

# **Anders Koppel**

## **Marimba Concertos**

Marianna Bednarska

Aalborg Symphony Orchestra

Henrik Vagn Christensen

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## Marimba Concertos

Marianna Bednarska, marimba

Aalborg Symphony Orchestra

Henrik Vagn Christensen, conductor

### Concerto No. 1 for Marimba and Orchestra (1995) .....

- |     |                   |      |
|-----|-------------------|------|
| [1] | I. Allegro.....   | 4:43 |
| [2] | II. Adagio.....   | 4:53 |
| [3] | III. Andante..... | 8:01 |

### Concerto No. 2 for Marimba and String Orchestra (2000)\* .....

- |     |                            |      |
|-----|----------------------------|------|
| [4] | Allegro ma non troppo..... | 8:19 |
| [5] | L'istesso tempo.....       | 3:45 |
| [6] | A tempo.....               | 4:27 |

### Concerto No. 3 "Linzer" for Marimba and Orchestra (2002, rev. 2003)\* .....

- |     |                 |      |
|-----|-----------------|------|
| [7] | Andante.....    | 5:01 |
| [8] | Meno mosso..... | 6:11 |
| [9] | A tempo.....    | 7:25 |

### Concerto No. 4 "In Memory of Things Transient" for Marimba and Orchestra (2006)\* .....

- |      |   |      |
|------|---|------|
| [10] | I. Moderato.....                                    | 2:28 |
| [11] | II. Adagio.....                                     | 4:04 |
| [12] | III. Adagio.....                                    | 4:51 |
| [13] | IV. A tempo (l'istesso tempo).....                  | 1:22 |
| [14] | V. Allegro.....                                     | 2:58 |
| [15] | VI. Meno mosso, pesante – Allegro appassionato..... | 4:12 |
| [16] | VII. Adagio.....                                    | 2:18 |
| [17] | VIII. Allegro – meno mosso, pesante.....            | 1:21 |

- |      |  |      |
|------|--|------|
| [18] | P.S. to a Concerto (1995).....<br>for marimba solo | 2:34 |
|------|--|------|

Total 78:51

\* World premiere recording

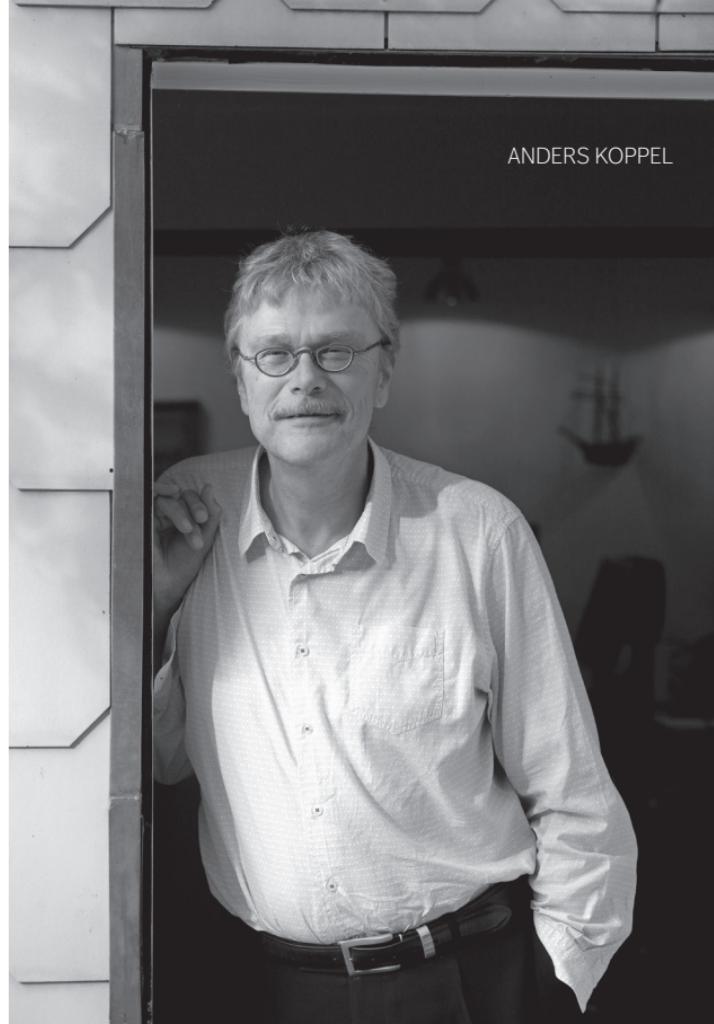
## ANDERS KOPPEL'S MARIMBA CONCERTOS *by Esben Tange*

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**Anders Koppel** (b. 1947) is to a rare degree a composer of his time. With one foot firmly planted in the classical European musical tradition and the other in world music, rock and jazz, Anders Koppel's career as a composer can be seen as one long continuous mission to unite these cultures in a contemporary musical idiom. This has resulted in a long succession of original and wide-ranging works, all bearing the mark of his special ability to communicate emotions and energy, powerfully and straightforwardly, between musicians and audience.

