

12 NOCTURNES

Bent Sørensen

Katrine Gislinge



12 Nocturnes

For piano (2000–2014)

Composed by Bent Sørensen (b. 1958)

Katrine Gislinge, voice⁹ and piano
Nightingale String Quartet¹³

1	Mignon – und die Sonne geht unter	3:56
2	Mondnacht (Berceuse No. 2)	2:20
3	Nächtlicher Fluss	1:17
4	Barcarola	2:35
5	In den Morgen tanzen	1:48
6	Sigrids Kantate	2:29
7	Mitternacht mit Mignon	2:55
8	In Rosenblüten tanzen	1:32
9	Sigrids Wiegenlied	2:23
10	304 Sterne in einem kleinen Fenster	2:01
11	Wiegenlieder	3:13
12	Und die Sonne geht auf	4:23
13	Bonus track: Walzer – Unter dem Meer (2020)	4:53
	Total	35:46

The piano at night

By Esben Tange

Bent Sørensen's *12 Nocturnes* comprise a collection of short pieces of great expressive weight. It is wonderfully atmospheric music with a vibrating magical sound that recalls the stars at night, miles above us. Where Chopin's iconic 19th century nocturnes are dark and full of unease, Bent Sørensen's music is luminous, a sounding prism for the tonal spectrum, the nocturne retransformed in the 21st century.

While working on the 12 pieces, which were composed one by one during the period from 2000 to 2014, Bent Sørensen was inspired with a special love for the piano, and with that came access to new musical zones: a new sound, a beauty, a purity.

It began with an inspiration that came from within, Bent Sørensen's memories of humming lullabies for his two daughters when they were little, the starting point for the eleventh nocturne, 'Wiegenlieder', which was composed first. Added to those memories were some strange nocturnal experiences in Copenhagen:

'There is something about the combination of the piano and the night. I have always been fascinated by the sound of a piano from far away, and many times when I have walked through the darkness of the city at night – I've been stopped by the sound of a piano that presses itself from a window. The most beautiful night sound – enigmatic and mystical in a way that is inexplicable', says Bent Sørensen.

Despite his interest and the special aura that surrounds the piano, Bent Sørensen has for many years had difficulty in composing for the instrument. But when he met the two pianists, Leif Ove Andsnes and Katrine Gislinge, for whom most of the pieces were composed, a new enthusiasm emerged and, explains Sørensen, he discovered that music was capable of 'swimming and drifting'. 'It is as though the piano has come to understand me, and now I am enormously happy to write for the instrument.'

A number of the pieces are linked with other works by Bent Sørensen, especially the trilogy *Papillons*, in which a central piano piece composed for Katrine Gislinge introduces a shadow-play with a string quartet, ensemble and string orchestra, respectively, in which Romanticism's intriguing girl, Mignon, is made a reflection-point for love.

There are also glimpses of music found in the piano concerto, *La Mattina* (2009), and two of the pieces are used in Sørensen's *St. Matthew Passion* (2019).

The *12 Nocturnes* were gathered and revised into their current form in 2014, and together form a sequence of nocturnal scenes, from one evening until the following morning.

The first, 'Mignon – und die Sonne geht unter', is sunset music built on a poem by Pia Juul, 'And the sun goes down'. It is condensed music. Briefly, when we step out of the usual time, struck by the moon's beams. A dark river at night drags us down into hidden dream cities. A whirling, gentle dance condenses in ecstatic presence. The night as a space for forgetting oneself, a fatal devastating space for reversal and a space for feeling confident.

In the ninth piece, 'Sigrids Wiegenlied', which was composed for Leif Ove Andsnes' new-born daughter, we hear a faint voice in the distance and witness the child being lifted into the world in the peace of the night.

The delicately glittering '304 Sterne in einem kleinen Fenster' which follows was inspired by a

quotation from Peter Asmussen: 'If you did not know where you were, you might believe you were somewhere else'. Finally, towards the end of the last piece, the choral study 'Und die Sonne geht auf', the piano is transcended and is rediscovered in a new form. Through a soft flickering tremolo we sense the first light of the day: the sun comes up.

A short piano piece, 'Walzer – Unter dem Meer', follows as a bonus track. It was composed with the work of the expressive German painter, Markus Lüpertz in mind. He, like Bent Sørensen, has created a new expressive art through an intense exchange with the past. With its origins in a trembling world of echoes, a lyrical singing motive from *Papillons* is revealed, we are being whirled tenderly in a sunken waltz which, despite the pull of the seabed, is saturated with light. With a dying tone, where sounds, as though from an alien planet, are sensed as whispering strokes from a string quartet, and space expands again. An omen of a new time. A meeting.



The night as a space for forgetting oneself, a fatal devastating space for reversal and a space for feeling confident.



Katrine Gislinge

Katrine Gislinge is one of Scandinavia's most striking pianists, giving solo and chamber music concerts in most of Europe and in the US. Her interpretations are characterised by a trembling sensitivity, where every little detail in the music makes sense and gathers in a clear and forward-looking stream. As a pianist, she manages to create a balance between the most fragile and the most direct. When you listen to her, you enter a musical space of 'intoxicating sensuality' – as one reviewer has described it.

