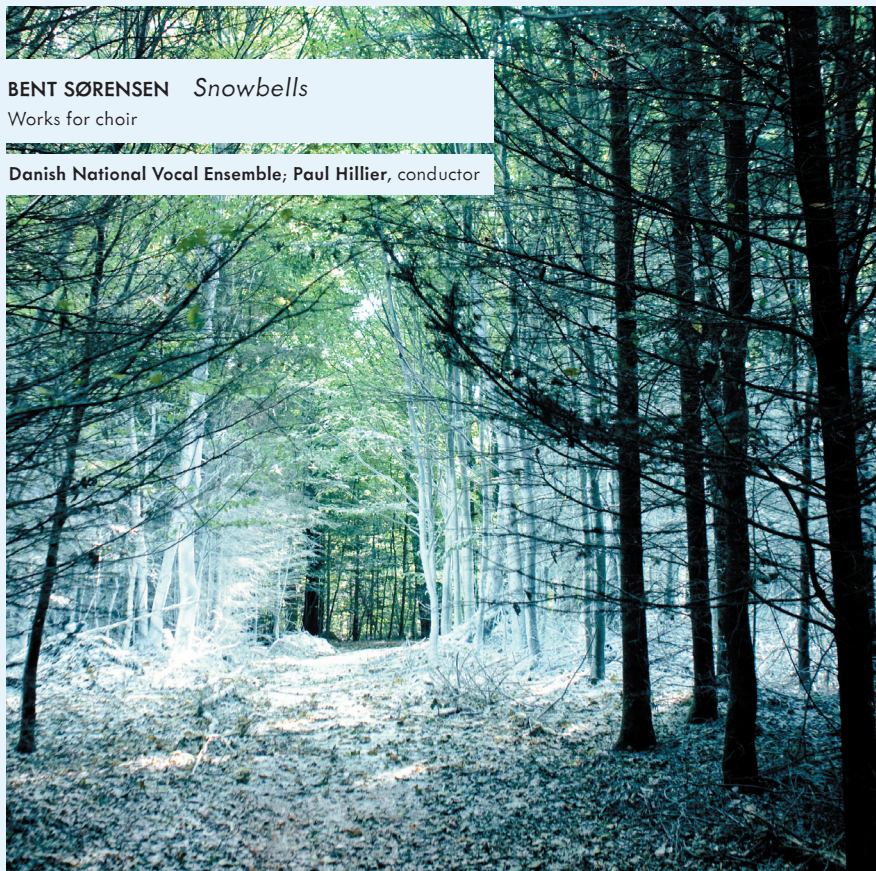




BENT SØRENSEN *Snowbells*

Works for choir

Danish National Vocal Ensemble; Paul Hillier, conductor

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1	Sneeklokken (The snowbell) (2009; 2014).....	4:02
	<i>for solo voice (Adam Riis, tenor)</i>	

	Sneklokker (Snowbells) (2009-10)	
	<i>8 movements for 5 voices and church bells</i>	26:09
2	I. Viborg (Cathedral)	2:47
3	II. Thorning	2:34
4	III. Vrads	3:17
5	IV. Nørre Snede	3:20
6	V. Øster Nykirke	3:34
7	VI. Jels	2:42
8	VII. Åbenrå	4:46
9	VIII. Kliplev	3:08

10	Gråfødt (Greyborn) (2009)	3:32
	<i>for choir</i>	

11	Livet og døden (Life and death) (2009)	2:25
	<i>for choir</i>	

	3 Motets (1985)	
	<i>for choir</i>	4:54

12	I. Sicut umbra cum declinat	2:29
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13	II. Induti sunt arietes ovium	0:43
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14	III. Dies mei sicut umbra declinaverunt	1:42
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15	Lacrimosa (1985)	5:20
	<i>for choir</i>	

16	“og solen går ned” (“and the sun sets”) (2008)	5:20
	<i>for choir</i>	

17	Benedictus (2006)	6:14
	<i>for choir</i>	

18	Havet står så blankt og stille (The sea stands so still and shining) (2005)	3:18
	<i>for choir</i>	

Total: 61:14

NOTES OF LONGING AND ROARING SILENCE

Anne Middelboe Christensen on Bent Sørensen and his vocal work 'Snowbells'

The uneasiness comes immediately: as soon as your ear senses Bent Sørensen's music your brow puckers. What exactly is happening? Often you can't actually 'hear' anything – your body just senses some sound on its way. Now and then the music comes from so far away that you have to attune your listening apparatus to remoteness and horizon, before you become aware that the sounds are gathering into notes.

Bent Sørensen's music is a music of silence. But it is also a music of longing. If you have the slightest trace of the romantic in your blood, you will be drawn in by Bent Sørensen's notes of longing. It seems they can filter through fire and water – and the intellect. But the point is that as soon as you have caught the strains of the music, it vanishes again. Like music of oblivion.

As a composer Bent Sørensen is peaking right now. He can do it all, has done it all, and still wants to do it all – and much more. Bent Sørensen was born in 1958, but aesthetically he harks back to the music of Late Romanticism, as well as forward to the most soaring digital sounds. He is a supreme master of the conventional forms of music, which is very probably why he plays with their dissolution. Bent Sørensen's music is almost visual in itself; and for that reason too it has a doubly impressive effect in a concert hall. He uses bowed strings so the bowing seems like whispering – and he makes human voices sound like the breath of wind. Together, the notes become scenic bombardments of the senses that you can almost see in the air.

