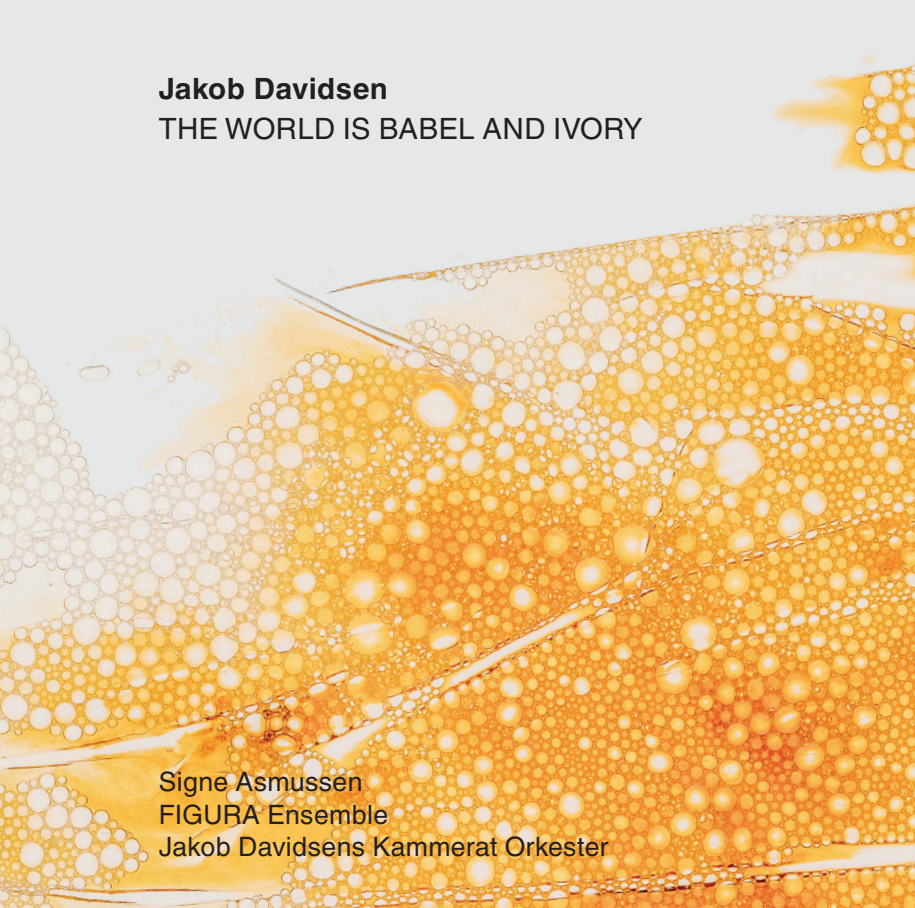




Jakob Davidsen

THE WORLD IS BABEL AND IVORY

Signe Asmussen

FIGURA Ensemble

Jakob Davidsens Kammerat Orkester

Jakob Davidsen (b. 1969)

THE WORLD IS BABEL AND IVORY

Signe Asmussen, mezzo-soprano

FIGURA Ensemble

- Anna Klett, bass clarinet
- Karl Husum, trumpet
- Jesper Egelund, double bass
- Frans Hansen, percussion

Jakob Davidsens Kammerat Orkester

- Peter Fuglsang, clarinet
- Jakob Munck, trombone
- Marie Louise Lind, cello
- Jakob Davidsen, piano

1	Cruel to Be Kind	6:41
	VERDEN ER BABEL OG ELFEN (THE WORLD IS BABEL AND IVORY)	30:15
2	I Jeg kan forestille mig dig (I Can Imagine You)	5:44
3	II Verdner af glas (Worlds of Glass)	3:25
4	III Som (The Way)	5:41
5	IV VERDEN ER BABEL OG ELFEN (THE WORLD IS BABEL AND IVORY)	4:58
6	V Du er mit (You Are My)	6:46
7	VI All Rise	3:41
8	Nærmere (Closer)	3:11

Total: 40:07

World premiere recordings

Dacapo is supported by the **DANISH ARTS FOUNDATION**



Jakob Davidsen

THE SMALL DETAILS IN THE VAST COSMOS *by Christian Munch-Hansen*

With the composer and pianist Jakob Davidsen as your travel guide, the listener on *THE WORLD IS BABEL AND IVORY* is invited to experience the great in the small, the near in the far, man in cosmos. In one of the Old Testament psalms, we find the mind-dizzying lines: 'When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?' It's an astonishing perspective, the subsidiary themes of which – powerlessness, vulnerability and love – also ring like small bells in the texts by William Shakespeare, Ursula Andkjær Olsen, and Ole Sarvig. On this release, they are given a unique musical interpretation by Jakob Davidsens Kammerat Orkester and FIGURA Ensemble in a fused symbiosis.

