

StillLife

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Anders Koppel, Hammond B3 organ

Henrik Dam Thomsen, cello

Composed by Anders Koppel

except *Evenfall*, *Figaro* and *Regret* composed by

Anders Koppel and Henrik Dam Thomsen



Anders Koppel

Henrik Dam Thomsen

15 impressions of life as captured in a dimly lit night

by Jens Cornelius

In 1970, the composer Anders Koppel purchased a Hammond organ – a Hammond Model B3. And precisely that organ is probably one of the best-known instruments in Danish musical life, for the endlessly creative Anders Koppel has played on that self-same organ ever since. The many band and festival stickers that have been attached to the instrument over the years are tattoos from a lifelong circumnavigation of the seven oceans of the musical world.

Koppel's Hammond organ playing acquired iconic status as early as 1971 with the ballet music *The Triumph of Death*, which he performed with his brother Thomas and their group Savage Rose. The organ is the sound that runs like a thread through the ballet, the acoustical leitmotif

of a brand-new sensational production at The Royal Theatre in Copenhagen. Since then, Anders Koppel has used the Hammond organ for all sorts of music genres, from jazz to world music and classical works. Among the over 40 classical instrumental concertos he has composed, there is also one written to himself as a soloist – it is for Hammond organ and symphony orchestra.

Anders Koppel's musical world is difficult to label. First and foremost, it sounds of himself. But a necessary impulse comes from collective processes with other musicians, preferably based on improvisations. One of the musicians Koppel has a long musical friendship with is Henrik Dam Thomsen, who is principal cellist of the Danish National Symphony Orchestra as well as being an extremely experienced chamber musician. Agewise, a generation separates the two musicians. 'I have listened to Anders' Hammond organ ever since I was a boy, for a long time

without knowing who was playing,' Henrik Dam Thomsen relates. 'I've always been attracted by his sound.'

The two of them began to play together in various contexts in the 1990s, also with Anders Koppel's son, the jazz saxophonist Benjamin Koppel. Anders Koppel has even composed various pieces of music for Henrik Dam Thomsen over the years, and in 2019 the time had come for them to work together directly as a duo. Not only does the cello and Hammond organ combination sound amazingly good. We are dealing here with two very flexible instruments that span many registers and can, therefore, assume different roles in the music. The cello can shift between playing the melody, bass, inner parts and accompaniment. Koppel's distinctive organ playing, which does not get bogged down in the clichés with which the instrument is often connected, is also completely open to new possibilities. 'I have always viewed my organ as a small symphony orchestra, where one can orchestrate and incorporate

counterpoint, contrasting voices and a variety of sounds,' Anders Koppel explains.

As its point of departure, the music on this album has compositions by Koppel, scored for the two instruments. But the final results, the arrangements, the duo have developed together, and in the making there has been ample room for improvisation. The borderline between improvisation and composition is so fluid that one cannot always make out which is which. This is unusual when it involves a classical musician such as Henrik Dam Thomsen, who is used to the confines of both a score and a conductor.

'Playing in a symphony orchestra is one of the most straightforward and disciplined types of work that exists. One does not have much freedom of movement,' Henrik Dam Thomsen says. 'And so it is fantastic for me to step into Anders' universe, where there is no initial fixed agenda. This is the closest I get to creating new music myself!'

The pieces were recorded in the same order as on the album. They form a beautiful cycle where the introductory improvisation resembles a shaman-like invocation of the magical forces needed for creation. After that, the way is open for a suite of pieces, highly varied, but bound by their reciprocal contrasts and a pervading nocturnal atmosphere.

Many of the pieces are lyrical and extremely beautiful, others are mysterious, introvert or simply lonely. Occasionally the peace is broken by strong glints of light which vanish just as quickly as they came. The structuring of the musical images forms a fascinating blend of the poetical and the grotesque.

