

Works for clarinet and strings
by Ness / Mikalsen

Vóren / Fleurs

TERJUNGENSEMBLE

Pierre Xhonneux, *clarinet*
Lars-Erik ter Jung, *conductor*

VÓREN is a name for the figure we become when we dream, the one that takes action in our dreams while our body is lying down, sleeping. Right from the start I imagined this not as a concerto, but rather as a kind of dramatic scene where the clarinet plays a nearly operatic main character, while the role of the strings evolves from simply providing a background into imparting a more active bustle and gleam, and then becoming an actual actor in the drama.

The piece is part of a project in which I try to interpret the art nouveau style in musical form, but transposed into our own time and superimposed with my own style, which features a strong element of quarter tones. I find it fascinating that the visual aspect of the art nouveau style was developed further in certain kinds of science fiction, for example by the *Alien* designer H.R. Giger or the French sci-fi cartoon series artist Pierre Druillet. In this piece it is the clarinet voice, in particular, that is conceived as a variant of the organic/floral/ornamental shapes that can be perceived visually in the art nouveau style.

I have envisaged that the piece begins in the dark, in a cave, and as one becomes accustomed to the dark, as it were, the walls of the cave assume new forms. Is there life there, are there subterranean creatures, insects? The

piece tries to escape this darkness, but otherwise is not programmatic.

In addition, the piece was inspired by several types of folk music including Norwegian and, especially, Arabic. It seems appropriate to seek out folk music models when one is composing organic microtonal melodies, as the overtone series, with its quarter-tone intervals, has inspired folk music all over the world for hundreds of years.

—*Jon Øivind Ness*

FLEURS was commissioned by Lars-Erik ter Jung and the TERJUNGENSEMBLE, and had its world premiere with Pierre Xhonneux and the TERJUNGENSEMBLE on 30 October 2022 at Sandefjord kunst- og kulturkirke. The commission received financial support from the Composers' Remuneration Fund. The work comprises three movements, each of which is named after two flowers that grow on the island of Jeløya in Moss. It is a further development of several other works I have composed featuring themes from the forest and the sky, including *Dendrophilia*, for two harps, *Les Etoiles*, for string quartet, and *Bois*, for solo oboe and orchestra. I lived on Jeløya for three years and spent considerable time exploring the island's forests. All the flowers named in the piece are on the

official list of endangered species, and my aim has been to draw attention to nature and its vulnerability.

While the work is not actually a clarinet concerto, focus is placed on the clarinet, which is supported by 11 string instruments. The first movement is named for the flowers Fargemyske and Strandrisp (dyer's woodruff and sea lavender). The movement begins with high-pitched clarinet and strings suffused with a somewhat mystical and serene quality, and ends with recurring and escalating string glissandos. The second movement bears the names of the flowers Solrose and Bakkeknapp (rock-rose and small scabious), and has a sense of tranquillity that is occasionally interrupted by rapid clarinet and string runs (ghost tones). The third movement is named for the flowers Hvitmure and Oslosildre (rock cinquefoil and Oslo saxifrage), and is centred mainly on the note D and the quarter tones around it. This is interrupted by a dance with pizzicato in the strings.

—*Jan Erik Mikalsen*

Born into a family of musicians in a region where the rich heritage of wind bands is appreciated and preserved, **PIERRE XHONNEUX** pursued his musical studies in Belgium, and in Paris with Nicolas Baldeyrou. Open-minded towards a wide musical repertoire, he

likes participating in a great variety of ensembles and has, in recent years, been invited to perform in prestigious festivals and concert halls throughout Europe. He was appointed E-flat clarinet soloist in the Liège Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (Belgium) in 2009, and has since 2015 served as the E-flat clarinet in the Oslo Philharmonic (conductor K. Mäkelä) and since September 2015 as clarinet teacher at the Barratt Due Institute of Music in Oslo. During the 2017-2018 season, Pierre was invited to be the Principal Clarinet of Malmö Symfoniorkester (Sweden), and since 2016 he has been the clarinetist of the Oslo Chamber Academy.

