

OLE BULL — Stages of Life

The Norwegian violinist Ole Bull (1810-1880) is often called “the Nordic Paganini”. Wherever he played, he held audiences spellbound with his incredible technique and personal charisma. In his native Norway he is revered first and foremost for his pioneering and dynamic role in the movement for a national identity in the fields of music and the dramatic arts. Bull recognized Henrik Ibsen’s and Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson’s potential as dramatists, and gave them indispensable opportunities to advance their careers at his Norwegian theatre in Bergen. He held Norwegian folk music in as high esteem as he did European classical music, and he incorporated national melodies in his compositions to portray Norwegian nature and life, for example in *Norges Fjelde* and *Vilspæl i Lio*.

This recording, a sequel to the album that violinist Annar Follesø and the Norwegian Radio Orchestra released in 2010, features compositions that have only been played by Ole Bull himself, and which therefore have not been heard since his death in 1880. *Largo posato e Rondò capriccioso* (1841) and *Fantasy on “Lilly Dale”* (1872) are not just examples of Bull’s international style – they also bear witness to his stamina as performer and virtuoso. The surviving musical manuscripts are incomplete, but Wolfgang Plagge, with his intimate knowledge of Bull’s composition technique, and in collaboration with Annar Follesø, has been able to reconstruct the music.

ANNAR FOLLESØ violin WOLFGANG PLAGGE piano
Norwegian Radio Orchestra EUN SUN KIM conductor

Recorded in DXD 24bit/352.8kHz

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■ 2.0 LPCM 24/192kHz ■ 7.1.4 Auro-3D 96kHz

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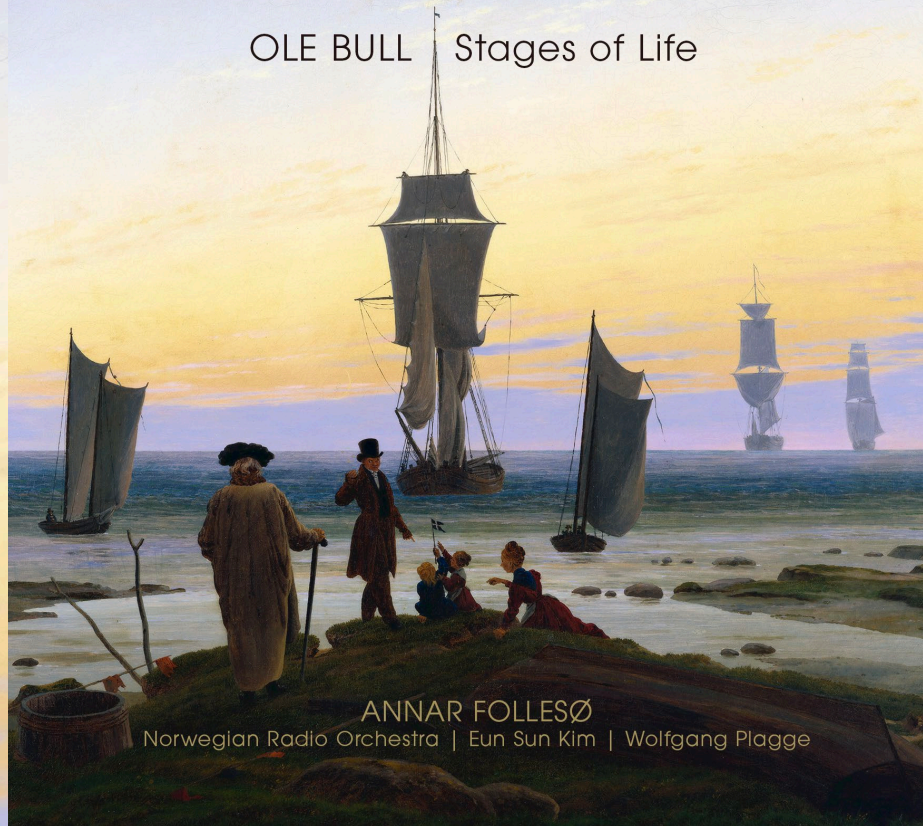
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OLE BULL Stages of Life



ANNAR FOLLESØ

Norwegian Radio Orchestra | Eun Sun Kim | Wolfgang Plagge

In his native Norway the violinist and composer **Ole Bull** (1810–1880) is revered as an artist who played a pioneering and dynamic role in the movement for a national identity in the fields of music and the dramatic arts. Bull was born in Bergen, and at an early age showed exceptional musical talent. He was able to benefit from the large number of good violin teachers in his hometown, and in his summer holidays, spent at his family's house in the country at Osterøy outside Bergen, he was enthralled by the sound of the Hardanger fiddle and by traditional Norwegian music and dances. From the age of eight he played in the “Harmonien” orchestra of the Bergen music society, and in this way he became familiar with the standard orchestral repertoire. In 1828 he moved to Christiania (today's Oslo) to study theology, but, finding himself unsuited to theoretical studies, he instead devoted himself to music, becoming leader of the theatre orchestra. But the desire to learn more took him abroad, initially to study with the violinist and composer Louis Spohr in Kassel. However, it was his violin studies in Paris and his meeting with Paganini that really inspired him to become one of the world's leading violin virtuosos. Following further studies and a concert tour in Italy, he made his breakthrough in 1835 with his concerts in Paris. Long tours in Europe and America followed. He received rapturous acclaim everywhere for his violin concertos and fantasias, composed expressly to allow him to impress and enchant audiences with their extreme technical demands and his virtuosity. Even in the year before he died he filled every seat at the Musikverein in Vienna, and the Steinway Hall in New York was filled to overflowing in the spring of the following year at what was announced as his farewell concert. Bull played for kings, emperors and presidents, and in the course of his life met numerous artists. He was a personal friend



of Mozart's widow and counted musicians such as Berlioz, Meyerbeer, Rossini, Mendelssohn, Schumann and Liszt as friends or colleagues.

Bull's worldwide fame and his charisma made him a natural source of inspiration for Norwegian artists. He made an impact on cultural life in Norway in countless ways. As soon as Bull saw Henrik Ibsen's and Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson's potential as dramatists, he gave them the opportunity to work at the theatre in Bergen, which he had himself purchased. He also appreciated the artistic qualities in folk music, and lifted it into the respectability of the concert hall by inviting the Hardanger fiddle player Myllarguten to play alongside him. His assertion that Norwegian folk melodies constituted art on as high a level as European classical music was a great boon to all folk musicians' self-confidence. Moreover, his transcriptions of Norwegian folk melodies for the piano were an eye-opener for Rikard Nordraak, a composer who went on to sharpen Edvard Grieg's awareness of, and emphasis on, the national element in music. Finally, as token of Bull's importance, one can note how frequently his name was cited as a reference in applications for scholarships and grants, and in parliamentary debates on the level of government spending on artists and the arts.