In terms of style, we encounter tender ballads, free arabesques and a humorous playing with musical genres. Typical for Anders Koppel's works is that it does not make sense to indicate which style is which. Here we find traces of Balkan music, tango, jazzy nightclub sounds and Baroque music that develop naturally – and are joy-

ously surprising. 'That's the story of my life,' Koppel says with a grin. 'That's one of the advantages of not being an academically trained composer. I do not think in genres. The idiom is a musical fingerprint, not a blend that I consciously construct.'

The titles of the pieces on the album can be read as afterthoughts to the music, not unlike the impressions as in Debussy's *Préludes* for piano. Anders Koppel names some of them:

'*White Night* was the first piece we played as a duo. It is an important piece for us. I wrote it in April when the nights start to grow shorter and lighter. *April Rain Song* is another piece from the same early phase, where we worked concentratedly on creating our shared music. *Step on a Crack* refers to the English rhyme about the children's game where you mustn't tread on the cracks between paving stones. This even applies to the music, in that the entire piece is 'lifted', shifting the beats in the bar so that we skip the bar lines!'

Everyday Dog Life and *Deserted Streets* have as their starting point a suite which Koppel wrote for Henrik Dam Thomsen's solo debut in 1998. In the number *The Italian* an Italian crooner suddenly enters stage right, while *Blue Staircase* could be the soundtrack of a moon landing or some sort of ghostly scene where one does not know what is waiting at the bottom of the staircase.

The whole night journey ends with the dizzying *Final* in 7/8 time, a new version of the final movement from Anders Koppel's *Partita*, which he originally composed in 1999 for the crossover group Mad Cows Sing, of which Henrik Dam Thomsen was a member. The piece has now gained new, hectic life and also had a Baroque-style fugue added that speeds up the last nighttime hours.

Still Life is an album with 15 impressions of life as captured in a dimly lit night. Does one sense in this nighttime ritual a touch of panic at time's swift flight? Not in the instruments at any rate – Koppel's Hammond organ from 1970 and Henrik Dam Thomsen's cello from 1680 have still got plenty of music in them.

'People often ask me if it's the same organ that I played *The Triumph of Death* on, and it is. It has had its golden anniversary on the road with me,' Anders Koppel relates.

'And we have only just begun our co-operation as a duo,' Henrik Dam Thomsen adds. 'There's so much still for us to try out.'

Since 1999, **Henrik Dam Thomsen** (b. 1973) has combined his position as first principal cellist in the Danish National Symphony Orchestra with a versatile appearance as chamber musician and soloist. He is influenced by both the distinguished Scandinavian cello tradition and some of the international cello world's most significant icons such as Morten Zeuthen, Torleif Thedéen, William Pleeth, and Janos Starker.

His 2004 debut-release of music by Kodály and Britten (Chandos Records, 2004) was nominated for a Danish Music Award in the category of Best Solo Recording and received numerous excellent reviews in the international music press. Other solo recordings include *French Pieces* (2006) and *More French*

Pieces (2016) with pianist Ulrich Stærk, and a DVD/CD box set *Live at the Tivoli Concert Hall* (2009), again with pianist Ulrich Stærk as well as the Danish National Symphony Orchestra conducted by Thomas Dausgaard.

He has played numerous concerts at festivals throughout Europe, the US and Asia, both as a soloist and as a chamber musician, including engagements with the Sartory String Quartet, Danish National Girls' Choir, and the Copenhagen Cello Quartet.

Henrik Dam Thomsen has also distinguished himself as an improviser and has performed with an array of Danish and international jazz stars. He appears on a large number of award-winning film scores, notably for several films by auteur Lars von Trier.

Anders Koppel (b. 1947), composer and musician; from the age of 5 he studied with his father, pianist and composer Herman D. Koppel. Later he played the clarinet and sang in the Copenhagen Royal Chapel Choir.

