

Rued Langgaard Piano Works Vol. 3 Berit Johansen Tange



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[1]	Som en Tyv om Natten (As a Thief in the Night) , BVN 211a (1930) *.....	7:03
	Misterioso minaccioso – Frenetico – [No designation]	
	Insektarium , BVN 134 (1917).	9:19
	9 <i>Fixerbilleder (9 puzzle pictures) for piano</i>	
[2]	No. 1, Forficula auricularia (Earwig): Tempo ad libitum.	2:12
[3]	No. 2, Acridium migratorium (Migratory Locust): Mosso! Mosso!	0:39
[4]	No. 3, Melontha vulgaris (Cockchafer): Rubato	0:45
[5]	No. 4, Tipula oleracea (Daddy-longlegs [crane fly])	0:58
[6]	No. 5, Libelulla depressa (Dragon fly): Presto	0:58
[7]	No. 6, Anobium pertinax (Death watch beetle): Tempo ad libitum	0:46
[8]	No. 7, Musca domestica (Housefly): Agitato – Langsomt (Slowly) – [Tempo I]	1:26
[9]	No. 8, Julus terristis (Millipede): Prestissimo.	0:57
[10]	No. 9, Culex pipiens (Mosquito)	0:38
[11]	Skyggeliv (Shadow Life) , BVN 307 (1914–45).	7:02
	<i>Fantasy for piano</i>	
	Allegro moderato – Mosso – [Tempo I]	
[12]	I det blafrende Efteraarslygteskær (In the Flickering Autumn Lamplight) , BVN 206 (1930–33)	9:03
	<i>Stemningsbilleder i een Sats (Mood pictures in one movement)</i>	
	Strepitoso (Noisy) – Espressivo – Strepitoso – Rimbombevole (Resounding) –	
	A tempo [I] – Rimbombevole – Agitato misterioso – Rimbombevole – Agitato –	
	Mosso – Vemale agitato – Fiammante quasi lanterno in pioggia (Flaming like a lantern	
	in the rain) – Aspramente (Severely)	

	Le Béguinage , BVN 369 (1948–49).	16:18
	<i>Little piano sonata</i>	
[13]	I. Andante marcato – Lento – Andante	3:29
[14]	II. ♩ = 60	3:26
[15]	III. ♩ = 96 Efterhånden så hurtigt som muligt (As fast as possible, little by little)	1:24
[16]	IV. Quasi organo! – “Slutning” (“Ending”) – Langsomme (More slowly), grazioso!	4:18
[17]	V. ♩ = 92 – Langsomme (More slowly) – ♩ = 69 – Langsomme (More slowly)	3:41
	Chiesa madre , BVN 367 (1948–49) *.....	13:26
	<i>Little sonata</i>	
[18]	I. ♩ = 84.	3:05
[19]	II. Introduction: Værdigt (Dignified) – Sang (Song): Same Tempo – Intermezzo –	
	Organ – Foraar (Spring): Tempo 1 – Grazioso, con moto	9:17
[20]	III. Ordruk: Grazioso.	1:04
[21]	Sponsa Christi tædium vitæ , BVN 297 (1944) *.....	4:21
	<i>Fantasia virtuosa</i>	
	Misterioso – Esaltato – Triumphale	

* World premiere recordings

TOTAL 66:32

STAGES IN RUED LANGGAARD'S LIFE

- 1893** Born on 28th July in Copenhagen, the only child of the pianist and composer Siegfried Langgaard and the pianist Emma Langgaard.
- 1901–05** Composes small piano pieces. Plays piano, violin and organ. Does not attend school, but is privately tutored in musical disciplines and school subjects. Paints, draws and writes little stories, often with a dramatic plot that revolves around death. Makes his debut in 1905 as an organist – incorporating improvisation – at the church Frederikskirken (the 'Marble Church'), Copenhagen. Shows an amazingly high musical standard and establishes a reputation as a child prodigy.
- 1907** Composition lessons from his father Siegfried Langgaard and for a brief period also lessons in counterpoint from Carl Nielsen. Composes short orchestral works with and without chorus, songs and piano pieces.
- 1912** Organist's assistant at Frederikskirken. Later applies for many posts as organist, but despite high qualifications is rejected time after time.
- 1913** On 10th April, a concert in Berlin with the Berlin Philharmonic, exclusively with music by Rued Langgaard. Enthusiastic reviews. Falls in love with a girl called Dora during a summer stay at Kyrkhult, Blekinge, Sweden.
- 1914** Siegfried Langgaard dies on 5th January. Rued continues living with his mother until her death in 1926. Makes his debut as a conductor in a concert at the society *Musikforeningen*, Copenhagen. Subsequently conducts from time to time (mainly his own works).
- 1915** Mental crisis. Spends time at the hydro sanatorium in Tyringe, southern Sweden.
- 1916** Composes the theosophically-inspired *Sinfonia interna* and the visionary *Music of the Spheres* for orchestra, remote orchestra, choir and vocal soloists.
- 1917** At the same time as Langgaard is still composing atmospheric Romantic music, he begins to experiment with concrete music, as in *Insectarium*, where nine insects are imitated.
- 1921** During a visit to Venice Rued Langgaard has the first inspiration for his opera *Antichrist*, and begins to compose *Music of the Abyss*, which is at first given the title *Lagoonarian Serenade (to the Revelation of St. John)*.
- 1923** Finishes the opera *Antichrist*, which is submitted to the Royal Danish Theatre. But the opera is rejected because the libretto is deemed unsuitable. Langgaard continues for the rest of his life to compose new versions of the opera in the hope of performance. But in vain.
- 1927** Marries Valborg Constance Olivia Tetens, his mother's friend and domestic helper for the preceding six years.
- 1930** Symphony no. 4 "Fall" is performed as a studio production at the Danish Broadcasting Corporation (Danmarks Radio). Over the following years Langgaard's music is performed almost exclusively by the orchestra of the Danish Broadcasting Corporation (now the Danish National Symphony Orchestra). The conductor is usually Launy Grøndahl.

