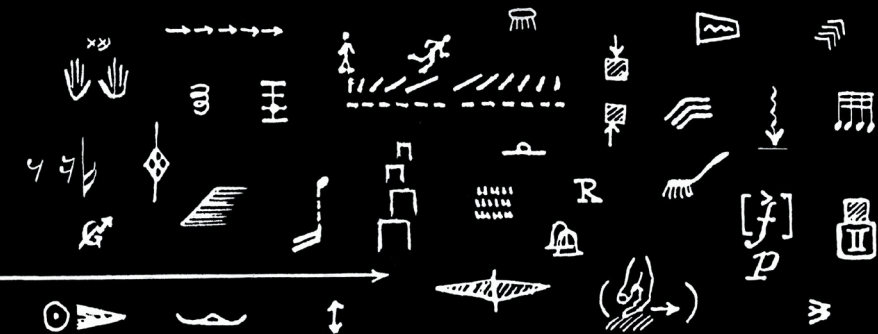


Works for ensemble and voice by **Axel Borup-Jørgensen**



Århus Sinfonietta Ars Nova Copenhagen Søren Kinch Hansen

Carambolage

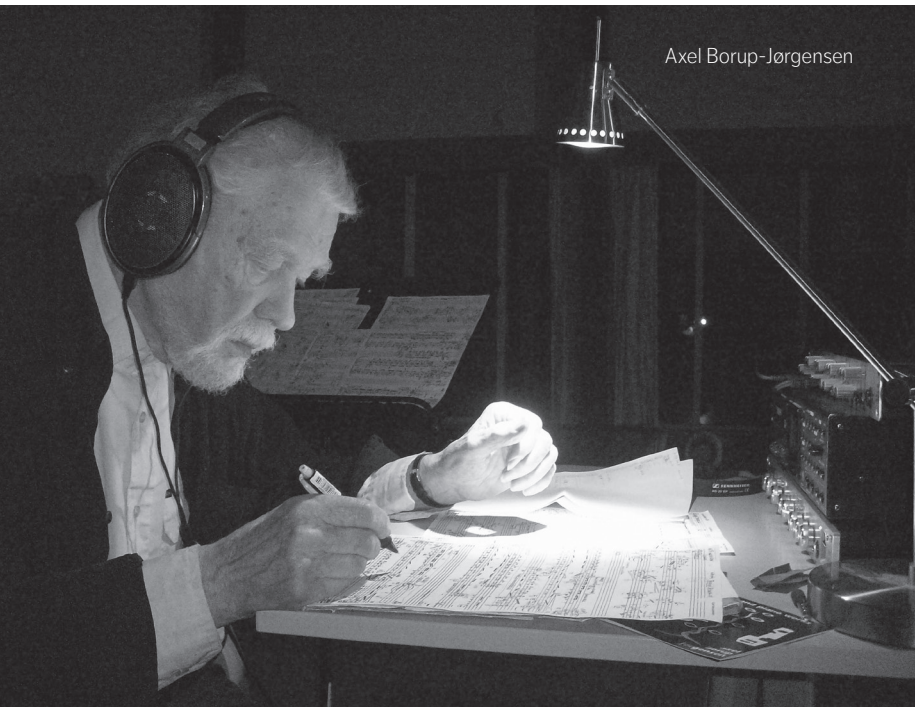
Works for ensemble and voice by **Axel Borup-Jørgensen** (1924-2012)

Århus Sinfonietta **Ars Nova Copenhagen** **Søren Kinch Hansen**, conductor

- | | | |
|---|--|-------|
| 1 | Winterelegie, Op. 55 (1968) * | 14:06 |
| | <i>for 3 female voices, flute, oboe, bassoon, percussion, piano and strings</i> | |
| 2 | Sirenernes kyst (Coast of Sirens), Op. 100 (1983) * | 16:07 |
| | <i>for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, guitar, piano, percussion and multivoice tape</i> | |
| 3 | Carambolage, Op. 79 (1979-80) | 14:43 |
| | <i>for piano/electric organ, electric guitar and percussion</i> | |
| 4 | Pocket Oratorium, Op. 50 (1964) * | 9:36 |
| | <i>for 16 voices, piano, harpsichord, timpani and percussion</i> | |