Jakob Davidsen is wide-ranging as a musician and a composer. He came originally from the young Danish jazz environment of the 1990s, but early on defined himself as a composer and studied composition under such teachers as Bo Holten and Niels Marthinsen. He also has considerable experience as a church organist. If one listens to his recordings over the years, one will notice how the music shifts from a Nordic, jazz- and fusion-influenced type to an increasingly chamber-musical style, and at the same time how his mode of expression matures and becomes focused. Davidsen's music displays supreme craftsmanship that always communicates precisely without any extremist forms of expression, yet always challengingly and with a wry, inquisitive view of existence. He is neither avant-garde nor a traditionalist, balancing on his tightropes of a stringent awareness of form, melodic humour and sensitivity.

In His Own Way

In Davidsen's music one can trace influences from J.S. Bach, Claude Debussy, Igor Stravinsky, Carl Nielsen, Per Nørgård and, not least, Olivier Messiaen. There are also hints of Jørgen Jersild, although this is not conscious on Davidsen's part. It's difficult to compare him with anyone – there is a touch of 'I did it my way' about his music. Davidsen also has a keen sense of the collective in his work with his fixed ensembles and as someone who is preoccupied with the common fate of humanity. His ingenious compositions often deal with the mysteries of existence and

with contrasting enigmas. It's hardly surprising that he is attracted by texts by B.S. Ingemann, Paulus, Ole Sarvig, and Italo Calvino.

'In terms of sound, I have delved deeper than ever,' Davidsen explains concerning THE WORLD IS BABEL AND IVORY. 'In many ways, the music is a summing-up and refining of my compositional work over the past twenty years. I am increasingly distancing myself from special compositional techniques and writing what I hear. And that is perhaps something increasingly lacking from present-day music: creating music by ear. A great deal of conceptual music is being written, which in itself there is nothing wrong with, but I no longer have that need. I'm quite happy to rely on my ears.'

If one moves backwards to such releases as *The Crossover Ensemble* (1996), *Helios Suite* (2000) and *Kammerat Orkester* (2011), there are works inspired by Nørgård's infinity series and Messiaen's scales and harmonic colours. 'I've lots of things in my luggage, but today I primarily compose as myself,' Davidsen differs from many other composers in his coupling of score music and improvisation. This is a practice particularly associated with Third Stream tendencies in the 20th century, with exponents such as Gunther Schuller, Chick Corea, Terje Rypdal, Markus Stockhausen, Louis Sclavis, and Maria Schneider. In Denmark, one can find it in Finn Savery and Palle Mikkelborg among others, but in recent times it's most consistently practised by Jakob Davidsen.

For the Musicians

But one ought to bear in mind that improvisation was once common practice in classical music, and that such figures as Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt, Schumann and Mendelssohn also mastered such improvisational techniques as improvised fugues, cadenzas and freely formed fantasias as well as ornamentations. But improvisation slid into the background during the transition from court culture to bourgeois music culture at the end of the 19th century. The work became solely supreme, fixed in the score as a graphic representation of the composer's ideas down to the tiniest detail. Davidsen, however, links up with the notion that musicians play a co-creative role in the work. He also personally stresses his special relation to his Kammerat Orkester, and in recent years, also to FIGURA Ensemble:

'I know what the musicians are capable of, and the most important thing is their ability to create music. It may then be a challenge to get the instruments of the ensemble to sound right

together, but the most important thing is what the persons in the orchestra can contribute. In a way, it's a bit like Duke Ellington, who wrote extremely directly for his musicians. For the same reason, it is extremely difficult to replace people in Kammerat Orkester and FIGURA Ensemble. It's not just a question of reading a score but also of understanding each other in the musical situation. I have previously never experienced being *so well* understood as a composer, although we come from somewhat different places. There is a form of naturalness in our collaboration. And in the musician environment, things are not as separate as they sometimes appear to be.'

This conception is confirmed by the bass player Jesper Egelund, who, back in 1993, was among the founders of FIGURA Ensemble, which is one of the more unusual classical chamber ensembles in Denmark – one that dares to play works and enter into contexts that cut across genres and forms of artistic expression: 'Over the past few years, a greater openness has arisen in the classical world, even though there are still some simplistic ideas that jazz equals improvisation, whereas classical music is written down. But it's also exciting to use one's instrument in that way. When one looks at Jakob Davidsen's scores, they seem at first sight to be simple, but are extremely well thought out – it feels good to be in the music. He has clear ideas, but there is also room for something free. I see him as being extremely sound-focused, which is why his music works so well.'

Both

The release comprises three new compositions, the main emphasis being on the suite THE WORLD IS BABEL AND IVORY, a musical staging of a cycle of texts from Ursula Andkjær Olsen's collection of poems *Det 3. årtusindets hjerte* (Third-Millennium Heart, 2012). This composition – regarded by Davidsen as a principal work – is encircled by a prologue, the Shakespeare quotation *Cruel to Be Kind* from *Hamlet* (1603), and an epilogue, the Sarvig poem *Nærmere* (Closer) from the collection *Grønne digte* (Green Poems, 1943).

