



THOMAS JENSEN LEGACY

VOLUME 20



HOLMBOE SYMPHONY 7

BRENE VIOLA CONCERTO

DANISH ORCHESTRAL MUSIC *BY*

RIISAGER • GADE • HØGENHAVEN • TARP • WEIS *ET AL*

Jana
CORD

CD 1

Friedrich Kuhlau (1786-1832)

[1] **Elverhøj Ouverture** (The Elf Hill – Overture) **Op. 100** (1828) 7:35

Odeon D 6012. Mtx. kpo 3547-48. Rec. 1940

Niels W. Gade (1817-1890)

[2] **Efterklang af Ossian.** (Echoes of Ossian) **Ouverture Op. 1** (1840) 12:50

Odeon DXX 8000-8001 Mtx. kpo 4089-91. Rec. Summer 1942

J.P.E. Hartmann (1805-1900)

[3] **Gudernes Triumfmarch fra balletten "Thrymskviden"** (1868) 3:58

(The Lay of Thrym) Triumphant March of the Nordic Gods

Odeon DXX 8001 Mtx. kpo 4088. Rec. Summer 1942

P.E. Lange-Müller (1850-1926)

[4] **Forspil til "Renæssance"** (1901) 4:09

Prelude to "Renaissance"

Tono X 25008. Mtx. 1706 Rec. September 7-8, 1942

[1] - [4] Tivoli Concert Hall Orchestra

Knudåge Riisager (1897-1974)

Slaraffenland (Paradise of Fools) – **Suite 1, Op. 33** (1936) 7:15

[5] Prinsesse Sukkergodt (Princess Sweets) 2:18

[6] Dovendidrikernes Polka (Lazy-bones Polka) 2:04

[7] Vagtparaden (The Royal Guardsmen) 1:11

[8] Punktum Finale (Point Finale) 1:31

Live broadcast 1962

Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra

Vagn Holmboe (1909-1996)

Symphony No. 7, Op. 50 (1950-51) 26:15

[9] Allegro con fuoco- 4:23

[10] Intermedio I: Andantino- 1:08

[11] Adagio - 7:33

[12] Intermedio II: Andantino- 1:04

[13] Presto 7:20

[14] Intermedio III: Andantino 1:25

[15] Coda 3:20

Live August 4, 1957

Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra

Svend Erik Tarp (1908-1994)

"Mosaik", miniature suite (1940) 7:12

[16] Harmonika / The accordion 0:43

[17] Skalmjeje / The shawm 1:37

[18] Den gamle violin / The old violin 0:57

[19] Koral / Chorale 0:50

[20] Sækkepibe / The bagpipe 0:55

[21] Tempo di valse 0:41

[22] Galopade 1:16

Tivoli Concert Hall Orchestra

Tono X 25010 Mtx. 1710-11 Rec. Sept. 7 & 9, 1942

Knud Høgenhaven (1928-1987)

[23] **Pastorale in F for string orchestra, Op. 16** (1956) 5:45

[24] **Norsk Folketone for string orchestra, Op. 26** (1957), (Norwegian Folk Tune) 3:35

World premiere - live broadcast, November 12, 1957

CD 2

Knudåge Riisager

[1] **Qarrtsiluni Op. 36** (1938) 8:17

Live Concert August 13, 1962

Jørgen Jersild (1913-2004)

[2] **Pastorale for Strygeorkester** (1945) 7:15

Live Concert 12 November, 1957

Svend Erik Tarp

[3] **Lystspilouverture** (1940) 6:42

Live Concert May 5, 1962 in Kolding

Emil Reesen (1887-1964)

[4] **Grønlandsk Folketone**. (Greenlandic Folk Music), (1934) 6:47

Live Concert 15 February, 1958

Erling Brene (1896-1980)

Concerto for Viola and Orchestra, Op. 47 (1949) 25:20

[5] Præludium. Allegro - Allegro non troppo 10:55

[6] Largo sostenuto e lamentoso 7:18

[7] Allegro 7:02

Soloist Christian Esbensen

Live Concert 5 April, 1960

Flemming Weis (1898-1981)

Sinfonia proverbiorum (1958) 16:12

Efter Salomons ordsprog - According to the saying of Solomon

[8] Fili mi, si susce peris sermones meos (II,1-6) 6:48

(My son, if you rise, you will hear my words)

[9] Beatus homo qui invenit sapientiam (III, 13-17) 5:26

(Blessed is the man who finds wisdom)

