

FANTASY PIECES FOR OBOE
AND PIANO, OPUS 2

The fantasy pieces for oboe and piano,⁶⁷ opus 2, were composed shortly after Carl Nielsen had taken up the post of second violinist in the Royal Danish Orchestra in 1889. In Emilie Demant Hatt's list of Carl Nielsen's compositions one reads that the first fantasy piece, "Andante", which was later called *Romance*, was "completed on Saturday 30th November 1889", and that "Intermezzo", which is the earliest name for the second fantasy piece, was finished on "Sunday 9th March 1890".⁶⁸ From these notes too, one can incidentally see that Carl Nielsen probably originally meant *Romance* to be for oboe and organ. In the summer of 1890 he had come so far with the composition that he could send it to his old theory teacher Orla Rosenhoff⁶⁹ for his comments. Rosenhoff suggested a few adjustments in the piano part:

"Here and there a little adjustment has been made in the piano part; you will easily discover what I refer to, but could with the same ease restore the original if you do not agree with me about the changes."⁷⁰

The piano part appears to have been reworked several times at a rather late stage of the composition process, so it is likely that Carl Nielsen followed Rosenhoff's suggestions and made the small changes. The work was printed in the autumn of 1890, and Carl Nielsen read proofs while he was staying in Dresden thanks to the grant *Det Anckerske Legat*. In a diary entry of 18th September 1890 he writes:

"Have spent the day reading proofs of my oboe pieces. At one place in the second piece some A's had to be deleted, so now it says *a bort, a bort* ['A away, A away']. The joke that I have aborted my own brainchild suggests itself rather strongly."⁷¹

⁶⁷ The two fantasy pieces with the titles *Romance* and *Humoresque* have no overall title in Danish in the sources, but appeared for the first time in German as *Fantasiestücke für Oboe, Opus 2*.

⁶⁸ DK-Kk, Tilg. 391; published by John Fellow as Emilie Demant Hatt, *Foraarsbølger. Erindringer om Carl Nielsen*, Copenhagen 2002, p. 92.

⁶⁹ Danish music teacher and composer (1844-1905).

⁷⁰ Letter from Orla Rosenhoff to Carl Nielsen, 13.7.1890 (DK-Kk, CNA, I.A.b).

⁷¹ Torben Schousboe, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

FANTASISTYKKER FOR OBO
OG KLAVER, OPUS 2

Fantasistykkerne for obo og klaver,⁶⁷ opus 2 blev komponeret kort tid efter, at Carl Nielsen i 1889 havde tiltrådt stillingen som 2. violinist i Det Kgl. Kapel. I Emilie Demant Hatts optegnelser af Carl Nielsens kompositioner anføres det, at det første fantasistykke, "Andante", der senere kaldtes *Romance*, blev "fuldført Lørdag d. 30 November 1889", og "Intermezzo", der er den tidligste betegnelse for det andet fantasistykke, blev færdigt "Søndag d. 9. Marts 1890".⁶⁸ Af disse optegnelser kan man i øvrigt se, at Carl Nielsen formodentlig oprindeligt havde tænkt sig *Romance* spillet for obo og orgel. I sommeren 1890 var han så vidt med kompositionen, at han kunne sende den til sin gamle teorilærer Orla Rosenhoff⁶⁹ for at få en kommentar. Rosenhoff foreslog nogle få omlægninger i klaversatsen:

"Hist og her er der foretaget en lille Omlægning af Klaversatsen, De opdager let hvad jeg sigter til, men kun[de] med samme Lethed bringe det Oprindelige frem, forudsat De ikke er enig med mig i Ændringerne."⁷⁰

Klaversatsen lader til at være omarbejdet flere gange på et ret sent tidspunkt i kompositionsprocessen, og det er derfor sandsynligt, at Carl Nielsen fulgte Rosenhoffs forslag og foretog de små forandringer. Værket blev trykt i efteråret 1890, og Carl Nielsen læste korrektur på noderne, mens han opholdt sig på Det Anckerske Legat i Dresden. I en dagbogsoptegnelse fra den 18. september 1890 hedder det:

"Har tilbragt Dagen med at læse Korrektur paa mine Oboestykker. Et Sted i det andet Stykke maatte nogle a'er slettes, saa der er kommen til at staa a bort, a bort, Vittigheden at jeg har aborteret med mit eget Aandsfoster ligger tæmmelig nær."⁷¹

⁶⁷ De to fantasistykker med titlerne *Romance* og *Humoresque* har i kilderne ingen fælles titel på dansk, men udkom første gang under den tyske titel: *Fantasiestücke für Oboe, Opus 2*.

