

DAC OCD

Carl Nielsen Collection Vol. 1

MONO

Carl Nielsen

6 Symphonies

The Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra
Erik Tuxen • Thomas Jensen • Launy Grøndahl



The Historic *Carl Nielsen* Collection

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MONO

Symphonies

Concertos

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Works

Incidental
Music

Operas

Chamber
Music

Keyboard
Works

Songs

Choral
Works

VOL
1

MONO

Carl Nielsen Collection Vol. 1

DAC OCD

3 CD

6 Symphonies

351-353



DACOC D
351-353

3 CD

MONO

ADD

Total
playing
time:
65:53
68:17
69:26

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COMPACT
DISC
DIGITAL AUDIO

Carl Nielsen

1865 - 1931

DACOCD 351

Symphony No. 1 31:16

- [1] Allegro orgoglioso
 - [2] Andante
 - [3] Allegro comodo
 - [4] Finale. Allegro con fuoco
- Live Concert, June 6, 1957

Erik Tuxen, conductor

Symphony No. 2

(The Four Temperaments) 34:26

- [5] Allegro colerico
- [6] Allegro comodo
e flemmatico
- [7] Andante malincolico
- [8] Allegro sanguineo

Live Concert, June 7, 1956

Launy Grøndahl, conductor



DACOCD 352

Symphony No. 3

(Sinfonia espansiva) 34:53

- [1] Allegro espansivo
- [2] Andante pastorale
- [3] Allegretto un poco
- [4] Finale. Allegro

Live Concert, June 20, 1959

Thomas Jensen, conductor

Symphony No. 4

(The Inextinguishable) 33:16

- [5] Allegro -
- [6] Poco allegretto -
- [7] Poco adagio quasi andante -
- [8] Allegro

Live Concert, September 2, 1952

Thomas Jensen, conductor

Carl Nielsen

1865 - 1931

DACOCD 353

Symphony No. 5 36:18

- [1] Tempo giusto-
 - [2] Adagio non troppo
 - [3] Allegro-Presto-Andante un poco
tranquillo-Allegro (Tempo 1)
- Live Concert, Paris, April 22, 1955

Erik Tuxen, conductor

Symphony No. 6

(Sinfonia Semplice) 32:44

- [4] Tempo giusto
- [5] Humoreske. Allegretto
- [6] Proposta seria. Adagio
- [7] Thema con variazioni

Recorded June 17-19, 1952

Thomas Jensen, conductor

THE DANISH RADIO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Transferred from tape and 78s and digitally remastered, at Abbey Road Studios, London, by Andrew Walter & Paul Baily, at DigiSound Studios, Copenhagen, by Eyvind Rafn and at StageTech, Malmö, by Krister Olsson.

Executive Producer: Jesper Buhl

Danacord Records

Gernersgade 35

DK - 1319 Copenhagen DENMARK

351-353

6 Symphonies

3 CD

anf. vorh.
Det Vigdelyphkelige
(for Symfoniske Symponer) (2. indtegnelse.)
Carl Nielsen

Carl Nielsen

6 Symphonies

The Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra
Erik Tuxen • Thomas Jensen • Launy Grøndahl



The Historic *Carl Nielsen* Collection

Carl Nielsen
Allegro (C) = 80 (Das Unheimliche)
Carl Nielsen

1865 - 1931

DAC OCD 351

Symphony No. 1 31:16

- [1] Allegro orgoglioso
 - [2] Andante
 - [3] Allegro comodo
 - [4] Finale. Allegro con fuoco
- Live Concert, June 6, 1957
Erik Tuxen, conductor

Symphony No. 2

(The Four Temperaments) 34:26

- [5] Allegro collerico
 - [6] Allegro comodo e flemmatico
 - [7] Andante malincolico
 - [8] Allegro sanguineo
- Live Concert, June 7, 1956
Launy Grøndahl, conductor