Edvard Grieg, for his part, saw Ole Bull as providing an essential foundation for the growth of a Norwegian cultural identity. Bull participated in Norwegian politics, in debates on literature and language, and in the fostering of institutions for the dramatic arts and music. For Grieg it was therefore natural, after Bull's death, to take the initiative to have a monument to him erected in their hometown. “The younger generation can only benefit from knowing the extent of our love and affection for Bull,” wrote Grieg when the monument was unveiled in 1901. The sculptor Stephan Sinding portrayed Bull playing his violin while listening to a water sprite playing the harp in the waterfall below. Bull really did listen to the sounds of the natural world and he also found inspiration in nature's more mystical and tantalizing elements – its moods and demons. In this, thought Grieg, lay Bull's importance for Norwegian music: “His virtuosity is something we can safely donate to Europe,” he declared. In this Grieg perhaps made a

misjudgment, because it was Bull's enormous international success as a violin virtuoso that cajoled the whole world into listening to someone from a small country that had little to show in the way of artistic traditions.

Ole Bull was an improvisatory musician and a performer-composer, and, like Paganini, he redefined what was considered technically possible for a violinist. When he played tunes or melodic passages of his own music, he had a special ability to move his listeners and touch their innermost feelings. As an improviser he had much in common with folk musicians – they had no need of a score, but could, totally spontaneously, enrich a performance by giving traditional tunes something personal, something of themselves.

Bull lived at a time when classical music was moving from the private drawing rooms and salons of the privileged classes to large public theatres and concert halls. Like his contemporary virtuoso colleagues, he was anxious to satisfy the expectations of the new, less well-schooled public. A commitment of this sort was bound to meet a mixed reception from music critics who considered it their job to goad performers and audiences to give top priority to Bach and Beethoven. Compared to composers of this calibre, Ole Bull obviously fell short, but that does not mean that his music was, or is, without value. The issue is whom we should compare him with. Composers such as Berlioz and Liszt talk of Bull as a musician with a touch of genius. Moreover, his catchy melodies and dazzling technique won the admiration of the 19th century's composers of light music. Several of them showed their admiration by making arrangements of his music, and by dedicating their own compositions to him.

In time, this sort of brilliant music fell into disfavour, and Bull did not escape the effects of this fluctuation in taste. It was said that his virtuoso compositions had no musical value and that they would be forgotten after his death. Such condemnation had dire consequences. Some of his scores were burnt, some were sold to collectors and have never seen the light of day, while a good many have lain hidden and forgotten in archives and libraries in, to a greater or lesser extent, their complete form. It is many of *these* works that today have re-surfaced, and it is this music that can tell new generations why Bull in his day was lauded all over the world.

In 2010, on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of Ole Bull's birth, soloist Annar Follesø and the Norwegian Radio Orchestra under Ole Kristian Ruud's direction were able to present for the first time since the composer's death in 1880 the Spanish fantasia *La Verbena de San Juan* and Bull's violin concertos in A major and E minor (2L-067-SABD). We now follow up this earlier album with a new recording of forgotten works.

In 1831 Bull left Norway in order to study in France and Italy, and did not return to his homeland for another seven years. During these years he had established his reputation as a virtuoso in the Paganini tradition and had performed in practically every European country. News of his success and fame had obviously reached Norway. During a visit to Stockholm in 1838 he was knighted by King Karl Johan, king of Norway and Sweden (from 1814 to 1905 the two countries were in a form of union by which they shared a common monarch), and in the Norwegian capital he was from then on habitually received as a prince. In his concerts in Norway he improvised on Norwegian folk melodies, and performed a new composition he initially called *Fjeldenes Echo* ("The Mountains' Echo"). According to his listeners, this was a pot-pourri of traditional Norwegian dances and familiar melodies of the national-romantic sort. In the following years Bull re-arranged this composition several times, and it received new titles, dependent on where it was performed: *Hjemkomst til Fædrelandet* ("Return to the Homeland"), *Klänge aus der Heimat* ("Sounds from the Homeland") or *Zvukyz vlasti* (Echo from my Homeland). The final title was *Norges Fjelde* ("Norway's Mountains"). This and the other titles make it obvious that there are elements of tone painting in this music. It is possible that Henrik Wergeland's poem from 1842 with the same title was inspired by Bull's composition.

No complete scores of *Norges Fjelde* are known to have survived, but Wolfgang Plagge has taken what does remain of the score, in addition to some extant short pieces – a "polska" dance and the folk tune «Der sto' tre Skjelmer aa maka paa Raa» ("Three rascals were making plans") – and used them as a basis for a complete reconstruction of the work. The incomplete score does show that Bull has, in addition to the pieces mentioned above, made use of the familiar folk melody "Stusle sundagskvelden" ("Dreary Sunday Evening"). With his intimate

knowledge of Bull's music and style, and in collaboration with Annar Follesø, Plagge was able to interpret Bull's intentions and complete the bars that were missing. Bull had a habit of including in his concerts a tune that was popular locally, wherever he was. Therefore, as a tribute to the son of Bergen who put Norway on the musical map of the world, Plagge allows this work to close with the French melody of Bergen's very own anthem, *Bergensiana*: "Jeg tok min nystemte Cithar i hende" ("I took up my newly-tuned cithara").