⁶⁸ DK-Kk, Tilg. 391; udgivet af John Fellow som Emilie Demant Hatt, *Foraarsbølger. Erindringer om Carl Nielsen*, København 2002, s. 92.

⁶⁹ Musikpædagog og komponist (1844-1905).

⁷⁰ Brev fra Orla Rosenhoff til Carl Nielsen 13.7.1890 (DK-Kk, CNA, I.A.b).

⁷¹ Torben Schousboe, *op. cit.*, s. 15.

Four days later, Carl Nielsen and the pianist Victor Bendix⁷² played the fantasy pieces at a social gathering in Dresden:

“First we played Bendix’s trio (I played the violin). Beautiful piece of music! Then B. and I played my two oboe pieces. This was in reality the greatest triumph I have had so far. At the beginning Scholz and Kirchner looked tired and indifferent, but before the pieces were over they were all afire. I will not forget *that* evening so quickly. Bendix played my pieces delightfully.”⁷³

At this private performance, which may have been played from a printed proof, Carl Nielsen presumably performed the oboe part on the violin. It may even have been on this occasion that the idea of transcribing the first of the fantasy pieces, *Romance*, for violin and piano arose, although it was not the composer himself, but the Czech-German violinist Hans Sitt⁷⁴ who arranged the music for these instruments.

Carl Nielsen’s fantasy pieces for oboe and piano were published by Wilhelm Hansens Musikforlag in March 1891 along with *Suite for Strings opus 1* and *5 Piano Pieces opus 3*.

In a programme note written more than twenty years later Carl Nielsen described the oboe pieces in the following terms:

“The two oboe pieces are a very early opus. The first – slow – piece gives the oboe the opportunity to sing out its notes quite as beautifully as this instrument can. The second is more humorous, roguish, with an undertone of Nordic nature and forest rustlings in the moonlight.”⁷⁵

The first public performance took place at the Royal Orchestra Soirée of 16th March 1891, where the fantasy pieces were played by the oboist Olivo Krause (to whom they are dedicated)⁷⁶ and the pianist Victor Bendix. The other items on the programme were Schumann’s Sonata for Violin and Piano, opus 121, Beethoven’s String Quartet in B flat major, opus 130,

Fire dage senere spillede Carl Nielsen og pianisten Victor Bendix⁷² fantasistykkerne ved en selskabelig sammenkomst i Dresden:

“Vi spillede først Bendix’s Trio (jeg Violinen). Smukt Stykke Musik! Saa spillede B. og jeg mine to Obostykker. Det var i Virkeligheden den største Triumf jeg endnu har havt. Scholz og Kirchner saa i Begyndelsen trætte og ligegyldige ud, men inden Stykkerne vare forbi, bleve de lutter Ild. Jeg glemmer ikke saa let *den Aften*. Bendix spillede mine Stykker henrivende.”⁷³

Ved denne private opførelse, der kan have fundet sted på grundlag af et korrekturtryk, udførte Carl Nielsen formentlig obostemmen på violin. Måske er idéen til at transskribere det første af fantasistykkerne, *Romance*, for violin og klaver endda opstået ved denne lejlighed, om end det ikke var komponisten selv, men den tjekkisk-tyske violinist Hans Sitt,⁷⁴ som arrange-rede musikken for denne besætning.

Carl Niensens fantasistykker for obo og klaver blev udgivet på Wilhelm Hansens Musikforlag i marts 1891 samtidig med *Suite for strygere opus 1* og *5 Klaverstykker opus 3*.

