



LAWO
CLASSICS

HERMAN VOGT

Cello and Piano Concerto

AUDUN SANDVIK—CELLO
SVEINUNG BJELLAND—PIANO
NORWEGIAN RADIO ORCHESTRA
ANNA-MARIA HELSING—CONDUCTOR

Herman Vogt's work extends a line of artistic thinking established in the Romantic period. His music presents an emotional but formally disciplined response to the central questions of existence, grappling with the very problem of the place of the individual in the world that occupied the likes of Ludwig van Beethoven, Robert Schumann and Gustav Mahler. Much of Vogt's music follows the established rubric of Classical Romanticism but dresses it in a modern but often tonal sound, both sensitive and stringent. His music's duality echoes fundamental philosophical dilemmas that have always remained with us, pitting the veiled and vague against the distinct and clear.

Vogt was born in Drammen in central-southern Norway. He studied composition at the

Norwegian Academy of Music (where he also studied violin) with Lasse Thoresen, Olav Anton Thommessen, Henrik Hellstenius and Bjørn Kruse and at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague with Martijn Padding and Louis Andriessen. His music has been performed by the Oslo orchestras and new music ensembles, and by many more besides.

Vogt's scores often harbour great drama and energy. In 2015, the composer completed a Violin Concerto that took its lead from Beethoven's own work in the form, and explored the dialectical interplay between soloist and orchestra. As he examined and probed concerto form, Vogt began to think of the solo concerto as a form 'in which the orchestra is regarded in relation to a soloist and must therefore constantly assume varying roles.'

Vogt's Cello Concerto was commissioned by the soloist on this recording, cellist Audun Sandvik. An initial version was completed in 2014, but the composer returned to it later, completing a new version in 2022 that replaced the final movement and added a second movement. In this final form, the piece was first performed by Sandvik and the Norwegian Radio Orchestra (KORK) in April 2023.

The Cello Concerto is a large-scale piece in three movements, but a work that combines broad, shifting landscapes and expressionistic tendencies with a certain intimacy. Throughout it, we hear Vogt mining a wide sound palette from the orchestra. In the first movement, titled *Fantasia*, the soloist emerges serenely as if from within an equally placid orchestra, but works its way into various states of agitation

induced by outbursts from the tutti ensemble imbued with fantastical instrumentation and a beguiling harmonic spectrum - particularly so in the straining final pages of the movement that follow the cadenza from the soloist, itself initiated on a pizzicato and accompanied by percussion, timpani and harp.

The second movement is a lyrical *Canzona* marked 'largo e tranquillo' (slow and tranquil). Its long, lyrical lines are based on a simple melody of two adjacent notes but the music moves from its exalted state to a frenzied one in its central section.

The third movement, in sonata form, is altogether more brittle. It is characterized by highly effective interplay between orchestra and soloist, who constantly provide one another with musical fuel while

also appearing in opposition—a singular being versus a diverse community (a snapshot of Vogt’s view of concerto form). The cello can appear agitated in this movement, scurrying around in search of shelter through heavy orchestral weather, an extension of Vogt’s idea desire to contrast the solo instrument’s long, lyrical lines with more technically demanding sections whose complexity suggests something more transcendental. The invigorating harmonic transitions in this movement are particularly noteworthy, even as rendered by an orchestra used mostly traditionally. The cello strives to ascend through much of the movement, its upward scales eventually leading to a sense of resignation. But the concerto ends on an energizing throttle-surge of optimism.

Vogt’s piano concerto was written between 2017 and 2021 as the culmination of the composer’s cycle of three concertante works including those for cello and violin. The work represents a conscious effort on behalf of the composer to search for a new musical clarity and give fresh voice to classical ideals. The score’s neoclassicism is underpinned most obviously by its scoring, modeled on that for Mozart’s piano concertos but with added percussion manned by two players.

Immediately in the first movement, listeners will surely sense they are in a different harmonic space in this concerto—one also influenced by Vogt’s retrospective glance at Mozart, as much of the harmonic argument is built using triads. The music twists, scissors and clambers its way up through triads, though a

feeling of unease appears to pull it back down again. Beguilingly spelt and orchestrated chords hold the music in the air like a cloud, while gleaming pillars of brass appear like punctuation. Underneath all that is a sort of blurred sonata form in which the exposition and development are intermingled and the recapitulation is but a fleeing reminiscence, itself preceding a fiery cadenza-like passage for the soloist.

