



RUED LANGGAARD

The Early Recordings 1963-1974
Piano, Organ and Vocal Music

CD 1 Piano and organ music

Rued Langgaard 1893-1952

Sonata No. 1 [BVN 197] (1925-28 rev. 1933) 18:13

[1] Introduzione: Allegro maestoso – Allegro maestoso 5:21

[2] Animato scherzoso 3:08

[3] Romance. Poco allegro espressivo 4:24

[4] Allegro con fuoco e grazioso 5:14

Flammekamrene (The Chambers of Flames), Fantasy after Dante's "Divina Commedia"

[BVN 221] (1930-33, rev. 1934-37) 7:34

[5] Lento misterioso – More and more wildly agitated – Lento misterioso

Afgrundsmusik (Music of the Abyss), A Sonata [BVN 169] (1921-24) 15:39

[6] Inflessibile mostruoso (Strict, horrifying) – Maestoso rigoglioso 9:23

[7] Frenetico, quasi rondo 6:13

Medens Sundets Brise summer (While the Sound's Light Breeze is Humming), 3 Piano Pieces

[BVN 302] (1929-1945) 7:09

[8] Allegro vivace 2:59

[9] Molto allegro leggiero 1:03

[10] Allegro vivace 3:02

[1]-[10] Noël Lee, piano

Transferred from FONA TF 124 (LP, 1970)

Toccata ("Zum Angedenken Niels W. Gade") [BVN 51] (1911) 7:17

[11] Maestoso

Jørgen Berg at the organ of Radiohuset, Copenhagen

Danmarks Radio (DR) Production 6 June 1963

Høstpræludium (Harvest Prelude) [BVN 250] (1940) 4:16

[12] Poco andante

Som Lynet er Kristi Genkomst (As Lightning is Christ's Second Coming) [BVN 341] (1948) 3:40

[13] Allegro marcato – Chorale tempo

Øde Gader (Deserted Streets) [BVN 373] (1949) 3:28

[14] Quickly and glowing

Forbigang (Paaske for Herren) (Passover, Easter for the Lord) [BVN 403] (1950) 3:58

[15] [Introduction] – Slowly

Sonata for Organ [BVN 410] (1950) 5:32

[16] Prelude 1. Allegro poco 3:01

[17] Prelude 2. Allegro 2:32

[12]–[17] Jørgen Ernst Hansen at the organ of Ribe Cathedral, August 1970

Transferred from FONATF 127 (LP, 1971)

CD 2 Vocal music

Symphony No.2 "Vaarbrud" ("Vaarsange") ("Awakening of Spring"/"Spring Songs")

[BVN 53] (1912–14, rev. 1926–33) 27:26

[1] Allegro (Allegro con fuoco) – 5:11

[2] Notturmo – Scherzo – 3:14

[3] Adagio (Elegiaco sostenuto – Sostenuto quasi adagio) 8:53

[4] Moderato con moto (with soprano solo) "Naar jeg hører Lærker synges" (Emil

Rittershaus/Rolf Harboe) 10:02

Kirsten Hermansen, soprano; Odense Symphony Orchestra conducted by Karol Stryja

Danmarks Radio (DR) Production (Odense) 22 August 1974

Gefunden (J. W. von Goethe) [BVN 58] (1913–14) 2:15

[5] "Ich ging im Walde"

Lieder von Goethe [BVN 60] (1913) 7:43

[6] Erinnerung ("Wilst du immer weiter schweifen") 0:53

[7] Gleich und Gleich ("Ein Blumenglöckchen vom Boden hervor") 2:27

[8] Blumengruss ("Der Strauss, den ich gepflücket") 2:50

[9] Vergeblich ("Erinnr' ich mich doch spät und früh") 1:33

Aus alten Märchen (H. Heine) (BVN 85) (1914) 1:44

[10] "Aus alten Märchen winkt es"

Wer zum ersten Male liebt (H. Heine) [BVN 87] (1914) 3:14

[11] "Wer zum ersten Male liebt"

Lyrishes Intermezzo von Heinrich Heine [BVN 101] (1915) 7:39

[12] Der Tod das ist die kühle Nacht 2:19

[13] Das ist ein Brausen 1:15

[14] Mir träumte von einem Königskind 1:44

[15] Ein Fichtenbaum 2:21

[5]-[15] Bonna Søndberg, soprano, accompanied by Eyvind Møller, piano
Danmarks Radio (DR) Studio production 8 June 1968

Sensommer (Late Summer) [BVN 127] (1916) 6:53

[16] "O hvor hvert Fjed dog er gammeltungt" (Holger Drachmann)

