



Tapestry

Telemark Chamber Orchestra
Lars-Erik ter Jung, Conductor



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New music by
Agnes Ida Pettersen
Hugo Harmens
Øyvind Mæland
Kristin Bolstad
Tyler Futrell
Stine Sørli
Eric Skytterholm Egan

Texts
Telemark Chamber Orchestra
– *going astray, luckily!* by Asbjørn Schaathun
Musical voyages and conversations by Stine Sørli

FBRCD-14

Tapestry

1. Agnes Ida Pettersen (1981): *I det stille // Epilog* 04:57
2. Hugo Harmens (1983): *Flytende* 06:40
- Øyvind Mæland (1985): *Four for Strings*
3. 1. *Tune-in-tune-out* 02:20
4. 2. *Unisons* 02:10
5. 3. *Water-repellent scherzo* 01:57
6. 4. *Hum* 02:14
7. Kristin Bolstad (1981): *Frå eit landskap* 08:20
8. Tyler Futrell (1983): *Brittle Fluid* 11:40
9. Stine Sørli (1978): *Tapestry* 06:52
10. Eric Skytterholm Egan (1983): *... i en eller annen oase ...* 09:08

Telemark Chamber Orchestra
Lars-Erik ter Jung, Conductor

Eskild Abelseth, Doublebass solo (1)
Ingvild Nesdal Sandnes, Cello solo (6)
Kristin Bolstad, Vocal solo (7)

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Telemark Chamber Orchestra – going astray, luckily!

Asbjørn Schaathun

When Øistein Sommerfeldt and Finn Mortensen, later the first professors of composition at the Norwegian Academy of Music, held a joint debut of their compositions in the Oslo University Auditorium in 1954, they represented an entirely new generation (nearly) on their own. Until the Academy was founded in 1973, the Norwegian composition community consisted mainly of individuals, not of groups – each one as the king of his own castle. There were few composers, and most of them were aesthetically isolated. If one were in addition a proto-modernist, as was Fartein Valen, and as were Bjørn Fongaard and Finn Arnestad later, one's isolation was complete. The possibility of conducting an ideologically or aesthetically developmental debate on this basis was, of course, nearly impossible.

Thus the mere phrase “generation of composers” is enough to make one rejoice on behalf of the Norwegian music community.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the Norwegian music community finds itself in the most expansive phase it has ever experienced. It has been said that if both large and small venues are considered, from symphony orchestra halls to small jazz or rock clubs, over 5000 concerts a year are presented in Oslo alone. The Norwegian Academy of Music alone presents over 400 concerts a year! Musical life is veritably exploding, and as a result working conditions for Norwegian composers have been radically transformed. It is enough to mention the successes achieved by the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra or the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra has travelled extensively, thus serving as a superb ambassador for Norwegian music. In the contemporary music sector, ensembles such as the Oslo Sinfonietta, BIT20 in Bergen and the Bodø Sinfonietta, not to mention Cikada and the somewhat newer Ensemble Ernst, as well as countless more recently established smaller ensembles, have helped to popularise advanced musical idioms by bringing young, enthusiastic musicians into contact with new and significant musical trends.

An ensemble such as the Telemark Chamber Orchestra provides a clear illustration of the breadth and richness of this new Norwegian musical life, and typically enough, the orchestra has firm and well-defined roots in the local community, which has served as the indisputably most important arena and workplace for the Norwegian composers of today. The cultural sphere, politicians and business sector can interact much more readily in the local community than in the larger cities.

If we try to describe the topography of the Norwegian musical landscape, many details will inevitably be overlooked. A multitude of different idioms stand side by side; new digital media are used as a point of departure for creating music, and forms of expression that cross artistic boundaries are the rule rather than the exception. A wide variety of styles and approaches are represented side by side in a music sector in which the main issue in Norway has shifted from being a creative conflict based on national versus international elements to investigating the relationship between what are perhaps also local identities and what is, in principle, a boundlessly digitalised world.