The concerto’s middle movement is slow as in the cello concerto but less direct and more guarded, like an improvisatory idyll in which time stands still until, around two thirds in, a brass call heralds change. What Vogt describes as the music’s ‘peaceful soreness’ presents a direct contrast to the mobility of the outer movements, the finale being characterized by an initial moto

perpetuo built of pointillist gestures from trumpet and percussion which quickly induces the sense of a chase in which orchestra and soloist are on one another’s tail. The chase calms for a slow central section for strings in which the piano is absent until it offers up a series of marbled chords in the manner of cadenza. When the chase ensues, it does so in a more developed light: more hindered, less fluent, those pillars of brass back again to complicate the music’s flow. Echoing the closing bars of the cello concerto, this piece also ends on an upward surge.

Andrew Mellor

*Andrew Mellor is author of
The Northern Silence—Journeys
in Nordic Music and Culture
(Yale University Press)*



Herman Vogt

Composer

Herman Vogt (b. 1976) studied composition from 1999 to 2004 at the Norwegian Academy of Music with Bjørn Kruse, Lasse Thoresen, Olav Anton Thommessen and Henrik Hellstenius as teachers, and finished a master's degree in composition the same place of study in 2018 under the tuition of Asbjørn Schaathun. In 2003 Vogt studied composition at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague with Martijn Padding and Louis Andriessen. Vogt studied the violin from 1995 to -97 at the Norwegian Academy of Music.

Vogt's music has been performed at the World Music Days (ISCM Festival) in Sydney and Belgium (ISCM and Transit Festival), Nordic Music Days in Copenhagen and Stockholm,

ULTIMA Festival in Oslo, Borealis Festival in Bergen, and other festivals both in Norway and abroad.

His music has been performed by the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, Norwegian Radio Orchestra, Trondheim Symphony Orchestra, BIT20 Ensemble, Oslo Sinfonietta, Athelas Sinfonietta, pianists Ian Pace and Sveinung Bjelland, violinist Geir Inge Lotsberg, cellists TimoVeikko Valve and Audun Sandvik, organist Anders Eidsten Dahl, conductors Edward Gardner, Vasily Petrenko, Pierre-André Valade, Baldur Brönnimann, Christian Eggen, Ingar Bergby, Peter Szilvay, Per Kristian Skaland and Anna-Maria Helsing, and by various ensembles and musicians both in Norway as well as abroad.





Audun Sandvik Cello

Audun Sandvik's heartfelt playing and lively performances make him a much in-demand soloist, orchestral musician, chamber musician and cello teacher. He has appeared as a soloist with orchestras including the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, the Norwegian Radio Orchestra, Stuttgarter Kammerorchester, as well as frequent appearances at Norwegian and international chamber music festivals.

Together with pianist Sveinung Bjelland, he garnered international attention with the release of "Rachmaninoff / Shostakovich: Cello Sonatas" (LWC1131, 2017).

The music on the beautiful new release "Trace of Lament" (LWC1234, 2022), 5 commissioned works for cello and orchestra, is written for Audun by 3 Norwegian composers who otherwise essentially write music with audiovisual expressions, but who here concentrate on the cello as solo-instrument. The project is designed to enable these brilliant composers to be seen on the formal stage of classical music.

Audun is currently a cellist with the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra where he actively participates in the further development of this innovative ensemble. From 2005 through 2019 he held the position

of Co-Principal Cello in the Norwegian Radio Orchestra. During this period he became known from a number of TV appearances, both as a soloist, chamber musician, presenter and mentor. He also performs with leading artists within the genres of jazz, pop and rock.

He is employed as Professor of Cello at the Norwegian Arctic University in Tromsø, where he is cultivating a positive and thriving milieu, following on from the work he undertook in his many years as a cello teacher at the Norwegian Academy of Music. Starting Autumn 2023, he is also cello professor at the highly rated Grieg Academy, University of Bergen.

Audun is the Artistic Director of the classical Gloppen Music Festival. The cello he plays was built in Rome

in 1695 by Giorgio Taninger. “A musician for today and a first-rate soloist, chamber musician and orchestral musician” was the jury's verdict when Audun was honoured with “The Lindeman Prize for Young Musicians” as one of our foremost soloists.

Sveinung Bjelland Piano

Sveinung Bjelland is one of Norway's leading classical pianists. His recording of Scarlatti and Mendelssohn sonatas received international acclaim and was nominated for the Norwegian Grammy Award. It was followed by numerous albums, including a celebrated recording of concertos by Chopin and Schumann in 2018.

He studied with Professor Hans Leygraf at Mozarteum in Salzburg and at the University of the Arts in Berlin. After his studies, which he completed with top marks and special distinction, he received numerous awards and was named “Young Musician of the Year” by the Norwegian Concert Institute in 1999. Bjelland has since then been much

in demand, both as a concert soloist and as a chamber musician throughout the world. He has also collaborated closely with the German tenor Daniel Behle for many years, performing in prestigious halls in London, Berlin, Vienna, Lucerne, Paris, Munich and Frankfurt. Their three recordings of *Die schöne Müllerin*, *Dichterliebe* and *Die schöne Magelone* received enthusiastic reviews from the international music press.