1930–33 In a time marked by philosophical brooding and increasing artistic isolation he composes *In the Flickering Autumn Lamplight* and *As a Thief in the Night*, typified by ecstatic apocalyptic visions.

1940 Secures the only official appointment of his life as organist and precentor at Ribe Cathedral. Lives for the remainder of his life in Ribe, where he is soon regarded as an eccentric. With his long, untrimmed hair, broad-brimmed hat and trousers that are too short, he stands out strikingly in the small city. The move to Ribe leads to his revitalization as a composer.

1944–45 A striking change of style leads to a number of dramatically expressive works of a retrospective character – several symphonies as well as *Sponsa Christi tædium vitæ* and *Shadow Life*.

1946–51 While Langgaard increasingly composes at night, his music splits into two directions: either pessimism and desperation, often with elements of 'happening', as is the case in *Le Béguinage*, or light-filled, harmonious music with a paradisiac perspective, as can be experienced in *Chiesa madre*.

1952 Dies at Ribe Hospital on the night between 9th and 10th July.



Rued Langgaard arouses attention strolling across the Højbro bridge in Copenhagen on 14 September 1932.

"I see what I want to do like a picture, and then the music develops all by itself".

So says Rued Langgaard in an interview in 1922, in which he makes it clear that he takes his starting point in his own imagination when he creates music. The tradition and the customary forms known from sonatas and symphonies are not crucial. It is the inner visions and moods that are crucial to Langgaard.

In the seven piano works, all of which have graphic titles, and were composed in the period from Langgaard's youth in 1917 until the last half of the 1940s, we experience Rued Langgaard 'unfiltered'. A psyche translated into music. And for good reasons. Most of the pieces were given their first performances several decades after Langgaard's death, so there was no interested audience waiting for the music, no listeners for Langgaard to relate to while he composed the music. Instead Langgaard unfolds a succession of deeply personal manias, as if they are internal confessions or musical letters to himself.

Along the way Rued Langgaard engages with some of the most important themes of his life. All the pieces are subject to an idea that the world is profound and that mysterious forces hold sway. The notion of an imminent religious apocalypse comes to expression in *As a Thief in the Night*. Evil is thematized in *Insectarium* and *In the Flickering Autumn Lamplight*. And the idea of life as martyrdom is an important element in *Shadow Life* and *In the Flickering Autumn Lamplight*.

As a Thief in the Night, BVN 211a (1930)

At the beginning of *As a Thief in the Night* cascades of notes run up and down the keyboard; first faintly, but soon powerfully, like a storm threatening on the horizon that turns out to contain devastating forces. It is the Second Coming of Christ and the subsequent Judgement Day that are depicted: "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat."

Besides the quotation from the Bible (Second Epistle of Peter) Langgaard refers to a short story of the same name 'Som en Tyv om Natten' (As a Thief in the Night) – written by Johannes

Jørgensen in 1921 – which describes how Judgement Day is played out on a summer night in Copenhagen, as the residents of the city disappear one by one, without warning, from the surface of the earth. In this modern version Judgement Day steals into the individual in the same way as Langgaard's music begins – *piano* – only later to bare its fangs.

The music is virtuosic, free-flowing and impactful, with reminiscences of Franz Liszt, with whom Langgaard's father Siegfried Langgaard had studied. But with an abrupt transition to a solemn, hymn-like choral the music takes on a collage quality that makes it unmistakably art of the 20th century. The chorale and the subsequent music are a re-use of an extended passage from the first movement of Langgaard's nine-year-old *Music of the Abyss*, in which the chorale, after a period, is assaulted by a hectically descending note sequence that breaks destructively into the majestic progress of the music. But whereas in *Music of the Abyss* Langgaard in the end creates a kind of harmony as he lets the chorale die away in an open major chord, it is different with *As a Thief in the Night*, where the music instead slips its leash as the rhythmic intensity deepens and the modulations increase until the music is so to speak pulverized. Corroded from within.

Add to this that the effect with the descending sequences that disturbingly break into the progressing chorale originally comes from Carl Nielsen's piano work *Theme with Variations* (1916). In the apocalyptic music *As a Thief in the Night* Langgaard not only eradicates his own creation. At the same moment he dismisses his older composer colleague.

