

Dag Wirén

STRÅKKVARTETT NR 4

Bo Nilsson

QUANTITÄTEN

Sven Erik Bäck

SONAT FÖR SOLOFLÖJT

Ingrar Lidholm

CANTO LXXXI

SVERIGES RADIO

MODERN SWEDISH CHAMBER MUSIC

DAG WIRÉN String Quartet nr 4
Calmo. Allegro molto. Calmo.
— Intermezzo I: Moderato. —
Intermezzo II: Prestissimo. —
Lento. — Allegro molto

SVEN-ERIK BÄCK Sonata for Flute
Andante libramente cantando.
— Allegro. — Moderato

BO NILSSON Quantitäten

INGVAR LIDHOLM Canto LXXXI

Swedish music has become more widely known abroad of recent years. In international competitions and musical festivals, Swedish composers have often taken away the prizes or have been placed high on the list of those competing. Critics the world over have naturally noted this activity in a country that from a musical point of view has long been dependent on its geographical position between Grieg's Norway and Sibelius' Finland. The favourable judgement that has recently been bestowed on Swedish composers has not been based on the fact that the public and the critics abroad have been delighted by any type of Nordic exoticism or national romanticism in a new form. Quite the opposite is the case. Swedish composers have won international acclaim by creating music which has proved itself capable of dealing with the most advanced forms—a music, however, where the new means of expression does not exclude a strong personal element.

During the last 30 years Swedish music has gone over from national romanticism to personal modernism. And discussion in Sweden about modern composers, their means and methods, has been extremely active during the last ten years. Much of what to the general public seemed revolutionary and extremist a short while ago, is now accepted in Sweden—as in other countries.

What makes one follow this development in Swedish music with such interest is above all its use of what is associated with chamber music. Apart from symphonies, operas and concertos, there is also a varied repertoire of Swedish chamber music. Swedish instrumentalists, singers and special chamber groups have also performed a great deal of modern Swedish music and have established fruitful co-operation with the country's own composers.

This record bears witness to the variety and quality of the repertoire. Three different generations, four comparatively differing temperaments, are represented.

DAG WIRÉN writes in an article on his *String Quartet No. 4* that he wants to arrive at a "special form in each of his works", each work must have its own individual stamp. He also says that he is always trying to model new forms from the material he presents at the beginning of the movements. The music should be a metamorphosis. In other words Wirén is always analysing his means of expression and he is constantly polishing and varying its effect. Composition thus becomes a sort of handicraft in which a critical intellect is always present. But this does not hamper imagination. Where does the first conception of a work come from? What of inspiration and its unchartered origin? This is really a question of psychology, not to say a riddle, but—as Wirén himself would say—it should not be romanticised.

Wirén's view of the act of composition is well thought out, even if it is not original. His methodical attitude can apply to other composers represented on this record but apart from this, comparisons between them are inapt.

In his quartets as in his other works Dag Wirén employs short often abrupt motifs. The way in which he later develops his movements has, however, still much in common with the traditional quartet technique used by the Viennese classical composers and the Continental romantics.

If you listen to SVEN-ERIK BÄCK's *Sonata for flute* you will find quite different moods, other structures. Bäck, too, develops his music from small but telling cores of ideas. But he does not over-complicate them. He draws, instead, long melodic lines, lets the flute make bold leaps, or play in graceful arabesques. His tonal expression oscillates between a spiritualised intensity (the beginning of the first movement is taken from a sketch to a hymn) and a highly effective display of virtuosity. If we

compare the work of Wirén and Bäck we notice a change from a classical consciseness to a mood rich in emotions.

This change can be even more clearly noted if we turn to the third work on this record: INGVAR LIDHOLM's *Canto LXXXI* for choir a-capella. This heightening of the means of expression is not only explained in the stringent poem of Ezra Pound with its throbbing refrain "Pull down thy vanity" but originates in a general tendency both in the later work of Lidholm and in contemporary Swedish music in general; highly emotional expressionism has come to the fore and with it more intensive melodic lines, dissonant formation of sounds and less rigid rhythmic. It is a way of tonal thinking that is very different from Wirén's method.

This radical form of music has been expressed in its most extreme form in the work of the young composer BO NILSSON. He too, as Wirén, considers economy an ideal. Yet Bo Nilsson's goal has nothing to do with classical balance. His piano composition is a series of sophoristic explosions, the result of a highly refined process of construction. This demands initiative from the interpreter (in the actual execution as well as in the choice of tempo) well above the ordinary. The title *Quantitäten* is characteristic of the style where one can scarcely talk of measure and rhythm or melody and chord, but where the musical material is reduced to duration, pitch, and frequencies.

DAG WIRÉN, born 1905, studied at the Swedish High School of Music from 1926—31, was musical critic on the paper Svenska Morgonbladet 1938—46. In 1947 he became Vice-Chairman of the Swedish Society of Composers.

SVEN-ERIK BÄCK, born 1919, studied at the Swedish Academy of Music and also with Hilding Rosenberg and Goffredo Petrassi. He has also studied Renaissance and Baroque music at the Schola Cantorum in Basel. Besides being a composer, he is a conductor and a teacher as well. He is to run the music courses of Radio Sweden from the Autumn of 1959.

INGVAR LIDHOLM, born 1921, studied at the Swedish Academy of Music and with Hilding Rosenberg and Matyas Seiber. He was conductor of the Örebro Municipal Orchestra from 1947—56. From 1956 onwards, he has been head of the chamber music section of Radio Sweden.

BO NILSSON, born 1937, is chiefly self-taught as a composer. His music has been represented at ISCM festivals in 1957 and 1959 and at summer courses in Darmstadt.

The internationally known KYNDEL QUARTET, founded in 1941 is made up of the following members: OTTO KYNDEL and GERT CRAFOORD, violin, KURT LEWIN, viola, and FOLKE BRAMME, cello. The ensemble has made a number of notable appearances in several European countries and has taken part in the World Music Festival in Rome in 1959.

THE SWEDISH CHAMBER CHOIR (20 members), founded in 1945, is connected with Radio Sweden and has long been considered to be one of Sweden's leading choirs. As the Kyndel Quartet, the choir has also made appearances abroad.

ALF ANDERSEN, born 1928, has been connected with the Norwegian Broadcasting Company's Orchestra in Oslo. He has performed in Sweden on several occasions and has gained a reputation of being an excellent interpreter of present day music for flute.

The American pianist DAVID TUDOR was born in Philadelphia in 1926, and has specialised in the latest piano literature. He is known through his appearance with John Cage and he toured Europe with him for the first time in 1954. He visited Sweden in 1956 and 1958 and has made broadcast recordings of contemporary Swedish music.

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