



CHANDOS

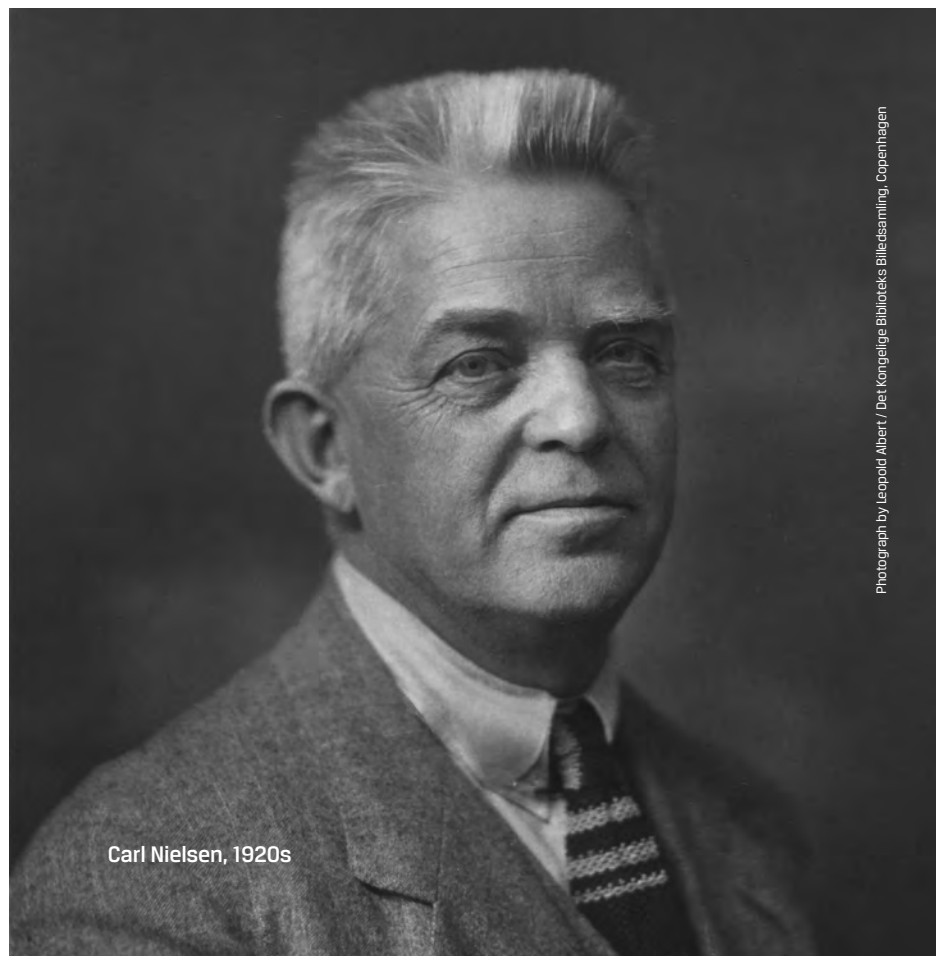
# NIELSEN

CLARINET CONCERTO • HELIOS • SYMPHONY NO. 5

ALESSANDRO CARBONARE CLARINET

BERGEN PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

EDWARD GARDNER



Carl Nielsen, 1920s

Photograph by Leopold Albert / Det Kongelige Biblioteks Billedsamling, Copenhagen