Disappearing music

Bent Sørensen has written for symphony orchestra and chamber musicians, for choir and for individual instruments. He has written opera. And not least, he has written the highly original music of disappearance *Sounds Like You*, which became a so-called 'concerto for orchestra, choir, actors and audience' – premiered during the Bergen Festival in 2012 by the stage director Katrine Wiedemann, with a dense text by Peter Asmussen, in a radical, erotic staging up against the conductor's stand and in among both musicians and spectators.



Bent Sørensen

Before that, Bent Sørensen's preoccupation with memory had also found concrete expression in the choral work *A Leaf Falls to the Sky*, based on Knud Romer's poem about his father, who had fallen victim to Alzheimer's disease. 'It made me think my father's brain was like a music box that had broken down,' as Knud Romer put it. Bent Sørensen's music was wonderfully hazy, just like the man's memory – and at the same time it was punctuated by ticking clocks that seemed to have a life of their own. It was given its concert premiere in 2009 by the singers of the Danish National Girls' Choir, and in 2012 it was immortalized in a documentary film by Didde Elnif and Anders Birch, expressing the sadness of forgetting and the desperation of remembering.

Snowy owl fantasies

With the work *Snowbells*, however, Bent Sørensen created something definitively new. *Snowbells* realized the dream of creating visible sound as remote as could be from the formality of the concert hall. Now Bent Sørensen's music was to move out into the landscape; out where people in past centuries had not necessarily heard anything but flutes and harmonicas and the odd folk fiddler – and the church bells. Out to Hærvejen – that is, the ancient Danish road south for cattle and traders, down along the backbone of Jutland from Viborg in Central Jutland to Kliplev in South Jutland. There Bent Sørensen recorded the sounds of the bells of eight different churches along Hærvejen and then made them peal and chime in a staged winter installation far out in the forest one summer month in 2012 – in Palsgård Forest near Nørre Snede between Horsens and Herning.

The White Forest was the name of the installation that he created together with Katrine Wiedemann. True, you could only find your way there if you caught sight of the three pieces of white paper that pointed the way from a small car park in the middle of the forest. But when you followed the direction of the arrow, you could see how the tree trunks began to whiten. Not with snow but with paint that ran down the trunks. And the sighing of the wind began to change – and became women's voices singing! All around in the trees, birds sat looking down at the listening wanderer – a snowy owl here, a falcon there. True, they were stuffed, these feathered watchers, but they were no less impressive for that. On the contrary. For they helped both to heighten and disturb the atmosphere of this magical moment in an enchanted forest.

Condensed breath

In there among the tree trunks, the church bells began ringing. Hesitant, gentle, calling, ingratiating – and coaxing, booming, threatening, judgemental ... Many bells for all sorts of existential human emotions. Surprise and solemnity pulsed and alternated among the white-painted branches of the trees as confusion fell over the white-splattered earth, accompanied by playful male voices.

All this unexpected sound fired up your body. Your legs just wanted to spin and leap wildly – and your body wouldn't have thought twice about lying flat on its back in all that white to form 'snow angels'. But your eyes saw all this with a certain scepticism. For where were all the bells coming from? How could the pealing get so intense? Well, speakers were secretly lashed high up to the tree-trunk masts, concealed behind the white-painted leaves, as if in preparation for a cruise with Odysseus. And up there the church bells sounded exactly like what they were – authentic medieval cast iron.

Voices were interwoven with the bells; voices full of religious intensity, but with no religious message – just voices in a church interior with the vaults a long way up and sustained echoes. But also voices full of tomfoolery and teasing, and with a penchant for jazzy aftertones and let's-get-on-with-it cadences at the end of otherwise aeon-long refrains.

This song had nowhere to go. Or rather nowhere but this same forest clearing, where the animals kept one another at bay – and where the snow-paint rooted the humans to the spot. Time stopped passing. Only the sunlight in the leaves shifted slightly. Here you felt only the condensed breath of the spectator's own body. And the present was transformed into the always and the eternal.

At least, that is, until a roar was emitted by the speakers; an utterly startling macho roar that scared the human hearts present into skipping a beat and leaping up – and the extinct black grouse on the tree trunk into flapping its bizarre wings in confusion. The roar whirled around among the tree trunks, putting all idyll to flight and dispelling all the charm of the choir. From here on all human voices sounded at least as animal-like as the sounds of nature around this small, protected whiteness of forest. And the human heart might well have chosen to take to its heels and avert its ears ...

Oblivion roulette

What devilry had got into Bent Sørensen's score on such a sunny day in a forest clearing? I don't know. But I do know that the whispers and the roars linked arms to keep me in the secure embrace of his distinctive sound of longing. It almost CALMED me to feel the shock of this surprise-attack music, precisely because I was expecting the unpredictable. This is inherent in the premises of longing: you have to keep experiencing the unreal – and longing for the unattainable. So a roar is quite in order.

The contrariety principle in *Snowbells* corresponds to the utopia of sound that is no longer there in *Sounds Like You*. Only at the moment when the silence has been shattered by the booming of the bells and the roaring of voices is it felt in all its horror – or all its calm. And only at the moment when a melody has died out can it be found in earnest amidst the reality of the possible combinations of notes. While at the same time a melody can only be found when it is played.