The release opens abruptly and effectively: closely packed blows on keyboard and wind instruments, rhythmic and dissonant figures in *Cruel to Be Kind*. Soon, however, a flow of the gentle and lyrical is added, and Jakob Munck contributes with an improvised trombone solo that has a twinkle in its eye. The elements collide in the music and place the Shakespeare quotation

in relief. Davidsen explains: 'To me, this is a statement about opposites, the gentle as opposed to the brutal. Water can be gentle and brutal at the same time. The sun is life-giving but can also be our death-sentence. There is a duality between which one has to navigate as a human being.'

The ensembles also serve something of a shock start to THE WORLD IS BABEL AND IVORY. Davidsen's flair for pithiness and the exploitation of detail runs true to form. *I Can Imagine You*, however, finds a quiet, reflective mood with a fixed pulse and the wind instruments in colouring roles, but nothing is self-evident until the final note has faded away.

The six movements have their own distinctive identities that nevertheless are inter-connected, just as the poems intertwine with small repetitions or turns of phrase that establish links. That the disc ended up with that title is due to the strong dualism of the statement: 'The world is precisely both – a large, confusing community and our own little exclusive ivory tower. We are a part of the world, and the world is a part of us. Ursula Andkjær Olsen manages to combine what is close with what is large and abstract in her poetry. I also attempt to work with this in the music,' the composer says.

Abnormally Bitter

In *Worlds of Glass* there is a small speaking I-figure who acts and attempts to create order in the vast cosmos, using a skewed, lively waltz as the *primus motor*, one that happens to be somewhat reminiscent of Ernst Krenek's *Waltz* from his collection *Eight Pieces*, op. 110 (1946).

A mistier musical mood is established in *The Way*, with the strange transformational text about the I-figure who transforms herself into God in the life-giving moment of breastfeeding. Then comes the title poem THE WORLD IS BABEL AND IVORY with its distinctive staccato rhythms arranged to fit the syllables of the words, but also a beautiful passage in which the clarinetist Peter Fuglsang supplies a solo with touches of blues and an oriental feel à la Duke Ellington and Juan Tizol.

Perhaps the most beautiful moment on the disc comes in the warm masterpiece *You Are My*, a poignantly fine staging of the profound interconnectedness between mother and child during pregnancy, a feeling that also contains the fear of death.

First and foremost, however, the listener is embraced by the music with floating sounds, playful piano, clarinet and wordless song. Until the moment when Signe Asmussen, with the dry precision of an actor, brings us back to sober reality with the warning: 'My urine has smelled

abnormally bitter the last few days'. The ending of the work happens with Babylonian confusion in *All Rise*, where music and words bubble over like a pot on the boil.

As a conclusion, *Closer* steps out on the ice, with caution at first. Then a sizzling sound: Signe Asmussen's voice, which soon intones the text of Sarvig about the star, twinkling high up as in a dream, a bonfire on the far shores of the sky. Davidsen's music gives the words clothes, a vignette of wondering human melody, warm woodwind sound, bow strokes and a bell-ringing piano.

There are musical and poetic dream-visions at work here, evoked so vibrantly and dynamically by the musicians of Kammerat Orkester and FIGURA Ensemble, and with a special cadeau to Signe Asmussen as a highly present song-interpreter. Jakob Davidsen was been active for a long time, but it is perhaps now time for even more people to open their eyes and ears up for the composer and his music, which remarkably points both inwards and outwards.

Christian Munch-Hansen, MA (Religion and Music), writer on music and author

Since graduating from the Royal Academy of Music in Copenhagen with reviews that named her 'the voice of possibilities', 'a natural interpreter', and 'an intimate vocal-seducer', Danish mezzo-soprano **Signe Asmussen** (b. 1970) has been a preferred soloist with all of the national orchestras, ensembles and choirs. Her curiosity and sharp musicality, along with her passion for the contemporary repertoire, and chamber music, has made Signe Asmussen a favoured collaborator with ensembles such as FIGURA Ensemble, SCENATET, and Theatre of Voices, with whom she has premiered several new works and operas. In 2014, she was awarded the Danish Composers' Society's Award for Musicians.

FIGURA Ensemble have spent a quarter of a century in a continuous and dedicated process of development, exploring music and the opportunities it provides to enrich or change the lives of audiences of all ages. The members understand that artistic practice exists in the interaction between the inspiration you take on board and the experience you pass on. The many initiatives of the ensemble transcend genres and art forms and reflect a high level of ambition. FIGURA Ensemble is a well-established institution on the Danish music scene, and yet it has managed to maintain its open-mindedness, vitality and extremely high quality over many, many years. In 2017, FIGURA Ensemble was nominated for the Nordic Council Music Prize and received among others the Danish Broadcasting Corporation's P2 Award – 'Innovation of the Year' in 2018 for the GrowOP! Festival, the first children's opera festival in Denmark.