## Carl Nielsen (1865 – 1931)

- |  |   |              |
|--|---|--------------|
| [1]  | <b>Helios, Op. 17, FS 32</b> (1903)<br>Overture<br>Stilhed og Mørke – saa stiger Sol under frydefuld Lovsang –<br>Vandrer sin gyldne Vej – sænker sig stille i Hav.<br>[Stillness and darkness – Then the sun rises to joyous songs of praise –<br>Wanders its golden way – Quietly sinks in the sea.]<br>Tilegnet Julius Röntgen i Venskab<br>Andante tranquillo – Allegro ma non troppo – Più allegro –<br>Tempo I – Presto – Tempo I (Allegro ma non troppo) –<br>Andante tranquillo | <b>11:24</b> |
| <b>Concerto, Op. 57, FS 129</b> (1928)*<br>for Clarinet and Orchestra<br>Aage Oxenvad tilegnet |   |              |
| [2]  | [I] Allegretto un poco – A tempo, ma tranquillo – Cadenza –<br>Tempo I – Allegro non troppo – Più allegro – Tempo I –   | 8:15         |
| [3]  | [II] Poco adagio – A tempo, ma tranquillo – Più mosso –<br>Poco adagio –  | 4:46         |
| [4]  | [III] Allegro non troppo – Meno – Molto cantabile e ben tenuto –<br>Molto espressivo e ben tenuto – Poco più mosso –<br>Un poco meno – Cadenza – Adagio – Più vivo – Adagio –   | 7:20         |
| [5]  | [IV] Allegro vivace – Molto tranquillo –<br>Tempo I – Poco adagio – Allegro –<br>Tempo I (Allegro vivace) – Poco meno   | 4:21         |

**Symphony No. 5, Op. 50, FS 97** (1920 – 22) **34:23**

Til mine Venner Vera og Carl Johan Michaelsen

<b>6</b>	I	Tempo giusto – Tranquillo – Tranquillo –	10:16
<b>7</b>		Adagio – Cadenza [snare drum] – Tranquillo – Cadenza [clarinet]	8:43 [19:00]
<b>8</b>	II	Allegro – Un poco di più –	5:39
<b>9</b>		Presto –	2:50
<b>10</b>		Andante poco tranquillo –	4:03
<b>11</b>		Allegro (Tempo I)	2:45 [15:19]
			<b>TT 70:45</b>

**Alessandro Carbonare** clarinet\*

**Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra**

**Alexander Kagan** leader

**Edward Gardner**



Alessandro Carbonare

## Nielsen: Helios, Symphony No. 5, Clarinet Concerto

### Symphony No. 5

The earliest signal of an impending Fifth Symphony from Carl Nielsen (1865 – 1931) came in a letter which he wrote on 8 October 1920 to Johannes Nielsen (no relation), director of the Royal Theatre, in Copenhagen. Legally separated from his wife since the year before, the composer was staying in Damgaard, on the east coast of Jutland, working on music for a new play at the theatre, Helge Rode's fairytale drama *Moderen* (The Mother). To the theatre chief, however, he revealed that there was also 'a largish thing I have to do, which is making rapid progress just now'. This can only have been the emergent symphony.

Once the score for *Moderen* was behind him, somewhere around the turn of the year (the first performance took place on 30 January 1921), Nielsen could concentrate on the symphony. Staying now at a house north of Copenhagen lent him by Carl Johan Michaelsen, a pupil who had become a friend, he completed the big first movement in March 1921. (The Michaelsens, Carl Johan and his wife, Vera, would be thanked with the symphony's dedication.) News of his

progress he conveyed in letters to his wife, who remained his close ally of three decades, and a fellow artist (Anne Marie Carl-Nielsen, as she styled herself, was a distinguished sculptor), and with whom he would be reunited the following year.

This opening movement was something extraordinary in the composer's output, given that Nielsen had started all his earlier symphonies with allegros of regular length. Here the music starts out beyond time, with an oscillation on violas that could imply almost any tempo. The bassoons enter to establish a slow speed, then leave as if emptying from a bottle. This causes consternation in the violas, in a first display of how in this symphony one body of instruments will react to the behaviour of another (as would happen again, very definitely, in the Clarinet Concerto). Continuing in dialogue, flutes and horns taking over from the bassoons, the movement gains a quicker and more solid pace with the arrival of the first violins. However, there are soon intimations of coming trouble, from woodwinds above and cellos below.

Then here it is: a march, marked out by snare drum and with gargoyle solos from clarinet and flute. We can hear how this music relates to what went before, which rises in protest, but at the same time it comes as an intrusion, almost as if from outside the symphony. Denmark, we may remember, had been neutral during the First World War, and yet had, in the peace agreement, regained territory which it had lost to Prussia half a century before; that was what Rode's play was written to celebrate. Nielsen, however, saw nationalism as a deadly disease of the spirit, and it is hard not to hear the malignancy in this rampage.