The **TERJUNGENSEMBLE** was established in 2019. The ensemble was founded as a chamber orchestra with a clearly contemporary profile, but in concert the ensemble juxtaposes new music with a contrasting and relevant historical repertoire. The TERJUNGENSEMBLE released its first album, *Kimen*, in 2020, featuring music from the opera *Kimen* by Magnar Åm, presented as concert pieces for strings. The following year *Den annen sang* was released, including works commissioned from Ørjan Matre, Agnes Pettersen and Herman Vogt, with folk singer Ingebjørg Lognvik Reinholdt as soloist. The ensemble performed at the Ultima Oslo Contemporary

Music Festival in September, 2020. In 2022 the ensemble presented a work commissioned from Tyler Futrell, *Stabat Mater*, twice at the Oslo International Church Music Festival, as well as at the Hardanger Music Festival. The work was performed along with two other Stabat Maters, those composed by Alessandro Scarlatti and Giovanni Battista Pergolesi.

Both works on this album were commissioned for the ensemble and clarinetist Pierre Xhonneux. Jan Erik Mikalsen's Fleur had its world premiere at the Musikk i Sandefjord Kirke festival in the autumn of 2022, and *Vören*, composed by Jon Øivind Ness, was presented first at the ensemble's concert at Fagerborg Church in Oslo in January, 2023. The commissioned work Woods, by Martin Ødegaard, for choir and strings, was also given its world premiere at these concerts together with the choir Ensemble 96.

The ensemble's artistic director, **LARS-ERIK TER JUNG**, has had an extensive career as a violinist and conductor. He has broad experience in leadership roles due to his work with various ensembles, including the terJungsextet and the Telemark Chamber Orchestra. In addition to his work in conducting the traditional symphonic repertoire, ballet and opera, he has commissioned works

from a number of Norwegian composers, thus becoming a prominent figure in the field of contemporary music. This has resulted in a number of world premieres and recordings, and in a comprehensive discography featuring a variety of releases on the Fabra label.

TERJUNGENSEMBLE

Johannes Sciacco Schantz, *violin (track 1)*
Miriam Helms Ålien, *violin (tracks 2-4)*
Inga Mathilde Gorseth, *violin*
Baard Winther Andersen, *violin*
Marit Egenes, *violin (track 1)*
Edward Daniel, *violin (tracks 2-4)*
Emil Huckle-Kleve, *violin*
Hanna Marie Thiesen, *violin*
Anders Rensvik, *viola*
Arthur Bedouelle, *viola*
Ingvild Nesdal Sandnes, *cello*
Ulrikke Henninen, *cello*
Kjetil Sandum, *double bass*
Lars-Erik ter Jung, *conductor*

Vóren / Fleurs

1. **JON ØIVIND NESS** *Vóren* (2021) ————— 28:28

JAN ERIK MIKALSEN *Fleurs* (2022)

2. I *Fargemyske & Strandrisp* ————— 08:24

3. II *Solrose & Bakkeknapp* ————— 09:49

4. III *Hvitmure & Oslosildre* ————— 09:23

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Pierre Xhonneux, *clarinet*

Lars-Erik ter Jung, *conductor*

Both compositions were commissioned by Lars-Erik ter Jung for TERJUNGENSEMBLE and Pierre Xhonneux, and supported by the Norwegian Composers' Fund / Det Norske Komponistfond (*Vóren*) and the Composers' Remuneration Fund / Komponistenes Vederlagsfond (*Fleurs*).

Recorded at Gamle Aker Church, Oslo, 3 December 2022 (tracks 2-4) and Sofienberg Church, Oslo, 28 January 2023 (track 1).

Recorded, produced and edited by Geir Inge Lotsberg.

English translation by Shari Nilsen.

Photography and design by Erik(sen).

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