

KNUDÅGE RIISAGER

violin works

JOHANNES SØE HANSEN
CHRISTINA BJØRKØE
ANNE SØE IWAN

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Johannes Søe Hansen, violin

Christina Bjørkøe, piano

Anne Søe Iwan, violin * **

Inkeri Vänskä, violin *

Inger Ørbæk Lerch Høj, violin *

Christian Ellegaard, violin *

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| [1] | BRICCONATA (PRANK) (1952) <i>for violin and piano</i> | 4:16 |
| | Vivace capriccioso | |
| [2] | AQUARELLE IN E MAJOR FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO (1917) | 4:03 |
| | Andante | |
| [3] | PALAVAS (1951) <i>for violin and piano</i> | 2:31 |
| [4] | ROMANCE IN C MAJOR (1914) <i>for violin and piano</i> | 1:44 |
| | Andante | |

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|------|--|-------|
| [5] | MINUET FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO (1916) | 2:32 |
| | Tempo di menuetto | |
| [6] | SOVESANG (LULLABY) (1936) <i>arr. for violin and piano</i> (c. 1952) | 2:08 |
| | <i>From Children's Songs</i> | |
| | SONATA FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO NO. 2, OP. 5 (1923-1924) | 19:29 |
| [7] | I Fresco con ritmo | 8:20 |
| [8] | II Aequo animo. | 5:01 |
| [9] | III Jocosio e risoluto | 6:08 |
| | SONATA FOR TWO SOLO VIOLINS, OP. 55B (1951) ** | 15:28 |
| [10] | I Allegro | 4:26 |
| [11] | II Adagio lamentoso | 6:08 |
| [12] | III Allegro vivace. | 4:54 |
| | CONCERTINO POUR CINQ VIOLONS ET PIANO, OP. 28A (1933) * | 8:42 |
| [13] | I Allegro | 2:52 |
| [14] | II Largo. | 3:35 |
| [15] | III Allegro. | 2:15 |

Total: 60:56

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KNUDÅGE RIISAGER was born on 6th March 1897 in Port Kunda, Estonia, where his father had built and at that time managed a cement factory. On the death of F.L. Smidth in 1899 Riisager's father was called home to work in Copenhagen for F.L. Smidth Company, and the family then moved to Frederiksberg, where Riisager lived for the rest of his life. After his school leaving exam in 1915 he began studying political science at the University of Copenhagen, and in 1921 he took the *cand. polit.* degree. From 1925 until 1950 he worked as a civil servant – for the last eleven years as a Departmental Head in the Ministry of Finance. Knudåge Riisager died on 26th December 1974.

Alongside this straightforward administrative career Riisager was prolifically active as a composer, music writer and organizer. He had his first training in theory and composition from Otto Malling, and after the latter's death in 1915 from Peder Gram. It was a study trip to Paris in 1923 that were to open the young composer's eyes in earnest to the new currents in contemporary music. In Paris Riisager became a pupil of Albert Roussel and Paul Le Flem, and the French influence can be clearly felt in his compositions from the mid-1920s. While the works of the years up to 1921 have a Nordic, lyrical, sometimes Carl Nielsenesque tone, the compositions of the years up to the mid-thirties show the influence not only of the Frenchmen Roussel and Satie, but also of Prokofiev, Honegger, Bartók, and not least Stravinsky. Riisager's highly personal style is already evident in the works of these years, as expressed for example by the almost provocative use of dissonant seconds, his fondness for bitonality, the humorous element of sheer music-making, and especially Riisager's own distinctive attitude to orchestral setting.

This whole development can be heard in works like the *Overture for Erasmus Montanus* and *Songs to texts by Sigbjørn Obstfelder*, both from c. 1920, *Suite dionysiaque* from 1924, as well as *Variations on a Theme of Mezangeau* and *T-Doxc. Poème mécanique*, both from 1926. The last of these works, subtitled *Jabiru, mechanical poetry*, is a musical portrait of what was then a brand-new Japanese aeroplane type. The work is quite in the spirit of the 'machine music' of the period and as such a fine example of the young composer's international orientation and will to experiment.

By 1928 Riisager had begun his collaboration with the ballet at the Royal Theatre; that year he composed the music for Elna Jørgen-Jensen's ballet *Benzin* (Petrol) with stage designs by Robert Storm Petersen. The premiere of this work, as far its reception was concerned, must be described as a resounding flop, and when it appeared in 1930 it only managed a total of three performances. At the end of the 1930s Riisager resumed his work as a ballet composer, supplying the music for Børge Ralov's Hans Christian Andersen ballet *Tolv med Posten* (Twelve by the Mail). But this was not premiered at the Royal Theatre until 1942, incidentally together with Harald Lander's *Slaraffenland* (Fool's Paradise) and *Qarrtsiluni* – also with Riisager's music. Although he composed a number of significant works in the thirties and forties, it was very much these ballet scores that established Riisager's name with the general public as one of the leading composers of his generation.

And for the next few years, too, ballet music was to be Riisager's most prominent field of work. In 1945 he completed the music for Lander's *Fugl Fønix* (The Phoenix), and in 1947 he reworked and scored a selection of Carl Czerny's piano etudes into his and Harald Lander's ballet *Etude* (later called *Etudes*). With this work in particular Riisager won international recognition, and although there are precedents for the use of orchestrated piano pieces as ballet music (for example Ottorino Respighi's *La Boutique fantasque* (1919)), the combination of the piano etudes and the technical progression of the dance steps has a special dimension which is precisely the point of the work as a whole.

