

BACH - TELEMANN - PAGANINI - ROBSON - HOBSON - ILLEVOLD - PAUS

# ALENE

BENTE ILLEVOLD - EUPHONIUM



*Alone* has become a state of being for me. A state of being that is now familiar and almost constant.

Alone came without warning. Our modern and invulnerable-seeming society was upturned overnight. An abrupt change, and we could no longer go where we pleased. We had to go our separate ways. Alone.

The Norwegian Prime Minister compared it to the April Days of 1940. The streets were empty, without people. We were alone.

We are experiencing a time of global reckoning, which will soon be both before and after. Absurd, and at the same time, the realization that I had never imagined this! The margins that can redefine freedom, and our obvious management of it...

Uncertainty and fear. Not just for the pandemic, but for our modern lives. The fear of life as we know it, safe and predictable. Will that life ever come back? Realizing our actual vulnerability.

*Alone* made me feel the timelessness of the music stronger than ever before. Chase the music, challenge my abilities, and push new boundaries.

Alone is also timeless and like music, the moment of its existence cannot be captured. Their shared volatile nature, there and then – each in its time and place. Unique in every person's mind, sometimes different in the same person's mind. Perhaps this is where the fascination lies?

Is this what I am looking for as a musician? The volatility I am trying to capture, wants to soundproof.

By meeting the unknown, facing our fears and our joys, our willingness to gamble against our desire for safety, you learn more about your inner most self. A sense of absolute intimacy exists in and is demanded by both music and loneliness.

If you want to get to that deeply personal space, you must have courage and strength. Alone is so much more than playing solo

We have made an honest and credible record. Alone is the result of the need to be creative in a troubled time. A performer and a producer. Two people in four sessions through eight very different musical works.

## ALONE

# ALENE



## BENTE ILLEVOLD

Bente Illevold (b. 1983) comes from Rendalen in Østerdalen and plays the euphonium. In recent years, she has distinguished herself as an innovative performer and gained recognition for her performances of new works for the instrument, both nationally and internationally.

Bente is passionate about expanding euphonium repertoire and letting the instrument unfold in new constellations and contexts. She has premiered seven major works for the euphonium and is known for untraditional and brave repertoire choices.

Bente works as a soloist, freelance musician and educator based in Drammen (Norway). She is an international S.E. Shires Company Euphonium artist and was the company's first female and European euphonium artist.

## AT-RECORDINGS

AT-Recording's philosophy is to create honest and authentic recordings without the use of any digital effects. A pair of stereo microphones is used, and it is the location and acoustics of the room that alone colour the music and instruments. This makes the recordings feel real. On this album, the music is recorded in three different rooms with different reverberations.

The microphone location and which room is adapted to each piece of music. This means that the soundscape, proximity, and reverberation will vary from composition to composition. The recording equipment has been selected from a technical perspective due to their transparent properties to capture the music as it was experienced in the room where the recording was made. To take full advantage of the recording, it is recommended to listen with good full-frequency playback equipment with homogeneous frequency response and good dynamic characteristics with low distortion in an adapted listening environment.

## JOHAN SEBASTIAN BACH: SUITE NO. 2 IN D MINOR FOR SOLO CELLO

It is believed that Bach wrote these beautiful and timeless cello suites between 1717 and 1723. There are a total of six cello suites, and Suite No. 2 is perhaps the most aptly written to perform on euphonium.

This music has been a part of my playing since my early studies, but when I play this suite, I do not aim to replicate some historical recording or period interpretation.

I allow myself great artistic freedom and strive to bring new perspectives and enrich the music with my unique instrument's tradition and timbre. What do we truly know about what Bach thought when he wrote this music? What expressions does each performer choose to call an authentic reproduction or a period performance?

Is it possible to bring the present into our interpretation? For me, it is impossible to attempt to present this music frozen in time. For me, it is the music - the instrument and me - there and then - in a given space, in a given time - in a present state.



## GEORG PHILLIP TELEMANN: EXCERPT FROM 12 FANTASIES FOR SOLO FLUTE, NO. 3 IN B MINOR

TRANSCRIBED FOR TROMBONE  
BY ALAN RAPH

Many historians say that Telemann gave flutists an enormous gift through the writing of these fantasies. This set of Fantasies were published in Hamburg in 1732 - 1733 and were later transcribed for many instruments, and perhaps the most famous of these adaptations is for viola.

The music flows freely and provides considerable artistic spaces and invites the performer to make musical choices. The performer is challenged to play with elegance in the euphonium transcription, where the central task is to convey beautiful music despite the great physical differences between flute and euphonium. Again, my central belief is that transcriptions open new spaces for interpretation and expression rather than reproducing the past or mimicking things that already exist. For what joy and art is created by restraining the freedom and boundless nature of our imagination?