Vilspel i Lio is another composition in which Bull portrays Norwegian nature through tone painting. "Vilspel" is a word used by folk musicians. It simply meant that a musician played without a score, relying only on his or her own imagination or memory. It is possible Bull opened this particular composition in the same way. He often worked his way into a piece by first playing a varied selection of tunes. Then he would weave variations and instrumental bridge passages into the music. A movement for strings would provide the starting point for the orchestral accompaniment, which was gradually augmented with contributions from the woodwind. Brass and percussion were usually used in the orchestral tutti. Norwegian composer Halfdan Kjerulf had reservations about this as a composition method. When he heard *Vilspel* in Kristiania in 1842 he wrote that it was "a Spring song from the mountains". On hearing the music, "the listener could blend his or her own inner tones with those of the Hardanger fiddle and of the majestic nature all around." Kjerulf considered it painterly music, and found it strongly alluring in many places, but he took exception to "dissonant and wild passages" disturbing the beautiful harmony: "Our national pastorelle only lasts a while, then goes off-course in modernist confusion." He finds the rondo theme reminiscent of the theme in *Largo posato e Rondò capriccioso*, and when the music had the character of "ordinary passages and normal artistic phrasing" it did not suit what Kjerulf saw as the composition's main idea: "the whole thing suddenly breaks down so that the composition can close in the form in which it began, and the mountain tones disappear accompanied by soft, beguiling harmonies." Kjerulf approved of the ending, but maintained that the symmetry was disturbed by elements that did not belong to the piece as a whole. However, he reckoned the work would be revised and improved with time, in accordance with Bull's standard practice. And he was right. Bull continued to play and change *Vilspel*, which received a major revision as late as 1860.

Bull had, in fact, never really learnt to compose. On the other hand he had, through his performance experience, gained an intuitive feeling for how he should build up tension and excitement in music. He saw his compositions as a means of displaying his virtuoso skills, which no one could equal. The works existed for the benefit of his playing, and not vice versa. The music, he believed, was a thing of the moment, to be heard and felt then and there, and it was not something that should be dissected and analysed afterwards from an academic, movement-by-movement standpoint.

Working on the reconstruction of *Vilspel* was one of the challenges Wolfgang Plagge, with his background as composer, found most fascinating. The existing material from Bull's hand is extensive, while the formal process seemed far more classical than in the previous works. Large sections of the soloist's part are set down in the form of rough notes in a – to put it mildly – sketchy form; however, working with Annar Follesø, Plagge has managed to reconstruct and assemble a solo part in Ole Bull's spirit. In order to attract attention, Bull developed the ability to play on all four strings at the same time, so that the violin almost gave the impression of an organ. His characteristic manner of playing chords is very much a fundamental element in all the solo cadenzas.

In Bull's lifetime Prague was part of the Austrian empire, and it was in Prague in 1841 that he enjoyed some of his happiest moments. His concerts were so popular that during his stay in the city he had to give no less than twelve of them. No one could remember any other visiting musician giving so many concerts in such a short period. In a letter to his wife Félicie he wrote, on 17th February, that he had just begun work on a new composition. He completed it ten days later, on the very day he was due to give his penultimate concert in the Czech capital. He gave the work the title *Gruss aus der Ferne* ("A Greeting from Afar"), and the music critic in the newspaper Bohemia interpreted the musical content as "Melodies of Farewell and Return" ("Töne der Trennung und des Wiedersehens"). This work, which was also given the title *Largo posato e Rondò capriccioso*, was really made up of several movements that Bull had played at earlier concerts; in subsequent years he revised the work many times, often giving it a new title. At a concert in Kristiania in December 1842 he called it *Åndehilsen* ("Spiritual Greeting"), a

title considered by Kjerulf to be misleading since – in spite of the sombre opening – it ended as a humoresque. However, Kjerulf had to admit that the work was a “spiritually enriching product”. Its conception had a depth; its orchestration was colourful; and the performance was opulent and polished. Bull gave the last version of this work the title *Vision*, and dedicated it to the American writer Henry W. Longfellow.

Largo posato e Rondò capriccioso opens with dark chords in D minor alternatively played by woodwind and strings. The mood can remind one of the beginning of Mozart’s overture to *Don Giovanni*, the opera that received its premier under Mozart in the Ständtheater in Prague, the very venue where Bull gave the first performance of his own work. Following an orchestral interlude, the soloist returns with an emotional and songlike theme in G major. The humorous, cheerful rondo theme is in strong contrast to the sombre opening. In the course of the rondo there are several contrasting and surprising elements that suggest associations with opera and ballet. The orchestral arrangement, by Nikolai Riise, is based on Bull’s original – but partly incomplete – manuscript from 1841. Annar Follesø has composed cadenzas and violin passages where they are missing.

Ole Bull’s wife, Félicie, died in 1862. In autumn 1870 Bull married Sara Thorp; she was 30 years younger than him. The couple lived at the home of Sara’s parents in Madison, Wisconsin, several times and for longish periods, and it was here that he composed many of his last works. In a letter to his son, dated 18th January 1872, Bull told him that he had begun working on a *Fantasy on “Lilly Dale”* for violin and piano: “I think you will like the introduction. Naturally, it is not too brilliant; I want the variations to stand out. I hope to complete the work tonight or early tomorrow.” The ballad “Lilly Dale” (“’Twas a calm, still night”), with text and melody written by H.S. Thompson, was printed in 1852, and tells the story of the beautiful Lilly and her tragic death. In Norway the melody is familiar as “Kjærligheten fra Gud” (“Love from God”), a hymn much used in weddings.

Ole Bull had often boasted that his compositions only took him a few days to complete, but this was by no means the case here. The *Fantasy on “Lilly Dale”* is probably based on the

Grand Duetto Concertante that Bull first performed in 1854. That version has not survived, but all this shows how quickly he could snap up a popular tune and assimilate it in a swash-buckling composition in his familiar rhapsodic style: in this case with a dramatic opening, followed by a set of variations and a breakneck conclusion. Here, too, Wolfgang Plagge has had to reconstruct the work from incomplete scores, although the piano part is more or less intact, except for the conclusion. The violin part, however, here as in so many of Bull’s scores, is only very roughly sketched in. We know that Bull was famous for his improvisatory abilities, and that he constantly adjusted and improvised the solo parts in his works. Plagge’s performing version can therefore be taken as just one of several possible models.

In 1872 it was many years since Bull had last composed. The reason for his decision to compose again was that he was about to set out on what he called a “six-week campaign”, and for that end he needed a new work. From the late 1870s there is an autographed melody arranged as a chorale, which Bull dedicated to Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson. Plagge has arranged this for violin and piano, calling it “Siste romanse” (“Last Romance”).

