

# FLOCK

KARIN HELLQVIST  
VIOLIN



# LYTTING SOM MUSIKALSK METODE

Fiolinens og elektronikkens lydverden står kanskje ikke så langt fra hverandre som man umiddelbart kunne tenke. Da komponisten og radioingeniøren Pierre Schaeffer midt på 1900-tallet slo fast at lydopptaket og høyttaleren skapte en ny lyttesituasjon ved å løsrive lyden fra lydkilden, refererte han til antikkens matematiker Pythagoras. Sistnevnte eksperimenterte med å forelese for studentene sine bak et teppe, fordi han ville ha dem til å lytte mer oppmerksomt til hva han sa. Samme Pythagoras viste også hvordan lengden på en streng står i forhold til tonehøydene som strengen kan produsere.

Samtidig peker møtet mellom fiolinen og elektronikken mot opposisjoner som har strukturert vår vestlige selvforståelse: tradisjon og innovasjon, det materielle og det immaterielle, historie og samtid, natur og vitenskap. Verkene på denne innspillingen utforsker, framhever, angriper og utvisker disse motsetningene mellom fiolinlyd og elektronisk lyd på forskjellige måter.

I *Doppelbelichtung* undersøker Carola Bauckholt fuglesang i form av ubearbeidede feltopptak, små noterte motiver og en lyttende utøver som imiterer opptakene i øyeblikket. Selv kaller komponisten metoden for «fotografiske imitasjoner». Lydsporene spilles av i 12 høyttalere, hvorav noen er fioliner som skal henge fra taket i konsertsalen utstyrt med små transducere. Deres grunnfunksjon er også oversettelse – fra én form for energi

til en annen. Små høyttalere plasseres under publikums stoler og skaper omsluttende lyd på en annen måte enn en tradisjonell høyttalerrigg i ørehøyde. Den insisterende repetisjonen og minimalismen i fuglesangen og fiolinistens presise imitasjon sender også tankene til folke-musikkens rekkeformer, der lignende korte musikalske figurer gjentas med små variasjoner og kobles sammen i vek eller vendinger. Karin Hellqvist viderefører selv en muntlig overlevert feletradisjon fra Dalarna i Sverige.

I verket *flock foam fume* utnytter Jan Martin Smørdal noen av mulighetene en slik lyttebasert utøverpraksis gir, når han lar lydopptak av et mangestemt strykeorkester flokke seg rundt en levende fiolinstemme. Orkesteret er bygget opp av enkeltstemmer spilt inn på forhånd av fiolinisten, som har lyttet til seg selv på tape mens hun har lagt til nye spor. Stykket arbeider langs en dimensjon mellom transparente støylyder og stabile toner, men komponisten stabler opptakene av de smale fiolintonene lag på lag på lag. Det gir en tett vev av tynne lydtråder der hver tråd er presist definert, samtidig som helheten av og til framstår ukontrollert. I en tid der elektronisk musikk er demokratisert, men også ofte preformatert, er det som om denne musikken vil la elektronikkens digitale formater, maskinvare og systemer og alle bilyder, pip, sus og støy som finnes i disse, skinne gjennom fiolinklangen.

I *Femte strängen* arbeider Henrik Strindberg med lyse, nesten gjennomsliktige overtoner i instrumentets øverste ytterregister. Kanskje er det disse fjærlette pustene av noen musikalske linjer komponisten tenker på som fiolinens femte, imaginære streng. Musikken er i dialog både med en spektral komposisjonstradisjon og med fiolinens tradisjonelle gestikk. Her er brutte arpeggiobevegelser som strekkes ut og komprimeres igjen – små, pustende organismer som utgjør en langsom, organisk puls. Når det klanglige mikroskopet rettes mot områder av en overtonerekke der forminskede intervaller dominerer, eller der buen brukes ordinært, framstår noen sekvenser nesten tonale. Det er som om musikken tar mål av seg til å oppløse hele distinksjonen mellom støy og klang ved å la de små støylydene som oppstår mellom instrument, bue og utøverens kropp flyte over i transparente toner spilt med veldig lette fingertrykk, på vei mot rekken av klare overtoner som felespillere alltid har lyttet og stemt etter.

