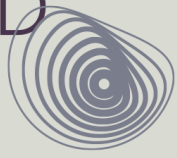
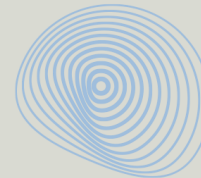


PER NØRGÅRD



CHRISTINA BJØRKØE



SELECTIONS 

RARE PIANO WORKS 

Per Nørgård (1932–2025)

Rare Piano Works

Selections

1	Stjerne-barcarole ('Star Barcarole') (1995)	4:52
2	Magyar Danyl Nota (2005)	2:44
	Maj på vej – tre vejrbilleder ('May on Its Way – Three Weather Pictures') (2007)	11:53
3	I. April – ikke til at regne med! ('April – Not to Be Relied Upon!')	4:53
4	II. Solregn ('Sunshower')	2:54
5	III. Dagregn ('Daytime Rain')	4:05
	Waterways (Vandveje) (2008-09)	8:27
6	I.	1:27
7	II.	4:06
8	III.	2:53
	Partita sévera (1951)	22:32
9	I. Introduzione	3:53
10	II. Elegia I	4:06
11	III. Intermezzo	5:35
12	IV. Elegia II	4:01
13	V. Conclusione	5:06

World premiere recordings²⁻¹³

Total 50:29

Christina Bjørkøe, piano



Per Nørgård (2016) © Lars Skaaning

Per Nørgård at the Piano

By Ivan Hansen

Per Nørgård stands as one of Scandinavia's most significant composers of the modern era. His roughly four hundred works include eight symphonies, six operas, concertos, chamber and choral music as well as music for ballet, film and electronic media – some one hundred hours of music in all.

Nørgård's works in the years leading up to 1960 carry forward the Nordic tradition of Jean Sibelius and Carl Nielsen. Through Vagn Holmboe (1909–1996), his teacher during his formative years, he developed a keen interest in musical metamorphosis where seeds of rhythmic and melodic material are ceaselessly transformed and developed. This led to a lifelong fascination with the metamorphoses and symmetries at work in the music of Sibelius, with whom he corresponded in 1954–55. Sibelius remained a guiding star for Nørgård well beyond his youth.

Studies with Nadia Boulanger in Paris in 1956–57 strengthened the 'universe of the northern mind' in Nørgård's music, until encounters with other young international composers around 1958 inspired him to experiment with forms and idioms beyond the Nordic tradition: collage, music theatre, percussion, electronic music, happenings and, in 1966–67, a music of an almost psychedelic intensity, hovering between melody and pure sonority, as one hears in the orchestral works *Iris* and *Luna*.

At the same time Nørgård was developing his own technique, the *infinity series*: a principle of musical growth applicable to any conceivable scale, generating melodies that replicate themselves in successively slower and faster canons, which then

replicate themselves in turn, and so on, a 'fractal music', as it came to be known.

From the orchestral work *Rejse ind i den gyldne skærm* ('Voyage into the Golden Screen') (1968) through to around 1980, Nørgård created a personal musical universe in which melodies from the infinity-series are combined with a unique harmonic language built on overtone and undertone series – a nuanced, personal form of major and minor. To this came rhythms based on the golden ratio (1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13 and so on) and its characteristic organic rhythmic swing. The result is a music of resonance and equilibrium, heard in works including Symphony No. 3 (1972–75), the operas *Gilgamesh* (1972) and *Siddharta* (1979/1984), and a range of chamber, choral and vocal works.

'I stand with one foot in Western rationalism and the other in Eastern mysticism, yet feel a stranger to both. I am, so to speak, a kind of third point in the picture', as the composer said of his music during this period.

Around 1980 Nørgård radically changed course towards a spontaneously composed, dramatic and fractured music, inspired by the pictures and texts of the schizophrenic Swiss outsider artist Adolf Wölfli (1864–1930). Works from this period include the opera *Det guddommelige Tivoli* ('The Divine Circus') (1982), a number of choral works, and Symphony No. 4, *Indischer Roosen-Gaarten und Chinesischer Hexen-See* (1981).

