



GUSTAV HELSTED

Decet & String Quartet

The Danish Sinfonietta (*Randers Kammerorkester*)

GUSTAV HELSTED (1857-1924)

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The Danish Sinfonietta (*Randers Kammerorkester*)

David Riddell, conductor*

Decet in D major, Op. 18 (1891) *

for flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, 2 violins, viola, cello and double bass ... 34:30

- | | | |
|---|---|-------|
| 1 | I. Allegro moderato | 9:26 |
| 2 | II. Theme and variations: Andante | 8:48 |
| 3 | III. Scherzo: Allegro molto vivace | 5:51 |
| 4 | IV. Finale: Adagio ma non troppo - Allegro ma non troppo - Allegro vivo -
Adagio ma non troppo - Allegro ma non troppo - Allegro molto | 10:25 |

String Quartet in F minor, Op. 33 (c. 1917) ... 27:04

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------|------|
| 5 | I. Allegro con fuoco | 6:11 |
| 6 | II. Presto appassionato | 6:18 |
| 7 | III. Andante sostenuto | 7:24 |
| 8 | IV. Allegro risoluto | 7:11 |

Total: 61:34

World premiere recordings



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GUSTAV HELSTED – LATE ROMANTICISM AND THE WILL TO EXPRESSION

by Bjarne Mørch Jensen

"Drily humorous" and "bizarrely sarcastic" are phrases that the Danish Encyclopedia uses in a description of Gustav Helsted's personality. The striking, the awkward, the categorical and the will to push things to the extreme were indeed typical of Helsted as a composer. At least so his music was perceived in his time. In his book from 1917 about Danish composers Gerhardt Lynge writes for example that Helsted is "a questing artist who chooses his resources with extremely discerning taste and who swears blindly to his ideals; and may therefore seem odd and unapproachable, and is indeed unapproachable for all those who cannot immerse themselves in his extremely meticulously wrought and fastidiously purified art". In Copenhagen musical life at the end of the nineteenth century Helsted was a radical and a champion of the Late Romantic currents as they came to expression in the works of among other composers Richard Wagner, Anton Bruckner and Gustav Mahler.

Gustav Helsted (1857-1924) was a pupil of among others Niels W. Gade, who had dominated Danish musical life for many years since the middle of the 1800s, and with inspiration from Schumann and Mendelssohn had taken out a patent on a distinctively Danish sound that typified many of the Danish composers of Romanticism. However, like the eight-years younger Carl Nielsen – who dissociated himself from what he called "pale" Danish Romanticism, Helsted had a need to do something new and different. He wanted to break down the boundaries and extend the expressive possibilities of music beyond what could be described as a particularly Danish Romantic "romance tradition" with the focus on singable, direct, straightforward expression. Along with among others Carl Nielsen, Fini Henriques and Louis Glass, Helsted therefore established the "Music Society of 14 March 1896", which put the new symphonies of Bruckner and Mahler on the programme – often in versions for two pianos – and made it possible to find one's bearings among the newest musical tendencies.

Although Gustav Helsted was born into a family of musicians – as a son of Carl Helsted, who was a composer and singing teacher and a musician in the Royal Danish Orchestra – the young Gustav, at the wish of his father, began his career as a trainee in a commercial office. But this did not succeed in stifling his son's interest in music, and at the age of 23 he therefore began



GUSTAV HELSTED

studying piano, counterpoint and composition at the Copenhagen academy of music. After his training there Helsted worked for a period as an orchestral musician and opera repetiteur at the Royal Danish Theatre, but it was first and foremost at the organ that he aroused attention. At the consecration of the Jesus Church in Valby in 1891 Helsted was thus appointed as organist, and had a new, modern organ, built by the French organ-builder Cavaillé-Coll, at his disposal there. It was therefore possible for Helsted to play the new, harmonically sophisticated organ works of the French composer César Franck in particular. With his popular organ recitals Helsted thus introduced, in both words and music, the French composer to the Danish musical scene.

