



SUNLEIF RASMUSSEN

Dancing Raindrops Solo and ensemble works

Aldubáran

# SUNLEIF RASMUSSEN (b. 1961)

## Dancing Raindrops Solo and ensemble works

### Aldubáran

DANCING RAINDROPS (1995) \* ..... 13:15  
*for clarinet, violin and piano*

- [1] I Con brio e ben ritmico ..... 4:12
- [2] II Fluente ..... 4:30
- [3] III Con brio ..... 4:33

*Anna Klett, clarinet; Øssur Bæk, violin; Jóhannes Andreassen, piano*

SUITE (2007) \* ..... 16:56  
*for guitar and effect processor*

- [4] I Præludium ..... 3:58
- [5] II Allemande ..... 3:01
- [6] III Courante ..... 1:48
- [7] IV Sarabande ..... 4:58
- [8] V Gigue ..... 3:11

*Ólavur Jakobsen, guitar*

9	ANDALAG #2 (2007) * .....	4:15
	<i>for two flutes</i>	
	<i>Andrea Heindriksdóttir and Bernharður Wilkinson, flutes</i>	
	LIKE THE GOLDEN SUN (1993) * .....	14:25
	<i>for piano and effect processor</i>	
10	I The winter gleam illuminates our mountains .....	3:16
11	II Upon us are the peaceful pearl grey days and the magical dusk .....	2:50
12	III The playful Northern lights return .....	1:09
13	IV Ice crystals sparkle delightfully on the road .....	3:31
14	V The immortal fountain of light brings a precious drop of eternity to our mortal eyes .....	3:39
	<i>Jóhannes Andreassen, piano</i>	
15	MOZAIK / MINIATURE (1999) .....	7:23
	<i>for flute, clarinet, piano and violin</i>	
	Capriccioso – Animato e lontano – Animato ed espressivo – Meno mosso	
	<i>Andrea Heindriksdóttir, flute; Anna Klett, clarinet;</i>	
	<i>Sámal Petersen, violin; Jóhannes Andreassen, piano</i>	

Total 56:14

\* World première recording

## SUNLEIF RASMUSSEN

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Faroese composer Sunleif Rasmussen was born on Sandoy – ‘the sand island’ – in 1961. In terms of his own priorities, the stress on nationality is important if one wants to approach his music and understand its background. At all events the Faroese aspect – the colonial history, the yearning for freedom, the language, the songs and the culture – fills most of the self-portrait that he put into writing in 2002 when he received the greatest recognition ever awarded a Faroese composer: the Nordic Council Music Prize for the symphony *Oceanic Days*.

Sunleif Rasmussen’s musical idiom is Faroese, too. Deep within the structure lie traces of old Faroese songs which Rasmussen has collected, broken down and rebuilt into a modern store of musical material. Material that one can quite reasonably say is both his own and new – but which at the same time has a relationship with tradition and history. The Faroese landscape, however, seems far more of a presence in Rasmussen’s music.

His youth in Sandoy with the omnipresent Atlantic, the dunes, the lyme-grass and the gales – perhaps not unlike the conditions on the west coast of Jutland in the autumn – seems to explain much of the highly sensual

musical experience one can get out of Sunleif Rasmussen’s music. But all the national baggage can also seem superfluous. Much as his music may recall the rushing wind, it can equally recall the music in the environment that Sunleif Rasmussen was a part of at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen at the end of the 1980s. His contemporary Bent Sørensen, formerly professor of composition in Copenhagen, or one of the most important figures of twentieth century music, György Ligeti, are people with tonal idioms and ideas for music that just as definitively resemble Rasmussen’s.

Sunleif Rasmussen has written orchestral works, solo concertos, chamber music, solo pieces, electroacoustic works for tape and for live electronics as well as a great deal of choral music. His scoring and ideas are often untraditional and take into account the venue where the music will be performed, sometimes defining the placement of orchestra musicians between the audience, or an item on a concert programme is preceded by excerpts scored for a few musicians who play it in the foyer before the concert. His music has been performed by ensembles throughout the world, including New York, Berlin, Paris, London, and Helsinki.

In 2004 he was visiting composer at the Korsholm Festival in Finland, where his violin concerto *Songs of Seasons* was premièred

by Ostrobothnian Chamber Orchestra and John Storgårds. In 2006 the première of his opera *The Madman's Garden* took place in Tórshavn, and has since been followed by performances in Tallin (Estonia) 2008 and at the Arts Festival in Reykjavík (Iceland) 2009. In 2009 he was commissioned to write a work for the 100th anniversary of the Faroese capital, Tórshavn, resulting in a large scale cantata combining many elements of Faroese music life such as choir, classical and rhythmic musicians as well as the traditional Faroese chain dance.

In recent years he has had two recidencies: in 2008-2009 with the South Jutland Symphony Orchestra for whom he composed *Prelude to an Orchestra* and a recorder concerto, *Territorial Songs*, premièred with Michala Petri as the soloist; and in 2009-10 with the Danish vocal ensemble Ars Nova Copenhagen and Paul Hillier who premièred *Gylfaginning* for choir, narrator and effect processor, leading to a new commission for Paul Hillier's ensemble Theatre of Voices, namely a work for solo quartet of voices and string quartet.