Katrine Gislinge's repertoire ranges from Bach to the newest music. She manages to add, beautifully and fascinatingly, colour and new dimensions to the different styles of the piano repertoire through her personal, delicate playing.

In recent years, Katrine Gislinge has particularly distinguished herself as an interpreter of Mozart's piano concertos. About her interpretation of Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 9, Jeunehomme, one reviewer wrote: 'With Katrine Gislinge at the keys, you did not just get a superb interpretation in a technical-virtuoso way. She also opened the door to music heaven, simply because Gislinge is an inspired pianist.'

Next to Mozart, Katrine Gislinge's focus is on the classical piano repertoire. In recent years there

has been an expansion of her repertoire and newer music – Rachmaninov, Gershwin, and others – and contemporary music has become a natural part of her concerts.

Katrine Gislinge has collaborated with musicians and conductors such as Gustavo Dudamel, Gidon Kremer, Augustin Dumay, Jin Wang, Kurt Sanderling, Andreas Brantelid and more, and played at festivals such as Lockenhaus, Bergen, Trondheim, Cervantino, London, Festival de Radio France in Montpellier as well as in concert halls like Carnegie Hall and the Concertgebouw.

Nightingale String Quartet is based in Copenhagen and is made up of Gunvor Sihm and Josefine Dalsgaard, violins, Marie Louise Broholt Jensen, viola, and Louisa Schwab, cello. The quartet was founded in 2007, and in 2014 – as the first ensemble ever – the quartet received Gramophone's 'Young Artist of the Year Award'.

Apart from considerable concert activity in Denmark, Nightingale String Quartet has toured countries like Brazil, Britain, the Netherlands, China, Russia, Sweden, South Africa, Germany, and the US. The quartet had its debut at the Wigmore Hall in January 2014.

Klaveret i natten

Af Esben Tange

Bent Sørensens *12 Nocturner* er en samling af korte stykker med stor virkning. Forunderlig stemningsmusik med en vibrerende magisk klang, der som stjerner i natten når os på milevid afstand. Hvor Chopins ikoniske 1800-tals nocturner er dunkle og anelsesfulde, er der hos Bent Sørensen tale om lysende musik – en klanglig prisme i hele tonespektret, nocturnen genfortryllet i det 21. århundrede.

Under arbejdet med de 12 stykker, der er komponeret drypvis i årene fra 2000 til 2014, er der for Bent Sørensen spiret en særlig kærlighed til klaveret frem. Og med den adgang til nye musikalske zoner; en ny klang, en skønhed, en renhed.

Det begyndte med en inspiration, der kom indefra. Bent Sørensens mindelser om at nynne vuggesange for sine to døtre som små, er udgangspunkt for “Wiegenlieder”, der er den 11. Nocturne, men som er komponeret først. Læg dertil sælsomme natlige oplevelser i København:

“Der er noget med kombinationen af klaver og nat. Jeg har altid været fascineret af lyden af et

klaver fra langt borte, og flere gange er jeg gået gennem byens mørke – om aftenen og natten – og er stoppet op ved lyden af et klaver, der trænger ud fra et vindue. Den smukkeste nattelyd – gådefuld og mystisk på en uforklarlig måde”, siger Bent Sørensen.

Til trods for interessen og den særlige aura, der står omkring klaveret, havde Bent Sørensen i mange år svært ved at komponere for netop det instrument. Men i mødet med de to pianister Leif Ove Andsnes og Katrine Gislinge, til hvem hovedparten af stykkerne er komponeret, blev der tændt en lyst, og en oplevelse af at musikken kunne “svømme og svæve”, fortæller Bent Sørensen. “Det er som om, at klaveret er kommet til at forstå mig, og nu er jeg blevet enormt glad for at skrive for klaver.”

En række af stykkerne er forbundet med andre værker af Bent Sørensen. Det gælder i særlig grad trilogien *Papillons*, hvor en central klaverstemme komponeret til Katrine Gislinge indgår i et skyggespil med henholdsvis strygekvartet, ensemble og strygeorkester. Og hvor romantikkens gådefulde pige Mignon gøres til et spejlingspunkt for kærligheden. Der er også glimt af musik, som kan genfindes i klaverkoncerten *La Mattina* (2009), og to af stykkerne er udfoldet i Bent Sørensens *Matthæuspassion* (2019).

Med de *12 Nocturner*, der i 2014 blev samlet og gennemskrevet i deres nuværende form, har Bent Sørensen skabt en række natlige scener. Rammen er en nat fra aften til morgen.

Den første, “Mignon – und die Sonne geht unter”, er solnedgangsmusik, der bygger på et digt af Pia Juul, “Og solen går ned”. Der er tale om kondenseret musik. Øjebliksbilleder, hvor vi træder ud af den vante tid, ramt af månens stråler. En mørk natlig flod, der trækker os ned i skjulte drømmebyer. En hvirvlende, nænsom dans fortættet i ekstatisk nærvær. Natten som et selvforglemmelsens rum, et fatalt omstyrtende rum og et fortrøstningens rum.

