadelphia Orchestra's principal cellist (1908-16) and professor of cello at the city's Combs College of Music. From 1919 onwards he lived in Denmark, annually touring Europe as a soloist and conductor of his own works. Sandby played the solo part of Dvořák's Cello Concerto under the Philadelphia Orchestra's long-serving music director, Leopold Stokowski, who also conducted several of Sandby's own works such as a Cello Concerto. The late-Romantic style of his music may be typical for music of the time, but Sandby had a refined understanding of orchestration, reminiscent of Delius and Grainger, both of whom he knew. His output includes five symphonies, concertos, chamber music and also arrangements of Danish and Scandinavian folk music for solo instruments and strings. There is an English flavour to his Fourth Symphony (1947), scored with prominent parts for cor anglais and harp. The cor introduces the symphony's opening theme, before Delian harmonies and Wagnerian orchestration characterise the movement's main Allegro. There is a distinctively Danish cast to the melodies, though as if viewed through English eyes, like Grainger's arrangements of Danish folk tunes. The strings usher in the second movement, with another prominent solo for cor

anglais. More Danish, folk-like motifs appear in the horns, coloured by impressionistic harmonies. Grainger's influence can once again be felt in the irregular dance rhythms on pizzicato strings accompanying the oboe theme of the finale.

Hakon Børresen (1876–1954) was born in Copenhagen to a Danish mother and Norwegian father, who discouraged his son from pursuing a musical profession. His career began in earnest, however, when the 19-year-old Børresen showed an orchestral piece, *Thor Rides to Jotunheim*, to Johan Svendsen. As both a composer and the chief conductor of The Royal Theatre in Copenhagen, the Norwegian-born Svendsen immediately grasped the promise of Børresen's talent, offered him free tuition in composition and prevailed on Børresen's father to relent.

It was through Svendsen's agency that Børresen met Edvard Grieg, and in 1907 received a travel grant to undertake further studies in Germany and France. Svendsen arranged for several of Børresen's early works to be performed in Copenhagen, and conducted the premiere of Børresen's First Symphony in 1901 with the orchestra of the Royal Chapel.

Composed in 1904, Børresen's Second Symphony is dedicated to Svendsen and bears witness to their friendship, in both its lyrical, Nordic late-romantic style and its handling of the orchestra. The symphony's subtitle of 'The Ocean' is immediately apparent in the opening movement's depiction of foaming surf, but the sea itself is bright and shining, more in the character of Debussy's 'Jeux de vagues' (1905) than *The Storm*, Vítězslav Novák's 'sea fantasy' of 1910.

Subtitled 'Summer', the second-movement Scherzo is also lit with light and airy orchestration reminiscent of Svendsen's music, with a more lyrical central section. Børresen's subtitle of 'Tragedy' for the succeeding *Adagio maestoso* is somewhat belied by the movement's noble character, like a meditation on a calm sea, albeit with some choppy waters at its heart. The optimistic finale returns to clearer and shallower waters like the end of a pleasure cruise.

It took another 20 years for Børresen to follow up the Second Symphony with a Third, but in the meanwhile he composed in other genres, notably with his masked-ball opera *The Royal Guest*, which was based on a story by Henrik Pontoppidan and given its premiere by The Royal Theatre in December 1919.

Johannes Andersen (1890–1980) began his musical career as a trumpeter in a military orchestra in Odense on the island of Funen, just as Carl Nielsen had done half a generation earlier. In fact he announced himself as 'the last private student of Carl Nielsen', but he continued to make his living as a brass performer, a member of Odense's Byorkester and then the ensemble at the Tivoli pleasure gardens (on trumpet, then horn). In 1926, Andersen became principal horn for the newly founded Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra, and he began to conduct the orchestra (along with the violinist Christian Høed) while Grøndahl took a well-earned summer holiday for a fortnight.