Jakob Davidsens Kammerat Orkester belongs to the elite of Danish orchestras that explore the borderland between improvisation and composition. The orchestra was formed in 2010 by the Danish piano player and composer Jakob Davidsen, who since the 1990s – persistently and challengingly – has shifted music away from conventional paths and shown himself to be one of the true original figures of crossover music in Denmark. Since then, Jakob Davidsens Kammerat Orkester has given concerts both at home and abroad, and in 2012 it received a Danish Music Award Jazz's 'Special Release of the Year'. Furthermore, the orchestra was awarded a prize by Danish Arts Foundation in 2013 for the innovative art project *Lend Art Your Ear*, which includes compositions particularly focusing on works by Danish painters from the 20th century exhibited at SMK (National Gallery of Denmark), the Willumsen Museum and Kunsten Museum of Modern

Art in Aalborg. The ensemble has worked together with musicians such as the Russian horn virtuoso Arkady Shilkloper, the French percussionist and composer François Merville, the American percussionist and musical thinker Adam Rudolph – and in recent years the Kammerat Orkester has collaborated closely with the FIGURA Ensemble.

Ursula Andkjær Olsen (b. 1970) was born and raised in Copenhagen. She has a degree in musicology and philosophy from the University of Copenhagen and Technische Universität Berlin. Olsen made her literary debut in 2000 and has since published eight collections of poetry, in addition to several dramatic texts and libretti for operas such as Danish composer Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen's *Sol går op, sol går ned*, and composer Peter Bruun's *Miki Alone*, which was awarded the Nordic Council Music Prize in 2008. Olsen has received numerous grants and prizes for her work, including the prestigious award Montana Literary Award for *Det 3. årtusindes hjerte* (Third-Millennium Heart) in 2013, and the Danish Arts Foundation's Award of Distinction in 2017.

Ole Sarvig (1921-1981), as a poet and writer, reached a central place in Danish literary history. He was born in Copenhagen and made his debut with the collection of poems *Grønne digte* (1943). Prevalent to his works is a peculiar aesthetic, created with inspiration from modern painting, and a general preoccupation with the situation of modern man in a troubled world, with no set standards, where the only resort seems to be love in a religious sense. Ole Sarvig received several awards for his writing, and from 1972 he was a member of the Danish Academy.

Med komponisten og pianisten Jakob Davidsen som rejsefører inviteres lytteren på VERDEN ER BABEL OG ELFEN til at opleve det store i det små, det nære i det fjerne, mennesket i kosmos. I en af Biblens salmer lyder det svimlende: "Når jeg ser din himmel, dine fingres værk, månen og stjernerne som du satte der, hvad er da et menneske, at du husker på det, et menneskebarn, at du tager dig af det?" Det er et forundret perspektiv, hvis sidetemaer om afmægtighed, sårbarhed og kærlighed også ringer som små klokker i teksterne af William Shakespeare, Ursula Andkjær Olsen og Ole Sarvig. De får på denne udgivelse en unik musikalsk fortolkning af Jakob Davidsens Kammerat Orkester og FIGURA Ensemble i sammensmeltet symbiose.

Jakob Davidsen favner bredt som musiker og komponist. Han kom oprindeligt fra det unge jazzmiljø i 1990'erne, men definerede sig tidligt som komponist og tog timer i komposition hos bl.a. Bo Holten og Niels Marthinsen. Han har også et langt virke som kirkeorganist. Lytter man til hans udgivelser gennem årene, vil man bemærke, hvordan musikken bevæger sig fra det nordiske, jazz- og fusionsprægede til en stadig mere kammermusikalsk stil, og samtidig, hvordan hans udtryk modnes og koncentrerer sig. Davidsens musik er ypperligt håndværk, altid præcist i kommunikationen, aldrig ekstremt i udtrykket, men alligevel til hver en tid udfordrende og med et skævt, søgende syn på tilværelsen. Han er hverken avantgarde eller traditionsholder, men balancerer på egne, opspændte liner af stringent formbevidsthed, melodisk humør og følsomhed.

På sin måde

I Davidsens musik kan man spore indtryk fra J.S. Bach, Claude Debussy, Igor Stravinsky, Carl Nielsen, Per Nørgård og ikke mindst Olivier Messiaen. Der er også mindelser i retning af Jørgen Jersild, selvom det ikke er bevidst fra Davidsens side. Han er vanskelig direkte at sammenligne med nogen og rimer som musikalsk personlighed på Piet Heins aforisme om katten, der sgu er sin egen. Davidsen har også blik for det kollektive i sit arbejde med sine faste ensembler og som en, der er optaget af menneskers fælles skæbne. Hans finurlige kompositioner kredser ofte om tilværelsens mysterier og modsætningsfyldte gåder. Ikke for ingenting er han draget af tekster af B.S. Ingemann, Paulus, Ole Sarvig og Italo Calvino.