As to the question of what contemporary music represents in this multi-coloured fabric (to paraphrase the title of this release and the point of departure for Stine Sørli's work *Tapestry*), as a long-standing observer in the field one is obligated to acknowledge the realities of the situation by answering with a hackneyed understatement: it is multi-faceted. However, both as a musical idiom and as a sociological phenomenon it is difficult to classify and systematise.

Is there, nevertheless, some unifying factor?

Occasionally one can peer enviously at writers, many of whom have had the most motley life stories behind them before they suddenly decide to sit down at a desk to write: formerly sailors, pharmacists or tennis teachers, now they want to share their experiences! Stories can be told and lessons learned, opinions offered, problems discussed, settings and people described.

This is not the case with music. Music cannot tell a story; music can neither moralise nor instruct; music cannot be “for” or “against” anything; but music can, like literature, express experiences: human experiences in a broad sense, by – as explained by Italian composer Luciano Berio – asking

constantly new questions that require constantly new answers.

The task of the composer is thus to ask these constantly new questions. The unifying factor, despite very different forms of expression, is that one is continually questioning the forms of art and how it is presented. It is a component of the very character of this sphere of art that all of these forms, in every part of the process, can be changed and redefined, in other words that one asks fundamental questions about something that is constantly struggling to find its form, but that nevertheless has not found it and, fortunately, never will.

In order to pose these questions, however, one needs an environment, fertile soil, or to put it in more technocratic terms, a production apparatus – and the new generation of Norwegian composers has undoubtedly found this in the Telemark Chamber Orchestra.

In any case, the most important element in such projects as the Telemark Chamber Orchestra is that it establishes a predictable framework around creativity, whose foremost characteristic is that it is so intensely unpredictable – luckily. May it continue thus until the last composer rides into the sunset.

Musical voyages and conversations

Stine Sørli

When Telemark Chamber Orchestra and nyMusikk's Composers' Group, with their full weight and breadth, cast out from the dock and took the first oar strokes in our joint collaboration two years ago this autumn, we all saw a unique opportunity to create and present the art of music at a very profound and broad level. A total of seven new works were commissioned, which in connection with this recording introduce a representative selection of the youngest generation of Norway's professional composers.

This recording was, however, a voyage into uncharted waters when we raised our sails and set out on the journey. The idea of releasing these works arose only after having navigated our way through the project with successful premiere performances and concerts in the autumn of 2014 – a year that gave us nothing less than the bicentennial celebration of our Constitution as a backdrop. As two groups of idealistic actors and standard-bearers for the newest music, we used this as a springboard for viewing the new music in the light of concepts such as identity, history, tradition, culture and nature in our search to find constantly new answers to the question of what is innovative and timeless, and can thus help us to determine our way forward for the next 200 years. What is it that unites the past, present and future?

The composers have created seven very different musical reflections on these questions. Nevertheless, the pieces cast light on each other – for instance, we can hear echoes of Norwegian folk music in a few of them, a musical source that, incidentally, can also be seen in connection with the artistic activities of Telemark Chamber Orchestra. Other than that, the composers drew inspiration for their works mainly from between the lines; the music speaks for itself, as is only appropriate.

Despite the fact that, each in its own way, the Telemark Chamber Orchestra, nyMusikk's Composers' Group and, not least, the bicentennial of the Constitution all involve a sense of belonging and community, all of the works, paradoxically,

seek out physical, mental or musical landscapes that deal with borderlines and isolation – whether this applies to landscapes featuring ice, mountains or deserts, or to loneliness, love and death – or naked individual notes played by soloists in the orchestra. Sometimes this approaches the sublime, where art erases the borders of internal and external landscapes and creates existentially charged meeting points between the extremities.

As the outgoing head of nyMusikk's Composers' Group, I have gathered the threads from various conversations the composers have had at different times, in different contexts and in different places (and as Asbjørn Schaathun has mentioned, I have thus had an integral role in weaving the tapestry that makes up this release, as both composer and writer of this text). On the basis of the reflections above, these conversations were initiated with loosely connected thoughts about where we place ourselves in a broader context. Does belonging to a community, a tradition or an artistic milieu at the same time generate, to some degree, a certain distance to the trends that hold us captive as composers, almost as a premise for finding our own meaningful place with this tapestry?