Nørgård then found inspiration in new forms of tone-rows, melodic networks and tempo relations, heard in three solo concertos for cello, viola and violin respectively. In the 1990s this was combined with a direct, often violent orchestral expression, as in Symphony No. 5 (1990), Symphony No. 6 (1999) and its sister piece *Terrains Vagues* (2000), the Piano Concerto *In due*

tempi (1994) and the war opera *Nuit des Hommes* (1996), setting texts by Apollinaire.

In the new century Nørgård drew on the full range of his techniques and expressive means, including a renewed interest in overlooked aspects of the infinity series, as in the Harp Concerto No. 2, *Gennem torne* ('Through Thorns') (2003). Where earlier one could discern longer, coherent phases of development in his music, it now seemed as though each work called forth its own universe. The Violin Concerto No. 2, *Borderline* (2002), focused on charged boundaries between ordinary equal-tempered and floating overtone-based scales and melodies. In the Hans Christian Andersen work *Lygtemændene tager til byen* ('The Will-O'-the-Wisps Go to Town') (2003–04), the mature Nørgård returned in a sense to the world of comic strips for which he wrote his first songs in the 1940s. Symphony No. 7 (2004–06) and a number of cello works, including the sonata *Rhizom* (2004) and Cello Concerto No. 2, *Momentum* (2009), which chart their own courses, as does Nørgård's last major work, Symphony No. 8 (2010–11), recorded by the Vienna Philharmonic under conductor Sakari Oramo in 2014 (Dacapo Records 6.220574).

What characterises the composer Per Nørgård across more than sixty-five years is his interest in the organic development of musical lines and in the drama that arises from *interference* – the meeting of those lines. Stylistically, Nørgård is inclusive, kaleidoscopic: certain works graze against Balinese gamelan, others resound with the passion of European Romanticism, and others still with the structural mobiles of a cooler avant-garde. The driving force appears to be the pursuit of new paths – and the periodic setting aside of earlier practice, until previous strategies and ideas resurface in new contexts.

The Piano as Prism

Per Nørgård's earliest musical explorations took place in Copenhagen in the 1940s at the family's Hindsberg grand piano. Classical piano lessons followed, along with his own music-hall songs, until around 1947–48 he began composing in earnest: placing a sheet of manuscript paper on the piano, writing 'Sonate' at the top, and then trying to set down his musical ideas. An inspiring evening-class lecture that same year on Stravinsky's music, given by the composer Jørgen Jersild, led to contact with Vagn Holmboe, who became his private teacher in 1949–51, a period concluded by the work that closes this release. The present recording is the digital prelude to the double album of Per Nørgård's piano works, to be released on CD in early 2027.

'**Stjerne-barcarole**' ('Star Barcarole') (1995), subtitled 'Stjerner over Hanne' ('Stars above Hanne'), reveals an unfamiliar side of Per Nørgård: his affinity with the poetic folk rock of the 1960s and the world of creative, self-taught singer-songwriters who, besides The Beatles, included above all Donovan, The Incredible String Band and others. Related to this is his collaboration with the Danish troubadour Povl Dissing, who had Nørgård's 'Vedis vuggevise' ('Vedi's Lullaby') (1958) in his repertoire, and with whom Nørgård performed at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in 1987. Later came the collaboration with Hanne Methling, who, enchanted by Nørgård's sensitive piano playing, asked whether he might like to accompany her song 'Dér hvor de falder fra hinanden' ('Where They Fall Apart') (1991). He agreed both to write a prelude and to improvise a free accompaniment to the song, which was released on Methling's album *Katteguld* in 2013. The composed prelude may be performed independently; here the composer draws threads from the melody into a Nørgårdian nocturne on Methling's song, whose first verse suggests the atmosphere:

The fire reaches me to the bone
on a wonderfully frost-clear night.
The blanket protects the soul
there are stars I cannot fathom (...)