Musically, Bent Sørensen quite clearly likes to play Russian roulette with memory and oblivion. Precisely because music is so intangible, it is clearly tempting for Bent Sørensen to play with the idea that music only exists for as long as it is remembered – and that it can only really be remembered while it is being played. It isn't enough to be able to hum a refrain. The complete music with all its tonal nuances only exists at the moment when the musicians put bow to strings and their arms draw the bow through the air.

Perhaps, too, this is why Bent Sørensen seems so fascinated by silence. That is, by the fragile point where silence is broken by sound – and when the notes of the music metamorphose from emitted sound waves into being perceived as music. And where else would he be able to demonstrate the optimal study of silence than right here, deep within a forest? True enough, the choral singing for *Snowbells* has been recorded in Studio 2 at DR Koncerthuset, where the Danish National Vocal Ensemble sang its way along the longings of that ancient highway, conducted by Paul Hillier. But the effect was greatest in the forest. As for the church bells, out there in the forest, of course, no ordinary ear could differentiate among the eight sets of church bells. But the bells of Viborg Cathedral naturally sound different from the bells of the Skt. Nicolai Church in Aabenraa.

'If you can't hum what you love, you must love what you hum.' So wrote Bent Sørensen himself in his blog at seismograf.org, while he was composing *Snowbells*. He was struggling with a poem by the poet of the Jutland heath, Steen Steensen Blicher, to which he wanted to give a

melody. There was just this catch: he himself kept humming something quite different from the tune he had put down on paper. And 'No longer can I linger,' the song goes.

Access to the music of the unconscious seems to be a goal for Bent Sørensen's unsettling music of memory, now captured on CD among church bells, choral voices and white-painted tree trunks along Hærvejen. Perhaps also with the sound of a black grouse that has taken off for skies of yearning. With a roar.

Anne Middelboe Christensen, cand. mag., is a theatre critic on the newspaper Dagbladet Information. She has written books about ballet, including Sylfiden findes (2008) and Dance in the Mirror - The Ballet Photography of John R. Johnsen (2012). As a theatre reviewer she let herself be lured into Bent Sørensen's world of theatre music – and since then she has never left it.

ON THE OTHER WORKS by Trine Boje Mortensen

Bent Sørensen writes for voices so that they sound celestial – or at least hover weightless in space and at the same time sound so familiar that you feel a comforting arm around your shoulder. Intimacy and humanity do not clash with the ethereal and supranatural. Like a Schubertian mixture of sad and glad, they exist in direct contemporaneity. That the expressive core of Sørensen's vocal style has not changed markedly over the years can be heard in these works, which come respectively from the mid-eighties and the early 2000s.

The snowbell (2009; 2014). Bent Sørensen's melody for the Danish 19th-century writer Steen Steensen Blicher's poem *Sneeklokken* (The Snowbell), flows gently; like a humming of eternity which, despite the rounded phrases along the way, constantly flows on in the melody's Escher-like cycles where the beginning is the end and continuation inevitable. A melodic driving force for the main work on this recording, *Snowbells*.

Greyborn (2009) is a setting of an erotic poem by Juliane Preisler, in which the grey chill and weight of the salt sea permeate everything and the voices add sweet savour.

Life and death (2009). Nature is close in Peter Asmussen's text: the screeching pheasant, waves, sun, song and the grass. The music is simple, but with an inherent unsettling quality that struggles to break out and is hummingly calmed several times.

3 Motets (1985). The three Latin verses chosen for these three motets are rich in contrasts: a text about mortality and smallness, one full of jubilant energy, and finally another one about the brevity of life. The music closely reflects the content of the texts, with outer movements that plunge the listener straight into the depths, the darkness and the beauty, and a middle movement that begins as an example of jubilant Renaissance and then, as if by magic, changes imperceptibly into contemporary, whirling sounds.

Lacrimosa (1985). Bent Sørensen: "The text is from the Latin Requiem and the piece is an independent work and at the same time forms part of a planned series of Requiem fragments." The music hovers like clouds around the listener in a dark *out-of-body*, or more specifically *out-of-music* experience.

"and the sun sets" (2008). To a text from Pia Juul's poetry collection *said I, I say*. The music revolves around itself and thus reflects the central word in the text, "turn": turn around, turn back. The work was commissioned by the Usedomer Music Festival.

Benedictus (2006). Bent Sørensen, quoted from a note on *Benedictus*: "Listening to the world is listening inwardly – Think before you listen!" The music, the composer goes on to say, arose in Visby on Gotland, from among other things the experience of the small streets and the church in the town. The composer calls for the music to be performed spatially, so the sound comes from all directions, ascending and encompassing.

The sea stands so still and shining (2005). A chaste musical interpretation of Hans Christian Andersen's yearning text in which even grief is beautiful and death is love.

Trine Boje Mortensen is Promotion Manager at Edition Wilhelm Hansen and a music journalist specialized in contemporary music.

THE PERFORMERS

Danish National Vocal Ensemble consists of 18 professional full-time singers who, since the debut in 2007, have taken on everything from Early music and Baroque to Romantic works and demanding new music. The singers are experienced soloists who bring expression and life to the music. Works that require strong individual performances therefore feature high on the list; because it's all about personal commitment and precision whether performing modern works like Messiaen's *Cinq Rechants* for 12 solo voices or Monteverdi's *Maria Vespers*. Several composers of today have written music for the DNVE, among others Sven-David Sandström, Peter Bruun and Sunleif Rasmussen. The ensemble has a small but exquisite discography. The singers have recently received the Diapason d'Or for their Messiaen release *L'amour et la foi*, and the ensemble can also boast of having received a German ECHO Prize for best innovative choral CD and nominations for an American Grammy as well as a Gramophone Award.

