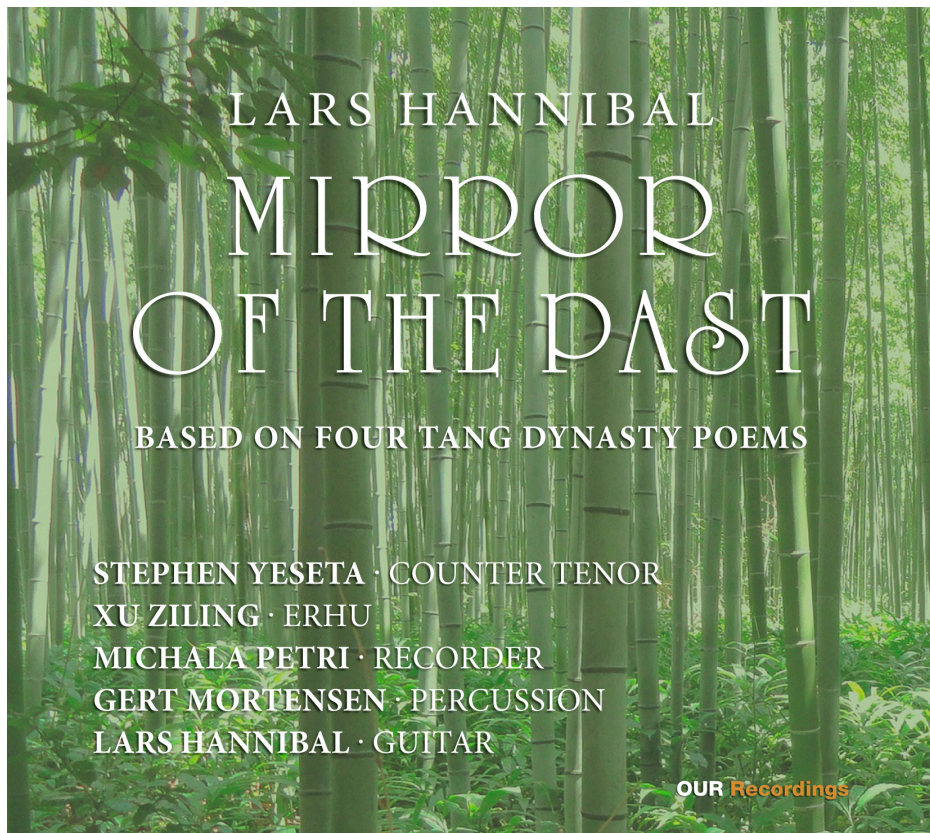




# OUR Recordings Digital EP Release

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LARS HANNIBAL  
MIRROR  
OF THE PAST

BASED ON FOUR TANG DYNASTY POEMS

STEPHEN YESETA · COUNTER TENOR  
XU ZILING · ERHU  
MICHALA PETRI · RECORDER  
GERT MORTENSEN · PERCUSSION  
LARS HANNIBAL · GUITAR

OUR Recordings

THE BAMBOO HUT .....	3.20
THE SPRING MORNING .....	4.51
THE DALE OF SINGING BIRDS .....	3.29
MY DELAYED DEPARTURE FOR HOME .....	4.18
TOTAL: .....	16.18



*MIRROR OF THE PAST I see two ways: A past observation and reflection, mirroring our world today, and today's reflections and thoughts on what was.*

For many years, I have worked with Chinese music, Chinese musicians, composers and orchestras.

In 2006, a Chinese colleague in Shanghai kindly gave me a wonderful bilingual book of poems from the Tang Dynasty (618-907). These poems have as a common theme man's wonder at and deep dependence on nature. In their apparently naive form, they explore the reverence humans used to have for nature, and give perspective to the distorted relationship we have today. Thus, the poems have a strong topicality, and are for me a mirror and a past commentary on the world's man-made climate crisis.

In 2021 I started writing music for some of these poems and was lucky enough to have the opportunity to stay one week at the house *Can Lis* in Mallorca. A wonderful "Temple of Nature" built for his own use by the Danish architect Jørn Utzon, the creator of the *Sidney Opera House*. Here I would start the work, inspired by Utzon's ideas of working with just a few elements - in his case the four elements: stone, wood, glass and brick - and all local materials.