'Magyar Danyl Nota' (2005) is a seventieth-birthday gift to the Hungarian-born pianist and conductor Tamás Vető (1935–2025), who became a Danish citizen in 1957 and from 1964 was a central interpreter of Nørgård's music at the Royal Danish Opera, Den Jyske Opera (The Danish National Opera) and the Danish National Symphony Orchestra (of the Danish Broadcasting Corporation). Their collaboration ranged from world premieres of works such as *Lila* (1971), *Gilgamesh* and *Twilight* (1976), through major performances of the Symphony No. 3 and *Siddharta*, to later premieres of substantial choral works including *Mytisk morgen* ('Mythic Morning') (2000) and *Ut Rosa* (2001).

The title is somewhat cryptic and suggests the meaning 'Hungarian–Danish melody' – the autograph reads 'Magyar Nota' – but the point seems clear: a Hungarian, chromatically dark, Bartókian right hand set against a more arpeggiated, luminous Danish-Nørgårdian left hand, the two meeting in harmonically rich cadences touched, perhaps, with mild wistfulness. The movement was incorporated the same year into the trio work *Delta* as its second movement, under the title 'Nostalgia'.

Maj på vej – tre vejr billeder ('May on Its Way – Three Weather Pictures') (2007) takes its inspiration from water, specifically the rainy Danish spring month of April. The sweet, mild month of May is still only on its way. In the first movement, 'April – ikke til at regne med!' ('April – Not to Be Relied Upon!'), the music too is changeable, unstable and unpredictable. Stravinskian rhythms arrive in gusts and splashes, punctuated by the drumming of

rain on a roof; then a more idyllic, bluesy calm gradually subsides into the composer's 'Flos ut Rosa' melody. But not for long: an abrupt, aggressive assault breaks in from above, until the opening motif rounds things off with characteristic good cheer. The second movement, 'Solregn' ('Sunshower'), moves as calmly as light rain in sunshine, shimmering; the music is searching and smile-through-tears in character, like a nostalgic aria. In the closing movement, 'Dagregn' ('Daytime Rain'), notes fall from above: dripping, trickling, splashing. A brief pause eddies and trickles, then the flow resumes.

The three impressionistic pieces were composed in 2007 for the premiere at Foreningen Ny Musik i Birkerød ('The New Music Society in Birkerød') at its 25th anniversary concert, and are dedicated to its founder Kirsten Benn on her 75th birthday in May 2007.

Waterways (Vandveje) (2008–09) continues the water-inspired vein from *Maj på vej*. An early manuscript version carried the title *Waterways (Krusninger)* ('Waterways (Ripples)') and the movement titles 'Resonanser' ('Resonances') (I), 'Fluktuationer' ('Fluctuations') (II) and 'Spejlinger' ('Reflections') (III). This is music that spreads in waves of overlapping and hovering sonorities, and in swirling rapid passages. Nørgård wrote of the pieces: 'In the motifs of the three movements there are connections back to two of my earlier piano works ('Grooving' from 1968 and 'Achilles and the Tortoise' from 1983).'

The first movement is characterised by echo effects also found in 'Grooving'. A succession of semitones sounds into one another and is then immediately damped, so that the after-impression of the muted tones mirrors the original sequence. In this movement an additional echo has been added, as a 'skip' across a water surface, three times. In the second movement there are remi-

niscences of 'Achilles and the Tortoise': arpeggio-like right- and left-hand scales on black and white keys respectively. Here the individual notes glint like reflections on a water surface, a moiré of constantly shifting, very short note-values. In the third movement the pattern of irregular durations unfolds and expands, though only fragmentarily, and a new melody emerges. The work was composed for and dedicated to the pianist Anne Marie Fjord Abildskov.

Partita sévera (1951) is a work of some twenty-three minutes in five movements, written as the nineteen-year-old Per Nørgård's concluding gift to the composer and teacher Vagn Holmboe and the pianist Meta Holmboe after two years as a private composition pupil, before his studies began at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen in early 1952. His audition with Holmboe in the summer of 1949 led to two years of foundational training in composition, comprising a mix of critique of his own pieces and the study of major works from Bach through the Viennese classics, and on to Stravinsky, Ravel and Bartók.

The summer of 1951 was a time for celebration: the eighteen-year-old Nørgård had passed his school-leaving examinations and been accepted as a composition student at the Royal Danish Academy of Music. He marked the occasion with a motorbike journey with his elder brother Bent through the still bomb-ravaged cities of Europe all the way down to Rome. New experiences – on his own.