Bonna Søndberg, soprano; Sønderjyllands Symfoniorkester conducted by Alf Sjøen
Danmarks Radio (DR) Production (Sønderborg) 6 June 1968

Fra Højsangen (From the Song of Solomon) [BVN 381] (1949) 14:45

[17] Broadly swelling – More slowly – Not fast – Slowly, dark – Secretively nocturnal –
Allegro glorioso

Bonna Søndberg (Shulamite), soprano, Kurt Westi (Solomon), tenor, members of Filharmonisk
Kor, Aalborg (Daughters of Jerusalem); Aalborg Symphony Orchestra conducted by Alf Sjøen
Danmarks Radio (DR) Production (Aalborg) 18 February 1969

Rued Langgaard blev født den 28. juli 1893 i København og døde 58 år gammel den 10. juli 1952 i Ribe. Allerede som elleveårig havde han en bemærkelsesværdig debut som organist og orgelimpromvisor, og som 19-årig fik han sin første symfoni uropført af Berlinerfilharmonikerne. I begyndelsen af 1920'erne oplevede Langgaard en kortvarig interesse for sine symfoniske værker i Tyskland, hvor hans symfonier nr. 2, 4 og 6 og hans mest progressive værk, *Sfærernes Musik*, blev opført. I Danmark blev den indesluttede og excentriske komponist imidlertid betragtet med betydelig skepsis. Et kunstnerisk gennembrud udeblev, og efter at Langgaard i midten af 1920'erne havde fået sin opera *Antikrist* afvist af Det Kongelige Teater, vendte han modernismen ryggen og rettede åben kritik mod det danske musikliv. Langgaards religiøst og symbolistisk farvede musikopfattelse harmonerede dårligt med den antiromantiske holdning, der, inspireret af Carl Nielsen (1865–1931), blev dominerende i Danmark. Langgaard

blev kørt ud på et sidespor og opnåede først i 1940 af få en fast stilling, som domorganist i Ribe. Efter hans død i 1952 så det ud til, at han skulle forblive en parentes i dansk musikhistorie. Men omkring 1965 satte en renæssance for hans musik ind, og den tog virkelig fart i 1990'erne. I dag er de fleste af hans værker indspillet og udgivet. Hans musik er også slået igennem internationalt. Operaen *Antikrist* har således fået en kolossal succes på Deutsche Oper Berlin (premiere i 2022).

Rued Langgaards musik er karakteriseret ved en usædvanlig stor stilmæssig variation. Hans værker er ofte sammensatte og ukonventionelle i deres form og båret af en stræben mod ekspressive, billedskabende og visionære udtryk. Værkerne på dette album rummer eksempler på hele udtryksbredden i Langgaards musik fra 1909 til 1951.

Pionerer inden for Langgaards klaver-, orgel- og vokalmusik

Rued Langgaard opførte næsten altid sine egne klaverværker, men optrådte

ikke som pianist efter 1933. I årene 1944–1953 uropførte Danmarks Radio et dusin klaverstykker i pianisterne Max Rytter og Agda Lhoirs udførelse. Herefter var det i mange år udelukkende Bengt Johnsson, der spillede Langgaards klavermusik. Han uropførte *Vanvidsfantasi* i radioen 1955 og koncertopførte *Afgrundsmusik* i 1967 (måske var det også en uropførelse). Bengt Johnssons fortolkninger af bl.a. disse to værker blev indspillet af Danacord og udsendt på et dobbeltalbum i 1984 (DACO 219–220; delvis genudgivet på CD i 1994 på DACOCD 369). Første gang, Langgaards klavermusik kunne høres på plade var imidlertid i 1970, hvor den amerikanske pianist Noël Lee, der havde danske aner, præsenterede fire værker på en LP, som lydteknikeren Peter Willemoës havde taget initiativ til. Værkerne genudgives her med bibeholdelse af LP'ens rækkefølge. Masterbåndet er forsvundet, så overførslen til CD er foretaget på basis af et par nogenlunde friske LP'er.

