

Bo Holten
The Emperor's
New Clothes
Oboe Concerto
Songs of Dusk

Bo Holten (b. 1948)

Odense Symphony Orchestra conducted by Bo Holten

World premiere recordings

Kejserens nye klæder (The Emperor's New Clothes) (2004) 23:32

A concert opera for tenor, baritone, choir of upper voices and orchestra

Libretto by Eva Sommestad Holten

Gert Henning-Jensen, tenor / Palle Knudsen, baritone

Vocal Ensemble Musica Ficta

- 1 *Kejseren i klædeskabet* (The Emperor in the dressing room) 3:17
- 2 *Bedragerne kommer til byen* (The Swindlers come to town) 3:44
- 3 *Væven går, hænderne danser!* (Weaving – shuttles flying!) 2:06
- 4 *Kejseren sender embedsmænd til at inspicere tøjet*
(The Emperor sends officials to inspect the cloth) 3:46
- 5 *Kejseren vil selv se tøjet*
(The Emperor wants to see the clothes for himself) 3:26
- 6 *Klæder bliver syet og kejseren bliver klædt på*
(Clothes are sewn and the Emperor is dressed) 4:21
- 7 *Den store procession* (The great procession) 2:52

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Oboe Concerto, <i>Il Romanesco</i> (1995)	28:14
<i>In one movement. For oboe and orchestra</i>	
Max Artved, oboe	
8 Passacaglia	5:30
9 Tarantella I	2:44
10 Cadenza	3:51
11 Tarantella II	4:04
12 Romanza	6:24
13 Tranquillo	5:41

Tusmørkets viser (Songs of Dusk) (1987)	26:00
<i>A song cycle for soprano, bassoon and orchestra</i>	
<i>Poems by Sophus Claussen</i>	
Christine Nonbo Andersen, soprano / Morten Østergaard, bassoon	
14 <i>I Vaaren</i> (In spring)	4:26
15 <i>Nocturne</i>	4:24
16 <i>Kavallérsorger</i> (Cavalier worries)	3:01
17 <i>Maanens Tungsind</i> (Spleen of the moon)	3:30
18 <i>Du som en lille Kattekillling er ...</i> (You are like a little kitten ...)	1:03
19 <i>Sagtelig ...</i> (Quietly ...)	3:30
20 <i>Kærlighed</i> (Love)	1:14
21 <i>Vaarsang ved Jul</i> (Spring song at Christmas)	4:52
	Total 77:47

Stories told and untold

by Andrew Mellor

With nine operas in his catalogue, Bo Holten is the most prolific living composer of lyric theatre in Denmark and among the most prolific the country has ever known. He is a practising musician as well as a writing one, who founded two of his country's most distinguished independent vocal consorts, spent 16 seasons on the conducting staff of the BBC Singers in London and has conducted all of Denmark's symphony orchestras, often in his own music. He is adamant that a composer's place is as much among performing musicians as it is in front of the blank sheets of unfilled manuscript paper. But his most partisan stance has concerned the fundamentals of musical language.

In a torrid time for tonality, Holten has been one of its most passionate advocates, likening composing without tonal harmony to 'painting without colour.'

Holten's musical foundation stones range from jazz to polyphony. In training himself to compose, he made an orchestration of Carl Nielsen's organ monolith *Commotio* that became an established test piece in Denmark; the idea of biological survival in the face of overwhelming darkness is a theme in Holten's music as much as in Nielsen's (both share an impish sense of humour, too). Holten returns, in conversation as well as in his music, to the fundamental beauty of simple musical ingredients – intervals, tunes, common rhythmic and harmonic devices. Seasoned with his own colourful imagination and acute response to

text, those elements lie at the heart of his works.

The Emperor's New Clothes (2004)

In 2004, Holten was commissioned to write a new score for the bicentenary of Danish writer Hans Christian Andersen's birth the following year. He opted to set Andersen's story of *The Emperor's New Clothes*, 'because the relevance of this story is so strong that I always wondered why nobody had done it before – not successfully anyway.' With librettist Eva Sommestad Holten drawing on Andersen's own words, he fashioned a 'concert opera' designed to be easily presentable by symphony orchestras with added choir and two male soloists. The score was first performed on 21 April 2005 by the symphony orchestra and girls' choir of the Danish Broadcasting

Corporation (DR) at their home in Copenhagen, conducted by the composer.

At the heart of Andersen's story is the deception of the swindlers who fashion the invisible clothes, as well as the delusion of the Emperor and his blindly adoring people. Holten emphasises the former by having one male singer take the parts of both masquerading craftsmen, singing in tenor and baritone registers.

The Emperor is sung by a separate baritone who also narrates, while the ladies' choir, divided into three, acts as commentator and onlooker (here, the three parts are taken by a small ensemble of adult singers).

The story moves at a pace, but each scene has its dramatic crux, underlined by a score written intentionally 'in a style that can be understood by anyone, even

children.' The music is full of narrative detail but signals the central transition, in which the deception of the story starts to make itself felt, with a more fundamental shift in mood. Along the way, there are plenty of skilful pastiches – Ravelian in style when the tenor swindler protests his pre-eminence in French, and of an American minimalist lineage when the imaginary looms begin to turn.

Minimalism is referenced at the very end of the work too after the child of Andersen's story shouts out that the Emperor 'has no clothes on.' While the orchestra *en masse* plays a posturing march, a faction of musicians begins to speed up in a gesture Holten compares to Steve Reich's phasing techniques. 'The idea is that the Emperor's brain actually splits at this point. He is more or less exploding and with that, and the riot of the people,

everything goes bananas,' he explains. The effect could also be compared to the absurdity of oppression conveyed, in a similarly militaristic style, by Dmitri Shostakovich.

Oboe Concerto (1995)

Holten has scored some of the most iconic films in Danish cinematographic history including Lars von Trier's *Forbrydelsens element* (The Element of Crime, 1984) and Bille August's *Tro, håb og kærlighed* (Truth, Hope and Love, 1984). When working on August pictures in the 1980s, Holten became intrigued by the expressive cinematic power of the oboe, particularly that of Bjørn Carl Nielsen, who then occupied the principal oboe chair in the Danish National Symphony Orchestra. The concerto Holten wrote for Nielsen in 1994-95 is full of the lyricism that marked the oboist's playing out.

The bulk of the concerto was written in Rome and much of it is thematically linked to the city. The theme that opens the score on second violins and violas is a medieval Roman melody in the Dorian mode; the reel that takes root at the start of the second movement is an Italian *Tarantella* from the same period. It isn't just the musical material that is mined from the past. The piece includes a baroque-style passacaglia (music controlled by the looping repetition of a bass line implying certain harmonies) and eventually churns up something like a Lutheran chorale, which is mined by Holten for plenty of harmonic value.

In a *Molto lento* intermezzo shortly before the *Tranquillo* section towards the concerto's end, solo flute, clarinet, violin and viola join the oboe in a dreamy passage with a notable structure. Playing *ad*

libitum and very gently, those instruments offer versions of the concerto's main theme – itself founded on the consecutive spelling out of a perfect fourth, perfect fifth and major sixth from the same starting note – that reference moments in iconic scores by Händel ('Rejoice Greatly' from *Messiah*), Schumann ('Träumerei' from *Kinderszenen*) and Strauss ('Beim Schlafengehen' from *Four Last Songs*). 'The brain is pondering on this all-European, all-times theme that exists in every sphere,' explains the composer.

More fundamental is a persistent tonal argument between the major and minor modes that sets the tone of the work even up to its final bar when the music appears to have settled on a major third, until the soloist slips unsettlingly down into the minor. All this gives the concerto the feeling of a haunted pastoral to which we sense the horn

section holds vital secrets (two horns join in one of the concerto's cadenzas, while the oboe slides up and down in painful glissandos). 'It is the basic truth of being a human being,' says Holten; 'that comedy and tragedy are the front-side and back-side of everything. All of human life and animal life has to face this constantly, however privileged a life we lead.'

Songs of Dusk (1987)

After studying musicology at the University of Copenhagen, Holten trained as a bassoonist at the Royal Danish Academy of Music. In the mid-1980s, he was commissioned to write a bassoon concerto that he sketched at length, before concluding that the expressive possibilities of a bassoon concerto 'last around 8 minutes' and abandoning the project. At the same time, he was keen to write for a soprano he was

drawn to and decided to develop the unused sketches into a new song cycle for high, lyric soprano with obligato bassoon.

