



LAWO
CLASSICS

EGIL HOVLAND

TE DEUM

ANDERS EIDSTEN DAHL
ORGAN

TE DEUM

Egil Hovland was an archetype twentieth-century composer, yet one rooted in the traditions and working practices of the Norwegian church. He would become one of Norway's most versatile, productive and performed composers—a man fully aware of avant-garde trends in European and American music who cleaved nonetheless to the musical DNA of his religion and day-to-day life in the provincial church community he served for 45 years. Those were the priorities that shaped Hovland's remarkable music—music that is beautiful yet gritty, rigorous yet involving, forward-looking yet rooted in tradition, all of it stamped through with the unmistakable sense of a particular man from a particular place.

That place was Fredrikstad, some 90km directly south of Oslo, where Hovland was born. His earliest concrete experience of

music was hearing revival hymns with his family, who worshipped at the Seiersten religious meeting house in Frederikstad. Hovland later studied church music with Bjarne Brustad and Arild Sandvold at the Oslo Conservatory, pursuing further composition studies with Vagn Holmboe at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen, with Aaron Copland at Tanglewood in Boston and with Luigi Dallapiccola in Florence.

Hovland's *Music for Ten Instruments* (1957), composed at Tanglewood, was awarded the Koussevitzky Composition Prize while his powerful orchestral work *Lamenti* (1963) proved a landmark in twentieth-century Norwegian symphonic music. He wrote symphonies, concertos, chamber music, choral music, organ music and music for children as well as church operas, church ballets and music for modern mystery plays. In 1949, the year the church's three-manual organ by J.H. Jørgensen was inaugurated, Hovland was appointed Organist and Choir Director at Glemmen Church in Frederikstad, a position he would hold until 1994.

Across that multitude of genres, Hovland absorbed a variety of compositional aesthetics and techniques. From a largely Nordic-Romantic style influenced by Norway's hymn and folk song traditions, he proceeded to embrace Neo-Classicism and twelve-tone serialism in the 1960s. Later, by his own admission, he 'looked completely backwards and embraced the Romantic or neo-friendly style.' The shift was partly prompted by direct contact with his church congregation at Glemmen, a relationship that incubated in Hovland a desire to write music that spoke directly to a community of worshippers. However much the composer described himself 'looking completely backwards,' his music was changed forever by his engaging with the discipline of Neo-Classicism and the severity of serialism; it took on a certain strength of will, a distillation of utterance, a harmonic spice and a strength of phraseology.

All that was laid over strong musical foundations built in Hovland by his mentors and his epoch. Late nineteenth-century style harmonies were used by his teachers

in Oslo who included Sandvold, a sometime pupil of Karl Straube in Leipzig. Sandvold's colouristic sensitivities had a particular influence on Hovland's religious music, but just as influential was the revival in Norwegian folksong that blossomed after the Nazi occupation during World War II.

The concurrent church music reform movement, meanwhile, looked back to old chorale tunes, dressing them in a harmonic language forged around four hundred years previously, while the equivalent Neo-Classical wave in Nordic organ design saw the building of hundreds of instruments tailored to Baroque or Neo-Baroque music (much of Hovland's music suits these instruments best). An urge to tend the flame of tradition carried itself into Hovland's tireless administrative activities, which included his work as consultant to the Liturgy Commission, his membership of the Hymnal Committee and work on the Norwegian Chorale Book and Norwegian Church Choir Book. As Åge Haavik cites in the liner note to the previous recording in this series (*Elementa Pro Organo*, LWC 1078),

Hovland is the composer with the highest number of melodies included in the 2013 edition of the Norwegian hymnal.

Many of those melodies made their way into Hovland's organ works—over 70 individual pieces in total—a good number of which deploy a cantus based on a chorale tune, a plainsong tune or a folk tune. Most of the individual pieces on this recording use cantus themes from German chorales straddling the turn of the sixteenth century, as gathered in Per Steenberg's Norwegian chorale book of 1949. Renewing the tradition of Bach and Buxtehude, Hovland uses baroque models such as trio, ornamentation, fugue, chorale-prelude, fantasy, toccata and passacaglia to formally frame these melodies while setting them within the context of his own musical language. As a matter of principle, the cantus melodies are always readily discernable, presented with a generous clarity in the score that demands attention from the performer, in both matters of articulation and registration (the composer often specifies dynamics, registrations and manuals in his scores).