After 24 years at the Jesus Church Helsted had established such a reputation that in 1915 he was appointed to the prestigious post of organist at the Church of Our Lady (Copenhagen Cathedral). In 1892 Helsted was also employed by the Academy of Music as a teacher of music theory, and in 1904 of organ-playing. As a composer Helsted produced among other works a decet, the opera *The Storm Bell*, the orchestral pieces *A Walking Tour on a Summer's Day*, *Gurre Songs* for choir and orchestra, *Erotic Songs* for voice and piano, a violin concerto and a number of symphonies and organ works.

Gustav Helsted was an assertive personality, but he was more modest when it came to putting his own works on the programme. At the first concert on Sunday 2 February 1902 at the "Danish Concert Society" – of which Helsted was Chairman – he did however conduct his own new symphony, which Gustav Hetsch described in the following words in the Swedish periodical *Ord och Bild*: "Mr. Helsted on the other hand conducted the performance of his own symphony, a work on the grand scale, bristling with compositional skill – questing and as a result often odd and awkward, which was heard with unfailing interest if not always with aesthetic pleasure. This new work from the peculiarly fine artistic personality that Helsted is was anticipated with no little excitement by the audience, who however seemed more amazed than enthusiastic over it".

The reaction of the audience was probably characteristic of the perception of Helsted's music at the time, and after Helsted's death his music has in fact only been played very sporadically in the Danish concert halls. The Danish Sinfonietta played Helsted's decet for the first time in 1991 – later several ensembles have had the work on the programme – and the South Jutland Symphony Orchestra recorded Helsted's violin and cello concerto in 2001, but these may well be all the performances in recent times.

DECET

In his book about Danish composers from 1917 Gerhardt Lyngø offers this assessment of Helsted's **Decet, Op. 18** for flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, French horn and strings: "The Decet too has the effect of a work conceived with great seriousness, diligence and knowledge, but it is, if one might put it so, more Helsted-like in its intransigence, in its absolute lack of accommodation to the requirement that music should appear to advantage and follow the established path in sound and the progressions of its harmony". So in 1917 Helsted's Decet, from 1891, was still 'modern' and inaccessible, while today to our ears it seems directly appealing with a decidedly Romantic expression, and despite the Continental inspiration has an indefinable Danish tone as its basis.

As far as we know there is no programme for Helsted's Decet. At the beginning of the first movement of the Decet one does however get a clear sense that Helsted wanted, with light pastel colours, to paint the picture of a morning mood in which nature awakens as the sun gains in power. The strings play a gentle *dolce* accompaniment, while the woodwinds, with the execution instruction *espressivo*, introduce a small fanfare that wanders through the various instruments and gives the impression of the morning twittering of the birds. Out of this fine, quiet introduction grows the movement, until the clarinet takes hold of a new theme. In the course of the first movement, with an assured sense of the melodic potential, Helsted unfolds an imaginative dialogue between the separate elements of the themes, and at the same time explores how far he is able to stretch the harmonic bow in what Gerhardt Lyngø would call a bold journey away from the original D major key. After an extended progression, however, the movement ends as it began, in D major and in a gentle, pastoral *pianissimo*.

The second movement is a variation form with a total of seven variations based on a melancholy theme which is presented with restrained power in oboe and clarinet, accompanied by the strings. The subsequent variations turn and twist the theme through all lightings and moods from the sorrowful to the graceful, from rhythmic and contrapuntal variations to sophisticated ornamentations and from the faintest nuances to full-blown *fortissimo*. A more serious mood grows up in the sixth variation for strings without winds and with the cello as the focus. After the fresh, forward-looking energy of the first bars the seventh and last variation ends quietly and calmly.

An ingenious, rather subtle theme in the solo cello introduces the scherzo in the third movement. The theme gradually appears throughout the ensemble in a contrapuntal, undulating process which, over a long crescendo, moves from *pianissimo* to *fortissimo*. As a contrast, the middle section has a more lyrical mood, after which the theme and the movement structure from the first part return.

