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GRAND  
PIANO

CONTEMPORARY  
DANISH PIANO MUSIC  
NØRGÅRD • LYKKEBO • BISGAARD

CARL PETERSSON

CARL PETERSSON  
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PER NØRGÅRD (b.1932)  
FINN LYKKEBO (1937–1984)  
LARS AKSEL BISGAARD (b.1947)

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CARL PETERSSON, *piano*

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## CARL PETERSSON

Born in 1981 in Lund, Sweden, Carl Petersson graduated from the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen, where he completed both his studies in piano and pedagogy with José Ribera. During his studies he took part in numerous international master-classes in Denmark, Sweden and Israel. Four times in succession he won a scholarship to the Tel-Hai International Piano Master-Classes, where he studied with Pnina Salzman, Victor Derevianco, Emanuel Krasovsky, Staffan Scheja and Nikolai Petrov. In 2013 he received his PhD. Degree from the Music Academy in Kraków, where he also assisted Mariola Cieniawa's class.

He has performed as a soloist as well as with orchestras on numerous occasions in Canada, the United States, Sweden, Denmark, Poland, France, the Czech Republic, Germany and Israel. In the autumn of 2012 he toured North America, performing Grieg's *Piano Concerto* seven times under Kerry Stratton, including a live broadcast for Canadian Radio (CBC).

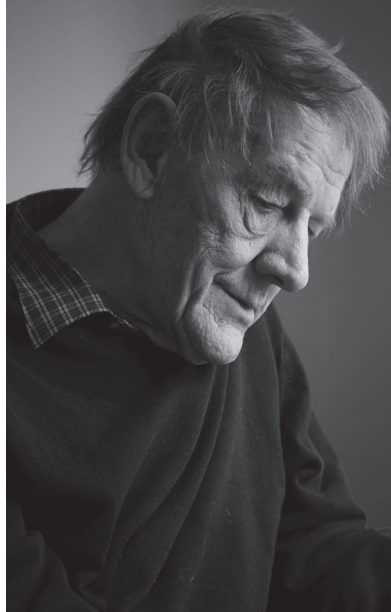
In 2008 he made an acclaimed recording with the Pilsen Philharmonic Orchestra of the two piano concertos by the romantic composer Friedrich von Flotow, released on the Sterling label, and in 2011 he recorded Leopold Godowsky's *Java Suite*, followed in 2012 by the duets for cello and piano of Jacques Offenbach and Friedrich von Flotow. In 2015 Grand Piano released his recording of the Percy Grainger edition of Grieg's *Piano Concerto in A minor*, coupled with Helge Evju's *Piano Concerto* based on Grieg's sketches for a second concerto. This was received with considerable critical and public interest.

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

*This performance is dedicated to my brother Michael and his wife Fiona.*



FINN LYKKEBO  
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**PER NØRGÅRD**  
**PIANO SONATA (1949) \***

- |          |                          |       |
|----------|--------------------------|-------|
| <b>1</b> | I.                       | 09:01 |
| <b>2</b> | II. Pastorale. Andante – | 03:30 |
| <b>3</b> | III. Finale. Allegro     | 02:15 |
|          |                          | 03:16 |

**TOCCATA (1949) \***

- |          |                   |       |
|----------|-------------------|-------|
| <b>4</b> | Toccata (Part I)  | 09:29 |
| <b>5</b> | Fuga              | 03:49 |
| <b>6</b> | Toccata (Part II) | 02:30 |
|          |                   | 03:10 |

**7 SONATE, OP. 6 (1953, REVISED 1956-57)** **13:23**

Allegro molto – Poco sostenuto – Più sostenuto –  
In tempo I – Più mosso – Tempo I – Quasi a tempo –  
Meno mosso – Più lento – Poco rubato, quasi cadenza –  
Adagio – Più andante, espansivo molto – Adagio

**FINN LYKKEBO**

**TABLEAUX POUR PIANO (1969, REVISED 1978) \***

- |           |   |       |
|-----------|---|-------|
| <b>8</b>  | Couleurs et valse: Alla cadenza. Allegretto. Lento à la valse | 09:54 |
| <b>9</b>  | Les enfants: Andante  | 02:09 |
| <b>10</b> | Sons d'hiver – Poco allegro attacca                           | 01:36 |
| <b>11</b> | et les oiseaux chauds: Lento                                  | 01:52 |
| <b>12</b> | Parfums attrapés: Allegro                                     | 02:52 |
|           |   | 01:25 |