Insectarium, BVN 134 (1917)

The nine small insect portraits that make up *Insectarium*, with their aphoristic brevity, are unique among Langgaard's works. With a concentrated minimalistic style in which most of the music is monophonic, there is an affinity with Anton Webern's miniatures from the same period. However, Langgaard was probably not aware of this, nor is it likely that he knew that here, as far as we know, he is the first composer in the history of music to ask the pianist to play directly on the strings of the piano (in the first and seventh movements), and knock on the lid of the piano (sixth movement). Despite the fact that large parts of the music are to be played *pianissimo* – insects are small – the expression is dramatic. This is further emphasized by the instruction that the pianist, midway through the first movement after a passage that is to be played "dementedly", is asked to lift his "hands over his head ad libitum!"

Insectarium is cryptic music and far more than a new version of *Carnival of the Animals*. With the subtitle "9 Puzzle Pictures (for Piano) by Crótalus durissus" (a South American rattlesnake) and with the choice of insects, several of which are pests, Langgaard signals that something abnormal and malignant is concealed in the music.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Earwig | 6. Death watch beetle |
| 2. Migratory Locust | 7. Housefly |
| 3. Cockchafer | 8. Millipede |
| 4. Daddy-longlegs (crane fly) | 9. Mosquito |
| 5. Dragon fly | |

Insectarium thus turns out to be small, corrosive studies – with an absurd twinkle in the eye – of the destructive forces that Langgaard experienced in the age, and on which he also focuses in the major work from the same time, *Music of the Spheres*, and later in the opera *Antichrist*.

Shadow Life, BVN 307 (1914–1945)

The subtitle of *Shadow Life* is "Fantasy for piano", and Langgaard has added "Composed 1914–1945". 1914 was a key year for Langgaard, since his father and greatest artistic support Siegfried Langgaard died in January that year. And after the successful presentation concert in Berlin in 1913 it also became clear at that juncture that the age usually had nothing but a shake of the head for Langgaard's music and, very much against his will, he saw himself relegated to a life in the shadow of other far more popular composers. In *Shadow Life* Rued Langgaard – now a good 50 years old – revisited the lyrically dreaming style that can be heard in the character pieces *Gitanjali Hymns* (1918), the Schumann-inspired *Fantasy Sonata* (1916) and not least the song *Det rinder med Dug* (Dew is Running) (1914), the beginning of which recurs in *Shadow Life* as a remote echo. The end of this song says "All my thoughts bleed together into one cry for happiness!"

The desperate utterance in this song from his youth, *Det rinder med Dug*, has for the mature Langgaard become quiet resignation because of a mood of defeat that is manifested right from the beginning in the main theme, the second half of which consists quite symbolically of three descending notes in a minor scale. Later, in the most agitated passages of the fantasy, the three descending notes are repeated again, now with dramatic accents as if fate is knocking on

the door with relentless consistency. However, the response is by no means heroic, it is only a repetition of the wistfully singing main motif.

Despite the despondency, Langgaard shows himself in *Shadow Life* from his most poetically graceful side – perhaps because the fantasy was finished at Blidahpark in Hellerup in July 1945. There, close to the Øresund and his childhood home in Frederiksstaden in Copenhagen, Langgaard, on a long summer holiday from his organist post in Ribe, had a refuge and the freedom to dream his way back to the hopeful world of his youth.

In the Flickering Autumn Lamplight, BVN 206 (1930–1933)

Even as a child Rued Langgaard was fascinated by the flickering light of the gas lamps in Copenhagen. In the apocalyptic opera *Antichrist*, each scene is staged with gas lamplight that changes character along the way and culminates with the former world going up in flames. In *In the Flickering Autumn Lamplight* we find ourselves in Hell, where the flames consume the tormented souls.

All Hell is loose from the very first notes, which are to be played *strepitoso* (noisy), with the musical motifs shooting up like rockets. With coruscating accents Langgaard wants to light a bonfire in the music. In a subsequent section, which is to be played *rimbombevole* (resounding), the lower regions of the piano are activated until, towards the ending, in the section *Fiammante quasi lanterna in pioggia* (Flaming like a lantern in the rain), we hear a tremolo in the high register of the piano, imitating the crackle of flames.

In the Flickering Autumn Lamplight is merciless music in which destructive, untameable forces are unleashed. This is underscored partly by the fact that Langgaard at first preferred the title *Lygtemands-Stemninger* (Will-o'-the-wisp moods), invoking the folkloristic notion of supernatural beings with lanterns luring people to their doom; and it is further underscored by a motto that Langgaard took from Thøger Larsen's poem *Stormnat* (Stormy Night) (1912):

*The storm tears and scatters across the earth
and takes its strength from the night.
The thirsty dark of perdition sucks
at every chimney-stock.*

By 'perdition' is meant annihilation in a religious sense, beyond redemption by God; and with harmonies at the edge of the familiar major-minor system, related to those of the most boundary-breaking works of Richard Strauss, Langgaard wishes here to depict a world possessed by evil. The only question is whether he sees himself as the prey of this wild hunt, or whether it is rather about the enemies in Danish musical life to whom Langgaard had taken a dislike.

