

## **Selection of successful students of Professor Niklas Sivelöv**

Niklas Sivelöv

## MARIE-LUISE BODENDORFF

Marie-Luise Bodendorff was born in Augsburg (Germany) in 1983. She had her first piano lessons at the age of five and due to her exceptional talent, she was admitted to the Hochschule für Musik in Karlsruhe at the age of 10. She later became a full-time student of Professor Olga Rissin-Morenova.

Aged six, Marie-Luise Bodendorff started giving concerts. Her first public appearance was with the South-West Chamber Orchester Pforzheim in 1989. Other events include performing with Kurpfälzisches Kammerorchester Mannheim, New Philharmonic Westphalia, Folkwang Kammerorchester Essen, the Bacau Philharmonic and The Kharkov Philharmonic. She has played numerous solo and chamber music recitals throughout Germany and abroad, and also made recordings for ARD and Bayerischen Rundfunk. She made a notable appearance on 'We can do everything except speak High German', a TV spot that was broadcast to all of Germany.

From 2002 until 2007, Marie-Luise Bodendorff studied with Russian piano authority Vladimir Krainev at the Hannover University of Music, Drama and Media. The ERASMUS exchange program enabled her to study at Paris Conservatoire, where she took lessons with the famous French pianist Brigitte Engerer in 2008.

From 2007 to 2013, Marie-Luise Bodendorff attended Postgraduate Studies with Professor Christopher Oakden in Hannover and finished these successfully. The soloist class at Royal Danish Academy of Music (RDAM) with Professor Niklas Sivelöv, proved to be an important milestone on her artistic journey.

In June 2014, Marie-Luise Bodendorff received her soloist diploma and gave her debut recital in Tivoli Concert Hall. She had already given a virtuoso solo recital in 2013 and performed Rachmaninov's Third Piano Concerto at the same venue one year earlier with the RDAM Orchestra.

In 2013, Marie-Luise Bodendorff was invited to play for the Danish Royal Family at Chateau de Caix. Here she started a collaboration with the Nordic String Quartet that later became known all over Denmark as the Nordic Piano Quintet. Concerts at Copenhagen Summer Festival, Bornholm Chamber Music Festival, Ofelia Live and other events followed.

The piano quintet has received coaching by Professor Tim Frederiksen, Lars Anders Tomter and Alexander Zapolski.

Marie-Luise Bodendorff currently resides in Copenhagen, Denmark. Since September 2016 she has been a part time teacher in piano at the Royal Danish Academy of Music.

Her portfolio of international piano competition prizes and other awards include:

Competition for young pianists, Rome, Italy, 1992

Lions International Youth Competition, 1993

Culture Prize from 'Baden-Württemberg', 1998

Bundeswettbewerb 'Jugend musiziert', 1999

Puigcerda Competition, Spain, 2001

International Piano Competition 'Stiftung Karic', 2001

GEDOK Competition, Detmold, 2002  
International Seiler Competition, 2005  
International Piano Competition, Rhodos, Greece 2006  
Scholarship from the 'Deutscher Musikwettbewerb', 2011  
The Van Hauen Prize, 2013  
Second Prize at the XI Concorso Pianistico Internazionale 'Lia Tortora', Italy 2015  
First Prize 'Assoluto' at the Concorso Internazionale 'Musica Insieme', Italy 2017  
Second Prize at the Concorso Internazionale 'Premio Vittoria Caffa Righetti', Italy 2017  
First Prize at the 3rd International Feurich Competition, Vienna (2018)  
First Prize at the 6th International Piano Competition, Ischia, Italy (2018)  
First Prize in the Solo Piano category and First Prize in the Soloist with orchestra category at the 30th International Music Competition 'Citta di Moncalieri', Italy (2018)  
Grand Prix at the International 'Future Stars' Piano Competition, and two special prizes for the best interpretations of Liszt and Rachmaninov (2018)  
Third Prize at the Concours Musical International de France (2019)  
Second Prize at the V. Paderewski International Piano Competition (Online Edition) (2020)  
First Prize at the V. International Busko-Zdroj Piano Competition (Online Edition) (2020)

## **JULIA DAHLKVIST**

The pianist Julia Dahlkvist is gaining a reputation as one of the most exciting pianists in Scandinavia. Among a number of prizes in international competitions, she is the winner of the Nordic International Piano Competition in 2004 where she was awarded with a Blüthner grand piano. During the years 2006–08 she performed the complete piano repertoire of Claude Debussy on tours in the Nordic countries. Since 2011 she has been part of the Piano Faculty of Karlstad University, Ingesund College of Music.

Julia is a concert pianist with a diverse background. Born in a Finnish–Russian family in Siberia, she started to play the piano at the age of three under the guidance of her mother, Lidia Mustonen. She has studied several years at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, Staatliche Hochschule für Musik in Freiburg, Hochschule der Künste in Berlin, Royal Academy in Dublin as well as the Stockholm College of Music and Danish Royal Academy of Music in Copenhagen. Her teachers were Erik T. Tawaststjerna, Vitali Berzon, John O'Connor, Alicia de Larrocha and Niklas Sivelöv.

She has been awarded many times, in Finland by: Kordelini Foundation (2002 and 2006), Jenny & Antti Wihuri Foundation (2001 and 2003) and Culture Foundation (2005 and 2010) as well as the Finnish Performing Music Promotion Centre (2006). Awards in Sweden: Swedish Music Academy, Anders Wall Foundation and the Freemasons' Lodge in Stockholm. Most recently she was awarded by the Léonie Sonning musikfond in Denmark.