I en programnote, skrevet mere end 20 år senere, har Carl Nielsen beskrevet obostykkerne i følgende vendinger:

“De to Obostykker er et meget tidligt Opus. Det første – lang-somme – Stykke giver Oboen Lejlighed til at synge sine Toner ud saa smukt som dette Instrument netop kan. Det andet er mere humoristisk, skalkagtigt, med en Undertone af nordisk Natur og Skovpusleri i Maanelys.”⁷⁵

Den første offentlige opførelse fandt sted ved Det Kongelige Kapels Soirée 16. marts 1891, hvor fantasistykkerne blev spillet af oboisten Olivo Krause (hvem de er tilegnet)⁷⁶ og pianisten Victor Bendix. De øvrige programpunkter omfattede Schumanns Sonate for violin og klaver, opus 121, Beethovens Strygekvartet i B-dur, opus 130 og nogle sange af Grieg. Carl

72 Danish pianist and composer (1851-1926).

73 Torben Schousboe, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

74 Hans Sitt’s (1850-1922) *Romance par Carl Nielsen Oeuvr. 2* for violin and piano (Pl. no. 11106) and for violin and orchestra (Pl. no. 11156) were published by Wilhelm Hansen Musikforlag c. 1891. The music is transposed from G minor to A minor.

75 Undated programme note, written however after the composition of opus 43 (in 1922). Quoted from John Fellow, *op. cit.*, p. 634, See also above, note 62.

76 However, one manuscript (Source **D**) has a dedication to the oboist Peter Brøndum (see facsimile p. xlv).

72 Pianist og komponist (1851-1926).

73 Torben Schousboe, *op. cit.*, s. 15.

74 Hans Sitts (1850-1922) *Romance par Carl Nielsen Oeuvr. 2* for violin og klaver (pl. nr. 11106) og for violin og orkester (pl. nr. 11156) blev udgivet på Wilhelm Hansen Musikforlag ca. 1891. Musikken er transponeret fra g-mol til a-mol.

75 Udateret programnote, der dog er skrevet efter tilblivelsen af opus 43 (i 1922). Citeret efter John Fellow, *op. cit.*, s. 634, Se også ovenfor note 62.

76 Et manuskript (kilde **D**) har dog dedikation til oboisten Peter Brøndum (se facsimile s. xlv).

and some songs by Grieg. Carl Nielsen's music thus represented the most youthful element in the concert and in fact aroused appropriate interest, as is evident for example from *Aftenbladet*:

"As for new pieces, what was on offer last night was Carl Nielsen's Fantasy pieces for oboe and piano.

In this the young, talented composer has revealed no mean knowledge of the peculiarities of the oboe as well as great technical skill in the structure of the composition. It is not ordinary, hackneyed motifs that Mr. Carl Nielsen uses; calmly and steadily he goes his own way. For that reason one can safely pin great hopes to the future of the young artist.

Mr. Olivo Krause performed the not entirely easy oboe part with a full, beautiful tone, and Mr. Victor Bendix played the piano part tastefully and finely."⁷⁷

The reviewer in *Politiken* was equally pleased with the music:

"The middle section of the concert was filled out by some new fantasy pieces for oboe and piano by the young composer *Carl Nielsen*. Like everything before from his hand they testify to a decided compositional talent and a happy ability to write wholesomely and naturally. Mr. *Olivo Krause*'s performance of the principal part was in addition extremely flattering; both his tone and execution are authentic and reliable. Mr. *Victor Bendix* too functioned here in the most satisfactory way at the piano."⁷⁸

Berlingske Tidende wrote:

"After this we heard two fantasy pieces for oboe by the young Danish composer Carl Nielsen, who in this work has shown considerable mastery in formal terms, in connection with close knowledge of the peculiarities of the oboe as a solo instrument. The last piece, a humoresque, which appears most significant to us, was performed with virtuosity by the excellent oboist, the Royal Orchestra musician Krause, who rightly garnered lively applause for this performance."⁷⁹

Nielsens musik repræsenterede altså koncertens mest ungdommelige indslag og blev da også mødt med behørig interesse, som det f.eks. fremgår af *Aftenbladet*:

"Af Nyheder bød man i Aftes paa Carl Nielsens Fantasiestykker for Oboe og Piano.