Malin Bångs verk *...när korpen vitnar* henter tittelen sin fra en svensk middelalderballade og er opprinnelig skrevet for det norske tradisjonsinstrumentet hardingfele. Spilt på en vanlig fiolin er musikken også tydelig i dialog med uttrykk og spilleteknikker fra klassisk historisk fiolinlitteratur. Den beveger seg i bølger og ekkolignende, repetitive motiver som gradvis blir svakere, viskes ut og forsvinner igjen og igjen, som abstrakte varianter av tekstrytmen i folketroens besvergelses. Men musikken kan også snu i dramatiske kast og være dirrende til stede på en måte som minner om hvordan fiolinen er brukt i senromantisk musikk og tidlig modernisme. Balladen beskriver en omvending som normalt aldri vil skje – at svarte ravner blir hvite. I teksten har unggutten Sven drept broren sin og må flykte:

*När kommer du tillbaka  
Sven i rosengård  
När svanen den svartnar  
Kära moder vår*

[...]

*Och när svartnar svanen  
Sven i rosengård  
När korpen den vitnar  
Kära moder vår*

Natasha Barretts nyanserte flersporsteknikker skaper en musikk som åpner store og små imaginære rom rundt, over og under lytteren. Verket *Sagittarius A\** peker også ut i uendelige rom og mot rommets motsetning, materie. Det låner navnet sitt fra en kosmisk energikilde i sentrum av vår galakse som ikke kan observeres direkte. Via røntgenstråling og radiobølger kan vi slutte at der *Sagittarius A\** befinner seg, finnes også et supermassivt såkalt svart hull. Et flerkanales høyttaleroppsett rundt publikum fungerer som et slags orkester rundt fiolinisten. Verket kombinerer forhåndsinnspilt elektroakustisk materiale, partitur, levende prosessering av konsertlyden og akustisk preparering av instrumentet. Vi blir tatt med på en reise gjennom et organisk og knivskarpt presist lydlandskap der Barrett samtidig stadig legger ut små overraskelser for lytteren og uforutsigbare hindre for seg selv som forstyrrer det potensielt sterile i høytalermusikktradisjonen.

Både fioliner og elektronikk kan forstås som teknologi. Hører man verkene på denne innspillingen i en konsertsal, er det relativt tydelig hvilken av teknologiene som lager hvilken lyd. Skjult bak høyttalere eller hodetelefoner flyter det elektroniske og det akustiske mer over i hverandre, og i mange av verkene er det utvilsomt meningen at det skal være vanskelig å høre forskjell. På ett vis kunne denne musikken gjerne vært formidlet på video – noe som i tilfelle ville vært en omvending av formålet med Pythagoras' teppe. Samtidig gir lydopptakets og høyttalerens teppe motivasjon til å spise ører og oppmerksomhet.

— HILD BORCHGREVINK



# LISTENING AS MUSICAL METHOD

The soundworld of the violin and of electronic music may not be as far apart as one would immediately think. When composer and radio engineer Pierre Schaeffer stated in the middle of the 20th century that sound recording and speakers created a new listening situation by detaching the sound from the sound source, he alluded to the ancient mathematician Pythagoras. The latter experimented with lecturing for his students behind a curtain, because he wanted them to listen more attentively to what he was saying. This was the same Pythagoras who also demonstrated how the length of a string is in proportion to the pitches that the string can produce.

At the same time, the meeting between a violin and electronic sounds points toward oppositions that have structured our Western selfunderstanding: tradition vs. innovation, material vs. immaterial, history vs. present, nature vs. science. The works of this recording explore, accentuate, attack, and erase these contradictions between the violin sound and electronic sound in various ways.

In *Doppelbelichtung* (Double Exposure), Carola Bauckholt investigates birdsong in the form of raw field recordings, small notated motifs, and a listening performer who imitates the recordings in the moment. The composer calls the method "photographic imitations." The tracks are played by 12 loudspeakers, some of which are actually violins (fitted with small transducers) that hang from the ceiling of the concert hall. Their basic function is also translation – from one form of energy to another. Small speakers also are placed under the audience's chairs to create an encapsulating sound in a different way than a traditional speaker rig placed at ear level might. The in-

sistent repetition and minimalism of bird song and the violinist's precise imitation also conjures up folk music's form sequence where similar short musical figures are repeated with small variations and then linked together in twists and turns. Karin Hellqvist herself carries on an orally-communicated fiddle tradition from Dalarna in Sweden.

