

EDVARD  
FLIFLET BRÆIN  
CHAMBER WORKS



# EDVARD FLIFLET BRÆIN

Edvard Fliflet Bræin would have turned 100 years old in 2024. The composer spent most of his life in Oslo, but left his composing mark and signature on the city of Kristiansund, where he was born. This recording is considered a contribution to this anniversary.

Edvard Fliflet Bræin (1924–1976) was born into a family of musicians spanning several generations, continuing to this day with clarinetist Hans Christian Bræin and his daughter, soprano Ditte Marie Bræin. They both take part in this recording. The family includes instrumentalists, folk musicians, music teachers, and composers who have expressed themselves in a range of musical genres. This approach to music likely shaped Bræin, giving him a practical, musicianly relationship with both music and performance. And not to mention, with the art of composing. He was a gifted musical craftsman. In his history of music, Niels Grinde describes Bræin as ‘a musically active composer with a solid command of compositional technique.’ He also added that Bræin is free from ‘burdensome musicality’ and ‘philosophical or epic content that could overshadow the vitality of the musical expression.’

Most would likely agree with this view, although it does not fully apply to works like the opera *Anne Pedersdotter* and *Symphony no. 2*, which are works that – alongside his two other symphonies and the opera

*Den Stundesløse* – are considered the most important in his production.

Generally, Bræin’s music could be described as driven by melody. The harmonic character supports and colours the melodies. It never asserts itself as an independent sound texture. He probably wished for the music to tell a story through its melodies which are singable and easy for the listener to grasp. Making the musical elements come to life was a key focus for Bræin, based on a view of music where the music itself plays the main role, rather than being a means to express something beyond the music. It is therefore no accident that many of his compositions have neutral titles like *Concertino*, *Capriccio* and *Serenade*. It is also no accident that the piece titled *Divertimento* is part of this recording.

This tendency towards a musicianly approach has led to Bræin being categorised as a neoclassical composer in Norwegian music history. Partly because he sought clarity and balance in his compositions. He sought to make music comprehensible and simple, without making it trivial. And it was implied: the music should be tonally rooted. As such, he was partly in opposition to composers who were more inclined towards modernism in Norway, like Arne Nordheim and Finn Mortensen. Bræin also studied in Paris, the capital of Neoclassicism, in 1950 and 1951. Before he moved to Paris, he passed an organist examination at the Oslo Conservatory of Music in 1943, and he completed studies to become a composer with Bjarne Brustad, in addition to orchestra conduction with Odd Grüner-Hegge. Therefore, the

main purpose of his stay in Paris was to improve and perfect his already mastered technique of composing. It has also been said, in an apt and short way, that Bræin ‘was a neoclassic by nature’. (Elef Nesheim and Nils E. Bjerkestrand.)

This recording contains chamber music, songs and piano pieces by Bræin. Included are opus 1, *The Merry Musicians*, from 1947; opus 3, *Fire Aukrustsanger*, from 1948; opus 7, *Bånsull and Scherzo*, from 1953; and opus 13, *Divertimento*, from 1962. *Song in Twilight* from 1969, the piano piece *Caprice* and the song *A Tear* are also included, all without opus numbers and the last two lacking composition years.

Listening to *The Merry Musicians* on clarinet, violin, viola, and cello, with the subtitle *Serenade*, means entering the lively musical world of Bræin. We are met with a composer who is able to elegantly weave the musical themes between the four instruments in the fast outer movements, while the slow middle movement showcases Bræin’s ability to write slow, singable melodies with a melancholic undertone. The sound of the clarinet may be responsible for the clear sense of melancholy. No instrument sounds more melancholic than a slowly played clarinet. It is as if the clarinet has a certain character, which I like to believe all instruments have. When *Serenade* blossoms into the Italian sera, meaning evening, there can be no doubt that the slow movement of *The Merry Men* is evening music.

*Divertimento* – also for clarinet, violin, viola and cello – definitely exists within Bræin’s musicianly universe. *Divertimento*

(Italian: entertainment, amusement) is a form of composition based on chamber music, with an unnumbered amount of movements meant to entertain both listeners and musicians. It held a strong position in Classicism, with composers like Wolfgang A. Mozart, Joseph Haydn and Luigi Boccherini. It is no wonder that Bræin, with his neoclassic nature, used this form of composition. He had this in common with several other composers in the 20th century, like Igor Stravinskij and Béla Bartók.

