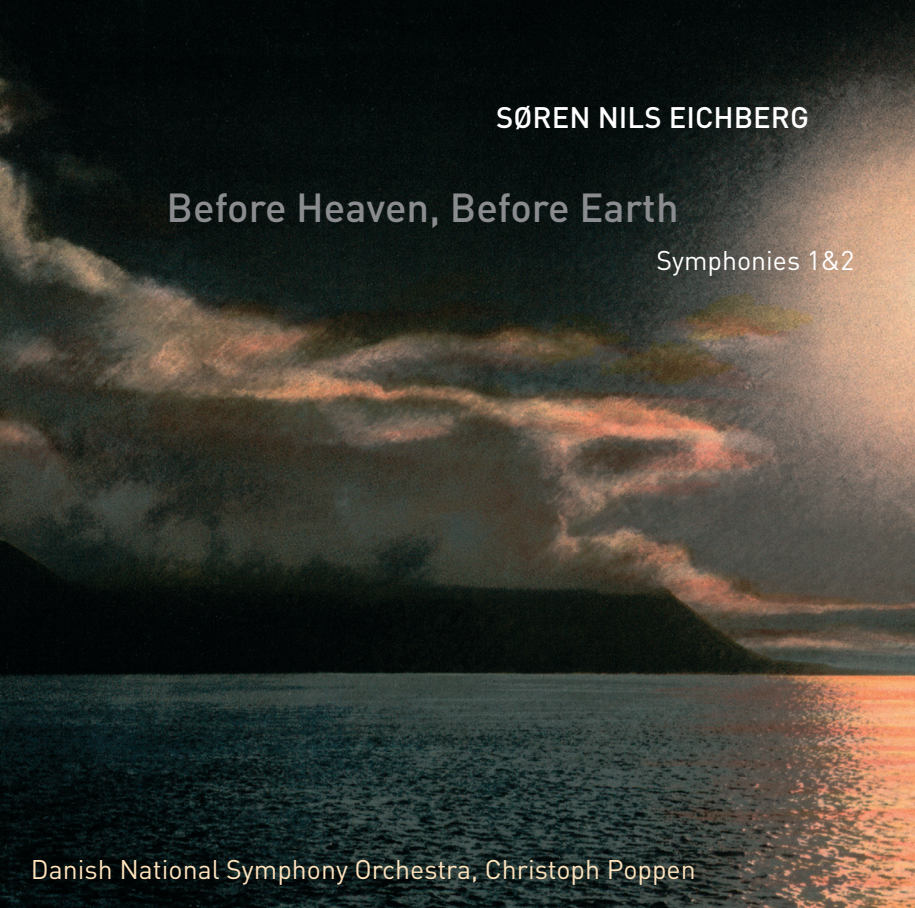




SØREN NILS EICHBERG

Before Heaven, Before Earth

Symphonies 1&2

Danish National Symphony Orchestra, Christoph Poppen

SØREN NILS EICHBERG

Before Heaven, Before Earth

Symphonies 1 & 2

Danish National Symphony Orchestra

Christoph Poppen, conductor

	SYMPHONY NO. 2, “BEFORE HEAVEN, BEFORE EARTH” (2010)	23:29
1	Chaotisch, aggressiv	11:10
2	Sehr genau	3:46
3	Gläsern	3:31
4	Wieder nervöser	5:02
	SYMPHONY NO. 1, “STÜRZTEN WIR UNS INS FEUER” (2005)	34:11
5	Schnell, wie im Rausch	14:46
6	Tempo I	11:14
7	Mysteriös	5:10
8	Tempo II	3:00

Total 57:50

Dacapo is supported by the Danish Arts Council Committee for Music





SØREN NILS EICHBERG

SØREN NILS EICHBERG: TWO SYMPHONIES *by Jens Cornelius*

‘Composing’s something I’ve always done,’ SØREN NILS EICHBERG says disarmingly. He is trained as a pianist and has no official qualification to prove his capacity as a composer. The music has just come of its own accord.

He has acquired the technique of composing for an orchestra in practice by studying conducting, and as a practising musician he works both as a pianist and a conductor. During the last few years, however, it is definitely composition that has gained the upper hand.

Among his more recent compositions are a cello concerto, a piano concerto, a double concerto and a concerto grosso as well as several operas. Most recently, Covent Garden in London has commissioned a chamber opera from him.