## About the music

Based on my knowledge of traditional Chinese music and folk music from around the world, I have chosen to explore the possibilities of the pentatonic scale. I used this scale for both the horizontal melodic progression and the vertical harmonic structure. Furthermore, I wanted the music to build and rest on a stable bottom - a “ground” in the bass, a device used both in early music and contemporary modally based popular songs. This gives a special atmosphere, which here symbolizes the constant hum of Nature, and keeps the music rooted rather than forcing it in to formulaic harmonies. Furthermore, reflecting the tendency in the world today, I have endeavored to incorporate elements from the musical traditions of several different continent and cultures. In this way, it insists on a dialogue that transcends the original setting of Tang Dynasty China, and which is more needed now than at any other time in world history. The last element focuses on the timbre of the singing voice and the instruments I chose for these special settings. In addition to the voice, which here is sung by a countertenor, I have chosen four instruments which are very different in their character: the guitar, a plucked instrument, the recorder, a wind instrument, the Chinese erhu, a bowed string instrument, as well as various percussion instruments. The four instruments could also symbolize the four corners of the world, or the four seasons, or the four elements.





## About the recording

It was a great joy for me that the musicians I wanted for this special project all said yes. It was a great inspiration to work with them and the producer Preben Iwan, with whom I have worked for 16 years, on this special project, different from our usual work. Particularly I would like to express my gratitude to Gert Mortensen for his invaluable creative inputs.

The recording took place as a live recording on 24 May 2022 in the Concert Church at Nørrebro in Copenhagen. Due to corona, it was not possible for Xu Ziling to be physically present - but she was present online from Beijing, where she since recorded her part.

Structurally, I have chosen the same musical form for all four songs. An atmospheric introduction sets the mood, creating a sound world punctuated with the sounds and colors of percussion instruments, but several songs draw on specific Chinese musical traditions and sounds. In *My late Departure for Home*, a “Monk Choir” is heard, which is sung “live” by the entire studio, including the sound and video crew! - and on *The Spring Morning* and *The Dale of Singing Birds* a little theme is heard far away, getting gradually nearer, to imitate the call-and-response sound of the “Fei Ge” or “Flying Song” – a courtship ritual unique to the Miao people of Southwest China where young women and their suitors from different villages sing to each other across the mountains and valleys. Some places the men are singing while going down from the mountains to the villages, while the women are responding. Continuing their singing in the village, after a longer or shorter time love may appear, and the couples finding each other through the music can spend the night together in a nearby bamboo hut.



The poems, which are all four lines long, are divided into two lines at a time, with the text only appearing once. The guitar is the central instrument, and the lower range recorders mostly establish a supporting melodic base. The percussion has both an atmosphere-creating character, as well as functioning as a sort of non-pitched, rhythmic “Basso continuo”, which was inspired by the clappers or paiban (拍板) used in *Peking Opera*. The erhu primarily has a freely improvisational role, with occasionally melodic “grooves” - which form the basis for the erhu’s more melodic flights of fancy.



## The Poems

### THE BAMBOO HUT

WANG WEI

Sitting among bamboos alone,  
I play my lute and croon carefree.  
In the deep woods where I'm unknown,  
Only the bright moon peeps at me.

### THE SPRING MORNING

MENG HAORAN

The spring morning in bed I'm lying,  
Not to wake till birds are crying.  
After one night of wind and showers,  
How many are the fallen flowers.

### THE DALE OF SINGING BIRDS

WANG WEI

Sweet laurel blooms fall un enjoyed;  
Vague hills dissolve into night void.  
The moonrise startles birds to sing;  
Their twitter fills the dale with spring.

### MY DELAYED DEPARTURE FOR HOME

ZHANG YUE

My heart outruns the moon and sun  
It makes the journey not begun  
The autumn wind won't wait for me;  
It arrives there where I would be.



## Stephen Yeseta

Los Angeles native Stephen Yeseta received his Master's degree from the *Royal Danish Academy of Music* in 2020, where he continued to the soloist class under Marianne Rørholm and Helene Gjerris. Stephen's lovely alto voice, vivacious musicality, and warm timbre have, over the past few years, made him a sought-after soloist and ensemble singer in various musical styles. He sings regularly with *Musica Ficta*, *Camerata Øresund*, *Mogens Dahl Chamber Choir*, and the *DR Concert Choir*, and has worked with Lars Hannibal, Michala Petri, Jakob Vejslev, Ebbe Munk, and Bo Holten. He has appeared as soloist in various works, including several Bach Cantatas, Händel's *Messiah*, and *Vølvens Spådom* by Bo Holten.

In addition, Stephen has special abilities within Gregorian Chant and liturgical music, to which he has contributed some of his own compositions, bear mentioning, including his latest commissioned Mass setting.





## **Xu Ziling**

Xu Ziling holds degrees from the *Central Conservatory* in Beijing in erhu. Ziling has enjoyed an active career performing in various Chinese orchestras such as the *National Peking Opera Company*, *China National Traditional Orchestra*, and the *Xiyangyang Chamber Ensemble*.

She is currently holding a position in *The National Traditional Orchestra Academia*, Beijing.

Ziling has toured many countries in Asia, Europe as well as Northern Africa. For some years she was a part of the new music scene in Copenhagen, where she was working as a teacher at the *Music Confucius Institute* at *The Royal Danish Academy of Music*, performing and recording with many Danish composers and musicians. Ziling also plays guzheng, guqin, yangqin and other traditional Chinese instruments, and furthermore works with poetry and calligraphy.