## **STEFANO ANDREATTA**

Stefano Andreatta began to study music and piano at the age of seven with his father. At the age of ten he performed in public for the first time and he made his debut with orchestra at fifteen performing Beethoven's First Piano Concerto. In 2011 he graduated with highest honours in the class of Francesco Bencivenga at the 'Agostino Steffani' Conservatory in Castelfranco Veneto.

In 2012 he was selected to take part in the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, where he worked with Jerome Lowenthal of the Juilliard School in New York. In the following years he studied also with Riccardo Risaliti and Anna Kravchenko. In 2014 he completed with highest honours his Master's degree, submitting a thesis on piano composers in Soviet Union. He is currently studying with Massimiliano Ferrati and at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen, in the class of Niklas Sivelöv.

He has won prizes in national and international competitions, including: First Prize at 'Premio Brunelli' in Vicenza, reserved for the best Italian graduates; Third Prize at the Chopin International Piano Competition in Rome; Third Prize and Special Prize at Guido Alberto Fano International Piano Competition in Padua.

In 2016 he was the First Prize winner of FVG International Piano Competition, with special prizes for the best Beethoven sonata and best 20th-century piece.

In 2017 he has recorded a CD for the KNS Classical label at Fazioli Concert Hall and won Third Prize at the Montreal International Piano Competition.

He has played concerts in Italy, Slovenia, Spain, Germany, Great Britain, Kazakhstan, Canada and USA. As soloist he performed with Orchestra di Padova e del Veneto, Orchestra Filarmonia Veneta 'G.F. Malipiero', Nova Amadeus Chamber Orchestra, 'Mihail Jora' Philharmonic Orchestra of Bacau, Montreal Symphony Orchestra and the Astana Symphony Orchestra.

He is also a professional piano teacher and a composer.

## **ELISABETH HOLMEGAARD NIELSEN**

Elisabeth received her soloist postgraduate diploma in 2017 after studying at the University of Music in Vienna and at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen, playing her debut concert with the innovative project 'Carnaval', which was a fusion of video art, live electronics, music by Robert Schumann as well as contemporary composers.

Elisabeth studied under and took masterclasses from prominent names such as Gianluca Luisi, Lilya Zilberstein, Federico Gianello, Konstantin Scherbakov, Niklas Sivelöv, Boris Berman, Marianna Shirinyan, Christopher Hinterhuber, Dmitry Bashkirov, Tamás Ungár, Victor Rosenbaum and Jan Jiracek von Arnim.

She won prizes at numerous international piano competitions, including the European Yamaha Competition in Sweden, International Piano Competition for Young Musicians in the Netherlands, Salieri Competition in Italy, Professor Dichler Wettbewerb in Austria, the Danish Steinway Competition and more. She also received numerous scholarships and awards from

prestigious foundations such as the Sonning Talent Prize, Stiftung LYRA and foundation Idella. Her residency at the Scandinavian Artist House and Danish Academy in Rome was supported by Queen Ingrid's Foundation.

Elisabeth has released two critically acclaimed CDs on the Danacord record label, with piano works by Bach, Schumann, Prokofiev and Carl Nielsen, and appeared on national radio and television in Denmark, Ukraine and The Netherlands. She performs piano recitals and as a soloist with orchestras in numerous prestigious concert halls all over Europe and China.

## **FILIP STRAUCH**

Filip Strauch belongs among the most talented Slovakian pianists of his generation. After the graduation from the University in Slovakia in 2012 he was admitted for the advanced postgraduate programme, soloist class, at the Royal Academy of Music in Copenhagen, Denmark with the great pianist and composer Niklas Sivelöv. Simultaneously with his Danish studies, Filip won a scholarship for a special training course at the Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatory in Saint Petersburg, Russia where he has been studying with well-known Russian pianists and teachers Vladimir Shakin and Sergey Maltsev.

Filip began playing the piano at a very early age, under the guidance of his pianist father. During his studies at the Conservatory in Žilina, Filip became a laureate of the Slovak Conservatories Competition and simultaneously won a contest to perform with the National Chamber Orchestra. In 2004 he received the medal for representing the school and in the same year was admitted to the Conservatory in Bratislava to be tutored by renowned teacher Peter Pazický. It was under his guidance that Filip made his very successful debut with the Slovak Philharmonic.

In 2005 he began studies at the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava with Ivan Gajan, and later Marian Lapšanský. Filip worked with several renowned teachers – Ferenc Rados, Josef Kluson, András Keller, Avedis Kouyoumdjian, Dmitri Bashkirov, Christian Zacharias, Robert Levin, Catherine Brown, Juhani Lagerspetz, Steven Mayer, Liisa Pohjola, Jens Elvekjær and Boris Berman. As a prize winner of the Yamaha competition in Bratislava in 2009, Filip received an opportunity to perform with the Slovak Radio Orchestra, which was recorded live and broadcast on Radio Devín.

Throughout university Bratislava Filip represented the school throughout Europe. In 2014 Filip performed Beethoven's Fourth Concerto with the Copenhagen Philharmonic. In 2014 Filip won First Prize in the Piano Competition of the Royal Danish Academy of Music and at the same time won the prize for best instrumentalist of the academy. He performed Liszt's Second Piano Concerto with conductor Giancarlo Andretta in Scandinavia's largest festival of classical music, the Tivoli Festival. In 2015 Filip released his first solo CD album on the Czech label Supraphon.

He has collaborated with names such as Jonathan Swensen, Anna Egholm, Johan Reuter, Alexander Gilman, Petr Nouzovsky and others. He has a large number of awards for best chamber player and has frequently cooperated with Slovak Television and Slovak Radio. In 2019 Filip released his second CD album with the brilliant Danish cellist Jonathan Swensen (Schubert, Rachmaninov cello sonatas).