Paul Hillier has been Artistic Director of Theatre of Voices since 1990. Founding director of the Hilliard Ensemble, and present Chief Conductor of Ars Nova Copenhagen, his career has embraced singing, conducting, and writing about music. His books about Arvo Pärt and Steve Reich, and numerous anthologies of choral music, are published by Oxford University Press. He has taught at the University of California at Santa Cruz and Davis, and from 1996-2003 was Director of the Early Music Institute at Indiana University. In 2006 he was awarded an OBE for services to choral music. In 2007 he received the Order of the White Star of Estonia, and was awarded a GRAMMY for Best Choral Recording (with the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir). In 2008 he was appointed Artistic Director and Chief Conductor of the National Chamber Choir of Ireland, and in 2009 was invited to form the new Coro Casa da Música in Porto, Portugal. He won a second GRAMMY in 2010 (with Theatre of Voices and Ars Nova Copenhagen), and in 2013 he was appointed Knight of the Order of the Dannebrog by Her Majesty The Queen of Denmark.

LÆNGSELSTONER OG STILHEDSBRØL

Anne Middelboe Christensen om Bent Sørensen og hans vokalværk 'Sneklokker'

Foruroligelsen indtræffer med det samme: Lige så snart øret indfanger Bent Sørensens musik, rynker øjenbrynene. For hvad er det, der sker? Tit kan man egentlig ikke høre noget – kroppen kan bare mærke, at der er noget lyd på vej. Af og til kommer musikken så langvejs fra, at man netop først skal indstille sin lytten på fjernhed og horisont, førend man faktisk kan opfatte, at lydene samler sig til toner.

Bent Sørensens musik er stilhedens musik. Men den er også længslens lyd. Hvis man har blot den mindste smule romantiker i blodet, så kommer man til at lade sig indfange af Bent Sørensens længselstoner. De kan tilsyneladende smyge sig gennem både ild og vand – og intellekt. Pointen er så bare, at lige så snart man har fanget musikken, så forsvinder den igen. Som glemselsmusik.

Som komponist står Bent Sørensen på toppen lige nu. Han kan det hele og har gjort det hele, og han vil stadig alt muligt – og meget mere. Bent Sørensen er født i 1958, men æstetisk rækker han både bagud til musikken fra senromantikken og frem mod musikken fra den mest svævende digitallyd. Han mestrer musikens vedtagne former suverænt, så velsagtens derfor leger han med at opløse dem. Bent Sørensens musik er nærmest visuel i sig selv; også derfor virker den dobbelt imponerende i en koncertsal. Han bruger strygeinstrumenter, så buestrøgene virker som hvisken – og han lader menneskestemmer lyde som vindpust. Tilsammen bliver tonerne til sceniske sansebombardementer, man nærmest kan se i luften.

Forsvindingsmusik

Bent Sørensen har skrevet for symfoniorkester og kammermusikere, for kor og enkeltinstrumenter. Han har skrevet opera. Og han har ikke mindst skrevet det originale forsvindingsværk *Sounds Like You*, der blev til en såkaldt 'koncert for orkester, kor, skuespillere og publikum' – uropført under Bergen Festspillene i 2012 til en fortættet tekst af Peter Asmussen og i teaterinstruktøren Katrine Wiedemanns heftige, erotiske iscenesættelse op ad dirigentpodiet og rundt mellem både musikere og tilskuere.

Inden da var Bent Sørensens optagethed af erindring også konkret kommet til udtryk i korværket *Et Blad Falder til Himlen*, der var baseret på Knud Romers digt om sin far, der var blevet dement af Alzheimers sygdom. 'Det fik mig til at tænke på, at min fars hjerne var lige som en spilledåse, der var gået i stå,' som Knud Romer udtrykte det. Bent Sørensens musik var vidunderligt diset, akkurat ligesom mandens erindring – og samtidig blev den afbrudt af tikkende ure, der tilsyneladende havde helt deres eget liv. Den fik sin koncertpremiere i 2009 med DR Pige Korets sangere, og i 2012 blev den foreviget i Didde Elnif og Anders Birchs dokumentarfilm. Med glemselssorg og erindringsdesperation.

Sneuglefantasier

Med værket *Sneklokker* skabte Bent Sørensen imidlertid noget afgørende nyt. *Sneklokker* realiserede drømmen om at skabe synlig lyd så langt væk fra de forkromede koncertsale, som det overhovedet kunne lade sig gøre. Nu skulle Bent Sørensens musik ud i naturen. Derud hvor menneskene de forgangne århundreder ikke nødvendigvis havde hørt andet end fløjten og mundharmonika og en enkel spillemandsviolin – og kirkeklokkerne. Ud til Hærvejen, altså den gamle, danske handelsvej for stude og godtfolk ned langs den jyske højderyg fra Viborg i Midtjylland til Kilev i Sønderjylland. Her optog Bent Sørensen lyden af kirkeklokkerne fra otte forskellige kirker langs med Hærvejen, og så lod han disse klokker bímle i en iscenesat vinterinstallation langt ude i en skov. En sommermåned i 2012 – i Palsgård Skov ved Nørre Snede mellem Horsens og Herning.