## LARS AKSEL BISGAARD

### STADIER, OP. 1 (1973–74) \*

- |           |  |       |
|-----------|--|-------|
| <b>13</b> | Introduktion                                       | 16:20 |
| <b>14</b> | Stadium I: Doppio movimento –                      | 04:05 |
| <b>15</b> | Stadium II: Quasi tempo primo –                    | 02:14 |
| <b>16</b> | Stadium III: Un poco meno vivo – Quasi tempo primo | 05:14 |
|           |  | 04:47 |

**17** BARCAROLE – LENTO E TRANQUILLO (1986-87) \* 03:14

**18** WALKING (HOMMAGE A THOREAU) – SEMPLICE (2014) \* 04:59

TOTAL TIME: 66:19

\* WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDING

*Walking* er tilegnet Carl Petersson i stor taknemmelighed og respekt for hans formidable musikerskab, som det ikke mindst kommer til udtryk på denne CD.

De tre stykker udgør tilsammen Lars Aksel Bisgaards samlede klaverværker.

Lars Aksel Bisgaard



LARS AKSEL BISGAARD  
© Ida Secher

for til sidst atter at dominere totalt. Forløbet kan eventuelt ses som et musikalsk billede på de fænomener, en person ifølge Den tibetanske Dødebog møder efter døden i den såkaldte Bardo-tilstand: Først konfronteres De fredelige Guddomme og derpå De vrede Guddomme, der imidlertid ifølge Dødebogen ikke blot er to sider af samme sag, men tillige projektioner af den afdødes eget sind. I katolsk teologi er Skærsilden den fase, hvor den afdødes sjæl bliver rensset for sine synder for derefter at kunne træde ren ind i Paradis. Her møder den afdøde således både Himlens og Helvedes persongalleri svarende til personens gode og slette sider.

Til sidst bryder lyset dog afgørende igennem, og en paradisk fred sænker sig over musikken, understreget af traditionelle dominantseptim- og dominantnoneakkorder. Stykkets slutning lader dog ane, at den gennem kamp opnåede paradisiske hviletilstand ikke er permanent, men rummer kimen i sig til en ny tilsvarende cyklus, hvorved *Stadier* tillige kan siges at antyde et eksistentielt evighedsperspektiv.

*Barcarole*, komponeret 1986 - 87, blev påbegyndt på et lykkeligt tidspunkt i Bisgaards liv og er tilegnet sangerinden Suzanne Nielsen som en fødselsdagshilsen. 'Barcarole' betyder 'bådsang' (af italiensk *barca*: båd) og er et stykke i roligt flydende tempo med det melodiske lagt i højre hånd, mens venstre hånd akkompagnerer med triolfigurer. Stykket lægger sig stilistisk tæt op ad den romantiske klavermusiks barcarole, som den blandt andet ses hos Mendelssohn i hans fire *Venetianische Gondellieder* fra *Lieder ohne Worte* samt - i monumental udformning - i Chopins Barcarole Op. 60 fra 1846.

*Walking*, med undertitlen *Hommage à Thoreau*, er komponeret 2014. Stykket bygger på nogle ungdomsskitser fra 1984 og er inspireret af den amerikanske forfatter Henry David Thoreau (1817 - 62) og hans essay *Walking* (dansk titel: 'Om at vandre') fra 1862. Det enkle hovedtema, der benytter de brugbare bogstaver h - e - d - a i Thoreaus navn, "forvilder" sig gradvist længere og længere bort fra udgangspunktet for til sidst at vende tilbage igen - ligesom enhver god spadseretur.

**CONTEMPORARY DANISH PIANO MUSIC**  
**PER NØRGÅRD (b.1932)**  
**FINN LYKKEBO (1937–1984)**  
**LARS AKSEL BISGAARD (b.1947)**

This recording contains rarely played and previously unrecorded piano music from the period 1949–2014 by three Danish composers: Per Nørgård (b. 13 July 1932), Finn Lykkebo (1937–1984) and Lars Aksel Bisgaard (b. 6 November 1947).

Per Nørgård has long been regarded as the most important Danish composer in the second half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first. He has accumulated an impressive oeuvre in almost every genre, and is the recipient of numerous prizes. From his early youth until the present he has composed a large number of pieces for solo piano, most of which have already been recorded on CD.

There are, however, a number of very early piano works by Nørgård from the period 1949–54 that have previously never been performed, or played just occasionally. This recording contains the two earliest known piano works by Nørgård: a sonata in three movements and a large-scale toccata, both dating from 1949 and never performed before. These pieces were probably shown to the composer Vagn Holmboe (1909–96) in connection with the then 17-year-old Nørgård's request for private tuition. Holmboe agreed to this request, astonished to see such a great and already well developed creative talent. From 1952 until 1956 Nørgård continued his composition studies with Holmboe as a pupil at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen, where he himself later became a composition teacher.