TOTAL: 54:31

* World premiere recording



SOUND FULLY ILLUMINATED AND UP CLOSE *by Henrik Friis*

Axel Borup-Jørgensen (1924-1912) was the composer of details. With his perfectionist sensibility he composed by separating the elements of the music into atoms and re-assembling them by means of subtle intuition. Throughout his life he took an interest in sounds in all their complexity, where mixtures of rhythms, notes, timbres and types of attack fused together in totalities built up from minute details. He was perhaps a modernist, indeed an early example of the type in the Danish context, but many of his ideals in the works are highly traditional. Even in the works that are fragmented and formulated as a series of points of impact, the music is poetically grounded and Romantic in its expressiveness.

Today his nature-evoking works still tower up in the landscape as some of the most consistent, richly detailed pieces that orchestras have had in their hands – for example his masterpiece *Marin*, written between 1963 and 1970.

Unlike the Romantic composers, he did not formulate the feeling of nature or subjective impressions of nature. He tried to reproduce nature itself in music with all the details that struck his senses, with a wealth of instrumental voices, each its own little detail of the natural phenomena. This is music without centre or hierarchy, where parts entangle and unravel among one another like the branches of a root network, exactly as natural phenomena are built up of small inseparable parts, each of which contributes a piece to the puzzle.

Pocket Oratorio from 1965 is not nature description, yet it resembles it. Here Borup-Jørgensen sets music to the German poet Rainer Maria Rilke's short, very dark poem 'Schlußstück' (End-piece) about the presence of death in life:

Der Tod ist groß.
Wir sind die Seinen
lachenden Munds.
Wenn wir uns mitten im Leben meinen,
wagt er zu weinen
mitten in uns.

Death is great.
We are His
of the wide grin.
When we feel in the midst of life,
He dares to weep for us
deep within.

The work is really just this text sung and recited by a choir a single time. But the words are almost unrecognizable, torn apart into bits of syllables or single letters and sung in dramatic flickers by the choir separated into many voices and supplemented by piano, harpsichord and percussion. Instead of being able to understand the words of the text – let alone the individual lines – you get a musico-dramatic interpretation of the text. The choir and the instruments split into a multitude of branchings, so no one can grasp the soundscape in all its details. But all the branches point in the same direction.

As blocks of sound they form whole phrases that constantly settle into the same mood-picture. The listener can zoom out a little from the music and experience a totality that is both detailed and mobile, but at the same time is quite simple in all its dramatic gravity.

Winterelegie, written in 1966-68, is a major work in Axel Borup-Jørgensen's oeuvre. With its point of departure in Brueghel's gloomy winter picture, 'The Return of the Hunters' and in two poems by the German Romantic Friedrich Hölderlin the music develops from whispering and searching to extremely expressive atmospheres which according to the composer's own comments on the work are images of the poet's own madness. You feel this clearly. In the same way as in *Pocket Oratorio*, the music is delicate and detailed in its fragmentary structure. But in *Winterelegie* the sound of the configuration of song and chamber ensemble is also quite transparent, spaced through with long pauses between the individual sections, so the listener can experience each small passage with complete clarity. It is winter in the music, and the cold is clearly felt.

There is a before and after *Marin* in Axel Borup-Jørgensen's music. Around 1970 the music becomes more fluid in its progression – unlike the highly expressive filigree-like style of the 1960s. **Carambolage** from 1979-80 is for piano (and electronic organ), electric guitar and percussion. It may well be that the style is different from before, but the depth of detail is intact. The wish to form precise sounds already becomes evident on the first page of the music, where Borup-Jørgensen has added a long, long succession of special markings of the devices he uses in the music, and which require an explanation for the musicians: how the pianist is to differentiate among the number of fingernails he is to brush across the keys; where exactly on the bridge of the guitar the guitarist is to knock; or how the percussionist is to let the stick lie on a drum skin

after striking it. You are in no doubt that the music has been imagined or heard before being written down – and that in some places there is very little scope for the musician's personality to be expressed.

