



BAUT

STIG NORDHAGEN : MUSIKK FOR EUFONIUM

BENTE ILLEVOLD - GUNNAR FLAGSTAD - ANDERS KREGNES HANSEN - STRINGS UNLIMITED

BAUT

MUSIC FOR EUPHONIUM

Stig Nordhagen is a renowned composer and musician on the Norwegian music scene. His music is often rooted in the Norwegian musical heritage, and he has devoted his attention to the euphonium from early on. The four compositions for euphonium we have here, sees three decades of Nordhagen's career as a composer, and they form an important part of the Norwegian euphonium repertoire. The works contribute to consolidating the euphonium as the "cello of wind music» and they are a style study in how the instrument can feature within the framework of traditional classical music.

"Baut" was recorded in Teglen, Spikkestad church and culture center, on 17 - 18 March and on 30 - 31 September 2023, as well as in Torshov church on 23 - 24 May 2023.

This album is supported by The Norwegian Art Council, The Fund for Performing Artists (FFUK), Creos vederlagsfond, The Norwegian Composers' Association and The Forsberg and Aulie grant.

All the nature pictures in this booklet are photographed in Rendalen by Halvor Sveen, Marthe Marie Grenli, Knut Fure and Line Aasbrenn. Calm Vidal Photography has taken the portrait photos.

Booklet design is by Bente Illevold. Booklet text is by Bente Illevold, Stig Nordhagen, Atle Tømmervik, Gunnar Flagstad, Anders Kregnes Hansen and Einy Langmoen.



THE COMPOSER HAS THE FLOOR

Having all the music I have written for the euphonium recorded, naturally makes me reflect on both time and expression. I think it is rare for a composer to get the opportunity to write for an instrument other than his own to the extent that I have been able to with the euphonium.

The euphonium concerto I wrote in 1997 was the first of many in the years to follow. It represents the start of a line I see today; how do you find an expression and develop it, without compromising yourself?

"Divertimento" is, in contrast to the concert, a "Ludus Tonalis". While I have a plan with the euphonium concerto, this work is created in the world of the moment. The sonata and "Baut" are also composed with a plan, but without "Divertimento" they would not have turned out the way they did.

Bente Illevold has manifested my compositions for euphonium in a marvelous way. It has allowed me to rediscover my early fascination with this instrument, through, among other things, working on creating a new version of the concerto. So, thank you Bente, for letting me discover the euphonium "again", and for the effort you have put into this project that showcases Norwegian euphonium music.

Stig Nordhagen, Kristiansand, autumn 2023

Stig Nordhagen, Kristiansand, autumn 2023



EUPHONIUM CONCERTO

FOR EUPHONIUM, PIANO AND PERCUSSION (1997 - revised 2022)

STIG'S WORDS

My fascination with the euphonium began long before I wrote this concerto, but it was only here that I seriously tried to put something down on paper. This version is for euphonium, piano, and percussion, so this is a different approach to the material than in the original brass band version. Nonetheless, it clearly demonstrates my ambition, namely to showcase the versatility and tonal variation that this instrument contains. I try to glide seamlessly between genres and expressions, between darkness and light. In this way, I wish to tie the concerto together with variation, and the variation is the euphonium. That is the way I wish to manifest the euphonium, which, in my opinion, lives a life out of sight for many.

BENTE'S WORDS

Nordhagen's Euphonium Concerto is a central work in Norwegian euphonium history. It's a work I heard rumors about from the first day I started at The Norwegian Academy of Music. Being allowed to make a recording of the work in chamber format is one of the biggest tasks I have had as a performer. The music is excellent, and the work is monumental and important for a modern Norwegian euphoniumist.



DIVERTIMENTO

FOR EUPHONIUM AND PIANO (2002)

STIG'S WORDS

In this Divertimento, I am confident that the instrument and I are on the same team. Whereas in the concerto I try to show off the euphonium, here I am more concerned with showing off the form of the work, as well as the joy of music. We (the euphonium and I) create some parodies. It may be of Mozart's C-major Sonata (K.545), or a calm movement that shoots off in an explosion of scales and chords. We are confident with each other in this piece; we have reached a point where we finish each other's sentences and phrases. It is very challenging to know an instrument that you don't play yourself. So there is still some friction, but this is what gives the music life.



