

# DANISH ROMANTIC PIANO TRIOS

~ *Gade, Lange-Müller, Langgaard* ~

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Lars Bjørnkjær, *violin*; Toke Møldrup, *cello*; Katrine Gislinge, *piano*

PE. LANGE-MÜLLER (1850-1926)

**Trio for Piano, Violin and Cello in F minor, Op. 53** (c. 1898) . . . . . 31:42

- 1 I. Moderato con moto . . . . . 14:39
- 2 II. Allegretto piacevole – L'istesso tempo (scherzando) – Tempo I . . . . . 7:44
- 3 III. Allegro con brio, ma non troppo presto . . . . . 9:17

NIELS W. GADE (1817-1890)

**Trio for Piano, Violin and Cello in F major, Op. 42** (1863) . . . . . 22:01

- 4 I. Allegro animato . . . . . 9:05
- 5 II. Allegro molto vivace . . . . . 3:33
- 6 III. Andantino . . . . . 3:14
- 7 IV. Finale: Allegro con fuoco . . . . . 6:09

NIELS W. GADE

**Piano Trio Movement in B flat major** (1839)

- 8 Adagio – Allegro con fuoco . . . . . 12:06

RUED LANGGAARD (1893-1952)

**Fjeldblomster (Mountain Flowers)**, BVN 34 (1908)

*Intermezzo for Violin, Cello and Piano*

- 9 Andante molto . . . . . 9:05

Total: 74:55

**Gade: Piano Trio in F major, Op. 42**

The piano trio was a genre that took a long time to reach Denmark from Central Europe. The many trios by Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven did not immediately prompt Danish composers to try to create anything similar. Not until the middle of the nineteenth century did something begin to happen.

One of the best Danish Romantic piano trios was written by Niels W. Gade in 1862-63. As a young man he had been encouraged by Mendelssohn, who gave his folksong-inspired First Symphony its first performance in Leipzig in 1843. Gade settled down in the city, became Mendelssohn's assistant and after his death in 1847 his successor at the head of the Gewandhaus Orchestra. But with the outbreak of the first Danish-Prussian War in 1848 Gade returned to Copenhagen.

Soon he even began to turn away from precisely the 'Nordic sound' that had captivated the Germans so much. Schumann was one of the first to warn against the limitations of National Romanticism: "One should urge all artists first to achieve originality and then to discard it, to slough it off like a snake when the old skin grows tight," he wrote. With this advice in mind Gade became careful with the dosages of his 'Nordic' effects.

Among his chamber works are three violin sonatas, three string quartets, a string quintet, a sextet and an octet. He was himself an able violinist, and Schumann noted that Gade's surname prophetically consisted of the names of the four notes of the violin strings. On the other hand he was no great pianist. But that did not prevent him writing excellent chamber music with the piano.

The Piano Trio in F major op. 42, the second work on this recording, was written when Gade was at the peak of his career and had both experience and vision. Typically for his mature style it is a succinct work with a classicizing balance between form and expression. The first movement has Gade's characteristically fresh, appealing charm. Discreet rhythmic shifts in the phrasing help to prevent the conservative form becoming academic. The two middle movements are very concise: the second movement is an elegant Scherzo, while the melancholy third movement with its 9/8 time recalls a "Lied ohne Worte". It continues *attacca*-style into the final movement, which is rhythmically striking with double-dotted figures and the character designation "con fuoco". Gade's only piano trio is perfectly balanced from start to finish.

**Gade: Piano Trio in B flat major**

Several decades earlier Gade had made an attempt in the piano trio genre – as one of the first composers to do so in Denmark. The project was not carried through, but what he did manage to write is still fascinating. As the layout for a planned trio in B flat major he drew up a detailed plan in 1839 – in words. The trio was to follow a programme in four movements where quotations from German poetry were the artistic fixed points. The narrative framework is about a hero who sets off in the first movement, is missed by his loved ones in the second movement, experiences danger in the third movement and returns home in the fourth movement.

The content-rich first movement is explicitly described in Gade's notebook: first an Adagio introduction with the motto "Wir sitzen so traulich beisammen" (taken from a poem by Kotzebue). Then an Allegro section where "The hero sets out", and one hears the "struggle of his loved ones with their emotions and agitation". Their "persuasion and prayers" are met with "resolute resistance", and the hero goes off. "A march tempo sometimes filters through very faintly".