Das Unheimliche
dac
ocd

DAC OCD 352

Symphony No. 3

- (Sinfonia espansiva) 34:53
- [1] Allegro espansivo
 - [2] Andante pastorale
 - [3] Allegretto un poco
 - [4] Finale. Allegro
- Live Concert, June 20, 1959
Thomas Jensen, conductor

Symphony No. 4

(The Inextinguishable) 33:16

- [5] Allegro -
 - [6] Poco allegretto -
 - [7] Poco adagio quasi andante -
 - [8] Allegro
- Live Concert, September 2, 1952
Thomas Jensen, conductor

Carl Nielsen
Carl Nielsen

1865 - 1931

DAC OCD 353

Symphony No. 5 36:18

- [1] Tempo giusto-
 - [2] Adagio non troppo
 - [3] Allegro-Presto-Andante un poco tranquillo-Allegro (Tempo 1)
- Live Concert, Paris, April 22, 1955
Erik Tuxen, conductor

Symphony No. 6

(Sinfonia Semplice) 32:44

- [4] Tempo giusto
 - [5] Humoreske. Allegretto
 - [6] Proposta seria. Adagio
 - [7] Thema con variazioni
- Recorded June 17-19, 1952
Thomas Jensen, conductor

THE DANISH RADIO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Transferred from tape and 78s and digitally remastered, at Abbey Road Studios, London, by Andrew Walter & Paul Baily, at DigiSound Studios, Copenhagen, by Eyvind Rafn and at StageTech, Malmö, by Krister Olsson.
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DK - 1319 Copenhagen DENMARK



Thomas Jensen

The Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra plays Carl Nielsen

DAC OCD 351

Symphony No. 1 G minor Op. 7 FS 16 (1891-92) 31:16

[1] Allegro orgoglioso 9:16

[2] Andante 6:28

[3] Allegro comodo 8:36

[4] Finale. Allegro con fuoco 6:54

Live Concert, June 6, 1957

Denmark's Radio, Studio 1

Erik Tuxen, *conductor*

Symphony No. 2 (The Four Temperaments) Op. 16 FS 29 (1901-02) 34:26

[5] Allegro collerico 10:17

[6] Allegro comodo e flemmatico 4:57

[7] Andante malincolico 11:17

[8] Allegro sanguineo 7:53

Live Concert, June 7, 1956

Denmark's Radio, Studio 1

Grøndahl's Farewell Concert

Launy Grøndahl, *conductor*

DACOCD 352

Symphony No. 3 (Sinfonia espansiva) Op. 27 FS 60 (1910-11) 34:53

[1] Allegro espansivo 11:04

[2] Andante pastorale 8:39 (Solo soprano: Kirsten Hermansen. Solo baritone: Erik Sjøberg)