As a son of the composer and pianist Herman D. Koppel (1908-98) Anders Koppel grew up in a musical milieu; in his childhood and early youth he played piano and clarinet and at an early stage became thoroughly familiar with scored music and instrumentation. At the same time Anders Koppel played an active part in the musical experiments that were part of the youth revolution of the 1960s and 1970s. In the years 1967-74, as an organist and lyricist, he was one of the mainstays of the rock group Savage Rose, which was among the most prominent, innovative bands on the Danish rock scene. After Anders Koppel left Savage Rose in 1974 he has increasingly immersed himself in the creation of contemporary composition music.

Alongside his work as a composer Anders Koppel has been an active musician in among other contexts the group Bazaar, which for about 35 years has cultivated a unique idiom combining improvisation, Balkan music and Anders Koppel's own compositions. Since 1996 he has also played with his son, the saxophonist Benjamin Koppel, in among other ensembles Koppel & Son as well as having formed a duo with the American pianist and composer Kenny Werner. His experiences as a performing artist are constantly reminding Anders Koppel of the importance of making the music relevant to the public, and this has resulted in distinctive music that is outward-looking and captivating. Rather than cultivating a particular compositional technique, Anders Koppel's music often has an undogmatically flowing character based on a classical view of tonality and on the natural expression of the individual instrument. In addition, Anders Koppel has composed music for around 200 films, plays and ballets. This has helped to hone his musical vocabulary, which besides the classical forms also involves a familiarity with and love of Latin American styles like tango, samba and Cuban music.



ANDERS KOPPEL

These influences can already be heard in his debut work for a classical ensemble: a piano quintet from 1982, which includes a tango. His true breakthrough as a composer of concert music followed in 1990 with *Toccata for Vibraphone and Marimba*, which is virtuosic, technically challenging music alternating with dreamlike passages of enchanting beauty. Here Anders Koppel has found a style of his own that gives the musicians the opportunity to create a performance of the highest standard that also appeals directly to the audience. Anders Koppel has later sublimated these qualities in a long series of concertos for soloist and orchestra where the direct identification with the soloist is often given an extra imaginative dimension, since he has been able to associate both intimate human feelings and supernatural power and passion with the central instrumentalist.

This comes to expression for the first time in *Concerto No. 1 for Saxophone and Orchestra* (1992), which alternates in a liberated neoclassical style all its own between ethereal string sounds, Bach-inspired fugato and hard-grooving rock rhythms. Anders Koppel has also composed several double concertos; among other works the *Concerto for Flute, Harp and Orchestra* (1998), whose elegance and poetry are related to Mozart's classical concerto for the same ensemble; but the actual musical idiom – with its impressionistic treatment of sound and a sensually dancing character – is very much Anders Koppel's own.

Anders Koppel's ability to penetrate to the inner nature of the individual instrument and find new modes of expression that break down habitual notions has led to a number of concertos for instruments that are rarely allowed to perform as soloists. This is the case for example in *Variations for Bass Trombone and Orchestra* (1997), *Concerto for Tuba and Orchestra* (2003), the accordion work *Concerto Piccolo* (2009) and most recently in *Concerto for Aluphone and Orchestra* (2013), where Anders Koppel has been the first composer to explore some of the rich sonorities to be found in the interaction of the bell-like aluphone and the symphony orchestra. The latest offshoot from the stem of solo concertos are a flute concerto, *Andorinha* (The Swallow) given its first performance by Rune Most and the Randers Chamber Orchestra in May 2014, and the *Concerto for Violin, Saxophone and Orchestra* given its first performance by the Canadian violinist Karen Gomyo and Koppel's son Benjamin at Musikkens Hus in Aalborg in the autumn of 2014.

## The marimba

The marimba is a latecomer in western classical music, but as a folk instrument its roots go far back to the African *balafon*, which has a crisper sound, and in which calabashes mounted beneath the wooden bars of the instrument produce a distinctive nasal, buzzing sound. African slaves brought the balafon to South and Central America, where the instrument changed its name to marimba, and where the number of bars was increased, among other ways so it covered a full chromatic scale. The marimba – and the brighter-sounding xylophone – are still popular instruments in countries like Mexico and Guatemala, where the marimba has the status of the national instrument. The modern marimba often has bars of rosewood, and resonating aluminium tubes beneath each bar ensure that the instrument today has a wide dynamic range, from the almost inaudible to the ear-splitting.