Den unge begavede Komponist har heri lagt et ikke ringe Kjendskab til Oboens Ejendommelighed for Dagen, og stor teknisk Dygtighed i Kompositionens Bygning. Det er ikke almindelige og forkjorte Motiver, Hr. Carl Nielsen anvender, men støt og rolig gaar han sine egne Veje. Derfor tør man sikkert knytte store Forhaabninger til den unge Kunstners Fremtid.

Hr. Olivo Krause udførte med stor og smuk Tone den ikke helt lette Obostemme og Hr. Victor Bendix spillede smagfuldt og fint Klaverstemmen."⁷⁷

Politikens anmelder var lige så fornøjet med musikken:

"Den mellemste Del af Koncerten udfyldtes af nogle ny Fantasiestykker for Oboe og Piano af den unge komponist *Carl Nielsen*. Som alt tidligere fra dennes Haand vidner de om afgjort Kompositionstalent og en lykkelig Ævne til at skrive sundt og naturligt. Hr. *Olivo Krauses* Udførelse af Principalstemmen var tilmed i højeste Grad flatterende; baade hans Tone og Foredrag er ægte og paalideligt. Hr. *Victor Bendix* fungerede ogsaa her paa den mest tilfredsstillende Maade ved Flygelet."⁷⁸

Berlingske Tidende skrev:

"Derefter hørtes tvende Phantasistykker for Obo af den unge danske Componist Carl Nielsen, der i dette Arbejde har viist betydelig Overlegenhed i formel Henseende i Forbindelse med nøie Kjendskab til Oboens Eiendommeligheder som Solo-instrument. Det sidste Stykke, en Humoreske, der forekommer os betydeligst, udførtes med Virtuositet af den fortræffelige Oboist, Capelmusicus Krause, der med Rette høstede livligt Bifald for denne Præstation."⁷⁹

⁷⁷ *Aftenbladet* 17.3.1891. Anmeldelsen signeret "M.".

⁷⁸ *Politiken* 17.3.1891.

⁷⁹ *Berlingske Tidende (Aften)* 17.3.1891.

⁷⁷ *Aftenbladet* 17.3.1891. Review signed "M.".

⁷⁸ *Politiken* 17.3.1891.

⁷⁹ *Berlingske Tidende (Aften)* 17.3.1891.

On 28th April 1892, when Carl Nielsen held a composition concert, the two fantasy pieces were again on the programme,⁸⁰ and did much to confirm the audience's "justified interest in the young composer."⁸¹

Over the following years the fantasy pieces were played in several concerts,⁸² but the first of the pieces, *Romance*, also gained some currency in Hans Sitt's transcription for violin and orchestra and for violin and piano, as well as being performed frequently with organ accompaniment.⁸³ The review in *Berlingske Tidende* of Carl Nielsen's composition concert in 1892 is evidence that Sitt's version even managed to be played in public *before* Carl Nielsen's original version had been heard for the second time: "Two beautiful pieces for oboe and piano, of which the first, the *Romance*, has already been adopted by the violinists, were beautifully played",⁸⁴ one reads. *Nationaltidende*, too, mentioned that the *Romance* "has already been heard successfully in the concert hall for violin".⁸⁵ Carl Nielsen also appeared at least once himself as the violinist with Sitt's version of *Romance* for violin and piano,⁸⁶ and in 1926 he conducted *Romance* in the orchestral version during a concert tour to Aarhus, Silkeborg and Odense.⁸⁷

The basis of this edition is Carl Nielsen's own copy of the first edition (Sources **A** and **Aa**), in a number of instances corrected in accordance with his ink fair copy of the score (Source **B**), and in the case of the first fantasy piece also with Source **D**, which represents an earlier version of the composition.

