

# HANNE TOFTE JESPERSEN

ARTIST PORT FOLIO

3 pages

incl. MEDIA LINKS



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Danish composer, born 1 May 1956.

Member of Danish Composers Society (DKF)

KODA. Danish Musicians Union (DMF)

IAWM (International Alliance for Women in Music).

Hanne Tofte Jespersen's broad artistic work is rooted in both classical and ethnic music. From early childhood she was taught classical piano, as a teenager also singing, graduated from high school with music as a major and from University of Copenhagen with a MA in music and a BA in film. In 1993-99 an interest in world music had led her to Ghana as co-leader of the Danida-sponsored Ciltad-Agoro Project. She received her first commission in 2004, having then also graduated as an organist.

*"This music is very expressive, lyrical, and imaginative. Ms. Jespersen has a strong sense of form and contrast and writes idiomatically for the strings."*

- Victoria Bond, composer and conductor, in her review of String Quartet No.1 "Times of Unrest" (Journal of IAWM, Vol.1 2023)

*"An extraordinary composer of her very own right with a sense of musical storytelling which is quite unique - using a broad network of musical roots condensed to her own musical style."*

- Bent-Erik Rasmussen, producer of The Testimony of Melangell during the Schubertiade 2011.

## LATEST ARTISTIC COLLABORATIONS

### SPEECH OF THE SILENCED ONES / DE FORSTUMMEDES TALE - NEW "CLASSICAL CABARET"

This experimental production is centered around poems by Anna Akhmatova (1889-1966) which Hanne has set to music for soprano, violin, cello, piano with integrated recital by actor - as a parallel work to Shostakovich' Romances for poems by Aleksandr Blok (opus 127). PREMIERED 6.-8. Sept 2024.

An allegory of the present times, the theme is ART AS A NECESSITY, A BLOWHOLE:

Around 1910 St Peterburg's cabaret stages were hot spots for avantgarde artists. They met in a short blooming of free creativity in Russian theatre. Among them were the stage director Vsevolod Meyerhold and the poet Anna Akhmatova. Both became friends of Shostakovich.

Playwright and stage direction: Mette Borg. Video and photo montages: Yury Vladovsky. Translations: Mette Dalsgaard and Niels Brunse. With Gitta-Maria Sjöberg soprano, Julia Lindgren/Kajsa Lindberg soprano, Elisabeth Zeuthen Schneider violin, John Ehde cello, Polina Fradkina piano, Thomas Bang actor, Yury Vladovsky Russian speaking actor.

Produced by Koncertkapellet, sponsored by Øernes Kunstfond, Roskilde District, Knud Højgaards Fund, Augustinus Fund, William Demant Fund, Danish Composers Society/ KODA Culture, WH Fund.

### NORDIC SONG FESTIVAL 2024 - Artist in residency - COMMISSIONS:

7 songs for poems by Inger Christensen include Cycle of 5 songs for soprano Inger Sophia Dam-Jensen and pianist Matts Jansson; Homage á Beethoven for baritone David Risberg and pianist Christina Bjørkø; song for mezzo soprano Idil Alpsoy.

### AMALIE MALLING

Commissioned the piano piece THE SEA AND THE GRASS/ HAVET OG GRÆSSET for her solo recitals. The piece is influenced by the composer's xperience of the sea during q flood and of the unconquerable grass during the ground swell of a natural catastrophe. Premiered 3.11.2024 during the Festival Timeless, and also performed in 2025.

## INSPIRATIONS

It was when she started composing for handed down scripts that Hanne Tofte Jespersen got hold of her unique way of expression. She draws inspiration from many years of absorption in mythology and mystery traditions, from poetry and other art forms as well as a broad spectrum of music traditions, incl. European classical instrumental music, Nordic and British choir music, folk tones and vocal traditions from many different cultures. 7 years of work in Ghana with West African music, dance & storytelling traditions have also influenced her. She has creates series of interactiveand collaborate works for choreographed voices and instrumental ensemble.

## KEY WORDS to Hanne Tofte Jespersen's production:

### - *Music to Western mystery traditions:*

In 2007 she formed Music for the Mysteries who toured the Nordic Countries and UK 2008-14 and recorded 2 CD's with her music, incl. *The Testimony of Melangell* based on the tale of a female hermit and saint around 500 AD, premiered 2011 as total art in visual installation and performed as choreographed concert in 2011-14. Later works include *Finding Consorts* (2019) for a broken consort of cornetto (zinken), baroque violin, viola da gamba and theorbo, inspired by the Welsh magical chess board *Gwyddbwyll*; and the *ETRURIA Suite for violin and double bass* (2016, rev. 2020) inspired by an Etruscan artefact.