And this music is quite entertaining, emerging from a musical score that invites both the musicians to play with joy and the listeners to enjoy the experience. The themes are, once again, singable and performed at a lively pace. The exception here is the slower part in the middle of the second movement, where the melancholic sound of the clarinet creates a contrast to the musicianly drive. What is also striking is the sense the listener gets, as if the music is being created during the performance itself. This may be due to the fact that Bræin was an intuitive composer. He never committed to one distinct format, as the conductor Peter Szilvay pointed out. This is particularly noticeable in the first movement, where the singable theme that unfolds in the middle of the movement is hinted at in the opening. This creates the impression that the musicians are searching for a beautiful melody – one they gradually discover as they play. As a result, the music feels spontaneous, which is often considered a hallmark of true musicality.

As Bræin was an inventive melodist, it comes as no surprise that he wrote many

songs. About thirty pieces were written for voice and piano. His most famous song is *Towards the Sea*, with lyrics by Henrik Straumsheim. It was originally part of the cantata *The Western Sea*, but there are also versions for voice and piano, in addition to several other versions. It is best known today in its orchestral version.

Some of the songs he composed, he liked to call folk songs. It is not surprising that Bræin spoke of folk songs. Folk songs are simpler and more down-to-earth than what is referred to as *romanse* in Norwegian, which is a type of ballad. Their form is strophic, meaning the same melody is used for every verse. The romance typically features a more intricate accompaniment than the folk song and often demands a trained voice. In terms of form, it slightly exceeds the strict strophic structure, though many romances follow this simple form. The romance is equivalent to what is known as *Lied* in German, as it was developed in the 19th century. Bræin's songs on this recording are classified as romances. The poems he composed music to were all in fixed form. It is therefore not surprising that the lyricist Bræin set to music most often was Einar Skjæraasen. He also composed music for works by Olav Aukrust and Trygde Bjerkrheim. All three are represented on this recording.

These romances are about fundamental existential emotions like grief and joy, often viewed through nature. But one cannot deny that there is a certain melancholic property to these poems, which obviously struck a compositional chord with Bræin. Akrust's *Morning* is most likely the excep-

tion, in which day triumphs over night. At any rate, the romance concludes with the line 'now hum, now thunder life's own harp strings!' These songs otherwise appear like typical romances, as the melody and piano accompaniment largely contribute to interpreting the text. For Bræin, communicating the poem is crucial. Therefore, he does not rearrange the lines of the verses, even though some words are repeated.

Most of the romances on this recording follow what is known as varied strophic form. This entails that a single verse receives new music, often to highlight the climax of the poem, as seen in "A Naked Branch" and "I Wonder". A romance such as "Solitary" is considered to be through-composed, as it closely follows the text with little musical repetition. The soprano repeats 'and pray in faith' and rises to a high note. This is no longer the art of folk songs, but the art of romances. "Song in Twilight" has a clear three-part structure, where the first part of the poem is repeated after the middle section, which serves as a minor contrast. In all, these romances appear clear and structurally secure.

The piano was Bræin's second main instrument, next to the organ. He also composed at the piano. His familiarity with the piano is expressed through the three piano pieces on this recording. In my opinion, they also show a different side of Bræin, especially compared with his romances. He appears to be composing another side of himself; allowing himself to let go of the melancholy. Of course, the absence of text has something to do with it. But the quick tempos and the resounding discords

– which here do not signify pain, as they often do – indicate cheerfulness.

Like in *Scherzo* – which was defined as a character piece during the 19th century – a shorter piano composition often intended to express a particular mood. And here, a cheerful mood, yes; an almost playful mood, as *scherzo* does mean jest in Italian. The same applies to *Caprice*, a French translation of the Italian word *capriccio*, a piece in free form, where cunning also plays a part. Both piano forms were cultivated during the Romantic era by composers like Chopin and Brahms. The piece *Lullaby* from Surnadal is classified as such a character piece, alongside Grieg's Lyrical pieces. The piece, originally a lullaby hummed to small children, can be considered a continuation of Grieg's development of Norwegian folk music.