After the slow, expressive introduction to the final movement, which is based on the theme from the variation movement, a unison semiquaver motion sets in with a forward-thrusting energy. Over four bars a little rustic figure is drummed out in the strings and moves from *piano* to *forte*, after which the winds, in the next four bars, present parts of the thematic material of the movement. The energetic thrust continues until a temporary halt, after which a small fugue in the strings over the recurring theme sets the movement in motion again. Later the introductory mood and the theme from the variation movement return; the process is repeated and Helsted then brings the whole work to a close with a melodically and formally sweeping, luxuriant and flourishing ending.

STRING QUARTET IN F MINOR

The **String Quartet, Op. 33** in F minor is the last of what may have been five string quartets. In several places it is stated that the work was composed in 1922, but that is more likely to have been the year of its first publication in print. According to the Royal Library in Copenhagen the original manuscript is dated 23 September 1917. The quartet was played on among other occasions 14 January 1942 in Copenhagen for the Royal Danish Academy's celebration of the founding of the Academy, which may have been the most recent performance of the work. The obstinate and categorical nature that characterized Gustav Helsted as a person can also be found in the first movement of the string quartet, which has the movement name *Allegro con fuoco* – 'quick and fiery'. With a highly economical feeling for the exploitation to the limit of the thematic and motivic material, the whole movement is built up around a single, short but clear-cut motif of four quick descending semiquavers that is heard for the first time as run-up to the first bar in the movement, and which also rounds off the movement in the last bar. Helsted's main introduction to the Late Romantic style was the French composer César Franck, who in the wake of Wagner and Liszt developed the harmonic basis for his music with particularly

many modulations – changes from one key to another – which in the listener creates direct uncertainty about the tonal and harmonic foundation; and this is also a recurring feature of the first movement and the rest of Helsted's quartet.

A conversation between Carl Nielsen and Gustav Helsted might suggest that Helsted's feeling for the contrapuntal – the equal interplay of several voices or instruments – was minimal. Indeed, in connection with Mogens Wöldike's first concert with the Palestrina Choir, Helsted's comment on the performance of Palestrina's Marcellus Mass was that the music was boring, unmelodious and just sounded like a long succession of triads, to which Carl Nielsen replied, "My dear Helsted, you obviously can't see the wood for the trees – it's all melody, all the time, and in all six voices". Although the composers of Late Romanticism often sought the so-called *Schmelzklang*, in which the different instruments are all united in a single fused sound, Helsted does work to a great extent, despite his possible misunderstanding of Palestrina's counterpoint, with the contrapuntal play among the four string instruments, which comes to expression in several places in the course of the first movement of the string quartet.

With the movement name *Presto appassionato* – fast and passionate – the second movement in Helsted's string quartet is also fiery and highly temperamental. The movement is in triple time and functions as the scherzo of the quartet with two contrasting intermediate sections with a slightly calmer atmosphere. In purely melodic terms the movement is based on long, emphatic and dramatic interval leaps, while the notes in the intermediate sections more or less cling their way from one note to the next. In the third movement Helsted suggests a slightly mysterious, anticipatory mood. Like a funeral march the movement moves along over a monotone rhythm in the cello, which in the first bar plays a so-called empty fifth, which with the E flat of the viola in the next bar turns out to be a minor chord – C minor. The descending melody in the two violins, with its very quiet volume (*pianissimo*) and the expression mark *dolce* – gentle – suggests a wistful, melancholy mood that runs through the whole movement. Towards the end a modulation to D flat major does offer hope of resolution and comfort, but the movement ends as it began in C minor. The fourth and last movement begins quickly and resolutely with a series of short, almost abrupt melodic fragments which however quickly come together in longer phrases. The mood changes when the second subject enters with the opposite character – friendly, expressive and accommodating. The whole movement thus becomes a struggle between the abrupt

and hectic on the one hand and the bright and friendly on the other. The quartet is in the overall key of F minor, but in the very last bars of the last movement its tangled and in some places almost impenetrably darkened character is finally and definitively resolved in a concluding F major cadence.