In 2010, Søren Nils Eichberg was the first person ever to be appointed *composer in residence* at DR SymfoniOrkestret. In the course of three seasons, the orchestra has presented a wide selection of his works, including a first performance of his *Symphony No. 2* and *Concerto for Orchestra*.

Søren Nils Eichberg was born in Stuttgart in 1973. He is of Danish-German parentage, grew up in Denmark, qualified as a pianist in Copenhagen and Cologne, and is at present based in Berlin. His breakthrough came in 2001, when the Greenland-inspired *Qilaatersorneq* for violin and orchestra gained first prize at the Queen Elisabeth Music Competition in Brussels. Since then, Eichberg’s music has spread to many countries, for it has a spontaneous appeal to both musicians and listeners.

‘My generation of composers is most eager to communicate with the audience,’ Søren Nils Eichberg says, ‘and we are not intent on instructing people. We just want to make good music that doesn’t make listeners hold their hands to their ears.’

SYMPHONY NO. 1

Eichberg’s *Symphony No. 1* was first performed in 2006 by Odense Symphony Orchestra and must already be considered an ‘early work’.

It is one cohesive sequence and has a subtitle ‘Stürzten wir uns ins Feuer’ (‘If we flung ourselves into the flames’). The words are taken from the book ‘The Gospel according to

Jesus Christ' by the Portuguese Nobel prize-winner José Saramago. The full quotation is a doomsday vision that reads as follows:

'... and if we were as foolhardy or reckless as the butterflies and moths, and we flung ourselves into the flames, one and all, the entire human race – then perhaps the blaze would be so fierce and the light so strong that God would open His eyes and wake him from his languid dozing – too late probably for him to manage to recognise us, but time enough to notice the beginning of the great nothingness, now that we were no longer there ...'

The vision immediately fascinated Eichberg when he read the book.

'For humans there is something directly magically attractive about collective self-destruction and the catastrophe as such, even though it actually seems to be illogical, and time after time we fling ourselves headlong into the fire,' he says. 'I knew at once that I wanted to use the quotation in music.'

But to place the quotation alongside Søren Nils Eichberg's *Symphony No. 1* is also because he felt that it expressed something about the situation at the beginning of the 21st century. 'Europe was once more conducting a war of aggression, and the political currents that sixty years previously had laid Europe in ruins were on the advance once again. In Denmark, they were even allowed to gain parliamentary influence. The Muhammad cartoons also appeared during that period,' Eichberg has explained.

The symphony is a violent work, one where brutal, boisterous expressions have taken over. 'The complacent and heroic gesture in the symphony is not only an abstract, artistic vision,' Eichberg says, 'but can definitely also be interpreted as references to the pompous soundtrack of, for example, Strauss and Pfitzner to nationalism and the lust for disaster that led to the Second World War – and thereby as a sarcastic hint to the present age.'

SYMPHONY NO. 2

Symphony No. 2 from 2010 is the jewel in the crown of an entire work-complex that Søren Nils Eichberg had been working on since 2008. During a scholarship stay in Italy, so many

ideas presented themselves that not even the three works he was composing at the time could make use of all of them. The material was used for the *Double Concerto*, for an opera and for an orchestral work commissioned by the German Ensemble Modern. And the material also lives on in his *Symphony No. 2*, concluding an explosive phase of creativity.

One does not have to know the other three works to enjoy the symphony, Søren Nils Eichberg points out. The material that the works share also finds highly different forms of expression in the various works. In the piece for Ensemble Modern ('In Circles'), the ideas seem to be restless, transient fancies, while in *Symphony No. 2* they are used in a more carefully worked-out fashion.

The symphony is once more an uninterrupted sequence. Despite this, it is constructed using a classical model during which one senses a 'first movement' a 'slow movement' and a 'finale'. The whole work derives from two contrasting themes presented at the start. This introductory section is played twice – a symphonic ploy that goes right back to the infancy of the genre. The 'double presentation' is particularly useful in music that listeners do not know in advance.

The first theme of the symphony is a series of chords played by the violins and violas. The contrasting theme is a quick, rhythmic bass figure presented by the deeper strings.

As an introduction to the whole piece one hears a series of figures in the strings that are repeated ad libitum. They reappear at the end of the symphony, but the course of the music has altered the material. While initially the expression was aggressive and chaotic, the symphony ends with a concluding 'satiated' feel to it.