The early sonata consists of three short movements. Overall the style is neo-classical with hints of Stravinsky and Prokofiev 'light'. The character is playful and quasi-improvisatory, with a skilfully judged balance between seriousness, lightness

and bravura. It is particularly interesting to note that in the development of the first movement we hear an ostinato bass figure, the movement patterns of which already anticipate the melodic infinity series, discovered a decade later and first used twenty years later, that became especially characteristic of Nørgård's mature music. The lyrical second movement, labelled 'pastorale', is almost minimalistic in its simplicity, but with a refined harmonic twist. The movement is constructed isorhythmically throughout, with a periodical structure of  $3 + 2 + 2 + 3 + 2 = 12$  crotchets. The third movement, played *attacca*, is a bravura finale with a decidedly virtuosic character. The frequent appearance of the 'festive' main theme (in the slightly ironic sense typical of Nørgård) binds the otherwise rather sprawling, episodic movement together, and ends the sonata in a festive manner.

The *Toccata* is – to an even greater extent than the *Sonata* – a large-scale bravura work, and places significant demands upon the pianist both technically and musically. Superficially the piece is more 'dashing' than the *Sonata*, and it is constructed even more in an episodic, mosaic-like manner, with an abundance of the most varied thoughts and ideas that clearly allow the young Nørgård's compositional skill and spontaneous creative joy to shine through everywhere.

As in the *Sonata*, the frequent appearances of the characteristic main theme – played in octaves in the right hand – bind the *Toccata* together, giving the theme a certain rondo-ritornello feeling. The work's overarching form is in three parts: *toccata* – *fugue* – *toccata*, a testament to Nørgård's early familiarity with the contributions to this genre by Buxtehude and the young J.S. Bach. The four-part fugue in C minor, forty bars in length, is particularly ambitious, and contains many of the stylistic effects of the baroque fugue such as the obligatory counterpoint and *stretto*. Harmonically the fugue is characterised by an uncompromising linearity, which on several occasions leads to powerfully dissonant clashes – which nonetheless seem logical from the perspective of voice-leading and part-writing. Occasionally, however, there are technical errors that show that even if the 17-year-

univers, dels blev den kreative impuls, der havde ligget latent hos ham siden barndommen, vakt. Den første frugt heraf blev klaverstykket *Stadier*, komponeret 1973 – 74 og tilegnet pianisten Elisabeth Klein, der uropførte værket på Statens Museum for Kunst i København 13. april 1975 og siden spillede det flere steder. Mens Bisgaard studerede musikteori og musikhistorie, havde han i et par år Elisabeth Klein som lærer i klaver. Her fik han lejlighed til at spille ny kompositionsmusik, og især to værker inspirerede ham til stilen i *Stadier*: Arne Nordheims *Listen* (1971) og Poul Ruders' *Dante-sonate* (1970). Som baggrundsværk for *Stadier* kan tillige nævnes Liszts tidligere nævnte klaversonate i h mol.

*Stadier* er et forsøg på at forene vidt forskellige stilistiske udtryk i ét værk, uden at dettes overordnede helhedspræg går tabt. Værkets grundmotiv, der genererer hovedparten af det musikalske materiale, består af blot fire toner, for eksempel a – b – des – c samt omvendingen heraf (es – d – h – c).

Efter en længere introduktion, hvor blandt andet grundmotivet og dets omvendning præsenteres, følger tre hovedafsnit, hvis karakter og rækkefølge kan opleves som en musikalsk pendant til dén progression, der finder sted i Dantes *Divina Commedia*: *Inferno* – *Purgatorio* – *Paradisum*.

Det første stadium er et veritabelt inferno af sekstendedele og skarpt dissonerende akkorder i indbyrdes tvekamp. Afsnittet stiller uhyre tekniske krav til pianisten, der skal afvikle figurerne i et forrygende tempo. Robert Schumann ville i begyndelsen af dette stadium måske have skrevet *So schnell wie möglich* og lidt senere *Noch schneller*, som han gjorde det i en af sine klaversonater, hvilket dog sikkert var ironisk ment som et hip til den tids udbredte, men overfladiske ekvilibrisme på de sorte og hvide tangenter. Her er der imidlertid ikke levnet den mindste plads til ironi, men derimod nok i rigt mål til ekvilibrisme!