Anders Koppel began playing Hammond organ in 1966, and with his brother Thomas Koppel formed the rock group Savage Rose (1967-74), touring all over the world. From 1974 Anders Koppel played for almost 40 years with Peter Bastian and Flemming Quist Møller in the world music group Bazaar. He has also worked extensively with his son, saxophonist Benjamin Koppel, in numerous musical settings for more than 25 years. Anders Koppel is even involved in releases with international stars

such as jazz musicians Kenny Werner, Miroslav Vitouš, and Brian Blade.

As a composer, Anders Koppel has a large production of over 150 scores in all genres – symphonic works, ballet, opera, musicals, chamber music, solo works, film music and no fewer than 33 solo concertos. Among them, his four marimba concertos are being played all over the world. The first has been performed over 500 times, the third was performed in Carnegie Hall, New York, and St Petersburg, and the fourth was world premiered in the Musikverein, Vienna. Anders Koppel's four string quartets, two saxophone concertos and two accordion concertos have also met with international interest. Numerous of Koppel's works have been released by Dacapo Records.



15 stykker liv, indfanget i en halvoplyst nat

af Jens Cornelius

I 1970 købte komponisten Anders Koppel et hammondorgel. Et Hammond model B3. Og lige netop dét orgel er nok et af de bedst kendte instrumenter i dansk musikliv, for den evigt kreative Anders Koppel har spillet på det selv samme orgel lige siden. De mange band- og festivalklistermærker, der med årene er blevet sat på instrumentet, er tatoveringer fra en livslang verdensomsejling på musikkens syv verdenshave.

Koppels hammondorgelspil fik ikonisk status allerede i 1971 med balletmusikken *Dødens triumf*, som han lavede med sin bror Thomas og deres gruppe Savage Rose. Orglet er den klanglige røde tråd i balletten, der blev en sensation på Det Kongelige Teater. Siden har Anders Koppel brugt hammondorglet i alle mulige genrer, fra jazz til world music og klassiske

værker. Blandt de mere end 40 klassiske instrumentalkoncerter, han har komponeret, er også en enkelt skrevet til ham selv som solist – den er for hammondorgel og symfoniorkester.

Anders Koppels musikalske verden er vanskelig at sætte etiket på. Den lyder først og fremmest af ham selv. Men en nødvendig impuls kommer fra kollektive processer med andre musikere, meget gerne baseret på improvisationer. En af de musikere, Koppel har et langt musikalsk venskab med, er Henrik Dam Thomsen, som er solocellist i DR Symfoniorkestret og desuden en meget erfaren kammermusiker. Der er en generations aldersforskel på de to musikere. “Jeg har lyttet til Anders’ hammondorgel, siden jeg var lille, uden at jeg vidste, hvem det var, der spillede”, fortæller Henrik Dam Thomsen. “Jeg har altid været tiltrukket af hans lyd.”

I 1990’erne begyndte de to at spille sammen i forskellige sammenhænge, bl.a. sammen med Anders Koppels søn, jazzsaxofonisten Benjamin Koppel. Anders

Koppel har også gennem årene komponeret forskellige stykker til Henrik Dam Thomsen, og i 2019 var tiden kommet til et rendyrket duosamarbejde. Ikke bare klinger cello og hammondorgel forbløffende godt sammen. Det er også to meget fleksible instrumenter, der spænder over mange registre og derfor kan indtage forskellige roller i musikken. Celloen kan skifte mellem at tage sig af melodi, bas, mellemstemme og akkompagnement. Koppels karakteristiske orgelspil, der ikke sidder fast i de klichéer, instrumentet ofte er forbundet med, er også helt åbent for muligheder. "Jeg har altid set mit orgel som et lille symfoniorkester, hvor man kan orkestrere, lægge kontrapunkt, modstemmer og klange ind", fortæller Anders Koppel.