There is a ceasefire (a repeating bell sound comes from the celesta), and eventually the music falls into a warm G major. From this an *Adagio* unfolds, as if on a new day. But there is no escape. We have warnings, which the main music feels, and soon that snare drum is back. At the climax of the ensuing battle, the snare drummer takes off from the orchestral tempo, 'as though determined', as Nielsen instructs, 'at all costs to obstruct the music'. This time the real music – as we may, with the composer, call it – wins out. It is, however, exhausted, as the snare drum beats its retreat.

Nielsen seems to have been unsure how to go on from here. To his wife he confided

that he had 'a rather strong feeling that my old abilities are failing me'. They might seem, rather, to come rushing back in the opening of the second movement, but as this continues, we might sense that it is not so much a resolution as a succession of responses that, as the composer realises, will not fit the occasion. We know that Nielsen had to break off work on the symphony for a month, that of August 1921, to write *Fynsk Foraar* (Springtime on Funen) for a consortium of choral societies, but that can hardly account for the odd form of this second movement, the oddity of which belongs so much to itself. Repetition very quickly reveals the exuberance of its start as forced. It veers into lament. Rival factions break out. Positive energy tries to reassert itself, but carries the music into a strange nocturne.

What can help now? Fugue, which begins innocently enough but is very soon shaken to its core. Flutes want to fly away with the music; are stopped; and succeed, in another moment of exhaustion.

A slow movement might offer consolation but does not. Chromatic and sparsely scored for strings, this *Andante* prefigures the desolate landscapes of Shostakovich. It gains power but not strength, and slips over into a reprise of the movement's opening *Allegro*. Something is trying to persuade us

that the wounds have now been healed, but something else is showing them as open. The ending is, to be sure, glorious. Has it come too quickly, though, for us to be sure of it?

Nielsen completed the score on 15 January 1922, and conducted the first performance just nine days later, in Copenhagen. This was the last and most disturbing of his run of mighty symphonies. The Sixth would have to be another matter.

#### Helios

A little under twenty years before, in the spring of 1903, the Nielsens were together in Athens. Anne Marie had won a grant to copy sculptures on the Acropolis; her husband meanwhile occupied himself with a sculpture in time on a classical topic, that of the sun god Helios. He started the score in mid-March, his first composition since the Symphony 'De Fire Temperamenter' (The Four Temperaments), and completed it six weeks later, adding an epigraph polished for him by the writer Einar Christiansen:

Stillness and darkness – Then the sun rises  
to joyous songs of praise – Wanders its  
golden way – Quietly sinks in the sea.

This, almost scripting an introduction and *Allegro*, is pretty much how the music goes, starting out from long breaths on bottom G from the cellos and basses. When

the horns enter above, the resemblance to Wagner's *Rheingold* prelude, itself an image of untroubled nature, becomes unmistakable. However, where Wagner builds a major chord on his initiating note and maintains it, Nielsen soon makes his G the fifth of C, to which he adds notes not belonging to the C triad, as if dropping a touch of vinegar into the cup. The violas begin weaving scales and, as the bass harmony settles on D major (with a clear triad for the first time), first violins turn the scales into a motif. What follows derives from these materials, developed first towards a proud theme on the horns, then to fanfaring trumpets that push the music into its *Allegro* at a bold march. Cellos introduce a second subject, and another big tune spills over into fugue, leading to a quick reprise and a return to the music of the opening.

When he had finished the introduction and started on the *Allegro*, Nielsen wrote to a friend that Athens was 'scorchingly hot: Helios burns all day'. It is not the heat of the sun that his overture conveys, however, but rather its life-giving energy.

#### Clarinet Concerto

The Clarinet Concerto takes us forward again beyond the Fifth Symphony to the penultimate work which Nielsen dignified with an opus number; only his organ piece



*Commotio* was to come. The spacing-out of these late works – the Flute Concerto in 1926, the Clarinet Concerto in 1928, *Commotio* in 1930 – 31 – was a sign of the composer's diminishing health, which prevented him from going any further with his plan to write a concerto for each member of the Copenhagen Wind Quintet. The flautist, Holger Gilbert-Jespersen, had his; now Nielsen held the clarinetist Aage Oxenvad and his instrument in view, revelling in the wide range of the clarinet and its ability to switch temper smartly, perky one moment, suave the next, or caustic, or pensive.