[10] Conserva, fili mi, praecepta patris tui (VI, 20-23) 4:29

(Keep, my son, the commandments of your father)

Danish Radio Chorus

World premiere - live broadcast, 21 June, 1959

Emil Reesen

[11] **Fantasy on Danish Christmas Melodies** (1933) 6:22

Live concert 14 December, 1957

Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra

Thomas Jensen, conductor

(An introduction to the life of Thomas Jensen can be found in previous volumes of this series)

The present set affords an opportunity to appreciate Thomas Jensen's unprejudiced advocacy of Danish composers writing across a wide spectrum of styles, comparable in this regard to the contemporary work of Sir Adrian Boult in the UK, Roger Désormière in France and Hans Rosbaud in Germany. Tracks 1-4 on CD1 were recorded during the wartime German occupation of Denmark. The Tivoli Concert Hall Orchestra had been regarded as a more significant concert-giving organisation than either the Royal Chapel or Danish Radio. During the summer season before the war, the Tivoli orchestra presented three daily one-hour concerts of light orchestral pieces, and on Saturdays afternoons they played 'Symphonies' of more substantial fare. This was the only one of the week's concerts granted a rehearsal period. This schedule hardly altered during the war, though music became more of a rallying point for national sentiment. It is therefore no wonder that the four pieces presented here are all Danish (allowing for Kuhlau as an immigrant from Germany). Tivoli concerts continued to draw crowds during the occupation, until the fateful night of June 24-25, 1944, when the Germans blew up the main concert hall, the smaller concert hall, the Glass Hall, and large parts of Tivoli's archive. In the days after this sabotage, the orchestra's musicians and other employees in Tivoli worked at high pressure to disinter what could be rescued from the ruins. Much went up in smoke, such as the complete manuscripts of the orchestra's former conductor-composer, H.C. Lumbye.

Elverhøj (The Elf Hill) enjoys the status of a national play in Denmark. It was written by Johan Ludvig Heiberg and first produced in 1828, for which Kuhlau produced a good deal of incidental music, opening with this Overture. The action is based partly on legends of the elf king from the region of Zealand, partly on heroic accounts of Denmark's King Christian the Fourth. The king is represented in the overture by the appearance (at 6'05") of a song ('Kong Christian stod ved højen mast') which is hardly less of a national anthem than 'Der er et yndigt land'. Indeed, it was common practice until recently for Danish audiences to stand up at this point in the overture,

in homage to their nation and their royalty.

Efterklang af Ossian (Echoes of Ossian) is Niels W. Gade's famous opus 1, which he submitted to the Musikforeningen's composer competition in 1840. Gade was an ambitious 24-year-old when he sent two orchestral scores to Mendelssohn, then conductor of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, in the hope of performance. Both *Echoes of Ossian* and the First Symphony won favour with the fastidious ear of the older man, who not only conducted them but invited Gade to Leipzig. The young Danish composer stayed in the city and made so positive an impression on Mendelssohn and his circle (including Robert and Clara Schumann) that he became a teacher at the conservatoire and an assistant conductor of the Gewandhaus. After the outbreak of war in 1847-48, Gade returned home to Copenhagen, where he both rebuilt the Musikforeningen and established the conservatory in Copenhagen, later the Royal Danish Music Conservatory.

The narrative over the overture concerns a legendary Scottish king, Ossian, but Gade's idiom shares a distinctly Nordic flavour with the music of J.P.E. Hartmann, with the heroic main theme being inspired by a well-known Danish folk song about Ramund ('Ramund, he was a better man'). The work was first performed in 1841 and led to Gade's international breakthrough as a composer.

Hartmann became both Gade's partner in the creation of Copenhagen's musical culture as well as his father-in-law. He wrote music in all genres, including the ballet *Thrymskviden* (The Lay of Thrym) created in collaboration with August Bournonville. The choreographer persuaded Hartmann to immerse himself in Nordic myths and legends and mythology, bearing fruit in a pair of ballets, *Valkyrien* (The Valkyrie, 1861) and *Thrymskviden* (1868). This epic deals with the Nordic twilight of the gods and its narrative was inspired by the Icelandic Eddas and sagas.

Balletic in a lighter vein, *Mosaik* is a 'miniature suite' for orchestra by Svend Erik Tarp in which each movement portrays an element of folk-music making.