I den niende, “Sigrids Wiegenlied”, der er komponeret til Leif Ove Andsnes’ nyfødte datter, hører vi en svag stemme i det fjerne og er vidne til at et barn i ly af natten løftes ind i verden. Den sart glitrende “304 Sterne in einem kleinen Fenster”, der følger efter, er inspireret af et citat af Peter Asmusen: “Hvis man ikke vidste, hvor man var, kunne man tro, man var et andet sted.”

Endelig i den sidste, koralstudiet “Und die Sonne geht auf”, er det mod slutningen, som om klaveret transcenderer og genfindes i en ny skikkelse. Igen nem et sagte flimrende tremolo fornemmes dagens første stråler. Solen står op.

Som ekstranummer følger endnu et kort klaverstykke, “Walzer – Unter dem Meer”, komponeret med tanke på den ekspressive tyske billedkunstner Markus Lüpertz, der ligesom Bent Sørensen skaber ny ekspressiv kunst i en intens udveksling med fortiden. Med udgangspunkt i en sitrende ekko-verden, der åbenbarer et lyrisk syngende motiv fra *Papillons*, hvirvles vi blidt ind i en sunken vals, der trods draget af havets bund er mættet med lys. Og med en udklang, hvor der anes toner fra en fremmed planet i form af fire strygeres hviskende strøg, udvides rummet atter. Et varsel om en ny tid. Et møde.



Natten som et selvforglemmelsens rum, et fatalt omstyrtende rum og et fortrøstningens rum.

Katrine Gislinge er en af Skandinaviens mest markante pianister med både solo- og kammermusik-koncerter i det meste af Europa og USA. Hendes fortolkninger er præget af en sitrende følsomhed, hvor hver eneste lille detalje i musikken får mening og samler sig i en klar og fremadrettet strøm. Som pianist formår hun at skabe balance mellem det mest skrøbelige og det mest direkte, og når man lytter til hende, går man ind i et musikalsk rum af “berusende sensualitet” – som en anmelder har beskrevet det.

Katrine Gislinges repertoire spænder fra Bach til den allernyeste musik, og hun formår på en smuk og fascinerende måde at få sit personlige, følsomme spil til at give farve og tilføje ekstra dimensioner til klaverrepertoirets forskellige stilarter.

I de seneste år har Katrine Gislinge især markeret sig som fortolker af Mozarts klaverkoncerter. Om hendes fortolkning af Mozarts 9. klaverkoncert, *Jeunehomme*, skrev en anmelder: “Med Katrine Gislinge ved tangenterne fik man ikke bare en suveræn tolkning i teknisk-virtuos forstand, men også åbnet porten til musikkens himmel, ganske enkelt fordi Gislinge er en beåndet pianist.”

Ved siden af Mozart er fokus hos Katrine Gislinge rettet på det klassiske klaverrepertoire. I de sene-

ste år er der imidlertid sket en udvidelse af hendes repertoire, hvor både nyere musik – Rakhmaninov, Gershwin og andre – og den allernyeste musik er blevet en naturlig del af hendes koncerter.

Katrine Gislinge har samarbejdet med musikere og dirigenter som Gustavo Dudamel, Gidon Kremer, Augustin Dumay, Jin Wang, Kurt Sanderling, Andreas Brantelid med flere, og spillet på festivaler som Lockenhaus, Bergen, Trondheim, Cervantino, London, Festival de Radio France i Montpellier samt i koncertsale som Carnegie Hall og Concertgebouw.

Nightingale String Quartet har base i København og består af Gunvor Sihm og Josefine Dalsgaard, violiner, Marie Louise Broholt Jensen, bratsch, og Louisa Schwab, cello. Nightingale String Quartet blev dannet i 2007, og i 2014 blev kvartetten – som det første ensemble nogensinde – tildelt Gramophones ‘Young Artist of the Year Award’.

Foruden omfattende koncertvirksomhed i Danmark har Nightingale String Quartet turneret i blandt andet Brasilien, England, Holland, Kina, Rusland, Sverige, Sydafrika, Tyskland og USA. Nightingale String Quartet debuterede i Wigmore Hall i januar 2014.

Recorded *live* at Koncertsalen, DR Koncerthuset, on 14 January 2021

Recording producer: Thore Brinkmann

Sound engineer: Mikkel Nymand

Editing and mastering: Thore Brinkmann

© & © 2021 Dacapo Records, Copenhagen

The piano at night, by Esben Tange, translated from the Danish by Colin Roth

Proofreaders: Colin Roth, Jens Fink-Jensen

Photos p. 1, 5 © Peter Christian Christensen

Cover design: Studio Tobias Røder, www.tobiasroeder.com

Publisher: Edition Wilhelm Hansen, www.wisemusicclassical.com

This release has been made in cooperation with DR (Danish Broadcasting Corporation)

DR

Dacapo Records is supported by the Danish Arts Foundation

www.dacapo-records.dk

DACAPO

8.226627

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.