Det andet stadium peger både fremad og bagud: Det begynder roligt og fredfyldt, men efterhånden bliver den forrige stemningsverden mere og mere påtrængende

Lykkebo var først og fremmest lyriker, der omsatte intenst sansede naturindtryk til musik. En påvirkning fra Per Nørgårds personalstil kan ikke spores i hans værker, selvom også Lykkebos musik som helhed er ret tydeligt indlejret i nordisk mentalitet. Hvad der derimod fik en vis indflydelse på hans udvikling var den tids orientering mod serialismen, som udgik fra Central- og Vesteuropa i årene efter 2. Verdenskrig. Denne indflydelse varede imidlertid ikke ret længe, og Lykkebo fandt nye veje. Men serialismen havde lært ham præcision, økonomi og koncentration - egenskaber, der i høj grad præger de fem korte stykker i *Tableaux*. Tonesproget er konsekvent atonalt, og mere eller mindre komplette tolvtonefelter kan undertiden spores i sætterne, der desuden er præget af overordentlig stor rytmisk kompleksitet. Trods det fortættede udtryk har stykkerne imidlertid et skær af sart poesi over sig, accentueret gennem de deskriptive titler, der al modernitet til trods gør dem fjernt beslægtede med tilsvarende karakterstykker af Schumann og Ravel.

Det blev afgørende for Lars Aksel Bisgaards valg af livsbane, at han som gymnasiast i vinteren 1965 - 66 fulgte Finn Lykkebos kyndige og inspirerende undervisning i musikforståelse under aftenskolen. Lykkebo var Bisgaard meget behjælpelig med information om, hvad der krævedes for at blive optaget på konservatoriets uddannelse i musikteori og musikhistorie. For at tilegne sig de nødvendige musikalske færdigheder studerede Bisgaard efter aflagt studentereksamen først musikvidenskab ved Københavns Universitet 1966 - 69 og fulgte derefter i Lykkebos fodspor som studerende med musikteori og musikhistorie som hovedfag ved Det kgl. danske Musikkonservatorium i årene 1969 - 75. Umiddelbart derefter fulgte et kompositionsstudium hos Per Nørgård ved Det jyske Musikkonservatorium i Århus 1975 - 81. I 1981 efterfulgte Lars Bisgaard Finn Lykkebo som docent i musikteoretiske fag ved Vestjysk Musikkonservatorium. Her virkede han indtil 1993 og underviste derefter på Det kgl. danske Musikkonservatorium indtil sin pensionering i 2013.

Mødet med Per Nørgård i sensommeren 1972 blev ligeledes afgørende for Lars Bisgaard i flere henseender: Dels blev han dybt fascineret af Nørgårds musikalske

old Per Nørgård had already mastered classical counterpoint to an unusually high standard, he still had much to learn from Finn Høffding (1899–1997), who became his music theory teacher at the conservatory. Very early in the last section of the *Tocatta*, a characteristic rhythmic-melodic figure is heard in the descant, another anticipation of the infinity series: it is simply the first eight notes in the two-tone version of this row (D – C sharp – C sharp – D, C sharp – D – D – C sharp)! The end of the *Tocatta* almost falls over itself in extremely fast demisemiquaver figures that threaten to go beyond what is pianistically possible – but here, as everywhere on this recording, Carl Petersson shows his masterful technique, allowing the musical figures to remain very clear despite the fast tempo.

The first of Nørgård's piano works that the composer himself acknowledges, however, is his *Sonata in One Movement, Op. 6*, which dates from his student years at the conservatory. It was composed in 1953, revised in 1956-57, and is dedicated to his fellow-student, the pianist John Winther, who gave its first performance (original version) on 17 September 1954. We do not know when the revised version was first performed. Previously it has been possible to become acquainted with this sonata only by means of an LP recording from 1970 by the pianist Elisabeth Klein. This is its first appearance on CD, and in digital form, and thus a significant missing piece is added to our overall picture of Nørgård's piano music from the period after approx. 1955.

Compared with the three-movement sonata from just four years earlier and a four-movement sonata from 1949–50, Nørgård has, in this his third piano sonata, already reached full mature mastery as a piano composer, both musically and technically. The sonata is a symphonically proportioned, expansive, densely contrapuntal and especially virtuosic work, which is nonetheless also characterised by strong, almost extreme motivic concentration. There are three recurring motifs which – using traditional sonata-form terminology with a little latitude – can be described as a motto, main theme and subsidiary theme. These motifs or themes are subjected to

numerous transformations and combinations, showing Nørgård's rapid assimilation of Vagn Holmboe's technique of metamorphosis, which has its roots as far back as Schubert, Liszt and Brahms.