"Lydmæssigt er jeg gået mere i dybden end nogensinde", uddyber Davidsen om VERDEN ER BABEL OG ELFEN. "Musikken er på mange måder en opsummering og forædling af mit kompositoriske virke i de sidste tyve år. Jeg går mere og mere væk fra specielle kompositionsteknikker, og skriver det, jeg hører. Og det er måske noget, der efterhånden mangler i ny musik i dag: at skabe musik på øret. Der bliver lavet megen konceptmusik, og det er der som sådan ikke noget galt i, men jeg har ikke længere det behov. Jeg tør godt stole på mine egne ører".

Bevæger man sig bagud til værker på udgivelser som *The Crossover Ensemble* (1996), *Helios Suite* (2000) og *Kammerat Orkester* (2011), findes der værker inspireret af Nørgårds uendelighedsrække og Messiaens skalaer og harmoniske farver. "Jeg har masser af ting i bagagen, men i dag komponerer jeg først og fremmest som mig selv". Davidsen adskiller sig fra mange andre komponister med sin kobling af partiturmusik og improvisation. En praksis, som især forbindes med *third stream*-tendenser i det 20. århundrede med bl.a. Gunther Schuller, Chick Corea, Terje Rypdal, Markus Stockhausen, Louis Sclavis og Maria Schneider som eksponenter. I Danmark kan man følge tendensen hos Finn Savary, Palle Mikkelborg og andre, men mest gennemført i nyere tid hos Jakob Davidsen.

Til musikerne

Men man bør erindre, at improvisation også engang var en almindelig praksis i den klassiske musik, og at personligheder som Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt, Schumann og Mendelssohn også mestrede improvisationsteknikker som improviserede fugaer, kadencer og frit formede fantasier og ornamenteringer. Men improvisationen gled i baggrunden i overgangen fra hofkulturen til borgerskabets musikkultur i slutningen af 1800-tallet. Eneherskende blev værket, fikseret i nodepartituret som en grafisk afbildning af komponistens ideer i mindste detaljer. Men Davidsen knytter an til den opfattelse, at musikerne har en medskabende rolle i værket. Han fremhæver da også selv den særlige relation til sit Kammerat Orkester og i de seneste år også FIGURA Ensemble:

"Jeg ved, hvad musikerne kan, og det væsentlige er deres evne til at skabe musik. Det kan så være en udfordring at få besætningens instrumenter til at klinge rigtigt sammen, men det vigtigste er, hvad personlighederne i orkestret kan bidrage med. Det er på den måde lidt som Duke Ellington, der skrev meget direkte til sine musikere. Af samme grund er det meget svært

at erstatte folk i Kammerat Orkester og FIGURA Ensemble. Det handler ikke bare om at læse et partitur, men også om at forstå hinanden i den musikalske situation. Jeg har ikke før oplevet at blive så forstået som komponist til trods for, at vi kommer fra lidt forskellige steder. Der er en form for naturlighed i vores samarbejde. Og i musikermiljøet er tingene ikke så adskilte, som det somme tider kan se ud".

Den opfattelse bekræfter bassist Jesper Egelund, der var med til at stifte FIGURA Ensemble tilbage i 1993, et af de mere usædvanlige klassiske kammerensembler i Danmark, der vover at spille værker og indgå i sammenhænge på tværs af genrer og kunstneriske udtryk: "De senere år er der opstået en større åbenhed i den klassiske verden, lige som der stadig trives nogle firkantede opfattelser af, at jazz er lig med improvisation og klassisk er nedskrevet. Men det er spændende også at bruge sit instrument på den måde. Når man ser på Jakobs partiturer, ser de umiddelbart enkle ud, men de er virkelig godt tænkt, det føles godt at være i musikken. Han har klare ideer, men der er også plads til noget frit. Jeg opfatter ham som meget klangfokuseret, derfor lyder hans musik så godt".

Begge dele

Udgivelsen består af tre nye kompositioner med hovedvægten på suiten VERDEN ER BABEL OG ELFEN, en musikalsk iscenesættelse af en tekstkreds fra Ursula Andkjær Olsens digtsamling *Det 3. årtusindets hjerte* (2012). Denne komposition – af Davidsen selv opfattet som et centralt værk – er omkranset af en prolog, Shakespeare-citatet *Cruel to Be Kind* fra skuespillet *Hamlet* (1603), og en epilog, Sarvig-digtet *Nærmere* fra samlingen *Grønne digte* (1943).

Udgivelsen åbner brat og effektivt: tætliggende hug i tangenter og blæsere, rytmiske og dissonerende figurer i *Cruel to Be Kind*. Men snart flyder også det bløde og lyriske til, og Jakob Munck bidrager med en improviseret basunsolo med glimt i øjet. Elementerne kolliderer i musikken og sætter Shakespeare-citatet i relief. Davidsen uddyber: "For mig handler dette udsagn om modsætninger, om det blide over for det brutale. Vand kan være blidt og brutalt på samme tid. Solen er livgivende, men samtidig er den vores dødsdom. Det er en dobbelthed, man som menneske må navigere imellem".