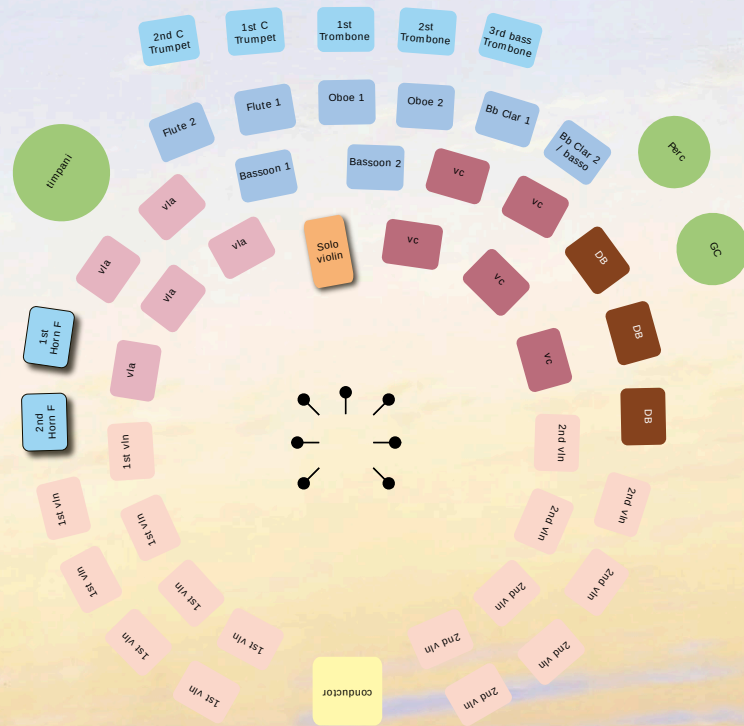
Annar Follesø (born 1972) studied at the Barratt Due Music Institute in Oslo with Soon-Mi Chung and Stephan Barrat-Due, and at The Indiana University Jacobs School of Music in Bloomington, Indiana, with Mauricio Fuks. In Indiana he also studied chamber music with, among others, György Sebök, Menahem Pressler and Leonard Hokanson, and the baroque violin with Stanley Ritchie. Follesø has toured extensively both as soloist and as chamber musician, playing at festivals and giving concerts in countries such as the USA, China, England, Russia, France, Austria, Italy, South Korea, Ukraine and Mexico. He has played with many distinguished conductors, including Andris Nelsons, Miguel Harth-Bedoya, Ole Kristian Ruud and Eivind Gullberg Jensen. With Wolfgang Plagge, Follesø is artistic director of Sunnmøre Chamber Music Festival in western Norway. The present recording is Follesø’s fourth for 2L, and it is the second devoted to Ole Bull’s music. The first of these two, released in 2010, the hundredth anniversary of Bull’s birth, received outstanding reviews – indeed, it was the first recording of music not composed by Grieg to receive the Grieg Society of Great Britain’s award “Record of the Year”. Annar Follesø plays a violin built by Enrico Rocca in the 1870s.

The **Norwegian Radio Orchestra** began life in 1946 as a provider, first and foremost, of light music for radio broadcasts. The orchestra's first conductor, Øivind Bergh, led for many years a popular programme from the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation's (NRK) main studio in Oslo, which is still where the orchestra does much of its work. Today the orchestra consists of about fifty musicians and has, over the years, assumed a wide variety of musical styles, from symphonic works and contemporary music to advanced jazz, folk music, rock and evergreens. It is not least the orchestra's variety of repertoire and its flexibility which have earned it the motto "an orchestra for the whole of Norway". This is a position it has managed to maintain even after NRK lost its broadcasting monopoly in the 1980s. In recent years the orchestra has made a number of recordings and has expanded its activities to other venues in Oslo and to touring in Norway and abroad.

Eun Sun Kim (born 1980) studied at Yonsei University in Seoul and the State University of Music and Performing Arts, Stuttgart – initially with the intention of becoming a composer. However, her work as an accompanist for singers triggered an intense interest in conducting. In 2008 she won first prize in the López Cobos International Opera Conductors Competition, and she was immediately engaged as assistant conductor to the competition's founder, Jesús López Cobos, at the Teatro Real in Madrid. In the years that followed, in addition to working with López Cobos, she studied with Daniel Barenboim and Kirill Petrenko. Kim has worked as guest conductor with several of the world's leading opera houses, and from the 2019-20 season has been engaged as principal guest conductor with Houston Grand Opera. She has also been appointed Music Director at San Francisco Opera, an appointment she will take up in the 2021-22 season. In addition she is much sought after as a conductor of symphonic music, and has appeared as guest conductor with many orchestras, including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra and the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra.

— *In our view, Eun Sun Kim's affinity with Italian opera and with the early Romantic orchestral palette makes her a superlative interpreter of Ole Bull's idiosyncratic music.*

Wolfgang Plagge was born in Oslo, Norway, of Dutch parents in 1960. At a very early age he showed a genuine interest in classical music, and started playing the piano, as well as writing his first compositions, aged four. He was ten when he won his first international competition on English television; one year later he also won the Young Pianists' Competition in Oslo. In 1972 he made a sensational recital debut in Oslo – with King Olav V present in the auditorium. He went on to win several national and international prizes in the years that followed, among them the Levin Prize in 1987. In 1986 he graduated from the Musikhochschule in Hamburg with distinction. He pursues an active career as an international pianist, and is much in demand as a chamber musician. The composer Wolfgang Plagge had his first work published at the age of twelve, and has since steadily developed into a mature, original and prolific creative artist. His oeuvre spans from liturgical music to chamber music, works for piano, vocal and symphonic works. Ever since his student days in Norway and Germany the phenomenon *time* has been one of Plagge's main points of interest: studying the time flow, manipulating our sense of time and how to utilize time as a forming tool have been central items in his creative process. His particular love for and research on the medieval music of Northern Europe has been inspirational for a substantial number of works. Wolfgang Plagge's music is performed by musicians, ensembles and orchestras all over the world, and his reputation as a composer continues to grow. In 1996 he was "Composer of the Year" with the Trondheim Symphony Orchestra. In 2002 he received the American ASCAP Award.