## NICCOLÒ PAGANINI: CAPRICE NO. 24 FOR SOLO VIOLIN

TRANSCRIBED FOR EUPHONIUM  
BY BENTE ILLEVOLD

This selection is the last of Paganini's virtuoso caprices, written in 1807. The composition is a classic - an eternal piece of music. The original notation requires string techniques that are impossible to produce on euphonium. This additional layer of unfamiliarity gives my transcription even more space for artistic expression when compared to the other selections on this album from the Baroque composers. Or perhaps Paganini is simply unplayable on the euphonium?

An artist's main task is to awaken emotions and reactions in people. The response is more important than the nature of the response. For me, the big question is regarding the relevance of a virtuoso today – in the present. Is there still an audience that can be engaged and pulled in by brilliant musicianship and technical mastery? Or is this now so common, that for the modern audience, that virtuosity itself is reduced to a brief moment from the past?

#### **KEITH ELLIOTT ROBSON: DANCE SUITE FOR SOLO EUPHONIUM**

Keith is my former music teacher from primary school in Rendalen. From that time, I remember him as the strict piano teacher with a sharp accent, who never accepted my self-taught fingerings in my left hand.

In 2015, Keith was on a visit to Norway in connection with the premiere of his "Nexus - Un Trio Concertante" for euphonium, flute and vibraphone. On the drive to the concert in Rendalen, we talked about the lack of a solo work for the euphonium inspired by music like Bach's Cello Suites and Paganini's Caprices.

In other words, the ultimate technical and musical challenge for the instrument! This conversation spurred Keith into compositional motion, and "Dance Suite" was premiered in the Oslofjord Museum on April 7, 2017. I have also used two of the movements for several concerts, but this is the first time the work is recorded and performed in its entirety since.

#### **ANDREA HOBSON: INSPIRED BY BLUE**

The composer's words about the composition:

*Inspired by Blue was written for Bente Illevold in 2020. The piece is loosely based on the blues scale and the rondo form. The piece's primary theme is "blue" and describes different shades of this color. The work's introduction is a sadly deep blue, a color which also returns near the end. This is followed by a rhythmically playful section that depicts a light blue color - in the same way that blue eyes can sparkle. A syncopated melody is a recurring element throughout the work and features a unique section of music designed to sound improvisatory.*

#### **BENTE ILLEVOLD: ARV (HERITAGE)**

This is my first work for euphonium, written in April 2021. It is inspired by my upbringing in the village of Rendalen and the nature that surrounds my childhood home. This wild and untouched wilderness is breathtakingly beautiful! The folk music from Rendalen and surrounding Østerdalen is largely composed in minor keys. This was the very first music I heard "live" as a child. I took inspiration from this tonal language as I wrote "Arv".

This composition is not pre-planned and processed, I strove to create this music intuitively to capture a moment of my life. The various sections and associated fractures symbolize a child's wandering imagination with constant digressions.

#### **MARCUS PAUS: NOTTURNO (LOCKDOWN LULLABY)**

The composer's words about the composition:

*During the first year of the pandemic, in the sudden lapse of deadlines and a reliable calendar, I wrote a series of works under the common name "Cabin Fever." The series included everything from small chamber miniatures to a large-scale concert for guitar and strings, but the thread that tied them all together was both the circumstances of their creation, as well as a kind of rediscovery of the energy that drove me to write in the beginning, long before it became a profession or a career.*

*"Notturmo (Lockdown Lullaby)" became one of the very last ones I wrote before the world slowly began to reopen (with the return of a calendar and deadlines...). The piece is written for Bente Illevold, and is a lyrical work devoted to both her and the euphonium's fantastic scope and register of expression.*

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J.S. BACH: CELLO SUITE NO. 2 I D MINOR BWV 1008

- 01: Prélude
- 02: Allemande
- 03: Courante
- 04: Sarabande
- 05: Menuet 1 and Menuet 2
- 06: Gigue

GEORG PHILLIP TELEMANN: EXCERPT FROM  
12 FANTASIES  
FOR SOLO FLUTE

- 07: I Fantasie in A minor (originally in B minor)

NICCOLÒ PAGANINI:

- 08: Caprice no. 24 for solo violin

KEITH ELLIOTT ROBSON: DANCE SUITE FOR SOLO  
EUPHONIUM

- 09: Tarantella
- 10: Valse Melancolique
- 11: Csardas
- 12: Tango

ANDREA HOBSON

- 13: Inspired by Blue

BENTE ILLEVOLD

- 14: Arv

MARCUS PAUS

- 15: Notturmo (Lockdown Lullaby)



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