## **KENDZSI TANAKA**

Kendzsi Tanaka was born in Hungary, and he is half Japanese. He studied piano at the Vántus István Music High School with Dr Lucz Ilona from 2009-2013 in Szeged, Hungary. He then graduated from the Royal Academy of Music, London in 2017 under the tutelage of Joanna MacGregor. He is also a Masters graduate in Piano Performance, which he completed with Niklas Sivelöv at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen.

His best successes as a pianist so far are Second Prize at the VIII. International Stasys Vainiunas Piano Competition, Third Prize in the VII. International Bartók Béla Piano Competition, along with the orchestra's special award, which he was granted after a performance of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* with the Hungarian National Symphony Orchestra Szeged.

His other awards include First Prize and Best Interpretation of a Hungarian Piece at the 18th National Piano Competition in Békescsaba, Hungary; and Second Prize at the 32nd Valsesia Musica International Competition. He has played in several masterclasses in Hungary, The Netherlands, Slovenia and the UK with superb teachers such as Matti Raekallio, Vladimir Viardo, Eckhardt Gábor, Diana Ketler, Steven Osborne and Lívía Rév. He especially likes playing music by Bartók, Brahms and Bach, but loves experimenting with contemporary music and jazz as well.

## **NADIO OKRUSKO**

Nadia Okrusko was born in 1989 in Lithuania and started studying piano at the National M.K. Ciurlionis arts school in Vilnius.

In 2005, she had her debut as soloist with the Kaunas Chamber Orchestra in Lithuania. In 2008, Nadia won First Prize at the Rosalyn Tureck Bach competition in New York, USA and in the same year was awarded an honorary diploma by Lithuania's president Valdas Adamkus.

From 2009, she studied at the St. Petersburg Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatory in Russia, graduating in the piano class of Professor Leonid Tamulevich in 2014. In 2015 Nadia moved to Copenhagen, Denmark for her Master's degree at the Royal Danish Music Academy, where she graduated in the class of Professor Niklas Sivelöv in 2018.

She is the recipient of several scholarships for pianists in Denmark, such as Tove Birthe Legat, Feldthusens Fond, and Torp-Pedersens Fond. During studies at RDAM she won Second Prize at the Academy's piano scholarship competition and performed as soloist with 'Percurama' percussion and winds orchestra.

Nadia has performed solo and chamber music in different festivals and projects around Europe, also in the USA, Mexico, Ecuador and China.

Since her graduation from RDAM in Copenhagen, Nadia has been working in Copenhagen as a piano teacher and freelance pianist. She tours in Danish schools with a piano quartet 'Glemte stemmer', which is part of 'Levende Musik i Skolen' school concert tour program, and plays in ensembles with multiple singers and instrumentalists.

Nadia is currently especially interested in music of the Caucasus, classical and folk, and she hopes to make a recording of composers from Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia.

## HAO DENG

Hao Deng is a gifted and versatile pianist. She can play works of different styles with confidence and excellence, such as *Pianogongs* by contemporary Chinese composer Zhou Long, *Serpent's Kiss* by American composer William Bolcom, and Tchaikovsky's First Concerto.

Hao Deng, who has just received her Master of Music degree from the Royal Danish Academy of Music, was admitted to the soloist program of Det Jyske Musikkonservatorium (The Royal Academy of Music, Aarhus/Aalborg) this year.

In 2010, she was admitted to the High School attached to the Tianjin Conservatory of Music, majoring in piano performance, studying there for six years. She participated in many competitions and on-campus activities and won the school's first-class scholarship several times. In 2016, Hao Deng was admitted to the Piano Department of Tianjin Conservatory of Music. In 2017, she applied to study at the Royal Danish Academy of Music under the tutelage of Professor Niklas Sivelöv.

During her five years' study in Denmark, she took part in many activities. She played at the Chinese Cultural Centre and Tivoli Concert Hall in Copenhagen. She has also performed in China Day, Beethoven Festival and Romantic festival. In 2022, she participated in the International Holland Music Session and worked with Professor Boris Slutsky from Yale School of Music. In the Netherlands, she performed successful solo recitals. She also won Second Prize in the International Piano Competition in Gothenburg, Sweden.

Hao Deng also frequently collaborates with other musicians. She played *Memories of Yunnan* with Chinese instrument Zhongruan performers and *Joe, Jack, Bill, Averell* by Nordic composer Kristin Warfvinge with three other pianists.

In addition to chamber music, she often works as a vocal accompanist. She has recently performed *Spanisches Liederspiel* by Schumann with four singers from the Royal Danish Academy of Music.

## CHRISTIAN WESTERGAARD

Christian, who regularly works with international stars such as Elsa Dreisig, Bo Skovhus and Mari Eriksmoen, as well as a number of other leading Nordic singers, has performed in London's Wigmore Hall and the Musikhalle in Hamburg, as well as in the rest of Germany, France, Italy, Sweden, Norway and Denmark.

On Dacapo Records, Christian has released *Peter Heise: The Song Edition*, one of the biggest releases in Danish music history, the internationally acclaimed CD *Tangos, Waltzes and Cinema Music* with piano works by Jacob Gade, the CD *Chamber Works* with Randers Chamber Orchestra and chamber music by Svend Westergaard, and on Kontrapunkt, the CD *Songs of their Times* with songs by Ib Nørholm (together with Signe Asmussen and Adam Riis).

A complete recording of Herman D. Koppel's songs and piano works is currently under preparation, as is P.E. Lange-Müller: The Song Edition.