[3] Allegretto un poco 5:57

[4] Finale. Allegro 9:11

Live Concert, June 20, 1959

Denmark's Radio, Studio 1

Thomas Jensen, conductor

Symphony No. 4 (The Inextinguishable) Op. 29 FS 76 (1914-16) 33:16

[5] Allegro -

[6] Poco allegretto -

[7] Poco adagio quasi andante -

[8] Allegro

Live Concert, September 2, 1952

Denmark's Radio, Studio 1

Thomas Jensen, conductor

DACOCD 353

Symphony No. 5 Op. 50 FS 97 (1921-22) 36:18

[1] Tempo giusto-

[2] Adagio non troppo 20:45

[3] Allegro-Presto-Andante un poco tranquillo-Allegro (Tempo 1) 15:33

Live Concert, Paris, April 22, 1955

Erik Tuxen, conductor

Symphony No. 6 (Sinfonia Semplice) FS 116 (1924-25) 32:44

[4] Tempo giusto 12:41

[5] Humoreske. Allegretto 4:07

[6] Proposta seria. Adagio 5:18

[7] Thema con variazioni 10:36

Recorded June 17-19, 1952

Denmark's Radio, Studio 1

Thomas Jensen, conductor

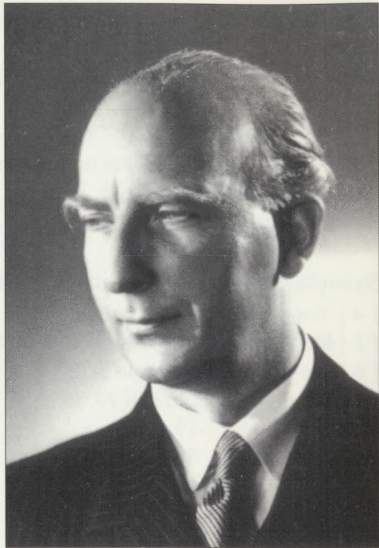
Transferred from TONO Y 30012-15

The FS numbers refer to the bibliography

Carl Nielsen: Kompositioner. En bibliografi ved Dan Fog i samarbejde med Torben Schousboe
(Copenhagen 1965)



Launy Grøndahl



Erik Tuxen

Carl Nielsen (1865-1931) is the central figure in Danish music after the Romantic period. Through his music, his writings and his strong personality he exerted a decisive influence on 20th-century Danish music and musical aesthetics, and he was, moreover, a source of inspiration for composers in the other Scandinavian countries. He absorbed and reformulated the best features of the musical heritage, and he composed in nearly all genres. His six symphonies are milestones in his compositorial output.

In the 20th-century Nielsen's music has often been described as a reaction against the high and late Romantic style; but this description is incorrect, since it throws less light on the music than on the fact that later generations adopted the stylistic ideals of Nielsen, and since Nielsen himself denied the possibility of revolution in art. It was more in his attitude to music and to musical craftsmanship that he differed from many contemporary composers and became a source of inspiration for posterity. It is of course possible to trace in Nielsen's compositions until around 1900 the influence of contemporary composers akin to him in some way. His early songs show a logical but deeply personal connection with the Danish Lieder tradition of Heise and Lange-Müller. His harmonic and contrapuntal style matured under the influence of J. P. E. Hartmann's and Brahms's chamber and piano music, Grieg's piano pieces and especially Johan Svendsen's orchestral works, and as a result of his own studies of 16th and 17th-century polyphony. His suddenly increasing use from the 1890s of chromaticism in the middle voices was no doubt the result of his first-hand knowledge (as a second violinist) of

Wagner's operas.

Similarly, his approach to thematic development and to structure seems to have been strongly influenced by his admiration for Beethoven's and Franck's chamber music and symphonies. Fairly early on, however, he discovered his own personal and unmistakable style, which he later developed relatively undisturbed within its own premises.

Nielsen started out from the Classical harmony of the 18th and early 19th centuries, with its preference for triads in the tonic and related keys and for a relatively fast harmonic rhythm, and these elements clearly marked his entire output. But during the 1890s he developed his harmony, apparently independently, to what might be called "extended tonality", where all 12 semitones could be used within a tonally centred scale. Nielsen used chromaticisms not in terms of the Romantic idiom, as leading notes related to diatonic notes and as expressive melodic anticipations, but as autonomous entities directly related to the tonic. This made possible the use of virtually all triads within the key without obscuring the tonic, and hence a rapid transition between keys. Above all, his use of major and minor 3rds and 7ths as nearly equals gives his music a characteristic major-minor bearing together with a Mixolydian colouring. A growing tendency of adding strokes of modal tonality may be observed, as for instance in the *Sinfonia espansiva*, and in later works there are frequent polytonal and at times atonal passages. Nielsen's "extended tonality" was primarily a melodic phenomenon, a means to more intensive expression; it is in evidence in the songs opp. 4 and 6 and (especially) 10, where the

subdued warmth of the diminished 7th often appears at lyric climaxes. But since the "extended tonality" was used in conjunction with a Classically orientated harmonic rhythm based on triads, the music was criticized from a Romantic point of view for relying excessively on implicit harmony.

