

Report on the Musical and Concert Contributions
By Members of the University of Agder, Faculty of Fine Arts
Department of Classical Music and Music Education

within the Cultural Programme of
Norway as Guest Country of Honour at the Buchmesse Frankfurt 2019

Following an initiative of Prof. Cordula Hacke and a resulting invitation from NORLA, teachers and students of the Department of Classical Music and Music Education at the University of Agder developed several ideas on a series of concerts leading up to the Cultural Programme of Norway as Guest Country of Honour at the Buchmesse Frankfurt 2019.

This was a conceptual as well as an empirical undertaking under the guidance of University Professors Cordula Hacke and Lars Asbjørnsen.

On the conceptual side, the idea was to present music either relating to or coming from Norway, reflecting the scope and variety of Norwegian music culture. The practical side of the project included selecting students to perform the music and to help them interpret and rehearse the chosen programmes as well as dealing with the logistical challenges such as finding suitable venues, organising travel, accommodation etc.

From the original 5 suggested programmatic concert themes, 2 programmes were chosen by NORLA and could be realised with the available budget. Both programmes represent specific strengths of the University of Agder:

- **Norway and the Sea**

A concert programme for flute, cello and piano performed by the Trio Sørlandet (all Master students at UiA) including works by Philippe Gaubert, Clara Schumann (arr. by Terje Mathisen), George Crumb (*Song of the Whales*) and Trygve Madsen (a world premiere)

- **Exploring and Adventures**

A concert programme for flute ensemble (The Norwegian Flute Ensemble, based at UiA under the direction of Prof. Jørn Schau) with a “Hardanger-fiddle” soloist (Marin Stallemo Bakke), playing music by Konrad Øhrn (Norwegian composer and Prof. Emeritus at UiA) as well as arrangements of traditional tunes for “Hardanger-fiddle” and flute ensemble by Terje Mathisen (also Prof. at UiA).

The two programmes were presented in concert on September 22 and October 13, 2019 in the Museum Wiesbaden in connection with the Harald Sohlberg exhibition. The concert venue at the museum can seat about 100 people, and the audience as well as the persons responsible from the museum were enthusiastic in their response to both concerts:

“Both concerts stood out in bringing a new and entertaining character to the concert stage” (Roman Zieglänsberger, Museum Wiesbaden) and “in inspiring a new fascination with Norwegian culture and music, which we will take further....” (voices from the audience).

The Trio Sørlandet then went on to perform at the European Chamber Academy in Leipzig (ECAL). In Leipzig they played 4 concerts:

- Musikhochschule Leipzig (Großer Saal, opening and closing concert)
- Grieg Begegnungsstätte
- Schumann Haus

Among many chamber music ensembles from all over Europe, the Trio Sørlandet was the only ensemble taking part from Norway. It was interesting to see, how – in the classical music world – participants from central and Eastern Europe are still “discovering” Norway and its culture.

To summarize our part in the campaign of Norway as Guest Country of Honour at the Bookfair Frankfurt 2019, we can say that

- the concerts were very well received and that the ensembles represented Norwegian culture as well as its ties to European culture in a strengthening and positive manner.
- the connections with German cultural institutions have been built up and wait to be intensified (further concerts are possible e.g. at the Museum Wiesbaden and the Grieg Begegnungsstätte, Leipzig).
- the arrangements of the Clara Schumann piano pieces for trio by Terje Mathisen, are reviewed for publishing at one of Germany’s leading publishing house: Breitkopf & Härtel.
- the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Agder has been able to manifest and promote itself as a strong and creative educational facility of the arts.

In the name of our institution the University of Agder, we would like to thank NORLA, and especially Marit Sande, for their generous support and endless patience with all our questions. Also we’d like to thank all participating institutions, students and administration.

Kristiansand, November 19, 2019