In the 1920s Riisager had been one of the most active champions of the performance of contemporary music in Copenhagen, and was thus one of the founders of *Unge Tonekunstneres Selskab* (the Society of Young Composers) (chairman 1922-24) and a member of the judging committee of the society *Foreningen 'Ny Musik'*. Finally, in 1937, he became the chairman of *Dansk Komponistforening* (the Association of Danish Composers) – a post he kept for 25 years.

Riisager's great initiative and his talent for identifying and solving problems made him an obvious candidate for membership of innumerable society boards, committees, councils etc. not only in Denmark but also outside the country. And as we have seen,

alongside these activities he kept up his work at the Ministry until 1950, when he retired as Head of Department. But Riisager refused to rest on his laurels as a senior citizen, so in 1956 he took up the challenge of becoming director of the Royal Academy of Music in Copenhagen. This is quite thought-provoking, since he had never himself attended the institution. And in fact as director he devoted himself to the administrative work and never taught in the eleven years he was at the Academy.

After finishing *Etude* Riisager went to work on his only opera, the one-acter *Susanne*, to a libretto by his close friend Mogens Lorentzen. It was no great success: it only saw 17 performances, and when it was revived in 1957 – for Riisager's sixtieth birthday – it was only on stage six times. Several major works now followed, including a concerto for the violin virtuoso Wandy Tworek, but as before it was to be ballet music that brought Riisager success. In the fifties his compositions included two ballet scores for the Swedish choreographer Birgit Cullberg: *Månerenen* (Moon Reindeer), premiered at the Royal Theatre in 1957, and *Fruen fra Havet* (The Lady From The Sea), first performed at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York in 1960. Worth singling out from Riisager's last ten years are *Sangen om det uendelige* (The Song of the Infinite) from 1964 to a text by the Italian poet Giacomo Leopardi, and the orchestral works *Trittico* from 1971 and *To Apollo*, composed in 1972.

Knudåge Riisager combined a full-time job as a civil servant with extensive activities as a composer, and besides making an important contribution to many of the organizations of the musical world he was an extremely prolific writer; in his younger years especially in music articles, but later as an essayist, as is evident for example from the fine books *Tanker i tiden* (Thoughts in Time) (1952) and *Det usynlige monster* (The Invisible Pattern) (1957). In these lucidly formulated literary works, too, we experience Knudåge Riisager as a cultural personality with thorough training in the humanities and a broad cultural perspective.

As a composer Riisager had no pupils or successors, but with his unmistakable personal tone he succeeded in enriching Danish music with an extra dimension of spirituality and pithiness.

KNUDÅGE RIISAGER had a close relationship with the violin, an instrument he was already playing at the age of seven. At first he had a child's violin, but at 15 he was given a full-sized violin. His first teacher was Carl Sanne, who also taught him music theory, but in 1915 Riisager began taking lessons from Peder Møller. Møller was one of the most important Danish violinists of the time, prominent both as a soloist in orchestral concerts and as a trio and quartet player. As a teacher too he was greatly appreciated, and by all indications Riisager enjoyed the violin lessons. When Riisager made his debut as a composer in 1919 with his First String Quartet, it was the Peder Møller Quartet who 'christened' it. We know relatively little about Riisager's violin career. In his upper secondary years at the Henrik Madsen School (the later – now closed-down – Skt. Jørgens Upper Secondary) he was a member of the school orchestra and appeared in concerts as early as 1913. But after Riisager had taken his school leaving exam in 1915, the violin playing seems to have faded into the background in favour of his studies in economics at the University on the one hand, and on the other his training in music theory with a view to becoming a composer.

Although Riisager thus played down or presumably actually gave up his activities as a musician, his work list bears unmistakable marks of his close relationship with the violin and a wish to enrich the instrument with a number of substantial works, concluding with his only solo concerto, the violin concerto from 1951. Back in his early teenage years Riisager had tackled small pieces for violin and piano. *Romance* in C major, which he dedicated to his mother, Henrikke Riisager, is his earliest dated composition. This lush little work was – not surprisingly – conceived in a Late Romantic style which may have echoes of Fini Henriques' violin music, which Riisager knew – perhaps of Henriques' well loved violin romance. More lively and elaborated is his *Minuet* from 1916. By this time Riisager had composed seriously for four years and had written more than 20 works, most of which were very likely just as short as those recorded here. Riisager presumably destroyed the majority of these early works, but fortunately, from 1914 on,

we have a quite respectable series of works that show us the development in the young composer's style. There is at any rate a considerable leap from the two works mentioned to the third early Riisager work, *Aquarelle* in E major. This is from 1917 and makes use of a far more developed harmony that has touches of early Impressionism, and which with its delicate expression fully matches the title *Aquarelle* – that is, watercolour painting. In these early years Riisager tried his hand at setting dissonances against pure triads, in final chords for example, and *Aquarelle* is a surprisingly successful example of this 'experimental' style of his youth.