Eichberg has subtitled the symphony 'Before Heaven, Before Earth' inspired by a verse from 'Tao Te Ching' by Chinese sage Lao Tzu:

'Before Heaven, Before Earth, within formless void, and toneless quietude. Aloof, eternally revolving, forever unchanging. Infinite.'

Jens Cornelius, 2013

THE PERFORMERS

THE DANISH NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA was founded as a radio orchestra in 1925 in connection with the launch of the Danish Broadcasting Corporation (DR), and consists today of 99 musicians. The orchestra is based in the DR Concert Hall, one of Europe's most spectacular concert halls, inaugurated in 2009. Earlier chief conductors of the DNSO have included Gerd Albrecht, Ulf Schirmer, Leif Segerstam and Lamberto Gardelli. The orchestra's honorary conductors are Thomas Dausgaard, who was chief conductor from 2004 until 2011, and Herbert Blomstedt, who was chief conductor from 1967 until 1977. The Danish National Symphony Orchestra's principal guest conductors have been Yuri Temirkanov, Michael Schönwandt and Dmitri Kitajenko. Two legendary conductors built the orchestra up in the early years: Fritz Busch and the Russian Nicolai Malko, whom the orchestra honours with the international Malko Competition for Young Conductors. The orchestra has performed under many others of the 20th century's greatest conductors, including Sergiu Celibidache, Kurt Sanderling, Marek Janowski, Gary Bertini, Giuseppe Sinopoli, Kyrill Kondrashin, Yevgeny Svetlanov, Gennady Rozhdestvensky and Christoph Eschenbach. The Danish National Symphony Orchestra tours both at home and abroad. In recent years the orchestra has performed in China and Korea and has been on tour to Europe's finest concert halls – the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Musikverein and the Konzerthaus in Vienna, the Philharmonie in Berlin and the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris - and has appeared at festivals like The Proms, the Salzburg Festival and Prague Spring. The Danish National Symphony Orchestra has recorded innumerable CDs for labels like Decca, Chandos and Dacapo, and has received awards for recordings from all over the world. In 2012 Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos was appointed the new chief conductor.

The conductor and violinist CHRISTOPH POPPEN is one of Germany's finest interpreters of the classical and modern repertoire. He started his career as a violinist and has toured both as a soloist and with the Cherubini Quartet, which he himself founded. In the 1990s, he started a parallel career as a conductor, and from 1995 to 2006 was principal conductor of the prestigious Münchener Kammerorchester. Since then, he has

been principal conductor of Deutsche Radio Philharmonie Saarbrücken Kaiserslautern. Christoph Poppen is known for his open-minded approach to music. He often plays new works alongside classical ones, and has a keen eye for neglected works. Poppen is also recognised for his considerable pedagogical skills, and for a number of years he was a violin professor in Berlin. Today, he is violin and chamber music professor at the academy of music in Munich. He lives in Bavaria and is married to the well-known German soprano Juliane Banse.

“At komponere er noget, jeg altid har gjort”, siger SØREN NILS EICHBERG afvæbnende. Han er uddannet som pianist og har ikke noget eksamensbevis, der beviser hans evner som komponist. Musikken er bare kommet af sig selv.

Orkestermusikens teknik har han lært ad praktisk vej ved at studere direktion, og som udøvende musiker arbejder han både som pianist og dirigent. Men de seneste år er det helt klart kompositionen, der har fået overvægt.

Blandt hans nyere kompositioner er en cellokoncert, en klaverkoncert, en dobbeltkoncert og en concerto grosso samt flere operaer. Senest har Covent Garden i London bestilt en kammeropera af ham.

I 2010 blev Søren Nils Eichberg som den første nogensinde udnævnt til *composer-in-residence* hos DR SymfoniOrkestret. I løbet af tre sæsoner har orkestret præsenteret et bredt udvalg hans værker og uropført bla. hans *Symfoni nr. 2* og en *Koncert for orkester*.

Søren Nils Eichberg er født i Stuttgart i 1973. Han har dansk-tyske forældre, er vokset op i Danmark, uddannet som pianist i København og Köln, og har i dag base i Berlin. Hans gennembrud kom i 2001, da det grønlandsk-inspirerede *Qilaatersorneq* for violin og orkester blev belønnet med førsteprisen ved Dronning Elisabeth Konkurrencen i Bruxelles. Siden har Eichberg fået udbredt sin musik til mange lande, for den forbinder sig umiddelbart med både musikere og tilhørere.