Organisten Palle Alsfelt var en af de få, der tidligt fandt interesse i Langgaards orgelmusik. Han var ansat i Danmarks

Radio, og den 28. juli 1963, hvor Langgaard ville være fyldt 70 år, præsenterede han et program med to orgelværker spillet af Jørgen Berg, en anden Langgaard-pioner, som allerede i 1958 havde opført to satser fra første del af orgeltrilogien *Messis* i radioen. Optagelserne fra 1963 er bevaret i DR's arkiv, og til nærværende album har vi valgt *Toccata* (versionen fra 1909). I 1960'erne tog flere organister Langgaards musik op ved enkeltkoncerter. Den mest vedholdende formidler af Langgaards orgelmusik var dog Jørgen Ernst Hansen. Hans repertoire omfattede fra 1967 og tre årtier frem større og mindre Langgaard-værker, hvis uropførelse han i mange tilfælde stod bag. Og lykkeligvis foretog han i august 1970 en LP-indspilning af Langgaard-kompositioner fra 1940'erne på Ribe Domkirkes orgel, som endnu stod urørt siden Langgaards tid. Orglet var blevet renoveret i 1937, tre år før Langgaard kom til Ribe som domorganist. Selv om en del af de romantiske stemmer fra orglets indvielse i 1904 var blevet erstattet af barokstemmer, var

Langgaard glad for det 46 stemmer store instrumentet. I 1973 blev det totalt ombygget. Fra Jørgen Ernst Hansens historiske LP har vi valgt fem af de ti værker. Også disse er overført digitalt direkte fra LP-mediet (en CD med hele LP'ens indhold blev i 2007 udgivet af Det Danske Orgelselskab m.fl.).

Jørgen Ernst Hansen optrådte ved utallige kirkekoncerter med Langgaards salmer og orgelstykker sammen med en af Det Kgl. Teaters populære solister, Bonna Søndberg, som fra midten af 1960'erne koncentrerede sig om lied-repertoire og kirkekoncerter. I 1968-69 indspillede hun sammen med en af den tids bedste akkompagnatører, Eyvind Møller, en række sange af Langgaard i Danmarks Radios regi, bl.a. 11 sange til tekster af Goethe og Heine. De blev udsendt i radioen 24. feb. 1969 og udgives her for første gang. Søndberg deltog også i to DR-produktioner med danske landsdelsorkestre. Hun medvirker således i tonebilledet *Sensommer* (1916), som blev uropført i radioen 29. juli 1968 (dagen efter Langgaards 75-

årsdag, idet DR nu havde besluttet *ikke* at markere fødselsdage!), og i *Fra Højsangen*, et af Langgaards sidste, større værker (1949), uropført i DR 24. feb. 1969. Her medvirker også den unge lyriske tenor Kurt Westi, som senere gjorde karriere på tyske operascener. Begge optagelser udgives her for første gang.

Blandt de 22 Langgaard-værker, DR producerede 1968-76 i samarbejde med de fire landsdelsorkestre uden for København, er også Symfoni nr. 2 bevaret. Finalens sopranstemme varetages af Kirsten Hermansen, en meget benyttet og populær solist fra Det Kgl. Teater. Produktionen blev udsendt i DR 9. dec. 1975, mere end et år efter at den var optaget.

CD 1 [1]-[10] Klaverværker

Selv om det virker paradoksalt, er *Sonate nr. 1* komponeret umiddelbart efter Langgaards mest avantgardistiske klaverkomposition, *Afgrundsmusik*. Sidstnævnte hører til gruppen af værker som idémæssigt knytter sig til operaen *Antikrist* (1921-23). Intentionen med

Afgrundsmusik er at skildre "det såkaldt onde" i musik. Et motiv fra Liszts h-mol sonate transformeres til et destruktivt element, og vedholdende gentagelser af tomme fraser, der kører i ring, giver indtryk af en stivnet, klaustrofobisk og kold musikverden, hvor der ikke åbner sig nogen vej ud af den diaboliske cirkel. I 1925, et år efter afslutningen af *Afgrundsmusik*, skrev Langgaard første version af den varme, romantiske pastiche, *Sonate nr. 1*. Han vendte dermed demonstrativt ryggen til modernismen; nu gjaldt det rendyrket klassicisme, enkelhed og velklang! Trods det velkendte tonesprog blev sonaten genstand for utallige revisioner indtil 1933 (scherzoen blev således udskiftet to gange).

Også *Flammekamrene*, hvis titel refererer til et hedt opholdssted for fortabte sjæle i Dantes *Helvede*, var langt tid undervejs. Første version blev til 1930–33, mens den endelige, som Noël Lee spiller, er fra 1937. Her er tale om en klaverstil med mindelser om Liszt og Skrjabin. Til gengæld er *Medens Sundets Brise summer* virtuos,

senromantisk salonmusik med et strejft af impressionistiske arabesker. Titlen er en verslinje fra et erindringsdigt, en sommerstemning ved Øresund, af Holger Drachmann. I sats 3 høres 0:33 inde et opadgående motiv, som i varieret form genfindes som hovedtema i både Langgaards 11. og 16. symfoni (1. sats).