Le Béguinage, BVN 369 (1948–1949)

Langgaard sums up some of his darkest, most mystical and self-destructive thoughts in the "little piano sonata" *Le Béguinage*. The title refers to a place in Bruges inhabited by *beguines*, women belonging to a pious Catholic lay movement. But this is no pious music that Langgaard has created. On the contrary. Added in brackets after *Le Béguinage* is "means holiness (mockingly)", and in purely musical terms Langgaard sneers at the religious. Good and evil – Christ and Antichrist – merge together in an absurd hysteria, and Langgaard himself plays a major role. In each of the last four movements, and most clearly at the very beginning of the third movement, we hear the same motif hammered out, a B flat major seventh chord played in a descending progression. The motif also appears in other enigmatic works by Langgaard, and it appears to be a personal 'fate motif'.

Langgaard appears in *Lé Béguinage* as a flagellant whipping himself as a penance. The first time the motif is played, in the second movement, Langgaard has inserted a note on the manuscript: "*Unreasonable remark on this motif which runs through the pieces*: When this motif is played the performer must *stand up* for each step on the pedal so it can be so violent that piano and pedal in time fall apart."

The absurd plays a major role throughout the work. Towards the end of the fourth movement, whose intense first subject, according to a note, is to be repeated "endlessly", we hear a number of arpeggiated chords. After these a kind of choral response is inserted, to which the manuscript adds a text, "Ave Mari-a!". But the notes are not to be played beautifully, they are to be hammered out *fortissimo*, and after the hysteria has culminated in a series of repetitions, as the conclusion of the movement Langgaard has noted "Mania religiosa" – religious mania.

The music for the end of the last movement, on the other hand, sounds beautiful and serene. It is a quotation from *Antichrist*, from a passage where the words "Pray to the Virgin, pray for thy salvation" are sung but, it should be noted, by the figure 'The Lie'.

Chiesa madre, BVN 367 (1948–1949)

In the 'little sonata' *Chiesa madre*, which means Mother Church and refers to the Catholic Church, Rued Langgaard refers to personal experiences in the 1920s, when he several times felt drawn to Catholicism. The music most of all has the character of a succession of religious meditations of an almost private nature, and it is written for the instruments that Langgaard himself played: harmonium, organ or piano.

The first movement takes the form of a fervently devotional organ chorale, whereas the first section of the second movement is intimate music well suited to the limited keyboard of a harmonium. Towards the end of the second movement, however, he has written "Organ" next to some broad, powerful chords, after which there is a sudden change to a playfully light, idiomatic piano music of a nostalgic character with the title "Spring". A similar mood prevails in the last movement, where Langgaard, with the title *Ordurp*, remembers St. Andrew's College at Ordurp-høj, where he had contacts with a Jesuit community in 1927.

Chiesa madre is a sister work to *Le Béguinage*. Most of the movements in both sonatas come originally from the suite "X", *Mood Madness from Ordurphøj (Gala religiosa)*. But while in *Le Béguinage* Langgaard cultivates an absurd, madness-tinged musical idiom, *Chiesa madre* constitutes a peaceful, soulful universe; all in all, a brilliant example of Langgaard's ambivalent religiosity and occasionally schizophrenic musicality.

Sponsa Christi tædium vitæ, BVN 297 (1944)

Langgaard even refers to his Catholic period in the 1920s in *Sponsa Christi tædium vitæ*. The first part of the title, *Sponsa Christi*, means 'Bride of Christ', a term used of the Catholic Church in general; it is also the title of a number of now-lost hymns for piano from 1923. And in the triumphant conclusion Rued Langgaard quotes himself, since it is a loan from the piano collection *Angelus* from 1924. With the second part of the title, *tædium vitæ*, which means weariness of life and is often equated with Sloth or Acedia as one of the Seven Deadly Sins, Langgaard signals that there is a danger built into all this euphony. The most striking aspect, however, is that the opposites in this music are united in a totality marked by a harmoniously progressing development with arpeggiated chords – and with a mood of ecstasy bubbling just below the surface. In *Sponsa Christi tædium vitæ* the musical pieces in Rued Langgaard's religious world fall into place.

The pianist **Berit Johansen Tange** trained with Anne Øland at the Royal Danish Academy of Music and made her debut from the chamber music class in 2000. She has since 2002 held a position at the academy as an accompanist and rehearsal. Berit has performed as an accompanist, a chamber musician and a soloist on numerous occasions, also outside Denmark, in Sweden, Finland, Scotland, France, Singapore and Malaysia. Berit Johansen Tange has worked intensely with the music of Rued Langgaard. Besides the piano works it also applies to Langgaard's songs and the works for violin and piano, and she performs every year at the Rued Langgaard Festival in Ribe. For Dacapo, Berit has released two CDs with Langgaard's works for solo piano, of which the first volume was nominated for a DR P2 Prize in 2005. In 2017 she will release the first of three volumes of Langgaard's complete works for violin and piano with the violinist Gunvor Sihm. In 2015 she released a CD, recorded with the violinist Loussine Azizian, featuring rarely performed pieces by a.o. the Armenian composer Arno Babadjanian.



