



CAT. NO 9.70861 | UPC: 730099786119
Carl Nielsen: Clarinet Concerto op. 57 (1928) (Live recording)

01	Allegretto un poco, Adagio	8.24
02	Poco Adagio	4.44
03	Allegretto non troppo	6.58
04	Allegro vivace	4.17
	Total	24.23



About the concerto

Carl Nielsen's (1865–1931) *Clarinet Concerto op. 57* (1928) is one of those works in which the composer presents the piece as a narrative, and the narrative conveys an image of the clarinet's character and personality expressed through music. The orchestra is reduced to the two protagonists, clarinet and snare drum, accompanied only by strings, two horns and two bassoons. The clarinet appears in the piece as a 'musical persona', much like a character in a play and must convey the experience of going through the world like a character in a drama, experiencing things around it and responding to them. As in a chamber play, it is the mutual reactions and relationships between the characters that drive the action forward. The instruments, Carl Nielsen writes in a letter to his daughter, are treated as individuals, and it is the clarinet that invents the motifs that are brought into play. The piece showcases Carl Nielsen in his mature years and at the height of his creative powers, composing directly for the unique sound and character of each individual instrument, and the musician's task is to let the instrument appear as the creative force from which the musical ideas originate.

In an interview, Carl Nielsen said that the clarinet 'can be warm and downright hysterical at the same time, mild as balm or screeching like a tramcar on poorly greased rails'. However, in a letter written the day after completing the work, he also emphasized that he had taken great pains with this piece, 'striving in particular for clarity and rigour, also in the instrumentation'. The latter is eminently evident in this performance. The piece is played with a springy lightness, poetic and elegiac at the same time, so that everything appears clear and musically justified. Jonas

Frølund, Adam Fischer and DUO fully realize Nielsen's intentions in writing for a smaller orchestra, the work takes on a chamber music character and appears completely clear and lucid. © Michael Fjeldsøe, 2025

Programme notes as they appeared in the concert programme

Nielsen's *Clarinet Concerto* was composed in 1928, when the sixty-three-year-old composer had by no means lost his appetite for innovation. In a 1925 interview, he recalled how he and his son-in-law, the violinist Emil Telmányi, had amused themselves by playing with the protective wrapping around a painting he had received. The cracking sounds, he said, led him to the seemingly banal but in truth radical realization that "Music is Sound."

The famous duet between clarinet and snare drum in the concerto embodies this insight: music need not rely solely on fixed pitches and traditional techniques, it may also unfold as a narrative in vivid, characterful sound. Of the clarinet, Nielsen remarked that it "can be at once warm-hearted and deeply hysterical, soothing as balm and shrieking like a tram on badly greased tracks."

Across the concerto's four continuous movements, the opening theme, eight bars long, returns in diverse guises, providing the unifying thread that leads to the conclusion. As Nielsen wrote to his daughter, "*the Clarinet invents a light and almost folksy-childlike motif (as if by chance), and when the other instruments hear it, they hurl themselves at it and, in a vehement yet joyful tutti, express their delight: 'this is something we understand.' But it does not end in this world; it is only a 'social episode.'*" Daniel Mortensen



FOTO: BIRGIT TENGBERG

Danish clarinetist Jonas Frølund

has quickly established himself as one of the most distinctive voices of his generation. His studies began 2012-15 at Sankt Annæ MGK under John Kruse, continued 2015-17 at the Royal Danish Academy of Music with Lee Morgan, and culminated at the Conservatoire national supérieur de musique et de danse de Paris 2017-22, where he studied with Philippe Berrod and Pascal Moraguès.

Frølund's artistry has been recognized with numerous awards, including the Artist Prize from the Danish Association of Music Critics in 2021, a distinction at the Prague Spring International Music Competition in 2022, the Danish Composers' Association's Fair Practice Award in 2023, the Rødovre Music Prize in 2024.

His career already spans an impressive international scope. He has appeared as soloist with the Orchestre de Douai 2025, performed at the George Enescu Festival 2023, 2025 and the Pablo Casals Festival 2023, and served as guest principal clarinet at the Royal Opera House in London 2024. In 2023 he was also featured in BBC Radio 3's *Artist's Choice*, and the same year as *Someone to Watch* in Gramophone.

At home in Denmark, Frølund is solo clarinetist and chairman of the association of musicians and shareholders of the Danish Chamber Orchestra. He is also a founding member of the wind quintet V Coloris and a sought-after chamber musician, collaborating with ensembles such as the Danish String Quartet, Trio con Brio Copenhagen, and Quatuor Diotima. His artistic partnerships extend to leading composers including Hans Abrahamsen, Bent Sørensen, Poul Ruders, Rune Glerup, and Elena Firsova.

Frølund's discography reflects both his versatility and commitment to new music. Recent and upcoming releases include *Carl Nielsen's Clarinet Concerto* (OUR Recordings, live 2025), *Rune Glerup's Clarinet Quintet* (Dacapo, 2025), *Love and Loss* (OUR Recordings, 2025), *Fragmenter af en dans* (Ö Records, 2024), *SOLO ALONE AND MORE* (OUR Recordings, 2023) and *Poul Ruders: Throne and Clarinet Quintet with Rudersdal Chamber Players* (OUR Recordings, 2022)

Equally committed to artistic entrepreneurship, he has initiated projects such as a concert series including several outreach concerts around Bent Sørensen's *Clarinet Quintet* written for Jonas and Nightingale String Quartet, the festive "YAY! Yet Another Year" New Year's concerts and the *5C Concerts* series with V Coloris, as well as *Katten og Tønden*, a Shrovetide performance for children and adults alike.