CD 1 [11]-[17] Orgelværker

Langgaard fik kun trykt tre orgelværker i sit liv, bl.a. *Toccata*, komponeret 1909 til minde om komponisten Niels W. Gade. Det er formelt set en meget frit udformet toccata. Langgaard uropførte stykket i 1909; det blev publiceret i 1912 og igen i en kortere version 1938.

Høstpræludium blev anvendt ved høstgudstjenesten i Ribe Domkirke 29. sep. 1940.

Den apokalyptiske fantasi *Som Lynet er Kristi Genkomst* har titel efter Matt. 24,27. Stykket blev uropført af Langgaard i en radiotransmitteret halvtimes koncert fra Ribe Domkirke den 3. maj 1948. Jørgen Ernst Hansen valgte, pga. LP'ens begrænsede plads, at ude-

lade den foreskrevne gentagelse af stykkets første del.

Øde Gader, hvis titel er hentet fra Georges Rodenbachs symbolistiske roman *Det døde Brügge*, er ikke, som man kunne tro, et stilfærdigt stemningsstykke. Det skal spilles "hurtigt og glødende" og udtrykker således snarest desperation over det tomme rum, de øde, mennesketomme gader.

Forbigang (Paaske for Herren) er en kort orgelfantasi, hvis titler er hentet fra to bibelsteder, hhv. 2 Mosebog 12,11 og Luk. 24,28. Et romantisk tema afbrydes gang på gang af forstyrrende elementer og abrupte udsagn, og til sidst er der kun en brudt akkord tilbage af temaet. Også her udelader J.E. Hansen gentagelsen af stykkets første del. Sluttelig er der den lille *Sonate* sammenstillet af to præludier, som Langgaard havde brugt ved radiotransmitterede gudstjenester i 1950. Sats 1 citerer salmemelodien "Af Højheden oprunden er" (Philipp Nicolai). Som samlet værk blev sonaten, ligesom *Øde Gader* og *Forbigang*, uropført af Jørgen Ernst Hansen i 1970.

CD 2 [1]-[4] Symfoni nr. 2 "Vaarbrud" ("Vaarsange")

Symfonien blev uropført i København i 1914. Publikum kvitterede med et varmt bifald efter symfoniens flotte og optimistiske slutning, men pressens modtagelse var lunken. Ved flere af de fem følgende opførelser frem til 1925 kunne Langgaard indhøste en gedigen publikumssucces, bl.a. i Tyskland. I 1926–33 var værket underlagt revision, og resultatet blev en forkortet udgave, hvor sidste del af 1. sats var skåret bort og symfonien reduceret fra tre til to satser. Den alternative titel "Vaarsange" kom til på dette tidspunkt. Den korte version, som høres på dette album, blev udsendt i DR i 1948 med Launy Grøndahl som dirigent. Teksten i finalesatsen er forårsdigtet *Lenzklänge* af Emil Rittershaus (1834–97) i Rolf Harboes danske oversættelse. I 2002 genskabtes symfoniens oprindelige, tresatsede form, og den har siden været den foretrukne ved koncerter og indspilninger.

[5]-[15] Sange af Goethe & Heine

Gefunden og *Lieder von Goethe* repræsenterer en markant drejning i Langgaards sangstil fra de voldsomme, opulente "Sturm und Drang"-lieder, han skrev 1909-11 til digte af Rittershaus, og mod den enkle, stilfærdige intimitet, som præger disse Goethe-sange. Bortset fra én blev de til under det personligt skelsættende sommerophold i Blekinge i 1913, hvor en ung kvinde, Dora, så at sige trak tæppet væk under den 20-årige komponist – og inspirerede ham til disse (og mange senere) kærlighedssange.

Lieder von Goethe fik mottoet "Sommer 1913", og den fjerde og sidste sang gav han titlen *Vergeblich* – "Forgæves".

Teksten slutter: "Sie denkt an mich, ich denk' an sie, und beiden hilft es nichts". Det siger alt. Erindringen om de skønne sommerdage i 1913 fik så varig en betydning, at motiver fra Goethe-sangene citeres i et utal af Langgaards værker frem til 1951.

I 1914-15 komponerede Langgaard en række sange til tekster af Heinrich Heine, i flere tilfælde velkendte digte, som også var populære blandt tyske, romantiske komponister.