Den Hvide Skov hed installationen, som han skabte sammen med Katrine Wiedemann. Man kunne godt nok kun finde vej til den, hvis man fik øje på de tre stykker hvidt papir, der viste hen til den fra en lille parkeringsplads midt i skoven. Men når man gik i pilens retning, kunne man se, hvordan træstammerne begyndte at være hvide. Hvide, ikke af sne, men af maling, der drev ned ad stammerne. Og vindens susen begyndte at forandre sig – og blev til kvindestemmers sang! Rundt om i træerne sad fugle og kiggede ned på den lyttende vandrer – en sneugle hist og en falk pist. De var godt nok udstoppede, disse fjerskabninger, men det gjorde dem ikke mindre imponerende. Tværtimod. For de var både med til at forstørre og forstyrre dette magiske øjeblik i en forvandlet skov.

Åndedrætsfortætning

Herinde mellem træstammerne begyndte kirkeklokkerne at ringe. Tøvende, blidt, kaldende, indsmigrende – og lokkende, dundrende, truende, fordømmende... Mange klokker til alle slags menneskelige eksistensfølelser. Overraskelsen og alvoren dunkede ind mellem træernes hvidmalede grene, mens benovelsen dalede ned på den hvidklattede jord sammen med mandestemmer fyldte med leg.

Kroppen blev optændt af al denne uventede lyd. Benene fik bare lyst til at dreje rundt og hoppe vildt – og ryggen ville ikke have haft noget imod at kaste sig ned i alt det hvide og 'lave engle i sneen'. Men øjnene blev også skeptiske. For hvorfra kom alle disse klokker? Hvordan kunne klokkeklangen blive så intens? Nåeh... Højttalere var hemmelighedsfuldt surret fast højt oppe på træstammerne, som gjaldt det en sejltur med Odysseus – og gemt bag de hvidmalede blade. Og herfra lød kirkeklokkerne grangiveligt som autentisk, middelalderligt støbejern.

Stemmer flettede sig ind mellem klokkerne. Stemmer fulde af religiøs alvor, men uden nogen religiøs forkyndelse – blot stemmer i kirkerum med højt til loftsbuerne og lang efterklang. Men også stemmer fyldt med pjat og dril og med hang til jazzede eftertoner og lad-os-så-komme-videre-slutninger på ellers evighedslange omkvæd.

Denne sang skulle ingen steder. Eller ingen andre steder end netop denne skovlysning, hvor dyrene holder hinanden stangen – og hvor snemalingen holder mennesket fastnaglet. Tiden holdt op med at gå. Det var kun sollyset i bladene, der rykkede sig en anelse. Her mærkedes kun det fortættede åndedræt fra tilskuerens egen krop. Og nuet var ved at transformere sig til altid og evighed.

I hvert fald indtil et brøl lød fra højttalerne. Et fuldstændig chokerende machobrøl, der fik mennesket til at hoppe forskrækket i vejret – og den uddøde urfugl på træstammen til blafre forvildet med de særprægede vinger. Brølet for rundt mellem træstammerne, så al idyl blev jaget på flugt – og korets nydelighed blev verftet til side. Herfra virkede al menneskelyst mindst lige så dyrisk som naturlydene rundt om den lille, beskyttede skovhvidhed. Mindst. Og så valgte mennesket måske at tage benene og ørerne på nakken ...

Glemselsroulette

Hvad var det for en djævel, der for i Bent Sørensens partitur sådan en solskinsdag i en skovlysning? Det ved jeg ikke. Men jeg ved, at både hvirken og brølet er med til at holde mig trykt omfavnet i hans særlige verden af længselslyde. Jeg bliver nærmest ROLIG af at blive chokeret af hans overrumplingstoner, netop fordi jeg forventer det uforudsigelige. Det ligger i længslens præmis: Man skal hele tiden opleve det uvirkelige – og længes efter det uopnåelige. Derfor er et brøl på sin plads.

Modsathedsprincippet i *Sneklokker* svarer til utopien om lyden, der ikke længere er der i *Sounds Like You*. Først i det øjeblik, stilheden er blevet spoleret af klokkeundren og stemmebrøl, mærkes den i al sin gru – eller al sin ro. Og først i det øjeblik, en melodi er døet ud, findes den for alvor blandt de mulige tonesammensætningers virkelighed. Samtidig med at en melodi netop kun findes, mens den spilles.

Musikalsk set spiller Bent Sørensen åbenbart gerne russisk roulette med glemslen. Og med erindringen. Netop fordi musik er så uåndgribelig, er det tydeligvis fristende for Bent Sørensen at lege med idéen om, at musik kun findes, så længe den huskes – og at den kun egentlig kan huskes, mens den spilles. Det er ikke nok at kunne nynne et omkvæd. Den komplette musik med alle dens tonenuancer findes kun i det øjeblik, hvor musikerne sætter buerne på strengene og lader armene trække buerne gennem luften.