The result in *Carambolage* is music that slowly and simply makes its way forward among the three musicians. Without any clear beginning, middle or ending, the three performers open up a universe of sounds which do in fact make logical sense as a succession – but which do not form a true dramatic sequence. There is a kind of equality or balance in the music that makes you think of the mobile of visual art, suspended and turning and constantly appearing in new positions, although the figure remains the same.

The narrative element becomes quite central in **Coast of Sirens** from 1985, where a tape with several tracks of women's voices is embedded in the delicate sounds of a chamber ensemble. The description of nature, the poetic ideas and a musical story as foundation all fuse together in this work, in which the soprano voice of Bodil Gümoes in multiple layers (on a recording also used for the first performance in 1985) serves as the imaginary centre of the music. As Axel Borup-Jørgensen himself once described this very relationship in a note on the work: "In remote times on foreign shores one heard the Sirens sing – Odysseus listened to them, tied to the mast in order not to be lured to death by drowning. Perhaps we can hear them everywhere by the sea where their voices can be made out in the wind and the roar of the surf or in the storm and the turbulent sea."

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THE PERFORMERS

Århus Sinfonietta was formed in 1990 by a group of musicians from the Aarhus Symphony Orchestra and the Jutland Ensemble in collaboration with the composer Hans Abrahamsen. The regular core of the ensemble consists of seventeen professional musicians who together represent all the instruments of the symphony orchestra. The repertoire includes works for larger ensembles as well as chamber music and works for solo instruments. Contemporary Danish music is something close to the heart of the ensemble – Århus Sinfonietta has commissioned and premiered works by a number of prominent composers including Per Nørgård, Karl Aage Rasmussen and Bent Sørensen. Århus Sinfonietta gives concerts all over Denmark, usually headed by the ensemble's regular conductor Søren K. Hansen. Since 2000 Erik Kaltoft has been the artistic director of Århus Sinfonietta.

Founded in 1979, **Ars Nova Copenhagen** has long established itself as one of the world's finest vocal ensembles. The ensemble's artistic director is the renowned English conductor Paul Hillier whose more than 150 recordings have won countless international prizes, i.a. two Grammy Awards. Ars Nova is specialized in the interpretation of Renaissance polyphony and contemporary vocal music and is today in demand more than ever before. Ars Nova has recorded more than 30 CDs to critical acclaim in both Danish and international music press. Among recent releases are 'Creator Spiritus' with music by Arvo Pärt, 'The Story of Christmas' (Harmonia Mundi) and 'The Golden Age of Danish Partsongs' with music by some of the best Danish vocal composers from the Romantic period up until today (Dacapo). Earlier releases include portraits of Danish composers like Per Nørgård and Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen; four CDs with Heinrich Schütz' complete narrative works for Christmas and Easter; John Tavener & Tudor Music, Vols. 1 & 2, and Terry Riley's 60s classic 'In C' as well as 'The Little Match Girl Passion' with music by David Lang which won a Grammy Award in 2010.

For the last twenty years **Søren Kinch Hansen** has been the regular conductor of Vocal Ensemble GAIA, which is well known as one of the best choirs in Denmark. He is also a regular conductor of the Århus Sinfonietta and works as a lecturer in choral and ensemble conducting at the Royal Academy of Music in Århus. In connection with his freelance work he has con-

ducted not only the Danish National Vocal Ensemble but also among others the Danish regional orchestras, Ensemble 2000, Ars Nova Copenhagen, Pro Coro Canada, the Danish National Choir and the Swedish Radio Choir. He has been artistic director of the Chorus of the Danish National Opera in Århus since 2003, and as an opera conductor he has often worked with the older, rarely heard repertoire or the brand new contemporary one. At the Danish National Opera he has headed several performances of contemporary music drama.