Because of the fundamental role played in Nielsen's music by melodic and driving (rhythmic) elements, his harmony at times became a direct function of melody, as is clearly heard in the latent unisono of the melodic-rhythmic progression of the first 137 bars of the **Sinfonia espansiva**. It is evident from Nielsen's manuscripts that he often conceived themes and motifs as unharmonized melodies; this applied generally to all his songs, but can also be seen in connection with the opera **Maskarade** and several instrumental works, such as the **First** and **Third Symphonies**. His melody was increasingly characterized by economy and balance in the use of intervals, and he is well known for his remark that "one must show the sated that the melodic interval of a 3rd should be considered a gift from God, a 4th an experience, and a 5th the supreme happiness. Thoughtless over-indulgence undermines health" (quoted in the article "Musikalske Problemer" ("Musical problems") in his book **Levende Musik (Living Music)** 1925). The repetition of a note or an interval, and the figurative replaying of a central note (the "perihelic principle") are typical of his melodic writing.

In Nielsen's instrumental music the phrasing evolved from a traditional four-bar symmetry in the early works to the use of metrically free

phrasing in the later ones. Similarly, the rhythmic driving elements, originally tied to his melody, became an independent factor, as in the four last symphonies. From the beginning his structural technique was marked by a concentration on motivic treatment, especially in the string quartets and the symphonies, and he deliberately chose short and concise developing motifs rather than long, flowering themes, especially as main ideas. His early developed sense of contrapuntal texture was no doubt strengthened by his many years of experience as a second violinist and chamber musician, and was consolidated through Orla Rosenhoff's teaching and through his own studies of polyphony. His delight in objective factual knowledge and thorough craftsmanship, characteristic of his relationship with his surroundings and also expressed in his writings, found its musical expression in structure. He often advised his students to study counterpoint, "not in order to become learned and complicated, but on the contrary to achieve greater strength and simplicity". This is noticeable in his piano music, for example in the independent motivic and rhythmic treatment of the left hand, unusual for the period. Similarly, while the emphasis in his instrumental music shifted from chamber pieces to orchestral (especially symphonic) works, its linear structure and polyphony became increasingly predominant, resulting in a somewhat more restrained colouring. Perhaps this is one of the main reasons why his music was for a long time not appreciated abroad, where other stylistic ideas prevailed. The homophonic sections are often more traditionally orchestrated than the linear ones, and from the **Third**

Symphony onwards, with the development of group polyphony, the music is characterized by an increasing concordance of orchestration and texture.

While Nielsen generally used strophic form in his vocal music, he developed a dynamic approach to symphonic form early on. Starting from the traditional sonata form he transformed it towards a personal episodic form. By means of intensive motivic treatment and the development of linear structure, he linked his musical progression in increasingly large structural sections which are directly adjacent but at once separated by and united through large curves of tension. Here again the **Third Symphony** is the central work. In his search for unity in both texture and structure, he developed a capacity both for contrapuntal synthesis of themes (especially in slow movements) and for the derivation and variation of motifs together with motivic and thematic metamorphosis. This striving for cyclical coherence is increasingly clearly reinforced in the symphonic works by that particular tonal disposition which from a dynamic point of view is called "progressive tonality" or "emergent tonality" (Robert Simpson), and from a static point of view the "principle of interlocking tonal structures" (Graham George), and which is the formal result of the melodically determined "extended tonality" which Nielsen developed early in his career.

It is not surprising to note that in Nielsen's compositions the various musical genres run somewhat parallel to his career as a musician (violinist, chamber musician, orchestral violinist, conductor, free-lance composer). Thus we find