BENTE'S WORDS

"Divertimento" is a work I first became familiar with about 10 years ago. As I see it, it is perhaps the most technical work Nordhagen has written for the euphonium. The performer is tested in flexibility, legato playing, and register - all at the same time. Musically, "Divertimento" offers a wide range of characters, which is both challenging and energy-demanding.



SONATA

FOR EUPHONIUM AND PIANO (2019)

STIG'S WORDS

Here, the euphonium and I have lived a long life together. In this sonata, it is the music which has the central place. I know how I want the instrument to sound, and I place it within the sonata tradition. Perhaps it is to visualize the role this instrument would have had if it were one of the chosen ones. I do not go to extremes like I do in Divertimento; the focus here is to present the instrument in a good light by taking it seriously. I strive to develop the music and let the instrument flourish. After my first fascination, I have come to an understanding of this instrument that is of great joy to me. I think it is rare that a composer writes for an instrument other than their own to the extent that I have. My excitement has matured, but it is still fully there.

BENTE'S WORDS

The music in this sonata has many layers, and one rarely gets the opportunity to play original music as good as this on the euphonium. The work is very well written, but requires work and reflection to find form and expression.

Then, as a performer, you can enjoy being part of the timbres and harmonies in the performance. A work that really enriches and adds something important to the euphonium repertoire.

BAUT

FOR EUPHONIUM, PERCUSSION AND STRING QUARTET (2020)

STIG'S WORDS

“Å gå baut” means to cross, that is, to sail against the wind direction. It was this word that became the inspiration for this piece. When Bente Illevold commissioned the piece, she wanted to use folk music from her home region as a backdrop for the composition. I imagined then that the folk music is the wind that blows, and that my piece is the boat. The folk music will hit the boat with a different force and angle the whole time, and in that way, the music will not repeat itself, but rather constantly go in new directions. I use only small quotations of the folk music, so that it does not feel like an arrangement, but rather as small cells of music you will recognize throughout the course of the piece. To make a bridge to my district, Agder, I have used a small quote from there as well. I have often used folk music as an inspiration and a framework in my compositions. It has shown me what an inexhaustible source of folk music we have in Norway, and that its value must be used and illuminated.

BENTE'S WORDS

For me, “Baut” represents a new era in the Norwegian euphonium repertoire. The piece uses the instrument in new ways in terms of sound treatment as well as blending with the string and percussion instruments. It fully shows the euphonium's abilities as link and glue in an ensemble context. The texture with percussion and strings creates new colors and spaces for expression.





STIG NORDHAGEN

Stig Nordhagen was born in Gjøvik. He has his education from Østlandets musikkonservatorium (Oslo), and Rotterdam Hogenschool voor Muziek en Teater (The Netherlands). Nordhagen does extensive work as a composer, and the works range from solo pieces to symphonic ensembles. Most of his production is music for wind instruments.

Nordhagen's compositions have been played all over Europe, the USA, Australia and in Taiwan. In Norway, they have been performed by most professional ensembles and orchestras. Nordhagen has written several hundred arrangements in all genres. His music has been nominated for "Work of the Year" in connection with The Publisher's Award three times.

Nordhagen has worked as a solo clarinetist in The Kristiansand Symphony Orchestra since 2003, after 10 years as a military musician. Since 1994, Nordhagen has worked as Assistant Professor at UIA, teaching political theory, score analysis, music history, composition, and clarinet.



BENTE ILLEVOLD

Bente Illevold is from Rendalen in Østerdalen and plays the euphonium. Over the past ten years, she has distinguished herself as an innovative performer and garnered recognition for her performances of new music for the instrument, both nationally and internationally. Illevold is behind 20 original performances for the euphonium, and there are more to come!

Bente is an international S.E. Shires Company Euphonium artist and was the company's first choice as their first female and European euphonium artist. Her debut album "Klangene fra de dype skoger" was released in 2020, earning her a nomination for "Instrumentalist des Jahres" in OPUS KLASSIK, Germany's largest classical music magazine. Her second album "Alone" was released in autumn 2021 and was nominated for Album of the Year by 4BarsRest.

In 2021, Illevold was awarded the prestigious Forsberg and Aulies grant. In 2023, she was awarded Drammen municipality's artist grant, and the title Municipal Artist of the Year.