Axel Borup-Jørgensen var detaljernes komponist. Med en perfektioneret sensibilitet skilte han musikens elementer ad i atomer og samlede dem igen med sin fintmærkende intuition. Han interesserede sig livet igennem for klange i al deres kompleksitet, hvor blandinger af rytmer, toner, klangfarve og anslagsart smeltede sammen til minutiøst udformede helheder. Han var måske nok modernist, endda en tidlig en af slagsen i dansk sammenhæng, men mange af hans idealer i værkerne er meget traditionelle. Selv i de værker, der er iturevne og formulerer i punkter og nedslag, er musikken poetisk funderet og romantisk i udtryksfuldhed.

I dag rager hans naturbeskrivende værker stadig op i landskabet som noget af det mest konsekvente og detaljerige, orkestre har haft fingrene i. F. eks. hans hovedværk, *Marin*, skrevet mellem 1963 og 1970.

For i modsætning til de romantiske komponister formulerede han ikke følelsen af natur eller subjektive indtryk af natur. Han forsøgte at gengive selve naturen i musik med alle de detaljer, han kunne få øje på. Med et utal af instrumentalstemmer som hver sin lille detalje af naturfænomenet. Det er musik uden centrum eller hierarki. Hvor stemmer filtrer sig ind og ud mellem hinanden som trådene i et rodnat. Nøjagtig som naturfænomener er bygget af små uadskillelige dele, der hver især bidrager med en brik til puslespillet.

Pocket Oratorium fra 1965 er ikke naturbeskrivelse, alligevel ligner det. Borup-Jørgensen sætter her toner til den tyske poet Rainer Maria Rilkes besorte korte digt 'Schlußstück' (Afslutningsvis) om dødens tilstedeværelse i livet:

Der Tod ist groß.
Wir sind die Seinen
lachenden Munds.

Wenn wir uns mitten im Leben meinen,
wagt er zu weinen
mitten in uns.

Døden er stor.

Vi er hans,
med latter i mund.

Bedst som vi følger os godt på vej,
står han dér og græder,
midt i det hele.

Værket er sådan set bare teksten sunget og reciteret af et kor en enkelt gang. Men ordene er næsten uigenkendelige, revet fra hinanden i bidder af stavelser eller enkeltbogstaver og sunget flimrende og dramatisk af koret skilt i mange stemmer og suppleret af klaver, cembalo og slagtpøj. I stedet for at kunne forstå tekstens ord – og slet ikke de enkelte linjer – får man en musikalsk dramatisk fortolkning af teksten. Koret og instrumenterne deler sig i et utal af forgreninger, så ingen kan overskue lydbilledet i alle detaljer. Men forgreningerne peger samme sted hen.

Som klange i blokke danner de samlede fraser, der hele tiden lægger sig i det samme stemningsbillede. Som lytter kan man zoome et stykke ud fra musikken og opleve en helhed, som både er detaljeret og bevægelig, men som samtidigt er helt enkel i sin alvorlige dramatik.

Winterelegie, skrevet 1966-68, er et hovedværk i Axel Borup-Jørgensens produktion. Med udgangspunkt i Brueghels dystre vinterbillede "Jægerne vender hjem" og to digte af den tyske romantiker Friedrich Hölderlin udvikler musikken sig fra hvisken og søgen til ekstremt udtryksfulde stemninger, der ifølge komponistens egen kommentar til værket er billeder af digterens egen sindssyge. Det fornemmer man tydeligt. På samme måde som i *Pocket Oratorium* er musikken sart og detaljeret i sin fragmentariske opbygning. Men i *Winterelegie* er lydbilledet af sang og kammerensemble tillige helt gennemsigtigt eller gennembrudt med store pauser mellem de enkelte dele, så man som lytter kan opleve hver en lille passage helt tydeligt. Det er vinter i musikken, og kulden kan mærkes.

Der er et før og et efter *Marin* i Axel Borup-Jørgensens musik. Omkring 1970 bliver musikken mere flydende som forløb – til forskel for den meget ekspressivt gennembrudte stil i 1960'erne.