NEDSLAG I RUED LANGGAARDS LIV

- 1893** Fødes 28. juli i København som eneste barn af pianist og komponist Siegfried Langgaard og pianist Emma Langgaard.
- 1901–05** Komponerer små klaverstykker. Spiller klaver, violin og orgel. Går ikke i skole, men modtager privatundervisning i musikalske discipliner og skolefag. Maler, tegner og skriver små historier, ofte med en dramatisk handling, som kredser om døden. Debuterer i 1905 som organist – med indlagt improvisation – i Frederikskirken (Marmorkirken), København. Forbløffende højt musikalsk niveau, og ry som vidunderbarn grundlægges.
- 1907** Kompositionsundervisning hos faderen Siegfried Langgaard. I en kortvarig periode også kontrapunktundervisning hos Carl Nielsen. Komponerer kortere orkesterværker med og uden kor, samt sange og klaverstykker.
- 1912** Organistassistent ved Frederikskirken. Søger siden et utal af organiststillinger, men trods højt kvalificeret afvises han gang på gang.
- 1913** 10. april koncert i Berlin med Berliner Filharmonikerne. Udelukkende med egen musik. Begejstrede anmeldelser. Forelsker sig i en pige ved navn Dora under et sommerophold i kurbyen Kyrkhult, Blekinge.
- 1914** Siegfried Langgaard dør 5. januar. Rued bor fortsat sammen med moderen frem til dennes død i 1926. Debuterer 7. april som dirigent ved koncert i Musikforeningen, København. Dirigerer siden af og til (fortrinsvis egne værker).
- 1915** Psykisk krise. Ophold på badesanatorium i Tyringe, Skåne.

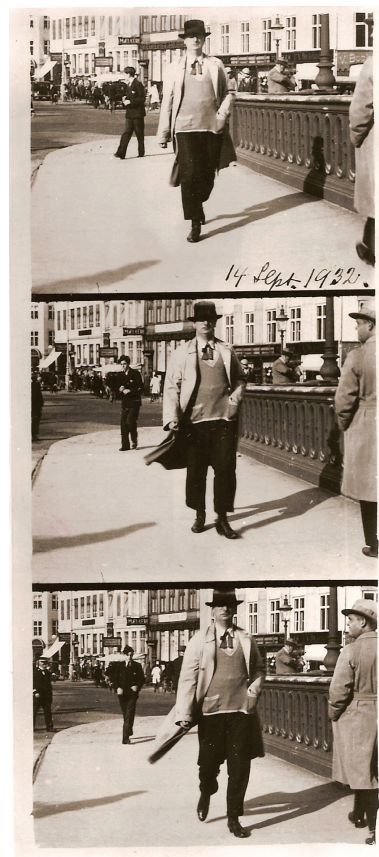
- 1916** Komponerer den teosofisk inspirerede *Sinfonia interna* og den visionære *Sfærernes Musik* for orkester, fjernorkester, kor og vokalsolist.
- 1917** Samtidig med at Langgaard fortsat komponerer stemningsladet romantisk musik, begynder han at eksperimentere med konkret musik som f.eks. i *Insektarium*, hvor ni insekter imiteres.
- 1921** Under et besøg i Venedig får Rued Langgaard den første inspiration til operaen *Antikrist*, og han begynder at komponere klaverværket *Afgrunds-musik*, som i første omgang får titlen Lagunarisk Serenade (til Sct. Johannes Aabenbaring).
- 1923** Færdiggør operaen *Antikrist*, der indleveres til Det Kgl. Teater men afvises med henvisning til, at teksten anses for uegnet. Langgaard fortsætter resten af livet med at komponere nye versioner af operaen i håb om opførelse. Men forgæves.
- 1927** Gifter sig med Valborg Constance Olivia Tetens, moderens veninde og hushjælp i de foregående 6 år.
- 1930** Symfoni nr. 4 "*Løvfald*" opføres ved en studieproduktion i Statsradiofonien (DR). I årene herefter opføres Langgaards musik næsten udelukkende af Statsradiofoniens orkester (DR SymfoniOrkestret). Dirigent er som oftest Launy Grøndahl.
- 1930–33** I en tid præget af filosofiske grublerier og tiltagende kunstnerisk isolation komponeres *I det blafrende Efteraarslygteskær* og *Som en Tyv om Natten*, der er præget af ekstatiske dommedagssyner.

1940 Rued Langgaard får sit livs eneste egentlige ansættelse, nemlig som organist og kantor ved Ribe Domkirke. Bor resten af livet i Ribe, hvor han snart opfattes som en original. Med sit lange uklippede hår, bredskygget hat og stumpede bukser skiller han sig mærkbart ud i den lille købstad. Flytningen fører til en revitalisering for Langgaard som komponist.

1944–45 Et markant stilskifte fører til en række dramatisk ekspressive værker af tilbageskuende karakter. Foruden flere symfonier også *Sponsa Christi tædium vitæ* og *Skyggeliv*.

1946–51 Samtidig med at Langgaard i højere grad komponerer om natten, spaltes hans musik i to retninger. I enten sortsyn og desperation, ofte med elementer af happening, hvilket er tilfældet i *Le Béguinage*, eller lysfyldt, harmonisk musik med et paradisisk perspektiv, som det kan opleves i *Chiesa madre*.

1952 Dør på Ribe Sygehus natten mellem 9. og 10. juli.



Rued Langgaard vækker opsigt spaderende over Højbro i København 14. september 1932.

"Jeg ser det, jeg vil, som et Billede, og saa udvikler Musikken sig af sig selv".

Sådan lyder det fra Rued Langgaard i et interview i 1922, hvor han gør det tydeligt, at han tager udgangspunkt i egne indre forestillinger, når han skaber musik. Traditionen og de overleverede former, som kendes fra sonater og symfonier, er ikke afgørende. Det er de indre visioner og stemninger, som er afgørende for Langgaard.