As a musical entrepreneur and program organiser, he has made his mark with Liedkompagniet, of which he is the founder and artistic director. For a number of years, Liedkompagniet was a central concert venue for lieder in Denmark, and on several occasions hosted premieres of new Danish music. In 2008, the festival presented *Herman og David*: a three-concert performance of the collected songs of Herman D. Koppel.

Together with bass-baritone Jakob Bloch Jespersen, he runs the project Nye Danske Sange (New Danish Songs), which has held premieres of Danish music for voice and piano by Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgren, Niels Rosing-Schow, Simon Steen-Andersen, Jexper Holmen, Nicolai Worsaae and Simon Løffler.

As a solo pianist, Christian is particularly passionate about Danish piano music and has built up a large repertoire of central works by Niels W. Gade, Carl Nielsen, Herman D. Koppel, Vagn Holmboe and Niels Viggo Bentzon, amongst others.

## **HUGO SELLES**

Hugo Selles is a Spanish pianist, composer and producer born in Santander in 1988. The diversity of his artistic interests is clearly reflected in the great variety of his musical endeavours. He is a member of many different ensembles and projects, including solo piano, chamber music groups and other formations, embracing various styles and periods. Hugo is a graduate of Jesús de Monasterio Conservatory of Music, Higher School of Music of the Basque Country Musikene, SAE Institute Madrid and the Royal Danish Academy of Music.

Hugo went on to completing his Advanced Post-Graduate Diploma Soloist Class at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in November 2017. He has had the privilege to perform for remarkable maestros such as Niklas Sivelöv, Sergei Osokin, Kathryn Stott, Ricardo Descalzo, Jeffrey Swann, Marta Zabaleta, Boris Berman and Claudio Martínez-Mehner. As a classical pianist and chamber musician, Hugo has received awards in several competitions in Europe, and has performed in concert halls and festivals in Spain, France, Italy, Serbia, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Singapore and Australia.

As a composer and producer, Hugo explores diverse styles of music in his work. His multi-genre band Psychic Equalizer was awarded with three Silver Medals at The Global Music Awards in 2017, with particular reference to the quality of the compositions and their musical style. Hugo has also composed soundtracks for the award-winning documentaries 'En Los Brazos de la Luz', about the life and work of Spanish painter Enrique Gran, and 'Susurros', about the prehistoric paintings of the cave 'El Moro Chufín' in Cantabria (Spain).

## **DAVID LAU MAGNUSSEN**

David Lau Magnussen has in recent years established himself as one of the foremost Danish pianists. Highly active as a soloist and chamber musician, the highlights of his most recent season included the world premiere of a new piano concerto by Martin Lohse in Copenhagen as well as numerous solo and chamber music recitals throughout most of Europe and Asia.

During his career he has received numerous prizes and awards, amongst them the prestigious 'Oddfellow Artist Award' that was presented to him after a solo recital in the historic Oddfellow Concert Hall, Copenhagen. As well as regular radio and television appearances, several CD recordings have featured David in chamber music. He has recorded the complete piano works written by Kasper Rofelt and dedicated to David, as well as the Piano Concerto by Martin Lohse on the record label Dacapo. They were released internationally in 2015.

He gives masterclasses regularly in conservatories and universities worldwide, most recently at CCOM (Chinese Conservatory of Music, Beijing), Royal Irish Academy of Music (Dublin), Heilongjian University (Harbin) and at Dulwich College International in most parts of China.

A student of Peter Feuchtwanger in London, Stefan Vladar and Avedis Kouyoumdjian in Vienna as well as Niklas Sivelöv in Copenhagen, David Lau Magnussen also holds a keen interest in the philosophy of music and life: As well as concerts, he regularly gives lectures about life seen from the piano stool, which he is currently preparing to be published as a book.

David has played concerts in many European countries and regularly visits Asia to perform and teach. In China he has appeared both as a soloist and together as Duo Shaw-Magnussen (with cellist Jacob Shaw) in nearly all the main Chinese cities, including Guangzhou, Beijing, Harbin, Suzhou and Shanghai.

## **KRISTOFFER NYHOLM HYLDIG**

Kristoffer Hyldig made his debut in 2010 at the Royal Danish Academy of Music after studies under Professor Niklas Sivelöv and Tove Lønskov. Kristoffer Hyldig is an active musician in Danish music life and appears in concerts and festivals both as soloist, chamber musician and accompanist. He has given concerts in Italy, Germany, Poland and at Carnegie Hall in New York. Since 2006, he has featured on recordings of lieder, chamber music and solo works by Debussy, Ravel, Messiaen, Bent Sørensen and Hindemith.

As a soloist, Kristoffer has appeared with Aalborg Symphony Orchestra, Copenhagen Philharmonic and the Royal Danish Orchestra, in the latter case with Michael Boder in Messiaen's 'Turangalîla' Symphony.

He received the jury's special prize in the EU Piano Competition in 2009 and has been awarded several grants such as the Jakob Gade Grant, the Léonie Sonning Scholarship and the Danish Music Critics' Artist Prize.

Kristoffer Hyldig is also a part of the Bruun Hyldig Duo, consisting of himself and mezzo-soprano Hetna Regitze Bruun. Since 2006, they have appeared together in mainly 20th century repertoire and Messiaen's vocal music in particular. They have made appearances in Denmark, Great Britain, Germany, France, Italy and the USA. Concerts in Denmark include several festivals and numerous performances at Musikhuset Aarhus and DR Koncerthuset. In England the duo appeared at the prestigious Leeds Lieder festival to great success.

The duo made a breakthrough with the recording of the Messiaen cycle *Harawi* in 2009 on an acclaimed Naxos release. Their CD *Skønne perler* was released by Naxos Denmark in 2010, featuring works by Danish 20th century composers. In 2015 came a third CD, featuring more vocal works by Messiaen, released by Naxos.

