
LAWO
CLASSICS
Evening
Hymn
Berit Norbakken
soprano
Arctic Philharmonic
Henning Kraggerud
artistic leader / violin

Often the most beautiful music I know is also the saddest. The *Evening Hymn* programme was put together at a time when the weight of life was especially apparent to me. The result is a production with a melancholic flavour, and the music on this record encompasses what I associate with the evening: how it can embrace us and how the darkness can overwhelm and envelop us completely. Even though we are performing music from another time, I feel that it reflects our present – a time perceived as bleak for many but also containing the connection between faith and doubt, light and darkness, joy and sorrow, and life and death. The music takes us into the darkness but still allows the light to break through, conveying beauty and hope. At its best, music can provide a language for what we don't really have words for and create coherence in what can seem like dark chaos.

Meeting someone with whom you share the same language, intuition and musical understanding, is a powerful experience. That's how my meeting with Henning Kraggerud was at a concert we did together with the Arctic Philharmonic a few years ago. Interpretation of music is personal and musical taste is individual. However, in this meeting, immediate listening, dialogue, and understanding of musical ideas, gestures, and phrasing were shared and mutual. We wanted to take this experience with us into a larger project, and that's how the idea for this album came about.

The repertoire consists of arias from various operas and cantatas from the Baroque era, some of which are familiar to many while others are more unfamiliar. Our desire is to present our version, our encounter with this music and with each other in the music. The pieces are woven together through our artistic voices and experiences, helping to foster new connections. For me, this way of performing music is part of a larger project. In recent years, I've moved into different musical borderlands in several contexts, where I've challenged myself to be open to the unknown and the unexpected. I wanted to make room for my discoveries, experiences, and reflections in my work with music. This can involve challenging our habits in performing a familiar piece of music, for example by experimenting with the timbral characteristics of the voice together with the instrumental sound, as we have done in Purcell's 'The Plaint'. Here, the vocals and violin merge into one line, at times even into one sound; each phrase does not end but is taken over by the other voice.

The musician's presence and mutual attention allow us to test different versions of the same piece during rehearsals. In 'Dido's Lament', the stanzas are repeated, and the variation can consist of different tonal nuances, dynamics, and character: Dido's prayer – *Remember Me* – can be heartfelt and prayerful but also a desperate cry. Although the framework for a piece can be agreed upon and clearly defined, the performance itself can still be characterised by spontaneity through presence, listening, and ongoing dialogue. The dialogue takes place in the form of eye contact, gestures, musical impulses and body language. The degree of intensity can vary, and the mutual contact and attention affect the performance and expression.

By daring to move away from the familiar and predictable, previous experience and knowledge of the repertoire can illuminate and give meaning to our work and performance of the same music in ever new ways. In this way, the recording becomes an interweaving of artistic expressions and encounters over time.

Those of us who collaborated on this recording are established artists in our own right, yet we share a strong connection through our relationship to the musical expression, as it sounds on the album. We hope the listener will take part in the music and sharing our encounters with both the known and unknown.

Berit Norbakken

Georg Friedrich Händel:
Verso già l'alma /
The Soul Already Turns

Verso già l'alma col sangue
Lento palpita il mio cor
Già la vita manca e langue
Per trofeo d'empio rigor

With my blood, my soul is draining
I can feel my heartbeat slow
My life's languishing and fading
Made a prize to the abhorred

Antonio Vivaldi:
Ah ch'infelice sempre /
Wishes me ever joyless

Ah, ch'infelice sempre
Mi vuol Dorilla ingrata
Ah, sempre più spietata
M'astringe a lagrimar

Per me non v'è, no
Non v'è ristoro
Per me non v'è, no
Non v'è più speme
E il fier martoro e le mie pene
Solo la morte può consolar

Alas, ingrate Dorilla
Wishes me ever joyless
And with a heart so hardened
She forces me to weep

For me there is no
There is no respite
For me there is no
There is no hope left
And this cruel torment, and all my anguish
Now only death shall make them abate

Anon:
O Death rock me asleep

O Death, rock my asleep,
bring me to quiet rest
Let pass my weary guiltless ghost
Out of my careful breast
Toll on the passing bell,
ring out my doleful knell
Let thy sound my death tell,
For I must die, there is no remedie
For now I die.

