

Concerto for Organ and Symphony Orchestra

Wayne Siegel, Professor

In December 2010 a marvelous new pipe organ constructed by Klais Organ Builders in Bonn for the Symphony Hall of the Aarhus Concert Hall was taken into use for the first time. The seeds to this enormous undertaking were planted well before construction began on the new building, which today houses the Royal Academy of Music, The Aarhus Symphony Orchestra and the Symphony Hall. The academy's organ professor, Ulrik Spang-Hanssen and the director of the Aarhus Symphony Orchestra, Palle Kjeldgaard, were important partners in bringing the construction of this new pipe organ to fruition. The organ was installed in the fall of 2010 thanks to a grant of the amount of nine million Danish kroner from the Mc-Kinney Moeller Foundation.



The Klais Organ in Aarhus Symphony Hall (Photo Jørgen True, Studie E)

In November 2009, well before construction on the new organ had begun, Prof. Ulrik Spang-Hansen and I discussed the possibility of collaborating on a new organ concerto. Ulrik Spang-Hansen approached Palle Kjeldgaard with the idea and in January 2010 the Aarhus Symphony formally commissioned me to compose a new concerto for organ and symphony orchestra to be premiered by the Aarhus Symphony with Ulrik Spang-Hansen as soloist. The Danish State Arts Foundation provided a generous grant for the commission and the Royal Academy provided additional support to enable me to undertake this substantial task.

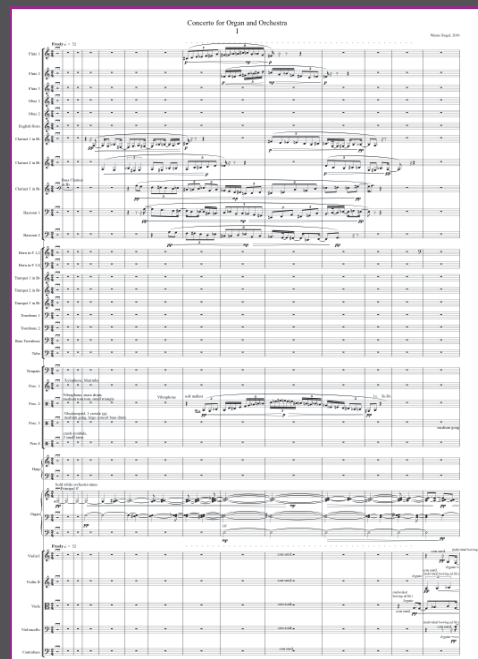
The motivation for bringing the Royal Academy and the Aarhus Symphony under one roof in a new building was to spark new collaborations between these institutions and fortify the musical activity in the geographical area. The new pipe organ may be considered one of the fruits of these labors, as might the orchestra's desire to collaborate with the Royal Academy in commissioning this organ concerto. The project also reflects cooperation between two internal departments at the Academy: the department of electronic music and the department of classical music.

The pipe organ is often described as "the first synthesizer" owing to its construction that enables the creation of new timbres using various combinations of overtones. It was my intention that this concerto for organ and symphony orchestra should gaze both towards the past and towards the future at the same time. The work is expected to be completed in the summer of 2011 and is scheduled to receive its premiere in the Aarhus Symphony Hall on March 1st, 2012. The new concerto falls into three movements, drawing on the rich tradition of the classical organ concerto. Additional sources of inspiration include minimal music, film music and electronic music.

Wayne Siegel has written music in many genres ranging from electronic music to orchestral works, from chamber music to a full-length science fiction opera. Leading international artists, including the Kronos Quartet, Singcircle, Safri Duo and Harry Sparnaay, have commissioned works from him. His music has been performed widely throughout Europe, the Americas and Japan. Many of his works fall between genres, combining diverse cultural elements and compositional techniques, encompassing influences from folk music, rock and minimalism. He often uses computers with live musicians, and he has explored the possibilities of interactive sound installations. In 1986 he became director of Denmark's national electronic music center, DIEM, and in 2003 Siegel was appointed professor of electronic music at the Royal Academy of Music. www.waynesiegel.dk

Ulrik Spang-Hanssen has often been called a musical octopus, one who "embraces" many different musical genres and activities. He is one of Denmark's most sought after solo organists, and has given innumerable concerts all over the world – alone, as chamber musician, as soloist with orchestra, and as jazz musician. He was appointed professor at the Royal Academy of Music in Aarhus in 2005, and has held many master courses in Europe and America. In addition, he is famous for his striking CD recordings, among them the first Danish recording of Buxtehude's complete works for organ.

www.ulrik.spang-hanssen.dk



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Professor Siegel



Professor Spang-Hanssen



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