Sunleif Rasmussen is founder and director of one of the numerous choirs in the Faroe Islands, Tarira, and furthermore a keen teacher, emphasizing the importance of music education amongst coming generations in the Faroe Islands.

In 1992 he received grants from the Leonnie Sonning Foundation and from the Danish Composers' Society. In 1997 he was awarded a three-year grant from the Danish State Arts Foundation, and in 2002 the prestigious Nordic Council Music Prize. As the youngest person so far he received the Faroese Cultural Prize of Honour in 2011.

*Dancing raindrops* can clearly be heard in the virtuosic chamber playing in the first work on this CD. Water is the theme which connects the work with the Symphony No.1. The music is not bound by any traditional form: a fast first movement, a calm middle movement, followed by a lyrical thematic winding-up in the third movement, ending with an abrupt "final-cut". We are not talking about common musical forms, and yet: the first idea, which the music returns to several times, is reminiscent of a fugue but without conforming to the traditional melodic or rhythmic steadfastness. We hear an *incessant* change, which is repeated, and as such is the pattern for the work, which dissolves into lyricism at the end.

*Suite* for guitar appears to be a musical echo from the Baroque age. The composer uses the same movement names and order as the French and German Baroque composers did in their solo suites. Baroque instrumental

music can be likened with a rapid tide of 'soggetti', themes that do not end as defined by the rules of form, but rather by themselves as all possibilities are exhausted. *Præludium* is an echo of this – with added rhythms that shift the emphasis all the time. In *Allemande* and *Courante* there is a definite current of sound distinctive of the artistic dance music, a precise ensemble between guitar and effect. The musical statement of the *Sarabande* reminds us of the old style, but we also hear a dissonant blanket of sound behind the pure music of the guitar. The *Gigue* is obvious dance music, characterised by virtuosic guitar playing and effects.

*Andalag #2* is the second of several proposed works for wind instruments. The title 'Andalag' is in fact composed of two faroesic words 'andi' and 'lag'. 'Andi' meaning either spirit or breath, whilst 'lag' means melody, layer or mood. The title *Andalag* has connections with one of the first works by the composer, but apart from the title there is little musical affinity between the two. In *Andalag #2* we are in the musical environment of *Symphony No. 1* "Oceanic Days", especially when taking into account Sunleif Rasmussen's ideas and use of echo-harmonies and shadow-harmonies. The musicians dazzle with virtuosic playing in close

dialogue and changing roles – effervescent music which can also be lyrical.

*Like The Golden Sun* is a significant work. Not only is it a work that introduces electronics to the composer's repertoire, but the musical process curiously changes throughout the work, and several performance techniques are introduced, for instance the piano is used as a harp. The sound emerges with gradual changes to several parameters simultaneously. The sound of the piano is dominant in the first movements; we hear a stuttering chorale – the composer's mantle for the song, 'As the golden sun breaks through'. The theme travels upwards towards the last movement, 'The immortal fountain of light brings a precious drop of eternity to our mortal eyes', where the electronic part becomes ever more present as the music develops.

*Mozaik / Miniature* consists of fragments from *Symphony No. 1*, here scored for chamber ensemble. The piano theme which begins this work can be heard a few minutes into the Symphony, played by a solo clarinet. It is perhaps the inspiration of folk music which gives this work a particular feeling of concert intimacy, which continues until the end as the music dissolves in glissandi and spatial sonorities.

On the whole, the works on this CD give a broad representation of Sunleif Rasmussen, a composer who stretches extensively in expression, time and style.

Hans Pauli Wenningsted Tórgarð, 2011

## THE ARTISTS

In 1995, seven young Faroese musicians formed an ensemble with the main purpose to perform and promote Faroese music. This ensemble is ALDUBÁRAN. Today Aldubáran has 14 members playing the flute, clarinet, bassoon, horn, trumpet, trombone, violin, viola, guitar and piano. This rather untraditional combination of instruments makes for great diversity in concerts and gives scope for composers. Aldubáran has commissioned and premièred a vast number of works by Faroese and foreign composers which have been well received by the press and public. Composer Sunleif Rasmussen and the musicians in Aldubáran are the first generation of professional musicians in the Faroe Islands. All the works on this CD, with one exception (Dancing Raindrops), are dedicated and composed for the musicians in Aldubáran. The works are all very demanding both artistically and technically and one can hear the obvious strong bond between composer and performers. The close connection between Aldubáran and Sunleif Rasmussen

has played a dynamic and integrated part in the development of Faroese music. The group has undertaken many projects throughout the years but without a doubt the biggest one has been the commission of the first Faroese opera, *The Madman's Garden* by Sunleif Rasmussen. An augmented Aldubáran with Bernharður Wilkinson, conductor, gave its première in 2006 to great critical acclaim from some of the most respected international music magazines and newspapers.