Another catalyst was a creative artist with whom Holten appears to be something of a kindred spirit. Sophus Claussen was a neo-romantic Danish poet whose birth and death occurred in the very same years as Carl Nielsen's. His poems combine the archaic with the modern, the expressionistic with the opaque and the flippant with the poignant. 'I find his poetry deeply moving but it is basically always about women and sex,' says Holten; 'however you read it there are enormous erotic leanings in there.'

In the score that sets eight Claussen poems, the bassoon represents the poet and the female voice the object of his sensual affection. That idea is encoded right

at the start, as the soprano sings a wordless reference to Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* and the bassoon responds immediately by recalling the opening high C and the downward peal of the solo that opens Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* (the gesture returns later on). It is, for Holten, 'the woman and the man: the inner violence and crudeness of the human mind on the one hand, and the eroticism of the poems and longing for eternal love on the other.'

The cycle takes the form of a continuous piece in which the songs are linked, 'a series of atmospheres with recurring themes,' in Holten's words. The eight poems take in absurdity, heartbreak and fleeting joy, sometimes at the same time – a vital attraction for the composer who states that 'the whole idea of all this stylistic variety is to mirror human life in the best sense.'

As in *The Emperor's New Clothes*, there is no lack of thematic or dramatic signposting.

The song 'Kærlighed' (Love) talks of the painful futility of abandoning to love but Holten sets it as an uptight neo-baroque dance, placing the tongue in the cheek. He sets the tale of Dingle-Dangle's wayward son 'like a pop song but with some refinement,' while the *moto perpetuo* feline tread of 'Du som en lille Kattekill er ...' (You are like a little kitten ...) manipulates the rhythmic emphasis of a Danish nursery rhyme by moving its tune a quaver to the left, across the bar line.

Those devices create depth and duality but elsewhere Holten gives it to us straight. He responds to the 'soft silk' of the snowy avenues in 'Maanens Tungsind' (Spleen of the moon) with dreamy impressionism and reptilian harmonies. Like the jazz-baroque ground bass of

‘Nocturne’, the love song ‘Sagtelig ...’ (Quietly ...) gets its gentle intimacy from the language of jazz, with ‘a sort of Bill Evans harmony.’ The emotional damage of ‘Vaarsang ved Jul’ (Spring song at Christmas) is writ large in Holten’s dusky, doleful setting that appears to sit on a knife-edge of tension as it contemplates life in the empty beauty of dusk with harmonies stripped bare. ‘It is a question mark,’ says Holten: ‘is there anything good coming or is all hope lost? Somehow, I have a little hope.’

Andrew Mellor is a journalist and critic with a particular interest in the culture and music of Denmark and the Nordic countries

Performers

Tenor **Gert Henning-Jensen** was educated at the Opera Academy in Copenhagen and Mozarteum Salzburg. Since then, he has been engaged as a lyric tenor at the Royal Danish Opera – today he sings in the world’s great opera houses and concert halls. He has performed at the Metropolitan Opera, Covent Garden, Staatsoper Berlin and the Opéra Bastille with conductors such as Bernard Haitink, Giuseppe Sinopoli, James Levine, and Richard Hickox.

Baritone **Palle Knudsen** became a member of the soloist ensemble at the Royal Danish Opera in 1999 where he saw great success in his first season performing as Papageno in Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*. Since then he has sung more than 25 different operas at the Royal

Danish Opera, in London, New York, Tel Aviv, Paris, and other opera houses around the world. Most recent and future engagements include Vaughan Williams’ *Dona nobis pacem* and Mahler’s *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* with Aarhus Symphony Orchestra, *Don Giovanni* at Israeli Opera, Tel Aviv as well as Marcello in *La bohème*, Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* and Sweeney in *Sweeney Todd* at the Royal Danish Opera.

Max Artved is a renowned solo-oboist and chamber musician. From 1991-2010 he was the principal oboist in the Danish National Symphony Orchestra. He has worked as a soloist in several contexts and toured most of the world with the Danish National Symphony Orchestra and recorded many essential symphonies, among these the collective symphonies

of Carl Nielsen, Beethoven and Mahler. Over the years, he has also recorded solo and chamber music for Naxos and Dacapo Records. Until 2018, he was for 14 years the artistic director of Diamant-Ensemblet, which was housed in the 'Black Diamond' at the Royal Library, Copenhagen. In 2009, he was appointed Professor of oboe and woodwinds at the Royal Danish Academy of Music.

The soprano **Christine Nonbo Andersen** graduated from the class of Margrete Enevold at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in 2014. She began her musical career in the Danish National Children's Choir, and until 2004 she sang in the Danish National Girls' Choir. As a soloist, she holds a comprehensive repertoire and moves with great authenticity from early music to productions of film music. She

specialises in Italian madrigal singing and is an experienced ensemble singer who, besides Vocal Ensemble Musica Ficta, sings in the baroque ensemble Barocca as well as a fulltime position at the Danish National Vocal Ensemble since 2016.

Morten Østergaard has been solo bassoonist in the Odense Symphony Orchestra since 1998. He trained with Erik Carstensen at the Carl Nielsen Academy of Music in Odense, and later at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm with Knut Sønstevold. He has been solo bassoonist with the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra and with the Malmö Opera. In 1996, Morten Østergaard won First Prize in the first international competition for bassoon quartets in Berlin as a member of the Stockholm Bassoon Quartet. Morten

Østergaard has been a soloist with the Odense Symphony Orchestra on several occasions and is a very active chamber musician. He also teaches at the South Jutland Academy of Music and the Danish Theatre School.

Vocal Ensemble Musica Ficta, based in Copenhagen, is a professional vocal ensemble, founded in 1996 by Bo Holten. With this ensemble, he has realised his vision of a highly flexible ensemble, where the classical Oxbridge early music ideal is combined with the warmth of the Scandinavian choral sound. On this recording, Vocal Ensemble Musica Ficta is made up solely of female voices: Ann-Christin Wesser Ingels, Louise Therkelsen Odgaard, Marianne Mailund Heuer, Eva Wöllinger-Bengtson, Hanne Marie le Fevre, and Sofia Thelin Edgren.

Odense Symphony Orchestra is one of Denmark's five regional orchestras. The orchestra was founded in 1946, but its roots go as far back as around 1800. From being a theatre orchestra that also played symphonic music, the orchestra today appears as a modern symphony orchestra with a high level of activity. The orchestra's repertoire has a wide range and covers everything from film concerts, chamber music, family concerts to the great symphonic works and opera, such as Richard Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. Odense Symphony Orchestra had 22 musicians at its founding but has grown to 73 permanent musicians over the years, from Denmark and all over the world. The orchestra performs around 100 concerts a year. The majority of the concerts take place in the Carl Nielsen Hall in Odense's Concert House, but the orchestra

tours throughout Denmark and the rest of the world.

Bo Holten is known for his work as both composer and conductor. He is especially known for his expertise in early vocal polyphony and his list of works comprises more than 100 pieces. He is the founder and the principal conductor of Vocal Ensemble Musica Ficta and has served as guest conductor for the BBC Singers. He was the principal conductor for the Flemish Radio Choir in Bruxelles until 2012. As a composer, Bo Holten has expressed himself successfully across the genre spectrum. However, he seems particularly interested in opera and vocal music. His operas, including *The Royal Physician's Visit* (2008) and *Gesualdo – Shadows* (2014) are some of the most acclaimed and performed Danish operas of recent times. His latest opera *Schlagt sie*

tot! about Luther and the Reformation premiered at Malmö Opera in 2019.

Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875) was a Danish writer who became world famous through his fairy tales, loved by adults and children alike. *The Emperor's New Clothes* is among the best known, along with *The Ugly Duckling* and *The Little Mermaid*. Andersen also influenced many English children's authors, including A.A. Milne and Beatrix Potter.

Eva Sommestad Holten (b. 1957) is a Swedish stage designer and librettist, whose dramatic texts are highly indebted to her deep insight into performance practice. She has worked on several large scale opera projects, including *Maria Paradis* (1999), *The Visit of The Royal Physician* (2008),

Gesualdo – Shadows (2014) and *Schlagt sie tot!* (2017).

Sophus Claussen (1865-1931) is one of the most important Danish poets of his age. Influenced by French Symbolism he spent much time in Paris and Italy as a freelance writer and painter. While seeking aesthetic perfection he tried, with his light rhythmical poetry, to transform impressions of the erotic dimension into visionary experiences.