[16] Sensommer

I årene 1916-18 var Langgaard særdeles produktiv, og han skabte en mængde værker uden udsigt til at få dem opført. Det gjaldt bl.a. *Sensommer* fra 1916, et tonebillede for mezzosopran og orkester, revideret i 1941. Teksten – *Ad kendte Veje* fra digtsamlingen *Ranker og Roser* af Holger Drachmann (1846-1908) – drejer sig om det fortabte ungdomsliv og om livets efterår, der uafvendeligt står for døren. Lige præcis sådanne følelser beherskede den 23-årige komponist! Digtet slutter dog med en betydelig optimisme. Musikken er typisk for årene 1916-18, hvor næsten alt, hvad Langgaard komponerede, har karakter af "tonebilleder" med naturens lyde og stemninger sat i musik, og en ofte ganske konkret sammenhæng mellem tekst og toner i vokalværkerne. *Sensommer* er komponeret lige efter Symfoni nr. 4 "Løvfald" og har mindelser om denne, et enkelt sted er der ligefrem et citat fra symfonien.

[17] Fra Højsangen

Langgaard benytter tekstuddrag fra Højsangen i den gamle danske bibeloversættelse fra 1871. Uddraget omfatter kap. 1, vers 2 til og med kap. 3, vers 2 samt kap. 5, vers 9–10 med visse udeladelser, ændringer og tilføjelser. Teksten er fordelt mellem Sulamith (sopran) og Salomon (tenor) samt Jerusalems Døtre (kvindekor). Langgaard sætter loyalt den højstemte bibeltekst i musik, lige indtil et punkt til slut, hvor han som komponist på excentrisk vis bryder ind i forløbet med en privat kommentar. Scenen skifter fra det mytologiske, bibelske landskab til en nat ved domkirken i Ribe anno 1949, musikalsk skildret med en skæbnsvanger rytme og brug af klokker (i partituret foreskrives også orgel, men det er i indspilningen erstattet af messingblæsere). Pointen må være, at den bibelske tekst er en illusion, en drøm om en uopnåelig og utopisk kærlighed, mens komponistens virkelighed, mens han skriver værket, er behersket af nat, orme og død. (“Døden os i Hælen gaar” er et citat fra salmen “Dagen viger og gaar bort” af Dorothe

Engelbretsdatter, 1634–1716). Og ganske brat er vi atter tilbage i det fik-tive bibelske miljø. I bibelteksten (kap. 5, vers 10) lyder Sulamiths sidste replik “Min elskede er hvid og rød”, men Langgaard ændrer farverne til “lys og blå”! Romantikens farver, måske? Sangstemmerne er deklamatoriske, og det avancerede, konstant skiftende tonesprog (nok inspireret af Richard Strauss) finder vi kun i få værker af Langgaard, bl.a. i 5. billede af operaen *Antikrist*.

Læs mere om værkerne på Rued Langgaard Udgavens side:
<http://langgaard.dk/RLU/index.htm>

Bendt Viinholt Nielsen

Rued Langgaard was born on 28 July 1893 in Copenhagen and died aged 58 on 10 July 1952 in Ribe. Already at the age of eleven he had a remarkable debut as an organist and organ improviser, and at the age of 19 he had his first symphony premiered by the Berlin Philharmonic. In the early 1920s, Langgaard experienced a short-lived interest in his symphonic works in Germany, where his symphonies nos. 2, 4 and 6 and *The Music of the Spheres*, his most progressive work, were performed. In Denmark, however, the introverted and eccentric composer was regarded with considerable scepticism. An artistic breakthrough did not materialise, and after Langgaard had his opera *Antichrist* rejected by the Royal Theater in the mid-1920s, he turned his back on modernism and directed open criticism at Danish musical life. Langgaard's religious and symbolically coloured perception of music blended poorly with the anti-romantic attitude which, inspired by Carl Nielsen (1865-1931), became dominant in Denmark. Langgaard was

side-tracked, and it was only in 1940 that he obtained a permanent position as cathedral organist in Ribe. After his death in 1952, it seemed that he would remain a parenthesis in Danish music history. But around 1965 a renaissance for his music set in, and really took off in the 1990s. Today, most of his works are recorded and published. His music is also a success internationally. Thus, his opera *Antichrist* has been a great success at the Deutsche Oper Berlin (premiere in 2022).

Rued Langgaard's music is characterized by an unusually large stylistic variation. His works are often complex and unconventional in their form and are driven by a striving towards impassioned, image-creating and visionary expressions. The works on this album contain examples of the wide range of expression in Langgaard's music from 1909 to 1951.