Only after World War II has the marimba become one of the instruments of classical music, and in his *Concerto for Marimba and Vibraphone* (1947) Darius Milhaud became one of the first composers to experiment with the use of four mallets rather than just two. Since then Messiaen among others has used the marimba as an orchestral instrument, and today the marimba is often an integral part of the percussion group in new composition music. Anders Koppel, who with his total of four concertos has played an important role in the development of the repertoire for marimba and orchestra, says that the marimba is unique in its interaction with the orchestra, since it can both stand out as an independent voice in the orchestral soundscape and is able to blend and fuse with the sounds of the other instruments. And the solo sound of the marimba has a direct beauty, warmth and glow that give the instrument a natural appeal.

## THE WORKS

### **Concerto No. 1 for Marimba and Orchestra**

With *Concerto No. 1 for Marimba and Orchestra* Anders Koppel has already inscribed himself in the canon of marimba literature. The concerto, composed for the final of the International Percussion Competition in Luxembourg in 1995, is today a standard work for young talented solo percussionists and has been performed more than 300 times. It has all one could desire of a classical concerto for marimba and orchestra: a grippingly dramatic first movement in which

the marimba frolics like a playful child in close interplay with the symphony orchestra, which alternately manifests itself from a dark, determined side and lets itself be carried away by the wanton dance of the marimba. In a dreaming second movement there are rich opportunities to demonstrate the marimba's large palette of sonorities – wrapped in a dark orchestral carpet of sound the marimba appears here as an effusive night wanderer in dialogue with a yearning, upward-striving violin solo. And finally comes a jewel of a final movement that is a bravura piece in its own right. Here the marimba shows itself from its most inciting side with a teasing rhythmic theme that culminates in a grand cadenza where the marimba's natural disposition for virtuosic excesses is fully exploited.

### **Concerto No. 2 for Marimba and String Orchestra**

The relentless tick-tock of time is the point of departure and consistent musical dynamo for Anders Koppel's *Concerto No. 2 for Marimba and String Orchestra*. With engineer-like precision the marimba measures out the passage of time as regularly falling drops on a quiet night, and although the strings, with their ability to form sheets of sound, postulate an eternal perspective on the flow of time, their musical material too is developed from the rhythmic germ intoned by the marimba at the beginning of the concerto.

The temporality of every life lies as a fateful premise over this one-movement concerto. True, the picture is obscured along the way, as we witness how the string orchestra diffuses out into a refined gossamer-like texture with distributed solo voices and glissando effects, but also how a tightly swinging groove is well on its way to swallowing up both orchestra and soloist.

But despite the musical digressions, which also include the marimba soloist's unbridled cadenzas and downy-light melodic fragments fluttering freely through the space, time's inexorable tick-tock pulse haunts the music as a persistent shadow and ensures that this concerto is held in the grip of a particularly determined concentration. And as a result it seems a natural consequence that the concerto ends in the same onward-ticking world in which it began.

### **Concerto No. 3 "Linzer" for Marimba and Orchestra**

In his *Concerto No. 3 "Linzer" for Marimba and Orchestra*, written for the Austrian marimba virtuoso Martin Grubinger and given its first performance by the Bruckner Orchestra in Linz,

Anders Koppel has created a marimba concerto that deploys a large Late-Romantic-style orchestra. The brasses in particular play a striking role and make sure the concerto has the imprint of a distinctive symphonic weight. It is thus all the more striking that this same concerto is so rich in delicate details. This is clear right from the start, when the intricate, elegantly swinging marimba theme of the introduction is imitated not only by the woodwinds, but also by the four horns, plunging naturally into the concerto with a show of agility usually reserved for instruments from the higher reaches of the orchestra.

The concerto is a cornucopia of rhythmic subtleties and motivic fragments that drift around among the orchestral groups and create a carnival-like riotousness. To this is added a more inward, melancholy side represented by a dark-timbred string theme. All in all, great orchestral forces are balanced with the ultimate challenges to the marimba soloist. In the first great cadenza the soloist is launched, like some brooding philosopher reflecting on the end of all things, into a play with silence, with a pulse that threatens to come to a complete halt. In other passages the solo part has the character of a technical *tour de force*, and so the tension is kept up all the way to the last note, when soloist and orchestra unite their forces in a triumphant joint ending.

### **Concerto No. 4 for Marimba and Orchestra "In Memory of Things Transient"**

The fourth marimba concerto was commissioned by *Wiener Mozartjahr* 2006, dedicated to Martin Grubinger and given its first performance by him in the Musikverein in Vienna, as part of the celebrations of the 250th anniversary of Mozart's birth. The concerto is unique among Anders Koppel's concertos, as the composer has directly associated a programme from his own experience with the music. Accompanied by a 'walking bass' in the low strings and the marimba, and with grandiose chords in the horns and woodwinds, the concerto begins with ceremonial rigour, and after the organ has struck up a celestial tone a heartfelt hymn tune gradually takes form in the marimba. The hymn refers to an experience on a hot summer's day as Anders Koppel and his wife Ulla were on their way into a dark Swedish forest.