that the dominance of compositions in small forms and for chamber ensemble in the years up to about 1900 is thereafter replaced by the dominance of orchestral music and of simple strophic songs. Although he had composed his first orchestral piece in 1888 (first performed in 1893 under the title of **Symphonic Rhapsody** and very much inspired by the orchestral style of Johan Svendsen), Nielsen had in his early years concentrated on songs and chamber music. But gradually, and parallel to his employment as a violinist in the Royal Orchestra under Svendsen's baton, he became aware of his gifts as a symphonic composer. Nielsen's **First Symphony** was begun in Berlin in the autumn 1890, while he was still composing his string quartet in F minor. Both works are characterized by a symphonic urge, and especially the First Symphony is marked by a strong motivic concentration inspired by Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. In his diary of the 1st of November, 1890, Nielsen wrote: "I have begun to memorize the C minor so that I can write it down from memory; I don't know if it is possible for me, but I shall try. The more one studies that symphony, the greater it becomes. One might think that that score had come down from Heaven!" (Nielsen's Beethoven-essays are still kept among his musical manuscripts). In his diary of the 20th December, 1890, Nielsen wrote: "I have made a good start on the Finale of the symphony." Nielsen's First Symphony (FS 16) was given its first performance on Wednesday the 14th of March, 1894, in Copenhagen as the opening number of the first self-supporting concert given by the Royal Orchestra conducted by Johan Svendsen,

Nielsen himself being a member of the second violin group. The work was hailed as an astonishing new symphony and was performed several times during the following years in Denmark and abroad. Score and parts were published in print towards the end of 1894, much to the envy of Nielsen's friends among the young Scandinavian composers, who were not paid for their works by publishers, but had to pay themselves to have their compositions published. Besides the Beethoven-like motivic concentration, especially in the first movement, the symphony is partly influenced by the symphonic style of the much admired Johannes Brahms, whom Nielsen visited in Vienna on the 7th of November, 1894, during another trip to Germany and Austria, and to whom he gave the score. The second movement is an early example of Nielsen's genuine and unsentimental Nordic Romantic style.

During the period until the turn of the century Nielsen developed and consolidated his personal style. It was seen to be, and indeed was, markedly different from much contemporary Romantic music: it was founded on Classicism as regards thematic formation, structure, cadential harmony and harmonic rhythm, with melody and rhythm as the primary elements, but nevertheless used contemporary developments in chromaticism and tone colour. Both admirers and critics of Nielsen's music now recognized his distinctive genius, and from 1901 he was given an annual state pension so that he would no longer have to take private pupils out of economic necessity. Nielsen's compositions until 1908 are marked by a particular interest in musical characterization.

This is perhaps shown most clearly in the opera **Saul og David** (1898-1901), and is also evident in the dramatic and stylistic opposite to this work, the buffo opera **Maskarade** (1904-1906), which anticipates the melodic style of the pioneering popular Danish songs composed by Nielsen ten years later. Moreover, such characterization is to be found in the Second Symphony **De fire Temperamenter** (1901-1902; FS 29), which, following an idea in a primitive painting, illustrates the four temperaments (choleric, phlegmatic, melancholic and sanguine) in a sequence of motivic variation from one movement to the next. This work is the first clear example of the special tonal disposition in Nielsen's symphonic works, which has been called "progressive tonality", and which is fully developed from the Third Symphony and onwards, where changes in tonality are brought about by means of the dynamic and linear forces in music. The tonal treatment in the **Second Symphony** is more like static tonal plateaus, interrelated throughout the four movements of the cyclus (B minor, with accentuation of G major; G major, with accentuation of E flat major; E flat minor, with a middle section in E flat major and accentuation of D minor, and ending in B flat major; and D major going to A major after a middle section in C minor). Only in the middle section of the third movement (Andante malincolico) a combination of tonal evolution with linear and dynamic forces takes place, resulting in the very climax of the whole symphony, where the first motif from the first (choleric) movement turns up again in augmented shape in D minor, but misses its tonal goal by a