However, Riisager also wrote larger youthful works for violin. From 1917, for example, we have a three-movement sonata with piano, and from 1919 a sonata for violin and viola. After this his early association with the violin stops. We have to move forward to 1923 before Riisager again feels inspired by the combination violin/piano. During his watershed stay in Paris in 1923, he composed *Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 2*, op. 5, and the next year, in April 1924, he completed a revision of the work. Like the early Romance, this sonata is also dedicated to the composer's mother, but now the format of the work has grown crucially. His study period in Paris had fundamentally changed Riisager's way of writing. For one thing he took lessons from highly respected teachers, for another he frequented a milieu where it was not only French music that made a strong impression on him; the new music of the period in general was present in ample quantities. Riisager's sonata bears the imprint of these many different impressions, but if one were to mention the most important impulses, they must be Erik Satie, Igor Stravinsky and Sergei Prokofiev. In the first movement, though, one of the most salient features is the Romantic gesture; that is, the expansive treatment of melody with large intervals and the swelling harmonies which, it must be admitted, execute some drastic swerves and colour the musical progression in fascinating ways, but which trace their origins and mode of expression to the Romantic sonata style. In the third movement, however, the ties with the Romantic style have on the whole gone. The first subject, with its fourth leaps, its sharply drawn profile and its shifting time signatures, takes us into the tonal world of the 1920s. One notes that the first chord in the accompaniment is a hammered-out stacking of fourths and thus has a pentatonic sound.

This sonata is a major work in Riisager's production and is important to the understanding of his early development, in the sense that it contains prominent stylistic features from the works of the composers he had met during his stay in Paris, where he wrote the sonata in the course of the summer. Nevertheless it represents a stage in his development that he quickly put behind him; perhaps he himself felt the ties to the great Romantic tradition were too restrictive. At all events, in several of the works that he composed in the year after his time in Paris he was on his way towards something quite different – one hears this in works like *Suite Dionysiaque* op. 6 and the *Sinfonietta for Eight Winds* op. 7. Here the impulses from among others Satie and Stravinsky are far more conspicuous than in the sonata, which was given its first performance on 17th February 1925 by the violinist Karen Fridericia and the pianist Max Rytter in a concert at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen.

Concertino for Five Violins and Piano, op. 28a, and *Sonata for Two Solo Violins*, op. 55b, are both representative of the neo-Baroque way of writing that Riisager used in a number of works after his period of study with Hermann Grabner in Leipzig in 1932. The Concertino, which is end-dated 22nd May 1933, is typified by intense drive and a style that clearly refers to the concerto form of the Baroque. As is the case with the contemporaneous *Concertino for Trumpet and String Orchestra*, the middle movement is more removed from the Baroque idiom for such movements. In the Trumpet Concertino the soloist plays this section muted, as do the six instruments in the Violin Concertino; that is, the violins are muted and the piano plays *una corda*. The *Concertino for Five Violins and Piano* was given its first performance at Den Frie Udstilling in Copenhagen on 25th November 1933 by the violinists Charles Senderowitz, Lilli Paulsen, Gjerd Bruhn, Lavard Friisholm and Ejvin Andersen, with the composer Otto Mortensen at the piano.

The *Sonata for Two Solo Violins* is a far later work. It was composed in 1951 and only given its first performance on 18th February 1958. The inspiration to compose such a sonata may have come to Riisager from Béla Bartók's *Sonata for Solo Violin* from 1944, or perhaps rather from Sergei Prokofiev's *Sonata for Two Violins* from 1932. Riisager's work is in three movements, the first of which is marked by its forward drive and a certain mechanistic rigour, but also by limited rhythmic variation. The second movement is

decidedly polyphonic and cantabile, while the third movement is strongly rhythmic and sonorous. The sonata is certainly one of Riisager's most challenging works for the listener. But the sonata presents among other things many harmonic surprises which the attentive listener will be able to enjoy.

Besides these, this CD features three short works for violin and piano: *Sovesang* (Lullaby), which is an arrangement of one of the melodies from *Børneviser* (Children's Songs) – Riisager and Mogens Lorentzen's popular collection for children from 1936; *Bricconata*, that is 'a prank', from 1952; and *Palavas* from 1951. The last two works were written for and dedicated to Wandy Tworek, to whom Riisager had also dedicated his violin concerto, which had been given its first performance by Tworek in a DR Thursday Concert the same year. Both these small works – unlike the concerto – are virtuosic sparklers clearly composed with Wandy Tworek's effervescent, charming playing in mind. One almost gets the idea that *Palavas*, with its violinistic acrobatics, is a discreet tribute to Fini Henriques.

Claus Røllum-Larsen is senior researcher at The Royal Library.

THE PERFORMERS

JOHANNES SØE HANSEN (violin) trained at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen with Professor Milan Vitek. He is Concertmaster of the Danish National Symphony Orchestra, a position he has held since 1992. As a soloist Johannes Søb Hansen has performed with all the Danish symphony orchestras, as well as several of the other Nordic orchestras and the St. Petersburg Philharmonic. He has an important parallel career as a chamber musician with concerts at home and abroad. For Dacapo Johannes Søb Hansen has recorded among other things Vagn Holmboe's works for violin and piano and Niels Otto Raasted's solo sonatas. Johannes Søb Hansen was a prizewinner in the International Carl Nielsen Violin Competition 1984. In 1988, he was awarded the 'major' Jacob Gade Grant and the 'minor' Sonning Prize.