Det er også lidt af en chokstart, de to ensembler leverer på VERDEN ER BABEL OG ELFEN. Davidsens sans for prægnans og udnyttelse af detaljen fornægter sig ikke. *Jeg kan forestille mig*

dig finder dog et roligt og reflekterende leje med fast puls og blæserne i farvende roller, men intet er givet, før sidste tone er klinget ud.

De seks satser har hver deres identitet, men er alligevel forbundne, selv om digtene griber ind i hinanden med små gentagelser eller vendinger, der skaber forbindelser. At pladen endte med den titel, skyldes udsagnets stærke dualisme: "Verden er netop begge dele, både et stort, forvirrende fællesskab og vores eget lille eksklusive elfenbenstårn. Vi er en del af verden, og verden er en del af os. Ursula Andkjær Olsen evner at kombinere det nære med det store og abstrakte i sine digte. Det forsøger jeg også at arbejde med i musikken", siger komponisten.

Mærkelig skarpt

I *Verdner af glas* er det et lille talende jeg, der agerer og forsøger at skabe orden i det store kosmos med en skæv, liflig vals som motor, i øvrigt med visse mindelser om Ernst Kreneks *Waltz* fra samlingen *Eight Pieces*, op. 110 (1946).

En mere tåget musikalsk stemning etableres i *Som* med den mærkelige forvandlingstekst om jeget, der transformerer sig til Gud i amningens livgivende stund. Derefter følger titeldigtet VERDEN ER BABEL OG ELFEN med de specielle staccato-rytmer, føjet efter ordenes stavelser, men også en smuk passage, hvor klarinettist Peter Fuglsang leverer solospil med blik for blues og østlige fornemmelser à la Duke Ellington og Juan Tizol.

Albummets måske smukkeste øjeblik indtræder i det varme mesterstykke *Du er mit*, en knugende fin iscenesættelse af graviditetens dybe samhørighed mellem mor og barn, som samtidig rummer frygten for døden. Først og fremmest omfavnes lytteren dog af musikken med svævende klange, legende klaver, klarinet og ordløs sang. Lige indtil Signe Asmussen med en skuespillers tørre præcision bringer os tilbage til den nøgterne virkelighed med varslet: "Min urin har lugtet mærkelig skarpt de seneste dage". Værket ender med babylonisk forvirring i *All Rise*, hvor musik og ord bobler over som en gryde i kog.

Som afslutning træder *Nærmere* ud på isen, med forsigtige skridt i begyndelsen. Derefter en sydende lyd: Signe Asmussens røst, der snart intonerer teksten af Sarvig om stjernen, der blinker som et drømmesyn, et bål højt oppe på himlens fjerne kyster. Davidsens musik giver ordene klæder, en vignet af undrende menneske-melodi, varm træblæserklang, buestrøg og klokke-ringende klaver.

Der er musikalske og poetiske drømmesyner på spil her, fremmanet så livfuldt og dynamisk af musikerne i Kammerat Orkester og FIGURA Ensemble og med en særlig cadeau til sopranen Signe Asmussen som stærkt nærværende sangfortolker. Jakob Davidsen har været i gang længe, men måske det nu er på tide, at endnu flere får øjne og ører op for komponisten og hans musik, der på forunderlig vis peger både indad og udad.

Christian Munch-Hansen, cand.mag. i religion og musik, musiksribent og forfatter

Siden debutkoncerten fra Det Kongelige Danske Musikkonservatorium i 2001 – med anmeldelser, der udråbte hende til “en sanger med ekstraordinære muligheder” og en “vokal intim-forfører” – har **Signe Asmussen** (f. 1970) slået sit navn fast som en af sin generations mest alsidige og karismatiske sangerinder. Udstyret med sund nysgerrighed, et skarpt gehør og en stor forkærlighed for den ny kompositionsmusik, har Signe Asmussen gennem et mangeårigt, fast samarbejde med ensembler som FIGURA Ensemble, SCENATET og Theatre of Voices været med til at uropføre adskillige nye værker og musikdramatiske produktioner. Hun blev tildelt Dansk Komponistforenings Musikerpris i 2014.

FIGURA Ensemble har i 25 år, i stadig og stædig udvikling, udforsket musikken og musikkens muligheder for at berige eller give livsændrende oplevelser til et publikum i alle aldre. Medlemmerne af ensemblet har forståelse for en kunstnerisk praksis, der lever af en vekselvirkning mellem den inspiration, man tager ind, og den erfaring, man giver videre. Listen over initiativer på tværs af genrer og kunstarter er lang og udstråler et højt ambitionsniveau. FIGURA Ensemble er en institution i dansk musikliv, der har formået at bibeholde både nysgerrighed og puls i samtiden igennem en imponerende årrække på allerhøjeste hylde. I 2017 blev FIGURA Ensemble nomineret til Nordisk Råds Musikpris og var blandt modtagerne af P2 Prisen 2018 (‘Årets Nyskabelse’) for *GrowOP!*, Danmarks første operafestival for børn.