Farewell, my pleasures past
Welcome my present pain
I feel my torments so increase
That life cannot remain
Cease now thou passing bell
Rung is my doleful knell
For the sound my death tell
Death doth draw nigh
There is no remedy
For now I die

Henry Purcell:
The Plaint — O let me weep

O, let me weep
O, let me, forever, ever weep.

My eyes no more shall welcome sleep.

I'll hide me from the sight of day,
And sigh my soul away

O, let me weep
O, let me, forever, ever weep.

He's gone; his loss deplore.
And I shall never see him more.

Tarquinio Merula:
Folle è ben che si crede / *'Tis a fool*

Folle è ben che si crede
Che per dolci lusinghe amorose
O per fiere minacce sdegnose
Dal bel idolo mio ritragga il piede
Cangi pur suo pensiero
Ch'il mio cor prigioniero
Spera che goda la libertà
Dica, dica chi vole, dica chi sa

Altri per gelosia
Spiri pur empie fiamme dal seno
Versi pure Megiera'l veleno
Perche rompi al mio ben la fede mia
Morte il viver mi toglia
Mai sia ver che si scioglia
Quel caro laccio che preso m'ha
Dica, dica chi vole, dica chi sa

Ben havrò tempo, è loco
Da sfogar l'amorose mie pene
Da temprar de l'amato mio bene
E dell'arso mio cor l'occulto foco
E trà l'ombre e gli orrori
De' notturni splendori
Il mio bel furto s'asconderà
Dica, dica chi vole, dica chi sa

'Tis a fool who believes that
For the silver-tongued words of a lover
Or for threats most disdainful and odious
From my fair idol I'd ever step back
Let them change their persuasion
Those who hope that my bosom
From these shackles shall ever be freed
Let them, those who know better,
let them all talk

Let them, those who are envious
Let them cast evil flames from their bosoms
Let the witches pour out their vile poisons
Tempting me to forsake my lover's vow
Let death render me lifeless
But let never come loosened
This dearest leash that has caught my heart
Let them, those who know better,
let them all talk

And then, sooner or later
I know that my soul's ache shall know respite
And be quenched by the love of my darling
Within my burning heart, the secret fire
And among the dark horrors
Of the nocturnal splendours
My fair extortion shall be unknown
Let them, those who know better,
let them all talk

Claudio Monteverdi:
Quel sguardo sdegnosetto /
That haughty little side glance

Quel sguardo sdegnosetto
Lucente e minaccioso
Quel dardo velenoso
Vola a ferirmi il petto
Bellezze ond'io tutt'ardo
E son da me diviso
Piagatemi col sguardo
Sanatemi col riso

Armatevi pupille
D'asprissimo rigore
Versatemi su 'l core
Un nembi di faville
Ma'l labro non sia tardo
A ravvivarmi ucciso
Feriscami quel sguardo
Ma sanimi quel riso

Begl'occhi a l'armi, a l'armi!
Io vi preparo il seno
Gioite di piagarmi
In fin ch'io venga meno
E se da vostri dardi
Io resterò conquiso
Ferischino quei sguardi
Ma sanami quel riso

That haughty little side glance
So bright and filled with menace
That arrow dipped in poison
It flies to wound my breast
Beauties that set me blazing
And sever me from myself
Ah, with your glances plague me
And with your laugh heal me

O pupils, arm your weapons
With all the sternest rigour
And pour upon my bosom
A mighty cloud of sparks
But let lips not be tardy
In rousing me from death's door
Ah, let your glances wound me
But let your laugh heal me