CHRISTINA BJØRKØE began playing the piano at the age of 5. She was a pupil of Therese Koppel until 1990, then at the age of 19 was admitted to the Juilliard School of Music in

New York as a pupil of Seymour Lipkin. Later she concluded her studies with Anne Øland at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen, where she made her debut in 1997. At the age of 16 she was already performing as a soloist with an orchestra, and since then she has given concerts as a soloist and chamber musician both in the major series at the Tivoli Concert Hall with music by Beethoven, Chopin and Schubert, and in various parts of Europe, the USA, South America and Asia. Christina Bjørkøe has recorded Carl Nielsen's piano works, which brought her the DR P2 Prize in 2009. She was also awarded the P2 Prize in 2005 for Best Classical Solo Recording with Knudåge Riisager's piano works. Christina has won several prizes and grants, among which she can number the Victor Borge Grant, the Gladsaxe Music Prize and the Carl Nielsen Travel Grant. Christina Bjørkøe has been a soloist with most Danish symphony orchestras, including the Danish National Symphony Orchestra, and among orchestras abroad has worked with the Czech Chamber Orchestra, the Recife Festival Orchestra in Brazil, the Malmö Symphony Orchestra and the Iceland Symphony Orchestra. In recent years she has given concerts in China, Sweden, Poland, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Germany, Italy and South America. Her many recordings include Niels Viggo Bentzon's piano sonatas and, along with the violinist Johannes Søb Hansen, Vagn Holmboe's violin sonatas, and with the violinist Arne Balk-Møller violin sonatas by Børresen, Glass and Henriques. She has most recently recorded Poul Rovsing Olsen's Piano Concerto with the Odense Symphony Orchestra. Christina Bjørkøe works as a lecturer at the Southern Denmark Academy of Music and Theatre School.

ANNE SØE IWAN began playing at the age of 4 with Ellinor Fribo at the Frederiksværk Music School. Later she studied with Tove and Béla Detreköy at the Danish Suzuki Institute. In 1984 she won the Gold Medal in the Berlingske Music Competition. She studied at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen with Professor Milan Vitek and at the Royal Academy of Music in Aarhus with Marta Libalova, where she made her debut in 1991. Further studies at the Mozarteum, Salzburg, with Ruggiero Ricci. Recipient of the Gade Prize 1990. In Salzburg she was a member of the Salzburg Chamber Soloists and the Salzburg String Sextet. She has performed as a soloist with all the Danish regional orchestras, Athelas Sinfonietta Copenhagen, the Belgrade Philharmonic, the

Salzburg Chamber Soloists, Salzburg Sinfonietta and Moscow Sinfonietta. In 1993-95 she was a member of the Nieuw Sinfonietta, Amsterdam, in 1995-2004 concertmaster in Athelas Sinfonietta Copenhagen, and since 2004 she has been assistant concertmaster in the Copenhagen Philharmonic. Anne Søe Iwan teaches violin, chamber music and orchestral ensemble playing at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen.

After studies at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki INKERI VÄNSKÄ trained at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen with Professor Serguei Azizian. She graduated from the soloist class in 2010 when her well-received debut concert gained much attention also because her uncle, the world famous conductor Osmo Vänskä, stood on the podium. Inkeri Vänskä plays regularly in the Royal Danish Orchestra, and has been an assistant in all the Copenhagen orchestras. She has won several prizes in various chamber music competitions in Finland.

INGER ØRBÆK LERCH HØJ studied violin at the Royal Danish Academy of Music with Professor Serguei Azizian and Johannes Søe Hansen. She graduated from the soloist class at the Royal Academy of Music, Aarhus, in 2010 and also took a master's degree from Northwestern University School of Music in Chicago. Inger Høj was leader of the Danish National Youth Ensemble and a long term member of the European Union Youth Orchestra working with conductors such as Bernard Haitink and Vladimir Ashkenazy. Selected by the Dutch talent program *Jumpstart Jr* Inger Høj gave a violin recital at Concertgebouw in Amsterdam in 2012. She received the Léonie Sonning Young Talent Award in 2011.

CHRISTIAN ELLEGAARD trained at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen with Professor Peder Elbæk and Professor Serguei Azizian and had his debut from the soloist class in 2011. He supplemented his studies at the chamber music institute Edsberg Castle in Stockholm with Professor Ulf Wallin and Mats Zetterquist, where he took a master's degree. Christian Ellegaard has won first prize in the Jacob Gade Violin Competition. In 2008 he was awarded the Leonie Sonning Grant for Young Musicians.

KNUDÅGE RIISAGER *af Claus Røllum-Larsen*

KNUDÅGE RIISAGER blev født den 6. marts 1897 i Port Kunda i Estland, hvor hans far havde ladet opføre og nu ledede en cementfabrik. Ved ingeniør Smidths død i 1899 blev faderen kaldt hjem for at arbejde i København for F.L. Smidth & Co, og familien flyttede da til Frederiksberg, hvor Riisager boede resten af sit liv. Efter studentereksamen i 1915 påbegyndte han det statsvidenskabelige studium ved Københavns Universitet, hvorfra han i 1921 blev cand. polit. Fra 1925 til 1950 fungerede han som embedsmand, de sidste elleve år som kontorchef i Finansministeriet. Knudåge Riisager døde den 26. december 1974.

Sideløbende med denne regelrette administrative karriere udfoldede Riisager en frodig virksomhed som komponist, musiksribent og organisationsmand. Sin første undervisning i teori og komposition fik han af Otto Malling og efter dennes død i 1915 af Peder Gram. Det skulle blive et studieophold i Paris i 1923, som for alvor kom til at åbne den unge komponists øjne for de nye strømninger i samtidens musik. I Paris blev Riisager elev af Albert Roussel og Paul Le Flem, og påvirkningen fra det franske fornemmer man klart i hans kompositioner fra midten af 1920'erne. Medens værkerne fra årene op til 1921 har et nordisk lyrisk, sine steder Carl Nielsens præg, så opviser kompositionerne fra årene op til midten af 1930'erne foruden indflydelse fra franskmændene Roussel og Satie påvirkning fra Prokofiev, Honegger, Bartók, og ikke mindst Stravinsky. Riisagers stærkt personlige stil skinner dog allerede igennem i værkerne fra disse år. Dette kommer således til udtryk i den nærmest provokerende anvendelse af sekunddissonanser, glæden ved det bitonale, det humoristiske, musikantiske islæt samt ikke mindst den for Riisager særegne orkestrering.