Fiolinisten og komponisten **Ole Bull** (1810–1880) står i den norske bevissthet som en pionér og pådriver i utviklingen av nasjonal identitet i musikk og scenekunst. Han ble født i Bergen og viste tidlig en usedvanlig musikalsk begavelse. I hjembyen fantes det flere dyktige fiolinpedagoger, og når han om sommeren oppholdt seg på familiens landsted på Osterøy utenfor Bergen, lot han seg fascinere av hardingfela og den nasjonale musikken og dansen. Fra åtte-årsalderen fikk lille Ole spille med i musikksekkapet «Harmonien» i Bergen og ble på den måten kjent med det klassiske orkesterrepertoaret. I 1828 dro han til Christiania for å bli teologistudent, men han egnet seg ikke for teoretiske studier og ble isteden leder av teaterorkestret. Lengselen etter å lære mer førte ham først til fiolinisten og komponisten Louis Spohr i Kassel, men det var studiene i Paris og møtet med Paganini som for alvor inspirerte ham til å bli en av verdens store fiolinvirtuoser. Etter en studie- og konsertreise til Italia gjorde ha sitt avgjørende gjennombrudd med konserter i Paris i 1835. Deretter la han ut på lange turneer i Europa og i Amerika. Over alt vakte han begeistring med sine fiolinkonserter og fantasier som var komponert for å imponere og begeistre publikum med en uhørt teknikk og virtuositet. Selv i 1879, året før han døde, fylte han den prestisjefylte salen til Musikverein i Wien til siste plass. Det samme var tilfelle da han våren 1880 annonserte sine avskjedskonserter i Steinway Hall i New York. Ole Bull spilte for konger, keisere og presidenter og kom på sin vei i kontakt med utallige kunstnere. Han var en personlig venn av Mozarts enke og hadde berømte musikere som Berlioz, Meyerbeer, Rossini, Mendelssohn, Schumann og Liszt som venner eller samarbeidspartnere.



Med sin verdensberømmelse og sin menneskelige utstråling ble han en inspirasjonskilde for norske kunstnere. Ole Bull oppdaget Henrik Ibsens og Bjørnstjerne Bjørnsons evner som dramatikere, og ga dem avgjørende muligheter til å utvikle seg på hans norske teater i Bergen. Han så folkemusikkens kunstneriske kvaliteter og løftet den inn i de borgerlige konsertsalene ved å la hardingfelespilleren Myllarguten fra Telemark spille sammen med seg. Og han ga folkemusikerne selvtillit ved å hevde at de norske slåttene var høy kunst på like linje med den europeiske musikktradisjonen. Slåttetranskripsjonene hans for piano ble en åpenbaring for Rikard Nordraak, som igjen oppfordret Edvard Grieg til å satse på det nasjonale elementet i musikken. I stipendsøknader og i Stortingets debatter om bevilgning til kunstnere og kunstneriske formål ble Ole Bull kontinuerlig benyttet som referanseramme.

Edvard Grieg betraktet Ole Bull som selve forutsetningen for at en nasjonal kultur kunne vokse frem. Han spilte en rolle i norsk politikk, i litteratur- og språkdebatten og i institusjonsutviklingen av scenekunst og musikk. Derfor tok Grieg initiativ til å få reist et monument over ham i hjembyen. «Den unge slekt har godt av å vite, hvordan vi, den eldre, har elsket Bull,» skrev Grieg da monumentet ble innviet i 1901. Billedhugger Stephan Sinding valgte å fremstille den unge Ole Bull spillende, mens han lytter til nøkkens harpeklang fra fossen. Bull lyttet til naturmaktene, og det var ifølge Grieg hans nasjonale betydning, «for virtuosens kan vi rolig skjenke Europa». Nedvurderingen av virtuosens var kanskje en feilslutning, for det var Ole Bulls enorme internasjonale suksess som fiolinvirtuos som var årsaken til at han fikk en hel verden til å lytte på en mann fra et lite land med minimale kunsttradisjoner.

Ole Bull var improvisasjonsmusiker og utøverkomponist, og på samme måte som Paganini flyttet han grensene for det man trodde var teknisk mulig på en fiolin. Når han spilte melodier, hadde han en egen evne til å berøre lytterne og vekke deres innerste følelser. Som improvisator hadde han noe til felles med folkemusikerne som ikke spilte etter noter, men som spontant i spillende øyeblikk tilførte de gamle slåttene noe av sitt eget.

Ole Bull levde i en tid hvor den klassiske musikken var på vei fra overklassens private kammer-saler til store offentlige teater- og konsertsaler. Som sine øvrige virtuose kolleger ønsket Bull å innfri forventningene til det nye og mindre skolerte publikum. Det måtte resultere i blandede kritikker fra musikkanmeldere som så det som sin oppgave å oppdra utøvere og publikum til å prioritere Bach og Beethoven. Sammenlignet med slike størrelser i musikkhistorien måtte Ole Bull falle igjennom som komponist, men det betyr ikke nødvendigvis at musikken hans var eller er verdiløs. Problemet er at det benyttes feil målestokk. Komponister som Berlioz og Liszt omtalte Ole Bull som en musiker med geniale trekk, og hans iørefallende melodier og halsbrekkende teknikk vakte beundring hos 1800-tallets underholdningskomponister. Flere av dem æret ham med å arrangere musikken hans og tilegne ham sine komposisjoner.

Virtuosmusikken kom etter hvert i miskreditt, og det rammet også Ole Bull. Det ble skapt en myte om at de virtuose komposisjonene hans ikke hadde noen musikalsk verdi og at de ville dø med ham. Dette fikk dramatiske konsekvenser. Noen partiturer ble brent, noen ble solgt til samlere uten at de er kommet til rette, og en god del av partiturene har ligget bortgjemt i arkiver og biblioteker i en mer eller mindre komplett form. I dag er disse verkene igjen blitt tilgjengelig, og det er denne musikken som kan fortelle nye generasjoner hvorfor Ole Bull i sin tid ble feiret av en hel verden.

Ved 200-årsjubileet for Ole Bulls fødsel kunne Annar Follesø og KORK under Ole Kristian Ruuds ledelse for første gang siden Ole Bulls død i 1880 presentere den spanske fantasien *La Verbena de San Juan* og Bulls fiolinkonsserter i A-dur og e-moll (2L-067-SABD). Denne platen er en oppfølger med glemte verker.

I 1831 forlot Ole Bull Norge for å studere i Frankrike og Italia og kom først tilbake til hjemlandet syv år senere. I løpet av den tiden hadde han gjort seg bemerket som fiolinvirtuos i Paganini-tradisjonen og spilt i nesten samtlige europeiske land. Ryktene om hans suksess og berømmelse i utlandet hadde for lengst nådd Norges kyster. Under et besøk i Stockholm i 1838 ble han slått til ridder av unionskongen Karl Johan, og i den norske hovedstaden ble han deretter møtt som en fyrste. På konsertene i Norge improviserte han over norske folke-

melodier og fremførte en ny komposisjon som han først kalte *Fjeldenes Echo*. De som hørte komposisjonen, beskrev den som et potpurri over norske folkedanser og kjente nasjonale melodier. I de følgende årene bearbeidet Bull musikken flere ganger, og verket fikk stadig nye titler alt etter hvor han spilte: *Hjemkomst til Fædrelandet*, *Klänge aus der Heimat* eller *Zvukyz vlasti* (Ekko fra mitt hjemland). Den endelige tittelen ble *Norges Fjelde*, som sammen med de øvrige titlene forteller at det finnes tonemaleriske elementer i musikken. Henrik Wergelands kjente dikt med samme tittel fra 1842, kan være inspirert av musikken til Bull.

