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CLASSICS

WOVEN
FINGERPRINTS

ORCHESTRAL WORKS BY
THERESE ULVO



Therese Birkelund Ulvo's poetic, inquisitive music is rooted in her human relationships—personal, professional, or both. This notion finds an obvious manifestation in the way Ulvo writes collaboratively for musicians, urging them to pour themselves not just into the performance of her scores, but into the writing of them. It extends to audiences too, who often find themselves immersed in the sonic scope of her work or brought into quasi-tactile contact with it.

Ulvo was raised in Bergen. She studied at the Norwegian Academy of Music with Lasse Thoresen and Peter Tornquist and at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London with Diana Burrell. In 2013 her incidental music to the play *Heilage Sunniva* was heard at a production of the work at the Bergen International Festival. Two years later she won the Young Lindeman Prize and the following year her clarinet concerto *Shadows and Shields* was a recommended work at the 63rd International Rostrum of Composers in Wrocław. She was awarded the Arne Nordheim Composer Prize in 2024.

Ulvo has since become one of Norway's most commissioned orchestral composers, though she has written solo, chamber and choral works as well as creating operas and installations. Her music is frequently inspired by other art forms and often makes reference to traditional Norwegian forms, though rarely in duplicating ways. It exists at the intersection of the acoustic and the electronic, the notated and the improvised. Almost always, it has a palpable narrative aspect. Arne Nordheim makes for a useful point of comparison, as if Ulvo has taken forward his resolve to open up immersive musical domains that aspire to move beyond the traditional borders of acoustic instruments.

Ulvo has worked as a record producer and a mentor for young composers and has been Artistic Director of Hardanger Musikkfest since 2014. But writing music is her true calling: 'Composing is not something you do for the sake of being sensible,' Ulvo has said; 'It is not easy, and it involves a lot of uncertainty, financially and otherwise.'

But for me, there was no alternative. This is what I had to do, this is who I am.'

Therese Ulvo's concerto for two pianos, *Woven Fingerprints*, was originally commissioned in 2013 by the Kristiansand Symphony Orchestra for soloists Ellen Ugelvik and Andreas Ulvo; however, it was first performed by the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra on 5 March 2020—just before the first lockdown of the COVID-19 pandemic. The work is particularly inspired by the two soloists, with their different musical backgrounds. 'Their finger-prints are clearly present, and traces of Ellen and Andreas are instrumented in different ways for the orchestra,' Ulvo commented in an interview with the Norwegian Society of Composers. 'All the material has come out of my intense listening to and fascination with their playing. When I ask both of them to play a single G, I can hear which one of them is playing. There's something about the attack, something about the timing, something about the expression.'

Ulvo likens the piano to a 'loom', describing it as 'the largest stringed instrument in the orchestra.' By combining two pianos, she says, 'it is as if a landscape of woven threads reveals itself and forms a complete tapestry.' She has also referred to Lewis Carroll's book *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* in connection with the work's genesis and form. 'Logic is not always as present,' she says; 'the orchestra uncovers secret, hidden and forgotten sounds, and the soloists weave all the threads together.'

As well as using the pre-prepared piano's keys, the soloists play its strings, inside its chamber, with brushes, rods, sticks, hammers and their own fingertips while also 'bowing' the piano strings with a length of bow hair. At first it seems as though Ellen's piano is more prone to delicacy and lyricism with Andreas's more abrupt and confrontational, but that duality soon proves to be less clear-cut. The pianists seem to trigger memories in the orchestra, which lunges into life with a sudden, fleeting rush of material. There is something deeply

caring and tender about the discourse, as the music itself gradually proves its own virility and resilience.

Please Don't Hesitate was written for KORK, the Norwegian Radio Orchestra, which first performed the work on 9 September 2017 under conductor Peter Szilvay (the orchestra revived the piece in 2024). The work salutes the great Norwegian composer Geirr Tveitt, whose own interest in Norwegian folk sources has been echoed by plenty of Norwegian composers of varied styles.

In so much of Ulvo's music, a story can be discerned. Such a 'story' is particularly apparent in this brief piece designed to awaken a concert hall into reactivity and life. It resembles a caravan—perhaps a steam-powered machine—that makes its way gradually forward despite obstructive hesitations. These hesitations, in which the rhythmic momentum is chopped and stalled, might be better described as 'distractions'—as if glistening objects or beautiful views catch the caravan's eye

as it passes. Perhaps the caravan stops to take on more passengers: the music seems to gain weight and mass as it proceeds.