Otherwise, classical sonata-form principles are not much in evidence, even if we can observe what seems to be a recapitulation and (at the beginning) the contours of a first and second group. In addition we can discern the outline of four continuous movements (the fourth of which corresponds to the recapitulation), which immediately makes the work resemble both a sonata form and a sonata cycle, akin to a Romantic symphonic poem. Moreover the slow coda and quiet conclusion claim a distant kinship between Nørgård's piece and Franz Liszt's famous *Piano Sonata in B minor* from 1853, which belongs formally to this same genre. Nørgård's sonata is in C, with a prominent tonal contrast in F sharp. In addition, the fact that the sonata is in a single movement leads our thoughts towards another of Nørgård's great role models, Jean Sibelius, and his *Seventh Symphony*. The sonata is thus a fully valid expression of the artistic perspective of the young Nørgård, which he referred to as 'the universe of the Nordic mind'. On Elisabeth Klein's LP recording, Nørgård himself characterised the sonata as follows: 'The Sonata is wholeheartedly attached to the Northern symphonic tradition – influenced as it is by Sibelius and Holmboe, dark sounding, far spinning, but with a monomaniac thematic unity.'

Finn Lykkebo began his musical education in earnest at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in 1960 – initially as a church musician, and from 1963 onwards also with music theory and music history as principal subjects. He also studied composition under Per Nørgård, and at the same time Lykkebo composed choral settings, piano music and songs, primarily in smaller, more modest forms. Lykkebo always stood slightly on the periphery of the circle of young composers at the Academy, which centred around Per Nørgård. In 1965, when Nørgård left the Royal Danish Academy of Music to take up a similar teaching post at the Academy of Music in Aarhus, his

løvrigt er de klassiske sonateformtræk kun lidet fremtrædende, omend man kan spore et repriseelement samt (i begyndelsen) konturerne af en hoveddel og en sidedel. Desuden kan omridset af fire sammenhængende satser anes (hvor fjerde sats svarer til reprisen), hvad der på én gang gør værket til både sonatesatsform og sonatecyklus i lighed med romantikkens symfoniske digtning. Den langsomme coda og tyste udklang giver tillige sonaten et fjernt slægtskab med Franz Liszts berømte klaversonate i h mol fra 1853, der formelt hører til denne genre. Sonaten står i C med en fremtrædende tonal kontrast i Fis. At sonaten er i én sats, leder desuden tanken hen på et andet af Nørgårds store forbilleder, Jean Sibelius, og dennes syvende symfoni. Sonaten er således et fuldgældigt udtryk for det kunstneriske perspektiv, der var Nørgårds i de unge år, og som han har kaldt "det nordiske sinds univers". På Elisabeth Kleins LP- indspilning har Per Nørgård selv karakteriseret sonaten således: "The Sonata is wholeheartedly attached to the Northern symphonic tradition - influenced as it is by Sibelius and Holmboe, dark sounding, far spinning, but with a monomaniac thematic unity."

Finn Lykkebo påbegyndte sin egentlige musikalske uddannelse ved Det kgl. danske Musikkonservatorium 1960 - først som kirkemusiker og fra 1963 tillige med hovedfagene musikteori og musikhistorie. Samtidig med studierne, der også omfattede studier i komposition hos Per Nørgård, komponerede Lykkebo korsatser, klavermusik og sange, fortrinsvis i mindre, beskedne former. Lykkebo stod altid lidt i periferien af den kreds af unge komponister på konservatoriet, der dannedes omkring Per Nørgård. Da denne i 1965 forlod Det kgl. danske Musikkonservatorium til fordel for en tilsvarende lærerstilling ved Det jyske Musikkonservatorium i Århus, fulgte hans elever med - undtagen Finn Lykkebo, der herefter stod på egne ben som komponist og som sådan egentlig betragtede sig selv som autodidakt. Efter diplomeksamen 1966 virkede Lykkebo som docent i musikteoretiske fag ved Vestjysk Musikkonservatorium i Esbjerg indtil 1981. Fra denne periode stammer blandt andet *Tableaux pour piano*, komponeret 1969 og revideret 1978. *Tableaux* er det eneste udgivne klaverværk af Lykkebo (Samfundet til udgivelse af dansk Musik).



den 17-årige Per Nørgård det klassiske kontrapunkt i usædvanlig høj grad, men han havde dog endnu meget at lære af Finn Høffding (1899 - 1997), der blev hans lærer i musikteori på konservatoriet. I det sidste toccata-afsnit forekommer der ret tidligt i forløbet en karakteristisk rytmisk-melodisk figur i diskanten, som igen er et forvarsel om uendelighedsrækken: Det er simpelthen de første otte toner i denne rækkes to-tone version (d - cis - cis - d, cis - d - d - cis)! Slutningen af toccataen kammer næsten over i ekstremt hurtige toogtredivtedelsfigurer, der truer med at overskride det pianistisk mulige, men her viser Carl Petersson (som overalt på denne CD) sin suveræne teknik, der får figurene til at stå ganske klart trods det opskruede tempo.