Det finnes bare ufullstendige manuskripter av *Norges Fjelde*, men Wolfgang Plagge har ved hjelp av partiturene og noen bevarte enkeltstykker: «polsdans» og folkemelodien «Der sto' tre Skjelmer aa maka paa Raa», gjennomført en fullstendig rekonstruksjon av verket. I det ufullstendige partituret har Bull i tillegg til de nevnte stykkene benyttet den kjente folketonen «Stusle sundagskvelden». Med sin inngående kjennskap til Ole Bulls musikk og stil har Plagge i samarbeid med Annar Follesø tolket Bulls intensjoner og supplert de taktene som mangler. Det var ikke uvanlig at Ole Bull på sine konserter la inn en kjent lokal melodi. Som en hyllest til bergenseren som satte Norge på verdenskartet, lar Plagge derfor verket tone ut med den franske melodien til Bergen bys egen nasjonalsang, *Bergensiana*: «Jeg tok min nystemte Cithar i hende».

Vilspel i Lio er et annet verk hvor Ole Bull ved hjelp av tonemaleriske elementer ville skildre norsk natur. «Vilspel» var et uttrykk som folkemusikerne brukte. Det betød ikke noe annet enn at utøveren spilte uten noter og ut fra sin fantasi og hukommelse. Kanskje startet Bull stykket på en liknende måte. Han begynte gjerne med å sette sammen et variert utvalg av melodier. Etter hvert føydde han til variasjoner og instrumentale overganger. En strykersats dannet utgangspunktet for orkesterakkompagnementet som etter hvert ble utvidet med innslag av treblåsere. Messinginstrumentene og paukene ble som oftest benyttet i orkestrets tutti-partier. Komponisten Halfdan Kjerulf syntes ikke at det var noen god komposisjonsmetode. Da han hørte *Vilspel* i Kristiania i 1842, skrev han at det var «en Forårssang på fjellet». Ved å høre musikken kunne lytteren «blande sitt eget indres toner sammen med Hardangerfelens og den storartede omgivende Naturs». Kjerulf skrev at det var en malende

musikk. Den tiltalte ofte og sterkt, men han likte ikke at «dissonanser og forvillelser» blandet seg i den skjønn harmoni: «Det nasjonalt pastorale er kun en tid bevart, så skeies det ut i det modernt-konfuse.» Rondotemaet syntes han liknet på temaet i *Largo posato e Rondò capriccioso*, og når musikken gikk over i «alminnelige passasjer og kunststykker», passet det ikke inn i det Kjerulf anså for å være komposisjonens hovedidé: «Så avbrytes plutselig det hele for at stykket dog kan endes i den første form, og fjelltonene forsvinner ledsaget av bløte, smektende harmonier.» Kjerulf syntes avslutningen var god, men han mente at symmetrien ble forstyrret av elementer som ikke hørte hjemme i verket som helhet. Han regnet imidlertid med at verket med tiden ville bli bearbeidet og utviklet til det bedre, slik Ole Bull pleide å gjøre. Og ganske riktig, Bull fortsatte å spille og endre på *Vilspel*, som senest i 1860 gjennomgikk en omfattende revisjon.

Ole Bull hadde aldri lært ordentlig å komponere. Til gjengjeld hadde han gjennom sin utøverpraksis en intuitiv følelse for hvordan han skulle bygge opp spenninger i musikken. Han så på sine komposisjoner som et redskap for å vise frem et virtuost og fantastisk spill som ingen kunne gjøre ham etter. Verkene var til for spillet hans og ikke omvendt. Musikken skulle høres og føles i øyeblikket, og ikke i etterkant analyseres ut fra et satsteknisk synspunkt.

Arbeidet med rekonstruksjonen av *Vilspel* var noe av det som Wolfgang Plagge med sin bakgrunn som komponist syntes var mest interessant og spennende. Det eksisterende materialet fra Bulls hånd er omfattende, mens det formelle forløpet virket langt mer klassisk enn i de foregående verkene. Store deler av solopartiet er overlevert i form av stikknoter i en mildt sagt utviklet form, men i samarbeid med Annar Follesø har det lyktes Plagge å fylle ut og rekonstruere en solostemme i Ole Bulls ånd. Bulls bemerkelsesverdige firestemmige akkordspill har fått bred plass, og akkordteknikken hans er langt på vei et bærende element i alle solokadensene.

Praha var på Bulls tid en del av det østerrikske keiserriket. Her opplevde han i februar 1841 noen av sine lykkeligste stunder. Tilstromningen til konsertene hans var så stor at han under oppholdet måtte gi hele 12 konserter. Ingen kunne huske at noen annen tilreisende kunstner

hadde gitt så mange konserter på en gang. I et brev til sin kone Félicie skrev han den 17. februar at han nettopp hadde begynt på et nytt verk. Sluttstreken ble satt ti dager senere, samme morgen som han skulle holde sin nest siste konsert i den tsjekkiske hovedstaden. Bull kalte verket *Gruß aus der Ferne* (En hilsen fra det fjerne), og musikkanmelderen i avisen *Bohemia* tolket det musikalske innholdet som «adskillelsens og gjensynets toner» («Töne der Trennung und des Wiedersehens»). Verket som også ble kalt *Largo posato e Rondò capriccioso*, var egentlig satt sammen av flere enkeltsatser som Bull hadde benyttet på tidligere konserter, og i de følgende årene bearbeidet han verket flere ganger, ofte med nye titler. På en konsert i Christiania i desember 1842 kalte han verket for «Åndehilsen», en tittel som Kjerulf syntes var en avsporing siden musikken tross den dystre innledningen endte som en «humoreske». Kjerulf måtte likevel innrømme at verket i det minste var «et åndrikt produkt». Det var dybde i oppfatningen, en malende instrumentasjon og rikdom og glans i utførelsen.