"In the middle of a darkening – or rather a clearing – we suddenly caught sight of a small, ancient marble stone fenced in by a rusty iron chain. The stone was half crumbled, but the inscription could still be made out: – "In Memory of Things Transient", it said. The words struck us with surprising force, and set our thoughts in motion. That we humans must die is something we

can live with; but that music too – eternal music, Mozart's music – will some day vanish, is harder to come to terms with."

The magical character of the experience and the recognition of the transitory nature of all things lies as a thought-provoking idea behind the whole concerto, but does not result in a despondent mood. Rather the contrary. For an interpolated marimba cadenza has the result that the organ introduces a joyous dance tune originally composed by Anders Koppel for the group Bazaar, and when this gay melody is later joined by a fragment of the *Rondo alla turca* from Mozart's Piano Sonata No. 11 the concerto opens up as a paean to life in all its wonderful diversity. East and west – represented on the one hand by the marimba and a number of other percussion instruments, and on the other by the classical symphony orchestra – meet here in the concerto in a life-giving collective festivity. As is the case, in a sense, in Mozart's piano sonata and in Anders Koppel's lifelong work with both Balkan folk music and western classical music.

#### P.S. to a Concerto

After Anders Koppel, as a jury member at the International Percussion Competition in Luxembourg in 1995, experienced the first performance of his *Concerto No. 1 for Marimba and Orchestra*, he composed this *Post-Scriptum* for marimba solo. The piece has the character of a large encore where the bell-like attack of the marimba and its natural ability to play with tempos and rhythmic displacements are demonstrated in exemplary fashion.

*Esben Tange is a musicologist, programme editor for DR P2 and artistic director of the Rued Langgaard Festival*

#### THE PERFORMERS

**Marianna Bednarska** is a young Polish percussionist. She demonstrated her musical talent from her earliest years, and after graduating with merit from Henryk Mikolajczyk's percussion class at the K. Szymanowski Secondary Music School in Warsaw, she is now studying under Marta Klimasara at Staatliche Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst in Stuttgart. 20-year old Marianna Bednarska is already a well-recognized percussionist. She has won 19 first prizes in national and international percussion competitions, where she scored the highest marks from juries for outstanding musicality and technique. The most important prizes were won in the marimba competitions in Paris (2009), Fermo (Italy 2008) and the Percussion Competition in Plovdiv (Bulgaria 2007), where she also received a Special Prize, and in several percussion competitions in Poland. She was a finalist in the National Eurovision Competition "Young Musician of the Year 2009". As a soloist, Marianna Bednarska has played concerts in many prestigious concert halls in Poland and abroad with orchestras such as Sinfonia Varsovia, the Aalborg Symphonic Orchestra, the Lviv Philharmonic and the Polish Radio Orchestra in Warsaw. Marianna Bednarska has also received many prestigious scholarships from among others the Polish Government, the Sinfonia Varsovia Foundation and Kunststiftung Baden-Württemberg. In 2013 Marianna Bednarska was awarded the 'Polish-Danish Friendship Prize' for her close connection with Danish musical life, culminating in the CD recording of Anders Koppel's four marimba concertos..

**Aalborg Symphony Orchestra** was founded in 1943 as the Aalborg City Orchestra, and in its present form consists of 65 musicians. On an everyday basis the orchestra is based at Musikkens Hus (House of Music) in the centre of Aalborg. As a regional orchestra the Aalborg Symphony Orchestra engages in extensive activities. The core of the orchestra's work is the symphonic concerts, where a season will see the orchestra presenting soloists and conductors from the absolute world elite. The orchestra gives chamber concerts, school concerts and concerts in partnership with other cultural institutions, as well as public children's and family concerts. Aalborg Symphony Orchestra even plays for operas and ballets. The Aalborg Symphony Orchestra has recorded several CDs, mainly of Danish music, but also of works by among



MARIANNA BEDNARSKA

other composers Wagner, Liszt, Tchaikovsky and Gershwin. Worth singling out in the Danish repertoire are recordings of Carl Nielsen, Vagn Holmboe and not least the critically acclaimed recordings of Herman D. Koppel's orchestral music. Several of the orchestra's recordings have been nominated for various prizes. The Aalborg Symphony Orchestra is an active touring orchestra and has given concerts for audiences in among other countries Germany, France, Switzerland, Norway and Sweden.

