



The Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation

### International Rostrum of Composers 2015

**JAN ERIK MIKALSEN** (b.1979):  
*Songr for Orchestra* (2014)

The Norwegian Radio Orchestra,  
Miguel Harth-Bedoya, conductor

Recorded 30.10.14, NRK  
The University Aula, Oslo



Jan Erik Mikalsen. Photo: Eirik Slyngstad

Jan Erik Mikalsen is currently living in Oslo, Norway. He has studied at the Grieg Academy in Bergen, Norway, and at the Royal Danish Music Academy in Copenhagen, Denmark.

He has had a number of pieces performed by orchestras, including performances and commissions by the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra, Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, Norwegian Radio Orchestra, Stavanger symphony orchestra, Oslo Sinfonietta, Bodø Sinfonietta, Orkester Norden, Thomas Bloch, Quartet Artis Vienna, Reykjavik Chamber Orchestra, Orchestre de Flûtes Français, Björn Nyman, the Norrköping Symphony Orchestra, the

Sibelius-academy symphony orchestra and the Kristiansand Ensemble.

In 2006 he was, with three other Norwegian composer released the CD *Lights Out* with the Norwegian Radio Orchestra. In 2010 the piece *Angels stories* was released on the CD *the black spaces* with pianist Kristian Lindberg.

He has been performed at festivals such as Presencés Festival, Ultima Festival, Pablo Casals Festival, Casa da Musica, UNM, Nordic Music Days, Høstutstillingen, Hove Festival, Young Euro Classic Festival and Momentum Nordic festival.

He is regularly collaborating with the artist Bård Ask, which has resulted in exhibitions in London, Paris, Bergen and Oslo. They are collaborating now with the Video installation *Global Perspective* (music recorded by the Norwegian Radio Orchestra and the Norwegian Radio Boys Choir).

The piece *Parts II for Orchestra* is one of four works selected for the Toru Takemitsu Composition Award 2011 (judge Salvatore Sciarrino). The piece was world premiered during the finale 20th of January 2012 by the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra, and won the third prize out of 120 orchestra pieces sent into the competition. *Parts II for Orchestra* also won the Edvard Prize for best contemporary work 2012.

*Songr for Orchestra* was commissioned and world premiered by the Norwegian Radio Orchestra the 30th of October 2014 in Oslo.

Jan Erik Mikalsen was chosen as Intro Composer 2014-2016 that means the Norwegian Composer Union, Ultima Festival, NyMusikk (the Norwegian section of the ISCM) and Music Norway is going to promote his music outside Norway.

## SONGR FOR ORCHESTRA

*Songr for Orchestra* was commissioned and world premiered by the Norwegian Radio Orchestra in the Aula of the University in Oslo 30th of October 2014.

The piece was commissioned as a part of the constitution jubilee of Norway 2014, and actually I got the call from the chief of the Norwegian Radio Orchestra when I was on my way to Norway's highest mountain Galdhøgpiggen with my friend Anna Daniell.

The piece consists of three movements where the first movement dives into more nature sounds and open fifth. Secant movement moves more into folk music and then finally the third movement has a more melodic profile and then again the open fifth returns.

It is the Norwegian instrument Harding fiddle with a quarter tone tuned violin and viola on each side that has the main focus in the piece. There is also an Indian harmonium played by the piano player on occasion.

So the essence of the piece is to try combining all of Norway's history with an old Norse title (*Songr* means song), nature sounds, the open fifth, folk music and melodic elements and repetitive (that might "represent" today). I also wanted to bring in Indian harmonium which was exported from the west to India. This I do without actually using real folk music melodies, but rather using elements that resemble folk music.

## SONGR FOR ORCHESTRA

*Songr for Orchestra* ble bestilt og urfremført av Kringkastingsorkesteret i Universitets Aula i Oslo 30.oktober 2014.

Verket ble bestilt som en del av grunnlovjubileet, og jeg fikk telefonen fra sjefen i Kringkastingsorkesteret mens jeg faktisk var på vei opp til Galdhøgpiggen med min venninne Anna Daniell.

Verket består av tre satser, hvor 1.sats beveger seg imellom mer naturlyder og kvinter. 2.sats beveger seg mer over i folkemusikken, mens 3. sats har en melodisk profil og igjen kommer kvintene tilbake. Det er en hardingfele med en kvarttonestemt fiolin og bratsj på hver side som har hovedfokus. Det er også et indisk harmonium som pianisten må spille på tidvis.

Så essensen i verket er å prøve å binde alt sammen med norrøn tittel, naturlyder, kvinten, folkemusikken og frem til i dag med repeterende melodiske element, samt ha med et instrument som ble eksportert fra vesten til India. Dette gjøres uten at jeg benytter faktiske folkemusikkmelodier, men heller noe som minner om folkemusikk.