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LuLo

“The Restless”

—

Rued Langgaard reimagined

—

Kirstine Elise Pedersen, cello

Mathæus Bech, bass

feat. Kira Martini, vocal

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45'01''

A shared fascination for the underrated and overlooked Danish composer, Rued Langgaard, brought us together in this duo. There is something special about his music which transcends genres and traditions and lends itself to a wide variety of personal interpretations. We dived into his music by listening to recordings and transcribing them by ear, trying to distill each composition down to its essence (sometimes this would mean boiling a whole symphony down to a single page of melody and chords) and then approaching it in a new light, as if it was a piece of folk music. Creative choices has to be made when you are trying to play orchestral pieces with this unusual combination of cello and double bass, but we were elated by the intimate way in which these instruments speak together.

It quickly escalated, and suddenly we had enough material for an entire album. There is something deeply satisfying engaging with music in a tangible way, and while we could have made a CD or a vinyl record we chose to make a book, because there are so many deeply interesting and dramatic stories surrounding Langgaard's life. His music absolutely stands for itself, but it becomes even better once you dive into who he was as a person, how he was treated by his contemporaries, and how he was almost erased from history.

Kirstine Elise Pedersen and Mathæus Bech — Copenhagen, summer 2021



Langgaard (1893-1952) was born into a musical family: his mother was a piano teacher and his father a composer. From a very early age he showed signs of great musical talent, which his parents were keen to nurture. At the age of 11 he played his debut concert, barely being able to reach the pedals of the organ in the Marble Church in Copenhagen. He was praised for his playing and mature musicality, and was hailed as the new hope in European classical music. His first symphony was a roaring success, premiering with a big-shot conductor and the Berlin Philharmonic. He didn't know it then, but that evening would turn out to be the high point of his life. From there on, it took a drastic turn for the worse...

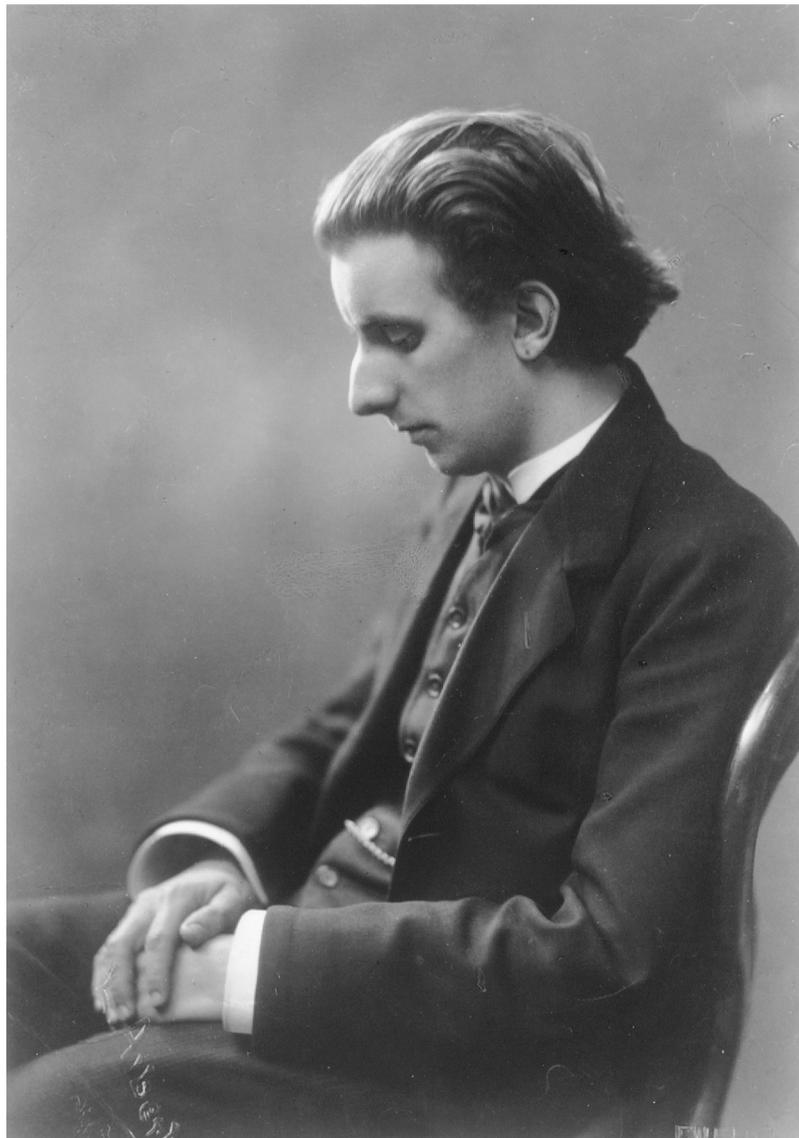
For some reason colleagues and critics in Copenhagen quickly turned against him, calling him a weirdo. They did not like the way he dressed and they did not like his 'arrogant' walk and 'squeaky' speaking voice. His compositions were also out of the ordinary: in his youth he would write music at least 50 years ahead of his time; in his adulthood he wrote anachronistic late romantic pieces; and in the last part of his life, he wrote something which is best described as punk.