**Henrik Vagn Christensen** is a versatile conductor with a repertoire spanning a wide range of arts and genres: symphonies, contemporary music, opera, operetta and musicals and ballet. Vagn Christensen is considered the leading ballet conductor of his generation and was associated with the Royal Danish Theatre in 1996-2012 and from 2013 with the New York City Ballet. Henrik Vagn Christensen also conducted at the Finnish National Ballet, the Royal Swedish Ballet, the Norwegian Opera, the State Theatre in Pretoria, South Africa, and the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg. His close cooperation with the Danish radio orchestras has brought him many engagements from concerts and ballet to film and TV recordings. The Danish regional orchestras have been the point of departure for his symphonic repertoire, and over the years Henrik Vagn Christensen has played innumerable concerts with all of these as well as making CD recordings and educational productions for children and the young. Henrik Vagn Christensen trained at the music academies in Aalborg, Aarhus and Copenhagen under the conductors Jorma Panula, Frans Rasmussen and Tamás Veto.

**Anders Koppel** (f. 1947) er i sjælden grad en komponist af sin tid. Med det ene ben solidt plantet i den klassiske europæiske musiktradition og det andet ben i verdensmusikken og den rytmiske musik kan Anders Koppels virke som komponist ses som ét langt vedvarende arbejde med at forene disse kulturer i et nutidigt tonesprog. Det har resulteret i en lang række originale og vidtpænende værker, der alle er præget af en særlig evne til at kommunikere følelser og energi stærkt og ligetil mellem musikere og publikum.

Som søn af komponisten og pianisten Herman D. Koppel (1908-98) voksede Anders Koppel op i et musikalsk miljø, og som barn og helt ung spillede han klaver og klarinet og fik tidligt et indgående kendskab til partiturlæsning og instrumentering. Samtidig tog Anders Koppel aktivt del i de musikalske eksperimenter, som var en del af 1960'ernes og 70'ernes ungdomsoprør. I årene 1967-74 var han som organist og tekstforfatter et af de bærende medlemmer i rockgruppen Savage Rose, der var blandt de mest fremtrædende og nyskabende på den danske rock-scene. Efter at Anders Koppel i 1974 trådte ud af Savage Rose har han i stigende grad fordybet sig i skabelsen af ny kompositionsmusik.

Sideløbende med arbejdet som komponist har Anders Koppel været aktiv musiker i blandt andet gruppen Bazaar, hvor han i mere end 35 år dyrkede et unikt udtryk præget af improvisation, balkanmusik og Anders Koppels egne kompositioner. Siden 1996 har han også spillet sammen med sønnen, saxofonisten Benjamin Koppel, i bl.a. orkestret Koppel & søn, samt indgået i et duo-samarbejde med den amerikanske pianist og komponist Kenny Werner. Erfaringerne som scenekunstner minder til stadighed Anders Koppel om vigtigheden af at gøre musikken vedkomende for publikum, og det har resulteret i en egen musik, der i særlig grad er uad vendt og medrivende. Frem for at dyrke en særlig kompositorisk teknik har Anders Koppels musik ofte en udogmatisk strømmende karakter, baseret på en klassisk tonalitetsopfattelse og på det enkelte instruments naturlige udtryksmåde. Dertil kommer, at Anders Koppel har komponeret musik til omkring 200 film, teaterforestillinger og balletter, hvilket har været med til at skærpe hans musikalske vokabularium, der foruden de klassiske former også indebærer et nært kendskab til og kærlighed til latinamerikanske stilarter som tango, samba og cubansk musik.

Det høres allerede i debutværket for klassisk besætning; en klaverkvintet fra 1982, hvori der indgår en tango. Det egentlige gennembrud som komponist af koncertmusik fulgte i 1990 med *Toccata for vibrafon og marimba*, der er virtuos og teknisk udfordrende musik, som veksler med drømmende passager af fortryllende skønhed. Her har Anders Koppel fundet en egen stil, der både giver de udøvende musikere mulighed for at skabe performance på højeste niveau, og som appellerer direkte til publikum. Disse kvaliteter har Anders Koppel siden sublimeret i godt 30 koncerter for solist og orkester, hvor den umiddelbare identifikation med solisten ofte tilføjes en fantastisk dimension, da Anders Koppel har evnet at knytte både intime menneskelige følelser og overnaturlig kraft og lidenskab til den centrale instrumentalist.

Det kommer første gang til udtryk i *Koncert nr. 1 for saxofon og orkester* (1992), der i en egen frigjort neoklassisk stil veksler mellem sfæriske strygerklange, Bach-inspireret fugato og sejt swingende rockrytmer. Anders Koppel har også komponeret flere dobbeltkoncerter. Blandt andet *Koncert for fløjte, harpe og orkester* (1998), hvor elegancen og poesien er beslægtet med Mozarts klassiske koncert for samme besætning. Men selve tonesproget er – med en impressionistisk klangbehandling og en sensuelt dansende karakter – Anders Koppels eget.

