



LAWQ
CLASSICS

Herman Vogt

Lux Manifesta

Oslo Philharmonic
Orchestra

Aivis Greters
Conductor

Lux Manifesta

Herman Vogt's work extends a line of artistic thinking established in the Romantic period. His music presents an emotional but formally disciplined response to the central questions of existence, grappling with the very problem of the place of the individual in the world that occupied the likes of Ludwig van Beethoven, Robert Schumann and Gustav Mahler. Much of Vogt's music follows the established rubric of Classical Romanticism but dresses it in a modern but often tonal sound, both sensitive and stringent. His music's duality echoes fundamental philosophical dilemmas that have always remained with us, pitting the veiled and vague against the distinct and clear.

Vogt was born in Drammen in central-southern Norway. He studied composition at the Norwegian Academy of Music (where he also studied violin) with Lasse Thoresen, Olav Anton Thommessen, Henrik Hellstenius and Bjørn Kruse and at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague with Martijn Padding and Louis Andriessen. His music has been performed by the Oslo orchestras and new music ensembles, and by many more besides. It includes four instrumental concertos, miscellaneous orchestral works and tone poems, two string quartets and numerous solo and chamber works.

A particularly fertile collaboration in the domain of sacred music has been that with the organist Anders Eidsten Dahl, a key figure in Nordic church music who enjoys a career as a teacher, concert organist and music director in the

parish of Drammen, where Vogt was born. In 2020, Dahl gave the first performance of Vogt's five-part organ work *Light Shall Shine Out of Darkness* in Oslo Cathedral. The piece, recorded by Dahl on LAWO Classics (LWC1235), was the result of a process of exploration undertaken by both organist and composer.

On his part, Vogt had become interested in the sonic reach of the organ as a musical instrument—particularly the almost overwhelming scope of textural possibilities presented by its potentially endless combinations of stops. Vogt saw the organ as 'a gateway into the world of opulent homophonic and polyphonic sound' and became fascinated by the confluence of its ability to sustain notes to any required length and its timbral qualities as a wind instrument (or assemblage of them).

As a twenty-first century composer, Vogt was also forced to ask himself the question of how to write for the instrument in the post-Messiaen age, given the seminal effect of the French composer's organ music on our collective perception of what that music might be. When *Light Shall Shine Out of Darkness* was recorded by Dahl, Vogt wrote of the organ as 'a condensed orchestra'. Soon enough, the allure to convert the work into an orchestral score proved too great to ignore and in 2021, Vogt orchestrated the piece, now with the title *Lux Manifesta*.

Like much of Messiaen's output, *Lux Manifesta* is a work that speaks of faith. Not, however, the unequivocal

Roman Catholicism of that composer but more 'a free-thinking, non-dogmatic religious point of view, possibly a modern approach to faith', according to Vogt. The work's five movements embrace central elements of Christian teaching and tradition but also German Passion literature and apocryphal texts. The Latin title *Lux Manifesta* can be translated as 'manifested light' or 'embodied light'. The title alludes to the core Christian idea of God incarnating into human flesh—uniting divine and human natures, as well as to the idea of light in Christianity as a metaphor for spiritual enlightenment.

The first part is titled 'The Kingdom is Within You, and it is Outside You'. 'It is taken from the apocryphal Gospel of Thomas, saying 3,' explains Vogt, 'and a possible version of the quotation of Jesus is found in the canonical gospels.' Vogt points to two translations of the passage from Luke's gospel, including 'for behold, the kingdom of God is within you' (17:12) and interprets the phrase as suggesting that 'it is through getting to know oneself that one is able to see the beauty of the world and become fully human', describing the music as 'laid out as contemplative, inner-directed.' There are echoes of Messiaen in the tone clusters that soon emerge, shifting shape and timbre like clouds. The predominantly wind and brass-based texture is visited by shimmering percussion before rising to an expressionistic peak, after which an epilogue-like passage for strings leads back to winds, before the music comes to rest on a delectable spread chord.