I de syv klaverværker, der alle har malende titler, og som er komponeret i perioden fra Langgaards ungdom i 1917 og frem til sidste halvdel af 1940'erne, oplever vi Rued Langgaard uden filter. Et sjæleliv omsat i musik. Og af gode grunde. Hovedparten af stykkerne blev først uropført flere årtier efter Langgaards død, så der var altså intet interesseret publikum, der ventede på musikken, og ingen lyttere at forholde sig til for Langgaard, mens han komponerede musikken. I stedet udfolder Langgaard en række dybt personlige manier, som var det indre bekendelser eller musikalske breve til ham selv.

Undervejs kommer Rued Langgaard ind på nogle af sit livs vigtigste temaer. Alle stykkerne er underlagt en forestilling om, at verden er dyb, og at mystiske kræfter råder. Forestillingen om en forstående religiøs dommedag kommer til udtryk i *Som en Tyv om Natten*. Det onde tematiseres i *Insektarium* og *I det blafrende Efteraarslygteskær*. Og så er forestillingen om livet som martyrium et vigtigt element i *Skyggeliv* og i *I det blafrende Efteraarslygteskær*.

Som en Tyv om Natten, BVN 211a (1930)

I begyndelsen af *Som en Tyv om Natten* flyger kaskader af toner op og ned ad klaviaturet. Først svagt, men snart kraftigt som et uvejr, der truer i horisonten, og som viser sig at indeholde alt-ødelæggende kræfter. Det er Kristi genkomst og den følgende dommedag, der udmales: "Herrens dag vil komme som en tyv om natten, og da vil himlene forgå med et brag, og elementerne vil brænde op".

Foruden Bibelen (Andet Petersbrev) knytter Langgaard an ved en novelle af samme navn – 'Som en Tyv om Natten' – skrevet af Johannes Jørgensen i 1921. Her beskrives det, hvordan

dommedag udspiller sig en sommernat i København, hvor byens indbyggere en efter en og uden forvarsel forsvinder fra jordens overflade. I denne moderne version lister Dommedag sig ind på den enkelte, på samme vis som Langgaards musik begynder piano for først senere at vise tænder.

Musikken er virtuos, frit strømmende og effektiv med mindelser om Franz Liszt, som Langgaards far Siegfried Langgaard havde studeret hos. Men med en abrupt overgang til en vægtig hymnisk koral får musikken et collagepræg, som gør den til umiskendelig kunst af det 20. århundrede. Korallen og den efterfølgende musik er genbrug af en længere passage fra første sats af Langgaards ni år ældre *Afgrundsmusik*, hvor korallen efter en rum tid antastes af jagende nedadgående toneløb, der bryder ødelæggende ind i den majestætisk skridende musik. Men hvor Langgaard i *Afgrundsmusik* slutteligt skaber en form for harmoni, idet han lader korallen klinge ud i en åben durklang, så forholder det sig anderledes i *Som en Tyv om Natten*. Her går musikken i stedet over gevind, idet den rytmiske intensitet fortættes og modulationerne tager til, indtil musikken så at sige pulveriseres. Ætset op indefra.

Læg dertil, at effekten med de nedadgående toneløb, der bryder forstyrrende ind i den fremadskridende koral, oprindeligt stammer fra Carl Nielsens klaverværk *Tema med Variationer* (1916). I dommedagsmusikken *Som en Tyv om Natten* udsletter Langgaard ikke blot sit eget skaberværk. I samme moment gør han det også af med sin ældre komponistkollega.

Insektarium, BVN 134 (1917)

De ni små insektportrætter, der udgør *Insektarium*, er med deres aforistiske korthed enestående blandt Langgaards værker. Med en koncentreret minimalistisk stil, hvor det meste af musikken er enstemmig, er der et slægtsskab med Anton Weberns miniaturer fra samme tid. Langgaard var dog sandsynligvis ikke klar over dette, ligesom han sikkert heller ikke har været klar over, at han her, så vidt vides, er den første komponist i musikhistorien, der beder pianisten om at spille direkte på klaverets strenge (første og syvende sats), samt banke på klaverlåget (sjette sats). Til trods for at store dele af musikken skal spilles pianissimo – insekter er små – er udtrykket dramatisk. Det understreges af, at pianisten midtvejs i første sats efter en passage, der skal spilles "forrykt", bliver bedt om at løfte "Hænderne over hovedet ad libitum!"

Insektarium er kryptisk musik og langt mere end en ny version af *Dyrenes Karneval*. Med undertitlen "9 Fixerbilleder (for Piano) af Crótalus durissus" (en sydamerikansk klapperslange)

og med valget af insekter, hvoraf adskillige af dem er skadedyr, signalerer Langgaard, at der skjuler sig noget abnormt og ondartet i musikken.

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Ørentvist | 6. Dødningeur (en bankende borebille) |
| 2. Vandregørshoppe | 7. Stueflue |
| 3. Oldenborre | 8. Tusindben |
| 4. Stankelben | 9. Stikmyg |
| 5. Guldsmed | |

Dermed viser *Insektarium* sig at være små ætsende studier – med et absurd glimt i øjet – af de nedbrydende kræfter, som Langgaard oplevede i tiden, og som han også fokuserer på i det samtidige storværk *Sfærenes Musik* og senere i operaen *Antikrist*.