Anders Koppels sans for at fordybe sig i det enkelte instruments natur og finde nye udtryksmåder, som bryder vante forestillinger, har ført til en række koncerter for instrumenter, som sjældent får lov til at optræde solistisk. Det er blandt andet tilfældet i *Variationer for basbasun og orkester* (1997), *Koncert for tuba og orkester* (2003), akkordeonkoncerteren *Concerto Piccolo* (2009) og senest i *Koncert for Alufon og Orkester* (1913), hvor Anders Koppel som den første komponist udfolder nogle af de rige klanglige muligheder, der ligger i sampillet mellem den klokkelignende Alufon og symfoniorkestret. Seneste skud på stammen af soloconcerter er en fløjtekonzert *Andorinha* (Svalen), uropført af Rune Most og Randers Kammerorkester i maj 2014, og *Koncert for violin, saxofon og orkester* der uropføres af den canadiske violinist Karen Gomyo og sønnen Benjamin i Musikkens Hus i Aalborg i efteråret 2014.

### Marimbaen

Marimbaen er et ung instrument i den klassiske vestlige musik, men som folkemusikinstrument går rødderne langt tilbage til den afrikanske balafon, der har en mere sprød klang, og hvor monterede kalabasser under instrumentets træstave giver en særlig nasalt-summende

lyd. Afrikanske slaver bragte balafonen til Syd- og Mellemamerika, hvor instrumentet skiftede navn til marimba, og hvor antallet af stave blev forøget, så det blandt andet dækkede en fuld kromatisk skala. Marimbaen – og den lysere klingende xylofon – er fortsat et populært instrument i blandt andet Mexico og Guatemala, hvor marimbaen har status af nationalinstrument. Den moderne marimba har ofte stave af rosentræ, og resonerende aluminiumsrør under hver stav sikrer, at instrumentet i dag har en stor dynamisk spændvidde, fra det næste uhørlige til det øresønderrivende.

Det er først efter 2. Verdenskrig, at marimbaen er blevet en del af den klassiske musiks instrumentarium, og i sin *Koncert for marimba og vibrafon* (1947) begyndte Darius Milhaud som en af de første at eksperimentere med at bruge fire koller frem for blot to. Siden da har bl.a. Messiaen brugt marimbaen som orkesterinstrument, og marimbaen er i dag ofte en integreret del af slagtøjsgruppen i ny kompositionsmusik. Anders Koppel, der med sine i alt fire koncerter har spillet en væsentlig rolle i udviklingen af repertoaret for marimba og orkester, fortæller at marimbaen er enestående i samspillet med orkestret, da marimbaen både kan træde ud som en selvstændig stemme i orkestrets lydbillede og er i stand til at gå ind i og smelte sammen med de andre instrumenters klang. Og så er marimbaens klang isoleret set præget af en umiddelbar skønhed, varme og glød, som giver instrumentet en naturlig tiltrækningskraft.

## OM VÆRKERNE

### **Koncert nr. 1 for marimba og orkester**

Allerede med *Koncert nr. 1 for marimba og orkester* har Anders Koppel skrevet sig ind i marimbalitteraturens kanon. Konerten, der er komponeret til finalen i Den internationale Slagtøjskonkurrence i Luxembourg i 1995, er i dag et standardværk for unge solistisk begavede slagtøjsspillere og er blevet opført mere end 300 gange. Her er alt, hvad man kan ønske sig af en klassisk koncert for marimba og orkester; En medrivende dramatisk første sats, hvor marimbaen boltrer sig som et legesygt barn i et tæt samspil med symfoniorkestret, der skiftevis viser sig fra en mørk determineret side, skiftevis lader sig rive med af marimbaens løsslupne dans. En drømmende andensats, hvor der er rig lejlighed til at vise marimbaens store palet af klanglige nuancer – svøbt i et dunkelt orkestralt klangtæppe opträder marimbaen her som en sværmerisk nattevandrer i

dialog med en længselsfuldt opadstræbende violinsolo. Og endelig en perle af en finale, der er et bravurstykke i egen ret. Marimbaen viser sig her fra sin mest inciterende side med et dirlagtigt rytmisk tema, der kulminerer i en stort anlagt kadence, hvor marimbaens naturlige anlæg for virtuose excesser udnyttes til fulde.

### **Koncert nr. 2 for marimba og strygeorkester**

Tidens ubønhørlige tik tak er udgangspunktet for og den gennemgående musikalske motor i Anders Koppels *Koncert nr. 2 for marimba og strygeorkester*. Med ingenørsmæssig præcision udmåler marimbaen tidens gang som regelmæssigt faldende dråber en tyst nat, og selv om strygerne med deres evne til at danne klangflader postulerer et evighedsperspektiv på tidens gang, er også deres musikalske stof rundet af den rytmiske kim, som intones af marimbaen ved koncertens begyndelse.