© *Bjarne Mørch Jensen, communications officer at The Danish Sinfonietta*

The Danish Sinfonietta is built around a permanent core of 14 musicians: a wind quintet and nine strings, supplemented by 20-25 additional musicians as and when required. Its permanent home is the Arts Centre Værket in Randers, Denmark, where around thirty concerts are played every season. Other activities include numerous concerts at other venues throughout Denmark, and regular performances as opera orchestra for Aarhus Summer Opera. Under its Scottish chief conductor, David Riddell, the orchestra occupies a unique place in Danish cultural life due to its many and varied activities: orchestral concerts with expanded forces, chamber concerts, opera and operetta performances, summer concerts, recordings and broadcasts, school concerts, workshops, and teaching. In recent years the orchestra has toured extensively, visiting Scotland, Estonia, Iceland, Greenland, Norway, Sweden, Russia, Syria, China and Italy. The Danish Sinfonietta was formed in 1945 by Lavard Friisholm. Under his leadership the orchestra soon became a permanent feature of Danish musical life. Classical concerts in Randers, summer concerts, and regular broadcasts for Danish Radio helped build a reputation as one of the country's finest chamber ensembles. In 1986, The Danish Sinfonietta was designated a "basis ensemble", enlarging the orchestras activities and providing a framework for state funding. The Danish Sinfonietta is funded by Randers Town Council and The Danish Arts Foundation.

Born in Elgin, Scotland, **David Riddell** was educated at various schools in North East Scotland before studying music at St. Andrews University, Edinburgh University, and conducting at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London. Now resident in Denmark, he is artistic director and chief conductor of The Danish Sinfonietta and artistic director of Aarhus Summer Opera. Riddell also enjoys a close association with the Danish National Opera. Riddell has been artistic director and chief conductor of The Danish Sinfonietta since 1993, making several recordings and touring with them to Scotland, Iceland, Estonia, Greenland, Norway, Sweden, Syria, China, Italy and Russia. His other orchestral work includes frequent guest appearances with some of Denmark's leading orchestras. He has broadcast on Danish Television, TV2 Denmark, Danish Radio, BBC Radio, Channel 4 (UK), and Czech Radio, in both live broadcasts and studio recordings. In Britain, his conducting activities have included appearances with The Northern Sinfonia, English Touring Opera, The Garden Venture, Scottish Opera, the RSAMD in Glasgow, and The Little Angel Theatre Company in London.

GUSTAV HELSTED – SENROMANTIK MED VILJE TIL UDTRYK

af Bjarne Mørch Jensen

“Tørthumoristisk” og “bizarsarkastisk” er ord, som Den Danske Encyklopædi bruger i en karakteristisk af Gustav Helsteds personlighed. Det markante, kantede, kategoriske og viljen til at sætte tingene på spidsen kendetegnede også Helsted som komponist. Sådan opfattede samtiden i hvert fald hans musik. I sin bog fra 1917 om danske komponister skriver Gerhardt Lynge således, at Helsted er “en stærkt søgende kunstner, vælger sine midler med yderst kræsen smag, sværger blindt til idealerne, kan derfor synes sær og utilnærmelig og er også utilnærmelig for alle dem, der ikke kan fordybe sig i hans til det yderste gennemarbejdede og kræsent udrensede kunst”. I det københavnske musikliv var Helsted i slutningen af 1800-tallet radikal og fortaler for de senromantiske strømninger, sådan som de kom til udtryk hos bl.a. Richard Wagner, Anton Bruckner og Gustav Mahler.