Skyggeliv, BVN 307 (1914–1945)

Undertitlen til *Skyggeliv* er "Fantasi for Klaver", og så har Langgaard tilføjet "Komponeret 1914–1945". Netop 1914 var et nøgleår for Langgaard, da hans far og største kunstneriske støtte Siegfried Langgaard døde i januar måned dette år. Og efter den succesfyldte præsentationskoncert i Berlin i 1913 viste det sig også på dette tidspunkt, at samtiden oftest kun havde hovedrysten til overs for Langgaards musik, og han måtte meget mod sin vilje se sig henvist til et liv i skyggen af andre langt mere populære komponister. I *Skyggeliv* genbesøger den godt 50-årige Rued Langgaard den lyrisk drømmende stil, som kan opleves i karakterstykkerne *Gitanjali-Hymner* (1918), i den Schumann-inspirerede *Fantasi-Sonate* (1916) og ikke mindst i sangen *Det rinder med Dug* (1914), hvis begyndelse går igen i *Skyggeliv* som et fjernt ekko. Til sidst i sangen lyder det "alle mine Tanker forbløder i et eneste Skrig efter Lykken!".

Det desperate udsagn i ungdomssangen *Det rinder med Dug* er hos den modne Langgaard vendt til stille resignation i kraft af en nederlagsstemning, der giver sig til kende lige fra begyndelsen i hovedmotivet, hvis anden halvdel helt symbolsk består af tre nedadgående toner i en molsskala. Siden, i de mest oprevne passager af fantasien, gentages de tre nedadgående toner igen, og nu med dramatiske accenter, som var det skæbnen, der bankede på med ubønhørlig konsekvens. Svaret er dog på ingen måde heroisk, men blot en gentagelse af det vemodigt syngende hovedmotiv.

Til trods for den mistrøstige stemning viser Langgaard sig i *Skyggeliv* fra sin mest poetisk yndefulde side. Måske fordi fantasien er færdigkomponeret i Blidahpark i Hellerup i juli 1945. Her, tæt på Øresund og sit barndomshjem i Frederiksstaden i København, havde Langgaard, på en lang sommerferie fra organistembedet i Ribe, helle og frit udsyn til at drømme sig tilbage til sin ungdoms håbefulde verden.

I det blafrende Efteraarslygteskær, BVN 206 (1930–1933)

Rued Langgaard var allerede som barn fascineret af det blafrende skær fra gaslygterne i København. I dommedagsoperaen *Antikrist* er hvert billede iscenesat med gaslygter, der ændrer karakter undervejs, og som kulminerer med, at den hidtidige verden går op i flammer. I *I det blafrende Efteraarslygteskær* befinder vi os i helvede, hvor flammerne fortærer de pinte sjæle.

Helvede er løs er lige fra de første toner, der skal spilles "strepitoso" (støjende), og hvor de musikalske motiver slynges opad, som raketter. Med gnistrende accenter ønsker Langgaard at antænde et bål i musikken. I et følgende afsnit, der skal spilles "rimbombevole" (drønende), aktiveres klaverets nedre regioner, inden vi mod slutningen i afsnittet "Fiammante quasi lanterno in pioggia" (flammende som en lanterne i regnen) hører et tremolo i klaverets høje register, der illuderer et knitrende flammehav.

I *det blafrende Efteraarslygteskær* er nådesløs musik, hvor destruktive utæmmelige kræfter slippes løs. Det understreges dels af, at Langgaard i begyndelsen foretrak titlen "Lygtemands-Stemninger", hvormed han skriver sig ind i folketroens forestilling om overnaturlige væsner, der med lygter lokker mennesker i uføre. Og så understreges det af et motto, som Langgaard har fra Thøger Larsens digt *Stormnat* (1912):

*Stormen langs Jorden fejer og strør
Og tager af Natten Styrke.
Nu suger i hvert et Skortensrør
Fortabelsens tørstige Mørke.*

Med 'Fortabelse' menes der i religiøs forstand en tilintetgørelse uden for Guds frelse, og med en harmonik, der er på kanten af det velkendte dur-mol system, og som er beslægtet med de mest grænsesøgende værker af Richard Strauss, ønsker Langgaard her at udmale en verden besat af

ondskab. Eneste spørgsmål er, hvorvidt han ser sig selv som offeret i dette vanvidsridt, eller om det snarere drejer sig om de fjender i dansk musikliv, som Langgaard havde set sig ond på.

Le Béguinage, BVN 369 (1948–1949)

Langgaard sammenfatter nogle af sine mest mørke, mystiske og selvdestruktive tanker i den 'Lille Klaversonate' *Lé Béguinage*. Titlen refererer til et kvarter i Brügge beboet af beginere, der er kvinder tilhørende en katolsk fromhedsbevægelse. Men det er ikke nogen from musik, Langgaard har skabt. Tværtimod. I en parentes efter *Lé Béguinage* er der tilføjet "betyder Helligheden (haanligt)", og rent musikalsk vrænger Langgaard ad det religiøse. Det gode og det onde – Krist og Antikrist – smelter sammen i et absurd hysteri, og Langgaard selv spiller en hovedrolle. I hver af de fire sidste satser, og mest tydeligt allerførst i tredje sats, høres det samme motiv udhamret, en B-dur septimakkord spillet i nedadgående retning. Motivet dukker også op i andre af Langgaards mest gådefulde værker, og det lader til at være et personligt skæbnemotiv.