Largo posato e Rondò capriccioso starter med alvorsfylte akkorder i d-moll som vekselvis presenteres i blåse- og strykergruppene. Stemningen gir visse assosiasjoner til åpningen av Mozarts ouverture til *Don Juan*, operaen Mozart uroppførte i Ständetheater i Praha der Bull spilte sitt eget verk for første gang. Etter et orkestermellomspill kommer solofiolinen tilbake med et nytt sangbart tema i G-dur. Det innledende largo vender tilbake, og etter en fiolin-kadens følger et «Cantabile». Melodien i finalen er rytmisk og melodisk beslektet med folketonen «Stusle Sundagskvelden». Rondotemaet gjentas før musikken går over i en avsluttende coda. *Largo posato e Rondò capriccioso* fikk sin mest omfattende revisjon og endring i 1872 med tittelen *Vision*. På denne innspillingen benyttes partituret fra 1841 i en utgave av Nikolai Riise.

Ole Bulls franske kone, Félicie, døde i 1862, og høsten 1870 giftet Bull seg med den 30 år yngre Sara Thorp. Ekteparet bodde i flere perioder hjemme hos hennes foreldre i Madison i Wisconsin. Det var her Bull komponerte noen av sine siste verker. I et brev til sønnen Alexander kunne han den 18. januar i 1872 fortelle at han hadde begynt på en *Fantasy on «Lilly Dale»* for fiolin og piano: «Introduktionen dertil til den tror jeg, Du vil like, den er naturligvis ikke brillant, for at gjøre Variationerne desto mer fremtrædende. Jeg haaber at blive færdig dermed i aften eller i morgen tidlig». Balladen «Lilly Dale» (Twas a calm, still night)

med tekst og melodi av H.S. Thompson, ble trykt i 1852 og handler om den vakre Lilly og hennes tragiske død. I norsk sammenheng er melodien kjent som «Kjærlighet fra Gud» og en mye brukt salme i kirkebryllup.

Ole Bull hadde mange ganger tidligere skrytt av at komposisjonene hans ble til i løpet av noen få dager, men det var heller ikke tilfelle denne gangen. *Fantasy on «Lilly Dale»* er sannsynligvis en videreutvikling av *Grand Duetto Concertante* som Bull fremførte første gang i 1854. Denne versjonen er ikke bevart, men den viser hvor raskt han kunne fange opp en populær melodi og bake den inn i en ellevill komposisjon med sin kjente rapsodiske stil: en dramatisk innledning etterfulgt av en variasjonsdel og en halsbrekkende avslutning. For å fremføre verket måtte Wolfgang Plagge også her foreta en gjennomgripende rekonstruksjon på grunnlag av de ufullstendige og mangelfulle manuskriptene. Klaverpartiet er noenlunde fullstendig, bortsett fra slutten. Her, som i flere av de tidligere nevnte verkene, er solostemmen nokså skissepreget. Vi vet at Ole Bull var særlig kjent for sine improvisasjoner, at han både omarbeidet og improviserte solopartiene i verkene. Plagges nedskrevne versjon kan derfor i noen grad betraktes som en av flere mulige løsningsmodeller.

I 1872 hadde Bull ikke komponert på mange år. Grunnen til at han igjen forsøkte å sette noe ned på papiret, var at han skulle ut på det han kalte «et seks ukers felttog». Og til det trengte han nytt verk. Fra slutten av 1870-årene finnes det som autograf en koralharmonisert melodi som Ole Bull tilegnet Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson. Den har Wolfgang Plagge arrangert for fiolin og piano og kalt for «Siste romanse».

Kringkastingsorkestret (KORK) startet i 1946 som et radioorkester med både klassisk og underholdningsmusikk som repertoar. Orkesterets første dirigent, Øivind Bergh, ledet i mange år populære og folkekjære sendinger fra Store studio, som er orkesterets daglige arbeidsplass. I dag består orkesteret av ca. 50 klassisk utdannede musikere og har i årenes løp fått stadig nye musikalske arbeids- oppgaver. Med hovedvekt på det klassiske, spenner repertoaret fra barokk til samtidsmusikk i tillegg til jazz, viser, rock, pop og folkemusikk. Det er ikke minst Kringkastingsorkestrets repertoarmessige bredde og fleksibilitet som har gitt KORK

hedersbetegnelsen «Hele Norges orkester». Det er en posisjon orkesteret har beholdt selv etter at NRK mistet sitt sendingsmonopol i 1980-årene. I de senere år har orkesteret gjort en rekke innspillinger og utvidet sin virksomhet til forskjellige konsertarenaer i Oslo og internasjonal turnévirksomhet.

Eun Sun Kim (f. 1980) har sin utdanning fra Yonsei Universitet i Seoul, og Staatliche Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst Stuttgart. Hun begynte sine musikkstudier med sikte på å bli komponist, men arbeid som akkompagnatør for sangere vekket for alvor hennes interesse for direksjon. I 2008 vant Kim 1. pris i López Cobos Internasjonale Operadirigentkonkurranse, og hun ble umiddelbart engasjert som assistent for konkurransens stifter, Jesús López Cobos, ved Teatro Real i Madrid. I tillegg til arbeidet med López Cobos, hadde hun i de følgende årene også perioder med studier under Daniel Barenboim og Kirill Petrenko. Kim har gjestedirigert ved en rekke av verdens ledende operahus, og er fra sesongen 2019/20 engasjert som første gjestedirigent ved Houston Grand Opera. Hun er utnevnt til Music Director ved San Francisco Opera, en stilling hun tiltrer i sesongen 2021/22. Hun er også en svært etterspurt symfonisk dirigent, og har gjestedirigert orkestre som Los Angeles Philharmonic, Bayersk Radios Symfoniorkester og Cincinnati Symphony. Denne plateinnspillingen er hennes tredje samarbeidsproduksjon med Kringkastingsorkestret.