Andersen's First Suite (1937) bears a dedication 'in admiration and gratitude' to Fritz Busch, who enjoyed an especially warm relationship with the orchestra as a regular guest conductor between 1932 and 1951 while raising its technical standards; he even entertained serious thoughts of moving to Denmark. The five movements of the suite have a much more extrovert character than the neo-Baroque spirit of the work by Rung-Keller and Kayser. Nielsen's influence is clearly felt in the abrupt shifts of tempo and dynamic, and Andersen uses the orchestra in a late-Romantic style. The premiere was given by the DRSO and Busch at a Popular Concert in 1939, and the present recording is a studio production from 1956.

Born in Copenhagen in 1889, **Rudolf Simonsen** studied both law and piano. Having graduated from the Royal Danish Academy of Music in 1911 he returned to the academy as a professor of piano, becoming its principal after Nielsen's death in 1931, and holding the post until his death in 1947. Simonsen began composing as a teenager, but his output dwindled after becoming the academy principal. He wrote four symphonies written between 1920 and 1925, and gave them subtitles: *Zion*, *Hellas*, *Roma* and *Denmark*. The Second (1921) is dedicated to his teacher of Ancient Greek, Thomas Müller. Both its intricate, bitonal language and its Classical narrative follow in the path of Nielsen's example in works such as the *Helios* Overture.

The 'Oresteia' first movement, named after Aeschylus's foundational trilogy of tragedies, opens with a winding, chromatic melody over a drum-roll. The theme is taken over by the strings, supported by the piccolo and oboe. A massive, chorale-like theme is given out by the brass and embellished by triplets in strings and woodwind, which later introduce a further theme to a *furioso* demisemiquaver string accompaniment. The main theme reappears on full orchestra before the movement reaches a quiet, tragic close.

A calm central interlude – 'Solitude by the Temple' – is introduced by the flutes, playing a long tune in D minor which is eventually taken up by the strings. The finale plays out a Nielsenesque struggle between A minor – established by the opening brass fanfare – and the A major of the main theme first stated by unison strings. The theme generates considerable tension through its contrapuntal development, but A major is conclusively established by the full orchestra in a triumphant coda.

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2 CD

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First release
CD 1 [4] - [10]
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The Launy Grøndahl Legacy, Volume 5

Four symphonies and two suites by late-Romantic Danish composers and contemporaries of Carl Nielsen, led with passion and authority by Launy Grøndahl in studio recordings made in the twilight of his distinguished career. Noble Classical ideals and typically Danish energy mark out the Sinfonia Svastika of Louis Glass and Second Symphony by Rudolf Simonsen. The neoclassical elegance of P.S. Rung-Keller's suite contrasts with the boisterous character of Johannes Andersen's example. Hakon Børresen's Second Symphony is a buoyant sea-scape, while Herman Sandby's Fourth is coloured by the influence of Delius and Grainger.

CD 1

Louis Glass (1864-1936)

[1] - [4] **Symphony No. 5 in C Major**
"Sinfonia Svastika" (1916) 33:46
Recorded October 22, 1957,
Danish Broadcasting Corporation, Studio 1

P.S. Rung-Keller (1879-1966)

[4] - [10] **Suite in D Major** (1947) 12:18
Recorded April 9, 1956,
Danish Broadcasting Corporation, Studio 1

Herman Sandby (1881-1965)

[11] - [13] **Symphony No. 4** (1947) 27:43
Recorded March 19, 1956,
Danish Broadcasting Corporation, Studio 1

CD 2

Hakon Børresen (1876-1954)

[1] - [4] **Symphony No. 2 in A Major**
"Havet" (The Sea) (1904) 33:10
Recorded June 3, 1954,
Danish Broadcasting Corporation, Studio 1

Johannes Andersen (1890-1980)

[5] - [9] **Suite No. 1 for Orchestra in B Major** (1937) 25:11
Recorded April 9, 1956,
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[10] - [12] **Symphony No. 2 in A Major**
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The Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra
Launy Grøndahl, conductor