Sveinung Bjelland served as artistic director of the Gloger Festival in Norway from 2002 to 2008. He is professor of piano at the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo and the University of Agder in Kristiansand.





Anna Maria Helsing Conductor

Within a short time the Finnish conductor has conducted all the major Finnish and Swedish orchestras including the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, Finnish National Opera Orchestra, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, Gothenburg Symphony and Royal Swedish Opera Orchestra. She also conducted the Philharmonia Orchestra (London), Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (London), Royal Danish Opera Orchestra, Norwegian Radio Orchestra, Barcelona Symphony, Iceland Symphony, Trondheim Symphony, Odense Symphony, Jena Philharmonic, Estonian National Symphony

and Musikkollegium Winterthur (Switzerland).

Anna-Maria Helsing gave her debut at the Finnish National Opera with Adriana Mater by Kaija Saariaho in 2008. She has led a number of world premieres, most recently Momo at the Royal Danish Opera and Magnus-Maria by Karólína Eiríksdóttir on tour in Scandinavia. She has also performed established operas by Mozart, Cimarosa, Puccini, Mascagni, Madetoja and Bernstein at the Tampere Opera and Savonlinna Opera Festival to name but a few.

Anna-Maria Helsing feels a special affinity with the sound and style

of modernism and contemporary music.

Upcoming highlights are her debut with the Budapest Festival Orchestra in Budapest in February and revisits with the Finnish Radio Symphony, Jönköping Sinfonietta, Norrbotten Chamber Orchestra as well as a China tour with the BBC Concert Orchestra.

Anna-Maria Helsing began her career as a violinist (with diplomas from the Conservatory of Jakobstad and the Academy of Music in Bydgoszcz), leading chamber orchestras before serving as Artistic Director of the Pietarsaari Sinfonietta and conductor of the Wegelius Chamber Orchestra. She has attended masterclasses with Jorma Panula, Vladimir Jurowski and John Carewe.

Just after finishing her studies in the class of Leif Segerstam at the Sibelius Academy, the Finnish conductor was chosen to take part in the International Conductor's Academy of the Allianz Cultural Foundation under the guidance of among others Esa-Pekka Salonen and Gustavo Dudamel.

In 2011 Anna-Maria Helsing became the first conductor to be awarded the Louis Spohr Medal in Seesen (Germany). In 1999 she won the First Prize in the International Competition for 20th Century Music for Young Artists in Warsaw.

Source:
www.annamariahelsing.com/bio

Norwegian Radio Orchestra

The Norwegian Radio Orchestra (Kork) is known as “the whole land’s orchestra” and is today regarded with a unique combination of respect and affection by its music-loving public. With its remarkably diverse repertoire, this is no doubt the orchestra most heard throughout the land—on the radio, television, and online, and at various diverse venues around the country.

It is a flexible orchestra, performing all from symphonic and contemporary classical music to pop, rock, folk, and jazz. Each year the orchestra performs together with internationally acclaimed artists at the Nobel Peace Prize Concert, which is aired to millions

of viewers worldwide. Those with whom the orchestra has collaborated in recent years include the Kaizers Orchestra, Mari Boine, Jarle Bernhoft, Diamanda Galàs, Renée Fleming, Andrew Manze, Anna Netrebko, and Gregory Porter.

The Norwegian Radio Orchestra was founded by the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation in 1946. Its first conductor, Øivind Bergh, led the ensemble in a series of concerts from the broadcasting company’s main studio, establishing the basis of its popularity and securing its status as a national treasure. The orchestra continues to perform in the context of important media

events. It is comprised of highly talented classical instrumentalists and yet its musical philosophy has remained the same: versatility, a light-hearted approach, curiosity for all kinds of music, and an unwillingness to pigeonhole musical styles. Petr Popelka is currently the orchestra's Chief Conductor.





Credits

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Herman Vogt ¹⁹⁷⁶

Cello Concerto

1. Fantasia, Lento–Allegro moderato e risoluto ^{13:00}
2. Canzona, Largo e tranquillo ^{08:45}
3. Sonata, Allegro–Tranquillo–Allegro agitato e energico ^{12:54}

Piano Concerto

4. Largo–Allegro con moto ^{11:21}
5. Adagio sereno; sempre tranquillo ^{10:30}
6. Vivace–Adagio largamente–Vivace ^{10:03}