Jakob Davidsens Kammerat Orkester hører til eliten af danske orkestre, der udforsker grænselandet mellem improvisation og komposition. Orkesteret blev dannet i 2010 af pianisten og komponisten Jakob Davidsen, der siden 1990'erne – vedholdende og udfordrende – har flyttet musikken væk fra konventionelle stier og vist sig som en af crossovermusikkens sande originaler herhjemme. Jakob Davidsens Kammerat Orkester har siden spillet koncerter i ind- og udland og modtog i 2012 en Danish Music Award Jazz for ‘Årets Danske Særudgivelse’. Derudover blev orkestret i 2013 præmieret af Statens Kunstfond for det banebrydende kunstprojekt, *Se kunsten med nye ører*, der rummer tonesætninger af især danske kunstmaleres værker fra det 20. århundrede udstillet på Statens Museum for Kunst, Willumsens Museum og Kunsten Museum of Modern Art i Aalborg. Orkestret har arbejdet sammen med musikere som den russiske valdhorn-virtuos Arkady Shilkloper, den franske trommeslager og komponist François Merville, den amerikanske perkussionist og musiktænkner Adam Rudolph og i de seneste år arbejdet tæt sammen med FIGURA Ensemble.

Ursula Andkjær Olsen (f. 1970) er født og opvokset i København. Hun er en cand.mag. i musikvidenskab og filosofi fra Københavns Universitet og Technische Universität Berlin. Olsen debuterede i 2000 og har siden udgivet otte digtsamlinger foruden adskillige dramatiske tekster og operalibretti, bl.a. Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreens *Sol går op, sol går ned* og Peter Bruuns *Miki Alone*, der blev tildelt Nordisk Råds Musikpris i 2008. Ursula Andkjær Olsen har modtaget adskillige priser for sit arbejde, herunder den prestigefyldte Montana Litteraturpris for *Det 3. årtusindets hjerte* i 2013 og Statens Kunstfonds livsvarige hædersydelse i 2017.

Ole Sarvig (1921-1981) nåede som digter og forfatter at skrive sig til en central plads i den danske litteraturhistorie. Han blev født i København og debuterede med digtsamlingen *Grønne digte* (1943). Fælles for hans værker er en særegen æstetik, skabt med inspiration fra den moderne malerkunst, og en gennemgående optagethed af det moderne menneskes situation i en kriseramt verden, uden faste normer, hvor den eneste udvej synes at være kærligheden i en religiøs forstand. Ole Sarvig modtog flere priser for sit forfatterskab, og fra 1972 var han medlem af Det Danske Akademi.

Cruel to Be Kind

[1] I must be cruel only to be kind.

From *Hamlet*, Act 3, Scene 4
by William Shakespeare

THE WORLD IS BABEL AND IVORY

[2] *I can imagine you, even though you aren't here.
I can imagine you, even though I haven't seen
you yet.*

That is the structure.

I can imagine you, even though you'll never exist.

That is the structure, continued.

[3] I put all the little
orb-shaped worlds of glass back
in their cosmic framings, and everything
becomes everything.

[4] The way

I am the house, you are inside me
as if I were a house.

Cruel to Be Kind

Af kærlighed må jeg jo være hård.

Fra *Hamlet*, 3. akt, scene 4 af William Shakespeare.
Oversættelse: Edvard Lembocke

VERDEN ER BABEL OG ELFEN

*Jeg kan forestille mig dig, selvom du ikke er her.
Jeg kan forestille mig dig, selvom jeg ikke har set
dig endnu.*

Det er strukturen.

*Jeg kan forestille mig dig, selvom du aldrig nogen-
sinde vil eksistere.*

Det er fortsættelsen af strukturen.

Jeg sætter alle de små
kugleformede verdner af glas på
plads i deres kosmiske indfatninger, og alt bliver
til alt.

Som

jeg er huset, du er i mig
som i et hus.

The way

I am the castle, yes, I am
sinking into rubble, I won't be doing that
I just gained my towers, after all.

I am. God is the lifting of differences between
part and whole.
The structure of breastfeeding is divine, we are
God, every day

GLORIA.

Every hour there's milk that
hasn't seen the light of day
like the babel and ivory

that it is.

I am everything yet no one. This is
what I have exposed: you are

DARLING.

I have always existed in rubble. Only now did I
become a castle, after gaining my towers.

You must be separated before you can meet.
That is the structure.

Som

jeg er det slot, ja, det er jeg,
der synker i grus, det gør jeg ikke,
jeg har jo lige fået tårne.

Jeg er. Gud er ophævelsen af forskel på del og
helhed.
Amningens struktur er guddommelig, vi er Gud,
hver dag

GLORIA.

Hver time mælk som
ikke har set dagens lys, som det
babel og elfen

ben den er.

Jeg er alt, og samtidig er jeg ingen. Det er
det, jeg har blotlagt, du er

DARLING.