Det er måske også derfor, at Bent Sørensen virker så optaget af tystheden. Altså af det skrøbelige punkt, hvor stilhed bliver brudt af lyd – og hvor musikkens toner forvandler sig fra at være udsendte lydbølger til at blive opfattet som musik. Og hvor ellers skulle han kunne vise det optimale tysthedsstudie end netop dybt inde i en skov? Korsangen til *Sneklokker* er godt nok optaget i DR Byens Studie 2 i København, hvor DR VokalEnsemblet levede sig ind i hærvæjslængslen sammen med dirigenten Paul Hillier. Men effekten var optimal i skoven. Hvad kirkeklokkerne angår, så kunne et almindeligt øre derude i skoven naturligvis ikke høre forskel på de syv kirkeklokker. Men Viborg Domkirkes klokke runger selvfølgelig anderledes end klokken fra Skt. Nicolai Kirke i Aabenraa.

'Kan man ikke nynne det, man elsker, må man elske det, man nynner.' Sådan skrev Bent Sørensen selv på sin blog Seismograf.org, mens han sad og komponerede *Sneklokker*. Han baksede med et digt af husekræmmerdigteren Steen Steensen Blicher, som han gerne ville give

en melodi. Der var bare det, at han selv hele tiden gik og nynnede noget helt andet, end det han havde skrevet i noderne. 'Jeg kan ej længer tøve,' som det lyder i sangen.

Netop adgangen til det ubevidstes musik virker som et mål for Bent Sørensens foruroligende erindringstoner, der nu er indfanget mellem kirkeklokker og korstemmer og hvidmalede træstammer langs Hærvejen på en cd. Måske sammen med lyden af en urfugl, der er lettet mod længselfulde himmelstrøg. Med et brøl.

Anne Middelboe Christensen er cand. mag. og teaterkritiker ved Dagbladet Information. Hun er forfatter til bøger om ballet, bl.a. 'Sylfiden findes' (2008) og 'Dansen i Spejlet' (2012). Som teaterkritiker har hun ladet sig lokke ind i Bent Sørensens verden af scenemusik – og har aldrig siden forladt den.

DE ØVRIGE VÆRKER af Trine Boje Mortensen

Bent Sørensen skriver for stemmer, så de lyder som om de er himmelske, eller i hvert fald svæver omkring tyngdefri i rummet, og samtidig lyder så velkendt, at man føler en tryk arm lagt om skulderen. Nærheden, menneskeligheden er ikke en modsætning til det luftige, overjordiske. Som en Schubertsk blanding af trist og glad eksisterer de i en umiddelbar samtidighed. At Sørensens vokalstil gennem årene ikke har ændret sig markant i sin udtryks-kerne kan høres på værkerne her, der stammer henholdsvis fra midtfirserne og fra 2000'erne.

Sneeklokken (2009; 2014). Bent Sørensens melodi til Steen Steensen Blichers tekst fra 1826 *Sneeklokken* er blidt strømmende. Som en evighedsnynnen, der, på trods af de afrundede fraser undervejs, hele tiden flyder videre i melodiens Escher-agtige hjul, hvor begyndelse er slutning og fortsættelse uundgåelig. En melodisk drivkraft til hovedværket på denne indspilning, *Sneeklokken*.

Gråfødt (2009) er en tonesættelse af et erotisk digt af Juliane Preisler, hvor det salte havs grå kulde og tyngde gennemstrømmer alt, og stemmerne tilføjer sødme.

Livet og døden (2009). Naturen er tæt på i Peter Asmussens tekst. Fasanskrig, bølger, sol, sang og græsset. Musikken er enkel, men med en iboende uro, der kæmper for at bryde ud og bliver nynnnet til ro i flere omgange.

3 motetter (1985). De tre latinske vers, der er valgt til disse tre motetter, er kontrastrige: En tekst om forgængelighed og lidenhed, en med jublende overskud og til sidst endnu en om livets korthed. Musikken afspejler fuldstændig teksternes indhold, med ydersatser, der smider lytteren lodret ud i dybet, mørket og skønheden, og en midtersats, der begynder som et stykke jublende renaissance, for som med magi umærkeligt at ændres til nutidige, hvirvlende klange.

Lacrimosa (1985). Bent Sørensen: "Teksten er fra den latinske dødsmesse og satsen er både et selvstændigt værk og samtidig en del af en planlagt serie af requiemfragmenter." Musikken svæver som skyer om lytteren i en mørk *ud af kroppen*, eller mere præcist: *ud af musikken*-oplevelse.

"og solen går ned" (2008). Til en tekst fra Pia Juuls digtsamling *sagde jeg, siger jeg*. Musikken kredser om sig selv og spejler dermed tekstens centrale ord "vender"; vender om, vender tilbage. Værket blev bestilt af Usedomer Musikfestival.

Benedictus (2006). Bent Sørensen, citeret fra en note til Benedictus: "Listening to the world is listening inwardly. -- Think before you listen!". Musikken, fortæller komponisten videre, opstod i Visby på Gotland, bl.a. ved oplevelsen af de små gader og kirken i byen. Komponisten opfordrer til at musikken fremføres rumligt, så lyden kommer alle vegne fra, himmelstræbende og omfavnende.

Havet står så blankt og stille (2005). En renfærdig musikalsk fortolkning af H.C. Andersens længselsfulde tekst, hvor selv sorgen bliver skøn og døden er kærlighed.

Trine Boje Mortensen er Promotion Manager hos Edition Wilhelm Hansen og musikskribent som specialiserer sig i ny kompositionsmusik.