Øyvind Mæland — My impression is that many composers, even today, are interested in a clean-cut style – whatever that might be within a particular style or era. This interest is often an aesthetic counter-reaction to an over-elaborate style – just as Classicism followed in the wake of the Baroque. Many composers might feel the need for this in an age that is as pluralistic as ours. I myself don't think that I have really found a clearly defined style of my own yet, and the original point of departure for this piece was also a stylistic experiment – I tried to create something “murky” that was constantly moving through various processes towards something “clean”. What is this pure, clean form of expression actually?

Agnes Ida Pettersen — Good question! I recognise the feeling of not having found a clearly personal style. I don't think that's my goal, either. But it's important to me to have a clean, clear form of expression in every individual composition. Precisely what that form of expression is

might vary from one time to another, and can also depend on the context. The fact is that we produce different kinds of music and work in different formats – concert music, dance, film, sound art and more. I think that one of the tasks of a composer is to approach the unknown with an open and inquisitive attitude.

Kristin Bolstad — I myself am very versatile, and as a composer I'm actually not especially rooted in the classical tradition. I was once asked which genre I would place myself in, and I rattled off an endless list that probably included most of them! This applies to my work as both a singer and a composer, two roles that are closely connected for me – something that listeners will also understand when they hear my work on this release. In many ways it's perhaps the personal voice, in a very broad sense, which is the foundation for everything I do musically.

Hugo Harmens — Actually, my music is also very strongly influenced by the fact that I started out as a singer. On the other hand, I don't write music primarily in order to express what is already a well-formed part of me, and I make a real effort to avoid having a recognisable style! My motivation is more to explore something – and particularly what is not already familiar to me and within me. But this can't happen without making some compositional choices, so it becomes a sort of game where I encounter fragments of myself in many different doors. I think that trying to create something outside one's own voice is at least as difficult as the opposite, searching for a personal voice. The musical palette I have already established, the stylistically recognisable features that I try to move away from, can appear in the most unexpected places in my music.

Tyler Futrell — Yes, but can we perceive what is “typical” of our own music, really? For instance, on a superficial level I could say that my piece on this release is very typical of my style – mostly abstract, but with references to sentimental music. But concepts such as “sentimental” and “abstract” might not necessarily represent how others perceive it at all.

I pointed out to Stine that on several occasions she has composed music that in one way or another enters into a dialogue with other music that it's programmed together

with. In the intro to *Tapestry* on this recording, listeners can detect fragments of the works of us six others. And in another case, the movements of one of her pieces are played between the other works in the concert. But I don't believe that she herself had regarded this pattern as being typical for her as a composer.

Stine Sørlie —All the same, it's fascinating when colleagues point out connections one hasn't thought of oneself! These choices were inspired for very different musical reasons, so I haven't thought along these lines. The chaotic, almost improvisational intro for *Tapestry* is always based on fragments of works that the piece is programmed together with – in this case, the works on this release. When the piece was presented at concerts last year, older classical music was also played. The compositional choice I made here was vaguely connected to the idea of memory and the concepts of past, present and future that underlie the project. The beginning of a composed work, almost regardless of style, holds great power to define the musical memory and to determine how the material develops. For this reason I wanted an intro that would never be exactly the same each time, and that would camouflage the actual beginning of the work. But first and foremost these thoughts emerged from an emotional place – I felt a great deal of internal chaos, so the intro is like a basket of yarn where everything has become tangled. The yarn must be untangled before the musicians can begin to weave. In addition to all of the quotations from the composers, the musicians all play solos in the course of the piece – so there are really multiple voices that are woven or tangled together in this work!