Det første af Nørgårds klaverværker, han selv har kunnet anerkende, er imidlertid hans Sonate i én sats, Op. 6, der stammer fra studietiden på konservatoriet. Den er komponeret 1953, revideret 1956-57 og tilegnet studiekammeraten, pianisten John Winther, der uropførte værket i dets oprindelige skikkelse 17/9 - 1954. Førsteopførelsen af den reviderede version kendes ikke. Denne sonate har man hidtil kun kunnet stifte bekendtskab med i en LP-indspilning fra ca. 1970 med pianisten Elisabeth Klein. Her foreligger den for første gang på CD og i digital form, og dermed er der føjet en væsentlig, manglende brik til det samlede billede af Nørgårds klaverværker fra tiden efter ca. 1955.

Sammenlignet med den kun 4 år ældre tresatsede sonate (samt en i 1949 - 50 komponeret firsatset sonate) har Nørgård med denne sin tredje klaversonate allerede nået fuldt modent mesterskab som klaverkomponist, både musikalsk og teknisk. Sonaten er et symfonisk anlagt, ekspansivt, tæt kontrapunktisk og særdeles virtuost værk, der dog samtidig er kendetegnet ved en stærk, næsten ekstrem motivisk koncentration. Der forekommer tre gennemgående motiver, som med brug af den traditionelle sonateforms terminologi med lidt god vilje kan kaldes motto, hovedtema og sidetema. Disse motiver eller temaer undergår talrige forvandlinger og kombinationer undervejs, hvilket vidner om Nørgårds hurtige tilegnelse af den Holmboe'ske metamorfose-teknik, der har rødder helt tilbage til Schubert, Liszt og Brahms.

pupils followed him there – with the exception of Finn Lykkebo, who henceforth stood on his own two feet as a composer, and basically regarded himself as self-taught in this capacity. After his diploma exam in 1966, Lykkebo worked as a lecturer in music theory at the Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts in Esbjerg (formerly the Vestjysk Musikkonservatorium) until 1981. Works from this period include *Tableaux pour piano*, composed in 1969 and revised in 1978. *Tableaux* is Lykkebo's only published piano composition (it is published by Samfundet til udgivelse af dansk Musik).

Lykkebo was first and foremost a lyricist who conveyed intense sensory impressions of nature through his music. Lykkebo's style shows no trace of Per Nørgård's individual style, although overall the younger composer's music is very clearly embedded in the Nordic mentality. On the other hand the orientation of the time towards serialism, which spread from central and western Europe in the years after World War II, did have a certain influence on his development. This influence was not long-lasting, however, and Lykkebo found new avenues. Nonetheless, serialism had taught him precision, economy and concentration – qualities that to a large extent characterise the five short pieces in the *Tableaux*. The musical language is consistently atonal, and more or less complete twelve-tone rows can sometimes be discerned in the movements, which are also marked by an unusual degree of rhythmic complexity. Despite their expressive concentration, however, the pieces have a hint of poetic sensitivity, accentuated by the descriptive titles which, despite all the modernity, establish a distant relationship with the character pieces of Schumann and Ravel.

A decisive factor in Lars Aksel Bisgaard's choice of career was that in the winter of 1965–66 when, as a schoolboy, he participated in Finn Lykkebo's knowledgeable and inspiring lessons in musical appreciation at evening classes. Lykkebo was very helpful in providing Bisgaard with information about what was necessary to gain admission to the conservatory's music theory and music history classes. After passing his school-leaving exams, Bisgaard acquired the necessary knowledge first by studying musicology at the University of Copenhagen (1966–69) and then by

following in Lykkebo's footsteps as a student at the Royal Danish Academy of Music with music theory and music history as his main subjects (1969–75). Immediately after that, he commenced studies of composition under Per Nørgård at the Academy of Music in Aarhus (1975–81). In 1981 Lars Bisgaard succeeded Finn Lykkebo as a lecturer in music theory at the Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts in Esbjerg. He worked there until 1993, and then taught at the Royal Danish Academy of Music until his retirement in 2013.