## **KATI ERIIKKA ARIKOSKI**

The Finnish pianist Kati Eriikka Arikoski (b. 1979) has all her life been closely linked to music. As a three-year-old, her very first hobby was Finnish folk dancing. Dancing was complemented by piano studies at the Kuopio Conservatory in Finland from the age of six. She also played clarinet and soprano saxophone for ten years. When she reached music high school in Kuopio, she began to box. From the age of sixteen she participated regularly in competitions, winning many awards. In 1999 she won the Finnish championship in boxing in the 60 kg class. At that point she stood at a crossroads to be a boxer or a pianist – she chose the piano.

From 1999 she studied in the Turku Art Academy in Finland and graduated in 2005 as a piano teacher from the class of the head teacher Jukka Juvonen. In spring 2008 she graduated with a Master's degree at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen, from the class of Professor Niklas Sivelöv.

Arikoski played her debut concert from the soloist class in 2011 and continued in the advanced postgraduate diploma program with her ensemble Piano Trio Gimelia. The ensemble played their debut concert in spring 2012.

Arikoski undertook her studies at the Music University of Graz between 2001 and 2003. She has also frequently participated in master courses, both in Finland and abroad. Her teachers have included Matti Raekallio, Erik T. Tawaststjerna, José Ribera, Pierre Réach, Emanuel Krasovsky and Liisa Pohjola, among others.

She has given a number of solo concerts, has been a member of various chamber music ensembles and worked as lied pianist in Finland, Sweden, USA, the Faroe Islands, Denmark, Island and Austria. She also performed with the Turku Philharmonic Orchestra in May 2004, at the Concert for Young Soloists and played as a soloist with the Sigyn Sinfonietta in autumn 2006.

Arikoski won Third Prize at the National Leevi Madetoja Piano Competition in Oulu in 2006. She was also awarded a special prize for the best performance, a recital, which was held at a music festival, 'Music in Paanu Church' in Käsämäki, in the summer of 2006. In 2008 she won joint First Prize at the piano competition and second place with her piano trio in the chamber music competition at the Royal Danish Academy of Music.

Life is not just about playing the piano. Sports and dance have always had a big role in Kati's life. She has danced swing regularly since 2007 and currently teaches both swing dances and piano in Atlanta, USA.

## **SØREN RASTOGI**

The pianist Søren Rastogi is most sought after at festivals and concert venues, both in his native Denmark as well as internationally. He has performed with conductors such as Christian Mandeál, Douglas Bostock, Christian Kluxen, Benjamin Shwartz, Mathias Aeschbacher, Ed Spanjaard, Jayce Ogren, Peter Feranec and Thomas Søndergaard in piano concertos by Mozart (K.466, K.491, K.451, K.488), Schumann, Stravinsky, Bernstein and

Gershwin. In 2023, a CD will be released on Dacapo Records with Søren Rastogi as a soloist in the first recording of Paul von Klenau's piano concerto with the Singapore Symphony Orchestra and conductor Hans Graf.

He has on many occasions received excellent reviews for his performances. After his debut with the Danish National Radio Symphony Orchestra in the Piano Concerto by Stravinsky, the Danish newspaper *Information* wrote: '*SR made his debut as a soloist with the Radio Orchestra with a perfectly balanced stage presence, which managed to combine both pianistic artistry, musical overview, sense of melodic lines, rhythmic skill, and a constant nerve with a rare lack of vanity.*'

Besides his career as a soloist, he has a close collaboration with leading Scandinavian singers, including baritone Johannes Weisser, with whom he has released the CD *Visiting Grieg*. '*Meisterlich*', the German newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* wrote, and it was anointed 'CD of the Month' by the British magazine Classic FM.

He is often used as a sonata partner with instrumentalists, and has played recitals with international names such as Vilde Frang, Andreas Brantelid, Narek Hakhnazaryan, Sergei Dogadin, Benjamin Schmid among many others. In addition, he has a recurring collaboration with the Danish Radio Vocal Ensemble, as both pianist and musical director. Together they have developed new concert formats, which have been presented on radio and TV transmissions in recent years. As both soloist and conductor, he has also performed piano concerts by Mozart with the ensemble CPH Mozart Players.

He is a regular guest at many chamber music festivals, and has performed at the Bergen Festival, Tivoli Summer Festival, Hardanger Chamber Music Festival and many more. He and his wife, cellist Janne Fredens, were appointed artistic directors of the internationally profiled Odsherreds Chamber Music Festival from 2022.

He recently started a successful four-hand collaboration with the pianist Martin Qvist Hansen, and in 2023 they will premiere Carsten Dahl's double piano concerto with Copenhagen Philharmonic and go on an extensive tour to China.

In 2006, he was appointed 'Artist in Residence' by The Round Tower of Copenhagen and the Danish National Radio. Included was a broadcast concert series with five concerts as a soloist, chamber musician and accompanist. His concerts have often been broadcast via the EBU.

Søren Rastogi was educated in Copenhagen at the Royal Danish Academy of Music by Tove Lønskov and Niklas Sivelöv as well as in Berlin at Hochschule der Künste by Pascal Devoyon. He graduated from RDAM with the highest grades and made his debut from the soloist class at the same place in 2005.

He has received numerous prizes and awards, for instance from the Danish Music Critics Association, and was a prizewinner at several competitions such as the 5th Nordic Piano Competition, and the Mendelssohn Competition, Berlin.

Søren Rastogi is a highly engaged in the education of the new generation of musicians, and is associate professor in piano at the Royal Academy of Music, Aarhus and at the Royal Danish Academy of Music, Copenhagen. He has given masterclasses in the USA, Norway, Sweden and Finland.