The second part is titled after a phrase from the Gospel of John: 'I Am the Light of the World' (the phrase continues: 'whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life', 8:12). Vogt aligns John's pitting of light with darkness to the idea of light as a symbol of truth and goodness against dark as deceit and malice—as espoused by the Essenes, the mystic Jewish sect that existed in Judea before, during and after Jesus's time. 'This is a powerful and luminous movement with fiery crescendos and diminuendos,' explains Vogt, 'punctuated in the middle by a section of tranquil tonal textures.' Some of the music's rhythmic stasis, drive and flux—as well as its brazen colours—again recall Messiaen's writing, particularly for orchestra. The movement ends with a flourish.

The third part takes as its title a line from scripture but first, a fragment from Picander's text for Johann Sebastian Bach's *St Matthew Passion*: 'See the Saviour's Outstretched Hands' ('Sehet, Jesus hat die Hand'). The second part, 'And He Took The Children In His Arms', comes from Mark's Gospel (10:15–16): 'Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it. And he took them in his arms and blessed them.' Just as Bach made extensive structural use of the symbol of the cross, so does Vogt here, placing this lullaby movement in the centre of his work. A solo viola leads off this tender, weaving song initially for strings, which are joined for the apotheosis by woodwind and brass.

'You Are The Light of the World' takes its title from Matthew's Gospel (5:14). The music frolics immediately, like an expressive celebratory march, with shades of Bohuslav Martinů's rhythmic ebullience and harmonic side-stepping. This material surrounds a more serene central episode characterized by long lines and open harmonies. 'It symbolizes a steadfast faith in love and goodness that can be found in us humans,' says Vogt, 'and the possibility we have of choosing our actions, and faith in our good potential.' The final chord billows outwards in an embrace.

Part 5 is titled 'Our Lasting Peace; May He Find Rest in Me'. This, explains Vogt, is not a quotation but rather a distillation of convergent sentiments surrounding peace found throughout the New Testament (though he points specifically to a passage in Paul's letter to the Galatians: 'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness...', 5:22). The music, says Vogt, is peaceful and subtle. From low brass, a theme emerges in parallel high and low strings, with the feel of an incantation. The steady building thereafter feels like a coming-to-terms, with the emotional weight in the music's steady retreat back towards low brass and a warming, consoling final chord.

Solsangen was commissioned by the Oslo Philharmonic, which gave the first performance on 23 August 2018 under Vasily Petrenko. The title comes from the *Canticle of the Sun*, the poem dictated on his deathbed by Francis of Assisi.

The poem is a song in praise of God for his creations: the sun, the moon, the stars and the elements as well as love, life and ultimately death. Vogt was inspired in particular by the poem's vitality and exuberance, as well as its more sobering reflections on the place of humans in the universe—a duality which is apparent in music by turns joyful and contemplatively fragile. The same idea is further explored using bitonality and ever-shifting tonal centres, which reflect the two-sided nature of the poem and its acknowledgment that the joy of life cannot be realized without the acceptance of death.

An enraptured atmosphere hangs over the music from its initial unfurling towards a falling motif built of adjacent notes, as low, muddy orchestral textures contrast with high, glistening ones. The music is frequently underpinned by a deep, existential rumbling. This appears to feed rising tensions that lead to one central eruption in the middle of the piece and two subsequent passages of orchestral exuberance and angst, the latter leading to a serene coda.

Andrew Mellor

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







Herman Vogt

Herman Vogt (b. 1976 in Drammen, Norway) studied composition with Bjørn Kruse, Lasse Thoresen, Olav Anton Thommessen and Henrik Hellstenius at the Norwegian Academy of Music from 1999 to 2004. He completed a master's degree in composition with Asbjørn Schaathun at the same institution in 2018.

In 2003 Vogt studied composition with Martijn Padding and Louis Andriessen at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague. He studied violin at the Norwegian Academy of Music from 1995 to 1997.

Vogt's music has been featured at the World Music Days in Sydney, Australia (ISCM Festival) and Belgium (ISCM and Transit Festival), Nordic Music Days in

Copenhagen and Stockholm, the Ultima Contemporary Music Festival in Oslo, the Borealis Festival in Bergen, and at other festivals in Norway and abroad.

His music has been performed by Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, the Norwegian Radio Orchestra, Trondheim Symphony Orchestra, Athelas Sinfonietta, pianists Ian Pace and Sveinung Bjelland, violinist Geir Inge Lotsberg, cellists Timo-Veikko Valve and Audun Sandvik, organist Anders Eidsten Dahl, Opus13 String Quartet, conductors Edward Gardner, Vasily Petrenko, Pierre-André Valade, Baldur Brönnimann, Christian Eggen, Ingar Bergby, Peter Szilvay, Per Kristian Skälstad and Anna-Maria Helsing, and by a number of other ensembles and musicians in Norway and abroad.