The Partita was written on his return as a gesture of thanks to the Holmboe couple. The work had in all likelihood never been performed, except perhaps for a private run-through by Meta Holmboe. This, then, was the music a gifted young composer newly graduated wrote in 1951, taking inspiration from Holmboe's piano music, for instance his *Suono da Bardo* (1949), as

well as from Nielsen, Stravinsky, Bartók and others.

Christina Bjørkøe played the work privately for Per Nørgård in April 2025, to his great delight. It was established on that occasion that the youthful wildness in the music might well be attributed to the motorbike journey, 'full throttle!', combined with a wish to honour Holmboe's inspiring seriousness and concentration: the *sévera*.

The Partita's five movements carry their titles naturally in Italian:

– 'Introduzione' (Tempo giusto): The opening is serious, yet the whole is a fine blend of gravity, sudden departure and dance-like, barbarically propulsive Balkan rhythms. A headlong sketch.

– 'Elegia I' (Grave ed espressivo): The expression is both elegiac in a youthful way and wild, intense and overwhelming.

– 'Intermezzo' (Allegro): Hard-hitting rhythms and glissandi dominate this central movement, with solitary recitations and abrupt chordal strokes. Towards the end the pace shoots upward – as the notes head downward!

– 'Elegia II' (Largo e pesante): A deep, rising three-note motif is repeated in lamentation, while a falling four-note motif descends from above. The harmonies are out of balance and grow with desperate force. The voices attempt imitative gathering (*Poco più mosso*) but fall to the ground. The rising lamenting motif rises at last – a glimmer of hope?

– 'Conclusione' (Allegro non troppo): The homeward journey at speed. The bass's deep Ds make room for both a chromatic turning motif (the notes C – B – A – B-flat) and a more winding motif (E-flat – A-flat – D-flat – C – A – A-flat – B). Both whirl

onwards together, until the two motivic travelling companions meet at last, albeit each on their own home note, A and B-flat respectively.

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Drawing on his background as a musician and music scholar, Ivan Hansen has played a central role in making Per Nørgård's music and ideas accessible. He has focused in particular on documenting and explaining the relationship between Nørgård's thinking and the practical realisation of his music, including through his work for the Royal Library in Copenhagen editing and publishing Per Nørgård's skrifter ('Per Nørgård's Writings') and Per Nørgård's kompositioner ('Per Nørgård's Compositions').

Christina Bjørkøe (b. 1970) is one of Denmark's leading pianists. A graduate of The Juilliard School of Music in New York and the Royal Danish Academy of Music, she has collaborated with renowned figures such as Krystian Zimerman and Emanuel Ax throughout her career. She also serves as an associate professor at the Danish National Academy of Music.

With a versatile classical repertoire as her foundation, Christina Bjørkøe maintains an extensive concert career in Denmark and abroad, performing as both a soloist and chamber musician. Her work has taken her to concert halls across Europe, the United States, South America, and China, including notable appearances at the Tivoli Concert Hall, and she has received numerous awards over the years.

A cornerstone of her work is an extensive discography for Dacapo Records: she won the DR P2 Music Award for her recording of Knudåge Riisager's piano works, and her catalogue includes works by composers such as Vagn Holmboe, Herman D. Koppel, Niels Viggo Bentzon, and Anders Nordentoft. Her previous recording project for Dacapo Records, *Animal Universe* (2021), presents twelve sets of animal-themed études commissioned from various Danish composers, a musical menagerie for players of all levels.



Christina Bjørkøe (2026) © Kasper Hafstrøm Bøg

Per Nørgård ved klaveret

Af Ivan Hansen

Per Nørgård står som en af Skandinaviens mest centrale moderne komponister. Hans cirka 400 værker rummer blandt andet otte symfonier, seks operaer, koncerter, kammer- og kormusik, samt musik til ballet, film og elektroniske medier – i alt omkring 100 timers musik.