Gade successfully used the model with a written conceptual basis when he composed his Piano Sonata and his First Symphony from the same period. But he did not adhere to the plan for the Piano Trio in B flat major. The score for the second movement was not fair-copied, the third movement was only sketched out, and the final movement was apparently never begun.

It is interesting to follow the movement with Gade's – hidden – plan in front of one, but as with all good programmatic art the music is not dependent on the model. The B flat major movement is grandly conceived, inspired music, and it is a shame that Gade did not complete the rest of the work.

**Lange-Müller: Piano Trio in F minor, Op. 53**

Niels W. Gade held sway as a 'godfather' of Danish music until his death in 1890. He left a gap in Danish musical life, not only as a working composer but also as a guiding arbiter of taste. The next few decades were musically rather diffuse in Denmark. It took some delay for a true Late Romanticism to emerge in Danish music, while at the same time Carl Nielsen gradually gained a foothold with his quite different style.

Among the most popular Danish composers at the turn of the century was Peter Erasmus Lange-Müller, a sensitive soul from a fine old Copenhagen family. Lange-Müller had achieved great

success with his lieder, small piano pieces, and the music for the folk tale drama *Der var engang* (Once Upon a Time) (1887), but he had higher ambitions, and went through torments in the attempt to fulfil them. This was due partly to his lack of experience with large formats (Lange-Müller was self-taught), partly to a morbidly low self-esteem and lifelong health problems. But there is no reason to look down on his lovely Piano Trio, which opens this CD. It exhibits the best sides of his melodic talent and his ear for harmony within the framework of a fully developed chamber work.

He wrote the Piano Trio in 1890, when he was living in Stockholm and associated with his Swedish colleagues Tor Aulin and Emil Sjögren. The trio was not printed until 1898 and was not played in public until 1900, and by then Lange-Müller, acknowledging the advent of a new era, was already retiring. It is dedicated to Aulin, who was also a violinist, and Wilhelm Stenhammar, Sweden's great rising composer, who was also a pianist. Lange-Müller felt for once that he was a match for others.

The first movement has his favourite time signature 6/8, where the chromatic restlessness and brooding tempo create a sombre starting point. This leads to a melancholy second subject which gradually brightens up and takes on a surprising whiff of Paris. The well-heeled Lange-Müller was a great traveller, and on the whole his music often seems more French-inspired than influenced by the usual German taste that predominated in the Nordic countries.

The second movement is archetypical for the composer, an intermezzo that is all loveliness, and whose middle section bears the marks of both Nordic folk music and the old style. In the last part of the movement the two subjects merge. The third movement is the fast final movement in which chromaticism, stormy figures and the second subject in A minor keep one waiting for the resolution in F major. The triumphs are hard-won for Lange-Müller. "Twilight is and will remain my life," was his apt self-description, and it could also serve as his artistic motto.

### **Langgaard: Mountain Flowers**

The short piece *Mountain Flowers* was written in 1908, when Rued Langgaard was just 15 years old. And there was much more where it came from. Langgaard was about to bring forth his First Symphony, and in an orchestrated version *Mountain Flowers* forms the second of the symphony's five movements. In 1913 the whole gigantic work was given its first performance by the Berlin Philharmonic and conductor Max Fiedler.

The symphony, which many years later was given the title "Rock Pastorals", describes human endeavour symbolized by the climbing of a mountain from the foam-lashed rocky coast to the highest peak from which one can look out into infinity. In this context *Mountain Flowers* is a meditation along the way in which the greatness even of nature's smallest creations is admired.

With this expressive, Wagner-inspired movement, written by a true child prodigy, we stand at the beginning of one of the most unusual Nordic composer destinies. Just ten years later Langgaard had developed so radically that he reached the boundaries of the Late Romantic universe with his use of atonality and other avant-garde ideas. This was followed by an extended period of regression, as he demonstratively imitated the style of Gade's prime, only to go to new extremes in the 1940s with almost absurdist works. *Mountain Flowers* became one of the last quiet moments before the world was shattered forever for the hyper-romantic Langgaard.

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**The Danish Piano Trio** is a newly established ensemble comprising three of Denmark's leading musicians: Lars Bjørnkjær, Toke Møldrup and Katrine Gislunge, who for years have delivered outstanding musical performances from their individual corners of Danish music life. The personal friendship and special musical understanding between the three soloists have now led to the formation of a permanent ensemble.

