

**International Rostrum of Composers 2012
NRK – Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation**

Åse Hedstrøm (b. 1950):

Runner's Blues (2012)

**Forsvarets Musikkorps Vestlandet (FMKV)
(The Armed Forces Band, West)
Peter Szilvai, conductor**

Recorded 08.03.2012 at the Haakon's Hall in Bergen.

Åse Hedstrøm (b. 17.04.1950) studied composition at the Norwegian Academy of Music with Finn Mortensen, and later electro acoustical music at the Institute for Sonology in Utrecht. As music organizer, she has been president in the New Music association from 1976. The years 1983-87, she was coordinator of music at the Henie-Onstad art museum, initializing a series of contemporary music, and from 1994-98 artistic and administrative leader of the Ultima Festival. 1999-2002 she was head of the Stockholm Concert Hall and its Philharmonic Orchestra.



Geir Johnson says of her music: “Expression is the hallmark of Åse Hedstrøms kjennetegn. She has a very personal language, unaffected by most “-isms”. Her music is also strongly related to other artists, like the expressive sculptor Eva Hesse, or the poet Henri Michaux. There is an inner pressure in Hedstrøm’s music, which creates an organic drive towards an eruptive climax. The complicated rhythmic and musical processes are always under control, but her music carries an inner force which finally brings a new and clarified insight.

Runner's Blues

Commissioned by The Armed Forces Band, West.

Images of human life as a journey, filled with tests and battles, we meet in all stages of human culture. *Runner's Blues* may also be experienced this way: as a discovery of Life's labyrinths.

”It all starts with a vibration. An unnoticeable movement which increases for each minute”, the author Octavio Paz once said. In such a way, *Runner's Blues* begins: The three percussionists touch the tom-toms, gradually bringing out a whispering, pulsating shimmer. This vibrating motif, gradually increases with the interference of the winds, in alternating combinations of various superimposed processes. The encompassing structure may resemble a finite wave, or a deep breath, whereas the structures of the vibrations, the shimmering, and the breathing build a complex process. Order and disorder seem to cooperate, and the threshold of silence converges with the edge of extreme loudness

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Synne Skouen (b. 1950):

...à travers les paroles (2007)

Geir Inge Lotsberg, violin

Recorded 14.01.2009 at the Radio House in Oslo.

Synne Skouen (born 08.08.1950 in Oslo) studied at the Hochschule für Musik und darstellende Kunst in Wien (from 1969-73); theory and composition with Professor Alfred Uhl and Professor Erwin Ratz, and experimental composition at the Academy's electronic studio, directed by the composer Dieter Kaufmann and the composer and conductor Friedrich Cerha. During this period she was also a member of the experimental music theatre group "Die Fremden" (with, among others, composer Günther Kahowez). In 1976 she earned a Diploma in composition at the Norwegian State Academy of Music following studies with Professor Finn Mortensen.



During the years as an employee in NRK, she was not active as a composer. In recent years she again works full time as a composer, for the time being with a grant from the Norwegian State. She also has been in the administration of various councils and organizations, and as a contracted columnist in Aftenposten she keeps up her journalism, for the most part with articles on cultural affairs.

The title [of the first of two pieces for solo violin] "*Une soirée d'été ...*" borrows the opening words from Marguerite Duras' novel *Les Yeux Bleus Cheveux Noirs* - "Blue eyes, black hair". This is a book whose nourishment comes from silence, the vast backdrop of things unsaid, the empty sound of the sea, and of "the time between things, between people". Small utterances and suggestions can create intense images, but they are separated from each other by time and by silence. This device is common to both "*Une soirée d'été ...*" and a subsequent piece for solo violin, "*... à travers les paroles*", commissioned by Geir Inge Lotsberg in 2007. "*... à travers les paroles*" are the concluding words of Duras' novel. A new contract for a new piece for a violinist, but the distance in time between the two works also has a musical aspect: it is the distance of which Duras writes, the distance between things and between people. The close connection between the suggested impressionism of the two pieces quietly emphasizes the fact that they exist on either side of all those things that neither mentions.

For a moment distance is audible; the opening of "*... à travers les paroles*" was recorded at a distance. This is a technical solution to something the recorded medium cannot capture; namely that the piece, when performed, begins outside the vision of the audience.

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Jon Øivind Ness (b. 1969):

Swan's Foetus (2012)

**Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra
Jukka Pekka Saraste, conductor**

Recorded 25.04.2012 in Oslo Concert Hall.

Jon Øivind Ness (30.03.1968) grew up in a small place in middle Norway, playing various instruments. He entered Norwegian Academy of Music with the Guitar as main instrument, and later studied composition there with Olav Anton Thommessen, Lasse Thoresen, Bjørn Kruse and Ragnar Söderlind. Ness has always referred to popular culture, mainly because he feels just as much at home in the progressive part of this as in “art music”. In the beginning this affinity appeared as various obscure quotes and such, while recently he has tried to assimilate the energy in prog rock and post-punk without incorporating stylistic elements. He has worked out his own, continuously transposing harmonic system, and in later years combined this technique with micro tonality. Humour has played an important part in Ness' music, but later the humour has become more naughty and dark. His very last pieces have taken a quite serious turn, with just an occasional hole for humour to break through.



”*Swan's Foetus* was written after the Oslo Philharmonic asked me if I had something which could be performed with Bartók's second Violin Concerto. I volunteered to write something new, as a kind of study for a post punk project I had been pondering. A couple of years ago I had discovered Swans, which I for several years had dismissed (after purchasing a CD by mistake). I attended a live concert in Oslo and was completely captivated, despite the sound level being nauseatingly loud (literally). Following this, I started digging deeper into the catalogue of a related musician I have long admired, Foetus. *Swan's Foetus* is based on "The Beautiful Days", "Minus Something" and "I Love You This Much" from the Swans' album *Soundtracks For the Blind*, and "Anything" by Foetus. Towards the end is a section with two different presentations of the twelve note theme from the Bartók Concerto. This has again been mixed with the opening chord of part two from Stravinsky's Rite of Spring, and a good portion of my own material. One has to be a bit of a nerd to recognize Stravinsky or Bartók in this context, but the quotes from Swans and Foetus are fully identifiable.

”Why Swans? A striking aspect of this group, is how well they can maintain a certain intense musical situation over an amount of time – up to ten, fifteen and twenty minutes. Atmost, the concert with the Swans, could be compared with an extended Bruckner climax, dependent on an ability to distribute the amount of information, so that one is capable of listening to more or less the same thing for fifteen minutes. Rock music has for me never been greater, as if Bruckner was resurrected as post-punk Messiah. [...] *Swan's Foetus* is not very long, so I didn't really go into this kind of time treatment. Here, it's more about using material from the worlds of Swans and Foetus. And integrate it in a different context.”