Slaraffenland (Paradise of Fools) was likewise composed in 1936 by Knudåge

Riisager as an orchestral suite, but it was later made into a lively and amusing ballet by Kjeld Abell with designs by Svend Johansen. There are various suites from the score; in the one conducted by Thomas Jensen, we hear the Tchaikovskian melodic sweep of 'Princess Sweets' followed by the wobbly gait of the Lazy-Bones Polka, orchestrated for low winds and shrill clarinet. A snare drum introduces an elegant parade of soldiers, more like a Tivoli guard than real militia. 'Point Finale' brings the suite to a festive, vigorous close.

The Seventh Symphony of Vagn Holmboe presents an austere contrast. Holmboe graduated from the Royal Danish Academy of Music at a time when Nielsen was the dominant figure in Danish music. His own music draws on both the turbulent language as well as the orchestral techniques of his predecessor, while prefiguring the innovations of later composers such as Per Norgard. The Seventh Symphony dates from 1950, while Holmboe was developing what he called a 'metamorphosis' technique, in which a melody is reshaped through the course of the piece. This process takes place in relatively condensed form through the course of the Seventh, which evolves in continuous sections with three interludes.

CD1 ends with two lighter pieces by a contemporary of Holmboe and Riisager, Knud Høgenhaven. He trained as an organist at the Royal Danish Conservatory of Music while beginning to compose for his own instrument and for chamber forces. He attended the celebrated music courses at Darmstadt after the war, but he never adopted an avant-garde idiom; his music remains rooted in traditional forms such as theme-and-variation and passacaglia while venturing into bold harmonic territory, thus disconcerting some listeners in both modernist and conservative camps. Both of the pieces conducted by Jensen in this 1957 broadcast are calmly unfolded over a slow-moving harmonic plan.

Composed by Riisager two years after *Slaraffenland*, *Qarrtsiluni* (1938) also attracted a balletic treatment. The choreographer Harald Lander reworked the score slightly, repeating sections here and there, and winning the composer's full approval for the

result. Heard here in its original version, the piece has a strong rhythmic profile which makes it eminently suitable as music for dancing, while being couched in a more modernist vein than much of Riisager's music, with a mysterious melody that rarely has room to fully unfold.

The piece takes its subject from the travels of the Danish explorer Knud Rasmussen. Just as Stravinsky depicts a pagan spring ritual in *Le sacre du printemps*, Riisager depicts the ancient Inuit spring ritual accompanied by the shaman's drumming. 'Qarrtsiluni' is a term describing the silence while waiting for something to burst, such as the Arctic dawn after months of darkness. Riisager portrays this in an unbroken sequence of mounting tension, in which the drums invoke primal natural forces.

A pioneer in the discovery of Greenland and Inuit culture, Rasmussen died of pneumonia in December 1933 on his seventh 'Thule Expedition', having contracted severe food poisoning from eating *kiviat* (fermented auk). For a memorial concert the following year, Emil Reesen wrote the *Grønlandsk Folketone* (Greenlandic Folk Music), a dignified rhapsody based on local melodies.

From the same broadcast that featured the music of Høgenhaven, The Pastorale by Jørgen Jersild presents a more consonant vision of nature. Jersild studied with Poul Schierbeck in Copenhagen and with Albert Roussel in Paris, and his own music finds its own synthesis of their teachings and traditions. He incorporated modal scales and harmonies which lend their own, archaic serenity to the Pastorale dating from 1945. The obvious precedent here is Carl Nielsen in his own rustic vein, with pieces such as Pan and Syrinx, and the middle movements of the earlier symphonies. In the same tradition is Svend Erik Tarp's *Lystspil* Overture (Comedy Overture) from 1940. The recording is from a concert given by the DRSO in the Jutland city of Kolding, which the orchestra visited in May 1962 as part of the radio's efforts to meet the audience in the province, which normally only had the opportunity to hear the orchestra through the loudspeakers. Tarp supplied a programme note: 'My *Lystspil*

Overture is not composed as a prelude to a specific dramatic work, but is an attempt to express a cheerful mood in tone – a mood where the cheerful, immediately musical element is the predominant one, only interrupted for musical-architectural reasons by a contrasting middle part of a quieter and more melancholy character.’ As a solo instrument, the viola is associated with a ‘melancholy character’, and the first movement of Erling Brene’s concerto is cast as an almost continuous, restlessly expressive cantilena, supported and punctuated by the orchestra. Brene only began to study music after graduating from business school. He was already 25 years old when he joined the violin and composition classes at the conservatoire in Copenhagen in 1921, and he soon left to pursue private studies with the composer Ludolf Nielsen. His style took a neoclassical turn during the 1930s, but the Viola Concerto dates from 1949, and has a looser relationship with specific tonalities. Following a reflective middle movement, the Viola Concerto ends with an exuberant, spicily harmonised finale.