EI NAKI GREIN /  
*A NAKED BRANCH*  
(Olav Aukrust)

Ei naki grein med blodraud bær  
og ei som bladrik blømer,  
på kvar sin måte fagre er  
for den som kjærleg dømer.

Den eine gjev sin ange, ho,  
der ljuv ho ligg og blømer.  
Den andre gjev sitt hjarteblod  
når lauv for haustvind rømer.

Den eine skin og strålar, ho,  
den andre brenn og mognar  
og gjev til sist sitt hjarteblod;  
der tung av bær ho bognar.

Eg gav deg den med blomar på.  
Eg gjev deg den med bæri.  
Kven rikast er vil du få sjå  
litt lenger fram på ferdi.

*A naked branch with blood-red fruit  
one lush with leaves in bloom,  
each in its way is fair and true  
to hearts that lovingly assume.*

*One gives her scent with gentle grace,  
while basking in the sun.  
The other bleeds its crimson juice  
when autumn's winds have come.*

*One glows and shimmers in the light,  
the other ripens deep  
and offers all its burning heart;  
when bowed with berries steep.*

*I gave the branch that sweetly bloomed.  
I give the one grown red.  
You'll find out which one held the most  
a little way ahead.*

EG UNDRAST /  
*I WONDER*  
(Olav Aukrust)

Eg undrast på um den som sjølv  
sit glad og varm og raud,  
hev hugen djup og hjarta for  
eit rop i høgste naud.

Ei medels sorg, ei høveleg,  
ei mild ei og med måte,  
ho gjer då hjarta berre godt,  
det gjer so godt få gråte.

Di ljuvar vert det etterpå.  
Ein turkar tår av kinn –  
og blank og fjåg som aldri fyrr  
til gleda går ein inn.

Den gjerdi er så gamall, ho,  
og du – du er so ung ...  
Og verdi er så fager, ho, –  
og sorgi er so tung.

*I wonder if the one who sits  
so warm, content, and bright,  
still holds a heart that deeply hears  
a cry from darkest night.*

*A sorrow true, and softly cast,  
a pain that's slow and kind,  
she soothes the ache within the heart,  
and lets the tears unwind.*

*It feels much lighter once it's past.  
You wipe your tears away –  
then wide-eyed, calm, and strangely glad  
you meet the world, new day.*

*This ache has stood through endless years,  
but you – you are so young...  
The world is bright, the path is clear, –  
yet grief still calls you home.*



MORGON /  
*MORNING*  
(Olav Aukrust)

No tandrar dag, no tindrar blom,  
sjå alle småe altarjos er tende!  
Ja stjerna drygde bleik til bruri kom,  
og natti neig, og myrkret fekk ein ende.

God natt mi sorg, og enn ein gong:  
Gud signe deg, og takk for denne gongen.  
Eg grøtte deg so mang ein einsleg gong,  
men du er trufast mi som fyrste gongen.

Det drygde ut: men dagen vann,  
sjå kvite skoddi stryk frå glitretinden!  
Og himmelelden glor i austerland,  
soleia glitrar gul i morgonvinden.

God morgon sol og signa dag!  
God natt mi sorg og vel møtt neste gongen.  
Velkomi att med kvite vengjeslag,  
kom sorg, kom sæl, og syng den nye songen!

Guds nåde er kvar morgon ny,  
stig høgt min hug på stride, strake vengjer.  
Sjå himmelbruri bryt den svarte sky,  
no brår, no brusar livsens harpestrengjer!

*Now dawn is bright, now flowers gleam,  
see every tiny altar flame is glowing!  
The star grew pale within its dream,  
until the bride arrived, the night was going.*

*Good night my grief, once more, farewell:  
God bless you now, and thank you for your staying.  
So many times I knew your spell,  
but still you're mine, as true as that first swaying.*

*It lingered long: but light broke through,  
see white fog trailing from glittering mountains!  
And heaven's fire glows bright and new,  
the buttercups shine gold in morning's first breeze.*

*Good morning sun and blessed day!  
Good night, my sorrow – until we meet again.  
Come back on wings of soft, white spray,  
come grief, come joy, and sing the song still burning!*

*God's mercy wakes with morning's hue,  
rise high, my soul, on strong and fearless motion.  
Behold the bride tears the dark in two,  
now hum, now thunder life's own harp strings!*

EINSLEG /  
*SOLITARY*  
(Olav Aukrust)

Når det er audt i sinnet,  
Når det er ingi gleda meir  
Og minni sit der inne  
Ved tome gløymde reir

Når sorg av saknad grøtest  
Og bed for seg og sig i kne,  
Når von av otte møtest  
Som søkjer allting ned

I myrkje djup av gråt og gru  
Og bryt den siste bivrand bru  
Då ver hjå meg,  
Då bed for meg um tru!

*When thoughts are dry and hollow,  
When joy has lost its light  
And memories slowly follow  
To nests swept out of sight*

*When longing turns to pleading  
And folds its hands in pain,  
When hope gives way to heeding  
A fear that falls like rain*

*When tears in silence gather  
Where trembling bridges fall  
Then stay with me,  
And pray in faith through all!*

SANG I SKUMRING /  
*SONG IN TWILIGHT*  
(Einar Skjæraasen)

Nå lukkes dør, nå stenges grind,  
og skumring faller på,  
og kvelden slår sitt myke spinn  
om skog og blomst og strå.  
To hender hviler i et fang,  
men tanken har så lang, så lang  
en vei å gå.

Den stille time kommer nær  
og ånder på din ild.  
Din fred er en å holde kjær  
og lene hodet til.  
Nå skrider sol mot vest og glar,  
men ingen vet hvor sorgen drar  
og hva den vil.

*Now doors are closed, and gates are shut,  
and twilight starts to fall,  
the evening spins its gentle thread  
around the trees and all.  
Two hands rest softly in a lap,  
but thought has such a long, a long  
road to go.*

*The quiet hour draws near and deep  
and stirs your heart to light.  
Your peace is found in those who keep  
your soul through darkest night.  
Now the sun sinks in the west,  
but none can tell where sorrow rests  
or what it wants.*

EI TÅRA /  
*A TEAR*  
(Trygve Bjerkrheim)

Ei tåra eg såg på eit eplekinn  
ein haustkveld so kyrr og klår.  
Kvi græt du i dag, vesle venen min,  
når andre med solsmil står?

Det svara meg ikkje, men tåra brann  
i sorgmod den skire kveld.  
Då såg eg på treet, og løysing fann,  
so fekk eg då svaret lell.

Då skjøna eg grant: det var siste gong  
den busken sin alde bar.  
Det skulle 'kje meir høyra livsens song:  
for sjukt det til døden var.

So lite var lauvet, og tynt og rart,  
og epli var få og små.  
Men tåra på kinni, ho skein so bjart,  
og kvifor? eg veit det no.

*I saw a tear on an apple's cheek  
one quiet autumn night.  
Why do you cry, my child, I spoke,  
when all the world feels right?*

*It gave no word, yet still it burned  
that tear in silent grace.  
In sorrow soft the moment turned,  
a question on its face.*

*I looked upon the tree nearby  
and saw the answer there.  
Its time had come to say goodbye:  
its branches growing bare.*

*So small the leaves, so thin and strange,  
and few the apples hung.  
But oh, that tear, how bright it shone,  
and now I know why it clung.*



## DITTE MARIE BRÆIN

Soprano Ditte Marie Bræin (1985) received her education from the Norwegian Academy of Music. She is among the most active concert singers in Norway and is also a sought-after ensemble singer. Ditte has gained extensive experience and a deep love for the church music repertoire through regular performances with most of the country's symphony orchestras and cathedral choirs. She frequently performs in chamber music settings and with renowned early music and contemporary ensembles both nationally and internationally.

Ditte has contributed to numerous critically acclaimed CD recordings and has participated in the premieres of many newly composed works. She is the daughter of Hans Christian Bræin and the granddaughter of Edvard Fliflet Bræin.