DR Vokalensemblet (Danish National Vocal Ensemble)

DE MEDVIRKENDE

DR VokalEnsemblet består af 18 professionelle fuldtidssangere, der siden debuten i 2007 har taget livtag med alt fra tidlig musik og barok til romantiske værker og krævende ny musik. Sangerne er erfarne solister, som bringer udtryk og liv ind i musikken. Derfor står værker, der kræver stærke individuelle præstationer, højt på listen hos ensemblet; for det handler om personligt engagement og præcision, hvad enten det er moderne værker som Messiaens *Cinq Rechants* for 12 solostemmer eller Monteverdis *Mariavesper*, der opføres. Flere nulevende komponister har skrevet specielt til DR VokalEnsemblet, fx Sven-David Sandström, Peter Bruun og Sunleif Rasmussen. Ensemblet har en mindre, men udsøgt diskografi. Sangerne har for nylig fået en Diapason d'Or for Messiaen-udgivelsen *L'amour et la foi*, og ensemblet kan desuden bryste sig af at have modtaget en tysk ECHO Preis for bedste innovative kor-cd samt nomineringer til både en amerikansk Grammy og en Gramophone Award.

Paul Hillier har ledet Theatre of Voices siden 1990 og har desuden i en årrække været chef-dirigent for Ars Nova Copenhagen. Han har i løbet af sin karriere virket som sanger, dirigent og forfatter til litteratur om musik. Hans bøger om Arvo Pärt og Steve Reich samt adskillige antologier om kormusik er udgivet på Oxford University Press. Hillier var stifter og medlem af vokalgruppen Hilliard Ensemblet og har undervist på University of California i Santa Cruz og Davis, og han var leder af instituttet for tidlig musik ved Indiana University fra 1996-2003. I 2006 modtog Paul Hillier en O.B.E. (Order of the British Empire) for sin indsats for kormusikken. I 2007 fik han Den Hvide Stjernes Orden af 4. grad for sin indsats i estisk musikliv og vandt en GRAMMY for Best Choral Recording med det Estiske Filharmoniske Kammerkor. I 2008 blev Paul Hillier udnævnt til kunstnerisk leder og chefdirigent for Irlands Nationale Kammerkor, og i 2009 blev han inviteret til at stifte og lede Coro Casa da Música i Porto, Portugal. Han vandt sin anden GRAMMY i 2010 med Theatre of Voices og Ars Nova Copenhagen, og i 2013 blev han tildelt Ridderkorset.



Paul Hillier

Sneeklokken

1 Naar alle Blomster slumme i kolde Vintergrav,
Jeg vaagner af min Dvale, og kaster Dækket af.
Jeg hører Lærken synge højt udi Himlen blaa,
Og med sin klare Trille om Vaarens Glæder spaae:

Jeg kan ej længer tøve; jeg veed, min Tid er kort,
Jeg nyde maae mit Liv, før det atter iler bort.
Men der er koldt deroppe, og gennem lis og Sne
Jeg maae mig Vejen
bryde, før jeg kan Solen see.

End Marken er saa øde, saa eenlig staaer jeg her;
Af mine Brødre ingen jeg finder hos mig nær:
Da bøjer jeg mit Hoved, i Utid kom jeg frem,
Og før de andre vaagne, jeg vender atter hjem.

Dog krandses Haabets Farve mig med sit blege Skjær:
Jeg skal dog ej uændset uelsket blomstre her.
En Ungersvend kan finde den hvide Vinterblomst,
Og tænke i sit Hjerte paa Vaarens Atterkomst;

Kan vandre med sin Pige fortrolig Arm i Arm,
Og kjælent hende gjække med Blomsten ved sin Barm.
Og før igjen jeg segner hen i det lange Blund,
Et Kys saa varmt jeg nyder af Pigens Rosenmund.

The snowbell

When all the flowers are slumbering in their winter bed,
I wake up from my sleep and cast the covers
from my head.
And high up in the heavens blue I hear the skylark sing
As with its trill it prophesies the coming joys of spring.

No longer can I linger; I know I cannot stay,
The joy of life to relish before it hastes away.
But it is bitter cold up there, and through the
ice and snow
Before I see the sun I'll have to force my way, I know.

And still the field is desolate. I stand there on my own;
With not a brother close to me I face the wind alone:
And so I bow my head again; untimely forth I came,
And then before the others wake, homeward
I'll wend again.

And yet I stand here garlanded, in hope's
white colour hued;
And after all perhaps I may not bloom
unloved, unviewed.
Some lad may come along and see this pale
flower blossoming
And to his heart it may recall the year's awakening.

And he may wander with his love, his arm in
hers entwine,
And grace her bosom fondly with a snowdrop valentine.
And what if with her rosy lips she kiss me warm?
Why, then
Contented to my slumber long I may sink down again.

Naar skjønnere frembryde de Sommerblomster smaae,
Naar mellem Roser dufte Violerne saa blaae:
Maaskee en kjerlig Taare dog skjænkes mig i Løn,
Et kjerligt Hjerter tænker paa Vintrens blege Søn.
Steen Steensen Blicher, ca. 1826

De seks vers går igen i *Sneklokker* som følger:

2, 3, 4, 5, 8 og 9

Gråfødt

10 Han er imod det regngrå hav
Som født ud af dets farve
Hun bliver kold som det
Og ny og bølgende som det
Og salt i munden
Og om læberne
Der vil lukke sig
Om al hans smag
Som om et vidtstrakt land
Der dækker alt
Med sine regngrå bølger
Juliane Preisler (fra "Nord")

Livet og døden

11 Hvert græsstrå er en kirkegård
Fasanens skrig er dødens
Bølgerne er de sidste åndedrag
Og nu kunne man synge om solen

Later, when greater summer beauties gaily rear
their head,
And violets blue their summer scent among the
roses spread:
Perhaps a secret tear of love will drop, preserving me,
A pale son of winter, in loving memory.