The score is prefaced by the following words, from the composer's own hand:

*To open a concert.
To fill a room.
To open people's minds, hearts and ears.*

*So much responsibility.
So little time.*

*Don't hesitate—just do it.
But do it gentle...or sharp and loud?*

*The opening. The Welcome.
Please—be my guest.*

In 2025, the City of Stavanger on Norway's south-west coast celebrated its 900-year jubilee. The Stavanger Symphony Orchestra marked the occasion with a series of new commissions under the banner 'Essence of Stavanger'—works conceived to reflect

the city's history and identity. Ulvo's contribution was *Restart/Reshape/Reveal*. 'What makes Stavanger remarkable is its incredible ability to lead and adapt through many different eras of growth, decline and change,' commented Ulvo in advance of the first performance on 6 February 2025, in which Andris Poga conducted the SSO. 'In this work,' added Ulvo, 'I have been inspired by Stavanger's continuous development and ability to renew itself.'

Stavanger is Norway's fourth-largest city and is known globally these days as the capital of the country's lucrative off-shore oil industry. It was established as a bishopric in 1125 having been an important Viking base. It was a hub of the fishing and canning industries from the 19th century, also becoming a key centre for shipbuilding. Ulvo's score tells the story of this development, though perhaps not explicitly. The music moves from rustling beginnings, through various states of dynamism and with obvious

references to modern industry. Old legacies mingle with eternal mysteries; we get the sure impression of the soul of the city underpinning its economy.

The Stavanger jubilee was not a one-off: Ulvo has frequently been called on to write works for landmarks and celebrations. In 2019, the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra celebrated its centenary. One item played during the celebratory gala concert conducted by Vasily Petrenko on 27 September that year was Ulvo's *In the Cage*.

The piece is an arrangement of a section of a longer work by Ulvo created in collaboration with the Oslo Philharmonic and titled *13 Ways to Tame the Beast*. This was a 32-channel sound installation which allowed members of the public to step 'inside' the belly of the orchestra, replicated by the 32 speakers, and move around within it – thereby experiencing orchestral sound as a multi-dimensional entity that shifts according to physical vantage point.

In the Cage is an acoustic, notated realization of a section of this work that 'imprisons' those free-floating sounds once more within the sonic dimensions of an acoustic symphony orchestra (albeit one using extended techniques) in performance.

The result is an orchestral canvas that shares many of the nuances of the contemporary composers of the First Icelandic School in its high textural refinement and in its apparent weightlessness and freedom from conventional musical time. Like a cloud, this mass of orchestral colour is held in the air where it gradually transforms in sonic appearance. The piece won the 2020 Edvard Prize (awarded by TONO, Norway's copyright and royalty agency for music) in the category Contemporary Composition.

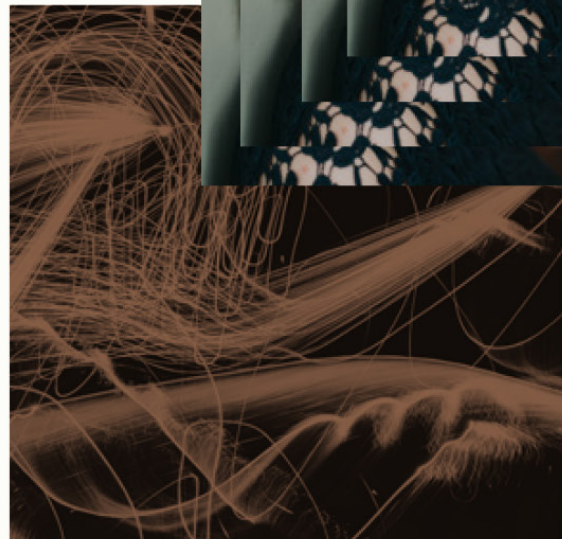
Andrew Mellor

Andrew Mellor is a freelance journalist and critic and author of *The Northern Silence—Journeys in Nordic Music and Culture* (Yale University Press).