## **BOGDAN NICOLA**

Bogdan Nicola was born in 1989 in Bucharest, Romania. He started playing the piano when he was seven at the 'George Enescu' College of Music where he studied under Professor Ana Maria Ciornei. He has won numerous prizes in national and international piano competitions.

In 2008, he was accepted at the National Academy of Music in Bucharest. His achievements brought him the Romanian State Scholarship between 2008 and 2011. In 2011 he was offered a place to study at the Royal Danish Academy of Music, in Copenhagen, under Niklas Sivelöv, leading Scandinavian pianist and member of the Steinway Hall of Fame.

Bogdan has recently graduated with a Bachelor in Music and he is currently a second-year Master's student.

Bogdan performed in various chamber music and solo masterclasses held by Boris Berman, Gabriel Amiras, Luiz de Moura Castro, and Sergei Osokin. He was the Third Prize winner in the international competition 'Carl Filtsch', held in Sibiu, Romania in 2012.

## **MEILING HUANG**

Meiling Huang was born in China into a family of musicians. She studied in the piano soloist class (advanced postgraduate degree) with Professor Niklas Sivelöv at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Denmark from 2014 and made her debut in 2017.

She won First Prize at Yan Bian Piano Competition in 1995. She gave concerts in nine Korean cities in October 1996. She also won the first prize at Ji Lin piano competition in 1999.

From 2001, she studied in the Middle School of the Central Conservatory of Music, with a scholarship from CCOM every year. She won a TOYAMA Youth Piano Competition's prize in 2003 and 2005, and gave successful concerts with the China Philharmonic Orchestra in May of 2007. From 2007 to 2014, she studied with Professor Taihang Du at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. In August of 2007, she gave a concert at the Klaviersoiree im Forum Seebach, in Weimar in Germany.

In 2009, she also won First Prize at Allegro-Vivo international music festival competition in Austria. In 2010, The Allegro-Vivo International Music Festival invited her as a soloist to perform in Austria. In the same year, she gave a concert in the Forbidden City Concert Hall in Beijing, and another at this venue in November of 2012.

In 2011 CCOM recommend her for admission to the conservatory on a full scholarship for her Master's degree.

She gave three successful solo concerts in Germany and concerts with Südwestdeutsche Philharmonie in Germany and Switzerland. In 2014, she gave a solo concert and chamber music concert successfully in Beijing. In the summer of 2014, she earned her Master's Degree from CCOM.

## DANIEL BESKOW

Daniel Beskow has established himself after his debut concert in Copenhagen 2012 as one of Scandinavia's most interesting and exciting concert pianists. He shows great promise and has already toured extensively in Scandinavia as a soloist and chamber musician with concerts in the Grieg Hall, Troidhaugen, Bergen, Berwald Hall, Stockholm, Tivoli Concert Hall, Copenhagen and chamber music festivals in Denmark, Sweden and Germany. He has performed with several orchestras in Mozart's Piano Concerto no. 13 in C major, KV 415 and Grieg's Piano Concerto in A minor.

The 2015/16 season included several performances of a staged version of Schubert's *Winterreise* with baritone Johannes Held, in the chamber music series organised by Region Gävleborg, as well as seven performances at the Galerie der Stadt Sindelfingen.

He has performed in a fairy tale program, *Sagolikt*, with Cornelia Beskow in Swedish castles organised by Musik på Sörmländska Slott och Herresäten. Other engagements include an all-Mozart program with Mila Thoors, organ, as well as sonata recitals with violinist Varpu Heikinheimo and cellist Stanislas Kim.

*'Daniel Beskow's playing is sensational'* (RITMO Magazine)

Daniel Beskow enjoys working with singers and the 2016/17 season included several performances of the staged *Winterreise* at the Theaterhaus Stuttgart and Schubert Festival in Roskilde, as well as Schumann's *Dichterliebe* and Nordic romances in Kalmar and Gränsö castles with tenor Anders Nilsson. He performed 'A Nordic Love Affair' with the fine Swedish mezzo-soprano Josefine Andersson in Sweden and Denmark. He is also engaged to give solo recitals.

In the summer 2017 performances of the staged *Winterreise* took place at the Frederiksvaerk Festival and Musik på Sörmländska Slott och Herresäten. The 2017/18 season included performances in Freiburg, Bornholm, Linköping castle as well as in the STORM series in Halmstad. Workshops and masterclasses took place at the Gothenburg opera in cooperation with Kultur i Väst in February 2018.

Daniel Beskow studied at the Royal College of Music and Edsbergs Institute of Music in Stockholm, followed by studies in Norway with Jiri Hlinka and in London with Peter Feuchtwanger. He has taken his Soloist Diploma at the Royal Danish Academy of Music with Niklas Sivelöv and at the Hochschule für Music und Theater Hannover with Einar Steen-Nökleberg. He has participated in masterclasses with Andrzej Jasinski, Ronald Brautigam, Liisa Pohjola and Hans Leygraf amongst others.

*'Can the young duo Beskow/Held make Schubert's music glimmer? The answer is YES!'*  
(OPUS Magazine)

Daniel has received many prizes and awards, including First Prize in the Royal Danish Academy of Music soloist competition 2010, where he also won First Prize in the Chamber Music Competition in 2010 and was a prizewinner in the Academy's piano competition in 2012. He won the Audience Prize in the Danish Radio P2 competition in 2011 and finalist in the 'young and promising' competition in Sweden 2011 with piano trio Scandza. He is the winner of several awards and scholarships from the Swedish Royal Academy of Music, Konstnärsnämnden, The Swedish arts grant committee and RWA DEA scholarship for studies in Germany, amongst others.