Gustav Helsted (1857-1924) var elev af bl.a. Niels W. Gade, der i en årrække fra midten af 1800-tallet havde domineret det danske musikliv, og som med inspiration fra Schumann og Mendelssohn havde taget patent på en særlig dansk tone, der prægede en lang række af romantikkens danske komponister. Ligesom den otte år yngre Carl Nielsen – der tog afstand fra det, han kaldte den “blege” danske romantik – havde Helsted imidlertid behov for at gøre noget nyt og anderledes. Han ville sprænge grænserne og udvide musikkens udtryksmuligheder i forhold til det, man kunne beskrive som en særlig dansk romantisk “romance-tradition” med fokus på det sangbare og det umiddelbare, ligefremme udtryk. Sammen med bl.a. Carl Nielsen, Fini Henriques og Louis Glass oprettede Helsted derfor “Musikelskabet af 14. Marts 1896”, hvor bl.a. de nye symfonier af Bruckner og Mahler stod på programmet – ofte i udgaver for to klaverer – og hvor det blev muligt at orientere sig om de nyeste musikalske tendenser.

Selv om Gustav Helsted var født ind i en musikerfamilie – som søn af Carl Helsted, der var komponist, sangpædagog og musiker i Det Kongelige Kapel – begyndte den unge Gustav efter farens ønske sin karriere som elev på et handelskontor. Det lykkedes imidlertid ikke at kvæle sønnens interesse for musikken, og 23 år gammel begyndte han derfor studier i klaver, kontrapunkt og komposition på musikkonservatoriet i København. Efter uddannelsen på konservatoriet beskæftigede Helsted sig en overgang som orkestermusiker og operarepetitør ved Det Konge-

lige Teater, men det var først og fremmest ved orglet, at han markerede sig. Ved indvielsen af Jesuskirken i Valby i 1891 blev Helsted således ansat som organist, og han havde her et nyt og moderne orgel bygget af den franske orgelbygger Cavaillé-Coll til sin rådighed. Det var derfor muligt for Helsted at spille især de nye og harmonisk raffinerede orgelværker af den franske komponist César Franck. Ved sine populære orgelforedrag introducerede Helsted således med både ord og toner den franske komponist i dansk musik.

Efter 24 år ved Jesuskirken havde Helsted opnået et så etableret ry, at han i 1915 blev ansat i den fornemme stilling som organist ved Vor Frue Kirke i København. Helsted blev i 1892 desuden tilknyttet musikkonservatoriet som lærer i musikteori og fra 1904 i orgelspil. Som komponist blev det fra Helsteds hånd til bl.a. en decet, operaen *Stormklokken*, orkesterstykkerne *Paa Fodtur en Sommerdag*, *Gurresange* for kor og orkester, *Erotiske Sange* for sang og klaver, en violinkoncert samt en række symfonier og orgelværker.

Gustav Helsted var en markant personlighed, men han var mere beskedent, når det handlede om at sætte sine egne værker på programmet. Ved den første koncert søndag den 2. februar 1902 i “Dansk Koncertforening” – hvor Helsted var formand – dirigerede han dog sin egen nye symfoni, hvilket Gustav Hetsch beskriver med følgende ord i det svenske tidsskrift “Ord och Bild”: “Hr. Helsted ledede derimod Opførelsen af sin egen Symfoni, et stort anlagt, af kompositorisk Dygtighed struttende, stærkt søgende og som Følge deraf ofte sært og kantet Værk, som man hørte med uafbrudt Interesse, omend ikke altid med æsthetisk Behag. Dette nye Arbejde af en ejendommelig fin Kunstnerpersonlighed, som Helsted er, var imødeset med ikke ringe Spænding af Publikum, der dog syntes mere forbløffet end begejstret over det”.

Publikums reaktion var nok kendetegnende for samtidens opfattelse af Helsteds musik, og efter Helsteds død har hans musik også kun meget sporadisk været opført i de danske koncertsale. Randers Kammerorkester spillede Helsteds decet første gang i 1991 – siden har flere ensembler haft værket på programmet – og Sønderjyllands Symfoniorkester indspillede Helsteds violin- og cellokoncert i 2001, men det er muligvis alt i nyere tid.