Steen Steensen Blicher. c. 1826

The six verses above appear in *Snowbells* as follows: 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 9

Greyborn

He is against the rain-grey sea
As from its colour born
She grows as cold as it
As new and rolling as it
And salt in the mouth
And on the lips
That will close
Around all his taste
As if around a vast land
That covers all
With its rain-grey waves
Juliane Preisler (from North, 2000)

Life and death

Each blade of grass is a graveyard
The pheasant's scream is the scream of death
The waves are the last gasp of breath
And now one could sing of the sun

Hvert græsstrå kæmper sig frem
Fasanen brunster sig selvfølgelig
Bølgerne er det evige åndedrag
Og nu kunne man synge om vinter

Peter Asmussen

3 motetter

12 I. Sicut umbra cum declinat,
ablátus sum:
et excússus sum sicut locústæ.
Ps. 108 (109)

13 II. Indūti sunt arietes óvium,
et valles abundábunt fruménto:
clamábunt, étenim hymnum dicent
Ps. 64 (65)

14 III. Dies mei sicut umbra declinavérunt:
et ego sicut foenum áruí.
Ps. 101 (102)

Lacrimosa

15 Lacrimosa dies illa,
qua resurget ex favilla
judicandus homo reus:
Huic ergo parce Deus.
Pie Jesu Domine,
dona eis requiem.
Amen.

Fra den latinske dødsmesse

Each blade of grass fights its way up
The pheasant ruts as rut it must
The waves are the eternal's breath
And now one could sing of winter
Peter Asmussen

3 Motets

I. I am taken away like the shadow
when it declineth:
and I am shaken off as locusts.
Ps. 108 (109)

II. The rams of the flock are clothed,
and the vales shall abound with corn:
they shall shout, yea they shall sing a hymn.
Ps. 64 (65)

III. My days have declined like a shadow,
and I am withered like grass.
Ps. 101 (102)

Lacrimosa

On this day, full of tears,
when from the ashes arises
guilty man to be judged,
Lord, have mercy on him.
Gentle Lord Jesus,
grant them rest.
Amen.

From the Latin mass for the dead

“og solen går ned”

- [16] Jeg vender mig om
et øjeblik, men
et øjeblik efter
er alting væk
Jeg vender tilbage
men tror det kun
Man kan ikke gense
noget som helst
hvad en klog mand
har konstateret for
længst, om en flod,
men dette,
det blomstrende liv med
Blussende børn
Spyt i en tråd mellem læber
Sangen de læner sig frem for at synge
Et øjeblik
jeg vender tilbage
jeg kommer om lidt
Stenene kaster
de særeste lange skygger
på stranden
Vandet på stenene
skinner i solen
og solen går ned
Pia Juul (fra "sagde jeg, siger jeg", 1999)

Benedictus

- [17] Benedictus qui venit
in nomine Domini.
Osanna in excelsis.
Fra den latinske dødsmesse

“and the sun sets”

I turn away
for a moment, but
a moment later
everything's gone
I turn back
but only think I do
You can never see
anything again
as a wise man
has said before
long ago, about a river
but this,
blossoming life with
Blooming children
Stringy spit between lips
The song they lean forward to sing
Just a moment
I'll be back
I'll be there soon
The stones cast
the oddest of long shadows
upon the beach
The water on the stones
gleams in the sun
and the sun goes down
Pia Juul (from said I, I say, 1999)

Benedictus

Blessed is he that comes
in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.
From the Latin mass for the dead

Havet står så blankt og stille

- [18] Havet står så blankt og stille,
himlen spejler sig deri,
som de hjertet kysse ville,
smelte det i melodi.
- Hvorfor tør jeg ej udsige
hver en tanke i mit bryst?
Strækker sig ej barnets rige
selv ud over himlens kyst?
- Hen ad livets strøm vi sejle,
sorg er ballast i vor båd,
medens smil af engle spejle
sig i hver uskyldigs gråd,
- Ved hvert hjerte vil jeg blunde,
halvt i drømme lytte der,
vist jeg da fortælle kunne,
om hvor meget godt der er.
- Jorden står som brudesale,
hver en luftning ånder fred,
hjertet må sig højt udtale,
svulme, dø i kærlighed!
H.C. Andersen

The sea stands so still and shining

The sea stands so still and shining,
the sky reflected in the sea,
as if they mean to kiss the heart
melting it with melody.

Why do I not dare to utter
every thought of my heart's core?
Does not childhood's kingdom linger
e'en beyond the heavens' shore?

Along the stream of life we sail,
our boat with grief is ballasted;
smiles of angels are reflected
where tears of innocence are shed.

By each heart I wish to linger
half in dreams to hear its sound;
sure I am that I could tell there
how much goodness can be found.

Earth, she stands a bridal chamber;
every breeze is breathing peace,
now the heart must speak its feelings,
swell and die in love's release!
H.C. Andersen

DDD

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