Meeting Per Nørgård in the late summer of 1972 was another decisive moment for Lars Bisgaard, in many respects. Not only was he deeply fascinated by Nørgård's creative universe, but also the creative impulse that had lain dormant within him since his childhood suddenly sprang to life. The first fruit of this was the piano piece *Stadier*, composed in 1973–74 and dedicated to the pianist Elisabeth Klein, who gave its first performance at the National Gallery of Denmark in Copenhagen on 13 April 1975 and subsequently played it on numerous occasions. While Bisgaard was studying music theory and music history, he had Elisabeth Klein as his piano teacher for two years. He then had the opportunity to play newly composed works, and two pieces in particular inspired him when choosing the style of *Stadier*: Arne Nordheim's *Listen* (1971) and Poul Ruders' *Dante Sonata* (1970). Also in the background of *Stadier* was Franz Liszt's above-mentioned *Piano Sonata in B minor*.

*Stadier* is an attempt to unite widely divergent stylistic expressions in a single composition, without losing its overall feeling of unity. The work's basic motif, which generates the majority of the musical material, consists of just four notes, for example A – B flat – D flat – C and its inversion (E flat – D – B – C). After a lengthy introduction where, for instance, the basic motif and its inversion are presented, there are three main sections, the character and order of which can be perceived as a musical pendant to the progression that takes place in Dante's *Divine Comedy: Inferno – Purgatory – Paradise*.

improvisatorisk og med en fin balance mellem seriøsitet, lethed og bravour. Særligt interessant er det, at der i gennemførelsesdelen i første sats dukker en ostinat basfigur op, som i sit bevægelsesmønster allerede lader ane den først ti år senere opdagede og først tyve år senere udnyttede melodiske uendelighedsrække, der i særlig grad er blevet kendetegnende for den modne Nørgårds musik. Den lyriske anden sats, betegnet *pastorale*, er nærmest minimalistisk i sin enkelhed, dog undervejs med et raffineret harmonisk twist. Satsen er konsekvent isorytmisk opbygget med en periode på  $3 + 2 + 2 + 3 + 2 = 12$  fjerdedele. Tredie sats, der spilles *attaca*, er en bravour-finale af udpræget virtuost tilsnit. Det gennemgående, "festlige" hovedtema (i den typisk Nørgård'ske let-ironiske forstand) binder ved sin hyppige forekomst den ellers noget vildtvoksende, episodiske sats sammen og sætter til slut et - festligt - punktum for sonaten.

Toccatæen er i endnu højere grad end sonaten et stort anlagt bravour-nummer, som stiller betydelige krav til pianisten, både teknisk og musikalsk. Stykket er mere udvendigt "flot" end sonaten og i endnu højere grad episodisk-mosaikagtigt opbygget med en overflod af de mest forskelligartede indfald og ideer, der tydeligt lader den unge Nørgårds kompositoriske overskud og spontane glæde ved at skabe skinne igennem overalt.

Ligesom i sonaten binder et karakteristisk hovedtema, som spilles i oktaver i højre hånd, toccatæen sammen ved sin hyppige optræden, hvad der giver dette tema et vist præg af rondo-ritornel. Stykkets overordnede form er tredelt: Toccata - fuga - toccata, hvilket vidner om Nørgårds tidlige fortrolighed med Buxtehudes og den unge J. S. Bachs bidrag til genren. Den ikke mindre end fyrre takter lange, firstemmige fuga, der står i c mol, er særdeles ambitiøst anlagt og rummer nogle af barokfugaens stilistiske virkemidler såsom obligat kontrapunkt og tætføring af temaet. Harmonisk er fugaen kendetegnet ved en kompromisløst gennemført linearitet, der adskillige steder fører til voldsomme dissonans-sammenstød, som dog overalt virker logiske ud fra et stemmeføringsmæssigt-melodisk perspektiv. Enkelte steder forekommer der dog nogle tekniske satsfejl, som viser, at nok beherskede

**DANSK KLAVERMUSIK**  
**PER NØRGÅRD (b.1932)**  
**FINN LYKKEBO (1937–1984)**  
**LARS AKSEL BISGAARD (b.1947)**

Denne indspilning indeholder sjældent spillet samt aldrig tidligere opført klavermusik fra perioden 1949 - 2014 af tre danske komponister: Per Nørgård (født 13/7 - 1932), Finn Lykkebo (født 14/1 - 1937, død 1984) og Lars Aksel Bisgaard (født 6/11 - 1947).