Aivis Greters

Latvian conductor Aivis Greters holds the position of Principal Guest Conductor at Gothenburg Opera since 2023, directly following two years at the House as Kapellmeister. In this new role, he led performances of Carmen and Iolanta as well as the Gala concert on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Opera's new house. Highlights of his 2025/26 season include the opening of Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra's season at Oscarsborg Fortress, and his debuts with Berner Symphonieorchester, Norrköping Symphony Orchestra, and Warsaw Philharmonic. He returns to Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Sinfonietta Riga and Latvian National Symphony Orchestra.

In recent seasons, Aivis Greters attracted attention through performances in a wide range of repertoire at Gothenburg Opera and a string of important debuts with orchestras such as the Wiener Symphoniker, Mozarteum Orchestra Salzburg, Norwegian Radio Orchestra, Bamberger Symphoniker, Orchestra of the Finnish National Opera, Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, Malmö Symphony Orchestra and NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra. He enjoys regular working relationships with Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra and Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra.

Deeply rooted in the rich musical tradition of his home country, Greters debuted as symphonic conductor with the three major orchestras, the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra, Sinfonietta

Riga and Liepāja Symphony Orchestra. His debut with the Latvian National Opera occurred in 2022 and a return visit is planned for this season. Outside Latvia, Aivis Greters was awarded the second prize of the 2021 Deutscher Dirigentenpreis and conducted WDR Symphony Orchestra Cologne and Gürzenich Orchestra Cologne in this context.

Greters started his musical career in 2018 as Artistic Director and conductor of the Latvian Youth Choir Kamēr. Under his direction, the choir won the Grand Prix of the 50th Tolosa Choral Contest in 2018, European Grand Prix 2019 in Arezzo and became the first choir worldwide to have won three European Grand Prix for Choral Singing titles.

In early 2021 Greters received The Grand Music Award of Latvia in the Young Artist of the Year 2020 and the Artistic Bravery and Innovation during COVID-19 categories for projects with the choir at Cēsis Music Festival.

Aivis Greters attended master classes with conductors such as Jörg-Peter Weigle, Steven Layton, Zbigniew Graca, Lutz Köhler, Ekhardt Wycik and Alexander Polianichko. Most recently he was a participant of the Järvi Conducting Academy at Pärnu Music Festival where he was chosen to also conduct three festival performances, and the Tonhalle Orchester Zürich Masterclass with Paavo Järvi where he was awarded the Prize of the Jury.





Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra

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, and Vasily Petrenko—have each contributed to the orchestra's evolving voice and global standing.

Under the current leadership of Chief Conductor Klaus Mäkelä, the Oslo Philharmonic continues to enrich and expand its artistic vision. With an enduring dedication to excellence, innovation, and cultural dialogue, the orchestra remains a leading force in Scandinavian and international symphonic music.

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. The orchestra plays music from a wide repertoire, often with internationally renowned soloists and conductors, and regularly goes on tours both domestically and abroad. The Oslo Philharmonic has 108 permanently employed musicians and an administration of 25.