In the piece *flock foam fume*, Jan Martin Smørdal takes advantage of some of the possibilities provided by such a listening-based performance practice, when he lets the sound of multiple strings flock around a solo violin part played live. The orchestra is made up of pre-recorded individual tracks synchronized by the performer listening to herself on tape while she adds new parts. The piece works along a dimension between transparent noise and stable tones, but the composer stacks the recordings of the slim violin notes layer upon layer upon layer. This weaves a tight web of thin sound strands where each and every thread is precisely defined, while the whole appears uncontrolled at times. Today, electronic music is democratized, but also often preformatted. It's as if Smørdal's work aims to allow its digital formats, hardware, systems, and all additional sounds, beeps, hisses, and noise that exist in electronic environments, to shine through the violin timbre.

In *Femte strängen* (The Fifth String), Henrik Strindberg works with bright, almost transparent overtones in the instrument's highest upper register. Perhaps these feathery breaths of musical lines are what the composer thinks of as the fifth, imaginary string of the violin. The music is in dialogue both with the tradition of spectral composing and with the gestures of traditional violin playing. Broken arpeggiated motion is stretched out and compressed – and these small, breathing organisms make up a slow, organic pulse. When the sonic microscope is directed to areas of an overtone sequence where reduced intervals dominate, or where the bow is used in an ordinary fashion, some sequences appear almost tonal. It is as if the music is aiming to dissolve the whole distinction between noise and sound by letting the tiny, often unintended noise that occurs between the instrument, the bow, and the performer's body then transform into transparent tones played with very light finger pressure, on the way to the sequence of clear overtones that fiddle players have always listened for and tuned to.

Malin Bång's piece ... *när korpen vitnar* (When the Raven Turns White) takes its title from a Swedish medieval ballad and is originally written for the Norwegian traditional instrument, Hardanger fiddle. Played on a regular violin, the music is also clearly in dialogue with expressions and playing techniques from the classic historical violin literature. It moves in waves and echo-like, repetitive motifs that gradually become weaker, wiped out, and disappear again and again, like abstract variations of superstitious curses and rituals. But the music can also turn around in dramatic throws and be tremulously present in a way reminiscent of how the violin is used in late romantic music and early modernism. The ballad describes a turnaround that normally wouldn't occur – that black ravens become white. In the text, the young boy Sven has killed his brother and must flee:

*When will you be back  
Sven of Rosengård  
When the swan turns black  
Dear mother of ours*

[...]

*And when does the swan turn black  
Sven of Rosengård  
When the raven turns white  
Dear mother of ours*

Natasha Barrett's nuanced multi-track techniques create a music that opens up large and small imaginary spaces around, above, and below the listener. The work *Sagittarius A\** also points to infinite space and to the contradiction of space – matter. It borrows its name from an astronomical energy source at the center of the Milky Way. The phenomenon can be observed via X-ray images, radio waves and other energy signatures, the nature of which infers the location of a supermassive black hole. A multi-channel speaker system around the audience serves as a kind of orchestra around the violinist. The work combines pre-recorded electroacoustic material, scores, live processing of the concert sound and acoustic preparation of the instrument. We are taken on a journey through an organic and sharply precise soundscape where Barrett continually disperses small surprises for the listener and at the same time unpredictable

obstacles for herself that disturb the potential sterility of electroacoustic music.

Both violins and electronics can be understood as technology. If one heard the works of this recording in a concert hall, it would be relatively easy to discern which of the technologies make which sound. Hidden behind speakers or headphones though, the electronic and acoustic merge into each other, and in many of the works it is undoubtedly the intention that it *should* be difficult to hear the difference. In one way, this music could have been conveyed by video – something that would have been a reversal of the purpose of the Pythagorean curtain. At the same time though, the acoustics of the recording and the speaker give the motivation to sharpen one's ears and attention.

— HILD BORCHGREVINK

# KARIN HELLQVIST VIOLIN

Karin Hellqvist performs internationally as an interpreter of contemporary music. Through collaboration and dialogue, her work examines, realizes, and contributes to the process of creating new music. Hellqvist is a member of several leading ensembles in contemporary music throughout Scandinavia, such as Cikada, Oslo Sinfonietta, Ensemble neoN, and Duo Hellqvist/Amaral and she is a frequent guest performer in major international arenas for contemporary and experimental music. Her performances have been broadcast internationally and she has contributed to several award-winning recordings. She was educated at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm, Universität der Künste Berlin, the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo, and at the Royal College of Music London, where she graduated with an Artist Diploma in Performance in 2011. In 2016 she received the Interpreter's Prize from the Swedish Society of Composers. She is currently a PhD research fellow at the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo (2018–2022).