Per Nørgård har allerede længe haft status som den betydeligste danske komponist i anden halvdel af det tyvende og begyndelsen af det enogtyvende århundrede. Han har et imponerende livsværk i næsten alle genrer bag sig og har modtaget talrige hæderspriser for sit virke. Lige siden sin tidlige ungdom og indtil i dag har han komponeret et stort antal værker for soloklaver, hvoraf de fleste allerede foreligger i fremragende CD-indspilninger.

Der findes imidlertid en række meget tidlige klaverkompositioner af Nørgård fra perioden 1949 - 54, som enten aldrig har været opført eller kun har været spillet enkelte gange. Dette album indeholder de to tidligst registrerede klaverværker af Nørgård: En sonate i tre satser samt en stort anlagt Toccata, begge fra 1949 og aldrig tidligere opført. Disse værker har sandsynligvis været forelagt komponisten Vagn Holmboe (1909 - 96) i forbindelse med den dengang 17-årige Nørgårds forespørgsel om at måtte få privatundervisning i komposition af ham. Holmboe imødekom hans ønske, efter sigende ret forbausset over allerede her at se et så stort skabende talent folde sig ud! Fra 1952 til 1956 fortsatte Nørgård sit kompositionsstudium hos Holmboe som elev ved Det kgl. danske Musikkonservatorium, hvor han sidenhen selv blev lærer i komposition.

Den tidlige sonate består af tre korte satser. Stilen er som helhed neoklassicistisk med mindelser om Stravinskij og Prokofiev "light". Karakteren er legende, quasi-

The first stage is a veritable inferno of semiquavers and sharply dissonant chords in conflict with each other. This section places enormous technical demands upon the pianist, who has to cope with these figures at an extremely fast tempo. At the beginning of this section Robert Schumann might perhaps have written the indication *So schnell wie möglich* (*As fast as possible*), and a little later *Noch schneller* (*Even faster*), as he did in one of his own piano sonatas – which was certainly meant ironically, as a dig at the prevalent but superficial virtuosity at the piano. In *Stadier*, however, there is no place for irony, although there are plenty of extreme challenges!

The second section points both forwards and backwards. It begins calmly and peacefully, but later the previous atmosphere becomes more and more intrusive until in the end it is completely dominant. This process can perhaps be regarded as a musical image of the phenomena that – according to the *Bardo Thödol* (the Tibetan Book of the Dead) – a person encounters after death in the so-called 'bardo' ('transitional') state. First the Peaceful Ones (deities) are confronted, then the Wrathful Ones; according to the *Bardo Thödol*, however, these are not just two sides of the same coin but also projections of the deceased's own mind. In Catholic theology, Purgatory is the stage at which the deceased's soul is cleansed of its sins, so it may be pure when it enters Paradise. Here the deceased meets figures from both heaven and hell, corresponding to the person's good and bad sides.

In the end, though, light breaks through decisively, and the peace of Paradise descends upon the music, emphasized by traditional dominant seventh and dominant ninth chords. The ending of the piece, however, hints that the paradisiacal state of rest, achieved through struggle, may not be permanent, but might contain the germ of a new, similar cycle. *Stadier* can thus be said to imply an existential perspective on eternity.

Bisgaard started to compose *Barcarole* (1986–87), at a happy time in his life; the piece is dedicated to the singer Suzanne Nielsen as a birthday greeting. 'Barcarole' means 'boating song' (from the Italian *barca*, 'boat') and is a piece in peacefully flowing tempo, with the melody in the right hand; the left hand accompanies with triplet figures. Stylistically the piece is close to a Romantic barcarole, for example those of Mendelssohn (the four *Venetianische Gondellieder* in his *Lieder ohne Worte*) and – monumental form – Chopin's *Barcarole, Op. 60* (1846).

*Walking*, with the subtitle *Hommage à Thoreau*, was written in 2014. The piece is based on some youth sketches from 1984, and is inspired by the American author Henry David Thoreau (1817–62) and his essay *Walking* from 1862. The simple main theme, which uses the available notes corresponding to the letters in Thoreau's name (B [=H] – E – D – A), gradually 'wander' further and further away from the starting point, and in the end come back again – like any good walking tour. *Walking* is dedicated to Carl Petersson with great gratitude and respect for his formidable musicianship, which becomes apparent not least on this recording.

These three pieces comprise Lars Aksel Bisgaard's complete piano music.

**Lars Aksel Bisgaard**  
English translation by Andrew Barnett



Nørgård's original manuscript for Toccata (1949)