GUNNAR FLAGSTAD

Gunnar Flagstad is from Gjøvik and is a trained pianist from Østlandets musikkonservatorium and The Norwegian Academy of Music (NMH), where he graduated with the highest grade. Flagstad is employed at NMH as Vice-Principal for education as well as Associate Professor in accompaniment. He has also been associated with The Barratt Due Music Institute for a number of years.

Flagstad has given concerts in over 20 European countries, in addition to the USA and Asia. In Norway, he has toured literally the entire country, from Kristiansand in the south to Longyearbyen in the north. He is also a regular guest on NRK radio and TV. Furthermore, Flagstad is one of the three artistic supervisors to the renowned concert series Resonans in Gjøvik.

On recordings, he can be heard in collaboration with violinists Bård Monsen and Mari Samuelsen on "Interactions" (2L) and "Nordic Noir" (Decca) respectively, as well as with baritone Frank Havrøy on "Schwanengesang" (Simax). The latter recording was singled out as one of the year's best classical albums in 2021 by both Aftenposten, Klassekampen and Morgenbladet.



ANDERS KREGNES HANSEN

Anders Kregnes Hansen is from Asker and is one of Norway's foremost percussionists within contemporary music, performance, and innovative genres. Hansen has a master's degree in performing classical percussion from the Norwegian Academy of Music.

He has subsequently garnered great recognition and attention for his thesis on composers and performers in creative collaboration, which formed part of his master's thesis.

Hansen excels both as a chamber musician and as a soloist and is also known for his versatility. He regularly has assignments with the professional orchestras in Norway and is the solo percussionist in the Norwegian contemporary ensemble Aksiom.

Hansen has participated in several award-winning recordings in contemporary music, classical, jazz, folk music, and pop/rock.



STRINGS UNLIMITED

KRISTIN KARLSSON - EILEEN SIEGEL

EINY LANGMOEN - INGVILD NESDAL SANDNES

The string quartet Strings Unlimited was founded in 1989 and has through continuous activity over all these years come to occupy a unique position on the Norwegian music scene. The musicians have bridged traditionally separate genres such as classical music, jazz, pop and rock, working from the mindset that great music can be found in every genre.

In recent years, Strings Unlimited has performed the worldwide debut of several pieces, including ones by composer Morten Gaathaug. In 2018, the group premiered his seventh string quartet. The commissioned work "Sonnet 129" by Knut Vaage was a welcome new challenge, as the musicians had to simultaneously perform the text and the music. The composition presented here, "Baut", as well as "Sonnet 129", were both premiered as part of a concert series in the fall of 2020.

Strings Unlimited has contributed to countless Norwegian albums with a wide variety of artists, including Erik Bye, Dance with a Stranger, Motorpsycho and Elisabeth Andreassen. In 1997 the quartet released their own CD "Strings Unlimited plays The Beatles", recorded at Abbey Road Studios in London.



AT

RECORDINGS
A U T H E N T I C
S O U N D

AT-Recording's philosophy is to create an honest and authentic soundstage with pure direct stereo mic recording technique without the use of effects or dynamic compression. Everything starts with only a pair of stereo microphones, and the location and acoustics of the room are the only factors that colour the music and influence the sounds of the instruments. This approach makes the recordings feel organic, tangible, and real. The microphone location and recording space is adapted to each piece of music. This means that the soundstage, proximity, and reverberation will vary from composition to composition. The recording equipment has been selected from a technical perspective focusing on the most transparent properties to capture music as it was experienced where the recording took place. To take full advantage of our recordings, we recommend listening with good, full-frequency playback equipment with homogeneous frequency response and good dynamic characteristics with low distortion in a calibrated listening environment. .



EUPHONIUM CONCERTO

VERSION FOR EUPHONIUM, PIANO AND PERCUSSION

- 01.
- 02.

DIVERTIMENTO

FOR EUPHONIUM AND PIANO

- 03. I
- 04. II
- 05. III
- 06. IV

PRODUCER: ATLE TØMMERVIK
SOUND TECHNIQUES: ATLE TØMMERVIK
EDITING: ATLE TØMMERVIK

SONATA

FOR EUPHONIUM AND PIANO

- 07. I
- 08. II
- 09. III
- 10. IV

BAUT

FOR EUPHONIUM, PERCUSSION AND
STRING QUARTET

- 11. I
- 12. II
- 13. III

AT
RECORDINGS
A U T H E N T I C
S O U N D