Violinist LARS BJØRNKJÆR is a concertmaster with the Royal Danish Orchestra since 1993. He is a graduate of, among others, the Julliard School of Music, New York, and has played concerts in Europe, USA and Asia. As a soloist, Lars Bjørnkjær has performed with orchestras home and abroad with conductors such as Christian Badea, Josef Suk, Fabrizio Ventura ad Michael Schönwandt. In 2007 he recorded an acclaimed CD with violin concertos by Johan Svendsen and P.E. Lange-Müller with Giordano Bellincampi and Aarhus Symphony Orchestra.

Cellist TOKE MØLDRUP is a prizewinner at several international competitions and has given concerts in, among others, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, Wigmore Hall, Musikverein Wien, and Konzerthaus Berlin; he has been a soloist with most of the Danish symphony orchestras and with conductors such as Aldo Ceccato, Santtu Rouvali, Thomas Søndergård and Joshua Weilerstein. He has even played at various international festivals. Several contemporary works by, e.g., Christian Winther Christensen, Simon Steen-Andersen and Per Nørgård have been dedicated to Toke Møldrup. Toke Møldrup is a solo cellist with Copenhagen Phil/Tivoli Symphony Orchestra and teaches at the Royal Danish Academy of Music.

Pianist KATRINE GISLUNGE trained at the Royal Danish Academy of Music and Yale University. Over the last two decades she has established herself as one the most significant pianists in Scandinavia in both classical and modern repertoire with solo and chamber music concerts throughout Europe. She has worked with musicians and conductors such as Okko Kamu, Heinrich Schiff, Gidon Kremer, Kurt Sanderling, Emmanuel Pahud and Gustavo Dudamel. In 2014 Katrine premiered and recorded Bent Sørensen's piano concerto *Mignon-Papillon*. She has recorded several CDs for, among others, Deutsche Grammophon and, in 2014, an acclaimed CD with music by Schumann and Per Nørgård, who dedicated one of the works to her. [danishpianotrio.com](http://danishpianotrio.com)



The Danish Piano Trio

### **Gade: Klavertrio i F-dur, op. 42**

Klavertrioen var en genre, der var lang tid om at nå fra Centraleuropa til Danmark. De mange trioler af Haydn, Mozart og Beethoven fik ikke umiddelbart danske komponister til at prøve at skabe noget lignende. Først i midten af 1800-tallet begynder der at ske noget.

En af de bedste danske romantiske klavertrioer blev skrevet af Niels W. Gade i 1862-63. Han var som ung mand blevet båret frem af Mendelssohn, der uropførte hans folkeviseinspirede 1. Symfoni i Leipzig 1843. Gade slog sig ned i byen, blev Mendelssohns assistent og efter hans død i 1847 hans efterfølger som leder af Gewandhausorkestret. Men ved udbruddet af den dansk-preussiske krig i 1848 vendte Gade tilbage til København.

Snart begyndte han også at vende sig væk fra netop den nordiske tone, der havde betaget tyskerne så meget. Schumann var en af de første til at advare mod nationalromantikens begrænsninger: "Man burde opfordre alle kunstnere til først at vinde sig originalitet og derefter kaste den af sig, krænge hammen af som en slange, når de gamle klæder begynder at stramme", skrev han. Med det råd in mente blev Gade påpasselig med at dosere sine "nordiske" virkninger.

Blandt hans kammerværker er tre violinsonater, tre strygekvartetter, en strygekvintet, en sekstet og en oktet. Han var selv en dygtig violinist, og Schumann bemærkede, at Gades efternavn profetisk bestod af tonenavnene på violinens strenge. Til gengæld var han ikke nogen stor pianist. Det forhindrede ham dog ikke i at skrive glimrende kammermusik med klaver.

Klavertrioen i F-dur op. 42 (det andet værk på denne indspilning) er skrevet, da Gade var på toppen af sin karriere og havde både erfaring og udsyn. Typisk for hans modne stil er det et kortfattet værk med klassicistisk balance mellem form og udtryk. 1. sats har Gades karakteristiske friske og behagelig charme. Diskrete rytmiske forskydninger i fraserne er med til at forhindre, at den konservative form bliver akademisk. De to mellemsatser er meget koncise: 2. sats en elegant Scherzo, mens den melankolske 3. sats med sin 9/8-takt minder om en "Lied ohne Worte". Den går attacca videre til finalen, som er rytmisk markant med dobbelt punkterede figurer og karakterbetegnelsen "con fuoco". Gades eneste klavertrio er perfekt balanceret fra start til slut.