Pioneers in the field of Langgaard's keyboard and vocal music

Rued Langgaard almost always performed his own piano works, but did

not appear as a pianist after 1933. In the years 1944–1953, Danmarks Radio premiered a dozen piano pieces performed by pianists Max Rytter and Agda Lhoir. Thereafter, for many years, it was exclusively Bengt Johnsson who played Langgaard's piano music. He premiered *Insanity Fantasy* on the radio in 1955 and performed *Music of the Abyss* in concert in 1967 (perhaps also a premiere). Bengt Johnsson's interpretations of these works were recorded, among others, by Danacord, and were released on a double album in 1984 (DACO 219–220; partly reissued on CD in 1994 on DACOCD 369). The first time Langgaard's piano music could be heard on disc, however, was in 1970, when the American pianist Noël Lee, of Danish descent, presented four works on an LP at the initiative of sound engineer Peter Willemoës. The recordings are reissued here, maintaining the order of the LP. As the master tape has disappeared, the transfer to CD was made on the basis of a couple of fairly fresh LPs.

Organist Palle Alsfelt was one of the

few musicians who took an early interest in Langgaard's organ music. He was a music editor at Danmarks Radio, and on 28 July 1963, when Langgaard would have turned 70, he presented a programme with two organ works played by Jørgen Berg, another Langgaard pioneer who had already performed two movements from the first part of the *Messis* organ trilogy on the radio in 1958. The recordings from 1963 are preserved in DR's archives, and for the present album we have chosen *Toccata* (the original version from 1909). In the 1960s, several organists took up Langgaard's music at individual concerts. The most persistent ambassador for Langgaard's organ music was, however, Jørgen Ernst Hansen. From 1967 and for three decades onwards, his repertoire included major and minor Langgaard works, many of which he premiered. Fortunately, in August 1970, he made an LP recording of Langgaard compositions from the 1940s at the Ribe Cathedral organ, which was untouched since Langgaard's time. The

organ had been renovated in 1937, three years before Langgaard came to Ribe as cathedral organist. Even though some of the romantic stops from the inauguration of the organ in 1904 had been replaced by baroque stops, Langgaard was happy with the instrument comprising 46 stops. In 1973, it was completely rebuilt. From Jørgen Ernst Hansen's historic LP, we have selected five of the ten works. These have also been digitally transferred directly from the LP medium (a CD with the contents of the entire LP was released in 2007 by Det Danske Orgelselskab et al.).

Jørgen Ernst Hansen performed at countless church concerts with Langgaard's hymns and organ pieces together with Bonna Søndberg, one of the Royal Danish Theatre's popular soloists. From the mid-1960s, she concentrated on lied repertoire and church concerts. In 1968-69, accompanied by one of the finest accompanists of the time, Eyvind Møller, she recorded a number of songs by Langgaard for Danmarks Radio,

including 11 songs to texts by Goethe and Heine. They were broadcast on the radio on 24 February 1969 and are published here for the first time. Søndberg also participated in two DR productions with Danish regional orchestras. She appears in the tone picture *Sensommer* (1916), which was first performed on the radio on 29 July 1968 (the day after Langgaard's 75th birthday, as DR had now decided *not* to celebrate birthdays!), and in *Fra Højsangen*, one of Langgaard's last, major works (1949), which was first performed on DR on 24 February 1969. The young lyric tenor Kurt Westi, who later made a career on German opera stages, also appears here. Both recordings are released on this album for the first time.

Among the 22 Langgaard works that DR produced between 1968 and 1976 in collaboration with the four regional orchestras outside Copenhagen, Symphony No. 2 is also preserved. The soprano part in the finale is interpreted by Kirsten Hermansen, a frequently-used and popular soloist from the Royal

Theatre. The production was broadcast on DR on 9 December 1975, more than a year after it was recorded.

CD 1 [1]-[10] Piano works

Although it seems paradoxical, *Sonata No. 1* was composed immediately after Langgaard's most avantgarde composition for piano, *Music of the Abyss*. The latter belongs to a group of works linked to the opera *Antichrist* (1921–23). The intention of *Music of the Abyss* is to depict “the so-called evil” in music. A motif from Liszt's B minor sonata is transformed into a destructive element, and persistent repetitions of empty phrases give the impression of a rigid, claustrophobic and cold musical world, where no way leads out of the diabolical circle. In 1925, a year after the completion of *Music of the Abyss*, Langgaard wrote the first version of the warm, romantic pastiche, *Sonata No. 1*. Thus, he demonstratively turned his back on modernism; now only pure classicism, simplicity and harmony mattered! Despite the familiar tonal language, the

sonata was subject to countless revisions until 1933 (the scherzo was replaced twice).

The Chambers of Flames, the title of which refers to a hot abode for lost souls in Dante's *Hell*, was also a long time in the making. The first version appeared in 1930–33, while the final one, played by Noël Lee, is from 1937. The piano style is reminiscent of Liszt and Scriabin. On the other hand, *While the Sound's Light Breeze is Humming* is virtuoso, late-Romantic drawing-room music with a touch of impressionistic arabesques. The title is a line from a poem by Holger Drachmann depicting summer memories at Øresund (the sound between Denmark and Sweden). In movement 3, the upward motif heard at 0:33 is found in varied form as the main theme in Langgaard's symphonies 11 and 16 (first movement).

CD 1 [11]-[17] Organ works

Langgaard only had three organ works published in his life, including the *Toccatà*, composed in 1909 in memory of the composer Niels W. Gade.

Formally, it is a very freely designed toccata. Langgaard premiered the piece in 1909; it was published in 1912 and again in a shorter version in 1938.

The *Harvest Prelude* was played at the harvest service in Ribe Cathedral on 29 September 1940.

As *Lightning is Christ's Second Coming* is an apocalyptic fantasy named after Matt. 24:27. The piece was premiered by Langgaard in a radio-transmitted half-hour concert from Ribe Cathedral on 3 May 1948. Due to the limited space of the LP, Jørgen Ernst Hansen chose to omit the prescribed repetition of the first part of the piece. *Deserted Streets*, whose title is taken from Georges Rodenbach's symbolist novel *Bruges-la-Morte*, is not, as one might think, a quiet mood piece. It is to be played "quickly and fervently" and thus expresses desperation over the empty space, the depopulated town.

Passover (Easter for the Lord) is a short organ fantasy, the double title of which is borrowed from two biblical passages, respectively Exodus 12:11

and Luke 24:28. A romantic theme is repeatedly interrupted by disturbing elements and abrupt statements, and in the end only a broken chord remains of the theme. Here too, J.E. Hansen omits the repetition of the first part of the piece. Finally, there is the small *Sonata* comprised of two preludes, which Langgaard used at radio-transmitted church services in 1950. Movement I quotes the hymn tune "How bright appears the morning star" (Philipp Nicolai). As a complete work, the sonata, like *Øde Gader* and *Passover*, was premiered by Jørgen Ernst Hansen in 1970.

CD 2 [1]-[4] Symphony No. 2 "Awakening of Spring" ("Spring Songs")

The symphony was premiered in Copenhagen in 1914. The audience responded with warm applause after the symphony's grand and optimistic ending, but the critics' reception was lukewarm. At several of the five following performances until 1925, Langgaard was able to reap a solid audience success, including in Germany. In 1926-

33, the work was subject to revision, and the result was an abbreviated version, where the last part of the first movement was cut out and the symphony was reduced from three to two movements. At this time, the alternative title “Spring Songs” appeared. The short version, which can be heard on this album, was broadcast on DR in 1948 with Launy Grøndahl as conductor. The text of the final movement is the spring poem *Lenzklänge* by Emil Rittershaus (1834–97) in Rolf Harboe’s Danish translation. In 2002, the symphony’s original, three-movement form was re-established, and since then it has been the preferred form for concerts and recordings.

[5]-[15] Goethe & Heine Lieder
Gefunden and *Lieder von Goethe* represent a significant shift in Langgaard’s lied style from a series of violent, opulent “Sturm und Drang” songs composed in 1909–11, and to the simple, quiet intimacy that characterizes the Goethe songs. With one exception, the songs were

composed during the personally defining summer stay in Blekinge in 1913, where Dora, a young woman, so to speak, pulled the rug out from under the 20-year-old composer’s feet – and inspired him to write these (and many later) love songs. *Lieder von Goethe* was given the motto “Sommer 1913”, and the fourth and final song was entitled *Vergeblich* – “In Vain”. The text of this song ends: “Sie denkt an mich, ich denk’ an sie, und beiden hilft es nichts”. That says it all. The memory of the beautiful summer days of 1913 had such a lasting impact that motifs from Goethe’s songs were quoted by Langgaard in countless of his works until 1951.

In 1914–15, Langgaard composed a number of songs to texts by Heinrich Heine, in several cases well-known poems, which were also popular among German romantic composers.

[16] Late Summer

In the years 1916–18, Langgaard was extremely productive, and he created a number of works with no prospect of having them performed. This included *Late Summer* from 1916, a tone picture for mezzo-soprano and orchestra, revised in 1941. The text – *Down Well-known Paths* from the poetry collection *Ranker og Roser* by Holger Drachmann (1846–1908) – is about lost youth and the autumn of life that is inevitably at the door. These are precisely the feelings that dominated the 23-year-old composer! The poem ends, however, with considerable optimism. The music is typical of the years 1916–18, when almost everything Langgaard composed had the character of “tone images” with the sounds and moods of nature set to music, and an often quite concrete connection between text and music in the vocal works. *Late Summer* was composed right after Symphony No. 4 “Leaf Fall” and is musically reminiscent of this, in one place there is even a quotation from the symphony.

