



DET KONGELIGE DANSKE
MUSIKKONSERVATORIUM

dkdm.dk/pulsar

PULSAR 2025 NORDIC VOICES

Søndag 9. marts kl. 16.00, Studiescenen

Lasse Thoresen: (f. 1949)	Solbøn
Gustav Bjerre:	Faut mire
Lasse Thoresen:	Diphonie I
Athanasia Kotronia:	Kvinnorna blev fåglar
Lasse Thoresen:	The Impatient Bride
Emil Johansson:	Norrland – ett landsbygds rekviem for vocal sextet
Maja Ratkje: (f. 1973)	A dismantled ode to the moral value of art

Nordic Voices

Tone Braaten
Ingrid Hanken
Ebba Rydh
Per Kristian Amundrød
Frank Havrøy
Rolf Magne Schmidt Asser

Nordic Voices

Nordic Voices er en seksstemmig a cappella-gruppe, som har turneret i Sydafrika, Taiwan, Bolivia og USA. Gruppen blev dannet i 1996 og består af seks kandidater fra Norges Musikkhøgskole og Norges Operaakademi, som ud over deres sangbaggrund har en bred erfaring med alt fra kordirektion til læreruddannelse og komposition. Det er måske denne vifte af interesser, der får dem til at udforske et bredere spektrum end normalt af musikalske udtryk, fra gregoriansk sang til nye værker bestilt hos førende norske komponister; fra de mest hellige religiøse tekster til de stærkt verdslige.
nordicvoices.no

Tonemestre: Zende Storlind og Louis Meyer

PULSAR 2025 er støttet af A.P. Møller og Hustru Chastine Mc-Kinney Møllers Fond til almene Formaal

Lasse Thoresen

Lasse Thoresen has been one of the composers of which Nordic Voices has cooperated with for the longest time. In 2005 he wrote *Diphonie, op. 39* to us, a work that was included in our recording *Djånki-Don* in 2008. Since then we have collaborated closely, and his works have been included in almost every program we have done since. It has been a huge privilege working with Lasse, and for each opus that has sprung to life from our collaboration, we, and perhaps Lasse as well, have been surprised over the new world that has unfolded. Such as with his work for this recording, *Land of Your Love, op. 57*. This work, premiering, suitable enough, on 8 March 2018, during the International Church Music Festival of Oslo, examines, among other topics, women's lack of freedom, expression and religion in the world in general, and specifically in Iran. Two of the works in the opus are based on poems by the Iranian poet Táhirih (1814-1852), who wrote poems in the philosophical Sufi tradition. Being a female writer, challenging the religious cornerstones of the Iranian society, and then publicly removing her veil, made her a challenging figure to the authorities. She was stoned for her beliefs in 1852. Lasse says this about this opus:

“The composition was based on two traditional Iranian settings of the poem, using the old modes of Iranian music that deviate radically from the Western well-tempered idiom. While traditional Iranian music is monophonic or heterophonic, I wanted to develop these melodies in a polyphonic style, involving the use of chords, and give the music a distinctly contemporary style. In order for the singers to approximate the non-tempered intonation of Iranian modality, I produced sounding parts for the singers with the exact intonation programmed on a computer. In the third piece performed at this occasion I had made a setting of Henrik Wergeland's (1808 - 1845) poem “Af Tidens Leilighed”, using archaic non-tempered Norwegian modes. Again the challenged was to develop non-tempered harmonies to go with the melody. The poet, being a contemporary of Tahirih provides a eulogy to the martyr of truth.”

Maja Ratkje

Maja Ratkje's piece *A Dismantled Ode To The Moral Value Of Art* is a firework of sounds, developed together with Nordic Voices. It was premiered during Båstad Kammarmusikfestival in 2012. This piece has appeared again and again in the programs presented by Nordic Voices, and we have sung the piece in almost all the different corners of the world. The reaction to the piece is the same wherever we go – amazement over the different sounds we produce and the sound spectrum the piece presents, fascination over the harmonic worlds the piece moves through, and the depths the music takes you to, although perhaps looking quite simply on the surface. The last section of the piece, citing Neil Young's words “Everything is gonna be all right” (from his song *Angry World*) sung by only one singer, sums up the music in an extremely fascinating way. Maja says this about the piece:

“It (Ode to Joy, ed. note) was performed under the direction of Leonard Bernstein at a concert to mark the fall of the Berlin Wall, it appears in Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange*. Hitler celebrated his birthdays with it, and the government of Rhodesia made it their anthem.

And the prisoners in German concentration camps played it. It also figured prominently at Mitterand's 1981 investiture. In 2012, we celebrate the Ode to Joy's 40 years anniversary as National Anthem of the EU.

Thanks to Neil Young and Edvard Grieg for inspiration.

Written in 2012 and referencing four decades of Beethoven's “Ode to Joy” as the European Union anthem, the piece begins enigmatically with textures that sound like vocal approximations of the sonic vocabulary of electronic music from half a century ago. As momentum builds, fragments of Beethoven (and, apparently, Grieg) drift into the texture. The work ends theatrically: singers casually exit, leaving a solo baritone intoning riffs from Canadian rock legend Neil Young, with the text “everything is gonna be alright.”

Is it? Given the context of the program, it seemed more about sad irony than affirmation. Whether or not Ratkje has created a lasting masterwork, *A Dismantled Ode* is a brilliant and provocative piece. If her bag of tricks is drawn from mainstream contemporary practice, the conception is striking. Nordic Voices' execution was magisterial.”