### **Gade: Klavertrio i B-dur**

Gade havde flere årtier tidligere gjort et forsøg i klavertrioenren, endda som en af de første komponister i Danmark. Projektet blev ikke gennemført, men hvad han fik skrevet er til gengæld spændende. Som disposition for en planlagt Trio i B-dur lavede han i 1839 en udførlig plan – i ord. Trioen skulle følge et program i fire satser, hvor citater fra tysk poesi var de kunstneriske fikspunkter. Rammefortællingen drejer sig om en helt, der drager afsted i 1. sats, savnes af sine efterladte i 2. sats, oplever farer i 3. sats og vender hjem i 4. sats.

Den indholdsrige 1. sats er eksplicit beskrevet i Gades notesbog: Først en Adagio-indledning med mottoet "Wir sitzen so traulich beisammen" (taget fra et digt af Kotzebue). Så et Allegro-afsnit, hvor "Helten drager frem", og man hører hans "Kjæres Kamp mod Følelser og Uro". Deres "Overtalelse og Beden" mødes med "Standhaftig Modstand", og helten tager så af sted. "Et Marschtempo toner undertiden igjennem ganske svagt".

Modellen med et skriftligt idégrundlag brugte Gade med held, da han komponerede sin Klaversonate og 1. Symfoni fra samme periode. Men planen for Klavertrioen i B-dur overholdt han ikke. Partituret til 2. sats blev ikke skrevet rent, 3. sats kun skitseret og finalen tilsyneladende aldrig påbegyndt.

Det er interessant at følge satsen med Gades – skjulte – plan foran sig, men som med al god programmatisk kunst er musikken ikke afhængig af forlægget. B-dur satsen er flot anlagt, inspireret musik, og det er en skam, at Gade ikke fuldendte resten af værket.

### **Lange-Müller: Klavertrio i f-mol, op. 53**

Niels W. Gade var ved magten som en 'godfather' i dansk musik lige til sin død i 1890. Han efterlod sig et hul i musiklivet, ikke kun som arbejdskraft, men også som retvisende smagsdommer. De følgende par årtier blev musikalsk set temmelig spredte i Danmark. En egentlig senromantik blomstrede forsinket op, samtidig med at Carl Nielsen gradvist vandt fodfæste med sin helt anderledes stil.

Blandt de mest populære danske komponister ved århundredskiftet var Peter Erasmus Lange-Müller, en følsom sjæl fra en fin gammel københavnerslæggt. Lange-Müller havde opnået stor succes med sine romancer, små klaverstykker og musikken til eventyrforestillingen *Der var engang* (1887), men han havde større ambitioner, og det plagede ham hårdt at forsøge at

opfylde dem. Det skyldtes dels manglende erfaring med store formater (Lange-Müller var autodidakt), dels et sygeligt lavt selvværd og livslange helbredsproblemer. Men der er ingen grund til at se ned på hans dejlige Klavertrio, som åbner CD'en. Det fremviser de bedste sider af hans melodiske talent og harmoniøre inden for rammerne af et fuldbåret kammerværk.

Han skrev Klavertrioen i 1890, hvor han boede i Stockholm og var knyttet til sine svenske kolleger Tor Aulin og Emil Sjögren. Trioen blev først trykt i 1898 og ikke spillet offentligt før 1900, og da var Lange-Müller i erkendelse af en ny tids komme allerede ved at trække sig tilbage. Den er tilegnet Aulin, der også var violinist, og Wilhelm Stenhammar, Sveriges fremadstormende komponist, der også var pianist. Lange-Müller har for en gangs skyld følt, at han kunne måle sig med andre.

1. sats er i yndlingstaktarten 6/8, hvor den kromatiske uro og det rugende tempo skaber et dystert udgangspunkt. Det fører til et melankolsk sidetema, der efterhånden lyser op og får en overraskende duft af Paris. Den velstående Lange-Müller var meget berejst, og i det hele taget virker hans musik ofte mere franskinspireret end præget af den sædvanlige tyske smag, der dominerede i Norden.

2. sats er ærketypisk for komponisten, et virkelig yndigt intermezzo, hvis midterdel har præg af både nordisk folketone og "gammel stil". I sidste del af satsen forenes de to temaer. 3. sats er den hurtige finale, hvor kromatik, stormfulde figurer og sidetemaet i a-mol lader forløsningen i F-dur vente på sig. Triumferne er dyrekøbte hos Lange-Müller. "Tusmørke er og bliver mit Liv," var hans rammende selvbeskrivelse, og det kunne også gælde som hans kunstneriske motto.