Work on it may have begun during a skiing holiday which the Nielsens took early in 1928, but perhaps nothing much was achieved before April, when the composer was able to return to a retreat that had served him for the Fifth Symphony: Damgaard. There were interruptions, but it was there that the concerto was finished, in August. Oxenvad had been receiving the solo part in stages; Nielsen was also in correspondence again with Michaelsen, who arranged a private first performance for September 1928 at his summer villa. The official première followed a month later, in Copenhagen.

Scored for a classical-period orchestra of strings with pairs of bassoons and horns plus solo percussionist, the piece opens

with a bluff theme that the clarinet picks up on the way to a quickly intense dialogue. A sudden alarm call announces the arrival of the same intruder as made its way into the Fifth Symphony, and this snare drum has a tussle with the clarinet before the latter can introduce a lyrical theme. Further altercations between soloist and ensemble, joined by the snare drum, settle down towards a solo Cadenza that recalls the work's initial theme. The orchestra re-enters with this, at first surreptitiously (on low strings accompanying bassoons in thirds) and the upshot is again a tournament involving all the players. A transition, through a short cadenza, makes possible the *Adagio*, begun as a horn solo with bassoons.

The clarinet enlarges on this, adding echoes of the opening motif, until the atmosphere is broken by a march-scherzo. This is the first of several episodes in which further skirmishes among the principal characters – clarinet, ensemble, snare drum – calm down, only to break out soon in another form. An increasing sense of crisis calls, as in the other two works on this album, for fugue, here engaging bassoon and clarinet. The latter has a second big Cadenza, issuing in a restoration of the *Adagio*, with opening motif uploaded. A fast *Allegro* enters as if to serve as finale, but keeps opening windows into the

*Adagio* music, and it is at a slow speed that the concerto ends, a beautiful cadence lifting it into the stratosphere.

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Born in Desenzano del Garda, in Northern Italy, **Alessandro Carbonare** has been principal clarinetist with the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, in Rome, since 2004. For fifteen years he lived in Paris where he served as principal clarinet with Orchestre national de France. He has won international competitions around the world, for example in Geneva, in 1990, Prague, in 1991, Toulon, in 1991, the ARD, Munich, in 1991 and 1992, and Paris, in 1992. He has appeared as soloist with the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Orquesta Nacional de España, Oslo-Filharmonien, Südwestdeutsches Kammerorchester Pforzheim, Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunk, WienSinfonietta, Orchestre national de France, Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, and all major Italian orchestras. As principal clarinet he has played with the Berliner Philharmoniker, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and New York Philharmonic. Having received a personal invitation from Maestro Claudio Abbado, he now plays in the late conductor's Lucerne

Festival Orchestra with which he has made an award-winning live recording of Mozart's Clarinet Concerto, KV 622. He is active not only in classical music but also in Jazz and Klezmer projects. As an active member of the State Foundation for the National System of Youth and Infant Orchestras of Venezuela (El Sistema), he teaches music for free to hundreds of poor young people in Caracas. He has performed all kinds of music with such friends and famous fellow musicians as Martha Argerich, Stefano Bollani, Paquito D'Rivera, Leonidas Kavakos, Lang Lang, Alexander Lonquich, Enrico Pieranunzi, Luis Sclavis, and Pinkas Zuckerman. Alessandro Carbonare is a professor at the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, in Rome, and, during the summer, at the Accademia Musicale Chigiana, in Siena.

One of the world's oldest orchestras, the **Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra**, a Norwegian National Orchestra, dates back to 1765. Edvard Grieg had a close relationship with the Orchestra, serving as its artistic director from 1880 to 1882. Edward Gardner was Chief Conductor from 2015 to August 2024 and is now Honorary Conductor. He has taken the Orchestra on multiple international tours. These have included appearances at the Concertgebouw, in

Amsterdam, Elbphilharmonie, in Hamburg, Konzerthaus Berlin, Edinburgh International Festival, Southbank Centre, and BBC Proms. Previous international tours have included performances at the Wiener Musikverein and Konzerthaus, Carnegie Hall, in New York, and Philharmonie Berlin. Sir Mark Elder is the Orchestra's Principal Guest Conductor, and Jan Willem de Vriend holds the position of Artistic Partner.