Hele denne udvikling kan aflyttes i værker som *Ouverture til Erasmus Montanus* og *Sange til tekster af Sighjorn Obstfelder*, begge fra ca. 1920, *Suite dionysiaque* fra 1924 samt *Variationer over et Thema af Mezangeau* og *T-Doxc. Poème mécanique*, begge fra 1926. Sidstnævnte værk med undertitlen *Jabiru, mekanisk Digtning*, er et musikalsk portræt af en dengang splinterny japansk flyvemaskinmodel. Værket er helt i pagt med tidens maskinmusik og som sådan et fint eksempel på den unge komponists internationale orientering og vilje til at eksperimentere.

Allerede i 1928 havde Riisager indledt sit samarbejde med balletten på Det Kongelige Teater, idet han dette år komponerede musikken til Elna Jørgen-Jensens ballet *Benzin* med scenografi af Robert Storm Petersen. Premieren på dette værk må, hvad modtagelsen angår, betegnes som en eklatant fiasko, og den opnåede ved fremkomsten i 1930 i alt kun tre opførelser. I slutningen af 1930'erne genoptog Riisager sit virke som balletkomponist, idet han leverede musikken til Børge Ralovs H.C. Andersen-ballet *Tolv med Posten*. Denne fik dog først sin premiere på Det Kongelige Teater i 1942, i øvrigt sammen med Harald Landers *Slaraffenland* og *Qarrrsiluni* – også med Riisagers musik. Skønt han i 1930'erne og 40'erne komponerede en række betydelige værker, så blev det i høj grad disse balletpartiturer, der i en bredere offentlighed kom til at slå Riisagers navn fast som en af sin generations førende komponister.

Balletmusikken blev også i de følgende år Riisagers væsentligste arbejdsområde. I 1945 færdiggjorde han musikken til Landers *Fugl Fønix*, og i 1947 bearbejdede og instrumenterede han et udvalg af Carl Czernys klaveretuder til sin og Harald Landers ballet *Etude* (senere kaldet *Etudes*). Med dette værk opnåede Riisager i særlig grad international anerkendelse, og selv om der er fortilfælde for anvendelsen af orkestrerede klaversatser som balletmusik (fx Ottorino Respighis *La boutique fantasque* (1919)), så rummer kombinationen af klaveretudernes og dansetrinnes tekniske progression en særlig dimension, som netop er det samlede værks pointe.

I 1920'erne havde Riisager været blandt de mest aktive forkæmpere for fremførelsen af ny musik i København og som sådan medstifter af Unge Tonekunstneres Selskab (formand 1922-24) og medlem af censurkomitéen i Foreningen 'Ny Musik'. Endelig i 1937 blev han formand for Dansk Komponistforening – en post han beholdt i 25 år.

Riisagers initiativrigdom og evne til problemafgrænsning og -løsning gjorde ham til et selvskrevent medlem af talrige foreningsbestyrelser, komitéer, råd m.m. såvel i Danmark som uden for landets grænser. Jævnside med denne virksomhed varetog han som nævnt sit arbejde i ministeriet til 1950, da han trak sig tilbage som kontorchef. Riisager lod sig dog ikke friste af en tidlig pensionisttilværelse, så i 1956 tog han imod opfordringen til at blive direktør for Det Kongelige Danske Musikkonservatorium. Det er ganske tankevækkende, idet han aldrig selv havde frekventeret denne læreanstalt.

Han helligede sig i øvrigt som direktør det administrative arbejde og underviste ikke i de elleve år, han var tilknyttet konservatoriet.

Efter at have færdiggjort *Etude* gik Riisager i gang med arbejdet på sin eneste opera, enakteren *Susanne*, til en libretto af hans nære ven Mogens Lorentzen. Nogen succes var der ikke tale om: den fik kun 17 opførelser, og ved genoptagelsen i 1957 – i forbindelse med Riisagers 60-årsdag – gik den kun over scenen seks gange. Flere større værker fulgte nu, bl.a. en koncert til violinvirtuosen Wandy Tworek, men det skulle som hidtil blive balletmusikken, der kom til at skaffe Riisager fremgang. Igennem 1950'erne komponerede han bl.a. to balletpartiturer til den svenske koreograf Birgit Cullberg, dels *Månerenen*, som havde premiere på Det Kongelige Teater i 1957, dels *Fruen fra Havet*, hvis førsteopførelse fandt sted på Metropolitan Opera House i New York i 1960. Af værkerne fra Riisagers sidste ti år må nævnes *Sangen om det uendelige* fra 1964 til tekst af den italienske digter Giacomo Leopardi samt orkesterværkerne *Trittico* fra 1971 og *Til Apollon* komponeret 1972.

Knudåge Riisager forenede et fuldtidsarbejde som embedsmand med en omfattende virksomhed som komponist, og ud over at gøre en betydelig indsats i et stort antal af musiklivets organisationer udfoldede han sig som en uhyre flittig skribent. I de unge år var det ikke mindst som artikelforfatter, men senere blev det som essayist, hvilket fremgår af bl.a. de fine bøger *Tanker i tiden* (1952) og *Det usynlige mønster* (1957). Også i disse klart formulerede litterære bidrag møder man Knudåge Riisager som en humanistisk dannet kulturpersonlighed med et bredt kulturelt udsyn.