Eric Skytterholm Egan —Actually, the sound world in my piece could also be characterised as a tapestry, and there is a distinct focus on the individual players in mine as well. At the concerts the musicians were placed in a circle around the audience. Unfortunately, because the piece is extremely quiet, you could hear the generator on a ferry in the fjord outside like a drone throughout. Each musician has a different tempo, and they decide themselves when in the course of the piece they want to play the different cells of material on the page, though they read it loosely from left to right. In that way, the piece will always have the same

character and to a certain extent the same macrostructure when it's performed, while the contour of the musical landscape will vary from time to time. In some ways it's contrary to the musicians' instincts to listen to the piece as a whole while at the same time they exist in their own little universe. To counteract this, the piece was not recorded with the entire orchestra simultaneously as were the other works on this release – we chose a solution where groups of three or four musicians were recorded at a time.

I often work with borrowed material. I usually choose something from the Baroque era, but for this piece I chose fourteen Norwegian fiddle tunes. Each of the parts is an arrangement of one of these folk tunes, but very little of the underlying material comes through in any recognisable form. For me the piece is, in many ways, a symbol of how we as human beings perceive the past – it's like seeing a photograph that has faded almost completely in the course of time, through a window that is so old that the glass has acquired air bubbles and cracks. Grime and dust have gathered in the corners, but here and there, behind this vague contour, we can recognise something – a face, a door, or perhaps a new window into a different and even more distant reality.

Øyvind —I was obviously not the only one who was reminded of the old fiddle music when I was going to write for the Telemark Chamber Orchestra. As we know, the National Romantics fell in love with these areas where they believed the Norwegian tradition had been best preserved, and fiddle music from this area has, in fact, enjoyed good growth conditions up to our own time – something which, in turn, can be linked to the pure and untainted quality that was the initial idea of my piece. Purity in music might sound terrible, but this concept is also used in a very sober way when referring to just intonation, also known as pure tuning, or when the members of an orchestra use a common note to tune their instruments before a concert. In the second movement I work with extremely simple processes that flow into pure unisons – a dense cluster of notes moves towards a lone single note, and a *molto vibrato* moves towards a non-vibrato, from movement to standstill. Incidentally, a string orchestra is ideal for such musical situations.

Agnes —Technically speaking, I wanted to explore sound at the borderline between tone and noise, combined with the extensive use of natural overtones and chords derived from them. The distinctive intonation that is connected to natural harmonics is one of the elements that characterises Norwegian folk music, so I decided to open up for subtler tonal features by basing the piece structurally on a folk tune – a fiddle tune from Setesdal called *Kjærleiksblomen* (*Flower of Love*).

Kristin —My piece was also inspired by vocal folk music! Namely, an untitled cow call from Nord-Odal, as sung by Karoline Bergset. When I myself sing this after the end of my piece, on the same track, it's not in order to present a new, noteworthy version of the tune, but to sing it from my perspective as a composer. Although I am not a professional folk singer, this cow call has in a way become a part of who I am, so it was natural for me to include it in a project that is so closely associated with the Norwegian cultural heritage. I come from Voss, and I associate this cow call particularly with the period when I worked at the guest house connected to the Ole Bull Academy there.

Agnes —The folk verse that I have used is one that I actually learned at a course at the Ole Bull Academy a long time ago! Although I'm not a singer, this project and the orchestra's focus on what is typically Norwegian brought this lovely melody to mind for me. Kristin, at the concert you sang the cow call before the orchestra played the piece, didn't you? And you decided to do the opposite on the recording?

Kristin —Yes, I wanted the cow call to sound like an echo of the piece rather than the other way around. After all, the piece is not a transcription of the cow call, but a reflection on my personal understanding of it – a free interpretation that is related to improvisation. During this process something happens that also responds to the cow call, and they reflect each other. I regard the piece as a way of exploring how I would have presented the cow call if I were going to present it without presenting it! Does that make any sense?

Hugo —Absolutely. One's voice is connected with one's identity, especially for those of us who use it as an

instrument. In that sense I am at least as interested in personal speaking voices, dialects and ways of expressing oneself as I am in the singing voice. When I was working on my piece I asked some friends to read a few excerpts from *Norges lover*, the collection of Norwegian legislation, in their different dialects. Then I made a sort of transcription of this material for the string instruments. The piece has become a cacophony of voices, but strictly speaking the listener doesn't have to know the story behind the material to get something out of the music – I see it as an abstract work. The texts I used were random excerpts – I think the laws were related to medical personnel, importing animals and illnesses.