For more information:  
[www.artefact.no](http://www.artefact.no) / [www.ditte.no](http://www.ditte.no)



## HANS CHRISTIAN BRÆIN

Hans Christian Bræin is a clarinetist with a long and impressive career. He was the alternating principal clarinetist in the Oslo Philharmonic from 1974 to 1980, and again from 1993 to 1995. Bræin was also a member of the Esbjerg Ensemble in Denmark from 1980 to 1989. From 1989 until he reached retirement age in 2013, he was an associate professor and later a professor at the Norwegian Academy of Music.

He has been the principal clarinetist in the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra, Oslo

Sinfonietta, and Cikada, and has participated as a soloist and chamber musician at various festivals, including Risør, Stavanger, and Bergen, as well as international festivals in Europe and America. Bræin has released several recordings, including all the chamber music for clarinet by Johannes Brahms.

Although he is now retired, he still performs concerts in various settings. Bræin is the son of the composer Edvard Fiflet Bræin





## OLE CHRISTIAN HAAGENRUD

Ole Christian Haagenrud (1989) is one of the most sought-after young pianists in Norway. He holds a diploma from the Norwegian Academy of Music, where he studied under Professors Jens Harald Bratlie and Håvard Gimse. In 2014, he made his debut concert at the University Aula, and in the same year, he was awarded the prestigious Robert Levin Festival Prize. In 2017, he was granted a place in Talent Norway's new major initiative, ArtEx (Artist in Excellence).

Ole Christian is a highly demanded chamber musician and accompanist, and he regularly performs at major festivals in Norway and abroad. He already has a long list of accolades and awards for his performances. Solo engagements with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, the Norwegian Radio Orchestra, and the Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra, as well as performances at renowned venues such as the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Brahms Saal in the Musikverein in Vienna, the JF Kennedy Center in Washington DC, and the Shanghai Concert Hall, are some of the highlights of his career.



## SSENS TRIO

Ssens Trio (pronounced 'Essence') was established in 2014 by three experienced musicians. They have performed with notable artists such as Geir Inge Lotsberg, Eivind Ringstad, Håvard Gimse, and Leif Ove Andsnes. Their debut CD, *Beethoven: String Trios Op. 3 & 8* (LAWO Classics), won Pizzicato Magazine's "Supersonic Award" and was nominated for the ICMA Awards in 2018. Fanfare Magazine praised it highly, and Pizzicato Magazine highlighted their joyful and intimate performance.

In 2019, they released a CD featuring music by W. A. Mozart, which received excellent reviews and was nominated for the Opus Klassik Award and the ICMA in 2020. This recording has over 4 million streams and more than 15,000 monthly listeners.

Their 2022 CD, *Ricercare* (LWC1238), includes works by Johan Kvandal, Finn Mortensen, Edvard Fliflet Bræin, and Bertil Palmar Johansen. It received glowing reviews in Gramophone, The Strad, and Pizzicato Magazine, among others, and was nominated for the ICMA Awards and Opus Klassik in 2023.

Ssens Trio is supported by the Norwegian Arts Council and the Bergesen Foundation.



EDVARD  
FLIFLET BRÆIN  
(1924-1976):

- De glade musikanter Op. 1**  
01. Serenade — 03:54  
02. Adagio cantabile — 04:45  
03. Lento-Allegro — 04:14

- Fire sanger til dikt  
av Olav Aukrust Op. 3**  
04. Ei naki grein — 02:38  
05. Eg undrast — 02:26  
06. Morgon — 02:33  
07. Einsleg — 02:02  
08. Bånsull fra Surnadal  
Op. 7 No. 1 — 01:19

09. Scherzo Op. 7 No. 2 — 04:19

10. Sang i skumring — 02:45  
11. Ei tåra — 03:09  
12. Caprice — 03:05

- Divertimento for klarinett, fiolin,  
bratsj og cello Op. 13**  
13. Allegro moderato — 04:54  
14. Allegretto scherzando — 04:46  
15. Allegro vivace - 04:08

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04, 05, 06, 07, 08, 10, 11

HANS CHRISTIAN BRÆIN, CLARINET:  
01, 02, 03, 13, 14, 15

OLE CHRISTIAN HAAGENRUD, PIANO:  
04, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 11, 12

SSENS TRIO, STRING TRIO:  
01, 02, 03, 13, 14, 15

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