Som komponist havde Riisager ingen elever eller efterfølgere, men han formåede med sin uforvekslelige, personlige tone at berige dansk musik med en ekstra dimension af spiritualitet og fyndighed.

KNUDÅGE RIISAGER havde et nært forhold til violinen, idet han allerede i syvårsalderen spillede dette instrument. I begyndelsen havde han en barneviolin, men som 15-årig fik han en hel violin. Hans første lærer var Carl Sanne, som også underviste ham i musikteori, men i 1915 fik Riisager Peder Møller som violinlærer. Møller var en af samtidens betydeligste danske violinister, fremtrædende både som solist ved orkesterkoncerter og som trio- og kvartetsspiller. Også som pædagog var han højt anset, og alt tyder på, at Riisager var glad for violintimerne. Da Riisager ved en koncert i 1919 debuterede som komponist med sin 1. strygekvartet, var det da også Peder Møller-Kvartetten der holdt den over dåben. Det er relativt sparsomt, hvad vi ved om Riisagers violinkarriere. I gymnasieårene på Henrik Madsens Skole (det senere – og nu også nedlagte – Skt. Jørgens Gymnasium) var han medlem af skoleorkestret og medvirkede ved koncerter så tidligt som i 1913. Men efter at Riisager var blevet student i 1915, synes violinspillet at være gledet helt i baggrunden til fordel for dels nationaløkonomiske studier på universitetet, dels undervisning i musikteori med henblik på en komponisttilværelse.

Skønt Riisager således tidligt nedtonede eller vel ligefrem helt kvittede sin musikervirksomhed, så bærer hans værkliste umiskendeligt præg af hans nære forhold til violinen og et ønske om at tilgodese instrumentet med en række substantielle værker sluttende med hans eneste solokonzert, violinkoncerten fra 1951. Allerede i de tidlige teenageår gav Riisager sig i lag med små stykker for violin og klaver. *Romance* i C-dur, som han tilegnede sin mor, Henrikke Riisager, er hans tidligste daterede komposition. Det lille sødmefyldte værk er – ikke overraskende – konciperet i en senromantisk stil, som måske har et genskin af Fini Henriques' violinmusik, som Riisager kendte, måske hans elskede violinromance. Mere livlig og mere udspunden er *Menuet* fra 1916. Riisager havde på dette tidspunkt komponeret seriøst i fire år og havde skrevet mere end 20 værker, hvoraf de allerfleste givetvis har været ligeså korte, som de her indspillede. Størstedelen af disse tidlige værker tilintetgjorde Riisager formodentlig, men heldigvis har vi fra 1914 og fremefter en ganske pæn række af værker, som viser os

udviklingen i den unge komponists stil. Der er i hvert fald et stort spring fra de nævnte to værker til det tredje tidlige Riisager-værk, *Aquarel* i E-dur. Det er fra 1917 og gør brug af en langt mere udviklet harmonik, der har anstrøg af tidlig impressionisme, og som i sit nænsomme udtryk stemmer helt overens med titlen *Aquarel*, dvs. vandfarvemaleri. Riisager forsøgte sig i disse tidlige år med at sætte dissonanser til rene treklange, bl.a. i slutakkorder, og *Aquarel* er et overraskende vellykket eksempel på denne "eksperimenterende" ungdomsstil.

Riisager skrev dog også større ungdomsværker for violin; fra 1917 foreligger således en tresatset sonate med klaver og fra 1919 en sonate for violin og bratsch. Herefter ophører hans tidlige beskæftigelse med violinen. Vi skal frem til 1923, før Riisager atter føler sig inspireret af kombinationen violin/klaver. Under sit skelsættende ophold i Paris i 1923 komponerer han *Sonate for violin og klaver nr. 2*, op. 5, og det følgende år, i april 1924, færdiggør han en revision af værket. Ligesom den tidlige romance tilegnes også denne sonate komponistens mor, men værkformatet er her vokset afgørende. Studieopholdet i Paris havde grundlæggende ændret Riisagers skrivemåde. Dels modtog han undervisning af højt anskrevne lærere, dels bevægede han sig i et miljø, hvor ikke alene fransk musik gjorde stort indtryk på ham, men hvor tidens nye musik generelt var til stede i rigt mål. Riisagers sonate bærer præg af disse mange forskellige indtryk, men skal man nævne de vigtigste impulser, må det være Erik Satie, Igor Stravinsky og Sergej Prokofiev. I førstesatsen er et af de mest fremtrædende træk dog den romantiske gestus, dvs. den brede melodik med store intervaludsving og den svulmende harmonik, som godt nok skrider voldsomt ud og farver det musikalske forløb på en fascinerende måde, men som har sin oprindelse og sit udtryk fra den romantiske sonatestil. I tredjesatsen er bindingen til den romantiske stil imidlertid stort set borte. Hovedtemaet fører os med sine kvartskridt, sin skarptskårne profil og sine vekslende taktarter ind i 1920'ernes toneverden. Man bemærker, at den første akkord i akkompagnementet er en udhamret opstabling af kvarter og derved en pentaton klang.