Tyler — I have mixed feelings about providing references for people while they listen to my music, as I worry that it will trivialise the listening experience or interpretation. On the other hand, many people appear to enjoy music more when they have such a handle to hold on to. For those people, I can offer a metaphor for my musical goals — a candle in an igloo.

Stine — Or a sunbeam inside an ice palace? Your metaphor is actually strongly reminiscent of the non-musical reference behind your work, the novel *The Ice Palace* by Tarjei Vesaas, isn't it?

Tyler — Yes, a young girl loses her way in an ice palace – a frozen waterfall. She eventually succumbs to hypothermia amid hallucinations, prompted by bright sunlight shining in through the icy walls. Making something with such motion and energy static is a feat of nature, and a compositional challenge that attracted me.

Eric — My work was also loosely inspired by a Norwegian literary classic, and by an entirely different landscape that is perhaps as far from that of a waterfall as you can get – a passage from *The Silence* by Jens Bjørneboe, where the protagonists drive a car far into the desert to get drunk and sleep under the stars. The piece was written as a memorial to the author; it's about existing in solitude – about beauty, loneliness and loss.

Agnes — The mood of my piece was inspired by both the

sound and the textual content of the folk tune I worked with. The lyrics are about vulnerability and how we must take care of each other. It says that *Kjærleiksblomen*, the flower of love, needs sun and water so it won't wither. In other words, we have moved away from the desert again in my piece!

Kristin — This theme of the weather is essential in my piece, too. Cow calls have been sung outdoors in all kinds of weather, and when I began to write the piece my head was filled with images of the changeable weather on the west coast of Norway. Dark, threatening clouds! Thunder! Sudden sun! Raindrops that ricochet off the metal frame of the window, or light raindrops against the windowpane – like plucking on strings.

Stine — While I was on my way to record my piece for this release, the weather was changing exactly as you describe it. Bright sun suddenly became a dramatic rainstorm, and when we began recording the thunder and lightning started. Luckily the orchestra managed to get a few good takes in between the worst of the noise! In my pieces I often work with harmonies in which some aspects are open – for example, several chords in this piece are built up so that the musicians can play a note of their own choice within a specific range. I like the non-hierarchical value of generating the harmonies in the moment at any given time. A major chord or a cluster chord emerges on an entirely independent basis, and thus becomes “something other” than its own structure – and this can elicit dislocations of the traditional perceptions of the roles of chords in relation to each other. In non-hierarchical harmonies the experience of tension and relaxation can depend as much on the internal setting as on whether the chords in themselves are fundamentally consonant or dissonant – a little like when clouds block the sun, or the wind suddenly changes direction. Sometimes I wonder how much one's artistic choices are unconsciously affected by what happens in the here and now, in one's own life or emotional life, or even in the weather, for that sake. Kristin, did you write your piece at home in Voss, since you mention that the west coast weather had such a strong presence in it?

Kristin — No, most of it was actually written in Oslo, on

the 17th of May – Constitution Day! That's a bit humorous in itself, as the bicentennial of the Constitution was the backdrop for the project – but for me the point was that it was the only day I had free to work on composing. In the morning I met with some friends and celebrated with breakfast and champagne, and we saw the children's parade on TV. Then I went home and wrote the piece while in a champagne haze, with the sound of the children's brass bands in the background.

Stine — Lonely and romantic – in the true artistic spirit? It sounds as though you are living up to the myth there! Or maybe as the solitary milkmaid calling in the cows in the mountains. Except that the milk has been replaced by champagne, the herds of cows by herds of people, and the cowbells by brass instruments.

Kristin — It was a little annoying to sit inside writing on a festive day, but luckily a lot of the piece fell into place then. Among the fantastic aspects of the project were the productive meetings we had with the orchestra during the writing process – but I was probably the only one of the composers who felt comfortable with the work after the first meeting. In fact, I don't think I changed a single note afterwards – or if I did, it was only one!

Øyvind — I would have happily given up my 17th of May for such a painless process! I have probably never struggled so much with a work before, strangely enough – and the piece also went through some dramatic alterations due to a major revision. The four unpretentious movements that now constitute the piece were originally part of a large and more ambitious single-movement variations work – an experiment where I tried to explore different musical “purification processes”. All of the material was presented in the opening of the work, which now forms the first movement – an eclectic mixture of different “musics”.

Hugo — My works are often highly experimental. One of my methods can be writing quickly, almost spontaneously and improvisationally. At the same time the danger arises that I can forgive myself a little too easily. The advantage of composition rather than improvisation is that one has

the possibility of planning and structuring the result, so I almost always have a structural sketch that I work from, even if it might change in the course of the process. I have also worked with randomness at various levels, through computer programming and algorithmic composition. However, I prefer to write scores and parts by hand – it gives me a feeling of freedom, and it’s good to get away from the computer that I sit in front of in so many other contexts!

Eric —I wrote my piece in the middle of moving house, so it was a very hectic period for me. As I mentioned earlier, each part in the piece acts completely independently – there is no score. Half of the parts were written in the old house in Newcastle, and the rest in the new flat in Tynemouth, a small village by the North Sea. From my desk I have a view of the ocean, and now, after the fact, I see that the parts I wrote there are musically a little less frenetic than those I wrote in the city. I don’t know whether this is a result of the calming influence of the waves, or the relief that the move was over and done with – or perhaps neither! As I’m half Norwegian and half Irish, I’m to a certain extent accustomed to different perspectives on things. Also, now that I’ve lived in England for many years, perhaps I see Norway from the outside a little, although I still visit a lot.

Tyler —I also see things from the outside, I suppose, since I’m an American who has moved to Norway. I’m originally from California, but studied composition in Denmark before moving to Oslo.

Stine —Many people would probably describe you as a very atypical American, wouldn’t they? Do you identify with the Scandinavian temperament?

Tyler —My great-grandfather was Norwegian, and immigrated to the USA. He was always the relative I identified with most strongly, and after moving to Oslo I’ve found out a little more about my Norwegian relatives. I also enjoyed reading Tarjei Vesaas before I relocated to Norway. I had read *The Birds* in English, and wanted to read the novel in Norwegian after moving here. I wanted to learn the language, but *nynorsk* – one of the two Norwegian written languages, the one Vesaas used in his works – was too foreign to me. When I went into a bookstore and asked whether they

had *The Birds* in *bokmål* the sales staff broke out in hysterical laughter. It was obviously a very funny question.

Hugo —I studied composition in Rotterdam and in Montréal, where I still live. So I also approach this project with a view from the outside – perhaps more of a critical view. I have thought for a long time that I would like to do something with *Norges lover* as a composer. I myself am an anarchist, but I’m intrigued by the fact that long ago people sat down and wrote this legislation, and by how much power this big, thick book still holds over us today. If we want to have any influence, the only thing we can do in practice is deliver a voting slip and see what happens. Making amendments to the Constitution is a very intricate process that is carried out through the Norwegian parliament. This feeling of resignation coincided with the death of my father while I was writing the piece. For that reason this work holds a special place in my artistic career, and its title, *Flytende (Floating)*, held a different significance for me than its concrete linguistic meaning would indicate.

Stine —What can be seen on the surface of a work can sometimes be something entirely different from what lies beneath the surface. That’s something I’ve always found captivating. On the surface, my piece was inspired by the patterns, colours and textures of woven and knotted tapestries. My mother wove tapestries with patterns from Telemark, and my father knotted tapestries based on old drawings he had made when he was young. It’s interesting how colours and patterns can look very different when seen close up or at a distance – and something similar happens with the nuances in a soundscape, too. My piece is based on a repetitive pattern, and on top of it all of the musicians play short solos, as though the performers are embroidering their own musical signatures on top of the sound tapestry itself. This evokes a feeling of ornamentation, which in turn affects the general listening pattern. When I made the sketches, I imagined a piece filled with light – the sun was shining from a cloudless sky. But just as when I left for the recording session, darker forces took over while I was writing the piece, and although the pattern of the piece remains the same it’s as though something in the tapestry unravels – these falling, vibrating movements, in the score notated as

curling lines, exactly like a thread that is unravelling ... and then these solo instruments that sew stitches on the top, as though they are suturing open wounds