Improvisata dates from 1948, the year before Hovland took up his position at Glemmen Church. The title reflects the improvisatory inspiration behind the work, if not its tight rendering in compositional form. The pedal division introduces the opening 'Maestoso', a simple expanding variation on the theme: a twelfth-century Norwegian melody. The 'Allegro moderato' weaves a fugue and the third movement recalls the 'Maestoso' opening.

The same year, Hovland composed the second of his Chorale Partita sets, on the hymn tune *Hvo ene lader Herren råde*, in seven movements. The cantus is introduced at the start in canon, developing into a trio and into variations in counterpoint in the second movement. The fourth movement resembles a toccata, with the cantus in the pedals with florid decoration above. It ends with two fugues, the first demure, the second longer and more forthright, concluding in the major.

By 1975, Hovland's compositional outlook had come full circle (or something resembling it). That year, he wrote his sixth Chorale

Partita set, this on the well known chorale tune *Gelobt sei gott im höchsten thron* (*Jesus, the Christ, is risen today*), tailoring the work to an organ with one manual and pedals. The first of ten movements introduces the chorale tune in a standard harmonization while the second presents an idiosyncratic harmonization of it in two-note underlying blocks. In the third, the deftly ornamented cantus is presented in canon at the fifth over a pedal point in one of Hovland's most affecting structures.

The fourth movement presents a buoyant, dancing variation punctuated by luminous chords, and the fifth a doleful one. In the sixth we hear Hovland's ability to tailor traditional harmonies with imaginative flair while the seventh has the cantus harmonized by string stops while the left hand perform a capering dance around it. The music seems to be freeing itself in these later movements; attempting to stretch the span between heaven and earth that so fascinated Hovland theologically and is so apparent in much of his music. That process steps-up towards the final movement, where heaven and earth are united, perhaps, in the

unifying re-statement of the chorale. Hovland's *Te Deum* constitutes his first published organ work, written in 1947. In this six-movement piece the cantus is the Te Deum plainsong common to many Christian denominations. It emerges in the pedals in the opening 'Toccata'—a standard Hovland device—after the improvisatory flourish that launches the movement. We hear it rendered on a solo stop in the ensuing 'Koral', in the manner of Bach. There follow two quizzical, recitative-like interludes, another 'Koral' with the cantus in the pedal division and a strong fugue that adumbrates the 23-year-old composer's contrapuntal skill.

Hovland's set of Chorale Preludes *Book Two* was published in 1963 but contains music written over the five previous years. Here we encounter the composer skillfully reconciling his admiration for the chorale prelude tradition of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with the rubric of the serialist composers whose music was gaining import, across instrumental configurations, in the 1950s and 60s.

Hovland is cunning enough to have us believe that the two schools aren't all that far apart. That much seems apparent from the treatment of the first of the five tunes from the Norwegian hymnal that is used as the basis of each movement here—in this case, a joyous toccata on *Kjærlighet er lysets kilde* (*Love, the Fount of Light from Heaven*). The melody of *Av høyheten opprunnen er* (*How Bright Appers The Morning Star*) is stated clearly, characteristically decorated twice over and then rendered in canon while that of *Jesus, dine dype vunder* (*GENEVAN PSALM XLII*) is placed in one voice while another obbligato voice pursues a melodic agenda of its own in counterpoint. The final movement wraps the melody *Herre, Jesus Krist* (*Lord Jesus Christ*) in a complex but elegant contrapuntal weave.

Hovland's set of Chorale Preludes *Book Three* was published in 1967 and includes music written in the 11 years from 1951—62, tracing the same middle-period union of progressive techniques and traditional forms as the previous set. The well-known melody *Fra himlen høyt jeg kommer her* (*Good news from heav'n the angels bring*) is split into sections by

the pedal division in the opening movement which is followed by an introspective, dense toccata on *Hvor salig er den lille flokk* (*How blessed is the little flock*). *Klippe du som brast for meg* (*Rock of ages, cleft for me*) is a trio with the cantus on a solo mixture stop that exploits overtones; the music lands as beautifully as in any equivalent piece by Bach. The composition is written based on a melody by Per Steenberg. *Jesus frelser, vi er her* (*Dearest Jesus, we are here*) is one of a number of examples in Hovland's output of a four-voice texture with the cantus in the soprano, the accompanying voices enjoying independent material. *Den blomster tid nu kommer* (*Now the Blooming Time Is Coming*) ends the set with a spring-like atmosphere and energy.