### **Langgaard: Fjeldblomster**

Det korte stykke *Fjeldblomster* blev skrevet i 1908, da Rued Langgaard var bare 15 år. Og der var meget mere hvor dét kom fra. Langgaard var nemlig undervejs med sin 1. Symfoni, og i en orkestreret version indgår *Fjeldblomster* som den anden af symfoniens fem satser. I 1913 blev hele det gigantiske værk uopført af Berliner Filharmonikerne og dirigenten Max Fiedler.

Symfonien, som mange år senere fik titlen "Klippepastoraler", beskriver den menneskelige stræben, symboliseret ved en bjergopstigning fra den skumbesprøjtede klippekyst til den højeste tinde, hvorfra der kan skues uendeligt. I den sammenhæng er *Fjeldblomster* en meditation undervejs, hvor storheden i også naturens mindste skabninger bliver beundret.

Med denne ekspressive, Wagner-inspireret sats, skrevet af et sandt vidunderbarn, står man ved begyndelsen på en af Nordens mest usædvanlige komponistskæbner. Bare ti år senere havde Langgaard udviklet sig så voldsomt, at han nåede grænserne for det senromantiske univers med brug af atonalitet og andre avantgardistiske idéer. Det blev efterfulgt af en længere periode i regression, hvor han demonstrativt efterlignede stilen fra Gades storhedstid, for så i 1940'erne at gå til nye yderligheder med nærmest absurdistiske værker. *Fjeldblomster* blev en af de sidste stille stunder, inden verden for altid splintredes for hyperromantikeren Langgaard.

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**Den Danske Klavertrio** er nyt ensemble bestående af tre af landets mest markante musikere: Lars Bjørnkjær, Toke Møldrups og Katrine Gislings, som i årevis fra hvert deres hjørne i musiklivet har leveret musikalske oplevelser i særklasse. Det personlige venskab og den særlige musikalske forståelse mellem de tre solister har nu ført til dannelsen af et fast ensemble.

Violinisten LARS BJØRNKJÆR har siden 1993 været koncertmester i Det Kongelige Kapel. Han er uddannet på bl.a. Juilliard School of Music og har spillet koncerter i Europa, USA og Asien. Som solist har Lars Bjørnkjær spillet med orkestre i ind- og udland med dirigenter som Christian Badea, Josef Suk, Fabrizio Ventura og Michael Schönwandt. I 2007 indspillede han en anmelderrost CD med violinkoncerter af Johan Svendsen og P.E. Lange-Müller med Giordano Bellincampi og Århus Symfoniorkester.

Cellisten TOKE MØLDRUP er prisvinder ved flere internationale konkurrencer og har givet koncerter i bl.a. Weill Recital Hall i Carnegie Hall, Wigmore Hall, Musikverein Wien, Konzerthaus Berlin; han har været solist med de fleste danske symfoniorkestre og under dirigenter som Aldo Ceccato, Santtu Rouvali, Thomas Søndergård og Joshua Weilerstein, og han har spillet ved flere internationale festivaler. Han har fået tilegnet flere nutidige værker af bl.a. Christian Winther Christensen, Simon Steen-Andersen og Per Nørgård. Til daglig er Toke Møldrups solocellist i Copenhagen Phil/Tivolis Symfoniorkester og underviser ved Det Kongelige Danske Musikkonservatorium.

Pianisten KATRINE GISLINGE er uddannet fra Det Kongelige Danske Musikkonservatorium og Yale University. Hun har de sidste to årtier etableret sig som en af Skandinavien mest markante pianister i både klassisk og moderne repertoire med solo- og kammermusikkoncerter over det meste af Europa. Hun har samarbejdet med musikere og dirigenter som Okko Kamu, Heinrich Schiff, Gidon Kremer, Kurt Sanderling, Emmanuel Pahud og Gustavo Dudamel. I 2014 uropførte og indspillede Katrine Bent Sørensens klaverkoncert *Mignon-Papillon*. Hun har udgivet flere cd'er bl.a. på Deutsche Grammophon og udgav i 2014 en meget anmelderrost CD med musik af Schumann og Per Nørgård, som tilegnede hende et af værkerne. danishpianotrio.com

## DDD

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