Musikken på dette album tager udgangspunkt i kompositioner af Koppel, skrevet ud på noder for de to instrumenter. Men slutresultaterne, arrangementerne, har duoen udviklet sammen, og undervejs er der gjort god plads til improvisation. Grænsen

mellem improvisation og komposition er så flydende, at man ikke altid bemærker, hvad der er hvad. Det er usædvanligt, når det involverer en klassisk musiker som Henrik Dam Thomsen, der er vant til at være bundet af både noder og dirigent.

"At spille i et symfoniorkester er noget af det mest regelrette og disciplinerede arbejde, der findes. Man har faktisk ikke ret megen bevægelsesfrihed", siger Henrik Dam Thomsen. "Derfor er det fantastisk for mig at hoppe ind i Anders' univers, hvor der ikke er noget facit fra starten. Det er det tætteste, jeg kommer på selv at skabe ny musik!"

Stykkerne er indspillet i samme rækkefølge, som de høres på albummet. Det danner en smuk cyklus, hvor den indledende improvisation er som en shamanistisk påkaldelse af de magiske kræfter, der skal til for at skabe. Derefter er der åbnet for en suite af stykker, vidt forskellige, men forbundne af deres indbyrdes kontraster og en gennemgående nattemning.

Mange af stykkerne er lyriske og meget smukke, andre er mystiske, indadvendte eller ligefrem ensomme. Af og til bliver freden afbrudt af stærke lysglimt, der forsvinder lige så hurtigt, som de kom. Sammensætningen af musikalske billeder danner en fascinerende blanding af det poetiske og det groteske.

Stilmæssigt møder vi ømme ballader, frie arabesker og en humoristisk leg med musikalske genrer. Typisk for Anders Koppels værker giver det ikke rigtig mening at udpege, hvilken stil, der er hvad. Her er træk fra Balkanmusik, tango, jazzy natklublyde og barokmusik, der udvikler sig naturligt – og frydefuldt overraskende. “That’s the story of my life!”, griner Koppel. “Det er en af fordelene ved ikke at være akademisk uddannet komponist. Jeg tænker ikke i genrer. Tonesproget er et musikalsk fingeraftryk og ikke en blanding, jeg konstruerer bevidst.”

Titlerne på albummets stykker kan læses som eftertanker til musikken, ikke ulig im-

pressionerne i Debussys *Præludier* for klaver. Anders Koppel nævner nogle af dem:

“*White Night* var det første stykke, vi spillede som duo. Det er et vigtigt stykke for os. Jeg lavede det i april, da de lyse nætter var ved at begynde. *April Rain Song* er et andet stykke fra den samme tidlige fase, hvor vi arbejdede koncentreret med at skabe vores fælles musik. *Step on a Crack* refererer til den engelske børneremse om den leg, hvor man ikke må træde på flisestregerne. Det gør vi også i musikken, hvor hele nummeret er “liftet”, taktslagene er flyttet, så vi undgår taktstregerne!”

Everyday Dog Life og *Deserted Streets* tager udgangspunkt i en suite, Koppel skrev til Henrik Dam Thomsens solistdebut i 1998. I nummeret *The Italian* kommer en italiensk crooner pludselig ind fra højre, mens *Blue Staircase* kunne være lydsporet til en månelanding eller en anden spøgelsesagtig scene, hvor man ikke ved, hvad der venter nedenfor trappen.

Hele natterejsen slutter med den svimlende *Final* i 7/8-takt, en ny udgave

af slutsatsen fra Anders Koppels *Partita*, som han oprindeligt komponerede i 1999 til crossover-gruppen Mad Cows Sing, hvor Henrik Dam Thomsen var medlem. Nu har stykket fået nyt hektisk liv og har også fået tilsat en fuga i barokstil, der speeder op i nattens sidste timer.

Still Life er et album med 15 stykker liv, indfanget i en halvoplyst nat. Mærker man i dette natteritual en anelse panik over tidens hastige flugt? Ikke på instrumen-

terne, i hvert fald – Koppels hammondorgel fra 1970 og Henrik Dam Thomsens cello fra 1680 har masser af musik i sig endnu.