Carambolage fra 1979-80 er for klaver (og el-orgel), el-guitar og slagtpøj. Det kan godt være, at stilen er anderledes end tidligere, men detaljeringsgraden er intakt. Ønsket om at forme præcise klange bliver allerede klart på første side i noderne, hvor Borup-Jørgensen har anført en lang, lang række specialtegn, han anvender her, og som kræver en forklaring for musikerne. Hvordan pianisten skal differentiere mellem antallet af negle, han skal stryge over tangenterne, hvor præcis på instrumentets stol, guitaristen skal slå – eller hvordan slagtpøjspilleren skal lade kollen ligge på et trommeskind efter anslaget. Man er ikke i tvivl om, at komponisten har forestillet sig

eller hørt musikken, før den er skrevet ned – og at der sine steder er et meget lille råderum for musikerens personlighed at træde frem i.

Resultatet i *Carambolage* er musik, der langsomt og enkelt skrider frem mellem de tre musikere. Uden tydelig begyndelse, midte eller afslutning åbner de tre medvirkende et univers af klange, der godt nok hænger logisk nok sammen efter hinanden – men som ikke former et egentligt dramatisk forløb. Der er en form for ligeværd eller balance i musikken, som får en til at tænke på billedkunstens mobiler (eller uroer, som er det almindelige navn), der i en ophængning drejer sig og hele tiden fremstår i nye positioner. Men hvor figuren er den samme.

Det fortællende bliver helt centralt i **Sirenernes kyst** fra 1985, hvor et flersporet bånd med kvindestemmer indlejres i et kammerensemblets sarte klange. Naturbeskrivelsen, de poetiske idéer og den musikalske historie som fundament smelter helt sammen i dette værk, hvor sangeren Bodil Gümoes' stemme i flere lag (på en båndoptagelse også anvendt til uropførelsen i 1985) udgør musikken imaginære centrum. Som Axel Borup-Jørgensen selv i sin tid beskrev netop den sammenhæng i en note til værket:

"I fjerne tider ved fremmede kyster hørtes sirenerne synge – Odysseus lyttede til dem, bundet til masten for ikke at blive lokket i druknedøden. Måske kan vi høre dem allevegne ved havet, hvor deres stemmer anes i vinden og dønningebruset eller i stormen og det oprørte hav."

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DE MEDVIRKENDE

Århus Sinfonietta blev dannet i 1990 af en gruppe musikere fra Aarhus Symfoniorkester og Det Jyske Ensemble i samarbejde med komponisten Hans Abrahamson. Århus Sinfonietta har 17 faste medlemmer og dækker alle instrumentgrupperne i et symfoniorkester. På repertoiret findes værker for større besætninger, kammermusik og musik for soloinstrumenter. Ny dansk musik er en hjertesag for ensemblet, og Århus Sinfonietta har både bestilt og uropført en lang række værker af prominente nulevende danske komponister som Per Nørgård, Karl Aage Rasmussen og Bent Sørensen. Århus Sinfonietta afholder koncerter overalt i Danmark, ofte under ledelse af ensemblets faste dirigent, Søren Kinch Hansen. Siden 2000 har pianisten og

tidligere professor ved Det Fynske Musikonservatorium Erik Kaltoft været kunstnerisk leder af Århus Sinfonietta.

Ars Nova Copenhagen blev grundlagt i 1979 og har forlængst etableret sig som et af verdens fineste vokalensembler. Ensemblet ledes kunstnerisk af den anderkendte engelske dirigent Paul Hillier, hvis mere end 150 indspilninger har vundet utallige internationale priser, heriblandt to Grammy Awards. Ars Nova har specialiseret sig i fortolkning af renæssancens polyfone kormusik og ny vokalmusik og er i dag mere efterspurgt end nogensinde. Ars Nova har indspillet mere end 30 CD'er, som har fået begejstrede anmeldelser i både den danske og den internationale musikpresse. Blandt de seneste udgivelser er 'Creator Spiritus' med musik af Arvo Pärt, 'The Story of Christmas' (Harmonia Mundi) og 'The Golden Age of Danish Partsongs' med musik af en række af de bedste danske vokalkomponister fra romantikken til i dag (Dacapo). Tidligere udgivelser omfatter portrætdgivelser af danske komponister af bl.a. Per Nørgård og Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen; fire CD'er med Heinrich Schütz' samlede fortællende værker til jul og påske, John Taverner & Tudor Music, vol. 1 & 2, og Terry Riley's 60'er-klassiker 'In C' og 'The Little Match Girl Passion' med musik af David Lang, som i 2010 blev tildelt en Grammy Award.