Of the around 400 compositions he wrote, only 40 were performed in his lifetime, and around half of those he had to pay for himself. Everywhere he sent his music, it would be rejected almost immediately. Langgaard would then provocatively and obviously strike out the old title, write a new one, and send it back multiple times. The meaninglessness of composing 'for the fireplace', as he put it himself, led him to try to get a job as a regular organist, but even this proved impossible because of rumours about him having spread. This sent him into a deep depression where he spent most of his time reworking old compositions for no apparent reason, and talking profanity about Carl Nielsen to the newspapers.

It came to a point where the 'music elite' in Copenhagen got so tired of seeing Langgaard in the streets and hearing him moan and complain that they got together and each found some money to bribe the church in Ribe, a small town in the far opposite end of Denmark, to hire him, just to get him out of their sights and lives. Although Rued had sensed that his new job was an eviction from Copenhagen, he was at least happy to serve some kind of purpose.

When he died, his music was already mostly forgotten, and for a moment it looked like it would never resurface. Luckily a few coincidences and the hard work of some die-hard Langgaard fans mean that history is being rewritten, and he is slowly getting the appreciation he deserves.



Cowbells in the Pine Forest

2'58''

Rued Langgaard

Købjælder i Granskoven – Sommerferie i Blekinge – solo piano – BVN123 No.4



Thankful

2'38''

Mathæus Bech

Tak for Alt



Waltz for Rued

1'58''

Mathæus Bech

inspired by:

Andante Religioso – violin & organ – BVN 407



Swedish

3'22"

Rued Langgaard

Svensk – Sommerferie i Blekinge – solo piano – BVN123 No.6



Sun At Rest

3'06"

Rued Langgaard & Thor Lange

Temmelig langsomt – Lenaustemninger – string quartet & soprano – BVN136 No.4

Sol derovre går til hvile
Atter skal en dag nu dø
Nedad duve breddens pile
mod den stille dybe sø

Bort jeg så min ungdom ile
Svundne lys kom dvæl og bliv
Alt for tungt bag dunkle pile
lyder suk af hvissent siv

Bag min smertevandrings mile
står du fjerne klar og mild
Som bag dunkle rør og pile
står en ensom stjernes ild

Over there the sun is setting
Yet again a day must die
Willows on the bank are falling
in to the mirrored sky

Youthful years have gone and withered
Dwindling lights are all around
Darkness falls behind the willow
Sighs from rustling reeds will sound

Painful footsteps are behind me
Here you stand so clear and far
Through the willows all I see
is a lonely burning star

Third String Quartet

5'12"