Nørgårds værker i årene frem mod 1960 viderefører den nordiske tradition fra Jean Sibelius og Carl Nielsen. Gennem Vagn Holmboe (1909-1996), hans lærer i ungdomsårene, skærpedes en interesse for musikalske metamorfoser, hvor kim af rytmiske og melodiske motiver bestandigt forvandles og udvikles. Det førte til en livslang interesse for metamorfoser og symmetrier hos Sibelius, som han korresponderede med i 1954-55. Sibelius forblev en ledestjerne for Nørgård, ikke blot i ungdommen.

Studier hos Nadia Boulanger i Paris 1956–57 forstærkede nærmest det ”nordlige sinds univers” hos Nørgård, indtil mødet med andre unge internationale komponister omkring 1958 inspirerede ham til at eksperimentere med udtryk og genrer hinsides den nordiske tradition: collage, musikdramatik, slagtøj, elektronmusik, happenings samt i årene 1966-67 en nærmest psykedelisk, vibrerende musik mellem melodi og klang, hvilket man blandt andet hører i orkesterværkerne *Iris* og *Luna*.

Samtidig arbejdede Nørgård med en egen teknik, *uendelighedsrækker*, som er et musikalsk vækstprincip inden for alle tænkelige skalaer, der skaber melodier, der gendanner sig selv i langsommere og hurtigere kanoner, der så gendanner sig selv og så videre – en ”fraktal musik”, som den senere betegnedes.

Fra orkesterværket *Rejse ind i den gyldne skærm* (1968) og frem til omkring 1980 skabte Nørgård et personligt musikalsk univers, hvor uendelighedsrækkemelodier kombineredes med en unik overtone- og undertone-harmonik, en nuanceret form for dur og mol. Dertil kom rytmer baseret på det gyldne snit (1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13 og så videre) og dets særlige organisk-rytmiske swing. Det er en velklingende og afbalanceret ny musik, som det høres i blandt andet 3. symfoni (1972-75), operaerne *Gilgamesh* (1972) og *Siddharta* (1979/1984) samt en række kammer-, kor- og vokalværker.

”Jeg står med den ene fod i den vestlige rationalisme og den anden i den østlige mysticisme, men alligevel føler jeg mig fremmed over for dem begge. Jeg er, så at sige, en slags tredje punkt i billedet”, som komponisten sagde i den periode om sin musik.

Omkring 1980 skiftede Nørgård radikalt kurs henimod en spontant komponeret, dramatisk og splittet musik, inspireret af billeder og tekster af den skizofrene schweiziske kunstner Adolf Wölfli (1864-1930), blandt andet i operaen *Det guddommelige Tivoli* (1982), en række korværker og 4. symfoni, *Indischer Roosen-Gaarten und Chinesischer Hexen-See* (1981).

Siden blev Nørgård inspireret af nye former for toneserier, melodiske netværk og temporelationer, blandt andet i tre solo-koncerter for henholdsvis cello, bratsch og violin. I 1990'erne kombineredes dette med et direkte, ofte voldsomt orkestralt udtryk, for eksempel i 5. symfoni (1990), 6. symfoni (1999) og dens søsterværk *Terrains Vagues* (2000), klaverkoncerten *In due tempi* (1994) og krigsoperaen *Nuit des Hommes* (1996) over tekster af Apollinaire.

I det nye århundrede udnyttede Nørgård hele sit repertoire af teknikker og udtryk, heriblandt en ny interesse for oversete

aspekter af uendelighedsrækkerne, blandt andet i Harpekoncert nr. 2, *Gennem torne* (2003). Hvor man tidligere kunne se længere, sammenhængende udviklingsfaser i Nørgårds musik, synes det nu, som om hvert værk kaldte på sit eget univers. I Violinkoncert nr. 2, *Borderline* (2002) fokuseredes på spændingsfyldte grænser mellem almindelige veltempererede og svævende overtonebaserede skalaer og melodier. I H.C. Andersen-værket *Lygtemændene tager til byen* (2003-04) vendte den modne Nørgård på en måde tilbage til det tegneserieunivers, han i 1940'erne lavede sine første sange til. 7. symfoni (2004-06) samt en række celloværker, herunder sonaten *Rhizom* (2004) og Cellokoncert nr. 2, *Momentum* (2009), går egne veje, ligesom Nørgårds sidste store værk, 8. symfoni (2010-11), indspillet af Wiener Filharmonikerne og dirigenten Sakari Oramo i 2014 (Dacapo Records 6.220574).

