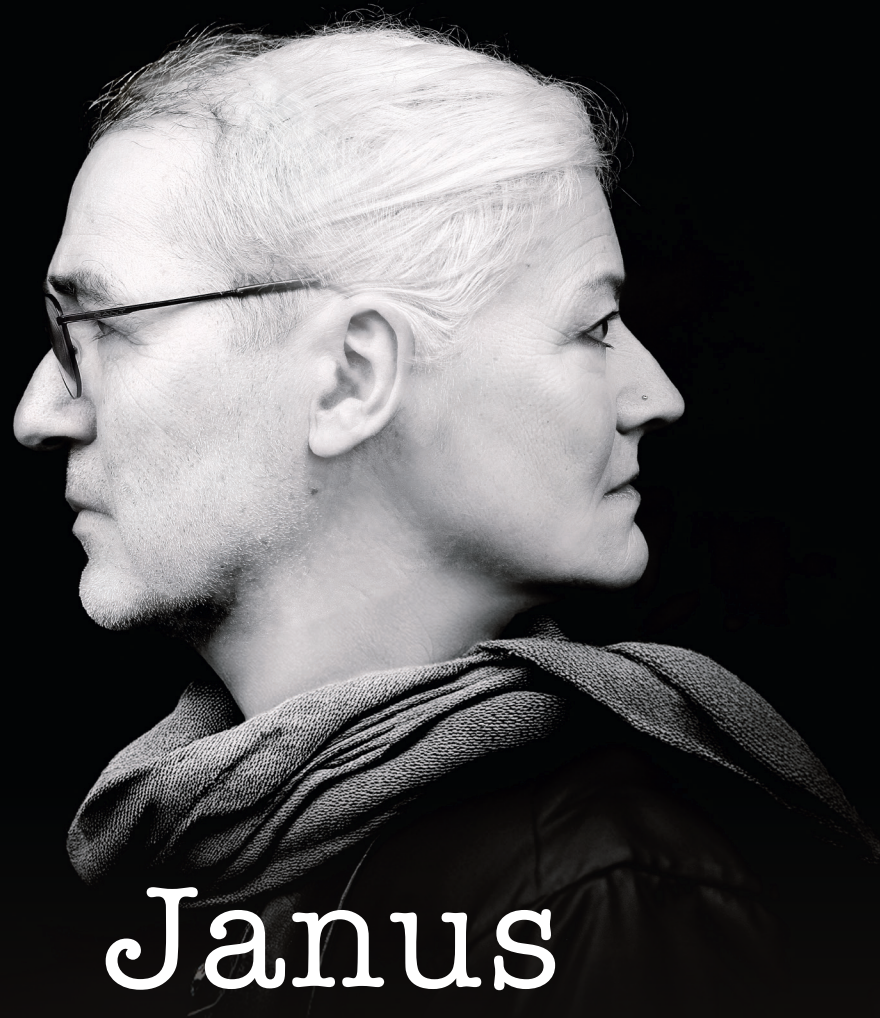


KNUT VAAGE
WORKS FOR FLUTE

BERGEN FILHARMONISKE ORKESTER
INGAR BERGBY - CONDUCTOR



INGELLA ØIEN - FLUTE

Janus

KNUT VAAGE /
INGELA ØIEN:

Janus

Composers write the music they have to, and for ensembles they believe best suit the material. But can the relationship between composer and musician also be symbiotic? This is both possible and probable. When something resonates in both parties to the point of feeling at home in company of the other, then we are touching upon a vital aspect of music creation.

In the world of fungi it's called *mycorrhiza*. Many fungi colonise trees with roots that supply them with carbohydrates, while the trees receive minerals and water via the fungi. It is a mutually beneficial relationship. Music history is full of such symbiotic relationships between composers and performers. They learn to get to know each other both as humans and musicians, and this understanding can lead to remarkable achievements in the world of sound— symbiotic variations, versions of *mycorrhiza*.