Et hvert livs timelige vilkår ligger som en skaebnebestemt præmis over denne ensatsede koncert. Billedet sløres ganske vist undervejs, hvor vi både bliver vidne til, at strygeorkestret difunderer ud i en forfinet spindelvævssats med solistisk opdelte stemmer samt glissandi-effekter, og til at et sejt swingende groove er på nippet til at opsluge både orkester og solist.

Men trods de musikalske sidespring, der også indbefatter marimbosalistens løsslupne kadencer og fuglette melodistumper, der flakser frit i rummet, så lurer tidens uomgængelige tik tak pulsslag som en vedvarende skygge i musikken, og sikrer, at denne koncert er præget af en helt særlig determineret koncentration. Og som en følge af det virker det som en naturbetiget konsekvens, at konerten munder ud i den samme tik tak verden, som den blev født i.

### **Koncert nr. 3 "Linzer" for marimba og orkester**

I sin *Koncert nr. 3 "Linzer" for marimba og orkester*, der er skrevet til den østrigske marimba-virtuos Martin Grubinger og uropført af Bruckner Orkestret i Linz, har Anders Koppel skabt en marimbakoncert, som gør brug af et stort senromantisk orkester. Ikke mindst messingblæserne spiller en markant rolle og sikrer, at konerten er præget af en særlig symfonisk tyngde. Desto mere påfaldende er det, at netop denne koncert er rig på delikate detaljer. Det er tydeligt lige fra begyndelsen, hvor indledningens finurlige og elegant swingende marimba-tema ikke blot imiteres af træblæserne, men også af de fire horn, der med største selvfolge kaster sig ind i

koncerten med en adræt attitude, der ellers oftest er forbeholdt instrumenter fra orkestrets højere luftlag.

Koncerten er et overflodighedshorn af rytmiske finurligheder og motiviske stumper, der fyger rundt blandt orkestrets grupper og skaber en karnevalsgativ løssluppenhed. Dertil kommer en mere indadvendt melankolsk side, repræsenteret af et mørktfarvet strygertema. Alt i alt store orkestrale kræfter, der balanceres i og med at marimba-solisten udfordres til det yderste. I den første store kadence kastes solisten som en anden filosofisk anlagt grubler ud i reflektioner over alttings ophør i en leg med stilhed og med en puls, der truer med at gå i stå. I andre passager har solostemmen karakter af en teknisk 'tour de force', og dermed holdes spændingen i live helt frem til sidste tone, hvor solist og orkester forenes i en fælles triumferende slutning.

#### **Koncert nr. 4 for marimba og orkester "Til det forgængeliges ihukommelse"**

Den 4. marimbakoncert er bestilt af Wiener Mozartjahr 2006, tilegnet Martin Grubinger og uropført af ham i Musikverein i Wien, som en del af fejringen af Mozarts 250 års fødselsdag. Koncerten er enestående blandt Anders Koppels koncerter, idet komponisten har knyttet et selvoplevet program direkte til musikken. Akkompagneret af en 'walking bass' i henholdsvis dybe strygere og marimba, og med højtidsstemte akkorder i horn og træblæsere, begynder koncerten med ceremoniel strengthed, og efter at orglet har slået en himmelsk tone an, tager en underligt formet salmemelodi efterhånden form i marimbaen. Salmen refererer til en oplevelse en hed sommerdag, hvor Anders Koppel og hans kone Ulla begav sig ind i en mørk svensk skov:

"Midt inde i en mørkning – eller snarere lysning – fik vi pludselig øje på en lille, ældgammel marmorsten, indhegnet af en rusten jernkæde. Stenen var halvt forvitret, men indskriften lod sig stadig tyde – "Til det forgængeliges ihukommelse", stod der. Ordene ramte os med overraskende styrke og satte vores tanker i gang. At vi mennesker skal dø, er til at leve med, men at også musikken – den evige musik – en gang vil forsvinde, er sværere at forlige sig med."

Oplevelsens magiske karakter og erkendelsen af al tings forgængelighed ligger som en tankevækende forestilling bag hele koncerten, men resulterer ikke i nedbojet tristesse.

Snarere tværtimod. En indskudt marimba-kadence resulterer nemlig i, at orgelet introducerer en glædesfyldt dansemelodi, der oprindeligt er komponeret af Anders Koppel til Bazaar, og da denne livsglade melodi efterfølgende forenes med en stump af Mozarts *Rondo alla turca* fra

hans Klaversonate nr. 11, udvikler koncerten sig til en besyngelse af livet i al dets forunderlige forskellighed. Øst og vest – repræsenteret på den ene side af marimbaen og en række andre slagtøjsinstrumenter og på den anden side af det klassiske symfoniorkester – mødes her i koncerten i en livgivende fælles fest. Lige som det på sin vis er tilfældet i Mozarts klaversonate og i Anders Koppels livslange arbejde med både balkanmusik og klassisk vestlig musik.