Credits

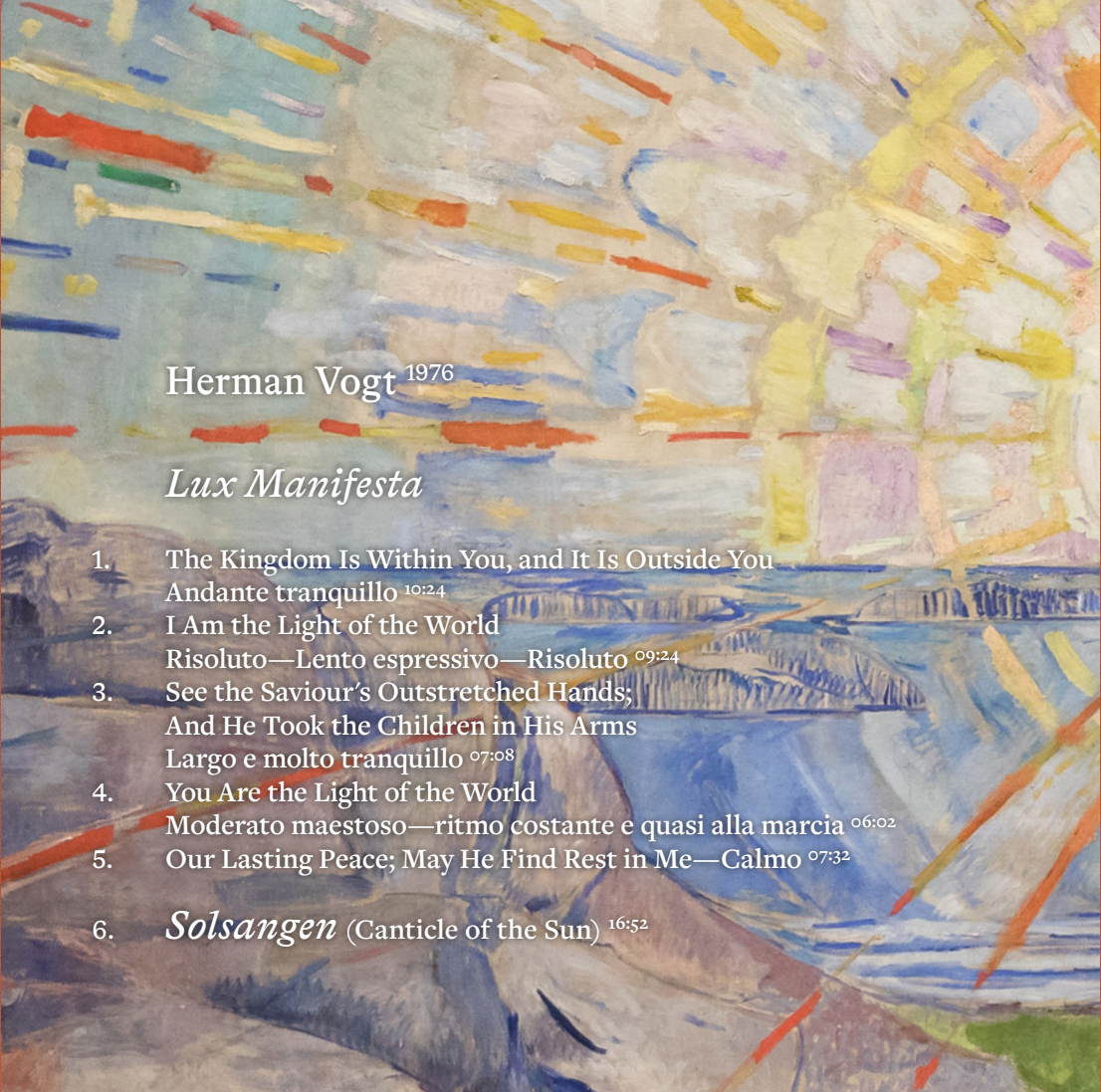
Recorded in Oslo Concerthall,
Oslo, 13–16 May 2024
Producer: Vegard Landaas
Balance engineer: Thomas Wolden
Editing: Vegard Landaas
Mastering: Thomas Wolden
Booklet notes: Andrew Mellor
Booklet editor: Torgeir M. Landaas
Cover design: Blunderbuss
Cover + page 3, 4, 7, 8; photo of
Edvard Munch, *The Sun*, (1909—
1916), from *Hall of Ceremonies* at
the University of Oslo.
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This recording has been made
possible with support from:
Arts and Culture Norway
/ The Audio and Visual Fund,
Norwegian Society of Composers.

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Herman Vogt¹⁹⁷⁶

Lux Manifesta

1. The Kingdom Is Within You, and It Is Outside You
Andante tranquillo ^{10:24}
2. I Am the Light of the World
Risoluto—Lento espressivo—Risoluto ^{09:24}
3. See the Saviour's Outstretched Hands;
And He Took the Children in His Arms
Largo e molto tranquillo ^{07:08}
4. You Are the Light of the World
Moderato maestoso—ritmo costante e quasi alla marcia ^{06:02}
5. Our Lasting Peace; May He Find Rest in Me—Calmo ^{07:32}
6. *Solsangen* (Canticle of the Sun) ^{16:52}