Fair eyes, to war! To your blows
I offer now my bosom
Rejoice in wounding my heart
Even until I faint
And if from all your arrows
I was forever vanquished
Ah, let those glances wound me
But let that laugh heal me

Claudio Monteverdi:
Ego flos campi /
I am the flower

Ego flos campi et lilium convallium
Sicut lilium inter spinas
Sic amica mea inter filias
Sicut malus inter ligna silvarum
Sic dilectus meus inter filios
Sub umbra ilius quem desidera veram sedi
Et fructus eius dulcis gutturi meo

I am the flower, the lily of the vale
As a lily among briars
Is my friend among the daughters
As an apple tree in a wild orchard
Is my love among the sons
I sat under his shade, which I dearly desired
And his fruit was so sweet to my taste

Tarquinio Merula:
Canzonetta Spirituale sopra alla nanna /
Spiritual Song About the Lullaby

Hor ch'è tempo di dormire
Dormi, figlio, e non vagire
Perche tempo ancor verrà
Che va gir bisognerà
Deh ben mio, deh cor mio fà
Fa la ninna ninna na

Now it's time to go to slumber
Sleep, my child, and do not cry
For ere soon shall come a moment
When you shall have cause to weep
Hush, my darling little child
Go to sleep now for the night

Chiudi quei lumi divini
Come fan gl'altri bambini
Perche tosto oscuro velo
Priverà di lume il cielo.
Deh ben mio, deh cor mio fà
Fa la ninna ninna na

Eyelids, close on divine pupils
As all other children's do
For ere soon a veil most odious
Shall obscure the sky with gloom
Hush, my darling little child
Go to sleep now for the night

Over prendi questo latte
Dalle mie ma melle intatte
Perche ministro crudele
Ti prepara aceto e fiele
Deh ben mio, deh cor mio fà
Fa la ninna ninna na

Come and take your mother's milk now
From my pure, untarnished breast
For ere soon shall those in power
Feed you vinegar and bane
Hush, my darling little child
Go to sleep now for the night

Amor mio sia questo petto
Hor per te morbido letto
Pria che rendi ad alta voce
L'ama al Padre sù la Croce
Deh ben mio, deh cor mio fà
Fa la ninna ninna na

Come, my love, let now my bosom
Be for you the softest bed
Ere your soul you send up wailing
To our Father on the cross
Hush, my darling little child
Go to sleep now for the night

Posa hor queste membra belle
Vezzosette e tenerelle
Perche poi ferri è catene
Gli daran acerbe pene
Deh ben mio, deh cor mio fà
Fa la ninna ninna na

Let your fair limbs come to rest now
All so precious and adored
For ere soon from chains and irons
Shall they know torture and pain
Hush, my darling little child
Go to sleep now for the night

Queste mani e questi piedi
Ch'or con gusto e gaudio vedi
Ahimé! Come in vari modi
Passeran acuti chiodi

And your hands and feet, so tiny
Which you contemplate with glee
Alas! In what heartless manner
Shall they be wounded by nails

Questa facia gratiosa
Rubiconda or più di rosa
Sputi e schiaffi sporcheranno
Con tormento e grand'affanno

This rotund and lovely visage
Redder now than a wild rose
Shall be spat upon and stricken
With such anguish and such scorn

Ah con quanto tuo dolore
Sola speme del mio core
Questo Capo e questi crini
Passeran acuti spini

Ah, with what atrocious torment
To your mother's only hope
Shall your head and hair most precious
Be transfixed by bloody thorns

Ah ch'in questo divin petto
Amor mio dolce e diletto
Vi farà piaga mortale
Empia lancia e disleale

Ah, that in the divine bosom
Of my sweet and darling child
Should a mortal wound be opened
By a cruel, unfaithful pike

Dormi dunque figliol mio
Dormi pur Redentor mio
Perche poi con lieto viso
Ci vedrem in Paradiso

So sleep now, my darling baby
My redeemer, close your eyes
For with faces filled with rapture
We shall meet then in the skies