In 2015 the Orchestra established its free streaming platform, Bergenphilive, which offers a great and extensive selection of live streams and works. The Bergen Philharmonic Youth Orchestra was established the same year.

The Orchestra has an active recording schedule, at the moment releasing four CDs every year. Critics worldwide applaud its energetic playing style and full-bodied string sound. Recording projects include Messiaen's *Turangalila-Symphonie*, ballets by Stravinsky, the symphonies, ballet suites, and concertos by Prokofiev, and the complete orchestral music of Edvard Grieg. Enjoying long-standing artistic partnerships with some of the finest musicians in the world, the Orchestra has recorded with Leif Ove Andsnes, Jean-Efflam Bavouzet, James Ehnes, Mari Eriksmoen, Gerald Finley, Alban Gerhardt, Vadim Gluzman, Stephen Hough, Sara Jakubiak, Freddy Kempf,

Truls Mørk, Steven Osborne, Lawrence Power, and Stuart Skelton, among others.

The Orchestra has recorded Tchaikovsky's ballets and critically acclaimed series of works by Johan Halvorsen and Johan Svendsen with Neeme Järvi, orchestral works by Rimsky-Korsakov with Dmitri Kitayenko, and music by Berlioz, Delius, Elgar, Sibelius, and Vaughan Williams with Sir Andrew Davis.

The first collaboration on disc between Edward Gardner and the Orchestra was a recording of orchestral realisations by Luciano Berio. Among subsequent recordings with Edward Gardner are a critically acclaimed series devoted to orchestral works by Janáček, including a Grammy-nominated recording of his *Glagolitic Mass*, Schoenberg's *Gurre-Lieder*, orchestral songs by Sibelius with Gerald Finley as soloist, a disc of orchestral works by Bartók, the Piano Concerto and incidental music from *Peer Gynt* by Grieg, the *Grande Messe des morts* by Berlioz, Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle* with John Relyea and Michelle DeYoung, Brahms's Symphonies Nos 1 and 3, Schoenberg's *Pelleas und Melisande* and *Erwartung* with Sara Jakubiak, Britten's *Peter Grimes* with, among others, Stuart Skelton and Erin Wall, tone poems and other works by Sibelius with Lise Davidsen, orchestral songs by Britten and Canteloube with Mari Eriksmoen, and

MANMADE with the saxophonist Marius Neset. The latest releases on Chandos are discs in an ongoing series of recordings of works by Carl Nielsen that include his Violin Concerto with James Ehnes and his Flute Concerto with Adam Walker, as well as a recording of Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem*, with Johanna Wallroth and Brian Mulligan. The Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra received a nomination for Orchestra of the Year at the *Gramophone* Awards 2020. In 2021, *Peter Grimes* won the Orchestra two *Gramophone* Classical Music Awards: Opera Recording of the Year and Recording of the Year.  
[www.harmonien.no](http://www.harmonien.no) / [www.bergenphilive.no](http://www.bergenphilive.no)

**Edward Gardner** OBE is Principal Conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Music Director of Den Norske Opera & Ballett. He additionally serves as Honorary Conductor of the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, following his tenure as Chief Conductor. In demand as a guest conductor, he has most recently worked with the Cleveland Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, Wiener Symphoniker, and Staatskapelle Berlin. He has also enjoyed return engagements with

the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, Montreal Symphony Orchestra, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, and Orchestra del Teatro alla Scala di Milano. He has continued his longstanding collaborations with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, where he was Principal Guest Conductor from 2010 to 2016, and BBC Symphony Orchestra, whom he has conducted at both the First and the Last Night of the BBC Proms.