“Min generation af komponister brænder for at kommunikere med publikum”, siger Søren Nils Eichberg, “og vi er ikke ude på at belære folk. Vi vil bare gerne lave god musik, hvor lytterne ikke behøver at holde sig for ørene.”

SYMFONI NR. 1

Eichbergs 1. *Symfoni* blev uropført i 2006 af Odense Symfoniorkester og må allerede regnes for et “ungdomsværk”. Den er i ét sammenhængende forløb og har en undertitel: “Stürzten wir uns ins Feuer” (“Styrte vi os i flammerne”). Ordene er taget fra bogen “Jesusevangeliet” af den portugisiske Nobelprismodtager José Saramago. Det fulde citat er en dommedagsvision, der lyder sådan her:

“... og var vi ligeså dumdristige eller vovemodige som sommerfuglene og natsværmerne, og styrte vi os i flammerne, én og alle, hele menneskeslægten – måske så en så kraftig brand, en så skærende lue ville gennemtrænge Vorherres lukkede øjenlåg og vække ham fra hans træge blunden – for sent ganske vist til at nå at opfatte os, men dog tidsnok til at mærke begyndelsen af det store intet, nu da vi ikke længere var ...”

Visionen fascinerede Eichberg med det samme, da han læste bogen.

“Der er for mennesket noget direkte magisk tiltrækkende ved den kollektive selvedstruktion og katastrofen som sådan, også selv om det egentlig synes ulogisk, og gang på gang styrter vi os hovedkulds ind i ilden”, siger han. “Jeg vidste med det samme, at jeg ville bruge citatet i musik.”

Men når citatet står oven over Søren Nils Eichbergs *Symfoni nr. 1*, er det også fordi han fandt, at det udtrykte noget om situationen i begyndelsen af det 21. århundrede. “Europa førte igen angrebskrig, og de politiske strømninger, der 60 år forinden lagde Europa i ruiner, var på fremmarch igen. I Danmark lod man dem ligefrem få parlamentarisk indflydelse. Muhammed-tegningerne faldt jo også i den tid”, har Eichberg forklaret.

Symfonien er et voldsomt værk, hvor brutale og bralrende udtryk har taget magten. “Den selvfede og heroiske gestus i symfonien er ikke kun en abstrakt, kunstnerisk vision”, siger Eichberg, “men kan bestemt også tolkes som referencer til det pompøse soundtrack af f.eks. Strauss og Pfitzner til nationalismen og katastrofegejlheden, der førte til 2. Verdenskrig – og dermed som et sarkastisk hint til samtiden.”

SYMFONI NR. 2

Symfoni nr. 2 fra 2010 er kronen på værket i et helt værkkompleks, som Søren Nils Eichberg havde arbejdet med siden 2008. På et stipendieophold i Italien fik han så mange idéer fra hånden, at selv ikke de tre værker, han dengang var ved at komponere, kunne udnytte dem alle. Stoffet blev brugt til *Dobbeltkoncerten*, til en opera og et orkesterværk bestilt af det tyske Ensemble Modern. Og materialet lever videre i hans *Symfoni nr. 2*, der afslutter en eksplisiv fase af kreativitet.

Man behøver ikke kende de tre andre værker for at få udbytte af symfonien, pointerer Søren Nils Eichberg. Det materiale, som værkerne har til fælles, fremtræder da også også på vidt forskellig måde. I stykket til Ensemble Modern ("In Circles") virker idéerne som rastløse og flygtige indfald, mens de i *Symfoni nr. 2* bliver anvendt på en mere gennemarbejdet facon.

Symfonien spilles i ét uafbrudt forløb. Alligevel er den opbygget efter klassisk model, hvor man fornemmer en "1. sats", en "langsom sats" og en "finale" undervejs. Det hele udspringer af to kontrasterende temaer, som præsenteres i begyndelsen. Dette indledende afsnit bliver spillet to gange. Det er et symfonisk princip, der stammer helt tilbage fra genrens barndom. "Dobbelt-præsentationen" er særlig nyttig i musik, som lytterne ikke kender på forhånd.

Symfoniens første tema er en række akkorder, der spilles af violiner og bratscher. Kontrasttemaet er en hurtig, rytmisk basfigur, som præsenteres af de dybe strygere.