DECET

I bogen om danske komponister fra 1917 giver Gerhardt Lynge denne vurdering af Helsteds **Decet, op. 18** for fløjte, obo, klarinet, fagot, horn og strygere: “Også Decetten virkede som et

med megen alvor, flid og viden udarbejdet værk, men den er om så kan siges mere Helsted'sk i sin stejlehed, i sin absolutte mangel på imødekommenhed over for fordringen om, at musikken skal tage sig ud og i klange og harmoniskridt følge det hævdvundne". Stadig i 1917 var Helsteds Decet altså moderne og utilnærmelig, mens den i dag med vore ører virker umiddelbart imødekomende med et udpræget romantisk udtryk og trods den europæiske inspiration med en undefinerbar dansk tone som grundlag.

Der foreligger så vidt vides ikke noget program for Helsteds decet. Man får imidlertid i begyndelsen af decettens første sats en klar fornemmelse af, at Helsted med lette, pastelfarver har villet male billedet af en morgenstemning, hvor naturen vågner op i takt med, at solen får magt. Strygerne spiller et blidt dolce-akkompagnement, mens træblæserne med foredragsbetegnelsen *espressivo* introducerer en lille fanfare, der vandrer gennem de forskellige instrumenter og giver indtrykket af fuglenes morgenkvinden. Ud af denne fine og sagte indledning vokser satsen, inden klarinetten tager fat på et nyt tema. Med en sikker fornemmelse for mulighederne i det melodiske potentiale udfolder Helsted i løbet af første sats en fantasifuld dialog mellem temaernes enkelte dele, og han undersøger samtidig, i hvor høj grad han formår at spænde den harmoniske bue i det, Gerhard Lynges ville kalde en dristig rejse væk fra den oprindelige D-dur toneart. Efter et længere forløb slutter satsen dog, som den begyndte, i D-dur og i et blidt og pastoralt pianissimo.

Anden sats er en variationsform med i alt syv variationer, der bygger på et vemodigt tema, som med tilbageholdt styrke præsenteres i obo og klarinet, mens strygerne akkompagnerer. De efterfølgende variationer vender og drejer temaet i alle belysninger og stemninger fra det sørgmodige til det graciøse, fra rytmiske og kontrapunktiske variationer til raffinerede ornamenteringer og fra de svageste nuancer til fuldtonet fortissimo. En mere alvorlig stemning breder sig i den sjette variation for strygere uden blæsere og med celloen som midtpunkt før syvende og sidste variation, der efter de første taktens friske og fremadrettede energi slutter rolig og stille.

Et besindigt og lidt underfundigt tema i solocelloen indleder scherzoen i tredje sats. Temaet dukker efterhånden op i hele ensemblet i et kontrapunktisk bølgende forløb, som over et langt crescendo bevæger sig fra pianissimo til fortissimo. Midterdelen har som kontrast en mere lyrisk stemning, hvorefter temaet og satsstrukturen fra første del vender tilbage.

Efter finalens langsomme og udtryksfulde indledning, der bygger på temaet fra variations-satsen, sætter en unison 16-delsbevægelse gang i en fremadrettet energi. Over fire takter

tromler en lille rustik figur frem i strygerne og bevæger sig fra piano til forte, hvorefter blæserne de næste fire takter præsenterer dele af satsens temamateriale. Den energiske fremdrift fortsætter indtil en midlertidig opbremsning, hvorefter en lille fuga i strygerne over det gennemgående tema sætter gang i satsen igen. Senere vender den indledende stemning og temaet fra variations-satsen tilbage, processen gentager sig, og Helsted sætter derefter punktum for hele værket med en melodisk og formmæssigt fejende, frodig og blomstrende afslutning.