[www.karinhellqvist.com](http://www.karinhellqvist.com)

## ABOUT THE COMPOSERS

**CAROLA BAUCKHOLT** was born in Krefeld, Germany, in 1959. After working at the Theater am Marienplatz (TAM) in Krefeld, she studied composition at the Musikhochschule Köln with Mauricio Kagel (1978–1984). In 2013, she was elected as a member of the Akademie der Künste in Berlin and in 2015, she was appointed as professor of composition at the Anton Bruckner Privatuniversität in Linz, Austria.

[www.carolabauckholt.de](http://www.carolabauckholt.de)

**JAN MARTIN SMØRDAL** is a composer, sometimes musician, and a member of Ensemble neoN. As a composer – and as a father of twins – he's occupied with thoughts about chaos, layers of rhythms, and the inevitability of humans as social beings. His works span from solo works to pieces for orchestra, choir, and installations, from popular to experimental performances.

[www.smordal.no](http://www.smordal.no)

The music of **HENRIK STRINDBERG** (1954, Sweden) has been described as organic minimalism. Rhythm and sound are deeply integrated into a family of works that explores arpeggiation on harmonics in different contexts, among them, *Neptuni åkrar* (Neptune's Fields) for orchestra (winner of the Christ Johnson prize), *Tidslinje* (Timeline) for mixed ensemble (Swedish Grammy award), and *Femte strängen* (The Fifth String) for violin solo, composed in collaboration with Karin Hellqvist. Strindberg is a member of the Swedish Royal Academy of Music and teaches composition at the Gotland School of Music Composition.

[www.henrikstrindberg.se](http://www.henrikstrindberg.se)

**MALIN BÅNG**'s music is an exploration of movement and energy. She defines her musical material according to the amount of friction it contains and she often incorporates acoustic objects to expand the soundscape, suggesting that musical content can be shaped by anything valuable to the artistic purpose. Malin has collaborated closely with Karin Hellqvist in compositions such as *purfling* (2012) and *siku* (2017), for which they developed an alternative soundworld for the violin, enhanced by close-up amplification.

[www.malinbang.com](http://www.malinbang.com)

**NATASHA BARRETT** (Norway/UK) composes acoustic and live electroacoustic concert works, sound and multimedia installations, and interactive music. After completing her PhD in 1998, she moved to Norway and has since been highly active as a composer, and in the application and mediation of cutting-edge technologies in a contemporary music context. Her work is commissioned, performed, and broadcast throughout the world and has received a solid list of awards and prizes, including the Nordic Council Music Prize.

[www.natashabarrett.org](http://www.natashabarrett.org)



# FLOCK

KARIN HELLQVIST - VIOLIN

- 1 | **CAROLA BAUCKHOLT (\*1959)**  
DOPPELBELICHTUNG (2016)  
12:22
- 2 | **JAN MARTIN SMØRDAL (\*1978)**  
FLOCK FOAM FUME (2016)  
11:33
- 3 | **HENRIK STRINDBERG (\*1954)**  
FEMTE STRÄNGEN (2009)  
08:34
- 4 | **MALIN BÅNG (\*1974)**  
... NÅR KORPEN VITNAR (2003)  
09:00
- 5 | **NATASHA BARRETT (\*1972)**  
SAGITTARIUS A\* (2017)  
29:43

RECORDED IN SOFIENBERG CHURCH, OSLO, 13 MARCH 2017 AND 3-4 APRIL 2018

PRODUCER: **VEGARD LANDAAS**

BALANCE ENGINEER: **THOMAS WOLDEN**

EDITING: **VEGARD LANDAAS**

MASTERING: **THOMAS WOLDEN**

BOOKLET NOTES: **HILD BORCHGREVINK**

ENGLISH TRANSLATION: **LEANN CURRIE**

BOOKLET EDITOR: **HEGE WOLLENG**

COVER AND ARTIST PHOTOS: **YUSUKE SUZUKI**

COVER DESIGN: **ANNA-JULIA GRANBERG / BLUNDERBUSS**

ELECTRONICS ON *DOPPELBELICHTUNG* REALISED IN COOPERATION WITH  
SWR EXPERIMENTALSTUDIO, MICHAEL ACKER

THIS RECORDING HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE WITH SUPPORT FROM  
ARTS COUNCIL NORWAY - THE AUDIO AND VISUAL FUND



LWC1179 © 2019 LAWØ © 2019  
LAWØ CLASSICS [www.lawo.no](http://www.lawo.no)

LAWØ