Som indledning på det hele høres en række figurer i strygerne, der gentages ad libitum. De dukker op igen som afslutning på symfonien, men det musikalske forløb har ændret på stoffet. Hvor udtrykket i begyndelsen var aggressivt og kaotisk, ender symfonien med en konkluderende og "mæt" fornemmelse.

Eichberg har givet symfonien undertitlen 'Before Heaven, Before Earth' inspireret af et vers fra den kinesiske vismand Lao Tse's "Tao Te Ching":

"Før Himlen, før Jorden, i formløs tomhed og klangløs stilhed, drejende om sig selv og for sig selv, uforanderlig. Uendelig."

Jens Cornelius, 2013

DE MEDVIRKENDE

DR SYMFONIORKESTRET er Danmarks nationale symfoniorkester. Det er grundlagt som radioorkester i 1925 i forbindelse med DR's begyndelse og består i dag af 99 musikere. 2004-2011 var orkestrets chefdirigent Thomas Dausgaard, den første danske chefdirigent for DR SymfoniOrkestret. Orkestret hører hjemme i DR's koncerthus, en af Europas mest spektakulære koncertsale, som blev indviet i 2009. Blandt DR SymfoniOrkestrets chefdirigenter har været Gerd Albrecht, Leif Segerstam og Lamberto Gardelli. Orkestrets æresdirigent er Herbert Blomstedt, der fra 1967 til 1977 var chefdirigent. DR SymfoniOrkestrets seneste 1. gæstedirigenter har været Yuri Temirkanov, Michael Schönwandt og Dmitrij Kitajenko. To legendariske dirigenter byggede orkestret op i de tidlige år: Fritz Busch og russeren Nicolai Malko, som orkestret ærer med den internationale Malko Konkurrence for unge dirigenter. Blandt andre store dirigenter, DR SymfoniOrkestret har samarbejdet regelmæssigt med, er Sergiu Celibidache, Kurt Sanderling, Marek Janowski, Gary Bertini, Giuseppe Sinopoli, Kyrill Kondrashin, Yevgeny Svetlanov, Gennady Rozhdestvensky og Christoph Eschenbach. DR SymfoniOrkestret turnerer i både ind- og udland. De seneste år har orkestret optrådt i Kina og Korea og turneret til Europas fineste koncertsale som Concertgebouw i Amsterdam, Musikverein og Konzerthaus i Wien, Filharmonien i Berlin og Théâtre des Champs-Élysées i Paris og optrådt ved festivaler som The Proms, Salzburg Festspillene og Prag Forår. Orkestret har indspillet utallige cd'er for plademærker som Dacapo, Decca og Chandos og har modtaget udmærkelser for indspilningerne fra hele verden. I 2012 tiltrådte Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos som ny chefdirigent.

Dirigenten og violinisten CHRISTOPH POPPEN er en af Tysklands fineste fortolkere af det klassiske og det moderne repertoire. Han begyndte sin karriere som violinist og har turneret både som solist og med Cherubini Kvartetten, som han selv grundlagde. I 1990'erne tog han fat på en sideløbende karriere som dirigent, og 1995-2006 var han chefdirigent for det fornemme München Kammerorkester. Siden har han været chefdirigent for Den tyske Radiofilharmon i Saarbrücken. Christoph Poppen er kendt for en fordomsfri tilgang til musikken. Han spiller ofte nye værker ved siden af etablerede klas-

sikere, og han har et vågent øje for det oversete repertoire. Poppen er også anerkendt for sine store pædagogiske evner, og i en årrække var han violinprofessor i Berlin. I dag er han professor i violin og kammermusik ved konservatoriet i München. Han bor i Bayern og er gift med den kendte tyske sopran Juliane Banse.

DDD

Symphony No. 2

Recorded at Koncerthuset on 10 and 12 February 2011

Recording producer: Bernhard Güttler

Sound engineer: Jan Oldrup

Symphony No. 1

Recorded at Koncerthuset on 9-11 February 2012

Recording producer: Morten Mogensen

Sound engineer: Jan Oldrup

Editing: Bernhard Güttler and Jan Oldrup

Mastering: Bernhard Güttler

Orchestral producers: Meta Alm and Curt Kollavik Jensen

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DANSK KOMPOSITTFORENING



DR
Symfoni
Orkestret

DANMARKS NATIONALE
MUSIKANTOLOGI

Dacapo Records, Denmark's national record label, was founded in 1986 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.