Lisbeth Ahlgren Jensen

Da Carl Nielsen 28. april 1892 afholdt en kompositionskoncert, stod de to fantasistykker atter på programmet,⁸⁰ og de var i høj grad med til at bekræfte publikums "berettigede Interesse for den unge Komponist."⁸¹

I de følgende år blev fantasistykkerne spillet ved flere koncerter,⁸² mens det første af stykkerne, *Romance*, også vandt udbredelse i Hans Sitts transskription for violin og orkester og for violin og klaver, ligesom det hyppigt blev opført med orgelledsagelse.⁸³ Anmeldelsen i *Berlingske Tidende* af Carl Niensens kompositionskoncert i 1892 vidner om, at Sitts version endog opnåede at blive spillet offentligt *før* Carl Niensens originale version havde lydt for anden gang: "To smukke Stykker for Obo og Claveer, af hvilke den første, *Romancen*, allerede tillige er taget til Indtægt af Violinisterne, bleve smukt spillede"⁸⁴ hedder det. Også *Nationaltidende* nævner, at *Romancen* "allerede med Held er hørt i Koncertsalen for Violin."⁸⁵ Carl Nielsen optrådte i øvrigt mindst én gang selv som violinist med Sitts version af *Romance* for violin og klaver,⁸⁶ og i 1926 dirigerede han *Romance* i orkesterversionen under en koncertturné til Aarhus, Silkeborg og Odense.⁸⁷

Til grund for udgaven ligger Carl Niensens håndeksemplar af førsteudgaven (kilde **A** og **Aa**), der i en række tilfælde er korrigeret i overensstemmelse med hans blækrenskrift af partituret (kilde **B**), samt for det første fantasistykkets vedkommende tillige med kilde **D**, der repræsenterer en tidligere version af kompositionen.

Lisbeth Ahlgren Jensen

80 Programme for Carl Nielsen, *Kompositions-Soirée. Koncert-palæets mindre Sal. Torsdag d. 28 April Kl. 8.* (DK-Kk, copy at CNU). The fantasy pieces were played by the oboist Georg Bruhn and the pianist Orpheline Olsen.

81 *Nationaltidende* 29.4.1892.

82 E.g. at "Studenterforeningens Compositions Aften" 15.12.1906, at a concert in *Østerbro Kammermusik Forening* 13.12.1912 and at a concert at the Royal Swedish Academy of Music in Stockholm on 25.10.1913 (cf. programmes in DK-Kk, CNA, I.E.b.).

83 At church concerts on 4.1.1893 (St. Johannes Kirke), 31.10.1900 (Jesuskirken); 14.10.1914 (Esajaskirken); 12.11.1914 (Matthæus Kirken); 19.10.1913 (Golgatakirken), all in Copenhagen (cf. programmes in DK-Kk, Småtrykssamlingen).

84 Quoted from *Musikbladet* 1892, nos. 8-9.

85 *Nationaltidende*, 29.4.1892.

86 At a concert on 1.10.1904 in the hall "Hotel Koldings Sal" with the pianist Henrik Knudsen (cf. programme in DK-Kk, CNA, I.E.b.).

87 Torben Schousboe, *op. cit.* p. 491.

80 Program for Carl Nielsen, *Kompositions-Soirée. Koncert-palæets mindre Sal. Torsdag d. 28 April Kl. 8.* (DK-Kk, kopi i CNU). Fantasistykkerne blev spillet af oboisten Georg Bruhn og pianisten Orpheline Olsen.

81 *Nationaltidende* 29.4.1892.

82 F.eks. ved "Studenterforeningens Compositions Aften" 15.12.1906, ved en koncert i Østerbro Kammermusik Forening 13.12.1912 og ved en koncert i Kungl. Musikkonservatorium i Stockholm 25.10.1913, (jf. programmer i DK-Kk, CNA, I.E.b.).

83 Ved koncerter 4.1. 1893 (St. Johannes Kirke); 31.10.1900 (Jesuskirken); 14.10. 1914 (Esajaskirken); 12.11. 1914 (St. Matthæus Kirken); 19.10. 1913 (Golgatakirken), alle København. (Jf. programmer i DK-Kk, Småtrykssamlingen.).

84 Her citeret efter *Musikbladet* 1892, nr. 8-9.

85 *Nationaltidende*, 29.4.1892.

86 Ved en koncert 1.10.1904 i "Hotel Kolding's Sal" sammen med pianisten Henrik Knudsen. (jf. program i DK-Kk, CNA, I.E.b.).

87 Torben Schousboe, *op. cit.* s. 491.