— *Slik vi ser det, gjør Eun Sun Kims affinitet for italiensk opera og for den tidligromantiske orkesterpaletten henne til en fremragende tolker av Ole Bulls idiosynkratiske musikk.*

Wolfgang Plagge (f. 1960) ble kjent da han vant Ungdommens Pianomesterskap 11 år gammel og debuterte som pianist året etter. Han har i voksen alder virket vel så meget som komponist og har til nå komponert mer enn 130 verker. Plagge vokste opp i Oslo som sønn av nederlandske foreldre. Han viste tidlig spesiell interesse for musikk og begynte allerede fire år gammel å spille klaver. Han debuterte 12 år gammel med egen klaveraften i Universitetets Aula i Oslo. Før debuten hadde han utmerket seg i mange sammenhenger. 1970 vant han en talentkonkurranse i britisk fjernsyn og året etter Ungdommens Pianomesterskap i Oslo. I oppveksten studerte han klaverspill med Reimar Riefling og Jens Harald Bratlie og musikkteori

med Øistein Sommerfeldt og Johan Kvandal. 1980 ble han opptatt som student ved musikkhøyskolen i Hamburg. Der hadde han blant sine lærere Evgeni Koroliov i klaver og György Ligeti i komposisjon. I årene etter utdannelsen har Plagge manifestert seg mer som komponist enn pianist, selv om han har opprettholdt en utøvende virksomhet. Som komponist har han en omfattende produksjon med en verkliste som spenner fra liturgisk musikk til symfoniske verker. Hoveddelen består imidlertid av klaver- og kammermusikk. Stilistisk favner Plagge vidt, og han kan ikke sies å tilhøre en bestemt retning eller gruppe. Karakteristisk for hans musikk er en spesiell evne til å ivareta instrumenters særpreg slik at utøvere føler seg hjemme i det han skriver. Flere verker er derfor i ferd med å få plass på standardrepertoaret. Et annet karakteristisk trekk er hans søken mot uttrykksmåter i middelaldermusikk. Dette kan henge sammen med hans engasjement for katolsk kirkemusikk i tillegg til en genuin interesse for tidlig musikk. Med sin mangesidige produksjon er han en av vår tids mest spennende musikere.

Annar Follesø (f. 1972) har sin utdanning fra Barratt Due Musikk institutt i Oslo, hvor han studerte med Soon-Mi Chung og Stephan Barratt-Due, og Indiana University Jacobs School of Music i Bloomington, hvor han studerte med Mauricio Fuks. I Indiana fikk han også anledning til å studere kammermusikk med blant annet György Sebök, Menahem Pressler og Leonard Hokanson, og barokkfiolin med Stanley Ritchie. Som solist og kammermusiker har han turnert, gjestet festivaler og spilt konserter i en rekke land, deriblant USA, Kina, England, Russland, Frankrike, Østerrike, Italia, Sør-Korea, Ukraina og Mexico. Blant dirigentene har han samarbeidet med er Andris Nelsons, Miguel Harth-Bedoya, Ole Kristian Ruud og Eivind Gullberg Jensen. Sammen med Wolfgang Plagge er Follesø kunstnerisk leder for Sunnmøre kammermusikkfestival. Denne innspillingen er hans fjerde for 2L, og den andre viet verker av Ole Bull. Det første Bull-albumet kom ut i jubileumsåret 2010, og fikk fremragende kritikker. Som første innspilling med annet repertoar enn Grieg, ble albumet tildelt Grieg Society of Great Britains "Record of the Year". Annar Follesø spiller på en fiolin bygget av Enrico Rocca omkring 1870.







2L (Lindberg Lyd) records in spacious acoustic venues; large concert halls, churches and cathedrals. This is actually where we can make the most intimate recordings. The qualities we seek in large rooms are not necessarily a big reverb, but openness due to the absence of close reflecting walls. Making an ambient and beautiful recording is the way of least resistance. Searching the fine edge between direct contact and openness; that's the real challenge! A really good recording should be able to bodily move the listener. This core quality of audio production is made by choosing the right venue for the repertoire, and balancing the image in the placement of microphones and musicians relative to each other in that venue. There is no method available today to reproduce the exact perception of attending a live performance. That leaves us with the art of illusion when it comes to recording music. As recording engineers and producers we need to do exactly the same as any good musician; interpret the music and the composer's intentions and adapt to the media where we perform.

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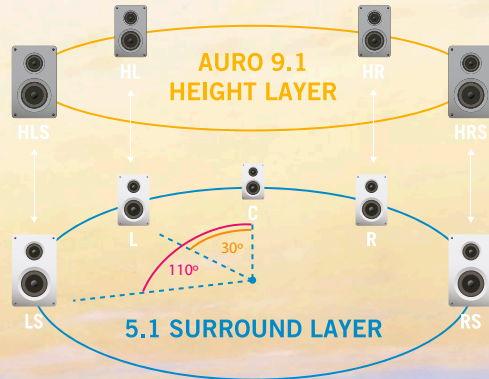
Morten Lindberg balance engineer and recording producer

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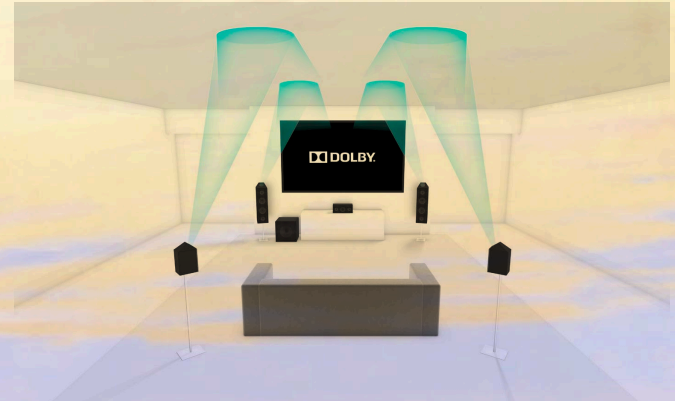
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Blu-ray authoring **msm studio group**

Screen design and Blu-ray authoring **Michael Thomas Hoffmann**

Pure Audio Blu-ray concept development **Morten Lindberg** and **Stefan Bock**

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Ole Bull 1810-1880

- 1 **Largo posato e Rondò capriccioso** 12:59
Annar Follesø; Norwegian Radio Orchestra; Eun Sun Kim
- 2 **Norges Fjelde** 16:49
Annar Follesø; Norwegian Radio Orchestra; Eun Sun Kim
- 3 **Fantasy on “Lilly Dale”** 11:39
Annar Follesø; Wolfgang Plagge
- 4 **Vilspel i Lio** 13:10
Annar Follesø; Norwegian Radio Orchestra; Eun Sun Kim
- 5 **Siste romanse** 2:48
Annar Follesø; Wolfgang Plagge

Annar Follesø, violin
Norwegian Radio Orchestra
Eun Sun Kim, conductor
Wolfgang Plagge, piano