THERESE ULVO

Therese Birkelund Ulvo (b. 1982, Bergen) has distinguished herself over the past decade through large-scale works and is one of the few Norwegian composers of her generation whose music is regularly performed by the major Norwegian orchestras. Her music is often inspired by other art forms such as film, text, and sound art. She has a close relationship with Norwegian traditional music, in which microtonality, rhapsodic elements and open forms can be found. Her works are frequently performed both in Norway and internationally.

Ulvo was appointed Intro composer with Rikskonsertene from 2011 to 2013. In 2015 she received the Young Lindeman Prize. At the International Rostrum of Composers in Wrocław, Poland, in 2016, her work *Shadows and Shields* was selected as a Recommended Work and was recommended for radio broadcast across the Rostrum's 30 participating countries. In October 2017, Ulvo became the first composer chosen



for Talent Norge's KUPP programme, a development and networking programme for emerging composers. In 2020 she received the Edvard Prize for her orchestral work *In the Cage*. In 2024 she was awarded the Arne Nordheim Composer Prize.

Therese Birkelund Ulvo has been artistic director of Hardanger Musikkfest since 2014.

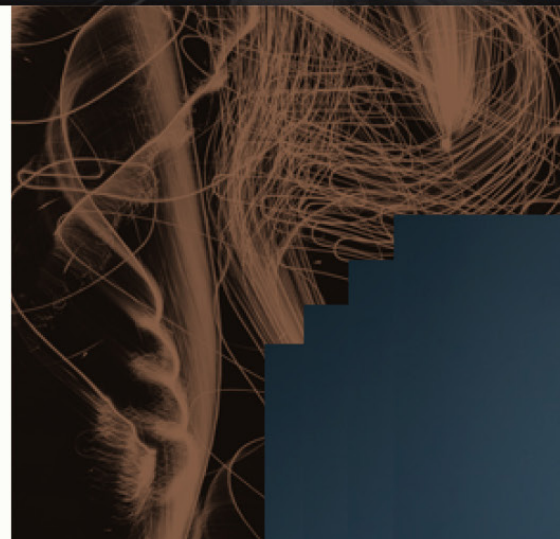
ELLEN UGELVIK

Ellen Ugelvik (piano) specialises in developing and performing new projects in cooperation with contemporary composers and artists. Ugelvik works as a soloist and chamber musician in Europe, USA and Asia, and her commitment to contemporary music is widely recognised. She was named 'Performer of the year 2016' by The Norwegian Society of Composers. In the periods 2008–2011 and 2017–2020 she received a state grant for performing artists, one of the most coveted awards in Norway.

Ugelvik has performed as a soloist with the most important orchestras and ensembles in Norway, in addition to international ensembles such as Klangforum Wien, Ensemble Resonanz and Prague Music Performance Ensemble. She is a member of the ensembles asamisimasa and Jagerflygel.

Her first solo album, "George Crumb: Makrokosmos" (released on Grappa) was awarded the Spellemann (Norwegian recording industry) prize for Best contemporary album in 2008. She has also won two Spellemann prizes with her ensemble asamisimasa, for the albums "Pretty Sound" (music by Simon Steen-Andersen) and "Neon Forest Space – asamisimasa plays the music of Øyvind Torvund".

Alongside her freelance career, Ugelvik is Professor of contemporary music performance at the Norwegian Academy of Music, where she also leads NordART/Arne Nordheim Centre for Artistic Research. She completed a Ph.D. in artistic research in 2018, in which she premiered five new piano concertos.

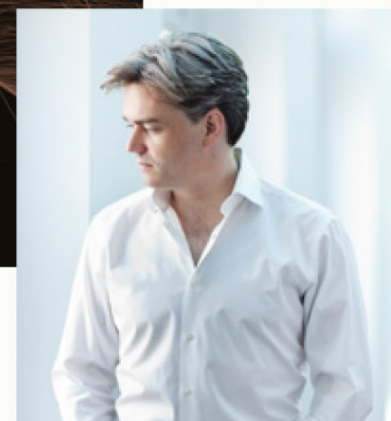


ANDREAS ULVO

Andreas Ulvo (b. 1983) is a Norwegian jazz pianist, keyboard player and composer. He studied piano with Misha Alperin and Helge Lien at the Jazz Department of the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo and has been an active and distinctive figure in the Norwegian music scene since the early 2000s.

Andreas Ulvo is known for his personal pianistic voice and for moving seamlessly between jazz, improvisation, electronic music and folk-influenced chamber music. He has released numerous albums under his own name, including several solo piano recordings. He is a sought-after collaborator in a wide range of Norwegian and international ensembles.





Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra & Edward Gardner

BERGEN PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA & EDWARD GARDNER

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 autumn 2024 and is now Honorary Conductor; from 2026 the orchestra's Chief Conductor is Tabita Berglund. Sir Mark Elder is the orchestra's Principal Guest Conductor. The orchestra was nominated Orchestra of the Year 2020 and again in 2025 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 und Konzerthaus, Carnegie Hall, New York, Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg, and the Philharmonie, Berlin.

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Edward Gardner was Chief Conductor of the Bergen Philharmonic from 2015 to 2024, and led the orchestra on multiple international tours, including performances in Berlin, Munich and Amsterdam, and at the BBC Proms and Edinburgh International Festival. He was appointed Principal Conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra in September 2021, and Music Director of The Norwegian Opera and Ballet in 2024. As guest conductor, he has appeared with many orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, the Royal Opera House and The Philharmonia Orchestra.

Gardner was Music Director of English National Opera for ten years (2006–15); he has an ongoing relationship with New York's Metropolitan Opera, and has conducted at La Scala, Chicago Lyric Opera, Glyndebourne Festival Opera and Opéra National de Paris. Born in Gloucester in 1974, Edward was educated at Cambridge

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University and the Royal Academy of Music. His many accolades include being named Royal Philharmonic Society Award Conductor of the Year (2008), an Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in Opera (2009) and receiving an OBE for Services to Music in the Queen's Birthday Honours (2012).

NORWEGIAN RADIO ORCHESTRA & JERI LYNNE JOHNSON

The Norwegian Radio Orchestra is known in Norway as 'the whole country's orchestra' and is today regarded with a unique combination of respect and affection by its music-loving audience. With its remarkably diverse repertoire, it is the orchestra most listened to throughout Norway – on radio, television, and online, and at various venues around the country. It is a flexible orchestra, performing everything from symphonic and contemporary classical music to pop, rock, folk, and jazz. Each year the orchestra performs together with internationally acclaimed

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artists at the Nobel Peace Prize Concert, aired to millions of viewers worldwide. The orchestra was founded by the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation in 1946. Petr Popelka was the orchestra's Chief Conductor from 2020 to 2023. From January 2026, Holly Hyun Choe is the orchestra's Chief Conductor.

Jeri Lynne Johnson is a conductor, composer and cultural entrepreneur. A graduate of Wellesley College and the University of Chicago, she studied conducting with Sir Simon Rattle, Marin Alsop, and Daniel Barenboim. In 2005 she became the first African American woman to win an international conducting prize when she received the Taki Alsop Conducting Fellowship. She has since led major orchestras and opera companies including the Philadelphia Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, and Santa Fe Opera. In addition to her work with classical and contemporary music she has collaborated with artists such as Jay Z, Solange Knowles, Alicia Keys and The Roots.

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Norwegian Radio Orchestra & Jeri Lynne Johnson



In 2022 she conducted Tania León's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Stride* at the Kennedy Center Honors.

In 2008 Johnson founded the Black Pearl Chamber Orchestra as a model for a 21st century ensemble rooted in artistic excellence and civic engagement. Under her leadership, Black Pearl has earned eleven National Endowment for the Arts grants and national recognition for its innovative community centered approach.

STAVANGER SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA & ANDRIS POGA

The Stavanger Symphony Orchestra (SSO) was founded in 1938 and was led by chief conductor Andris Poga from 2021 to 2026. The orchestra is based at the Stavanger Concert Hall and is one of Norway's seven professional symphony orchestras. The SSO has an extensive concert programme at home and internationally, and has collaborated with celebrated soloists and conductors. The orchestra has toured in Europe, Japan

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and the USA. In addition to its commitment to the traditional orchestral repertoire and contemporary music, the orchestra has a special focus on performing early music together with specialists in historical performing practice. The Stavanger Symphony Orchestra has made several critically acclaimed recordings on various labels and has commissioned a number of new works from Norwegian and international composers.

Andris Poga was Chief Conductor of the Stavanger Symphony Orchestra for the period from 2021 to 2026. He was the Music Director of the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra from 2013 till 2021 and continues to collaborate with the LNSO as its Artistic Advisor.