“Folk spørger mig tit, om det er det samme orgel, jeg spillede *Dødens triumf* på, og det er det. Det har haft 50-års jubilæum på landevejen med mig,” fortæller Anders Koppel.

“Og vi er jo faktisk kun lige begyndt på vores duosamarbejde”, siger Henrik Dam Thomsen. “Der er så meget, vi skal afprøve endnu.”



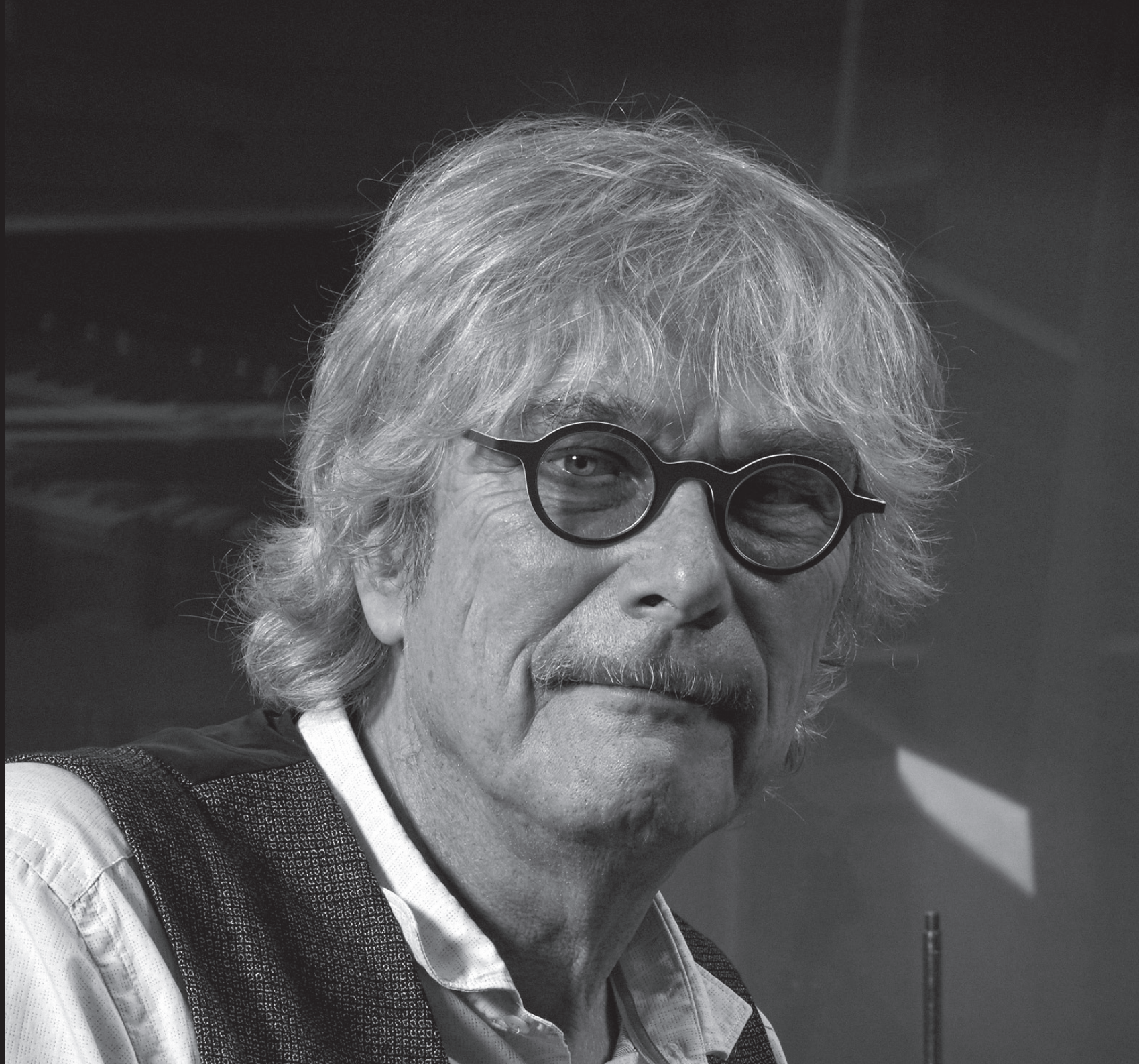
Siden 1999 har **Henrik Dam Thomsen** (f. 1973) kombineret en stilling som 1. solocellist i DR Symfoniorkestret med et alsidigt virke som kammermusiker og solist. Han er præget af både den fornemme skandinaviske cellotradition og nogle af den internationale celloverdens største personligheder som Morten Zeuthen, Torleif Thedéen, William Pleeth og János Starker med flere.