[www.aldubaran.com](http://www.aldubaran.com)

ANDREA HEINDRIKSDÓTTIR (flute) Studied at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen with Henrik Svitzer. Finished her music diploma exam in 1992. Has attended courses with Andreas Adorjan and Michel Debost. Works as a teacher at the Faroese Music School and is principal flute of the Faroese Symphony Orchestra.

ANNA KLETT (clarinet) studied at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen. Finished her music diploma exam in 1991 and received her soloist diploma in 1994. Further studies at the Conservatoire de Musique de Genève with Thomas Friedli; was awarded the Premier Prix. Works now as a freelance musician in Copenhagen and is also a member of Athelas Sinfonietta Copenhagen and of Figura Ensemble.

ØSSUR BÆK (violin) began playing violin at the Suzuki Institute in Copenhagen. Studied at the Carl Nielsen Academy of Music in Odense with Béla Detreköy whilst also playing in the Odense Symphony Orchestra. Further studies at the Music Conservatoire in Utrecht with Viktor Liberman; received his soloist diploma in 1990. Worked as 1st violinist in the Royal Danish Orchestra for some years. Is also one of the founding members of the Royal Danish Chamber Orchestra.

SÁMAL PETERSEN (violin) studied at the Carl Nielsen Academy of Music in Odense with Bela Detreköy, Alexander Fischer and Arne Balk-Møller. Took his diploma exam in 1993. Further studies in Vienna with Ernst Kovacic and Maigraed McCann. Has attended courses with Valerij Klimov and Kristian Altenburg. Works now as a violin teacher at the Faroese Music School and is the leader of the Faroese Symphony Orchestra.

ÓLAVUR JAKOBSEN (guitar) studied at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen with Ingolf Olsen and took his diploma exam in 1995. Further studies in Paris with French guitarist Roland Dyens. Has participated in masterclasses with Sir Julian Bream, Göran Söllscher and David Russell. Worked for some years as a freelance musi-

cian in Copenhagen and was member of the Copenhagen-based Corona Guitar Quartet. Has commissioned and premièred a vast number of compositions by Danish and Faroese composers such as Per Nørgård, Axel Borup-Jørgensen, Pierre Dørge, Sunleif Rasmussen, Edvard N. Debess, and Kristian Blak. Worked as a session musician with a number of popular artists as well as Ensemble CAPUT and Collegium Musicum. Works now as a freelance musician and teacher at the Faroese Music School.  
[www.olavurjakobsen.com](http://www.olavurjakobsen.com)

JÓHANNES ANDREASEN (piano) studied piano from an early age and later on at the Hochschule für Musik und darstellende Kunst in Vienna. He continued his education, studying chamber music at the International Menuhin Music Academy in Switzerland and later with Peter Feuchtwanger in London. He has attended courses with various musicians, e.g. Irena Zaritskaya and Edith Picht-Axenfeld. He works as a teacher at the Faroese Music School and as a freelance musician. He frequently performs in duos and chamber music and has recorded CDs for the labels Extraplatte, Kontrapunkt, and Tutl. As a soloist he has performed several times with the Faroese Symphony Orchestra. He has premièred solo works by a number of composers, including

Nordic Council's Music Prize winners Sunleif Rasmussen and Atli Heimir Sveinsson.

BERNHARDUR WILKINSON (flute) began his musical studies at an early age as a chorister at Westminster Abbey in London. He entered the Royal Northern College of Music in 1969 where his principle study was the flute. His main teacher was Trevor Wye. He has attended master classes with Marcel

Moyse, William Bennett and James Galway, and was appointed to the Iceland Symphony Orchestra in 1975, and has since performed frequently as a soloist with various ensembles. Bernhardur is a founding member of the Reykjavik Wind Quintet which has performed throughout the world, including the Wigmore and Carnegie Halls, Sydney Opera House, and live broadcasts for the BBC.

[www.wilkinson.fo](http://www.wilkinson.fo)



SUNLEIF RASMUSSEN

DDD

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## SUNLEIF RASMUSSEN

## Dancing Raindrops Solo and ensemble works Aldubáran

The five works on this CD offer a broad perspective on the Faroese composer Sunleif Rasmussen (b. 1961) who continues to be inspired by the elements of nature as well as drawing on a wide range of idioms, periods and styles. In the virtuoso playing of the ensemble Aldubáran the listener can hear lyrical echoes of traditional folk music, Baroque structures and electronically manipulated sounds as Rasmussen combines the seven instruments of the ensemble in a wide variety of configurations.

- |             |   |       |
|-------------|---|-------|
| [1] - [3]   | Dancing Raindrops (1995) for clarinet, violin and piano*        | 13:15 |
| [4] - [8]   | Suite (2007) for guitar and effect processor*                   | 16:56 |
| [9]         | Andalag #2 (2007) for two flutes*                               | 4:15  |
| [10] - [14] | Like the Golden Sun (1993) for piano and effect processor*      | 14:25 |
| [15]        | Mozaik / Miniature (1999) for flute, clarinet, piano and violin | 7:23  |

Total 56:14

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