Rued Langgaard

Rovbegærlig – 3rd string quartet, 1st movement – BVN183 No.1



God's Will

2'09"

Rued Langgaard

Prelude – Antikrist – symphony orchestra, organ, choir & singers – BVN192



Dying Angels

2'47''

Rued Langgaard

Prelude – Antikrist – symphony orchestra, organ, choir & singers – BVN192



“Like a never ending, monotonous walk through a desert – which was never made interesting by a small sandstorm or a cheerful little mirage – this opus kept the audience chained to their seats for almost 45 minutes without a break or any chance of escape. Some meaningless choir, or should I say wailing (the lyrics were inaudible and sounded like falleralallera), was placed as a cocky little bowtie on the tailend of this never ending worm.

The audience was shocked and appalled: along the seating rows, one could hear giggling, hissing, teethgrinding, suppressed “bloddy hells”, some were moaning, others spitting, and an elderly lady fainted and had to be carried away. When the piece was finally finished, a violent murmur broke out among the audience: insulted squeaks and laughter drowned out any fading applause.

The music contained colossal ice quakes, squeaking and creaking while a giant barrel organ was playing Maggiduddi. You could hear roof tiles rustling from skyscrapers down against the city; from Trekroner Fort they were saluting the birth of a prince in the middle of an automobile accident in Vimmelskaftet; whilst 700 cats were expressing their free love on the roof of the house where art dealer Ferlov was selling his antique gramophone records from the estate of Emperor Nero whilst bells were ringing from the restoration of Vor Frue Church.”

Review of Langgaard's 6th symphony in Ekstrabladet, 1921



Music of the Spheres

2'01''

Rued Langgaard

Som blomster på en kiste dekoreret med sødt duftende blomster

Sferernes Musik – symphony orchestra & distant orchestra – BVN128



“The celestial and earthly music from red glowing strings with which life plays with claws of beasts of prey – this life, with an iris-crown around its marble-face and its stereotypic–yet living–demonic smile as if from lily cheeks.

In Music of the Spheres, in the darkness and despair of night, I have completely abandoned any sort of motif, planned structure, form or coherence. It is 'music' cloaked in a black veil and the impenetrable mists of death...”

Rued Langgaard

Like sunbeams on a coffin decorated with sweet smelling flowers

Like twinkling stars on a dark blue evening sky

Like light and the abyss

Like refracted sunbeams in the waves

Like the twinkle of a dew drop on a summer's morning

Longing – despair – ecstasy

Soul of the world – abyss – universal soul

I will!

Chaos – ruin – near and far

Flowers wither

A glimpse of the sun through tears

Bells: Look, he is arriving!

Gospel of flowers – from far away

The new day

The end: Antichrist – Christ

The sound of Christ

The Master is Coming

3'35"

Rued Langgaard

Den store mester kommer – Violin sonata No.2 – violin & piano – BVN167 No.1



Ixion

2'54''

Rued Langgaard

Ixion – Symphony No. 11 – symphony orchestra & 4 tuba – BVN303



In the last part of Langgaard's life, he wrote mostly provocative and conceptual orchestral punk music. One of these pieces was dedicated to Carl Nielsen – the root of all of his misery, according to Rued. The piece, which is only 32 bars long, is written for the enormous instrumentation of: symphony orchestra, percussion, organ and choir with the only lyrics being the same as the title: “Carl Nielsen, our great composer”. At each end of the piece there are repetition bars with instructions in the score to “repeat for all eternity”.

Another one of his punk works “Efterhånden Vanvid” came with a similar instruction to “repeat with a crescendo until either the piano or your fingers break”...



Eventually Mad

1'48''

Rued Langgaard

Efterhånden Vanvid – Hel-Sfærernesmusik – solo piano – BVN371



In 1948, the 1000th anniversary for the cathedral in Ribe was coming up and they were planning a big celebration. Much to Rued's dismay, they had decided to hire an outside organist from Copenhagen, Finn Viderø, to play at the festivities. Rued was furious and started sabotaging the organ: messing with the fuse-box, locking the door to the organ and hiding the key etc., but this was quickly discovered by the janitor, who would fix whatever Rued had done.