Flemming Weis also wrote in a modally inflected, post-Bartokian idiom. Like Høgenhaven he was a church musician by training, and in 1958 he composed this three-movement setting of sayings from the Book of Proverbs. The character of each text in the *Sinfonia Proverbiorum* is treated in vividly illustrative rather than abstract terms. Weis remarked of himself in an interview from 1978: ‘I’ve listened to so much music and kept up with it both in my capacity as a critic and in my association work [as long-time chair of the Danish Composers Society] that I’ve come into contact with it all and have never been able to put anything aside as something negative or something I wasn’t interested in... Not that I’ve exactly gone where the wind blows – I’d say rather that it was the wind that came to me and blew on me. And when I had a 12-tone period, following Schoenberg’s principles quite strictly and precisely, it was simply out of curiosity.’

As a light-hearted finale on a contrasting note, the compilation ends with Emil Reesen’s Fantasy on Danish Christmas Melodies, written in 1933, and first played on

the radio under Launy Grøndahl's direction on Christmas Eve 1939. Several well-known Danish Christmas hymns are orchestrated traditionally, but nonetheless masterfully in a joyously interwoven fashion which will strike chords with any Anglophone listeners familiar with Victor Hely-Hutchinson's *Carol Symphony*.

© Martin Granau / Peter Quanttrill, 2023



The Thomas Jensen Legacy, Volume 20

There was no more unprejudiced or enthusiastic promoter of Danish music than Thomas Jensen. Twelve composers are featured here, in styles ranging from Romantic ballet to modernist oratorio. Nearly all the recordings are issued for the first time ever since they were originally broadcast. Taken together, they present a panoramic picture of Danish music in the 19th and 20th centuries.

CD 1

- Friedrich Kuhlau** (1786-1832)
 [1] *Elverhøj Overture Op. 100* 7:35
- Niels W. Gade** (1817-1890)
 [2] *Efterklang af Ossian. Op. 1* (1840) 12:50
- J.P.E. Hartmann** (1805-1900)
 [3] *Gudernes Triumfmarch* (1868) 3:58
- P.E. Lange-Müller** (1850-1926)
 [4] *Forspil til "Renæssance"* (1901) 4:09

Knudåge Riisager (1897-1974)
 [5] - [8] *Slaraffenland* (Paradise of Fools) 7:15
 Live broadcast 1962

Vagn Holmboe (1909-1996)
 [9] - [15] *Symphony No. 7, Op. 50* 26:15
 Live broadcast 1957

Svend Erik Tarp (1908-1994)
 [16]-[22] *"Mosaik", miniature suite* (1940) 7:12

Knud Høgenhaven (1928-1987)
 [23] *Pastorale in F Op. 16* (1956) 5:45
 [24] *Norsk Folketone Op. 26* (1957) 3:35
 Live Concert November 12, 1957

[1] - [4] + [16] - [22] Recorded 1940-1942
 Tivoli Concert Hall Orchestra

CD 2

- Knudåge Riisager**
 [1] *Qarrtsiluni Op. 36* (1938) 8:17
- Jørgen Jersild** (1913-2004)
 [2] *Pastorale* (1945) 7:15
- Svend Erik Tarp**
 [3] *Lystspilouverture* (1940) 6:42
- Emil Reesen** (1887-1964)
 [4] *Grønlandsk Folketone* (1934) 6:47

Erling Brene (1896-1980)
 [5] - [7] *Viola Concerto Op. 47* (1949) 25:20
 Soloist Christian Esbensen

Flemming Weis (1898-1981)
 [8] - [10] *Sinfonia proverbiorum* 16:12
 Danish Radio Chorus. World premiere

Emil Reesen
 [11] *Danish Christmas Melodies* 6:22

[1] - [11] Live Concerts
 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1962

Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra

Thomas Jensen, conductor



DACOCD 930

2 CD

Total playing time:
 79:47 + 78:35

First release

CD 1 [5] - [15] + [23] - [24]
 CD 2 [1] - [3] + [5] - [10]

Transferred by
 Claus Byrith

Cover photo
 Svend Ravnkilde

Cover design
 Hannah Jørgensen

Executive producer
 Jesper Buhl

www.danacord.dk
 ©2023

LC 07075