#### **P.S. til en Koncert**

Efter at Anders Koppel som jurymedlem ved Den internationale Slagtøjskonkurrence i Luxembourg i 1995 oplevede uropførelsen af sin *Koncert nr. 1 for marimba og orkester* komponerede han dette *Post-Scriptum* for marimba solo. Stykket har karakter af et kort ekstranummer, hvor marimbaens klokkeagtige anslag og naturlige evne til at lege med tempo og rytmiske forskydninger udstilles på eksemplarisk vis.

*Esben Tange er cand.mag., redaktør i DR P2 og kunstnerisk leder af Rued Langgaard Festival.*

## DE MEDVIRKENDE

**Marianna Bednarska** er en ung polsk slagøjsspiller. Hun viste tidligt tegn på sit store musikaliske talent og efter at have bestået eksamen med udmærkelse fra K. Szymanowski Secondary Music School i Warszawa, studerer hun nu hos Marta Klimasara på Staatliche Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst i Stuttgart. 20-årige Marianna Bednarska er allerede en anerkendt perkussionist. Hun er modtager af hele 19 førstepriser ved internationale og nationale slagøjsskonkurrencer, hvor hun har opnået de flotteste udtalelser for en enestående musicalitet og teknik. De mest betydningsfulde er vundet ved marimbakonkurrencerne i Paris (2009), Fermo (Italien, 2008), Plovdiv Percussion Competition (Bulgarien 2007), hvor hun også modtog en specialpris, og ved flere slagøjsskonkurrencer i Polen. Hun var finalist ved National Eurovision Competition "Young Musician of the Year 2009". Som solist har Marianna Bednarska spillet koncerter i mange ansete koncertsale i Polen og i udlandet med symfoniorkestre som Sinfonia Varsovia, Aalborg Symfoniorkester, Lviv Philharmonic Orchestra og det polske radioorkester i Warszawa. Marianna Bednarska har modtaget flere fine legater bl.a. fra den polske regering, Sinfonia Varsovias fond og Kunststiftung Baden-Württemberg. I 2013 modtog Marianna Bednarska 'Danish-Polish Friendship Prize' for sin tætte tilknytning til dansk musikliv, som kulminerer med CD-indspilningen af Anders Koppels fire marimbakoncerter.

**Aalborg Symfoniorkester** blev grundlagt i 1943 som Aalborg Byorkester, og tæller i sin nuværende form 65 musikere. Til dagligt holder orkestret til i Musikkens Hus i centrum af Aalborg. Som landsdelsorkester har Aalborg Symfoniorkester et omfattende aktivitetsniveau. Kernen i orkestrets virke er symfonikoncerterne, hvor orkestret i løbet af en sæson præsenterer solister og dirigenter fra den absolute verdenselite. Dertil kommer kammerkoncerter, skolekoncerter, koncerter i samarbejde med andre kulturelle institutioner samt offentlige familie- og børnekoncerter. Aalborg Symfoniorkester spiller også til operaer og balletter og akkompagnerer ofte Den Jyske Opera, og når Det Kgl. Teater er på turné vest for Storebælt, er det med Aalborg Symfoniorkester i orkestergraven. Aalborg Symfoniorkester har indspillet adskillige cd'er. Hovedsageligt dansk musik, men også værker af bl.a. Wagner, Liszt, Tjajkovskij og Gershwin. Af det danske repertoire skal fremhæves indspilninger af Carl Nielsen, Vagn Holmboe og ikke mindst de meget

anmelderroste indspilninger af Herman D. Koppels orkestermusik. Aalborg Symfoniorkester er et aktivt turnéorkester, og har givet koncerter i bl.a. Tyskland, Frankrig, Schweiz, Norge og Sverige.

**Henrik Vagn Christensen** er en alsidig dirigent med et repertoire, der spænder over en bred kam af kunststarter og genrer: symfonier, ny musik, opera, operette og musicals og ballet. Vagn Christensen anses som sin generations førende danske balletdirigent og har været tilknyttet Det Kgl. Teater fra 1996-2012 og fra 2013 New York City Ballet. Henrik Vagn Christensen har også dirigeret på Den Finske Nationalballet, Den Kgl. Svenske Ballet, Den Norske Opera, State Theatre i Pretoria, Sydafrika, Teatro Real i Madrid samt Mariinskij Teateret i Skt. Petersborg. Et nært samarbejde med DRs orkestre har budt på mange opgaver fra koncerter over ballet til film- og tv-indspilninger. De danske landsdelsorkestre har været udgangspunktet for hans symfoniske repertoire, og Henrik Vagn Christensen har gennem årene spillet utallige koncerter med dem alle samt lavet cd-indspilninger og formidlingsproduktioner for børn og unge. Henrik Vagn Christensen er uddannet fra konservatorierne i Aalborg, Aarhus og København af dirigenterne Jorma Panula, Frans Rasmussen og Tamás Veto.

**DDD**

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