Henrik Dam Thomsens debut-CD med værker af Kodály og Britten (Chandos Records, 2004) blev nomineret til en Danish Music Award og fik en stribe fremragende anmeldelser i den internationale presse. Hans andre udgivelser inkluderer *French Pieces* (2006) og *More French Pieces* (2016) med pianisten Ulrich Stærk

samt DVD/CD-bokssættet *Live at the Tivoli Concert Hall* (2009), igen med Ulrich Stærk samt DR Symfoniorkestret dirigeret af Thomas Dausgaard.

Henrik Dam Thomsen har medvirket ved utallige koncerter og musikfestivaler i Europa, USA og Asien både som solist og kammermusiker, blandt andre med Sartory String Quartet, DR Pige-koret og Copenhagen Cello Quartet.

Han har desuden markeret sig som improvisationsmusiker, hvilket har sat ham i forbindelse med en lang række danske og internationale jazzstjerner. Lyden af hans cello kendes desuden fra en lang række soundtracks, og her er hans solistiske bidrag på flere Robert-vindende Lars von Trier-produktioner særligt markante.



Anders Koppel (f. 1947), komponist og musiker, fra 5-års alderen elev hos sin far, pianisten og komponisten Herman D. Koppel. Han spillede senere klarinet og sang desuden i Københavns Drengekor.

Anders Koppel begyndte at spille hammondorgel i 1966 og dannede sammen med sin bror Thomas Koppel rockgruppen Savage Rose (1967-74), der turnerede i hele verden. Fra 1974 spillede Anders Koppel i næsten 40 år sammen med Peter Bastian og Flemming Quist Møller i verdensmusikgruppen Bazaar. Han har i talrige musikalske sammenhænge i mere end 25 år desuden haft et gennemgående samarbejde med sønnen, saxofonisten Benjamin Koppel. Anders Koppel medvirker også på udgivelser med internationale

stjerner som jazzmusikerne Kenny Werner, Miroslav Vitouš og Brian Blade.

Som komponist har Anders Koppel en stor produktion på over 150 partiturer i alle genrer bag sig – symfoniske værker, ballet, opera, musicals, kammermusik, soloværker, filmmusik og ikke færre end 33 solokoncerter. Blandt dem fire marimbakoncerter, der bliver spillet over hele verden. Den første er opført over 500 gange, den tredje er blandt andet opført i Carnegie Hall, New York og Skt. Petersborg og den fjerde blev uopført i Musikverein, Wien. Også Anders Koppels fire strygekvartetter, to saxofonkoncerter og to accordeonkoncerter er blevet mødt med international interesse. Talrige af Koppels værker er blevet udgivet af Dacapo Records.





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Mixed by Boe Larsen, Anders Koppel, and Henrik Dam Thomsen

Produced by Henrik Dam Thomsen, and Anders Koppel

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**DANMARKS NATIONALE
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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.

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2	White Night	6 : 49
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5	Oh Moon	6 : 06
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7	Deserted Streets	4 : 10
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World premiere recordings

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