Janus is a creature with two faces who in Roman mythology is the god of gates and doorways, of beginnings and endings. Janus's two faces are on one head, each facing in opposite directions — one looking into the future, the other into the past. No wonder then that composer Knut Vaage and flautist Ingela Øien have chosen *Janus* as the name for their album, as it represents a double portrait of their 40-year collaboration.

The pieces on the album are rather diverse, but they do share a common denominator - that of Ingela Øien, who for decades

has been one of Norway's foremost flautists. You would be hard pressed to think of a more ideal collaborator for Øien than Knut Vaage, and vice versa. Her presence ensures that the connection between composer and soloist is always tangible. There is a warmth and presence to her playing, which Vaage fills with suggestions, instructions, requests, recommendations, and imperatives. She channels the material through herself, producing something which is uniquely her own, while remaining deeply rooted in Vaage's distinctive sound palette.

Though the flute is made of metal, it possesses a warmth and softness that evokes lush gardens and alluring aromas in the air. We are inevitably transported to composers such as Debussy and Ravel, and for some reason there's something inherently French about pieces where the flute plays a central role, be it alongside a full orchestra, as part of a smaller ensemble, or as a solo instrument. Yet the flute, one of the oldest instruments known, also points toward folk music and traditional melodies.

The album opens with *Janus* (2022), a powerful, fleshy work that begins at a lingering pace. Gradually though, cracks, tears, fissures and crystals appear in a frigid world of ice and frozen formations. Cascades of percussion are pumped out - marimba, vibraphone, crotales, gongs, flexatone, tam-tam, snare drum, gran cassa, bongos, and congas. In fact, Vaage notes in the score that this arsenal can be played by two percussionists, though he suggests that three or four musicians could take part, which is not a bad idea considering how much there is to do. The dynamics range from crystal-clear quietude, shattered by fierce explosive outbursts. A clear pulse is absent for much of the piece, but after seven and a

half minutes it kicks in with a rhythm that evokes the wildness of Russian ballets in Paris at the beginning of the last century. The ending is magical, with Øien playing overtones on the flute, creating a comet's tail that fades into infinity—a powerful and magnificent journey.

Tapt slag (1994, revised 2023) shows us Vaage in a completely different mood. The first version was created 30 years ago, and you can sense that he was in a different phase of his development, though his later style is also unmistakably present. Poet Hanne Bramness provides the text, which she reads herself, with the music cautiously meandering around her voice. This is a canvas where tones repeat in long sequences and series, with percussionist Owen Weaver delicately propelling the music forward and Øien sprinkling flute tones into this tender gamelan.

Medusa (2023) is a solo flute piece which brings Øien's artistry to the fore. It teems with diverse techniques and playing styles, with the dynamics again spanning the spectrum from the softest of the soft to the wildest of the wild. In folk music there's of a concept called *dām*— a subtle sound that can only be sensed, and is part of an underlying world. Here, the sound colours shift through varying playing techniques, creating different *dām* throughout the piece. Medusa was of course the mythological Greek monster with a woman's face and live venomous snakes for hair.

Får eg likna deg for solo flute was written in 2006 (revised 2023) and is based on a piece from the 1991 song cycle entitled *Eg strøyer mine songar ut*. These were inspired by poems by Vaage's grandfather, Ragnvald Vaage. Originally written for soprano, flute, and piano, this piece evokes

Norwegian folk melodies, with echoes of the music of Fartein Valen. Both Valen and Vaage have the coastal nature of their native Hordaland in western Norway in their musical DNA, and the connection here is palpable.

The album closes with *Electra II* (2023) for solo flute and electronics. Abrupt jolts, piercing cries into the night, and dense dissonances fill a foggy soundscape. Thorolf Thuestad's masterful and sensitive electronic processing creates the illusion of two flutes. The sounds twist and turn slowly, reminiscent of string instruments and at times evoking the *hardingfele*. Long threads of sound are served up, and they stretch endlessly up into a dark sky, above the clouds and into the stratosphere. Where do they go, and what source are they connected to? Øien brilliantly handles the lightning fast passages, explosive bursts, signal tones, and drawn-out, delicate notes, providing a worthy conclusion to an album that covers a vast terrain.

Symbiosis, *mycorrhiza*, synergy, and a fundamental shared understanding of where one wants to go, and where one *is* actually going. We need no more arguments to understand how Øien and Vaage found each other 40 years ago, and that there is a good chance that they will be able to continue this journey together in the wonderful world of the flute. This head has two faces, and like Janus, they look back into the past and forward into the future.

—Øivind Hånes

Ingela Øien

Ingela Øien is a Norwegian flutist celebrated for her versatility, artistry, and dedication to contemporary music. Based in Norway, she has, during a long orchestral-music career as the Co-Principal Flute in the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, carved a distinctive niche as both a soloist and an ensemble musician, performing a repertoire that spans from classical masterworks to cutting-edge contemporary compositions.

Øien has collaborated with leading orchestras, chamber groups, and composers, earning acclaim for her ability to bring clarity and expressive depth to complex modern works. Her interpretations are noted for their technical brilliance, dynamic range, and nuanced musicality, which captivate both seasoned audiences and newcomers to the flute repertoire.

As a passionate advocate for new music, Øien has premiered numerous works by contemporary composers, often inspiring them to write pieces tailored to her unique sound and artistic vision. She has been an integral member of the internationally renowned BIT20 Ensemble, contributing to groundbreaking performances that explore the boundaries of musical innovation.

Beyond the stage, Øien is a dedicated educator, nurturing the next generation of musicians with her expertise and enthusiasm. Her artistry reflects a profound commitment to pushing the flute's expressive possibilities while honoring its rich traditions. Ingela Øien continues to be a vital force in the classical and contemporary music worlds.



Knut Vaage



Knut Vaage (1961) is a full-time composer born and living in Bergen, Norway, where he majored in piano and composition at the Grieg Academy. He has worked with multiple styles of music, although with a main emphasis on improvisational and contemporary music, and in several projects has explored the boundaries between improvisation and composition. Developing a hybrid acoustic/electronic sound is another important parameter in his music, and he has participated in several collaborations between contrasting art forms.

Throughout his career, Vaage has maintained a commitment to pushing artistic boundaries, making him a vital figure in Norway's contemporary music scene. His works reflect a deep engagement with the possibilities of sound, often challenging audiences to experience music in new and profound ways. His compositions span a diverse array of genres, including orchestral works, chamber music, opera, and solo pieces, often characterized by their striking textures and dynamic contrasts.

Vaage's output ranges from symphonic works and opera to solo pieces and his works are often performed at concerts and festivals both domestically and internationally. These include the Bergen International Festival, Ultima, Borealis, Ilios, Grec Festival (Barcelona), Prague Spring Festival, Nordic Music Days in Stockholm and Reykjavik, and in Carnegie Hall. He has provided full-scale opera productions at the Norwegian National Opera & Ballet, the Ultima Festival, Bergen National Theatre, and NOSO in Tromsø, as well as interna-



tionally at Phalztheater, Stadttheater Giesen, Theatre National Luxembourg (TNL), and at the Arnel Opera Festival in Hungary. Vaage was nominated for the Nordic Council Music Prize for 2022 with his work *Hybrid Spectacle* and has been awarded The Lindeman Prize for 2024..

The Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra

The Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, one of the oldest orchestras in the world, has been a cornerstone of Norway's cultural life since its founding in 1765. With a history spanning over 250 years, it has evolved into one of Scandinavia's leading symphony orchestras. Edvard Grieg served as its artistic director from 1880 to 1882. Edward Gardner was Chief Conductor until the autumn 2024 and is no honorary conductor. Sir Mark Elder is the orchestra's Principal Guest Conductor.

The orchestra was nominated Orchestra of the Year 2020 by Gramophone and won two Gramophone Classical Music Awards in 2021: Recording of the Year and Opera Award Winner for Britten's *Peter Grimes*.

In recent years, the orchestra has played in the Concertgebouw, at the BBC Proms, Wiener Musikverein and Konzerthaus, Carnegie Hall, New York, Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg and the Philharmonie, Berlin. The orchestra and Edward Gardner appeared at the Edinburgh International Festival (EIF) (2017) and the Royal Festival Hall (2019) with their critically acclaimed production of *Peter Grimes*. In 2022 the orchestra was invited back to the Edinburgh International Festival and re-



ceived rave reviews for their performance of Strauss' *Salome*.

Edward Gardner and the Orchestra has released a series of recordings, including a Grammy-nominated recording of Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass*, Schönberg's *Gurre-Lieder*, songs by Sibelius, Grieg's Piano Concerto and Incidental music to *Peer Gynt*, Schoenberg's *Erwartung* and *Pelleas und Melisande*, Britten's *Peter Grimes* with Stuart Skelton and Erin Wall, songs by Britten and Canteloube with soprano Mari Eriksmoen and a CD with saxophonist Marius Neset. In 2023 they released Norheim's *Tempest* (LWC1250)

Later that year Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra releast a recoring of Frederick De-

lius *Eine Mese de Lebens* (LWC1265), conducted by Sir Mark Elder. This recording was rewarded with the Norwegian Grammy "Spellemann".

In 2011 Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra published their first recording with music of Knut Vaage, *Gardens of Hokkaido*, which was awarded with a nomination to the Norwegian Grammy "Spellemann".

Ingar Bergby

Ingar Bergby was born in 1964 in Sarpsborg, Norway and grew up in a musical family where he was playing in the local wind bands. He studied clarinet with Rich-

ard Kjelstrup at The Norwegian Academy of Music, and later orchestra conducting with Karsten Andersen at the same institution, as well as with Jorma Panula at the Sibelius Academy. He graduated as conductor from the Norwegian Academy of Music in 1991.

Bergby is one of Norway's leading conductors, known for his versatility across classical, opera, contemporary, and crossover music. He has collaborated with major Norwegian and Scandinavian orchestras. He was principal conductor of the Värmlands Opera and Värmlands Opera Sinfonietta from 1999 to 2005, permanent guest conductor in Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra from 2003 to 2008, focusing on Norwegian and Nordic repertoire. He engaged as a



profile conductor with the Norwegian Radio Orchestra (KORK) I 2009-2010 and has had several engagements there every year since. He is regularly guest conductor with almost all Nordic orchestras.

Renowned for his interpretations of contemporary music, Bergby has premiered works by Norwegian contemporary composers like Thommessen, Wallin and Vaage. His dedication to Norwegian music is evident through his numerous recordings and performances, contributing significantly to the country's cultural landscape. In 2024, he was the conductor-in-residence for the Cartagena Music Festival.

In addition to his orchestral career, Bergby has also conducted Norwegian wind bands, earning both national and European championship titles for brass bands with Eikanger-Bjørsvik Musikklag and five national championship titles for wind bands with Lillestrøm Musikkorps.

Hanne Bramness

Hanne Bramness, born in 1959 in Oslo, is a renowned Norwegian poet, editor and translator. She made her literary debut in 1983 with the poetry collection *Korre-spondanse* and has since published numerous acclaimed collections. In 2006, she was awarded the prestigious Dobloug Prize for her poetry. Her latest collection, *Snø på museum*, was released in 2021, and in 2025 *Himmelen faller ikke ned* will be published, a poetic elegy about a mother-daughter relationship. Bramness's work has been translated into several languages, with her collected poems appearing in French in 2019. A new selected poems, *The History of Winter*, is forthcoming in English in 2025.