Karakteristisk for komponisten Per Nørgård hen over godt 65 år er hans interesse for organiske udviklinger af musikkens linjer samt af det drama, der ligger i fænomenet *interferens*, møderne mellem disse linjer. Stilistisk er Nørgård inklusiv, kalejdoskopisk: Visse værker strejfer balinesisk gamelan, andre klinger lidenskabeligt af europæisk romantik, og atter andre af en køligere avantgardes strukturelle mobiler. Drivkraften synes at være at finde nye veje og muligvis glemme tidligere praksis – for en tid, indtil tidligere strategier og idéer dukker op igen i nye sammenhænge.

Klaveret som prisme

Per Nørgårds første musikalske udfoldelser skete i København i 1940'erne hjemme ved familiens Hindsberg-flygel. Siden fulgte klassisk klaverundervisning, egne music hall-sange, indtil han omkring 1947-48 selv begyndte at komponere ved at anbringe et nodepapir på flyglet, øverst skrive "Sonate" og derefter forsøge at nedfælde sine musikalske idéer. Et inspirerende

aftenskolekursus samme år om Stravinskys musik ved komponisten Jørgen Jersild førte til kontakt med komponisten Vagn Holmboe, der blev hans privatlærer i årene 1949-51 – en tid, der afrundes af det værk, der afslutter denne albumudgivelse, som er den digitale optakt til dobbeltalbummet med Per Nørgårds klaverværker, der udkommer på cd i begyndelsen af 2027.

'**Stjerne-barcarole**' (1995) med undertitlen 'Stjerner over Hanne' viser en ukendt side af komponisten Per Nørgård: hans inspiration fra 1960'ernes poetiske folkrock omkring kreative, selv lærte sangskrivere som – ud over The Beatles – især talte Donovan, The Incredible String Band med flere. I tilknytning hertil står hans samarbejde med den danske troubadour Povl Dissing, der havde Nørgårds 'Vedis vuggevise' (1958) på repertoire, og som Nørgård optrådte med på kunstmuseet Louisiana i 1987. Senere kom samarbejdet med Hanne Methling, der – begejstret for Nørgårds følsomme klaverspil – frejdigt spurgte, om han mon havde lyst til at akkompagnere sangen 'Dér hvor de falder fra hinanden' (1991). Han indvilgede i både at lave et præludium til og frit at akkompagnere sangen, der blev udgivet på Methlings album *Katteguld* i 2013. Det komponerede præludium kan opføres separat, og komponisten spinder her tråde fra melodien til en indlevet nørgårdsk nocturne over Methlings sang, hvis første vers antyder atmosfæren:

Ilden når mig til benet
en underfuld frostklar nat.
Tæppet beskytter sjælen
der er stjerner jeg ikke forstår (...)

'**Magyar Danyl Nota**' (2005) er en 70-års-fødselsdagsgave til den ungarskfødte og fra 1957 danske pianist og dirigent Tamás Vetö (1935-2025), der siden 1964 var en central Nørgård-dirigent på både Det Kongelige Teater, Den Jyske Opera og i Danmarks

Radio. Samarbejdet strakte sig fra uropførelser af værker som *Lila* (1971), *Gilgamesh* og *Twilight* (1976) over centrale opførelser af 3. symfoni og *Siddharta* til senere uropførelser af vægtige korværker som *Mytisk morgen* (2000) og *Ut Rosa* (2001).

Titlen er lidt kryptisk og peger på betydningen ”ungarsk-dansk melodi” – autografen lyder ”Magyar Nota” – men pointen synes klar: en ungarsk, kromatisk-mørk, bartóksk højrehånd over for en mere arpeggierende, lysere dansk-nørgårdsk venstrehånd med møder undervejs i klangskønne kadencer, måske med et strejf af mild vemod. Satsen indgik samme år i trioværket *Delta* som anden sats med titlen ’Nostalgia’.