Søren Kinch Hansen har gennem de sidste 20 år været fast dirigent for Vokalensemblet GAIA, der er kendt som et af de bedste kor i Danmark. Han er desuden fast dirigent for Århus Sinfonietta og ansat som docent i kor- og ensembleledelse ved Det Jyske Musikonservatorium. Foruden DR Vokalensemblet har han i forbindelse med sit freelancearbejde blandt andet dirigeret de danske landsdelsorkestre, Ensemble 2000, Ars Nova Copenhagen, Pro Coro Canada, DR Koncertkoret og det svenske Radiokor. Han har været kunstnerisk leder af Den Jyske Operas kor siden 2003, og som operadirigent har han ofte beskæftiget sig med det ældre, sjældent hørte repertoire eller det helt nyskrevne. På Den Jyske Opera har han stået for flere opførelser af ny musikdramatik.

ÅRHUS SINFONIETTA

Jette Jokumsen, violin [1](#)

Ina Tagmose, violin [1](#)

Hans Stengaard, violin [2](#)

Mina Fred, viola [1](#)

Janne Fredens, cello [2](#)

Eva Østergaard, flute [1](#) [2](#)

Henrik Husum, oboe [1](#)

Anna Moe, bassoon [1](#)

Vibeke Lembcke, clarinet [2](#)

Frederik Munk Larsen, guitar [2](#) electric guitar [3](#)

Frode Stengaard, harpsichord [4](#)

Erik Kaltoft, piano [1](#) [2](#) [4](#) electric organ [3](#)

Henrik Larsen, percussion [3](#) [4](#)

Ambjørn Lebech, percussion [1](#) [4](#)

Mads Bendsen, percussion [1](#) [2](#) [4](#)

Nickie Johansson, soprano [1](#)

Signe Asmussen, mezzo-soprano [1](#)

Bolette Bruno Hansen, alto [1](#)

Søren K. Hansen, conductor [1](#) [2](#) [4](#)

DDD

Recorded in Mariendal Church and The Concert Hall Aarhus on 20 and 22 January 2014 (Pocket Oratorio); at Værket, Randers, on 24-25 May 2014 (Winterelegie); at The Concert Hall Aarhus on 26-27 June 2014 (Carambolage) and at The Academy of Music in Odense on 8 November 2014 (Coast of Sirens)

Recording producer, editing, mix and mastering: Preben Iwan

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Liner notes: Henrik Friis

English translation: James Manley

Translation of Rilke poem: James Manley (English, p. 5); Svend Ravnkilde (Danish, p. 10)

Proofreader: Svend Ravnkilde

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DANMARKS NATIONALE
MUSIKANTOLOGI

Dacapo Records, Denmark's national record label, was founded in 1986 with the purpose of releasing the best of Danish music past and present. The majority of our recordings are world premieres, and we are dedicated to producing music of the highest international standards.

[9] (6):1 >

*) efterklang ved stumt
. nedtrykkede tangenter

(venstre
under-
arm)

The image shows a handwritten musical score for guitar, consisting of several staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). Below it are two more staves, likely for the left hand, with various markings including 'ff', 'pud', and circled 'NB'. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a tempo marking 'mf'. The score is filled with musical notation, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings. There are also several handwritten annotations and symbols scattered throughout the score, such as 'x', 'y', 'R', 'A', and circled numbers.

hovedstem-
me: quasi legato

(f) = ad
libitum

*) slag på det
sted den har
"rund" klang

3 poca
ritard.

ca 50

[ca 62]