Hor che dorme la mia vita
Del mio cor gioia compita
Tacia ogn'un con puro zelo
Tacian sin la terra e'l Cielo

Now that my life lies in slumber
My heart's greatest pride and joy
Let all sit in zealous silence
Up in Heaven and below

E frà tanto io che farò?
Il mio ben contemplerò
Ne starò col capo chino
Fin che dorme il mio Bambino

And as he lies down, what of me?
I shall contemplate my love
And I shan't lay down my own head
For as long as my babe sleeps

Henry Purcell:
An Evening Hymn

Now that the sun hath veil'd his light,
And bid the world good night;
To the soft bed my body I dispose;
But where shall my soul repose?
Dear God, even in thy arms:
And can there be any so sweet security?
Then to thy rest, O my soul
And singing, praise the mercy that
prolongs thy days.
Hallelujah.

Antonio Vivaldi:
Sonno, se pur sei sonno /
Sleep, if indeed you are sleep

Sonno, se pur sei sonno e non orrore
Spargi d'ombra funesta il ciglio mio

Sleep, if you are sleep and not night terror
Spread now upon my brow your dismal shade

Georg Friedrich Händel:
Piangerò / *I will rue*

Piangerò
Piangerò la sorte mia
Si crudele e tanto ria
Finchè vita in petto avrò

Ma poi morta d'ogni intorno
Il tiranno e notte e giorno
Fatta spettro agiterò

I will rue
I will rue my ruinous fate
So horrendous, inhumane
For as long as I draw breath

But in death, from every side
To the tyrant, day and night
As a ghost I shall bring dread

Henry Purcell:
Thy hand, Belinda — When I am laid

Thy hand, Belinda, darkness shades me,
On thy bosom let me rest,
More I would but death invades me
Death is now a welcome guest

When I am laid, am laid in Earth
May my Wrongs create no trouble in thy Breast

Remember me, but ah! Forget my faith

Berit Norbakken

Norbakken is one of Scandinavia's leading sopranos. Her versatility and flexibility of voice have allowed her to master a repertoire ranging from Baroque to contemporary, including folk music. She regularly appears in performances of oratorios, passions, and masses, and continues her work with leading ensembles, orchestras, and conductors in major concert halls all over the world.

Her many recordings have garnered high critical acclaim both in Norway and abroad. In particular, her recording of Arriaga's vocal music, together with the BBC Philharmonic under the leading of Juanjo Mena has received glowing reviews internationally.

Norbakken has performed at the Sydney Opera House, the Tokyo Opera City Concert Hall, at the Cincinnati May Festival as well as in several programs touring throughout Europe.

As a research fellow through The Norwegian Artistic Research Program, she has worked closely with the Swedish composer Karin Rehnqvist.

"*Carrying all of this emotional weight was soprano Berit Norbakken, whose rendition of each song was astonishingly gorgeous, making them deeply moving. Nowhere more so than in the third of the songs, 'Perfume of the instant', its enraptured, intimate sensuality practically inducing the sensation of wafts of fragrance in the concert hall. Throughout the work, Solset made the music marvellously tactile, her voice seemingly communicating to each one of us in the audience personally. I can honestly say that if this was the last performance I ever heard, I would have died perfectly happily. Amazing.*"

(Simon Cummings (5:4) after listening to Kaija Saariaho's *Quatre Instants* at Nordic Music Days in Bodø, November 2019.)

"*...Two vocal works are included: the cantata "Herminie" and "Air de l'Opéra Médée" The 15- minute cantata is, quite simply, a masterwork of vocal writing. It hints at what the operatic world lost with Arriaga's early death, Soprano Berit Norbakken Solset sings with a clear, pure tone that continually delights. Her delivery reinforces the stylistic similarities between Arriaga and Mozart...*"

(Charlottesvilleclassical.org/Chandos/Arriaga/ BBC Philharmonic/Juanjo Mena, 2018)

"...and so wonderfully performed, and the fabulous soprano, Berit Norbakken, who has exactly the right blend of straightness, so you can hear every note, but when she decides to open up, it s just fabulous, for me, it s got everything..."