The janitor then overheard Rued talking to himself about coming up during the concert to stab Finn Viderø, and this was a threat they had to take seriously, so they hired the local music teacher to sit as a bodyguard at the top of the stairs leading up to the organ. The concert started, and a few moments later the music teacher heard someone at the bottom of the stairs. He rushed down and saw Langaard standing with a mix of anger and sorrow in his eyes and what looked like a knife behind his back. He calmed Rued down and walked him away.



The Restless Wind

1'58''

Rued Langgaard

Den Hvileløse Vind – Gitanjalihymner – solo piano – BVN149 No.7



Tired

2'18''

Rued Langgaard & Mathæus Bech

Træt – Rosengårdsviser – choir – BVN164 No.3

Mens hybenrosehimlen
Spejlet i blanke brosten
Falmer til den bliver
Stjernevimmel i mine ben

The rosehip coloured sunset
Shines in the glossy cobble
Darkening, deepening
Little shooting stars in my legs

Kære moder ensomhed
Læg mig hen at sove

Dearest mother loneliness
Lay me down to rest

Mens byer bades
i gadelampernes gyldne varme
Håber jeg mine tanker
Holder op med at larme

The gas lamps fill the streets with
warm and golden beauty
I am hoping my thoughts
will quiet down for one night

Kære moder ensomhed
Læg mig hen at sove

Dearest mother loneliness
Lay me down to rest

Passing Train

4'17"

Kirstine Elise Pedersen

inspired by:

Bortkørende Tog – 2nd string quartet, 2nd movement – BVN145 No.2



Spring Breaks

2'00''

Rued Langgaard

Vaarbrud – 2nd symphony, 2nd movement – symphony orchestra – BVN53 No.2



The end of Langgaard's life seemed full of frustration and anger – you can sense this very clearly in his pieces from the last ten years of his life. It was a struggle: he had dedicated his whole life to creating music to enrich the human experience, but people responded by calling him names and putting him down.

It is almost unbelievable that perhaps the most beautiful piece of music he has ever written was also one of his very last. Amidst all of the chaos, punk and dissonance, a heart-crushingly beautiful violin sonata emerged with the title 'Andante Religioso'. Somehow even when everything was against him and had been for most of his life, he managed to find hope and see light in the darkness.

We are truly thrilled that he was not forgotten, because our lives would not be the same without him. From the bottom of our hearts: Thank you for the music, Rued!



KOMPOSITEN
DOMÖRANIST PROF
RUE
LANGGAARD
† 28.7.1895
† 10.7.1952
CONSTANCE
LANGGAARD
† TEFENS
† 3.12.1895
† 4.2.1969

Kirstine Elise Pedersen, cello

Mathæus Bech, bass

feat.

Kira Martini, vocal

Recorded, mixed and mastered by Mathæus

Translations by Kirstine & Mathæus

Colour photos from Arild by Mathæus

Special thanks:

Scandinavian Cello School

for lending us your beautiful place to record

Bendt Viinholt Nielsen

for your help with photos and all of your amazing work with Langgaard
and his music in general – what would we have done without you?!

Esben Tange

for your tireless passion and support along the way



**Futher reading, watching and listening
we highly recommend:**

The essensial book about Langgaard:

Den Ekstatiske Outsider

by Bendt Viinholt Nielsen

The wonderful and very informative website:

www.langgaard.dk

The masterpiece of a movie:

Rued Langgaard

by Peter Aalbæk Jensen, Anker Li & Erik Zappon

The many fantastic recordings released on Dacapo Records

by Berit Johansen-Tange, Nightingale String Quartet,

DR Symphony Orchestra with Thomas Dausgaard,

Anne Øland & Serguei Azizian and many more..!