STRYGEKVARTET I F-MOL

Strygekvartet, op. 33 i f-mol er den sidste af muligvis fem strygekvartetter. Flere steder er det angivet, at værket er komponeret i 1922, men det er nok snarere året for dets første udgivelse på tryk. Ifølge Det Kongelige Bibliotek er originalmanuskriptet dateret den 23. september 1917. Kvartetten blev bl.a. spillet den 14. januar 1942 i København ved Det Kongelige Danske Musik-konservatoriums markering af 75-året for konservatoriets oprettelse, hvilket muligvis er den seneste opførelse af værket. Det stejle og kategoriske, der karakteriserede Gustav Helsted som person, finder man også i første sats af strygekvartetten, der har satsbetegnelsen *Allegro con fuoco* – hurtig og med ild. Med stor økonomisk sans for at udnytte tema- og motivmaterialet til det yderste er hele satsen bygget op omkring et enkelt kort men skarptskåret motiv på fire hurtige, nedadgående 16-delstoner, der første gang høres som optakt til den første takt i satsen, og som også afrunder satsen i sidste takt. Helsteds indgang til den senromantiske stil var især den franske César Franck, der i forlængelse af Wagner og Liszt udviklede det harmoniske grundlag for musikken med især mange modulationer – skift fra en toneart til en anden, hvilket hos lytteren skaber umiddelbar usikkerhed om det tonale og harmoniske grundlag – hvilket også er gennemgående i første sats og resten af Helsteds kvartet.

Et samtale mellem Carl Nielsen og Gustav Helsted kunne antyde, at Helsteds fornemmelse for det kontrapunktiske – det ligeværdige sammenspil mellem flere stemmer eller instrumenter – skulle være minimal. I forbindelse med Mogens Wöldikes første koncert med Palestrina-koret var Helsteds kommentar til opførelsen af Palestrinas Marcellus-messe således, at musikken var kedelig, uden melodi og at den blot lød som en lang række treklinge, hvortil Carl Nielsen svarede, "Kære Helsted. De kan jo ikke se skoven for bare træer – det er altsammen melodi, hele tiden, og i alle seks stemmer". Selv om senromantikens komponister ofte søgte den såkaldte

schmelzklang, hvor de forskellige instrumenter forenes til en enkel sammensmeltet klang, arbejder Helsted på trods af sin eventuelle misforståelse af Palestrinas kontrapunkt dog i høj grad med det kontrapunktiske spil mellem de fire strygeinstrumenter, hvilket kommer til udtryk flere steder i løbet af strygekvartetens første sats.

Med satsbetegnelsen *Presto appassionato* – meget hurtig og med lidenskab – er anden sats i Helsteds strygekvartet også ildfuld og med stort temperament. Satsen er i tredelt takt og fungerer som kvartetens scherzo med to kontrasterende mellemstykker i en lidt roligere stemning. Rent melodisk bygger satsen på store, markerede og dramatiske intervalspring, mens tonerne i mellemstykkerne nærmest gnider sig op ad hinanden fra den ene tone til den anden. I tredje sats anlægger Helsted en lidt mystisk og afventende stemning. Som en sørgemarch bevæger satsen sig frem over en monoton rytme i celloen, der i første takt spiller en såkaldt tom kvint, som med bratschens tone es i næste takt viser sig at være en molakkord – c-mol. Den nedadgående melodi i de to violiner, den helt sagte lydstyrke (*pianissimo*) og foretagsbetegnelsen *dolce* – blidt – antyder en melankolsk og vemodig stemning, der er gennemgående i hele satsen. Mod slutningen giver en modulation til Des-dur dog håb om forløsning og fortrøstning, men satsen ender, som den begyndte, i c-mol. Fjerde og sidste sats begynder hurtigt og bestemt med en række korte og næsten abrupte melodistumper, der dog hurtigt finder sammen i længere fraser. Stemningen ændrer sig, da sidetemaet træder ind med en modsatrettet venlig, ekspressiv og imødekomende karakter. Hele satsen bliver således en brydning mellem det abrupte og hektiske på den ene side og det lyse og venlige på den anden. Kvartetten står overordnet i f-mol, men i de allersidste takter af sidste sats løses det endegyldigt op for det knudrede og nogle steder næsten formørkede i en forløsende afsluttende kadence i F-dur.