Det sagte og det usagte

af Andrew Mellor

Med ni operaer på værklisten er Bo Holten den mest produktive nulevende danske komponist af musikteater og samtidig en af Danmarks mest produktive nogen-sinde. Foruden at være komponist er han tillige udøvende musiker og har blandt andet grundlagt to af landet mest markante uafhængige vokalgrupper, gennem 16 år været dirigent for BBC Singers i London og desuden dirigeret samtlige danske symfoniorkestre, ofte i sin egen musik. Han insisterer på, at komponistens plads ikke kun er foran tomme nodeark, der venter på at blive udfyldt, men i høj grad også ude blandt aktive musikere. Hans mest markante holdning har imidlertid med selve det musikalske

sprog at gøre. I en stormomsust tid for tonal musik har Holten været en af dens mest lidenskabelige fortalere og sammenlignet komposition uden tonale harmonier med “at male uden farver.”

Holtens musikalske baggrund spænder fra jazz til polyfoni. Som kompositionsøvelse for sig selv skabte han en orkesterudgave af Carl Nielsens monumentale orgelværk *Commotio*, der siden er blevet et etableret konkurrenceværk i Danmark; tanken om biologisk overlevelse over for et massivt mørke er da også et tema i både Holtens og i Nielsens musik (ligesom de har den underfundige humor til fælles). Såvel i samtale som i sin musik vender Holten gerne tilbage til den grundlæggende skønhed i enkle musikalske bestanddele – intervaller, melodier, enkle rytmiske og harmoniske

greb. Med hans egen farverige fantasi som krydderi og minutiøse lydhørhed over for tekster er det blevet de centrale grundelementer i hans værker.

Kejserens nye klæder (2004)

I 2004 fik Holten bestilling på et nyt værk i anledning af H.C. Andersens 200-års fødselsdag året efter. Han valgte at sætte Andersens eventyr *Kejserens nye klæder* i musik, “fordi historien er så stærk og vedkommende, at det altid har undret mig, at ingen tidligere har gjort det – i hvert fald ikke med succes.” Sammen med librettisten Eva Sommestad Holten skabte han ud fra Andersens egne ord en “koncertopera”, der skulle være let at fremføre for symfoniorkestre suppleret med kor og to mandlige solister. Værket blev uropført i DR Koncerthuset den 21. april 2005 af DR Symfoni-

orkestret og DR Pigechooret under komponistens ledelse.

Andersens historie kredser om dels svindlernes fupnummer med at sy usynligt tøj, dels vrangforestillingerne hos kejseren og hans blindt tilbedende folk. Holten fremhæver det første ved lade den ene sanger synge begge de falske håndværkere i henholdsvis tenor- og barytonregister. Kejseren bliver sunget af yderligere en baryton, der samtidig fungerer som fortæller, mens det trestemmige damekor fungerer som kommentator og tilskuer (hvor de tre stemmer overtages af en lille gruppe voksne sangere).

Historien bevæger sig hurtigt af sted, men samtidig har hver enkelt scene et dramatisk højdepunkt, som understreges af, at partituret bevidst er skrevet “i en stil, som alle kan forstå, også børn.” Musikken fortæller historien med et væld af detaljer, men markerer også den

afgørende forvandling, hvor bebrageriet begynder at kunne mærkes, med et mere grundlæggende stemningsskift. Samtidig er der raffinerede pasticher undervejs – når tenorsvindleren plæderer for sin overlegenhed på fransk, er det i Ravel-stil, og når den fiktive væv begynder at bevæge sig, klinger det af amerikansk minimalisme.

Også til allersidst i værket henlydes der til minimalismen, efter at barnet i Andersens historie har råbt, at kejseren “ikke har noget på.” Mens hovedparten af orkestret begynder at spille en demonstrativ march, skruer en fraktion af musikerne op for tempoet i en gestus, Holten sammenligner med Steve Reichs faseforskydnings-teknik. “Tanken er, at kejserens bevidsthed helt konkret spaltes på dette sted. Han eksploderer mere eller mindre, og derefter går det hele amok, da folket gør oprør,”

forklarer han. Virkningen kan også sammenlignes med Dmitrij Sjostakovitjs absurde skildringer af undertrykkelse i en tilsvarende militaristisk stil.

Obokonzert (1995)

Holten har skrevet musik til nogle af de mest ikoniske film i dansk filmhistorie, heriblandt Lars von Triers *Forbrydelsens element* (1984) og Bille Augusts *Tro, håb og kærlighed* (1984). Under arbejdet med musikken til film af August i 1980'erne blev Holten fascineret af oboens ekspressive filmiske kraft, i særdeleshed hos DR Symfoni-orkestrets daværende solooboist Bjørn Carl Nielsen. Den koncert, Holten i 1994-95 skrev til Bjørn Carl Nielsen, er gennemsyret af det lyriske udtryk som kendetegnede netop denne oboist.

Hovedparten af koncerten er skrevet i Rom, og meget af den

har tematisk forbindelse til byen. Åbningstemaet i andenvioliner og bratsch er en romersk middelaldermelodi i dorisk toneart, og dansen i begyndelsen af anden sats er en italiensk tarantel fra samme periode. Ikke kun det musikalske materiale er imidlertid hentet i fortiden. Stykket omfatter også en passacaglia i barokstil (hvor musikens grundlag er en fast gentaget basfigur med en særlig harmonisk logik) og munder ud i en form for protestantisk koral, hvorfra Holten henter rigeligt med harmonisk fylde.

I et intermezzo angivet *Molto lento* umiddelbart før *Tranquillo*-afsnittet tæt på koncertens afslutning slutter fløjte-, klarinet-, violin- og bratsch-solister sig til oboen i en drømmelignende passage med en bemærkelsesværdig opbygning. *Ad libitum* og helt stille præsenterer instrumenterne forskellige versioner af koncertens hovedtema – der er

baseret på henholdsvis en kvart, en kvint og en stor sekst ud fra samme grundtone og hentyder til ikoniske værker af Händel (*Rejoice Greatly* fra *Messias*), Schumann (*Träumerei* fra *Kinderszenen*) og Strauss (*Beim Schlafengehen* fra *Vier Letzte Lieder*). “Tankerne kredser om dette alment europæiske og tidløse tema, der findes i alle mulige sammenhænge,” forklarer komponisten.

Mere grundlæggende foregår der en vedvarende tonal diskussion mellem de dur- og moltonearter, som slår grundstemningen i værket an helt frem til den sidste takt, hvor musikken tilsyneladende har lagt sig fast på en stor tert, mens solisten med foruroligende effekt alligevel glider ned på en lille tert. Tilsammen giver det koncerten karakter af en spøgelsesagtig pastorage, hvor hornsektionen synes at ligge inde med vigtige hemmeligheder (i den ene af koncertens

kadencer slutter to horn sig til, mens oboen glider op og ned i smertefyldte glissader). “Det er den grundlæggende sandhed ved at være menneske,” siger Holten, “at komedie og tragedie er to sider af samme sag. Både som menneske og dyr konfronteres man med det overalt, uanset hvor privilegeret et liv vi lever.”

Tusmørkets viser (1987)

Efter at have læst musikvidenskab ved Københavns Universitet studerede Holten fagot ved Det Kongelige Danske Musikkonservatorium. I midten af 1980'erne fik han bestilling på en fagotkoncert og nåede at komponere omfattende skitser til den, før han kom frem til den konklusion, at de ekspressive muligheder i en fagotkoncert “ikke rækker længere end otte minutter”, og opgav projektet. I samme periode var han opsat på at skrive noget til

en sopran, han var fascineret af, og besluttede at udvikle de uudnyttede skitser til en ny sangcyklus for høj, lyrisk sopran med obligat fagot.

En anden inspirationskilde var en kunstner, som Holten tilsyneladende har en del til fælles med. Digteren Sophus Claussen blev født og døde præcis samme år som Carl Nielsen og forener i sine digte det arkaiske med det moderne, det ekspressionistiske med det dunkle og det flabede med det gribende. “Jeg oplever hans poesi som dybt bevægende, men grundlæggende drejer det sig altid om kvinder og sex,” siger Holten; “uanset hvordan man læser den, er der enorme erotiske strømninger i gang.”

I tonesætningen af otte af Clausens digte er fagotten repræsentant for digteren, mens kvindestemmen er genstanden for hans sensuelle betagelse. Denne idé er indlejret i musikken lige fra begyndelsen,

hvor sopranen synger en ordløs hentydning til Wagners *Tristan og Isolde*, og fagotten omgående svarer ved at mindes det indledende høje C og den nedadgående bevægelse i åbningssoloen fra Stravinskys *Vårofferet* (den samme gestus vender senere tilbage). For Holten er det “kvinden og manden: på den ene side menneskesindets iboende vold og grovhed, på den anden side digtenes erotik og længsel efter evig kærlighed.”