Langgaard fremstår i *Lé Béguinage* som en flagellant, der pisker sig selv i en bodsøvelse. Første gang motivet spilles, midt i anden sats, har Langgaard indføjet en note i manuskriptet: "*Urimelig Bemærkning til dette Motiv som gaar gennem Stykkerne*: Naar dette Motiv spilles skal den spillende rejse sig til hvert Pedalnedtryk saa det kan blive saa voldsomt at Klaveret og Pedalen gaar i Stykker efterhaanden."

Det absurde spiller en hovedrolle gennem hele værket. I fjerde sats, hvis voldsomme første hoveddel ifølge en note skal gentages "i det uendelige", høres der mod slutningen en række harpeligende akkorder. Herefter er der indføjet en form for korsvar, hvortil der i manuskriptet er føjet en tekst "ave mari-al!". Tonerne skal dog ikke spilles smukt, men hamres ud i fortissimo, og efter at hysteriet er kulmineret i en række gentagelser, har Langgaard som afslutning på satsen noteret "Mania religiosa" – religiøs mani.

Musikken til slutningen af sidste sats klinger derimod smukt og afklaret. Der er tale om et citat fra *Antikrist* fra en passage, hvor ordene "Bed til Maria (bed for din frelse)" synges, men vel at mærke af figuren "Løgner".

Chiesa madre, BVN 367 (1948–1949)

I den 'Lille Sonate' *Chiesa madre*, der betyder moderkirken og referer til den katolske kirke, knytter Rued Langgaard an til personlige oplevelser i 1920'erne, hvor han i flere omgange var tiltrukket af katolicismen. Musikken har mest af alt karakter af en række religiøse meditationer af næsten privat art, og den er skrevet for de instrumenter, som Langgaard selv spillede på: harmonium, orgel eller klaver.

Første sats er formet som en inderlig andagtsfuld orgelkoral, hvorimod de første afsnit af anden sats er intim musik velegnet for det begrænsede klaviatur på et harmonium. Mod slutningen af anden sats ved nogle brede kraftige akkorder har Langgaard dog skrevet "Orgel", inden der pludselig skiftes til en legende let klaversats af nostalgisk karakter med titlen "Foraar". En lignende stemning råder i sidste sats, hvor Langgaard med titlen *Ordrup* mindes Sct. Andreas Kollegiet ved Ordruphøj, hvor han i 1927 havde kontakt til en jesuittermenighed.

Chiesa madre er et søsterværk til *Le Béguinage*. Hovedparten af satserne i begge sonater stammer oprindeligt fra suiten "X", *Stemmingsvanvid fra Ordruphøj (Gala religiosa)*. Men hvor Langgaard i *Le Béguinage* dyrker et absurd vanvidspræget musikalsk udtryk, udgør *Chiesa madre* et fredfyldt sværmerisk univers. Alt i alt et lysende eksempel på Langgaards ambivalente religiøsitet og til tider skizofrene musikalitet.

Sponsa Christi tædium vitæ, BVN 297 (1944)

Langgaard knytter også an ved sin katolske periode i 1920'erne i *Sponsa Christi tædium vitæ*. Første del af titlen, *Sponsa Christi*, der betyder Kristi brud og er et udtryk for den katolske kirke, er også titlen på en række nu forsvundne hymner for klaver fra 1923. Med anden del af titlen *tædium vitæ*, der betyder livslede og er en af de syv dødssynder, signalerer Langgaard, at der er en fare indbygget i al velklangen. Det mest slående er dog, at modsætningerne i musikken her forenes i et hele præget af en harmonisk fremadskridende udvikling med harpeligende akkordbrydninger – og med det ekstatiske liggende lige under overfladen. I *Sponsa Christi tædium vitæ* falder de musikalske brikker på plads i Rued Langgaards religiøse verden.

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Pianisten **Berit Johansen Tange** er uddannet på Det Kongelige Danske Musikkonservatorium hos Anne Øland og debuterede fra kammermusikklassen i 2000. Hun har siden 2002 været ansat som akkompagnatør og repetitør samme sted. Hun har optrådt som akkompagnatør, kammermusiker og solist i utallige sammenhænge, også udenfor Danmark, bl.a. i Sverige, Finland, Skotland, Frankrig, Singapore og Malaysia. Berit Johansen Tange har arbejdet intenst med Rued Langgaards musik. Udover klaverværkerne gælder det hans sange og værker for violin og klaver, og hun er fast koncertgiver ved den årlige Rued Langgaard Festival. Berit har udgivet to Dacapo-cd'er med soloklaverværker af Langgaard, hvoraf den første blev nomineret til P2-prisen 2005. I 2017 udgiver hun sammen med violinisten Gunvor Sihm den første af i alt tre cd'er med Langgaards samlede værker for violin og klaver. I 2015 udgav Berit sammen med violinisten Loussine Azizian en cd med sjældent spillede værker af bl.a. den armenske komponist Arno Babadjanian.



DDD

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