Highlights of recent years have included concerts with the leading orchestras of Germany, France, Italy, Japan and Scandinavia. He is a regular guest at the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester Hamburg, WDR Sinfonieorchester Cologne, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, NHK Symphony Orchestra Tokyo and many others.

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Stavanger Symphony Orchestra & Andris Poga

He has also conducted the Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich, Gewandhaus-orchester, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Hong Kong Philharmonic, Sydney Symphony and Dallas Symphony.

In 2010, Andris Poga was the First Prize winner of the Evgeny Svetlanov International Conducting Competition, which thrust him onto the international scene. He became an assistant to Paavo Järvi at the Orchestre de Paris, and he also served as the assistant conductor for the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Poga graduated from the conducting department of the Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music. He studied philosophy at the University of Latvia and conducting at the Vienna University of Music and Performing Arts.

OSLO PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA & VASILY PETRENKO

Founded in 1919, the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra has long stood as a cornerstone of Norway's musical life and an ambassador of its cultural heritage on the international stage. Over more than a century, the orchestra has earned widespread recognition for its artistic integrity, distinguished sound, and commitment to both the classical canon and the advancement of contemporary repertoire.

Resident at the Oslo Concert Hall since 1977, the orchestra presents an extensive concert season and maintains a prominent presence through international touring and critically acclaimed recordings. Its identity has been shaped by a lineage of eminent chief conductors, among them Mariss Jansons, whose tenure from 1979 to 2002 marked a period of exceptional artistic growth and international acclaim. His successors – including André Previn, Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Vasily Petrenko and Klaus Mäkelä – have each

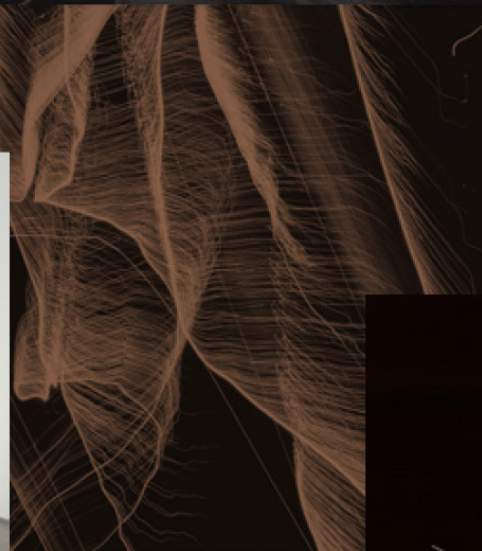
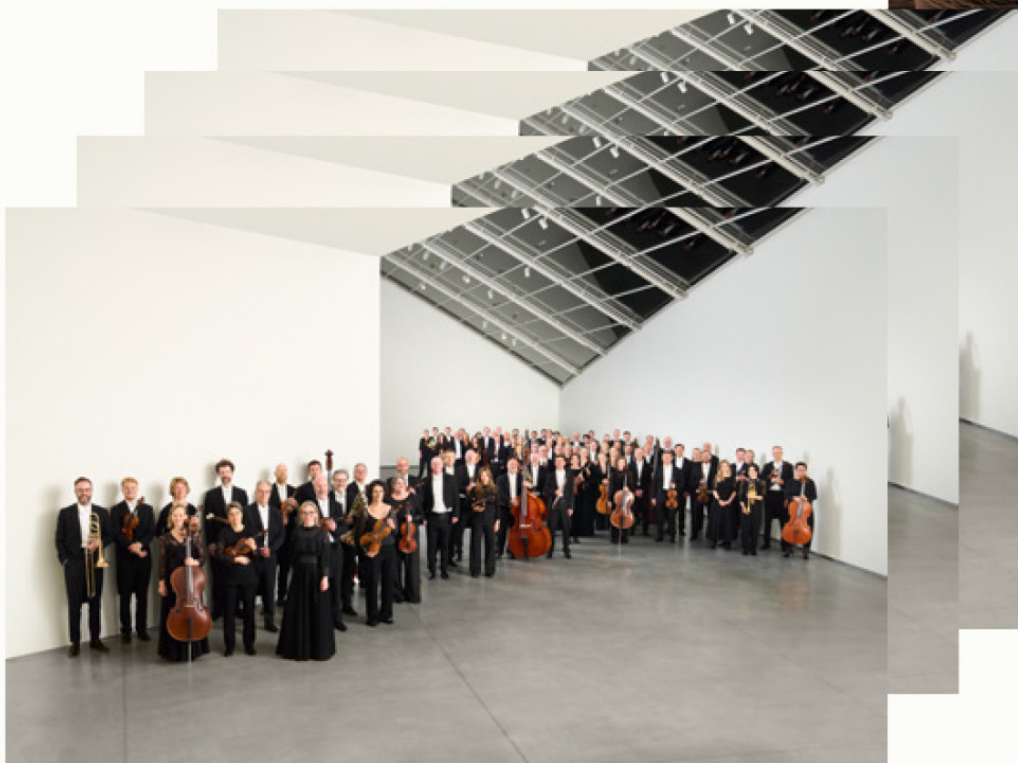
contributed to the orchestra's evolving voice and global standing.