Maj på vej – tre vejr billeder (2007) er inspireret af vand i form af den regnfulde danske forårsmåned april. Den søde, milde maj måned er stadig kun på vej. I første sats, ’April – ikke til at regne med!’, er også musikken omskiftelig, ustabil og uforudsigelig. Først får vi friske, stravinskyske rytmer kastet i hovedet med blæst, plask og trommedryp fra taget, så en mere idyllisk, bluesy ro, der efterhånden rinder ud i komponistens smukke ’Flos ut Rosa’-melodi. Dog ikke længe: Pludselig angribes der igen abrupt og aggressivt fra oven, indtil det friske startmotiv muntert runder af. Anden sats, ’Solregn’, er rolig som let regn i solskin, regnbueglimtende; musikken er søgende og smil-gennem-tårer-smuk, som en nostalgisk arie. I slutsatsen, ’Dagregn’, siler toner nedad fra det høje: dryppende, pibende og plaskende. Et lille ophold hvirvler, risler, og så strømmer det nedad igen. De tre impressionistiske vandstykker er komponeret i 2007 til uropførelse i Foreningen Ny Musik i Birkerød ved dens 25-års jubilæumskoncert og er tilegnet dens initiativtager, Kirsten Benn, til hendes 75-års-fødselsdag i maj 2007.

Waterways (Vandveje) – tre stykker for klaver (2008-09) – lader vandinspirationen fortsætte året efter *Maj på vej*. En tidlig manu-

skriptversion havde titlen *Waterways (Krusninger)* og satsnavnene: ’Resonanser’ (I), ’Fluktuationer’ (II) og ’Spejlinger’ (III). Det er musik, der breder sig i bølger af toneoverlappende klange, svævninger og hvirvlende hurtige toneparløb.

Per Nørgård har skrevet om stykkerne: ”Der er i de tre stykkers motiver forbindelser tilbage til to af mine tidligere klaverværker (’Grooving’ fra 1968, og ’Achilles og skildpadden’ fra 1983)”.

Første sats er præget af ekkovirkninger, som også forekommer i ’Grooving’. En følge af halvtoner klinger ind over hinanden, og umiddelbart derefter dæmpes de samme toner, således at efterindtrykket af de dæmpede toner afspejler den oprindelige rækkefølge. I denne nye sats er et ekstra ekko tilføjet – som ”smut” hen over en vandflade – tre gange. I anden sats findes reminiscenser af ’Achilles og skildpadden’, nemlig arpeggio-lignende højre- og venstrehåndsskalaer på henholdsvis sorte og hvide tangenter. Men de enkelte toner glimter nu som reflekser i en vandoverflade, som et moiré af konstant vekslende, meget korte varigheder. I tredje sats udfoldes og udvides mønstret af uregelmæssige varigheder, men kun brudstykkevis, og en ny melodi anes. Værket er komponeret til og tilegnet pianisten Anne Marie Fjord Abildskov.

Partita sévera (1951), der er et 23 minutter langt værk i fem satser, er den 19-årige Per Nørgårds svendestykke til komponisten, læreren Vagn Holmboe og pianisten Meta Holmboe efter to år som privatelev i komposition – før studiestarten på Det Kongelige Danske Musikkonservatorium i begyndelsen af 1952. Optagelsesprøven hos Holmboe i sommeren 1949 ledte til to års grundlæggende kompositionsuddannelse og studier af vægtige værker af Bach over wienerklassik til Stravinsky, Ravel og Bartók.

Sommeren 1951 var samtidig en fest: Den 18-årige Nørgård blev student og var samtidig blevet optaget som komponist på konservatoriet. Han fejrede det med en motorcykeltur med sin storebror, Bent, gennem de stadig sønderbombede europæiske byer helt ned til Rom. Nye oplevelser – på egen hånd.