semitone through a lightning quick shift of harmony and resigns to end up in B flat major - a true musical expression of tragedy. The four movements of the symphony are knitted tightly together by the tonal coherence of the cyclus and the above mentioned motivic quotation at the climax, and by the fact that one little motif is treated and varied as thematic germ in all movements - four temperaments not in four persons, but in one and the same. Nielsen finished his composition only ten days before the first performance of the work, which took place in Copenhagen on Tuesday the 1st of December, 1902, at a concert given by the young music society "Dansk Koncertforening"; Nielsen himself conducted the premiere. A few days before his death on the 3rd of October, 1931, Nielsen wrote a long programme note on the symphony, on the occasion of a planned performance of the work by **Stockholms Konserthörelseforening**. Nielsen's note was reprinted by Torben Meyer in his book **Carl Nielsen. Kunstneren og Mennesket** (Copenhagen, 1947) vol. I 188-190; an English translation was given by Robert Simpson in his book **Carl Nielsen. Symphonist** (London, 1952), 42-44 (revised edition 1979, 53-55).

Nielsen's Third Symphony, or **Sinfonia espansiva** (1910-1911; FS 60), whose first movement, in particular, has been acclaimed for its rhythmic, thematic and tonal span and thrust, definitively confirmed Nielsen's position as the most significant Danish symphonist. In this symphony, and in the following three, we find, that Nielsen's themes and motives contain

melodic elements characteristic of his own popular songs, a fact that has not hitherto been realized, but which certainly contributed to the growing understanding and accept of his symphonic works. The name of the symphony was derived from the first movement (*Allegro espansivo*) and the expansive character of the motivic material and treatment therein. After the tension of the first movement follows the relaxed Andante pastorale, with the addition of two textless human voices in the concluding section; these two voices are not meant to be solo voices, but the singers should be placed in the background of the orchestra in order to mix well with the instruments. After the intermezzo-like third movement with its rhythmic vivace character follows the Finale with its metamorphosis of thematic material from the first movement. Each of the first three movements of the symphony begins with a short introduction, but the Finale does not. A glance in Nielsen's autograph manuscript shows, however, that originally the Finale had a unisono introduction of two bars, like a short prelude to a song, and serving as a kind of bridge passage from the third movement. Knowing this, the hymn-like or song-like character of the main theme of the Finale is perhaps even better understood. The symphony was composed at a time, when Nielsen was busy as a conductor of the Royal Orchestra and often had to deputize with short notice for the principal conductor Frederik Rung at opera performances at the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen. Nevertheless, he managed to compose a true masterwork. The first movement was finished on the 13th of April, 1910, and the Finale was

completed on the the 30th of April, 1911; the symphony was given its first performance on the 28th of February, 1912, in Copenhagen, Nielsen himself conducting the Royal Orchestra. The success was evident, and the symphony was subsequently performed in Amsterdam at Het Concertgebouw under Nielsen's baton two months later, and three times at the Royal Theatre during the month of May, 1912, in honour of Nielsen. The work was published in 1913 by C. F. Kahnt in Leipzig, who paid 5000 Marks for the copyright - six times as much as Nielsen used to get from his Danish publishers.

The Fourth Symphony, **Det Uudslukkelige (The Inextinguishable)**, 1914-1916; FS 76) seems to be a focal point in Nielsen's music. It was composed at a time when he was also occupied by composing simple Danish folk melodies, and when he had to face severe problems on the personal level; furthermore, the First World War had begun. Although the Symphony is divided into four movements, it is meant to be played in one continuous stream. Much has been said and written about Nielsen being influenced by the impact of the First World War and of modern tendencies in European music; and certainly he told one of his former pupils that he was composing a new symphony in which there would be a duel between two sets of timpani - "it is something about the war". But the expressiveness and the somewhat heterogeneous style of the Fourth Symphony is much better counted for, when one considers the fact that Nielsen was at the same time composing simple folk melodies and complex symphonic music, and that his personal life went through a severe