### - *Sinfonietta, Chamber, Solo voices, Choir:*

commissioned works include String Quartet *Times of Unrest* for Nordic String Quartet commissioned by Chamber Music Society BRAGE on behalf of 5 Danish chamber music societies; sinfonietta work for Esbjerg Ensemble; solo works for pianist Amalie Malling, clarinetist Anna Klett and for violinist Kuno Kjærbye; songs for soprano and piano for Gitta-Maria Sjöberg & Polina Fradkina and for Noora Karhuluoma & Ida Andersson, trio work for clarinetist Catherine Wood, duo work for organist Sven-Ingvart Mikkelsen a.m.o. *Going to Heaven* (TTBBB) for Linköping Student Singers (SE).

### - *Interactive works for and with children/ youth & professional ensembles:*

*The Play of colours* from 2013 won realisation in the DR Concert House. Since 2014 she has created series of collaborate projects which set urban and rural landscapes to music based on walks with local participants: *If the Land Could Talk* (2014-17 for Roskilde District), *Vibrandring* (2019 for Esbjerg Ensemble, 2021 for the festival Nordic Music Days in the Faroe Islands).

## RECENT ARTISTIC COLLABORATIONS

*Duo Karhuluoma Andersson* has premiered her "Å KOMME TILBAKE DIT EIN ALDRIG FØR HAR VORE" for soprano and piano Oct 2022. This 10:45 min. is composed for a *credo*-like poem by Norwegian author Marit Tusvik; the title means "To Return To Where One Has Never Been Before". The duo commissioned it for their concerts with Nordic songs.

*Canadian clarinetist Cathy Wood* commissioned a duo for 2 cl and piano for her duo with Jenny MacClay. The piece was premiered during the Int. Clarinet Fest 2022 in Nevada, US. In 2021 Cathy Wood had taken part in Hanne Tofte Jespersen's project for sinfonietta during Nordic Music Days in the Faroe Islands.

*Duo Kjærbye-Maschmann* recorded her ETRURIA SUITE for Violin and Double Bass (15 min) in 2022 and performs it as part of their current tour programmes, in DK and DE 2024-25 and in New York at the Cutting Edge Concerts 2025.

*Nordic String Quartet* premiered her "STRING QUARTET No.1 UROLIGE TIDER" (*Times of Unrest*) in November 2020. Hanne Tofte Jespersen composed it for the context of Haydn's Opus 76,2 'Fifths' (1797) and Britten's String Quartet No.1 (1941) - three quartets all created in 'times of unrest'. In 2022 it has been recorded and released on CD Sept '22. The premiere was broadcasted by DR (Danish National Radio) and was very well received and reviewed. Apart from performances, the project offers additional educational and audience development programmes.

*Violinist Kuno Kjærbye* commissioned and premiered "FANTASIA in view of J.S.Bach" (2020) for his ongoing concert project with Bach's six solo sonatas/ partiten alongside with three new works for solo violin. Hanne Tofte Jespersen composed her piece for the context of Bach's C major Sonata and the E major Partita, inspired also by Helga Thoene's research of "hidden chorales" in Bach's solo sonatas. In 2022 Kjærbye has recorded the piece for an upcoming album.

*Nordic Music Days* selected her VIBRANDRING FO-100 project for the festival Sept. 2021 in the Faroe Islands. A collaborate project for singers and sinfonietta in which talented youth and professionals join forces.

Festival *TIDLØS / Timeless* 2021 produced "Finding Consorts" performed by a *broken consort* ensemble led by Andreas Arend (DE).

*Gitta-Maria Sjöberg* (SE/DK) & *Polina Fradkina* (RU) premiered 'PÅ GJENNOMREISE - 3 songs for soprano and piano for poems by Marit Tusvik' in 2018, during Roskilde Music Society's 50 yrs anniversary recorded them subsequently, released online in 2019.

*Esbjerg Ensemble* commissioned 'VIBRANDRING' - a collaborate work for sinfonietta ensemble and talented youth, 2019.

*Landesmuseum Schloss Gottorf* selected 'GOTTORFER TONGEWEBE' for an audio station after its German premiere in Schleswig (DE) 2017. HTJ composed this duo for violin and organ for the unique acoustics of the Gottorf castle chapel.

## ENSEMBLE LEADER & COMPOSER

**MUSIC FOR THE MYSTERIES** which Hanne Tofte Jespersen formed in 2007 has toured DK, UK, Faroe Islands and Iceland and has recorded 2 CDs with her music, incl. 'The Testimony of Melangell' (65 min) for contralto solo, SATB soloists, violin, double bass, piano, percussion and integrated recital; manus: Mike Harris (Wales, 1989). This work achieved 13 performances 2011-14, incl. as total artwork in 2011 with installation by visual artist Alison Michell (UK/DK).