Ziling has received many honors and awards. In 2017, she composed the work *Dream In The Peony Pavilion* in Kun opera style, and for that she received an award.



## Michala Petri

Michala Petri was educated at *Staatliche Hochschule für Musik und Theater* in Hannover, Germany, and has since then performed more than 5.000 concerts around the world. She has a discography of more than 70 albums, many critically acclaimed and award winning. Since childhood she has had an interest for new music and for expanding the contemporary repertoire for her instrument, and more than 150 work have been composed especially for her by major composers. Petri has furthermore always sought new ways to expand her musical horizons and explore creative musical dialogues with other genres and cultures. Amongst her many honors and awards are *Léonie Sonnings Music Prize*, *European Soloist Prize - Pro Europa*, and *Danish Radio Artist of the Year 2019*. For her albums she has received several *ECHO Klassik Awards*, 3 *US-Grammy* nominations and an *ICMA Award*. In 2011 Queen Margrethe appointed her *Knight of the Dannebrog 1. Rank*.



## Gert Mortensen

Gert Mortensen graduated from the *Royal Academy of Music* in Copenhagen, where he later for 22 years, from 2000 to 2022, worked as Professor of the percussion department. Prior to that, he held for 25 years the position as principal percussionist at *The Royal Danish Orchestra*, Copenhagen. He is recognized as one of the leading concert percussionists in the world, having appeared as soloist at *Carnegie Hall*, *Royal Albert Hall*, *Berlin Philharmonic*, *The National Center of Performing Arts* in Beijing (NCPA) and *Shanghai Grand Theatre*.

Since 2004 Gert Mortensen has toured intensively in China, and has delivered lectures and televised masterclasses all over the globe. Gert Mortensen has founded and created many percussion and new music festivals and large scale events, in addition to forming his own successful percussion ensemble *Percurama*.

Today he is the curator and owner of one of the biggest collections of percussion instruments from all over the world.

Many leading composers have composed for Gert Mortensen, including Per Nørgård, Poul Ruders, Svend David-Sandström, Askeell Masson and Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen, and his recordings can be found on many labels, including *Deutsche Grammophon*, *BIS*, *Dacapo* and *OUR Recordings*.





## LARS HANNIBAL

Lars Hannibal first picked up a guitar as a teenager back in the 60s, at which time he developed his chops on folk and rock music. After discovering classical music he studied as a guitarist at *The Royal Academy of Music* in Aarhus, Denmark and in the Haag, Holland as a lutenist. During his studies, he continued to play in various bands, for which he would always also compose music. In 1980 he formed with violinist Kim Sjøgren *Duo Concertante* - in the following many years they recorded 10 albums for *EMI* and performed 1000 concerts in various countries, introducing a more informal concert form at the time. Since 1992 he has played in a duo with Michala Petri, with whom he has toured and still tours the world, having played more than 2000 concerts and recorded 8 albums, of which their *Kreisler Inspirations* for *BMG* received the German *ECHO Klassik Award*.

Lars Hannibal's fascination with other genres led to many unconventional collaborations over the years, including *Birth of a Quartet* with Nordic jazz patriarch Palle Mikkelborg, Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen and Kim Sjøgren, and tours with jazz violinist Svend Asmussen.

Lars Hannibal taught for many years at the *Academy for Social Workers* and the *Royal Conservatory of Music*, both in Aarhus, Denmark. From 2008 - 2010 he served as curator for the Danish cultural program at *EXPO 2010* in Shanghai, and he is honorary member of the *Danish Soloist Union*.



Recorded live May 24 2022 in Koncertkirken in Copenhagen.

Producer, recording & balance engineer: Preben Iwan

Editing, mix and mastering: Preben Iwan

Recording assistance: Stefan S e Iwan and Mette Due

Executive producer: Lars Hannibal

Cover notes: Lars Hannibal, translation Joshua Cheek

Artwork and cover design: CEZBP/OUR Recordings

Photos and Video: Julie Malmstr m Media

Recorded in the DXD audio format (Digital eXtreme Definition, 352.8 kHz/32bit). Pyramix DAW system with Horus preamps/converters. Monitored on B&W 802D Nautilus Diamond speakers.

Main microphones: 5x DPA 4006-TL, Guitar 2x Neumann U89, Flutes: 1x DPA 4006 & Sennheiser MKH40, Vocal 1x DPA 4011, Percussion: 2x DPA 4006TL, 2x DPA 4015-TL, 2x DPA 4011 & Royer SF24.



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The songs are composed with generous support from *Edition Borup-Jørgensen* and are dedicated to Elisabet Selin.

YouTube video from the recordings:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=srAilvMNNsU&t=37s>