The set of Chorale Preludes **Book Six** was published in 1977 and includes material from up to eight years earlier, though much of it hails from the mid 1970s. These miniature chorale preludes, largely around a minute in length but some shorter (and one considerably longer), present this recording's clearest embodiment of Hovland's desire, born at the beginning of the 1970s, to

recapture something of the musical spirit of his earliest works in the neo-Romantic vein. We hear the composer moving beyond the emotional restraint of both the Lutheran and Neo-Classical aesthetics right from the flourish that opens the fanfare strewn *Lukk opp kirkens dører* (*Open the Church Doors*) and its exhortation to 'open up the church doors'.

Standard treatments remain, including the homophonic harmonization of chorale melodies; a duo that surreptitiously becomes a trio (*O Gud, vårt vern* | *O God, Our Help in Ages Past*); a fugue that sprouts four voices (*Våk, o sjel, og be* | *Watch, O Soul, and Pray*); the cantus picked out on a solo reed stop around contrasting textures on a manual and pedal divisions (*Der mange skal komme* | *There many shall come from the east and the west*); a rapid, brief canon (*Kom og se hva Gud har gjort* | *Come and See*) and two toccatas with the cantus in the pedal division: a valedictory example on a Christmas tune and that on *Sacta Nox* whose decorative figurations in the manuals hint at the French tradition and fly off into the ether. The latter is an effective mirror

image of the first *O Gud, vårt vern* (*O God our help, in ages past*), in which the well known tune is refracted into improvisatory shards punctuated by unison reminders of the cantus.

— Andrew Mellor

Andrew Mellor is author of The Northern Silence—Journeys in Nordic Music and Culture (Yale University Press)

ANDERS EIDSTEN DAHL ORGAN

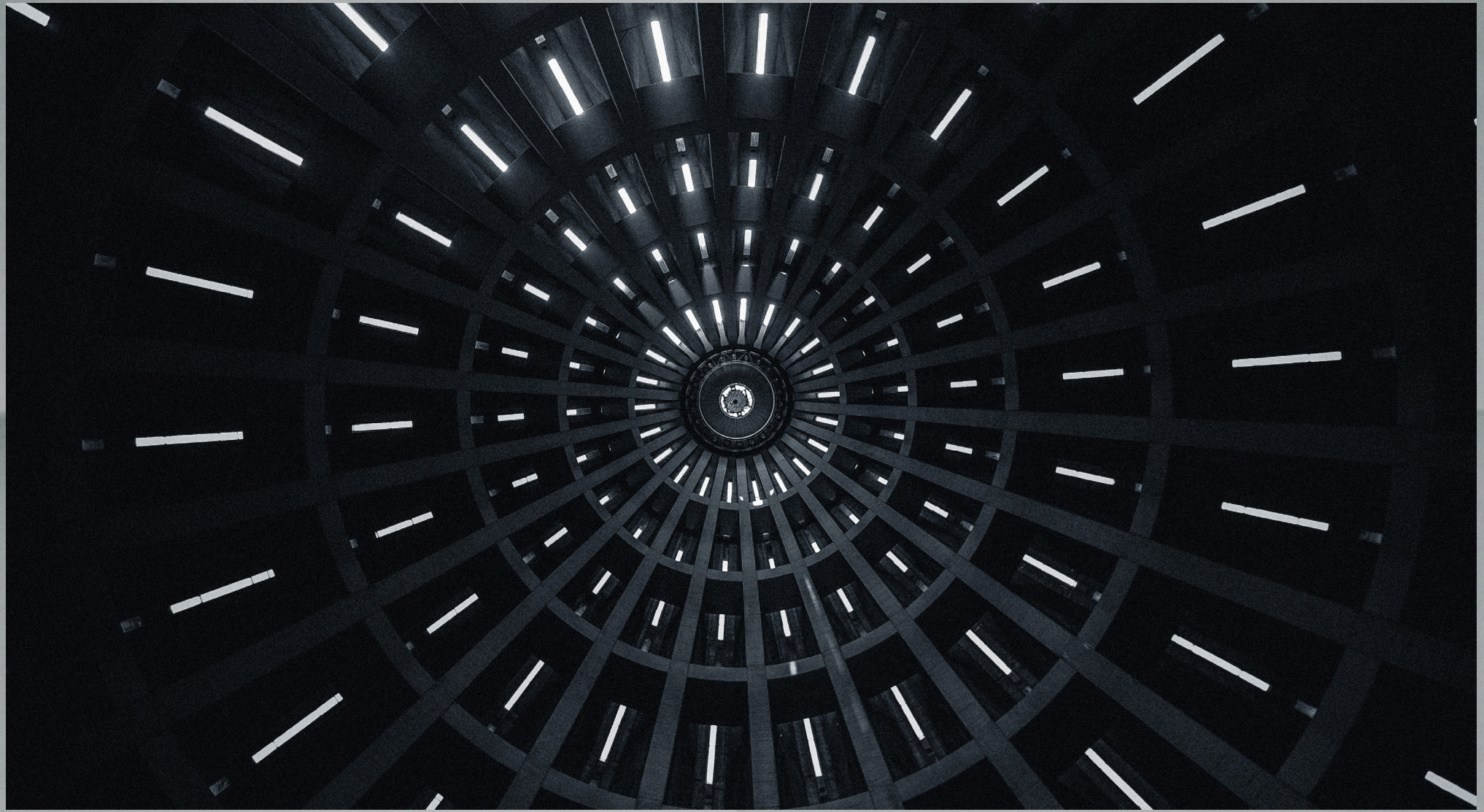
Anders Eidsten Dahl (b. 1976 in Drammen) graduated with a degree in church music from the Norwegian Academy of Music and later completed a Master's degree in solo organ performance at the same institution. Following two years of solo performance study at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen, he gave debut concerts in Copenhagen and Oslo in 2003. He has studied organ with Professor Terje Winge, cathedral organist Kåre Nordstoga and Professor Hans Fagius. He holds the position as Associate Professor of organ at the Norwegian Academy of Music.