crisis. In the Spring of 1914, he had resigned from his job as a conductor at The Royal Theatre, and a coinciding marital crisis nearly knocked him out, as it did to his wife, the sculptress Anne Marie Carl-Nielsen. The marriage was strong enough, however, to survive the crisis, and throughout life these two centrally placed artists remained an invaluable support for one another, both on a human and on an artistic level. In a letter of the 3rd of May, 1914, before the war had started, he wrote to his wife; "I have an idea of a new composition, which has no programme, but is to express what we know as urge for life or manifestations of life, that is: everything that moves, that can be called neither evil nor good, neither high nor low, neither great nor small, but only "That which is life" or "That which has the will of life" - you know: just life and movement, yet different, very different, but in a continuously flowing connection, in one big movement, in one stream. I need a word or a short title to tell that; that is enough. I cannot quite explain what I intend, but that which I intend is good. I felt it all right through myself when I think it over, but words can really do nothing here." Like in **The Four Temperaments**, we find in the **Fourth Symphony** a small melodic motif to be the basis of the whole work, a diatonically descending melody accompanied in parallel thirds, treated differently throughout the symphony, lyrically, peacefully, tragically, and triumphantly, yet with resignation. Nielsen finished the symphony on the 14th of January, 1916, and conducted its first performance on the first of February, 1916, at "Musikforeningen" in Copenhagen. In the programme of the concert he wrote: "The

composer has tried through the title "L'ineetinguibile" to indicate in one word what only Music itself is able to express fully: The elementary will of life. Facing a task like this: to express life abstractly, where other arts remain unable, forced to use indirect means, to make extracts, to symbolize, there and only there does Music feel at home in its own original territory, rightly in its own element, simply because it has performed its task just by remaining itself. For it is life there, where the others only represent and paraphrase life. - Life is unconquerable and inextinguishable, there is struggled, wrestled, begotten and consumed to-day as to-morrow, to-morrow as to-day, and everything turns back. Once again: Music is life, and like it, inextinguishable. The word that the composer has placed over his work, might therefore seem superfluous, the composer has, however, employed it in order to underline the strictly musical character of his subject. Not a programme, but a suggestive guide into Music's own territory."

In the Fourth and Fifth Symphony we find Nielsen reformulating the traditional symphonic form from inside, with an increasing use of orchestral groups in polyphonically built movements ("group polyphony"). The **Fifth Symphony** (FS 97), in two big movements, was begun in February 1921 and finished on the 15th of January, 1922. Nielsen had to delay the completion of the work in order to compose the popular choral work **Fynsk Foraar (Springtime in Funen)** in 1921. Seven structurally interrelated motifs are used in the first section of the first movement in various layers of the orchestral

sound, and in the second movement some of them turn up again in new surroundings. In his pencil manuscript score of the symphony Nielsen sketched the idea of the work with the following words: "Vague, resting forces - Alert forces". He conducted the first performance of the symphony on the 24th of January, 1922, at "Musikforeningen" in Copenhagen, and during the following years it was also performed in Germany, Sweden and Holland. The first movement was generally received as a masterpiece, but the appreciation of the symphony as a whole was rather moderate - the performance in Stockholm on the 20th of January, 1924, caused a scandal. Nevertheless, Nielsen's Fifth Symphony was among the works performed at the I.S.C.M. festival at Frankfurt am Main on the 1st of July, 1927; the conductor was Wilhelm Furtwängler, who performed it a second time on the 27th of October, 1927, at the Gewandhaus in Leipzig. The immense success of the symphony at the performance given by the Danish State Radio Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Erik Tuxen, at the Edinburgh festival on the 29th of August, 1950, opened the world-wide interest in Nielsen's music, especially his instrumental music.

For the remaining ten years of his life, Nielsen aimed at a mode of expression more like chamber music, derived directly from the character of each individual instrument. This tendency first became apparent in his Wind Quintet (1922), his most frequently performed chamber work, which was followed by the **Sinfonia semplice** (1924-1925; FS 116), with its sharper tonal conflict, by the Flute Concerto, with chamber orchestra (1926)