Denne sonate er et hovedværk i Riisagers produktion og vigtigt til forståelsen af hans tidlige udvikling i den forstand, at det indeholder fremtrædende stiltræk fra de komponisters værker, som han havde mødt under opholdet i Paris, hvor han skrev sonaten

i løbet af sommeren. Alligevel repræsenterer den et hurtigt overstået stadium i hans udvikling; gad vist om han selv følte bindingen til den store romantiske tradition for snærende. I hvert fald var han i flere af de værker, han komponerede året efter sit Parisophold, på vej et helt andet sted hen – det hører man i værker som *Suite Dionysiaque* op. 6 og *Sinfonietta for 8 blæsere* op. 7. Her er impulserne fra bl.a. Satie og Stravinsky langt mere fremtrædende end i sonaten, som blev uropført den 17. februar 1925 af violinisten Karen Fridericia og pianisten Max Rytter ved en koncert på Det Kongelige Danske Musikkonservatorium.

Både *Concertino for 5 violiner og klaver*, op. 28a, og *Sonate for 2 solovioliner*, op. 55b, er eksponenter for den neobarokke skrivemåde, som Riisager benyttede i en række værker efter sit studieophold hos Hermann Grabner i Leipzig i 1932. Concertinoen, der er slutdateret 22. maj 1933, præges af en voldsom motorik og en stil, som klart refererer til barokkens koncertform. Ligesom det gælder den samtidige *Concertino* for trompet og strygeorkester, er mellemsatsen mere fjernet fra det barokke sats-idiom. I trompetconcertinoen spiller solisten her med dæmper, og det samme gør de seks instrumenter i violinconcertinoen, dvs. violinerne med sordin og klaveret med “una corda”. *Concertino for 5 violiner og klaver* blev uropført på Den Frie Udstilling den 25. november 1933 af violinisterne Charles Senderowitz, Lilli Paulsen, Gjerd Bruhn, Lavard Friisholm og Ejvin Andersen med Otto Mortensen ved klaveret. *Sonate for 2 solovioliner* er et langt senere værk. Den er komponeret i 1951 og først uropført 18. februar 1958. Inspiration til at komponere en sådan sonate kan Riisager have fået fra Béla Bartóks sonate for violin solo fra 1944 eller måske snarere Sergej Prokofjevs sonate for to violiner fra 1932. Riisagers værk er i tre sats, hvoraf den første præges af fremdrift og en vis motorik, men med en begrænset rytmisk variation. Andensatsen er udpræget polyfon og sangbar, medens tredje sats er stærkt rytmisk og klangfuld. Sonaten er ganske givet et af Riisagers lyttemæssigt mest fordringsfulde værker. Men sonaten rummer mange bl.a. harmoniske overraskelser, som den koncentrerede lytter vil kunne nyde.

Denne cd rummer herudover tre korte værker for violin og klaver: *Sovesang*, som er et arrangement af en af melodierne fra *Børneviser* – Riisager og Mogens Lorentzens populære samling for børn fra 1936 – *Bricconata*, dvs. skælmsstreg, fra 1952 og *Palavas*

fra 1951. De sidste to værker er skrevet til og tilegnet Wandy Tworek, som Riisager også havde tilegnet sin violinkoncert, og som Tworek havde uropført ved en torsdagskoncert samme år. Begge disse små værker er – til forskel fra koncerten – virtuose knaldperler, som tydeligvis er komponeret med Wandy Tworeks sprudlende og charmerende spil for øje. Man kan næsten få den tanke, at *Palavas* med sin violinakrobatik er en diskret hyldelse til Fini Henriques.

Claus Røllum-Larsen er seniorforsker ved Det Kongelige Bibliotek.

DE MEDVIRKENDE

JOHANNES SØE HANSEN (violin) er uddannet på Det Kgl. Danske Musikkonservatorium hos professor Milan Vitek og er i dag en af DR SymfoniOrkestrets koncertmestre; en post, han har varetaget siden 1992. Som solist har Johannes Søe Hansen spillet med alle de danske symfoniorkestre, flere nordiske samt Skt. Petersborg Filharmonikerne. Som kammermusiker har han sideløbende haft en stor karriere med koncerter både hjemme og i udlandet. For Dacapo har Johannes Søe Hansen bl.a. indspillet Vagn Holmboes værker for violin og klaver med Christina Bjørkøe og Niels Otto Raasteds solosonater. Johannes Søe Hansen vandt Den internationale Carl Nielsen violinkonkurrence i 1984. I 1988 modtog han Jacob Gades Store Legat og den “lille” Sonningpris.

CHRISTINA BJØRKØE begyndte at spille klaver som 5-årig. Hun var elev af Therese Koppel indtil 1990, hvorefter hun i en alder af 19 år blev optaget på Juilliard School of Music i New York som elev hos Seymour Lipkin. Senere afsluttede hun sine studier hos Anne Øland på Det Kongelige Danske Musikkonservatorium, hvorfra hun debuterede i 1997. Allerede som 16-årig optrådte hun som solist med orkester og har siden givet koncerter som solist og kammermusiker både i Tivolis store serier med musik af Beethoven, Chopin og Schubert og rundt om i Europa, USA, Sydamerika og Asien. Christina Bjørkøe har indspillet Carl Nielsens klaverværker, som indbragte hende P2-prisen 2009. Hun modtog ligeledes P2 prisen i 2005, for bedste klassiske soloudgivelse med Knudåge Riisagers klaverværker. Christina er tildelt adskillige priser og legater, her kan nævnes

Victor Borges Legat, Gladsaxe Musikpris, Carl Nielsens Rejselegat. Christina Bjørkøe har været solist med de fleste danske symfoniorkestre, inkl. DR SymfoniOrkestret, og blandt orkestre i udlandet kan nævnes Det tjekkiske Kammerorkester, Recife Festival Orchestra i Brasilien, Malmö Symfoniorkester og Iceland Symphony Orchestra. De seneste år har hun givet koncerter i Kina, Sverige, Polen, Tjekkiet, Kroatien, Tyskland, Italien og Sydamerika. Blandt hendes mange indspilninger kan desuden nævnes Niels Viggo Bentzons klaversonater og sammen med violinisten Johannes Søb Hansen Vagn Holmboes violinsonater og med violinisten Arne Balk-Møller violinsonater af Børresen, Glass og Henriques. Hun har senest indspillet Poul Rovsing Olsens klaverkoncert med Odense Symfoniorkester. Christina Bjørkøe er ansat som docent ved Syddansk Musikkonservatorium og Skuespillerskole.