Sangkredsen udspiller sig som et sammenhængende forløb, hvor sangene bindes sammen som “en række stemninger med tilbagevendende temaer,” kalder Holten det selv. De otte digte omfatter absurditeter, hjertesorg og flygtig glæde, nogle gange samtidig – en afgørende kvalitet for komponisten, ifølge hvem “hele idéen med al denne stilistiske variation er at afspejle menneskelivet i bedste forstand.”

Ligesom i *Kejserens nye klæder* skorter det heller ikke på tematiske eller dramatiske signaler.

Sangen *Kærlighed* fortæller om det smertefuldt forgæves ved at hengive sig til kærligheden, men Holten tonesætter den som en stram, neobarok dans med et glimt i øjet. Historien i *Kavallérsorger* om Dingle-Dangles uregerlige søn gør han til “noget i retning af en popsang, blot lidt mere raffineret,” mens den katteagtige *moto perpetuo*-bevægelse i *Du som en lille Kattekillling er ...* manipulerer den rytmiske fremhævelse af et dansk børnerim ved at bevæge melodien en fjerdedel til venstre, det vil sige hen over taktstregen.

Sådanne greb skaber dybde og tvetydighed, mens Holten ved andre lejligheder stiller sig helt oprigtigt an. I *Maanens Tungsind* reagerer han på de sneklædte boulevarders “bløde silke” med en

drømmeagtig impressionisme og krybende harmonier. Ligesom den jazz-barokke basgang i *Nocturne* henter kærlighedssangen *Sagtelig ...* sin blide intimitet fra jazzens tonesprog med “en Bill Evans-lignende harmonik”. De sårede følelser i *Vaarsang ved Jul* rykkes helt frem i Holtens dystre, sørgmodige tonesætning, som tilsyneladende her befinder sig på en knivsæg af spændinger, sådan som den med helt nedbarberede harmonier funderer over tilværelsen i tusmørkets tomme skønhed. “Det er et spørgsmålstegn,” siger Holten: “Er noget godt på vej, eller er alt håb ude? På en eller anden måde håber jeg stadig en lille smule.”

Andrew Mellor er journalist og kritiker med særlig interesse for dansk og nordisk kultur og musik.

Medvirkende

Tenoren **Gert Henning-Jensen** er uddannet på Operaakademiet i København og på Mozarteum i Salzburg. Lige siden har han været lyrisk tenor ved Den Kongelige Opera i København. I dag synger han i verdens store operahuse og koncertsale. Han har optrådt på Metropolitan Operaen, Covent Garden, Staatsoper Berlin og Bastilleoperaen med dirigenter som Bernard Haitink, Guiseppe Sinopoli, James Levine og Richard Hickox.

Barytonen **Palle Knudsen** har siden 1999 været en del af solistensemblet på Den Kongelige Opera i København, hvor han i sin første sæson oplevede stor succes som Papageno i Mozarts *Tryllefløjten*. Siden da har han sunget flere end 25 forskellige operaer i Køben-

havn, London, New York, Tel Aviv, Paris og andre operahuse rundt om i verden. De seneste og fremtidige forpligtelser inkluderer bl.a. Vaughan Williams' *Dona nobis pacem* og Mahlers *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* med Aarhus Symfoniorkester, *Don Giovanni* ved Den Israelske Opera i Tel Aviv samt Marcello i *La bohème*, Sharpless i *Madame Butterfly* og Sweeney i *Sweeney Todd* på Operaen i København.

Max Artved er en anerkendt dansk solooboist og kammermusiker. Fra 1991-2010 var han 1. solooboist i DR Symfoniorkestret. Han har arbejdet som solist i adskillige sammenhænge og turneret i det meste af verden bl.a. med DR Symfoniorkestret, med hvem han har indspillet mange væsentlige symfonier, blandt disse, de samlede symfonier af Carl Nielsen,

Beethoven og Mahler. Han har gennem årene desuden indspillet solo- og kammermusik for Naxos og Dacapo Records. Frem til 2018 var han i 14 år kunstnerisk leder af DiamantEnsemblet, der havde til huse i Den Sorte Diamant som Det Kgl. Biblioteks husensemble. Han blev i 2009 udnævnt til obo og træblæserprofessor ved Det Kongelige Danske Musikkonservatorium.

Sopranen **Christine Nonbo Andersen** er uddannet hos Margrete Enevold ved Det Kongelige Danske Musikkonservatorium i 2014. Hun begyndte sin musikalske løbebane i DR Børnekoret og frem til 2004 sang hun i DR Pige-koret. Som solist spænder hun over et bredt repertoire fra den tidlige musik til produktioner af film-musik. Hun har specialiseret sig indenfor den italienske madrigal-sang og er en erfaren ensemble-

sanger, som ud over at synge i Vokalensemblet Musica Ficta er fastansat i DR Vokalensemblet. Hun dyrker desuden solosangen i barokensemblet Barocca og i andre førende ensembler i Danmark

Morten Østergaard har været solo-fagottist i Odense Symfoniorkester siden 1998. Han er uddannet hos Erik Carstensen på Det Fynske Musikkonservatorium og senere ved Kungliga Musikhögskolan i Stockholm hos Knut Sønstevold. Han har været tilknyttet som solo-fagottist i Sveriges Radios Symfoniorkester og Malmö Operaen. I 1996 vandt Morten Østergaard ved den første internationale konkurrence for fagotkvartet i Berlin 1. prisen som medlem af Stockholms Fagotkvartet. Morten Østergaard har ved flere lejligheder været solist med Odense Symfoniorkester og er en meget aktiv kammermusiker.

Han underviser desuden på Syddansk Musikkonservatorium og Skuespillerskole.

Vokalensemblet Musica Ficta er et professionelt dansk vokalensemble, dannet i 1996 af Bo Holten. Her har han realiseret sin vision om et fleksibelt og projektorienteret ensemble, hvor den virtuose ensemblesang i alle dens afskygninger står i centrum. Vokalensemblet Musica Ficta favner et meget bredt repertoire. Ensembles speciale er dog musikken fra middelalder og renæssance. På denne indspilning udgøres Vokalensemblet Musica Ficta af Ann-Christin Wesser Ingels, Louise Therkelsen Odgaard, Marianne Mailund Heuer, Eva Wöllinger-Bengtson, Hanne Marie le Fevre og Sofia Thelin Edgren.

Odense Symfoniorkester er et af Danmarks fem landsdelsorkestre.

Orkestret blev grundlagt i 1946, men dets rødder går helt tilbage til omkring år 1800. Orkestret, oprindeligt et teaterorkester, som også spillede symfonisk musik, fremstår i dag som et moderne symfoniorkester med et højt aktivitetsniveau. Odense Symfoniorkestrets repertoire er bredt og dækker over alt fra filmkoncerter, kammermusik, familiearrangementer til de store symfoniske værker og opera, blandt andet Richard Wagners *Nibelungens ring*. Odense Symfoniorkester havde ved grundlæggelsen 22 musikere, men er i årenes løb vokset støt og har nu 73 fastansatte medlemmer fra både Danmark og resten af verden. Orkestret giver årligt omkring 100 koncerter. Størstedelen af koncerterne foregår i Carl Nielsen Salen i Odense Koncerthus, men orkestret turnerer også i Danmark og resten af verden.

Bo Holten er anerkendt for sit arbejde både som komponist og dirigent med speciale inden for den tidlige vokalpolyfoni. Hans værkliste tæller mere end 100 værker. Bo Holten er stifter af og dirigent for det Vokalensemblet Musica Ficta og har også virket som gæstedirigent for BBC Singers. Han var chefdirigent for Det Flamske Radiokor i Bruxelles frem til 2012. Som komponist har Bo Holten haft succes med at udtrykke sig på tværs af genrer, dog med særligt fokus på opera og vokalmusik. Holtens operaer, deriblandt *Livlægens besøg* (2008) og *Gesualdo – Shadows* (2014), er blandt nogle af de mest roste og spillede danske operaer i nyere tid. Hans seneste opera *Schlagt sie tot!* om Luther og reformationen havde premiere på Malmö Opera i 2019.

