

L8Nite Performance

THE BOUNDARY-SEEKING SONG COMPOSER

Rued Langgaard's songs

This performance demonstrates the work on realization of a number of vocal works by the genius Danish outsider-composer Rued Langgaard (1893-1952).

Langgaard wrote more than 125 songs with piano accompaniment to Danish, German and Norwegian lyrics. The majority of the songs are of the highest quality and essential in his production, but quite unknown and underexposed when it comes to recordings.

Soprano Signe Asmussen Manuitt and pianist Berit Johansen Tange are now preparing a recording of a wide selection of the songs. In this context Tange, who has a comprehensive knowledge of Langgaards instrumental works, is doing an artistic research project on the necessary artistic choices that arise in the encounter with such boundary-seeking and frequently complex works.

In our performance we – Asmussen and Tange – will show Langgaard as a highly expressive composer who prefers to push the limits of both musical expression and practicality, and we will perform selected songs to illustrate this.

These romantic songs are inspired by composers as diverse as Schumann, Grieg, Wagner and Strauss. Sometimes Langgaard trumps his idols, so to speak, by almost exaggerating their style, and thereby magically makes it his own.

We will demonstrate how the stylistic diversity and the boundary-seeking nature of the music, as well as the fact that there is not yet a tradition of interpreting these 100 year old songs, gives the performer the experience of a creative free space. We will address some of the following issues that require a specific approach in the work:

- Langgaard's notation is strong in expression. But it's characterized by inconsistency and contains elements that are difficult to implement and require rewrites or alternative solutions by the performers.
- In the most Wagnerian and ecstatic songs, written already around the age of 16, the piano parts in particular are so challenging that they nearly push the boundaries of what can be done. How to solve this?
- Langgaard has a penchant for symbols, for instance bells of any kind. In his songs there are often elements that are not logical in the musical context, but must be explained by something external. This makes the dialogue between singer and pianist particularly important, to reach agreement on the meaning of the element and congruence of the artistic expression.
- Langgaard's use of the lyrics is unusual. He seems more interested in the atmosphere or sometimes "ecstatic" state the text indicates, than creating a melody that focuses on the words and helps the declamation.

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Link to my newest recording of Rued Langgaards music:

https://open.spotify.com/album/45IKVVWgrgOXSo1IkUnqSA?si=LVd8n3a6S_W7oOkFwr7ghw&nd=1



Berit Johansen Tange
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Pianist Berit Johansen Tange was trained at the Royal Danish Academy of Music by professors Anne Øland and Tove Lønskov, especially in chamber music and vocal accompaniment. She had her debut concert in 2000. Since 2002 she's been an accompanist and teacher in RDAM.

Berit Johansen Tange has given numerous concerts both in Denmark and abroad.

She has worked intensely on the music of Danish composer Rued Langgaard, including the recording of a larger part of his solo piano works (4 cd's) and a complete recording of his works for violin and piano with violinist Gunvor Sihm (3 cd's). All the albums have received great reviews.

Berit Johansen Tange works continuously to spread the knowledge of Langgaard. She's a co-organizer of a Langgaard competition for students, launched in 2021, and she has played solo concerts in Berlin and Vienna as part of a presentation of his music.