Jeg har altid været i grus. Det er først nu, jeg er
blevet et egentligt slot på grund af tårnene.

Man skal skilles ad, før man kan mødes. Det er
strukturen.

5 THE WORLD IS BABEL AND IVORY

I rub a desert of correlation against a desert of change:
thus fire was created. Then I rub a desert of necessity against
a desert of coincidence, until

correlation = coincidence
change = necessity
closeness = closeness

6 You are my

foreign body

named body
fabled body
cradled body.

If your death is meaningless, it must be because
you are meaning,
and losing you would be the loss of meaning
inside my distant interior: where
meaning runs out, where rose and name run
out.

My urine has smelled abnormally bitter the last
few days.

VERDEN ER BABEL OG ELFEN

Jeg grubber en ørken af sammenhæng imod en
ørken af forandring:
Således opstod ilden. Så grubber jeg en ørken af
nødvendighed imod
en ørken af tilfældighed, lige indtil

sammenhæng = tilfældighed,
forandring = nødvendighed,
nærhed = nærhed.

Du er mit

fremmedlegeme,

navnlegeme,
sagnlegeme,
favnlegeme.

Hvis din død er meningsløs, må det være, fordi
du er mening, og din
forsvinden ville være forsvinden af mening, dér i
mit fjerne indre, dér, dér
rinder mening ud, rinder rose, navn
ud.

Min urin har lugtet mærkelig skarpt de seneste
dage.

7 My life is hanging by long threads from the sky: a
spindle apparatus that keeps it
in place, in an upright position in my chest. When
oceans rise in the throat, life's
anchor is threatened.

The judge says *all rise*, and the big blue courtroom
gets up and swallows

humans, animals, gods
or even hearts
complex beings

unless I pull the organs out of my rib cage,
playpen, and
send them into orbit.

Printed as the poems appear in *Third-Millennium
Heart* by Ursula Andkjær Olsen (Broken Dimanche
Press/Action Books, 2017, translation: Katrine
Øgaard Jensen)

Mit liv hænger i lange tråde ned fra himlen i et
spindelapparat, som
holder det på plads, oprejst i brystet. Når havene
stiger i halsen, vil livets
ophæng blive truet,

dommeren siger *all rise*, og den store blå retssal
løfter sig og opsluger

mennesker, dyr, guder,
eller hjerterne selv,
komplicerede væsner,

hvis ikke jeg når at få organerne ud af brystkas-
sen, kravlegården, og
sender dem i kredsløb.

Gengivet som digtene fremstår i *Det 3. årtusindes
hjerter* af Ursula Andkjær Olsen (Gyldendal, 2012)

Closer

- 8 A star is twinkling drowsily
high up
as in a dream,
like a bonfire on some other coast
or a ship that is burning
far, far away,
where other destinies exist.
It twinkles whitish, flaming
like a glowing droplet,
like sodium flaring in water
with a sizzling sound.
And faintly I recall
that it was this ...

From *Grønne digte* by Ole Sarvig
(Gyldendal, 1943, translation: John Irons)

Nærmere

En stjerne blinker døsig
højt oppe
som i en drøm,
som et bål på en anden kyst
eller et brændende skib
langt, langt borte,
hvor andre skæbner lever.
Hvidligt blinker den og flammer
som en glødende dråbe,
som natrium, der brænder i vand
med en sydende lyd.
Og jeg erindrer svagt,
at det var den ...

Fra *Grønne digte* af Ole Sarvig
(Gyldendal, 1943)

DDD

Recorded at The Village Recording Studio, on 25–26 August 2018
Recording Producer: Jakob Davidsen
Engineering: John Fomsgaard
Editing, mix and mastering: John Fomsgaard & Jakob Davidsen
Mastering: John Fomsgaard

© & © 2020 Dacapo Records, Copenhagen

Liner notes: Christian Munch-Hansen
English translation of liner notes: John Irons
Proofreader: Svend Ravnkilde
Photo: p. 4: © Gorm Valentin

Lyrics by William Shakespeare: *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* (1603), Ursula Andkjær Olsen:
Det 3. årtusindets hjerte (Gyldendal, 2012), and Ole Sarvig: *Grønne digte* (Gyldendal, 1943)

Excerpts from *Det 3. årtusindets hjerte/Third Millennium Heart* are printed with permission of Gyldendal/Broken
Dimanche Press and Action Books. Copyright © 2012, 2017 Ursula Andkjær Olsen.
Translation copyright © 2017 Katrine Øgaard Jensen
Excerpt from *Grønne digte* is printed with permission of Gyldendal. Copyright © 1943 Ole Sarvig.
Translation copyright © 2019 John Irons

Jakob Davidsen and Dacapo Records acknowledge, with gratitude, the support of Augustinus Fonden,
Dansk Musiker Forbund, Dansk Kapelmesterforenings Gramex-midler, and Koda Kultur



DACAPO

8.226137

**DANMARKS NATIONALE
MUSIKANTOLOGI**

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