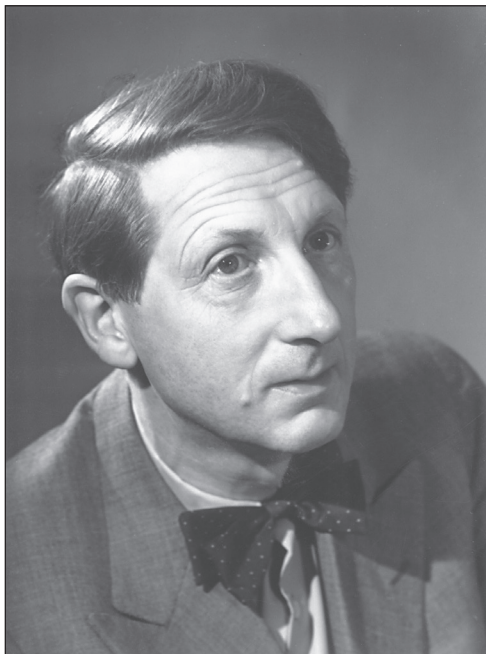
ANNE SØE IWAN begyndte at spille som 4-årig hos Ellinor Fribo på Frederiksværk Musikskole. Siden undervisning hos Tove og Béla Detreköy på Det Danske Suzuki Institut. I 1984 vandt hun guldmedalje i Berlingske Musikkonkurrence. Studier på Det Kongelige Danske Musikkonservatorium hos prof. Milan Vitek og på Det Jyske Musikkonservatorium hos Marta Libalova. Debut 1991. Videre studier på Mozarteum, Salzburg, hos Ruggiero Ricci. Modtager af Gade Prisen 1990. I Salzburg medlem af Salzburg Chamber Soloists og Salzburger Streichsextett. Har optrådt som solist med alle de danske landsdelsorkestre, Athelas Sinfonietta Copenhagen, Beograds Filharmoniske Orkester, Salzburg Chamber Soloists, Salzburg Sinfonietta og Moskva Sinfonietta. I perioden 1993 – 95 var hun ansat i Nieuw Sinfonietta, Amsterdam, 1995-2004 koncertmester i Athelas Sinfonietta Copenhagen, og siden 2004 har hun været 2. koncertmester i Sjællands Symfoniorkester. Anne Søb Iwan underviser endvidere på Det Kongelige Danske Musikkonservatorium i violin, kammermusik og orkesterstemmespil. Anne Søb Iwan spiller på en Nicolaus Gagliano fra 1745, som Augustinus Fonden har stillet til rådighed.

Efter studier ved Sibelius Akademiet i Helsinki fortsatte INKERI VÄNSKÄ sin uddannelse på Det Kongelige Danske Musikkonservatorium hos Professor Serguei Azizian. Hun havde debut fra solistklassen i 2010, hvor hendes anmelderroste debutkoncert tiltrak

sig stor opmærksomhed, også fordi hendes onkel, den verdensberømte dirigent Osmo Vänskä stod på podiet. Inkeri Vänskä spiller fast i Det Kgl. Kapel og har desuden været assistent i alle de københavnske orkestre. Hun har vundet adskillige priser i diverse kammermusikkonkurrencer i Finland.

INGER ØRBÆK LERCH Høj studerede violin på Det Kongelige Danske Musikkonservatorium hos professor Serguei Azizian og Johannes Søb Hansen. Hun havde debut fra solistklassen på Det Jyske Musikkonservatorium i 2010 og har også taget en master's degree på det prestigefyldte Northwestern University of Music i Chicago. Inger Høj har været koncertmester i DR Ungdomsensemblet og i mange år været medlem af EUYO, European Union Youth Orchestra, med store dirigenter som Bernard Haitink and Vladimir Ashkenazy. Det hollandske talentprogram *Jumpstart* Jr udvalgte i 2012 Inger Høj til at give en recital i Concertgebouw, Amsterdam. Inger Høj har bl.a. modtaget Léonie Sonnings stipendium i 2011.

CHRISTIAN ELLEGAARD er uddannet fra Det Kongelige Danske Musikkonservatorium under professor Peder Elbæk og professor Serguei Azizian og havde sin debut fra solistklassen i 2011. Han supplerede sine studier på kammermusikinstitutionen Edsberg Slot i Stockholm hos professor Ulf Wallin og Mats Zetterquist, hvorfra han tog en magistereksamen. Christian Ellegaard har bl.a. vundet førstepris ved Berlingske Tidendes Klassiske Musikkonkurrence og Jacob Gade Violinkonkurrencen. Han modtog i 2008 Léonie Sonnings stipendium for unge musikere.



KNUDÅGE RIISAGER

DDD

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