**ARTISTIC COLLABORATIONS include** singers such as Agnethe Christensen, Bente Vist, Gitta-Maria Sjöberg, Jakob Skjoldborg, Julia Lindgren, Noora Karhuluoma, Teit Kanstrup; soloists such as Kuno Kjærbye (vl), Elisabeth Zeuthen Schneider (vl), Karen Humle (vl), Øssur Bæk (vl), Anette Slaatto (vla), Caroline Tarras-Wahlberg (vc), John Ehde (vc), Heiko Maschmann (db), Ida Bach Jensen (db), Jeppe Mørch Sørensen (db), Katrine Øigaard (db), Anna Klett (cl), Catherine Wood (cl), Anrijs Ivanovskis (bs), Gertie Johnsson (rec), Thorbjørn Gram (hn), Mikkel Andersen (g), Amalie Malling (pno), Ida Andersson (pno), Polina Fradkina (pno); David Hildebrandt (perc), Anders Hvidberg-Hansen (perc); Sven-Ingvart Mikkelsen (pipe organ); conductors such as Stefan Parkman, Christina Hörnell, Bernardur Wilkinson; actors: María Ellingsen (ISL), Lauralee Nicole (Wales), Thomas Bang; choreographer Sara Ekman (SE), stage director, dramaturg Mette Borg; video editor Yury Vladovsky; authors: Mike Harris (UK), Marit Tusvik (NO); visual artist Alison Michell.

## OTHER SELECTED ARTISTIC PROJECTS

2017: composer at Ensemble Storstrøm's outreach project 'THE GARDEN - three tales' with Fuglsang Art Museum, Museum Lolland-Falster a.o. 'HØREBILLEDER / AUDIO IMAGES' (30 min) premiered Sept 2017.

2016: co-initiator of OPEN MUSIC WORK-PLACES and composer at the Museum of Contemporary Art Nov '16.

2014-17: *Hvis Landet Kunne Tale/If the Land Could Talk*, idea and and composer at music & art project for 48 kindergartens with interactive music works for choreographed childrens voices and professional trios, based on children's spontaneous singing during joint walks. Published online <http://www.hvislandetkunnetale.dk>. Commissioned by Roskilde District.

2014: Choreographed concert project *Melangell - Honey Angel* during Skálholt Summer Concerts' 40 year anniversary, ICELAND, w/Music for the Mysteries, conductor Stefan Parkman, actor María Ellingsen, South Iceland Chamber Choir.

## SELECTED RELEASES

### ONLINE

**WORKS FOR STRINGS by Hanne Tofte Jespersen** - solo violin, duo for 2 vl, duo vl & cb;  
w/ Kuno Kjærbye & Øssur Bæk vl, Heiko Maschmann cb (own label 2022 for streaming worldwide)

Gitta-Maria Sjöberg & Polina Fradkina: **PASSING THROUGH** - works by Musorgskij, Borg and Tofte Jespersen (Micropascal 2019)

**HVIS LANDET KUNNE TALE /IF THE LAND COULD TALK** - 8 works of 25 min, music & texts by Hanne Tofte Jespersen 2014-17.  
CD

**String Quartet Project Urolige Tider / Times of Unrest** Danacord 2022 (DACOCD 945)

**Ensemble Music for the Mysteries: The Testimony of Melangell** - MERIDIAN RECORDS 2012 (CDE 84617)  
music: Hanne Tofte Jespersen, text: Mike Harris.

**Ensemble Music for the Mysteries: The Seven Natures** - TUTL 2009 (FKT 043)  
music by Hanne Tofte Jespersen and Anders Hvidberg-Hansen.

**Hosianna - 7 songs for childrens Choir** Dansk Sang 2008 (B-CD-876)

**Insektudsigten**, own label / distribution Gateway 2006

music by: Anders Hvidberg-Hansen, Anders Gerup and Hanne Tofte Jespersen. Storytale by Hanne Tofte Jespersen (2003).

## AWARDS & GRANTS

In *Linköping Studentsångares* Composition Award 2016, her 'GOING TO HEAVEN' for TTBBB a capella to a poem by Emily Dickinson reached the final and was premiered in Norrköping (SE), recorded 2017 and released online 2018.

'FARVESPILLET / THE PLAY OF COLOURS' (40 min, cl, bs, vl, perc & children audience's voices) won commission in *DR-Musikariet's* competition on interactive music tales for children & professional quartet, premiered in DR Concert House 2013.

ARTISTS GRANTS include San Cataldo, Danish Arts Foundation, Danish Composers Society (DKF), Nordic Culture Point a.o.

COMPOSER'S FEES from Augustinus Fund, Louis-Hansen Fund, KODA Culture, Danish Arts Foundation, Nordic Song Festival a.m.o.

DANISH MUSICIANS UNION's HONORABLE AWARD 2024. ROSKILDE DISTRICT'S CULTURAL AWARD FOR INDIVIDUALS 2024.

## MEDIA

**AUDIO:** <http://www.musicformysteries.org/audio.php>

**VIDEO:** <https://vimeo.com/hannetoftejespersen>

**LIST OF WORKS:** <http://www.musicformysteries.org/compositions.php>