Eidsten Dahl is much in demand as organ soloist, chamber musician and harpsichordist, and he has given organ concerts at festivals in a number of European countries. His

repertoire spans from the Baroque to the music of today, with emphasis on J. S. Bach and organ music from the Romantic period. Since 2001 he has served as organist and director of music at Bragernes Church in Drammen, where he is artistic and administrative director of the church's organ concert series.

A recipient of the Government Work Scholarship for Younger and Newly Established Artists, Eidsten Dahl has released a number of critically acclaimed albums on the LAWO Classics label. The last one was *Exultate* with organ works of Knut Nystedt (LWC1277).







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EGIL HOVLAND 1924—2013

ORGEL—TE DEUM OP. 8

1. TOCCATA 02:01
2. KORAL 01:52
3. INTERLUDIUM 01:13
4. KORAL 01:55
5. INTERLUDIUM 00:57
6. FUGE 03:07

IMPROVISATA—HYMNUS IN HONOREM SANCTI MAGNI, COMITIS ORCADLÆ OP. 9

7. MAESTOSO 01:04
8. ALLEGRO MODERATO 02:06
9. MAESTOSO 01:11

KORALPARTITA NR. 2 HVO ENE LADER HERREN RÅDE OP. 10

10. KORAL I 01:02
11. VAR II 01:44
12. VAR III 01:34
13. VAR IV 01:45
14. VAR V 01:03
15. VAR VI 01:25
16. VAR VII 03:13

ORGELKORALER BIND 2 OP. 14

17. KJÆRLIGHET ER LYSETS
KILDE TOCCATA 01:28
18. AV HØYHETEN OPPRUNNEN ER 03:03
19. JESUS, DINE DYPE VUNDER 01:35
20. HERRE, JESUS KRIST 02:13

ORGELKORALER BIND 3 OP. 14

21. FRA HIMLEN HØYT JEG
KOMMER HER 01:59
22. HVOR SALIG ER DEN LILLE
FLOKK. TOCCATA 03:54
23. KLIPPE, DU SOM BRAST
FOR MEG 01:22
24. JESUS FRELSER, VI ER HER 01:51
25. DEN BLOMSTERTID NU KOMMER 02:05

ORGELKORALER BIND 6 OP. 14

26. INTRADA OVER “LUKK OPP
KIRKENS DØRER” 02:34
27. O GUD, VÅRT VERN 00:46
28. O GUD, VÅRT VERN 00:33
29. SYNG FOR HERREN, HELE VERDEN 01:09
30. VÅK, O SJEL, OG BE 00:54
31. KORAL 00:32
32. DER MANGE SKAL KOMME 00:29
33. KORAL 01:05
34. SANCTA NOX. KORAL OG TOCCATA 03:40
35. KOM OG SE HVA GUD HAR GJORT 00:33
36. NOËL—TOCCATA 01:51

KORALPARTITA NR. 6 GELOBT SEI GOTT IM HÖCHSTEN THRON OP. 90

37. KORAL I 00:32
38. VAR II 01:07
39. VAR III 00:53
40. VAR V 00:50
41. VAR IV 01:24
42. VAR VI 01:06
43. VAR VII 01:11
44. VAR VIII 01:07
45. VAR IX 00:47
46. VAR X 00:40