## KRISTINA SOCANSKI

Kristina Socanski was born in Belgrade, Serbia in 1990. At an early age, she showed exceptional musical talent and won several competitions for youth in her home country. In 2001 she moved with her family to Stavanger, Norway.

Kristina has studied at the University of Stavanger and Barratt Due Music Institute in Oslo, Norway, as well as at HFM Franz Liszt in Weimar, Germany. She holds her official degrees from the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo (Bachelor Degree) and Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen (Master's Degree). In February 2019, she graduated from the 'soloist class' (Advanced Postgraduate Program) at RDAM in Copenhagen, where she specialised in chamber music and accompaniment, mentored by Professor Niklas Sivelöv, Friedrich Gurtler and Søren Rastogi.

In 2018, Kristina was invited to the Aaron Copland School of Music, Queens College in New York as a 'visiting scholar'. Here she collaborated with Professor Edward Smaldone, and performed some of his music written for piano, among other pieces written by American composers. This was a part of her artistic research dedicated to contemporary music written in the USA, which was presented in Copenhagen in 2019.

Kristina has won prizes in competitions in Serbia, Norway, Italy, Austria, Germany and the USA. As a result of her recent awards, she has been invited to perform in major venues such as the Mozarteum (Salzburg, Austria), Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall (New York) and Kammersaal, Berlin Konzerthaus (Germany). Other venues include LeFrak Concert Hall (New York), Stavanger Concert Hall, Oslo Opera House, Tivoli Concert Hall (Copenhagen), Royal Danish Theatre (Copenhagen) and Kolarac Cocert Hall (Belgrade).

Her debut concert in Copenhagen (2019) was broadcasted by the Danish Radio (P2 Klassisk), she has also recorded for Serbian Radio and TV Stations on several occasions (Radio Beograd 202, RTS, RTV, TV Banat). Her talent has been acknowledged with grants and scholarships from the Norwegian Cultural Council, Sparebank 1, Idella Foundation, Oticon Foundation, Den Böhmske Fond, Torp-Pedersen Fondet, Feldthusens Fond and others.

During her studies at the Norwegian Academy of Music, Kristina worked with the renowned contemporary pianist Ellen Ugelvik. This inspired her to start exploring contemporary music, and marked the beginning of an exciting new journey. In the last few years, the collaboration with Peter Degenhardt, professor emeritus at the Music Academy in Cologne and a contemporary music specialist, has also been of great importance.

In 2017 Kristina spent a month in Florence, Italy, studying accompaniment and opera coaching with Maestro Jane Klaviter at the 'Bel Canto Institute'. This inspired her to continue and broaden her activity as a collaborative pianist. She is a passionate chamber musician and member of several ensembles, as well as the founder and artistic director of the Vrsac International Chamber Music Festival in Serbia.

Kristina has performed in Scandinavia, numerous European countries and in the USA. As a part of her soloist degree, she has been a teaching assistant for the piano class at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen.

Kristina is also an experienced piano teacher, with more than ten years of teaching behind her, and many hours devoted to development of young musical talents.

## **NIKOLAUS VON BEMBERG**

Nikolaus von Bemberg (b. 1991 in Munich), is based in Copenhagen, where he is currently studying piano in performance under Professor Niklas Sivelöv in the Master's Degree program at the Royal Danish Academy of Music.

Educated in classical music performance at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Munich under Professor Markus Bellheim, Nikolaus v. Bemberg has a keen interest in the musical development of the 20th century, improvised music as well as cooperating with artists of other disciplines. At the moment he is working on a multimedia installation on the theme 'The Forest', employing both live music, visual art as well as written text.

He creates programs to present classical music in new fashions to offer an engaging and accessible segue into the larger themes of music, but still challenging the audience's conception: For instance, 'The Art of American Piano' – a talk show featuring various American music styles including jazz and classical music. The show was premiered in 2019 at the Münchner Stadtmuseum.

Additionally, 'The Memoirs of D. Shostakovich' provides a portrait of the Russian composer embracing both spoken word and the performance of a selection of musical works by Shostakovich. It was premiered in 2020 at Schloss Nymphenburg in Munich.

Bemberg has performed with authors, actors, dancers, singers and visual artists such as the Catalan theatre group 'La Fura dels Baus.' He has received a Germany Scholarship and currently holds a scholarship from the Yehudi Menuhin Live Music Now Foundation. He acts as a jury member he acts for the German youth competition 'Jugend musiziert' in an honorary capacity.

## **BINGBING ZHU**

Bingbing Zhu was born in 1989 in Tianjin, China. When she was four years old, she began playing the piano with her mother, and played her first solo recital at the age of 16. Bingbing Zhu took her Bachelor's Degree at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing (CCOM) where she studied with professor Taihang Du. In 2011, she was accepted at the Royal Danish Academy of Music where she took her Masters and Advanced Postgraduate Diploma with Professor Niklas Sivelöv.

Bingbing Zhu has been awarded several prizes: Second Prize in the 2013 Scholarship Competition for Singers and Instrumentalists (DKDM), the Second Place in the 15th Asia Piano Open Competition (Hongkong), and Champion of Xinghai Cup Piano Competition (Tianjin).

Bingbing Zhu has been invited to perform at several classical music festivals, such as Nation Centre for the Performing Arts (China), Hong Kong Cultural Centre (China), Allegro Vivo Music Festival (Austria), and 4th International Chinese Arts Festival (Singapore). In 2014, Bingbing Zhu performed Mozart's D minor concerto (KV 466) with the Tivoli Symphony Orchestra conducted by Giordano Bellincampi at the Tivoli Concert Hall.