H.C. Andersen (1805-1875) var en dansk forfatter, der blev verdens-

berømt for sine eventyr, elsket af både børn og voksne. *Kejserens nye klæder* er blandt de mest kendte sammen med *Den grimme ælling* og *Den lille havfrue*. H.C. Andersen påvirkede også mange engelske børnebogsforfattere, herunder A.A. Milne og Beatrix Potter.

Eva Sommestad Holten (f. 1957) er en svensk scenograf og librettist, hvis dramatiske tekster er tæt forbundet med hendes dybe indsigt i performance-praksis. Hun har arbejdet på adskillige store opera-produktioner, herunder *Maria Paradis* (1999), *Livlægens besøg* (2008), *Gesualdo – Shadows* (2014) og *Schlagt sie tot!* (2017).

Sophus Claussen (1865-1931) er en af sin tids vigtigste danske digtere. Han var påvirket af fransk symbolisme og tilbragte en stor del af sin tid i Paris og Italien som freelanceskribent og kunstmaler. På vej mod sit mål om æstetisk perfektion lykkedes det ham at omdanne det ubevidst erotiske, det sanselige til visionær, rytmisk letflydende poesi.

Kejserens nye klæder Libretto (2004)

En koncertopera frit efter H.C. Andersens eventyr.
Libretto af Eva Sommestad Holten.

Librettoen bygger på et fortællerteater-princip, hvor kor og to solister skifter mellem forskellige roller og fortælling.

1 KEJSEREN I KLÆDESKABET

For mange år siden levede en kejser, som holdt så uhyre meget af smukke, nye klæder, at han gav alle sine penge ud for ret at blive pyntet.

Hoffolk

Kejseren er i klædeskabet! Kejseren er i klædeskabet!

Ja, dér var kejseren!

The Emperor's New Clothes (2004)

A 'concert opera' freely adapted from the H.C. Andersen fairy tale.

Libretto and English singing translation by Eva Sommestad Holten

Singing translation available in English and Swedish

The libretto is based on the principles of storytelling theatre, where choir and two soloists switch between several characters and narration.

THE EMPEROR IN THE DRESSING ROOM

Many years ago, there was an Emperor so exceedingly fond of fancy new clothes, that he spent vast riches on royal robes.

Courtiers

The Emperor is in his dressing room! Look, he is in the dressing room!

Yes, here's the Emperor! Yes here!

Kejseren

Ahh! Så skønt, så dejligt! Sarte silkestoffer, atlask, brokade ... Se de stramme skørter, de gyngende sløjfer, de stivede kniplinger ... Se mig ... ! Se min figur! Det strammer, det gynger – se mig i spejlet! Det er den skønneste kunst at ret pynte den kongelige krop! Voilà!

Hoffolk

Er kejseren i rådet? Nej, han er i klædeskabet! Han er her! Tid til at se den næste kongelige kjole! Nyd jeres kejser, det er da en fornøjelse!

2 BEDRAGERNE KOMMER TIL BYEN

Men den dag, der var der kommet to bedragerer til kejserens by. Den første var den højeste, og han havde de fineste strømpebånd i sløjfer:

Bedrager 1

Deres Excellence! Min Kejser! Er der nogen højere dyd end dragtens perfektion, end kroppens fordampning til kunst og til skønhedens spejl? Hvad er mon større end at tale til Ånden gennem farve, form og duft?

Emperor

Ahh! ! What joy, what pleasure! Finest silk and satin, ribbon and laces ... Look, this fitted doublet, the fluttering ruffles, the swaying skirts and bows ... Ah, that's me ... ! That's me! This noble shape, the swinging, the swaying ... Look in the mirror! With taste adorning the Emperors body is truly a fine art. Voilà!

Courtiers

The Emperor is in council? No, he's in the dressing room! He is here! Time to behold the newest royal garment! Ah! Look at your Emperor! Ah! What a pleasure, what happiness!

THE SWINDLERS COME TO TOWN

But this day, this very moment, two true swindlers did enter the town. The first one was the stateliest, he was clad in the dainties of diamond-set blue garters:

Swindler 1

Imperial highness! My Emperor! Is there any higher virtue than the perfect fit, where bodies condense to fine art, to the mirror of grace? What could give more delight than pleasing the senses with colour, cut and scent?

Den anden havde lyserøde lommeklapper, og han talte fransk:

Bedrager 2

Monsieur l'Empereur! C'est la Beauté! La perfection de la réflexion ...

Kejseren

Se, to fremmede i vores fornøjelige lille by! Man siger at de forstår at væve det dejligste tøj – de smukkeste farver, de eventyrligste mønstre.

Bedrager 1

Og tøjet har den forunderlige kraft, at det bliver usynligt for den, der er utilladeligt dum, eller ikke duer til sit embede.

Kejserens interesse blev vakt:

Kejser

Tøjet bliver usynligt for den der ikke duer til sit embede. Så kan jeg kende de kloge fra de dumme!

The second one wore pocket flaps with scarlet buttons and he did speak French:

Swindler 2

Monsieur l'Empereur! C'est la Beauté! La perfection de la réflexion ...

Emperor

Look, two strangers who have come to our sweet and humble little town. It's said that they do know to weave the most delicate cloth, with beautiful colours, all set in marvellous patterns.

Swindler 1

And this same cloth has a truly magic pow'r, being all-invisible to those who are unsuitably stupid. or unworthy of their office.

The Emperor's attention was aroused:

Emperor

This will be invisible to those who are unfit for their office. Thus, I can tell the wise from the foolish.

Alle

*HVIS MAN ER DUM, KAN MAN IKKE SE, HVOR
ENESTÅENDE DENNE KUNST ER.*

Kejseren

Så kan vi kende de kloge fra de dumme. *(Til bedragerne:)* Det tøj må straks væves til mig! Straks!

Bedrager 1

Det koster ...

Bedrager 2

Très cher ...

Og Kejseren gav dem mange penge på hånden ...

Bedrager 2

Plus cher ...

... og de fik mere guld i poserne, meget guld i poserne.

Bedrager 1

Og vi små straks have det fineste silke, det prægtigste guld, perler, indigo og cochenil.

All

*IF YOU ARE STUPID YOU CANNOT SEE, HOW MOST
MAGNIFICENT THIS ART IS.*

Emperor

Thus, we can tell the wise from the foolish. *(To the swindlers)* I want this cloth woven for me! Now.

Swindler 1

It's costly ...

Swindler 2

Très cher ...

The Emperor gave them heaps of silver and gold ...

Swindler 2

Plus cher ...

... and he poured more gold in their pockets ...

Swindler 1

We must at once have the finest of silks and the most precious pearls, purple, indigo and cochineal.

Og kejseren rystede lidt på hånden, fordi det blev meget dyrt. Men da de to bedragere blev alene, lagde de alt i deres egne poser – det prægtigste guld, det fineste silke, perler, purpur, indigo og cochenil.

3 VÆVEN GÅR – HÆNDERNE DANSER!

Og de satte vævestolene op og lod som om de arbejdede. Og hvor var de flittige, hænderne dansede over væven!

Bedrager 2

Voilà! Eh bien!

Pif, pif, spolen går, dunk, dunk, bommen slår! Pif, dunk!

Og de arbejdede på de tomme væve langt ud på natten. Og alle i byen vidste, hvilken forunderlig kraft tøjet havde, og alle ville de se, hvor dårlig eller dum deres nabo var.

The hand of the Emperor trembled slightly, since this was a costly affair. But when the swindlers again were on their own, they did put everything in their own knapsacks; the most precious pearls, the finest of silks, gold, purple, indigo and cochineal.

WEAVING – SHUTTLES FLYING!

And with looms set up, how busily they pretended to be working! All night long so busily, busily! All hands and shuttles were flying, dancing!

Swindler 2

Voilà! Eh bien!

Piff, piff, shuttle, go! Dunk, dunk, a beating beam! Piff dunk!

And the swindlers were working the empty looms far into the night. And all in town they knew what magical powers the cloth did possess, and they all wanted to learn how bad and blind and stupid their neighbours were.

4 KEJSEREN SENDER EMBEDSMÆND TIL AT INSPICERE TØJET

Kejseren

Nu gad jeg godt vide, hvor vidt de er nået med tøjet,

... sagde kejseren. Men han var lidt underlig om hjertet ved at tænke på, at den der var dum intet kunne se.

Kejseren

Jeg sender først min gamle skikkelige minister! For han har forstand, og ingen passer sit embede som han.

Og ministeren gik hen til bedragerne.

Bedrager 2

Ah, Monsieur le Ministre!

Og bedragerne pegede på den tomme væv.