Agnes —In my piece I have also focused on something vulnerable through the use of restrained sounds. The result is a bright and subdued work – and, as such, possibly a tonal contrast to your work, Stine. For example, one can hear a relatively unusual solo for double bass in an extremely high register! Together with my sister, bassist Ingvild Maria Mehus, I investigated whether it was possible to play the melody of the folk tune entirely on one string of the double bass, only by using the natural overtones. This requires the bassist to press down the string at exactly the right place “in the middle of the air”, meaning outside of the fingerboard, where usually only the bow is used. In other words, a particularly demanding task! The double bass is definitively the instrument that is best suited to doing this. Because of the length of the strings, the margins are larger than they would have been on the other string instruments.

Tyler —The double bass in my piece is in a way just the opposite – it must be played with an extension that lowers the string to C, because that way it can ground all the possible natural harmonics on all the strings of the orchestra. At one point in the piece, there is a long *glissando* through the whole orchestra, starting high on the violins and ending with the low C on the bass. Each of the 14 strings stops at a point along the *glissando* that corresponds with an overtone of C.

Øyvind —I have an extremely high-pitched cello solo in the last movement of my piece, lying at the borderline between humming and mumbling – which is the source of the title of the movement, *Hum*. This contrasts with a different kind of “humming” produced by a deep drone sound from two violins, a viola and a double bass that has had its lowest strings tuned down for the piece. I am very grateful for the collaboration with the superb musicians of the Telemark Chamber Orchestra, who tackled all the challenges admirably.

Agnes —I agree that the musicians were very impressive!

Apart from the purely technical aspect of playing, the orchestra also did a thorough job of exploring the wide range of musical idioms that the composers on this recording represent.

The orchestra and artistic director Lars-Erik ter Jung have earned our profound gratitude for the formidable effort they devoted to this project. It is in itself a unique situation that a well-established professional ensemble of this calibre presents the relatively newly established generation of composers in this country. The exchange has been comprehensive and mutual, and I would contend that its educational and artistic scope must be something exceptional in today's musical life, with several meetings taking place along the way where the composers have had an opportunity to test their musical sketches in dialogue with the musicians and conductor. Most of the premiere performances were held at Akershus Castle Church, Oslo, in September 2014, and the orchestra has incorporated the works into its repertoire and has performed several of them at various concerts in Telemark as well as in Łódź, Poland.

A living music community depends on enthusiasts, and in addition to the artistic aspects of their work several musicians and composers have made a significant contribution to the organisational part of the project. During my three years as the leader of nyMusikk's Composers' Group our organisation has initiated a variety of projects, ranging from collaborations with Norwegian and foreign contemporary musicians and ensembles to the presentation of new works for uniquely Norwegian instruments, metal bands and even street music. In our concert activities, both nyMusikk's Composers' Group and Telemark Chamber Orchestra have experienced the power of music to confront and acknowledge the here and now. In a fragmented and digitalised era, however, it's not every day that we, in our remote little corner of the music community, can create a concrete product for posterity which also includes a physical format. Will a new listener come riding into the sunset and brush the dust off this CD in 200 years' time, I wonder?

Telemark Chamber Orchestra – a dynamic promoter of the music of the 21st century

During the past few years the Telemark Chamber Orchestra (TCO) has gained an increasingly high profile in the Norwegian cultural arena. After over 20 years of wide-ranging activities in the county of Telemark, as of 2016 the orchestra will no longer be funded by the Telemark County Administration. The TCO is being reorganised with its headquarters in Oslo, while at the same time it will continue to pursue its valuable work within the area of classical and contemporary music at both national and international levels. In 2014-2015 the TCO conducted an extensive collaboration with the Grażyna and Kiejstut Bacewicz Academy of Music in Łódź, Poland, after the allocation of EEA funding. At the national level, this CD is testimony to the fact that the orchestra has a long list of collaborators, not least in the contemporary music sector.