Tapt slag

Bak ditt forheng, ord, er regnet stengt
ute, og øyet har måttet gi tapt for din
klarsynthet

Det sto en kamp om fortellingen, om sol
og måne, den vant som befridde skyggene
for sjel

Nå svever drømmene i drømmenes sfære og
regnet har vendt tilbake
til seg selv

Lost Battle

*Behind your curtain, words, the rain's been shut
out, and the eye forced to yield to your
clarity*

*There'd been a battle over the story, over sun
and moon, the winner was the one who'd rid
the shadows of their soul*

*Now dreams stay floating in the world of dreams
and the rain has gone back
to itself*





Owen Weaver

Percussionist Owen Weaver's "intensely focused" (Gramophone) performances combine the forces of rhythm, noise and quiet in search of the musical potential in everyday life. He uses recycled objects, home-made instruments and electronic sounds to construct a kaleidoscopic sound world with original music, improvisation and collaboration with today's leading and emerging composers.

He has performed in Europe, South America, Asia and throughout the U.S. with Mantra Percussion, Glenn Branca Ensemble, NEWSPEAK, and others including Conspirare: A Company of Voices for a PBS television special and Grammy-nominated album. A passionate educator, Owen has

taught at Yale, Cornell, CalArts, the University of California at Berkeley, Rikers Island Correctional Facility, and New York public schools. Owen is based near Bergen, Norway where he is a member of one of Scandinavia's leading contemporary music ensembles, BIT20 Ensemble.

In 2018 he earned a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the Hartt School.

Thorolf Thuestad

Thorolf Thuestad is a composer, sound designer, and kinetic sculptor. He studied composition and music technology at the Utrecht School of Arts and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and holds a PhD from the University of Bergen's Grieg Academy. Thuestad has extensive experience in performing arts and contemporary music and has been part of numerous theatre, music, and stage productions, with a main emphasis on contemporary music expression. He is a member of the BIT20 Ensemble.



Knut Vaage (1961)

1. Janus for flute and orchestra _____ 24:04
- Tapt slag for flute and percussion
2. Part 1 _____ 04:56
3. Part 2 _____ 06:50
4. Part 3 _____ 01:37
- Medusa for solo flute
5. Part 1 _____ 04:26
6. Part 2 _____ 04:09
7. Part 3 _____ 04:19
8. Får eg likna deg for solo flute _____ 04:01
9. Electra II for flute and electronics _____ 13:49

INGELA ØIEN
FLUTE

BERGEN PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

INGAR BERGBY
CONDUCTOR

OWEN WEAVER
(BIT20 ENSEMBLE)
PERCUSSION ON *TAPT SLAG*

HANNE BRAMNESS
POEM AND VOICE ON *TAPT SLAG*

THOROLF THUESTAD
(BIT20 ENSEMBLE)
SOUND DESIGN ON *ELECTRA II*

RECORDED IN ÅSANE KULTURHUS, BERGEN,
28. FEBRUARY – 2. MARS 2023

PRODUCER: **VEGARD LANDAAS**
BALANCE ENGINEER: **THOMAS WOLDEN**
EDITING: **VEGARD LANDAAS**
MASTERING: **THOMAS WOLDEN**
PRODUCTION MANAGER BIT20 ENSEMBLE: **ELÉN AMILIE LEIREN**
BOOKLET NOTES: **ØIVIND HÅNES**
TRANSLATION: **PAUL HOLDEN**
POETRY TRANSLATION: **HANNE BRAMNESS AND ANNA RECKIN**
BOOKLET EDITOR: **TORGEIR M. LANDAAS**
COVER DESIGN: **ANNA-JULIA GRANBERG / BLUNDERBUSS**
ARTIST PHOTO (ØIEN, VAAGE, BRAMNESS): **ANNA-JULIA GRANBERG**
ARTIST PHOTO (BERGEN PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA): **LARS SVENKERUD**
ARTIST PHOTO (THUESTAD): **THOMAS WOLDEN**

THIS RECORDING HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE WITH SUPPORT FROM:
ARTS AND CULTURE NORWAY / THE AUDIO AND VISUAL FUND
NORWEGIAN SOCIETY OF COMPOSERS
BERGEN KOMMUNE AND FUND FOR PERFORMING ARTISTS.

LAWO LWC1378 © 2025 LAWO © 2025
LAWO CLASSICS www.lawo.no