At the heart of Frølund's work lies a clear vision: to share his passion for music in a way that leaves a lasting impression, to nurture the community that arises around musical performance, to uphold and renew the tradition of composition and notation, and to dissolve boundaries between genres, highlighting instead the kinship that unites different kinds of music.



Hungarian-born Adam Fischer (b. 1949)

studied at the *Budapest Conservatory* and continued his training in Vienna. He is a highly sought-after conductor in both opera and symphonic repertoire and has collaborated with many of the world's leading opera houses and concert halls.

In 2019 he received the international Wolf Prize, was named *Conductor of the Year* by Britain's *Presto Classical* and won an *Orchestral Award* at the BBC Music Magazine Awards for his recording of Mahler's *Symphony No. 1* with the *Düsseldorf Symphony Orchestra*.

In 2022 he was honored with the prestigious *Lifetime Achievement Award* at the *International Classical Music Awards (ICMA)*, and in February 2025 he received *Special Achievement Awards* from the ICMA: one for his "sustained social and humanitarian commitment and his innovative programming," and one for his recent Schubert–Dvořák album with the *Düsseldorf Symphony Orchestra*; and another for his recordings of Haydn's late symphonies with the *Danish Chamber Orchestra*.

In 2006 he founded the *Wagner Days* in Budapest festival, which under his artistic leadership has developed into a world-class event, described by *The New York Times* as "Bayreuth on the Danube."



The Danish Chamber Orchestra

has been the country's only musician-owned orchestra since 2015, though its roots reach back 86 years to its founding in 1939 as the *Danish National Radio Light Orchestra*.

Through its collaboration with Chief Conductor Adam Fischer, the orchestra has gained broad international recognition while also maintaining a sharply defined profile in popular music.

The *Danish Chamber Orchestra* connects Denmark through great musical experiences, insists on the social relevance of music, and is deeply committed to talent development, outreach, and the creation of new concert formats. A special priority is placed on engaging children and young people, and the orchestra works with municipalities across the country to ensure that music reaches audiences of all generations.

Musicians

1. Violin (9)

Erik Heide (Concert master), Jon Gjesme, Peter Mezö, Anne Skærbæk, Marianne Sørensen, Jacob Agerskov Buur, Cecilie Emtoft, Madara Petersone, Clara Glasdam

2. Violin (7)

Christine Enevold, Josefine Dalsgaard, Michala Mansa, Rebecka Freij, Liisi Kedik, Kristine Algot Sørensen, Arne Balk-Møller

Viola (5)

Monika Mikalajunaite, Mina Fred, Mette Thykier, Jevgenija Frolova, Malin William-Olsson

Cello (4)

Mihai Fagarasan, Dorothea Wolff, Jan Harald Halvorsen, Anne Sofie Gørvild

Bass (3)

Meherban Gillet, Yonas Ben Hamadou, Ida Rostrup

Bassoon (2)

Ignas Mazvila, Lucia Amerise

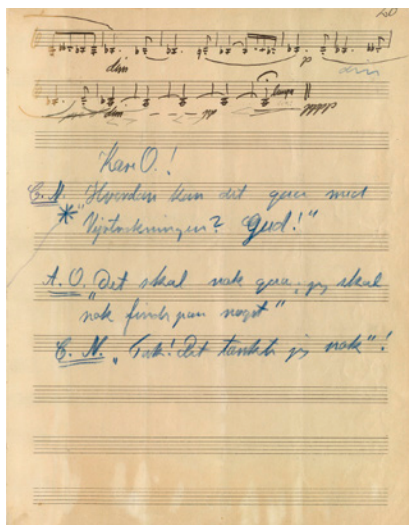
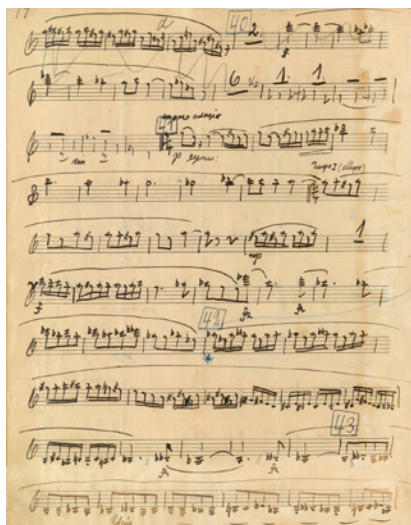
Horn (2)

Sandor Berki, Niklas Kallsøy Mouritsen

Snare drum: Jakob Weber

Presence of history

Connoisseurs will know that Carl Nielsen wrote his Clarinet Concerto for Aage Oxenvad (1884-1944), the solo clarinetist of the Royal Danish Orchestra. A clarinet reed that used to belong to Aage Oxenvad now belongs to Jonas Frølund after having been in the possession of first Palle Neehammer, one of Aage Oxenvad's colleagues, and then Jørgen Sandberg, former clarinetist in the Band of The Royal Life Guard. On the handwritten score which Carl Nielsen sent to Aage Oxenvad, Nielsen asks whether it would be possible to take a very long breath in a certain passage, and Oxenvad writes back that a solution could surely be found. Unfortunately no recording of Oxenvad performing the concerto exists but he was totally right about this and Jonas Frølund plays the passage in one breath.



Recorded in Tivoli Garden Concert Hall,
Copenhagen July 5, 2025

Recording technician:
Peter Bo Nielsen, Danish National Radio, DR

Producer:
Gorm Larsen, Danish National Radio, DR

Master:
Daniel Davidsen

Executive producer:
Lars Hannibal

Artwork:
Toke Bjørneboe

Released with generous support from Carl Nielsen and Anne-Marie Carl
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Thank you to Jakob Marstrand DR/P2 for making it possible to release this
live recording

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