Lars-Erik ter Jung is the artistic director of the TCO. Working with contemporary music has, for many years, played an integral part in his activities as well as those of the orchestra. Through commissions, recordings and creative productions, ter Jung has been instrumental in establishing the TCO as one of Norway's foremost ensembles in the field, and there was clear evidence of this at the concert held by the TCO at the Ultima Oslo Contemporary Music Festival in 2011, featuring world premieres of works by Bent Sørensen, Simon Steen-Andersen and Olav Anton Thommessen. The efforts made with regard to commissioning and premiering new Norwegian works have also resulted in the chamber opera *Benk med og utan hund* by Jon Rørmark and Ragnar Hovland (2004), the family musical *Billenes bryllup* by Gro Dahle and Guttorm Guttormsen (2001), the violin concertos *Nostos* by Bjørn Kruse (2002) and *Bite the Dog II* by Mark Adderley (2013), the double concerto *Nyslått* for two Hardanger fiddles by Henrik Ødegaard (2000), *Rapid Clouds* by Olav Anton Thommessen (2011) and *Concerto da Camera nr 3* by Antonio Bibalo (2005), to mention a few.

Several of these works were recorded on the Fabra label:

Nostos (2005), *Thommessen / Bibalo* (2013), *Bite the Dog II* (2013) and now *Tapestry*. The orchestra has also released the CD *Passione* (2011), featuring works by Haydn, Mozart and Elgar. The orchestra has collaborated on CDs with Ingrid Andnes (piano), Camilla Kjøl (violin) and the improvisational trio Poing, among others, and has also participated in two organ concertos on the CD *Henrik Ødegaard: Organ Music* (2012) together with Ghislain Gourvennec.

Lars-Erik ter Jung has been the artistic director of the TCO since its inception in 1992. His organisational contribution has also enabled the orchestra to achieve its current position. Starting in the early 1980s, ter Jung forged a successful career as a violinist, and served as concertmaster for the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra among other positions. He is currently a very highly regarded conductor, and is involved in a wide range of activities with his extensive repertoire. Among the ensembles he has conducted are the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra, the Oslo Sinfonietta, the BIT20 Ensemble, the Swedish Chamber Orchestra and the Cairo Symphony Orchestra.

The TCO's most important financial supporter is Arts Council Norway.

nyMusikk's composer group

nyMusikk's komponistgruppe (NMK), established in 1978, is an organization for composers and sound artists at the beginning of their careers. NMK is one of nyMusikk's nine departments, and organizes a variety of concerts, workshops and seminars each year, in cooperation with professional musicians, ensembles and festivals in Norway and abroad. NMK presents around 30 world premieres each year, and through keen awareness of emerging voices, NMK is able to present the freshest drivers and the latest trends, and to play an important role in exploring innovative ideas and the potential and flexibility of today's experimental music scene. The five-year membership that is offered to composers generates a dynamic structure and broad aesthetic diversity, and the members themselves play an active role in creating the organization's artistic profile. NMK has released the CDs *In Real Time, Non-Solid Objects* (2001 on the Albedo label), *Cirrus* and *Tapestry* (2007 and 2016, respectively, on the Fabra label).

Telemark Chamber Orchestra

Violin 1

Bård Monsen (leader)
Emilie Heldal Lidsheim
Hilde Kolstad Huse
Fride Bakken Johansen

Violin 2

Pål Solbakk
Rønnaug Flatin
Ragnhild Lien
Maren Lovise Nygård

Viola

Karoline Vik Hegge
Cathrine Halland Bering
Guro Lysaker Næss

Cello

Ingvild Nesdal Sandnes
Tove Margrethe Erikstad

Doublebass

Eskild Abelseth
Kjetil Sandum (Futrell)