## **JULIJA SADAUNYKAITE**

Julija Sadaunykaite is a Lithuanian pianist. She studied at Vilnius Academy of Music and Universität Mozarteum in Salzburg with Professor P. Lang. She continued her studies with Dr D. Racys at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas. She holds a Master's degree from Vytautas Magnus University and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, where she was admitted with full scholarship. In year 2022 Julija started her advanced postgraduate study program at the Royal Danish Academy of Music studying with Professor Niklas Sivelöv.

In 2015 Julija won the Grand Prix at the Valletta International Piano Competition in Malta. The next year she won the Ramsay Calder Debussy Prize and won Second Prize at the Bamber/Galloway piano competition at the RCS. In 2019 she won Third Prize at the International Euterpe Piano Competition.

Julija has given solo concerts in Lithuania, Poland, Italy, Switzerland, Malta, the United States of America, the United Kingdom and China. She has also participated in various different festivals (Yamaha Piano week in China, 'Aurora' in Sweden, 'Chamber Music in Vilnius' in Lithuania, 'Cracow Music Summer' in Poland, 'Young talents', Birštonas summer music festival in Lithuania and others), and masterclasses with Ch. Elton, P. Devoyon, J. Lowenthal, K. Knorre, J. Martin, A. Paze, P. Giacometti, E. Tawaststjerna, P. Stravinskas, A. Babakhanian, K. Bogino and A. Zlabys, among others.

Apart from solo and chamber music activities, she is a lecturer at the Music Academy of Vytautas Magnus University. Julija has given masterclasses for students in Poland, Italy and China. Since 2020 Julija is an artist of BAMA Artist Management Agency.

## **MARCO POMELLI**

Marco Pomelli (b. 1994) studied from the age of ten at the Conservatory of Padua (Italy), where he graduated in 2015 *Summa cum laude* with a special Honourable Mention.

Subsequently he continued his studies in France at the Schola Cantorum of Paris and in Italy under the guidance of Professor Massimiliano Ferrati and Professor Marian Mika. In 2019 he graduated with honours in Chamber Music Performance at the Conservatory of Parma (Italy) under the supervision of the Trio di Parma, one of the most prestigious Italian chamber ensembles.

In 2019 he moved to Denmark to study with Professor Niklas Sivelöv at the Royal Danish Academy of Music, where he graduated with full marks in 2021 and where is currently attending the Soloist Performer Advanced Postgraduate Diploma in Music. Since 2012 Marco Pomelli has been selected to perform in masterclasses and advanced courses held by some of today's leading concert pianists, such as Benedetto Lupo, Pavel Gililov, Andrea Lucchesini, Jerome Rose, Alberto Nosè, Leslie Howard, Pietro De Maria, Dirk Mommertz, Roberto Prosseda, Steven Osborne, Lilya Zilberstein, Fabrizio Chiovetta, Christopher Hinterhuber, Irene Russo, Jura Margulis, and Stefan Wojtas, in prestigious institutions such as the Mozarteum University of Salzburg.

Marco Pomelli is a prize winner and finalist of national and international piano competitions: the Premio Giovannini International Piano Competition, the Giovani Musicisti – Città di Treviso International Piano Competition, the Città di Piove di Sacco National Competition, the Premio Brunelli National Piano Competition, the Nuova Coppa Pianisti International Competition, the San Donà di Piave International Piano Competition and the Brescia Classica International Piano Competition.

In his concert career Marco Pomelli has performed in solo and chamber music recitals in Italy, Spain, France, Germany and Denmark, with a repertoire ranging from Scarlatti to John Cage, including masterpieces by Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt, Debussy and Bartók. In 2015 and 2017 he performed Robert Schumann's Piano Concerto, op.54 and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Piano Concerto in A major, K.488, both with the Cittadella Circle Symphony Orchestra. In 2020, the 250th anniversary of Beethoven's birth, Marco Pomelli released his debut Album: 'Beethoven: Eroica Variations' (produced by Federico Mattioli). In September 2022 he released *Lineature*, an album featuring some of his finest original works for solo piano (produced by Federico Mattioli and distributed by Gateway Music). Marco Pomelli has indeed been engaging for years in compositional and improvisational practice, as well as in the visual arts. Another piano solo album, dedicated to the great Hungarian composer Béla Bartók, is soon to be released.

Marco Pomelli worked as a producer for three prestigious releases in 2021 and 2022: the albums J. S. Bach: Partitas & English Suites, Vol. 2 and Vol. 3 (Niklas Sivelöv – AMC / Amchara Classical) and the album 'Suites for Two Pianos' – Sergei Rachmaninov (Marianna Shirinyan and Dominik Wizjan – Orchid Classics).

## **ANNE-MARIE LIPSONEN**

The Finnish-born pianist Anne-Marie Lipsonen made her debut in the soloist class at the Royal Danish Conservatory of Music in 2010. She has studied in Helsinki and Copenhagen and has experience from the Curtis Opera Theater in Philadelphia, USA, amongst others. She is a sought-after lied pianist and accompanist, and has appeared as a pianist with the Danish Song Society, Copenhagen Summer Festival, European Academy of Music Festival in Italy and Germany and was also a soloist with the Aalborg Symphony Orchestra. She has won prizes both as a soloist and as a lied pianist, and in 2008 she received the prestigious Léonie Sonning scholarship.

She has given concerts with, amongst others, the sopranos Lina Johnson, Olga Heikkilä, the mezzo-soprano Josefine Andersson and the baritone Audun Iversen and in 2019 released a CD with new Nordic lieder.

She teaches accompaniment and piano playing at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen.