



OLE BUCK

SINFONIETTA WORKS

ATHELAS SINFONIETTA COPENHAGEN

JESPER NORDIN

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JESPER NORDIN, conductor

- 1 **Fiori di ghiaccio** (1999) 13:32
for 9 instruments
- 2 **A Tree** (1996) 14:17
for 13 musicians
- 3 **[Untitled]** (2010) 9:28
for 8 instruments
- 4 **Flower Ornament Music** (2001) 22:03
for 17 instruments

Total 59:20

World premiere recordings

When the composer Ole Buck turned 70 in February 2015, he was celebrated in two concerts given by Athelas Sinfonietta Copenhagen. The concerts were played to full houses; but this was not because Ole Buck is famous – he is rather one of the best kept secrets in Danish music. The sudden crowd was perhaps more due to the fact that one does not so often have the chance to hear Ole Buck's music; people may often hear *about* it, now they wanted to hear it for themselves.

And so they did – audience and musicians were captivated by Ole Buck's music, which in its way is simple and beauty-seeking, yet sophisticated and surprising on its own terms. His composer colleagues around the age of 40 who attended the concert were rather shaken – this was music which in all its direct simplicity reminded them of what they were looking for, as one of them said after the concert.

Ole Buck in fact came into focus early with his work. His music for Flemming Flindt's ballet *Felix Luna* at the Royal Danish Theatre in 1973 has more or less achieved the status of a *succès de scandale*, and his *Summer Trio* from 1968 amiably and precisely questioned the whole modernist project with its simple repeated figures and small scale runs – in a way like Mozart, but in a different language and in a different time: now it was to be called 'New Simplicity'.

Since Ole Buck moved far out into the countryside at the end of the 1980s, a sense of calm and a different kind of simplicity have appeared in his music. Many works use only five notes, although one does not miss having more, for he has refined one of his special characteristics: timing! Ole Buck is a true master of only making something happen in the music when it is necessary, and not a second before. Precisely at the instant when it is necessary, something new happens in the music.

The four works on this CD cover the period from 1996 until 2010.

Fiori di ghiaccio (1999)

The piece was written as a tribute to one of the composers Ole Buck has often mentioned, the Italian Niccolò Castiglioni (who died in 1996), even though the music in no way recalls that of Castiglioni. The work starts off with a dream in which Ole Buck dreams that he draws the



curtains from the window and is confronted by a landscape all covered in ice and snow. He says himself that it snows all through the piece. Only when he gives it the title does he discover that it is loan from Castiglioni's work *Inverno in-ver*. There is a clear tonality in the initial alternation between B flat major and D minor, and the sense of cold and beautiful ice-flowers is maintained throughout the piece, which at no point emerges out of its winter mood. At the same time the piece heralds the major work with another flower title, *Flower Ornament Music*.

A Tree (1996)

Few other Danish composers have as many works as Ole Buck with titles that refer directly to nature, the seasons and the landscape. His sense of nature is one of the things that sounds constantly through the works.

And so it is with this work with the simple title – A Tree – where the inspiration is a meditation about the tree as concept and symbol. The tree develops through growth, it is modern and rooted at the same time. In Ole Buck's own words: "The roots are the tradition, the outermost branches are the modern, and more at that. Where one has one's roots one begins in the tonal. The trunk is where the growth / development takes place – where one rises up mentally – and the branches and twigs are all the new ideas and the works. The fruits are enlightenment and insight."

About 3/7 of the way into the work a sudden small 'explosion' comes – this is the growth impulse, the light of Spring which starts a new process for the tree – and the music. In this work too the ending seems to bear within it a seed of the next work, a tendency Ole Buck has often observed in himself: "*Here it ends, then, but many of my pieces seem to be the first part of a work that could continue in a new movement that takes its cue from the first.*"

[untitled] (2010)

Ole Buck's works are rarely decidedly descriptive, although the titles might suggest so. The visual imagery arises more by virtue of the state one enters into as a listener. But in this work there are nevertheless quite specific images as a starting point for the music, even though the composer does not impose these images on us. The work *[untitled]* was commissioned by the Danish Chamber Players as one of several works, each of which was to describe a picture in the

local art museum. With his work Ole Buck – like good old Mussorgsky – describes the whole tour of the museum from picture to picture and the various impressions and expressions that belong to each picture. Although it is the most recent work on the CD, Ole Buck harks back here to an earlier way of writing where one presents a series of striking elements that are put together in changing patterns and are thus constantly transformed along with our impression of them.

The work *[untitled]* has its title from the fact that in many museums one may encounter pictures that have no title – it is perhaps these untitled pictures that are conjured up in this museum visit.

Flower Ornament Music (2001)

This major work was originally intended as a small grateful vignette for an American ensemble which had performed one of Ole Buck's works in New York in 1999. But the little flute solo which was the original intention was somehow unable to come to an end in the composer's mind. As soon as the piece had been sent off, a new rounding-off came to mind in which the instruments entered little by little. Once that had been written, a new idea arose and, as Buck himself has described earlier, it was as if in each ending there lay the beginning of the next section. What should have been a small vignette almost wrote itself and became a piece over 20 minutes long that took its title from the word *avatamsaka*, Sanskrit for flower ornament music.

In this piece Ole Buck's inspiration from Zen and Buddhism is clear without being an example of cultural appropriation. The piece takes the necessary time and proceeds through a series of landscapes and moods, constantly changing in the detail and with subtle nuances in the instrumentation – ending at last with a rare, true example of imagery which Ole Buck himself describes as follows:

"In the end I decided to end with something festive, like a procession of monks in orange and ruby-red habits, and thus it ended with thundering drums. And right at the end, a dissonant trumpet sound. For after all it is not yet over, another procession of monks can be glimpsed in the distance, this time even more festive and dancing towards us. But here my piece ends and the musicians must leave the orchestra."

© Jesper Lützhøft, artistic director of Athelas Sinfonietta Copenhagen

THE PERFORMERS

Athelas Sinfonietta Copenhagen is one of the leading Danish new music ensembles. The ensemble performs in concerts and opera productions, at festivals and on international tours. Since its foundation in 1990 Athelas has performed around 700 works, many of which in first performances. Athelas has collaborated with prominent soloists, conductors and composers, including Steve Reich, Per Nørgård, Heiner Goebbels, Poul Ruders, Arvo Pärt, David Lang, Christian Lindberg, Reinbert de Leeuw, Thomas Adès, Ilan Volkov, Paul Hillier, George Benjamin, Philippe Leroux and Pierre-André Valade. In the fall of 2013 Athelas launched "Brand New Tuesdays" – a series of 12 concerts featuring music by Danish and international composers, performed in unconventional settings and in close dialogue with the audience. International cooperation is essential to Athelas, with appearances in recent years in among other countries England, Monaco, the USA and France. On CD, Athelas has released music by, among others, Per Nørgård, Poul Ruders and Rune Glerup. Each year Athelas is ensemble-in-residence at KLANG – the Copenhagen Avant-garde Music Festival.

athelas.dk

Jesper Nordin is a Danish conductor widely experienced with opera and new music in particular. Since his debut from the Royal Danish Academy of Music in 2006 he has conducted all of the professional orchestras, choirs and ensembles in Denmark, as well as orchestras in Finland, Sweden, France, Ukraine and Great Britain. From 2008 to 2010 he was Studienleiter at The Royal Danish Opera, where he also conducted both opera and ballet, featuring in more than 25 productions. In 2012 Nordin won a national conductor competition arranged by The Danish Conductors Association. He has also premiered more than 100 new works and is closely connected to his own generation of Danish composers. As a composer and arranger Nordin has been performed by Odense Symphony Orchestra, Danish National Vocal Ensemble and at the Royal Danish Theatre.

jespernordin.dk

OLE BUCK – SINFONIETTAVÆRKER af Jesper Lützthøft

Da komponisten Ole Buck fyldte 70 år i februar 2015, blev han fejret ved to koncerter med Athelas Sinfonietta Copenhagen. Koncerterne blev spillet for fulde sale; men det skyldtes ikke, at Ole Buck er særlig berømt – han er vel snarere en af de store hemmeligheder i dansk musik. Tilstrømningen skyldtes måske, at det ikke er så ofte, man kan høre Ole Bucks musik – men man kan ofte høre om den – og nu ville man have syn for sagn.

Og det fik man! Publikum og musikere var bjergtagede af Ole Bucks musik, der på sin vis er enkel og skønhedssøgende, men alligevel raffineret og overraskende på sine egne præmisser. Hans komponistkolleger i alderen omkring de 40, der overværede koncerten, var på sin vis rystede – her var en musik, der i al sin umiddelbare enkelhed mindede dem om det, de ledte efter, som en af dem sagde efter koncerten.

Ole Buck kom ellers tidligt i fokus med sin musik. Hans musik til Flemming Flindts ballet *Felix Luna* på Det Kongelige Teater i 1973 har nærmest fået status af skandalesucces, og hans *Sommertrio* fra 1968 stillede venligt og præcist spørgsmål ved hele modernismens projekt ved sine enkle gentagne figurer og små skalabevægelser – på sin vis som Mozart, bare på et andet sprog og i en anden tid – nu kom det til at hedde 'Ny enkelhed'.

Siden Ole Buck i slutningen af 1980'erne flyttede langt ud på landet, er der kommet en ro og en anden form for enkelhed over hans musik. Mange værker benytter sig kun af 5 toner, uden at man kommer til at savne flere, for han har forfinet et af sine særkender: Timingen! Ole Buck er en sand mester til først at lade noget ske i musikken, når det er nødvendigt, og ikke et sekund før. Præcis i det øjeblik, det er nødvendigt, sker der noget nyt i musikken.

De fire værker på denne CD dækker perioden fra 1996 til 2010.

Fiori di ghiaccio (1999)

Stykket er skrevet som en hyldest til en af de komponister, Ole Buck ofte nævner, nemlig italienske Niccolò Castiglioni (som døde i 1996), men uden at musikken på nogen måde minder om Castiglionis. Værket sættes i gang af en drøm, hvor Ole Buck drømmer, at han trækker gardinerne fra vinduet og mødes af et landskab helt dækket af is og sne. Han beskriver selv, at det

sner igennem hele stykket. Det er først, da han sætter titlen på, at han opdager, den er et lån fra Castiglionis værk *Inverno in-ver*. Der er en klar tonalitet i begyndelsens vippen mellem B-dur og d-mol, og fornemmelsen af kulde og smukke isblomster fastholdes hele vejen igennem stykket, der på intet tidspunkt springer ud af sin vinterstemning. Samtidig varslers stykket det store værk med endnu en blomstertitel, *Flower Ornament Music*.

A Tree (1996)

Ikke mange andre danske komponister har så mange værker med titler, der direkte refererer til naturen, årstiderne og landskabet, som Ole Buck. Det er bl.a. hans natursansning, der til stadighed kommer til lyd i værkerne.

Således også i dette værk med den enkle titel – Et træ – hvor inspirationen er en meditation over træet som begreb og symbol. Træet udvikler sig gennem vækst, det er moderne og rodfæstet på samme tid, med Ole Bucks egne ord: "Rødderne er traditionen, de yderste kviste er det moderne, og mere til. Der, hvor man har rod, begynder man i det tonale. Stammen er der, hvor væksten/udviklingen foregår; der, hvor man rejser sig mentalt, og grenene og kvistene er alle de nye ideer og værkerne. Frugterne er oplysning og indsigt."

Cirka 3/7 inde i værket opstår en lille, pludselig 'eksplosion' – det er vækstimpulsen, forårets lys, der sætter et nyt forløb i gang for træet – og musikken. Også i dette værk synes slutningen i sig at bære en kim til det næste værk. En tendens Ole Buck tit har iagttaget hos sig selv: "*Her slutter det så, men mange af mine stykker synes at være første del af et værk, som kunne fortsætte i en ny sats, der tager konsekvensen af den første.*"

[uden titel] (2010)

Ole Bucks værker er sjældent decideret beskrivende, skønt titlerne kunne pege på det. Det billedskabende opstår mere i kraft af den tilstand, man som lytter sættes i. Men i dette værk er der alligevel helt konkrete billeder som afsæt for musikken, selvom vi ikke pålægges disse billeder af komponisten. *[uden titel]* er bestilt af Storstrøms Kammerensemble som et af flere værker, der hver skulle beskrive et billede på det lokale kunstmuseum. Ole Bucks værk beskriver på sin vis – som gode gamle Mussorgskij – hele turen på museet fra billede til billede og de forskellige udtryk og indtryk, der hører til hvert billede. Selv om det er cd'ens nyeste stykke,



griber Ole Buck her tilbage til en tidligere måde at skrive på, hvor der præsenteres en række markante elementer, der sættes sammen i skiftende mønstre og således stadig ændrer sig og vores oplevelse af dem.

[uden titel] har sin titel ud fra det faktum, at der på mange museer hænger billeder uden titel – det er måske disse titeløse billeder, der manes frem på dette museumsbesøg.

Flower Ornament Music (2001)

Dette store værk er oprindeligt tænkt som en lille taknemmelig vignette til et amerikansk ensemble, der i 1999 havde opført et af Ole Bucks værker i New York. Men den lille fløjtesolo, det oprindeligt var tænkt som, lod sig ikke rigtig afslutte i komponistens hoved. Straks stykket var afsendt, meldte der sig en ny afrunding, hvor instrumenterne lidt efter lidt satte ind. Da dét var skrevet, meldte der sig en ny ide, og som Buck selv tidligere har beskrevet, var det som om der i hver eneste afslutning lå en begyndelse til det næste afsnit. Det, der skulle have været en lille vignette, skrev næsten sig selv og blev et over 20 minutter langt stykke, der fik sin titel efter ordet 'avatamsaka', sanskrit for Blomster-ornament-musik.

I dette stykke er Ole Bucks inspiration af Zen og Buddhismen tydelig uden at være udtryk for kulturel appropriation. Stykket tager sig den nødvendige tid og kommer igennem en række landskaber og stemninger, konstant foranderligt i detaljen og med subtile detaljer i instrumenteringen – for til sidst at ende i en sjælden og egentlig billeddannelse, som Ole Buck selv beskriver således:

”Til sidst besluttede jeg at jeg ville slutte med noget festligt, ligesom et optog af munke i orange og rubinrøde munkedragter, og så sluttede det med buldrende trommer. Og til allersidst en dissonant trompetklang. For det er jo ikke slut endnu, endnu et optog af munke skimtes i det fjerne, denne gang endnu mere festligt og dansende mod os. Men her slutter mit stykke og musikerne må forlade orkestret.”

© *Jesper Lützhøft, kunstnerisk leder for Athelas Sinfonietta Copenhagen*

DE MEDVIRKENDE

Athelas Sinfonietta Copenhagen er blandt de førende danske ensembler inden for ny kompositionsmusik. Ensemblet optræder på koncerter, ved operaforestillinger, på festivaler og internationale turneer. Siden grundlæggelsen i 1990 har Athelas opført ca. 700 værker, en stor del deraf som uropførelser. Athelas har samarbejdet med fremtrædende solister, dirigenter og komponister, bl.a. Steve Reich, Per Nørgård, Heiner Goebbels, Poul Ruders, Arvo Pärt, David Lang, Christian Lindberg, Reinbert de Leeuw, Thomas Adès, Ilan Volkov, Paul Hillier, George Benjamin, Philippe Leroux og Pierre-André Valade. I efteråret 2013 lancerede Athelas "Brand New Tuesdays" – en serie på i alt 12 koncerter, hvor unge danske og internationale komponisters musik opføres i utraditionelle rammer og i tæt dialog med publikum. Det internationale samarbejde er essentielt for Athelas, som de seneste år har optrådt i bl.a. England, Monaco, USA og Frankrig. Ensemblet har CD-indspillet musik af bl.a. Per Nørgård, Poul Ruders og Rune Glerup. Hvert år er Athelas ensemble-in-residence på KLANG – Copenhagen Avantgarde Music Festival.

athelas.dk

Jesper Nordin er en dansk dirigent med omfattende erfaring inden for især opera og ny kompositionsmusik. Siden sin debut fra Det Kongelige Danske Musikkonservatorium i 2006 har han dirigeret alle landets professionelle orkestre, kor og ensembler, såvel som orkestre i Finland, Sverige, Frankrig, Ukraine og England. Fra 2008 til 2010 var han indstuderingsleder på Det Kgl. Teater, hvor han også har dirigeret både opera, ballet og medvirket som dirigent i over 25 forestillinger. I 2012 vandt han en national dirigentkonkurrence arrangeret af Dansk Kapelmesterforening. Han har uropført over 100 nyskrevne værker og har en tæt kontakt med sin egen generations danske komponister. Som komponist og arrangør er han opført af bl.a. Odense Symfoniorkester, DR Vokalensemblet og Det Kgl. Teater.

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Kerstin Thiele, flute

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Anna Klett, clarinet [2]

Viktor Wennesz, clarinet [1], [3], [4]

Signe Haugland, bassoon

Thomas Ekma, horn [2], [4]

Jonas Wiik, trumpet [1], [2], [4]

Andras Olsen, trombone [4]

Manuel Esperilla, piano

Maria Sørensen, harp [1], [3], [4]

Mathias Friis-Hansen, percussion [4]

Mathias Reumert, percussion [4]

Matias Seibæk, percussion [2]

Anne Søe, violin

Idinna Lützhøft, violin [4]

Mina Fred, viola

Adam Stadnicki, cello

Olle Davidson, double bass [2], [4]

DDD

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