The Oslo Philharmonic performs more than 130 concerts annually with a full orchestra and smaller chamber groups in Oslo, Europe, and the rest of the world.

Vasily Petrenko is Music Director of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, a role he took on in 2021, and Conductor Laureate of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra after a celebrated 15-year tenure as Chief Conductor (2006–2021). He is Associate Conductor of the Orquesta Sinfónica de Castilla y León and has served as Chief Conductor of the European Union Youth Orchestra (2015–2024) and Oslo Philharmonic (2013–2020), and Principal Conductor of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain (2009–2013). He stood down as Artistic Director of the State Academic Symphony Orchestra of Russia 'Evgeny Svetlanov' in 2022, having been their Principal Guest Conductor from 2016 and Artistic Director from 2020.

Petrenko has worked with many of the world's leading orchestras and is equally at home in opera, with over thirty operas in his repertoire. He has appeared at the Edinburgh Festival, Grafenegg Festival, and the BBC Proms. His discography is widely acclaimed, including Shostakovich, Rachmaninov and Elgar cycles with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, and releases of Scriabin, Strauss, Prokofiev and Myaskovsky with the Oslo Philharmonic.

Petrenko was Gramophone Artist of the Year (2017) and Classical BRIT Male Artist of the Year (2010), and holds honorary degrees from Liverpool's three universities. In 2024 he co-founded a young conductors' academy in Armenia.



Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra & Vasily Petrenko

CREDITS

WOVEN FINGERPRINTS

Recorded in Grieghallen,
Bergen, 5 March 2020
Engineers: Gunnar Herleif Nilsen & Ruth Følstad
Mastering: Thomas Wolden

PLEASE DON'T HESITATE

Recorded in Store Studio, NRK
Oslo, 30 January – 1 February 2024
Producer: Vegard Landaas
Balance engineer: Thomas Wolden
Editing: Vegard Landaas
Mastering: Thomas Wolden

RESTART/RESHAPE/REVEAL

Recorded in Stavanger Concert Hall,
13 February 2025
Producer: Vegard Landaas
Balance engineer: Thomas Wolden
Editing: Vegard Landaas
Mastering: Thomas Wolden

IN THE CAGE

Recorded in Oslo Concert Hall,
27 September 2019
Producer: Krzysztof Drab
Engineers: Elisabeth Sommernes & Marit Askeland
Mastering: Thomas Wolden

Booklet notes: Andrew Mellor
Booklet editor: Alison Bullock Aarsten
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Artist photo: (Andreas Ulvo): Birte Magnussen
Artist photo: (Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra): Lars Svenkerud
Artist photo: (Edward Gardner): Benjamin Ealovega
Artist photo: (Norwegian Radio Orchestra): Julia Maria Naglestad
Artist photo: (Jeri Lynne Johnson): Jeri Lynne Johnson
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Artist photo: (Vasily Petrenko): Antoine Saito



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THERESE BIRKELUND ULVO (1982*)

1. WOVEN FINGERPRINTS
Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra (2015) 28:43
Ellen Ugelvik and Andreas Ulvo, pianos
Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra
Edward Gardner, conductor
2. PLEASE DON'T HESITATE (2017) 05:45
Norwegian Radio Orchestra
Jeri Lynne Johnson, conductor
3. RESTART/RESHAPE/REVEAL (2025) 13:17
Stavanger Symphony Orchestra
Andris Poga, conductor
4. IN THE CAGE (2019) 08:18
Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra
Vasily Petrenko, conductor