(BBC Radio 3, about her recording of *Ave Maria* / Fartein Valen (Refractions, 2013, BIS Records)

Arctic Philharmonic

The Arctic Philharmonic is the world's northernmost professional orchestra. With its strong sense of belonging to its home, north of the Arctic Circle, the orchestra is committed to conveying knowledge about life and conditions in the Arctic. The orchestra is, moreover, the youngest in Norway, and is organized in a unique way: it comprises a sinfonietta in Bodø and a chamber orchestra in Tromsø, each playing weekly concerts in their hometowns. Eight to ten times a year, the two ensembles join forces for larger symphony and opera productions. This arrangement has been judged extremely successful on several fronts: flexibility, use of resources, and most importantly, in terms of quality and the audience experience. Each year the orchestra performs between 200 and 250 concerts at home and abroad.

In addition to its continuous striving to attain ever higher artistic standards, the Arctic Philharmonic is determined to fulfil its obligation to be a relevant part of life in heart of Sápmi, the region traditionally inhabited by Sami people. An important mission for the orchestra is therefore to promote understanding and knowledge of Sami culture and traditions. Highlighting the challenges faced by the whole world due to climate change is also an important task. These challenges reveal themselves with greater speed and consequence in the Arctic, where literally, the health of the world has it's temperature taken.

Henning Kraggerud

Norwegian violinist Henning Kraggerud is artistic leader of the chamber orchestra of the Arctic Philharmonic. His teaching and educational writings show his multifaceted approach to music-making, while his composing, arranging, and improvising recall the likes of Josef Suk and Eugène Ysaÿe.

His eminence as a soloist and play-director have led to invitations to many of the world's most significant orchestras, including the Royal Danish Opera, Vancouver Symphony, Deutsche Kammerakademie Neuss, Toronto Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, Danish National Symphony, Tonkünstler Vienna, BBC Scottish Symphony, and Tasmanian Symphony orchestras. Highlights of past seasons include appearances at the BBC Proms, with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra at the Hollywood Bowl, and the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra at Carnegie Hall.

Kraggerud has released several recordings with the Arctic Philharmonic, including the album Equinox which was his first album release consisting entirely of his own compositions. Since then, the artistic partnership has resulted in three more albums, including the critically acclaimed Between the Seasons.

He plays on a 1744 Guarneri del Gesù, provided by Dextra Musica AS, a subsidiary of Sparebankstiftelsen DNB.

Evening Hymn

1. Verso già l'alma **05:10**
   Georg Friedrich Händel
2. Ah ch'infelice sempre **05:25**
   Antonio Vivaldi
3. O Death rock me asleep **04:16**
   Anon
4. The plaint—O let me weep **07:29**
   Henry Purcell
5. Folle e ben **03:14**
   Tarquinio Merula
6. Quel sguardo sdegnosetto **02:15**
   Claudio Monteverdi
7. Ego flos campi **03:21**
   Claudio Monteverdi
8. Canzonetta spirituale sopra alla nanna **08:16**
   Tarquinio Merula
9. An Evening Hymn **04:33**
   Henry Purcell
10. Sonno, se pur sei sonno **02:23**
    Antonio Vivaldi
11. Piangerò la sorte mia **05:46**
    Georg Friedrich Händel
12. Thy hand, Belinda —When I am laid **04:56**
    Henry Purcell

RECORDED IN
GRØNNÅSEN CHURCH, TROMSØ,
17. – 20. OCTOBER 2023

PRODUCER:
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EDITING:
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MASTERING:
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BOOKLET NOTES:
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TRANSLATION LYRICS:
VERBOO LANGUAGE SERVICES
BOOKLET EDITOR:
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COVER DESIGN:
ANNA-JULIA GRANBERG / BLUNDERBUSS
COVER PHOTO:
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LWC1372 NOEHX2507010-130
7 090020 183442