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Randers Kammerorkester blev grundlagt i 1945, og under dirigenten Lavard Friisholms ledelse indtog orkestret en vigtig og markant plads i dansk musikliv. Siden 1986 har orkestret haft status som basisensemble under Statens Kunstfond, og fra 1993 har den skotskfødte David Riddell været kunstnerisk og administrativ leder. Hvert år spiller Randers Kammerorkester omkring 110 koncerter, der bl.a. tæller orkester- og kammerkoncerter i Randers, koncerter i musikforeninger og kulturhuse overalt i Danmark, skolekoncerter, børnekoncerter, operaforestillinger m.m. Randers Kammerorkester har desuden udgivet en lang række cd'er med bl.a. ny dansk musik og en samlet indspilning af Händels orgelkoncerter. Randers Kammerorkester har en omfattende turnévirkksomhed, der har bragt orkestret til bl.a. Kina, Rusland, Skotland, England, Italien, Syrien, Grønland, Island, Norge, Sverige og Estland. I juni 2013 og 2016 medvirkede Kammerorkestret i den internationalt højt anerkendte St. Magnus Festival i Skotland, og i juni 2015 optrådte orkestret bl.a. på Cambridge Summer Music Festival og i St. John's Smith Square i London. Som fast husorkester ved Aarhus Sommeropera har Randers Kammerorkester været med til at skabe rammerne for en ambitiøs opsætning af bl.a. John Frandsens trilogi, *Tugt og Utugt i mellemtiden* samt flere af Benjamin Britzens kammeroperaer. Randers Kammerorkester har desuden samarbejdet med en lang række fremtrædende musikere som José Carreras, Sir James Galway, Barbara Hendricks, Bo Skovhus og Nikolaj Znaider. Randers Kammerorkester støttes af Randers Kommune og Statens Kunstfond.

Randers Kammerorkestres kunstneriske leder og chefdirigent, **David Riddell** er født i Elgin, Skotland. Han har studeret musik på The University of St. Andrews og The University of Edinburgh samt direktion på Guildhall School of Music and Drama i London. I dag er David Riddell bosiddende i Danmark, hvor han er musikchef for Randers Kammerorkester og kunstnerisk leder af Aarhus Sommeropera. Han er en hyppig gæstedirigent for de fleste danske orkestre og har dirigeret talrige operaproduktioner på Den jyske Opera og Aarhus Sommeropera. I Storbritannien har Riddell optrådt med bl.a. The Northern Sinfonia, English Touring Opera, Scottish Opera, og The Garden Venture (Royal Opera, Covent Garden), og han har ligeledes dirigeret i Tyskland, Frankrig, Estland, Norge, Sverige, Syrien, Kina, Italien og Island. David Riddell er endvidere aktiv som komponist og arrangør og har undervist på The University of St. Andrews, Guildhall School of Music, Det Kongelige Danske Musikkonservatorium og Operaakademiet. Sammen med Randers Kammerorkester har David Riddell indspillet flere cd'er, og han har foretaget en række indspilninger i den omfattende Lumbye-produktion med Tivolis Symfoniorkester.



The Danish Sinfonietta (Randers Kammerorkester)

Decet

Mo Yi, 1st violin
 Joaquín Páll Palomares, 2nd violin
 Olga Goijs, viola
 Gert von Bülow, cello
 Ole Ulvedal, double bass
 Marianne Leth, flute
 Jette Kristensen, oboe
 Bue Skov Thomassen, clarinet
 Søs Friborg Kjeldgaard, bassoon
 Hans Jørgen Ilum, horn
 David Riddell, conductor

String Quartet

Mo Yi, 1st violin
 Joaquín Páll Palomares, 2nd violin
 Olga Goijs, viola
 Gert von Bülow, cello

DDD

Recorded at Musik- og teaterhuset Værket, Randers, on 19-21 September and 7 October 2013 (*String Quartet*) and 4-6 and 8 October 2013 (*Decet*)

Recording producer and sound engineer: Preben Iwan

Editing, mix and mastering: Preben Iwan

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