[17] From the Song of Solomon

Langgaard uses excerpts from the *Song of Solomon* in an old-fashioned Danish Bible translation from 1871. The excerpt includes ch. 1, verse 2 through ch. 3, verse 2, and ch. 5, verses 9–10 with certain omissions, changes, and interpolations. The text is divided between Shulamite (soprano) and Solomon (tenor) and the Daughters of Jerusalem (female choir). Langgaard loyally sets the highly emotional biblical text to music, right up to a point at the end where he, as a composer, eccentrically breaks in with a private commentary. The scene changes from the mythological, biblical landscape to a night by the cathedral in Ribe in 1949, musically depicted with a fateful rhythm and the use of bells (the score also prescribes an organ, however this is replaced by brass instruments in the recording). The point must be that the biblical text is an illusion, a dream of an unattainable and utopian love, while the composer’s reality during the work’s composition is dominated by night, worms and death (the text includes

here a quotation from a Danish hymn by Dorothe Engelbretsdatter, 1634–1716). And quite suddenly we are back in the fictional biblical environment. In the biblical text (ch. 5, verse 10) Shulamite’s last line is “My beloved is white and red”, but Langgaard changes the colours to “bright and blue”! The colours of Romanticism, perhaps? The singing voices are declamatory, and the advanced, constantly changing tonal language (probably inspired by Richard Strauss) is only found in a few works by Langgaard, including the 5th scene of the opera *Antichrist*.

Read more about the works at the Rued Langgaard Edition page:
<http://langgaard.dk/RLU/index.htm>

Bendt Viinholt Nielsen

Rued Langgaard on Danacord

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The Early Recordings Vol. 2 features a number of Langgaard pioneers who presented piano, organ and vocal works in the period 1963-1974. In 1970, Noël Lee recorded the first LP of piano music by Langgaard; it is reissued here for the first time on CD. Organist Jørgen Ernst Hansen can be heard on Langgaard's Ribe Cathedral organ (1970). In the 1960s, Royal Theatre soloist, Bonna Søndberg recorded several songs and major vocal works for Danmarks Radio, a selection of which are released here for the first time. The album contains examples of the wide range of expression in Langgaard's music from 1909 to 1951.

CD 1 Piano and organ music
Rued Langgaard 1893-1952

- [1] - [4] Sonata No. 1 18:13
[5] Flammekamrene 7:34
[6] - [7] Afgrundsmusik 15:39
[8] - [10] Medens Sundets Brise summer 7:09
[1]-[10] Noël Lee, piano
Transferred from FONATF 124 (LP, 1970)
- [11] Toccata ("Zum Angedenken Niels W. Gade") 7:17
Jørgen Berg at the organ of Radiohuset.
Danmarks Radio (DR) Production 6 June 1963
- [12] Høstpræludium 4:16
[13] Som Lynet er Kristi Genkomst 3:40
[14] Øde Gader 3:28
[15] Forbigang (Paaske for Herren) 3:58
[16] - [17] Sonata for Organ 5:32
[12]-[17] Jørgen Ernst Hansen at the organ of
Ribe Cathedral, August 1970
Transferred from FONATF 127 (LP, 1971)

CD 2 Vocal music

- [1] - [4] Symphony No.2 "Vaarbrud" 27:26
Kirsten Hermansen, soprano; Odense
Symphony Orchestra conducted by Karol Stryja
Danmarks Radio (DR) Production (Odense)
22 August 1974
- [5] - [15] Goethe & Heine Lieder
Bonna Søndberg, soprano, accompanied by
Eyvind Møller, piano. (DR) Studio production 8 Juni 1968

[16] Sensommer 6:53

Bonna Søndberg, soprano; Sønderjyllands
Symfoniorkester conducted by Alf Sjøen
Danmarks Radio (DR) Production
(Sønderborg) 6 June 1968

[17] Fra Højsangen 14:45

Bonna Søndberg (Shulamite), soprano,
Kurt Westi (Solomon), tenor, members of
Filharmonisk Kor, Aalborg (Daughters of
Jerusalem); Aalborg Symphony Orchestra
conducted by Alf Sjøen
Danmarks Radio (DR) Production
(Aalborg) 18 February 1969



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