Bedrager 1

Er farverne ikke dejlige? Er mønstret ikke smukt?

THE EMPEROR SENDS OFFICIALS TO INSPECT THE CLOTH

Emperor

Now I will examine what progress they do with my cloth.

... said the Emperor. But he felt uneasy when recalling and remembering that those who are fools, could not see a thing.

Emperor

I send at first my trusted minister and true servant, for he is wise, and none is more fit for office than he.

And the minister went off to the swindlers.

Swindler 2

Ah, Monsieur le Ministre!

*And the swindlers they pointed at the empty loom.
(Choir and swindlers pointing)*

Swindler 1

The colours aren't they brilliant? Behold the bold design!

Men han kunne intet se, for der var ikke noget. Var han dum? Duede han ikke til sit embede? Det måtte ingen mennesker vide!

Og ministeren fortalte kejseren, at det behagede ham særdeles! Dette mønster, disse farver ... Ja, det er ganske allerkæreste!

Hoffolk

De skønneste kulører! Det dejligste mønster! Ja, det er ganske allerkæreste!

Og kejseren sendte snart en anden skikkelig embedsmand hen for at se, om tøjet snart var færdigt.

Bedrager 1

Træd nærmere! Er farverne ikke henrivende?

Bedrager 2

Bleu d'indigo, vermillon!

Bedrager 1

Og bemærk det fine mønster af kinesiske flad-finker!

But he could see nothing there, since there was really nothing. Was he dumb? Unfit for his office and position? No one should never ever know this!

And the minister informed the Emperor that it delighted him immensely! All these patterns, all these colours ... Yes, this was really most adorable!

Courtiers

The most delightful patterns, the brightest of colours! Yes, this is really most adorable!

And the Emperor before long sent a new trustworthy official to inspect if the cloth would soon be ready.

Swindler 1

Come closer! The colours, are these not enchanting?

Swindler 2

Bleu d'indigo, vermillon!

Swindler 1

And behold this fitted pattern of Chinese flaring flat-finches!

*Men det gik ham som ministeren: Han kunne intet se.
Det måtte ingen mennesker vide!*

*Det fineste mønster af kinesiske flad-finker. Ja, det er
ganske allerkæreste, sagde han til kejseren.*

Hoffolk

De skønneste kulører! Det dejligste mønster! Ja, det
er ganske allerkæreste!

5 KEJSEREN VIL SELV SE TØJET

*Nu ville Kejseren selv se tøjet, mens det endnu var på
væven.*

*Pif dunk, spolen går! Dunk, dunk, bommen slår! Væ-
verne vævede af alle kræfter, uden trævl og tråd.*

Bedrager 2

(Ser pludseligt op fra væven)

Enfin, enfin, Monsieur l'Empereur! Bienvenu!

*But as with the trusted minister he did not see a thing.
No one should never ever know this!*

*This fine, fitted pattern of Chinese flaring flat-finches.
Yes, this is really most adorable, he assured the Emperor.*

Courtiers

The most delightful patterns, the brightest of col-
ours! Yes, this is really most adorable!

THE EMPEROR WANTS TO SEE THE CLOTHES FOR HIMSELF

*The Emperor now wished to see his new cloth while it
still was on the loom:*

*Piff, dunk, shuttle go! Dunk, dunk, a beating beam!
Weaving and labouring with might and main – with no
warp nor weft!*

Swindler 2

(Looks up from the loom)

Enfin, enfin, Monsieur l'Empereur! Bienvenu!

Bedrager 1

Kom nærmere! Lad Dem opsluges af Kunstens mysterier! Se mønstrets dirrende uro! Se farvernes besnærende spil!

Bedrager 2

La perfection de la séduction!

Hoffolk

Ja, er det ikke magnifique! Nu har vi noget virkelig enestående i vores lille by! Noget så fint og fornemt som var vi ude i den store verden!

Kejseren (*For sig selv*)

Hvad for noget! Jeg ser jo ingenting!

(Det indre mareridt får overtaget – bedragernes stemmer bliver fjerne)

Bedrager 2

Monsieur l'Empereur?

Swindler 1

Come closer! Let the mysteries of art overwhelm you! Behold the fluttering pattern! Behold the vibrant colours, the blaze!

Swindler 2

La perfection de la séduction! !

Courtiers

Yes, is it not magnifique! Now we have something of true eminence and greatness in our little town! Something to give us fame, as were we a city of true importance!

Emperor (*To himself*)

What is this? I can't see anything!

(The inner nightmare takes over – the voices of the swindlers fade away)

Swindler 2

Monsieur l'Empereur?

Kejseren

Ja, det er meget smukt! (*indre stemme:*) Er jeg virkelig uduelig? Er jeg virkelig den dumme? Dum?

Det har mit allerhøjeste bifald! Ja, det er smukt ...

Bedrager 1

Bemærk de yndige flad-finker, monteret i dobbelt jaquard-spejlmønster!

Kejseren (*indre stemme*)

Kun mig, der intet ser ... Dum, uduelig, dum, dum- mest ...

Bedrager 1

... mærk flad-finkerne ...

Kejseren (*Fraværende*)

Det er magnifique, nysseligt, excellent ...

Bedrager 2

(*Med absolut autoritet*)

Exactement magnifique excellent!

Emperor

Yes, it is very nice ... (*inner voice:*) Should I really be incompetent? Should I really be the stupidest? Dumb?

It has my highest approval! Highest! Yes, it is nice ...

Swindler 1

Behold the beautiful flat-finches, arrayed in a twin-twisted spinning pattern!

Emperor (*inner voice*)

Just me don't see a thing ... Dumb, incompetent ...

Swindler 1

... Look, flat-finches ... !

Emperor (*Absently*)

It's *magnifique*, unsurpassed, excellent ...

Swindler 2

(*With absolute authority*)

Exactement magnifique, excellent!

Kejseren (*Vågner op*)

Til disse skikkelige mænd giver jeg hermed ridderkorset og titel af første vævejunkere!

(Hænger ridderkors i knaphullet)

For de skønneste fremskridt i Kunstens tjeneste!

6 KLÆDER BLIVER SYET OG KEJSEREN BLIVER KLÆDT PÅ

Bedrager 1

Men kære Kejser! Hvorfor ikke tage i klæder dette nye prægtige tøj ved den store procession, der forestår?

Så blev der travlt!

Bedrager 1

Lad 16 lys brænde hele natten, så vi kan nå at få kejserens nye klæder færdige!

Bedrager 2

Allez vite!

Emperor (*Wakes up*)

To these two honourable men I hereby confer the knighthood and token of Master Weaver!

(Pins their medallions in their button-holes)

For most notable deeds in the service of the arts!

CLOTHES ARE SEWN AND THE EMPEROR IS DRESSED

Swindler 1

But my dear Emperor! Why not turn this lovely and extr'ordinary cloth into robes for the splendid stately pageant you're soon to lead?

Oh, what a haste!

Swindler 1

Leave 16 candles burning day and night, that we in time get the Emperor's new clothes ready!

Swindler 2

Allez-vite!

*Gennem vinduet så folk, hvor travlt de havde; De lod
som tog de tøjet af væven, de klippede i luften med store
sakse, de syede med synål uden tråd.*

Bedrager 2

Attention!

Bedrager 1

Kejserens nye klæder er færdige! Deres højhed! Mine
herrer Ministre! Se dette kunstværk i silke og broka-
de! Se kjolen, se kappen; se det dejlige slæb!

(Lader som om han holder det op)

Alle

MEN INGEN SÅ NOGET, FOR DER VAR IKKE NOGET.

Bedrager 1

Tag straks Deres klæder af, kære Kejser, og lad os al-
lernådigst give det nye på herhenne ved spejlet.

*People saw through the window how hard they laboured;
They feigned to roll the cloth off the looms, they cut into
the air with giant scissors, they sewed with tiny needles
with no thread.*

Swindler 2

Attention!

Swindler 1

The Emperor's new clothes are ready! Oh, your
Highness! ! My dear Ministers! Welcome! Look at
this wonder of silk, brocade and laces; the doublet,
the breeches; look, this breathtaking train!

(Pretends to lift the train)

All

*BUT SINCE THERE WAS NOTHING, NO ONE SAW
ANYTHING.*

Swindler 1

At once take your garments off my dear Emperor,
and let us finally most humbly fit your new clothes
here at the mirror.

Kejser

Det er den skønneste kunst at ret pynte den kongelige krop! Lad mig nyde min figur foran spejlet!

(Påklædning parallelt med det følgende: Tager ham om livet, lader til at binde slæbet fast etc. Kejseren vender og vrider sig foran spejlet)

Bedrager 2

Ahh ... Magie de transformation ...

Ja, se dette kunstværk i silke og brokade!

Bedrager 1

Og mærk: Tøjet er let som spindelvæv! *(Finurligt:)* Man skulle tro, man havde ingenting på kroppen – men det er just dyden ved det!

Bedrager 2

La vertu même!

Kejser

La vertu même ... ?

Så let som spindelvæv ...

Emperor

With taste adorning the Emperor's body is truly a fine art. Let me admire my new clothes in the mirror!

(Simultaneously a dressing scene where the swindlers pretend i. e. to attach the train, correct the fit etc.)

Swindler 2

Ahh ... Magie de transformation ...

Yes, look at this wonder of silk, brocade and laces!

Swindler 1

And note; These clothes are light as spider web! *(Cunningly)* Yes, you could fancy you wore nothing indeed! That's the true virtue of it!

Swindler 2

La vertu même!

Emperor

La vertu même ... ?

... light as a spider web ...

Bedrager 1

Mærk det levantiske snit! Mærk dobbeltkraven, kniplingskanten!

... let som spindelvæv, ... spindelvæv ... Dette kunstværk i silke og brokade ...

Bedrager 2

Ahhh, ... mmmm ... Voilà! ... Eh bien ... à point ...

(Stryger over dragten, tager fat i kroppen etc. som en kostumier)

Kejser

Ja, man skulle tro man havde ingenting på kroppen!

Bedrager 2

Moment, attention! Monsieur l'Empereur ...

Bedrager 1

Derude venter man allerede med tronhimlen!

Og kejseren så sig en sidste gang i spejlet ...

Swindler 1

Notice the Levantine cut, ... the double collar, ribbon lacing!

Yes, this wonder of silk, brocade and laces, light as spider web!

Swindler 2

Ahhh, ... mmmm ...Voilà! ... Eh bien ... à point ...

(The swindlers pretend to arrange the robe)

Emperor

Yes, you could fancy you wore nothing indeed!

Swindler 2

Moment, attention! Monsieur l'Empereur ...

Swindler 1

Your men are already waiting with the canopy!

The Emperor glanced for the last time in the mirror ...

7 DEN STORE PROCESSION

Kejseren

Ja, jeg er jo i stand ... Sidder det ikke godt?

(Bedragerne fortrækker diskret)

Og kejseren gik gennem gaderne under den dejlige tronhimmel, og kammerherrerne gik og holdt i luften, og lod som om de bar det dejligste slæb.

Folket

Gud, hvor kejserens nye klæder er mageløse! Hvilket dejligt slæb han har på kjolen! Hvor det sidder velsignet! Ja, det er en kostbar dragt!

(Kejseren nikker og vinker til folket)

Lille barn

Men han har jo ikke noget på!

Folket

Der er et lille barn, der siger: Han har ikke noget på!
Ha, ha! Han har jo ikke noget på!

THE GREAT PROCESSION

Emperor

Yes, well, it should be all set ... Isn't the fit à point?

(The swindlers leave discretely)

And the Emperor walked through the streets and squares, under the wonderful canopy. And all his chamberlains followed holding nothing, pretending to bear a breathtaking train.

People

Ahh, the Emperor's new clothes are wonderful! What a coat and what a lovely train! It fits him to perfection! How it fits to perfection! Yes, this is a costly dress!

(The Emperor nods and waves to the people)

Child *(spoken)*

But he has got nothing on at all!

People

A little child is saying: He has got nothing on at all!
He has got nothing on at all!

(Spreders sig, accelererer; grin, lettelse)

Kejseren

... De har jo ret ... men jeg må holde ... holde ... holde
processionen ud!

Folket

Ha, ha, ha! Han har jo ikke noget på!

*(Lys går ned til fokus på kun kejseren. Vi oplever hans
mareridt)*

(It's spreading and accelerating, with laughter and relief)

Emperor

... Yes, they are right ... ! But I must bear up, keep on
to the very end! !

People

He has got nothing on at all!

*(Lights dim to focus only on the Emperor. We experi-
ence his nightmare.)*

Tusmørkets viser (1987)

En sangcyklus for sopran, fagot og orkester til digte af Sophus Claussen.

14 I VAAREN

Hendes Øjne er kvidrende Fugle,
som altid synger om Vaar,
og Vaaren kan hun ej skjule,
den er i hendes Haar.

Hendes Bryst er en skælvende Glæde,
og Midien er saa smal,
men Læben – smal over Maade
bragte mig hastig til Fald.

Med Hjertets Smil i sin Strube
et Blik omblaant af Lyst –
en kry lille Skæmt i et Mæle
dybt fra et daant Bryst.

Hendes Øjne er kvidrende Fugle,
som altid synger om Vaar,

Songs of Dusk (1987)

A song cycle for soprano, bassoon and orchestra. To poems by Sophus Claussen

IN SPRING

Her eyes are twittering birds,
Always singing of Spring,
And Spring she cannot hide,
It nests in her hair.

Her bosom is a trembling joy,
And her waist that narrow,
Yet her lip – even more narrow
Quickly brought me down.

With that smile of the heart in her throat
Eyes so deeply set in excitement blue –
A pert little jest in a voice
From deep down a bosom that swooned.

Her eyes are twittering birds,
Always singing of Spring,

og Vaaren kan hun ej skjule,
den er, hvor hun staar og gaar.

Hun kroner hver Eg og hver Bregne
med Elskov og elskende Spøg,
hun kommer svøbt i sit Hjerte
og gør mig mange Besøg.

Hendes Bryst er en skælvende Glæde
og Midien fin og smal.
Min Læbe skal aldrig smæde
den Rigdom, der voldte mit Fald.

Jeg ved, den Veninde jeg ynder
vil rammes af Fruernes Snak,
de hviler paa svære Hynder
og kender ej Bøn eller Tak.

De sidder paa Bolstre og hader
og hader – mens Vaarens Aand,
et Foraarsug gennem Brystet,
har løst min Venindes Baand.

Med Hjertets Smil i sin Strube,
et Blik omblaant af Lyst,

And Spring she cannot hide,
It follows, wherever she goes.

She crowns every oak, every fern
With love and with loving mirth,
She comes, all swept in her heart,
And pays me many a visit.

Her bosom is a trembling joy,
And her waist is fine and narrow.
Never shall my lip defame
The riches that brought me down.

I know that the lady of my heart
Will suffer the gossip of good women,
They recline on heavy cushioned seats
And know not prayer or thanks.

They sit on their cushions and hate
And hate – all the while the spirit of Spring,
A vernal sweep down her chest,
Untied the bands that held my friend.

With that smile of the heart in her throat,
Eyes so deeply set in excitement blue,

en kry lille Skæmt i et Mæle,
dybt fra et daanet Bryst –

Hun kommer svøbt i sit Hjerte
og smiler i Vaarvindens Brus:
“Med dig i de grønne Skove
jeg er i min Elskers Hus.”

15 NOCTURNE

Nu vaagner de fjerne Steder
til Lys, medens Hjerterne græder.
Og Mørket stumt gennem Forstaden gaar,
hvor Armoden sover blandt Skrammel og Skaar.

Snart fyldes de rige Sale
af Glæde og glemsom Tale.
Snart lyder Musik i den natlige Blæst,
én kaldes til Død, og én kaldes til Fest.

Men Kirkernes Mure forbavse.
De bliver saa tusindaars-tavse.
Og ud fra Kirkegaardenes Sten
gror Skygger, der volder de Levende Mén.

A pert little jest in a voice
From deep down a bosom that swooned –

She comes, wrapped up in her heart,
And smiles in Spring-time's bustling wind:
“With you in the woodlands green
I dwell in my lover's house.”

NOCTURNE

Now the distant places awaken
To light, while hearts must cry.
And in silence darkness passes through the suburb,
Where misery sleeps amongst junk and shards.

Soon the halls for richness and pomp
Are filled with joy and talk of nothing.
Soon there is music heard in the wind of the night,
One is summoned to death, and one is summoned to
mirth.

But the walls of the churches surprise.
Millennium-silent they wax.
And from the stones of the churchyards
Shadows spread that hurt and harm the living.

Der sidder et Barn paa et Gærde
og lér, – som var intet paa Færde.
Dog kysser en Mund hendes varme Mund,
det Kys skal hun mærke til Dødens Stund.

Men Livsmodet knuser Vingen
mod Mure, der huses af Ingen.
De sorte Ruder, de mørke Tegl
er en Gaade, lukket med hundrede Segl.

Og kolde og skumle ligger
de nys saa travle Fabrikker.
Og Kvinder søger langs Gadens Flis
en Udvej fra Livets sidste Forlis.

16 KAVALLÉRSORGER

Dingle-Dangle hed hans Fader,
Kavallér af bedste Slags,
sprang og sprætted, som en Laks
med de pynteligste Lader –
Kongen raabte ligestraks:
“Du skal hedde d’Ingel-Faks!”

A child sits perched on a fence
And laughs – as if nothing were afoot.
Yet a mouth kisses her mouth so warm,
A kiss that she will feel till kissed by Death.

But the zest for life breaks its wing
Against walls where no one lives.
The black panes, the dark bricks:
An enigma they are, closed with a hundred seals.

And cold and dismal lie
The factories, their bustle suddenly halted.
And women walk the sordid street in search
Of escape from life’s defeat, the last in a line.

CAVALIER WORRIES

Dingle-Dangle was the name of his father,
A gentleman of the first order,
Jumped and tossed, like a salmon
Versed to perfection in courtly manners –
The king cried at once:
“Your name henceforth is d’Ingel-Faks!”

Dangle hedder Dingles Søn,
han er overmaade skøn,
var saa ranglet, var saa ringlet,
hvor han end sig svang og svingled.
Da han fried, vandt han straks
Frøken Sisken Sølvversaks.

Men da Dangle d'Ingelfaks
paa en Bænk, i Middagsstunden
har forført med Pjank i Lunden
Frøken Mette-Mød-Mig-Straks,
(stakkels Mette-Mød-Mig-Straks!)
græder Sisken Sølvversaks.

Medens han forsoner Sisken,
Mette slaar med egen Haand
om en Gren sit Strømpebaand!
Højt i Aftenvindens Hvisken
hendes Lemmer ringle, rangle:
"Det vil du fortryde, Dangle!"

Dangle is the name of Dingle's son,
Of handsome men the most beautiful one,
Lanky and lean like none they had seen,
Wherever he swayed and swished by at court.
And when he proposed, the girl cried, Yes, please!
Her name was Siskin Silver Scissors (Miss).

But when Dangle d'Ingelfaks
On a bench, at the midday hour
Has seduced with nonsense in the grove
MissMinnie-Meet-Me-at-Once
(Poor Minnie-Meet-Me-at-Once!)
Who weeps? Siskin Silver Scissors.

Whilst he placates said Siskin,
Minnie with her own hand
Throws over a branch her garter!
Up high in the whispers of evening breeze
Her limbs now dingle and dangle a tune:
"You'll be sorry for this, Faks fixer most foul!"

17 MAANENS TUNGSIND

Efter Charles Baudelaire

I Aften synes Maanen lidt trættere at glide
som en blødagtig Skønhed paa et Hav af Puder lagt,
der strejfer Brystets Omrids og glatter sin Side
med let og adspredt Haand, førend Søvnens faar Magt.

Henstrakt paa Snelavinernes bløde Silkerygge
hun nyder længe døende en Afmægt uden Ord,
og hendes Blikke følger de hvide Skyer, der bygge
Luftsnyer i det Blaa som et Blomst- og Greneflor.

Naar stundum, i sit tærende Savn, paa denne Kugle
hun tyst en Taare fælder, som hun søgte at skjule,
en Digter uden Søvn, som i stille Andægt gik,

tog denne matte Draabe i de hulede Hænder,
en hvid Juvel, hvis Perlemorsglimmer ham blænder;
og gemmer den i Hjertet for Solens hede Blik.

SPLEEN OF THE MOON

After Charles Baudelaire

Tonight the moon, more tired maybe, seems to glide
Like a beauty soft as velvet on a sea of pillows laid,
Who outlines the contours of her bosom and smoothes
With light distracted hand her side, till sleep prevails.

Reclining thus on silken slopes and ridges soft, on
avalanches of snow afloat,
She long enjoys, in dying, a wordless swoon
And follows with her eyes the clouds so white,
The airy sights they fashion in the blue like a profu-
sion of flowers and of branches too.

When from time to time, consumed by longing, upon
this globe
She silently lets fall a tear she tried in vain to hide,
A poet sleepless on foot at night in silent devotion

caught that one dull drop in the vessel of his hands,
A jewel white, like mother of pearl it shines and
blinds him;
In his heart he hides it from the fiery eyes of the sun.

18 DU SOM EN LILLE KATTEKILLING ER ...

Du som en lille Kattekilling er, du kaade Barn,
som altfor sød og altfor tilbedt er,
– en lille, lystig Kattekilling, der
mig arme Djævel triller, som var jeg et Nøgle Garn.

Jeg mellem dine Poter ruller viljeløs omkring,
som Regnbu'farver skifter dit Humør.
Jeg snurrer, til jeg bliver ganske ør
og ikke længer tænke kan paa nogen Verdens Ting.

Og hvis de bitte, bløde Poter ej faar rigtig fat,
saa griber mig de fine, spidse Klør.
Men allersortest bliver mit Humør
naar andre Nøgler rent gør tummelumsk min kælne
Kat.

19 SAGTELOG ...

Sagtelig, sagtelig Timer glide
her ved din Side
i duftende Eng.
Fuglene kvidre, mens Larmen forstummer;

YOU ARE LIKE A LITTLE KITTEN ...

You are like a little kitten, oh playful child,
Too sweet by half, too much adored,
– a joyful little kitten, tossing me about,
And I, poor soul, a ball of yarn, no more.

Between your paws I roll about, all helpless, weak,
Like rainbow hues your moods will shift.
I spin till I am dizzy, dazed,
And no longer know what's what, what's not.

And if those tiny, tender paws should lose their grip,
Your fine and pointed claws come out, I'm hooked!
But ne'er my mood sinks down to black so fast
As when other balls beguile my skittish kittenish cat.

QUIETLY ...

Quietly, quietly hours pass
Here by your side
In meadow sweet.
Birds still tweet, all noises die;

stille om Majløvets Hæng
Mygget i Aftenens Solglans summer.

Sagtelig Øjnene vil jeg lukke,
lade mig vugge
i elskende Drøm.
Om mig din Arm saa buttet og liden
ligger beskyttende øm.
Sagtelig, sagtelig glider Tiden ...

20 KÆRLIGHED

Tal ej om skuffet Kærlighed
og Hjærter, som er brudt!
man gør sig lidt Besværlighed
og ta'r en ny til slut.

Tal ej om evig Kærlighed!
vort Hjærte kun slaar Smut;
det hopper let fra Sted til Sted
og synker træt til slut.

A quiet mosquito up high
In golden sunset buzzes round leaves of May.

Quietly I will close my eyes,
Let myself be craddled
By loving dream.
Around me your arm so chubby and small
Is wrapped, all tender protection.
Quietly, quietly time passes ...

LOVE

Don't mention love that was thwarted
And hearts that were broken!
One suffers a bit of inconvenience,
Then finds someone new in the end.

Don't mention eternal love!
Our heart plays ducks and drakes;
It skips and hops from place to place
And then sinks down, all spent for now.

21 VAARSANG VED JUL

Tusmørkets Stjerner
rimblege staar.
Sig, min Veninde,
bliver det Vaar
nu ingen Sinde?

Ak, min Veninde!

Skoven er øde,
Vejen er bar,
Lykken, der døde,
giver ej Svar ...
Frysende Kroner.

Intet forsoner.

Findes dog Balsam
for vore Saar?
Er det en evig
Sandhed og Vaar,
Stjernerne øser ...?

Mildheds Forløser.

SPRING SONG AT CHRISTMAS

At dusk the stars
Hover white as frost.
Tell me, my lovely girl,
Is there no hope of Spring,
Now or ever?

Ah, my lovely girl!

Deserted the woods.
All empty the road.
The bliss that died
Has no answer to give ...
Treetops that freeze.

Nothing brings redemption.

Can balm be found yet
For our wounds?
Is it eternal
Truth and Spring
The stars pour down ...?

Releaser of mildness.

Tusmørkets Ynde
Skovdybet naar.
Stjernelys smiler
tyst, hvor vi gaar.
Ak, min Veninde –

er Højtid inde?

The grace and charm of dusk
Reach far into the woods.
Starlight smiles
In silence, where we walk.
Oh, my lovely girl –

Time for celebration, now?



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