and by the Three Piano Pieces (1928), which border on atonality. The stylistic dichotomy mentioned above was resolved in the sublime Clarinet Concerto (1928). The **Sixth Symphony (Sinfonia semplice)** was begun in August 1924; the first movement was completed on the 20th of November that year, and the three other movements were composed in 1925. Nielsen finished his score on the 5th of December, 1925, and conducted the first performance in Copenhagen on the 11th of December, 1925, at a special festival concert given in his honour on the occasion of his 60th anniversary six months earlier. Much has been written about the seemingly diversified nature of this last symphony and its expression of despair; it seems to have been, for a long time, the most difficult of Nielsen's works to understand. But Nielsen aimed at a lighter vein and chamber style in this new **avant-garde** symphony; and the careful and unprejudiced listener will hear in this work, that musical idioms characteristic of Nielsen's style throughout his mature life, turn up here again in new ways, thus establishing an organic connection to the previous compositions. Nielsen always remained himself and did not believe in revolution in music; and he was constantly looking ahead.

Nielsen conducted his own symphonies several times during his lifetime. Thus, on the 14th of January, 1927, he conducted his **Third Symphony (Sinfonia espansiva)** at the first big orchestral concert given by the newly established Danish State Radio Corporation. No tape was, of course, taken of this performance; and

unfortunately, no other kind of recording exists of Nielsen playing his own music or talking over the radio. But some Danish musicians that got into contact with Nielsen during his late years and even played under his baton, have been able to make tape and grammophone recordings of his music and thus transmit part of Nielsen's own way of performing his music - although there is a general agreement among old musicians, that nobody could match Nielsen's own performances of his symphonies. The three conductors in the present set of compact discs are among the musicians able to transmit part of the Nielsen tradition; and over the years, Nielsen's symphonies have been standard ingredients in the programmes of the Danish Radio Orchestra.

Launy Valdemar Grøndahl (1886-1960) studied violin with Nielsen's friend and colleague Axel Gade and was appointed violinist in the Danish Radio Orchestra at its start in 1925. From 1926 to 1956 Grøndahl was permanent conductor of that orchestra, often performing Nielsen's music. On the 19th of October, 1928, Grøndahl conducted a whole Nielsen concert in the Danish State Radio, and Nielsen made a note of the date in his diary. Grøndahl's last concert took place on the 7th of June, 1956; on the programme was Nielsen's **Second Symphony**, included in this set.

Thomas Jensen (1898-1963) studied the violoncello at the Music Conservatory of Copenhagen, where Nielsen was his teacher of music theory. 1920-1927 Jensen played the cello in the Tivoli Orchestra, a few times playing under Nielsen's baton. From 1927 he lived as a conductor in Aarhus, being one of the founders of Aarhus Symphony Orchestra in 1935. He was

said to have a fairly precise memory of Nielsen's own tempi. Therefore, his recordings of Nielsen's music are of special interest. Three of these are included in the present set; his recordings of the Third and Fourth Symphonies are from original tapes and are the only ones in existence.

Erik Oluf Tuxen (1902-1957) was, besides being a conductor specially interested in new music, a composer of incidental and film music; he also had his own jazz band. From 1936 he conducted the Danish Radio Orchestra. His performance of Nielsen's First Symphony took place on the 6th of June, 1957, only two and a half months before his early death.

Torben Schousboe ©1983

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We would also like to express our thanks to the leading Carl Nielsen scholar Torben Schousboe for the texts for the booklet and to Mogens Wenzel Andreasen for his additional notes. In order to make the most of the new digital media we have based this new compact disc series on the original master tapes kindly supplied from Hans Skaarup of Denmark's Radio Music Department and the original 78 r.p.m. recordings in the collection of Arne Helman.

Great care has been taken in restoring the sound by Andrew Walter and Paul Baily at the Abbey Road Studios in London and by Eyvind Rafn, DigiSound in Copenhagen with the final digital preparation to CD by Krister Olsson, StageTech in Malmö, Sweden.

A major part of the costs for the sound restoration were generously funded by the Statens Musikråd, Carl Nielsen og Anne Marie Carl-Nielsens Legat and Gangstedfonden to whom we express our gratitude.

Jesper Buhl



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