



**Therese Birkelund Ulvo** (b. 1982)

***Shadows and Shields***, for clarinet and orchestra

Christian Stene, clarinet  
Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra  
James MacMillan, conductor

Recorded February 5<sup>th</sup> 2015 (First performance)  
Grieg Concert Hall, Bergen



Therese Birkelund Ulvo (born 1982) studied composition at the Norwegian Academy of Music and Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. She also has a tight bond to Norwegian traditional music, a genre with rich array of microtonal and rhapsodic passages, open forms and performer-based compositions.

“I work primarily with people, not with instruments or paper”, says composer Therese Birkelund Ulvo. She composes in intimate dialogue with performers and focuses on how this exchange of ideas with other musicians can supplement the written score. Her music is also inspired by other art fields, such as film, text and sound art. The compositions often arise out of various forms of friction, noise and overtones created by the instruments. Ulvo’s forms appear open, sometimes bordering on the improvised, while maintaining a strong narrative aspect. This openness allows both performers and listeners the freedom to shape the music. On one level, the composer gives up control, but in return, she gains presence and a direct, almost tactile contact with the listener.

**About *Shadows and Shields***

A memory can be very diffuse. You think you remember it very clear, but if you try to recreate - all you find is a tactile sense of “something”. And that’s ok! Maybe we should pay more attention to this unclear part of our history. I think this is what is really worth saving. The sense.

*Shadows and Shields* picks up the lines between memories. It is full of “a sense of something” in the past, but still a bit cloudy. The solo part is not about being brilliant or playing fastest and loudest, but rather about telling something, and making people wonder.

I wrote *Shadows and Shields* for my friend Christian Stene and Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra in 2014. It is a piece where old memories meet nostalgic feelings about discovering the art of music. Christian and I played in the same school band in Bergen when we were young – a very stimulating environment. There was room for dedication and I realized that it might actually be possible to do something serious with music.

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