Partitaen er skrevet ved hjemkomsten som en tak til musikerparret Holmboe. Værket er sandsynligvis aldrig blevet opført offentligt før denne indspilning, bortset fra at Meta Holmboe privat kan have spillet det. Sådant komponerede altså en ung begavet komponist med studenterhue i 1951 med inspiration fra klavermusik af Holmboe – for eksempel dennes *Suono da Bardo* fra 1949 – samt af Nielsen, Stravinsky, Bartók med flere. Christina Bjørkø spillede privat værket for Per Nørgård i april 2025 – til hans store glæde. Det fastsloges ved den lejlighed, at musikkens ungdommelige vildskab undervejs muligvis skyldtes motorcykelturen – ”fuld gas!” – kombineret med et ønske om at takke for Vagns inspirerende seriøsitet og koncentration – det sévere.

Partitaens fem satser, satstitler naturligvis på italiensk, får her blot stikord med på vejen:

– ‘Introduzione’ (Tempo giusto): Anslaget er seriøst, men helheden er en skøn blanding af alvor, opbrud og dansante, barbarisk-fremfærende balkanrytmer. Et heftigt udkast.

– ‘Elegia I’ (Grave ed espressivo): Udtrykket er både ungdommeligt elegisk og vildt – intenst og overvældende.

– ‘Intermezzo’ (Allegro): Hårdtslående rytmer og glissandi præger den centrale midtersats; ensomme recitationer og abrupte akkordhug. Mod slut går farten i vejret, opad: det går nedad!

– ‘Elegia II’ (Largo e pesante): Et dybt, opadgående tretonemotiv gentages klagende, mens et nedadgående firetonemotiv siler fra det høje. Samklangene er ude af balance og stiger desperat i styrke. Stemmer prøver imiterende at samle sig (Poco più mosso), men falder til jorden. Det opadgående klagemotiv letter til sidst – et lille håb?

– ‘Conclusione’ (Allegro non troppo): Hjemtur i høj fart. Bassens dybe d’er giver plads til både et kromatisk drejemotiv (tonerne c-h-a-b) og et mere slyngende motiv (tonerne es-as-des-c-a-as-h). Begge hvirvlende afsted, indtil de to motiviske rejsekammerater mødes til sidst, dog på hver deres grundtone, henholdsvis a og b.

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Med udgangspunkt i sin baggrund som musiker og musikforsker har Ivan Hansen spillet en afgørende rolle for at gøre Per Nørgårds musik og idéer tilgængelige. Han har især fokuseret på at dokumentere og forklare sammenhængen mellem Nørgårds tænkning og musikkens praktiske udførelse, blandt andet gennem sit arbejde for Det Kongelige Bibliotek i København med at redigere og publicere Per Nørgårds skrifter og Per Nørgårds kompositioner.

Christina Bjørnkøe (f. 1970) er en af Danmarks førende pianister. Hun er uddannet ved Juilliard School of Music i New York og Det Kongelige Danske Musikkonservatorium og har gennem sin karriere samarbejdet med kapaciteter som Krystian Zimerman og Emanuel Ax. I dag er hun desuden docent ved Syddansk Musik-konservatorium.

Med et alsidigt klassisk repertoire som fundament har Christina Bjørnkøe markeret sig med en omfattende koncertvirksomhed i Danmark og udlandet, både som solist og kammermusiker. Hendes virke har ført hende til koncertsale i Europa, USA, Sydamerika og Kina, herunder markante optrædener i Tivolis Koncertsal, og hun har gennem årene modtaget talrige priser.

Centralt i hendes arbejde står en omfattende diskografi for Dacapo Records: Hun vandt DR P2 Prisen for sin indspilning af Knudåge Riisagers klaverværker, og hendes udgivelser tæller desuden musik af komponister som Vagn Holmboe, Herman D. Koppel, Niels Viggo Bentzon og Anders Nordentoft. Hendes seneste indspilningsprojekt for Dacapo Records, *Animal Universe* (2021), præsenterer tolv sæt dyre-etuder bestilt hos forskellige danske komponister – et charmerende musikalsk menageri for både begyndere og professionelle.

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Dacapo Records, Denmark's national record label, was founded in 1989 with the purpose of releasing the best of Danish music past and present. The majority of our recordings are world premieres, and we are dedicated to producing music of the highest international standards.