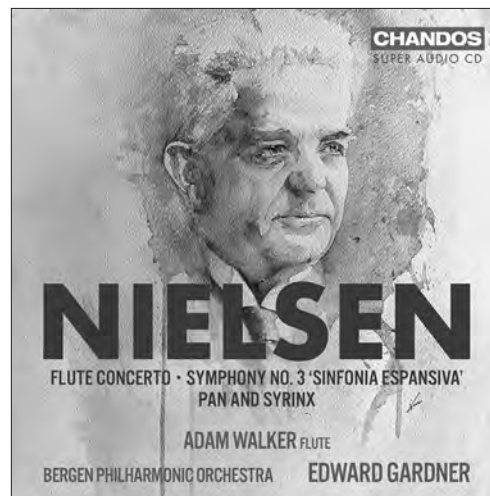
Music Director of English National Opera for eight years (2007 - 15), Edward Gardner built a strong relationship with The Metropolitan Opera, New York, where he has conducted productions of *La Damnation de Faust*, *Carmen*, *Don Giovanni*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, and *Werther*. In London, he has made appearances at The Royal Opera, Covent Garden: in 2019 in a new production of *Kát'a Kabanová*, and in the following season conducting *Werther*. In the 2024 / 25 season, he conducted the world première of Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Festen*. During the 2021 / 22 season, he made his début with Bayerische Staatsoper, in a new production of *Peter Grimes*, and returned in the 2022 / 23 season at short notice to conduct Verdi's *Otello*. Elsewhere, he has conducted at Teatro alla Scala, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, and Opéra national de Paris. A passionate supporter

of young talent, he founded the Hallé Youth Orchestra, in 2002, and regularly conducts the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain. He has a close relationship with The Juilliard School, and with the Royal Academy of Music which appointed him its inaugural Sir Charles Mackerras Conducting Chair in 2014.

Born in Gloucester, in 1974, Edward Gardner was educated at Cambridge and the Royal

Academy of Music. He went on to become Assistant Conductor of The Hallé and Music Director of Glyndebourne Touring Opera. Among many accolades, he was named Conductor of the Year by the Royal Philharmonic Society in 2008, won an Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in Opera in 2009, and received an OBE for Services to Music in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2012.

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Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, at Grieghallen, in Bergen



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Many thanks also to the Assistant Conductor, Ingunn Korsgård Hagen

**Recording producers** Ingo Petry, Take5 Music Production (*Helios*) and Brian Pidgeon (other works)

**Sound engineers** Stephan Reh, Stephan Reh Musikproduktion (*Helios*) and Ralph Couzens (other works)

**Assistant engineers** Nobel Lyd: Sverre Sæbø, Cem Arapkirlioglu, and Elaine Maltezos (Clarinet Concerto, Symphony No. 5)

**Editors** Ingo Petry, Take5 Music Production (*Helios*) and Alexander James (other works)

**Chandos mastering** Ralph Couzens

**A & R administrator** Karen Marchlik

**Recording venue** Grieghallen, Bergen, Norway; 14 and 15 June 2023 (*Helios*) and 13 – 15 June 2024 (other works)

**Front cover** Portrait (watercolour) of Carl Nielsen by Kim Sommerschild, specially commissioned, after a photograph, 1908

**Back cover** Photograph of Edward Gardner © Benjamin Ealovega Photography

**Design and typesetting** Cass Cassidy

**Booklet editor** Finn S. Gundersen

**Publishers** Carl Nielsen Udgaven. Det Kongelige Bibliotek, København / Edition Wilhelm Hansen, Copenhagen

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Chandos Records Ltd, Colchester, Essex CO2 8HX, England

Country of origin UK



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**Edward Gardner**

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NIELSEN: SYMPHONY NO. 5 / CLARINET CONCERTO, ETC.

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# CARL NIELSEN (1865 – 1931)

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|------|---|-------------------|
| 1    | <b>Helios, Op. 17, FS 32</b> (1903)<br>Overture                       | 11:24             |
| 2-5  | <b>Concerto, Op. 57, FS 129</b> (1928)*<br>for Clarinet and Orchestra | 24:45             |
| 6-11 | <b>Symphony No. 5, Op. 50, FS 97</b> (1920–22)                        | 34:23<br>TT 70:45 |

ALESSANDRO CARBONARE clarinet\*

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