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CARL NIELSEN STUDIES

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Edited by David Fanning and Michael Fjeldsøe

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life and music of Nielsen in a context of music and cultural history. The Centre also aims to communicate Nielsen's musical and cultural significance Carl Nielsen through publications, exhibitions and other outreach activities. Starting with the next issue, *Carl Nielsen Studies* will be based at the Centre.

The Carl Nielsen Centre fulfils a task that is currently not being performed anywhere else in Denmark: a comprehensive, unifying and permanent undertaking of research and dissemination of Nielsen's work and significance, which at the same time contributes to the development of musicological research nationally and internationally. With its extensive collection, two Carl Nielsen museums and a research environment of the highest international standard across the arts, including research centres dedicated to Carl Nielsen, Anne Marie Carl-Nielsen and Hans Christian Andersen, Museum Odense is ideally equipped to take on this responsibility.

Research into Hans Christian Andersen is deeply rooted at Museum Odense, and the museum's researchers collaborate with researchers from the University of Southern Denmark at the Hans Christian Andersen Centre. In the spring of 2025, Museum Odense established the Anne Marie Carl-Nielsen Centre, which currently has three researchers and is headed by Emilie Boe Bierlich. This also means that Anne Marie Carl-Nielsen is likely to receive the recognition in art history and the independent

research attention she is entitled to. In June 2025, Museum Odense opened a highly acclaimed permanent exhibition of her works.

The Carl Nielsen Museum also reopened in 2023 in a completely redesigned form, which was extremely well received. The exhibition aims to present the 'whole Carl Nielsen' through sound and music. The Carl Nielsen Centre draws on these new exhibitions. The Centre is currently developing a strategy, but it has already been decided that collecting, working with, and making available new sources will continue to be a core task, as will investigating and communicating Nielsen's creativity and music in new ways. The opening conference will present an initial idea of what future Nielsen research might entail.

*Michael Fjeldsøe*

### **The Honorary Studio Apartment in Frederiksholms Kanal**

When the young Anne Marie Brodersen visited Copenhagen for the first time, in 1882, she immediately went to Frederiksholms Kanal 28A, hoping that the sculptor and professor Vilhelm Bissen would take her as his pupil. He had taken over and carried on his father Herman Wilhelm Bissen's workshop and studio residence after the latter's death in 1868. He did not comply with Anne Marie's wish, however, answering that 'he did not take women, as it never went far with them.

They married.<sup>1</sup> She took no notice of this refusal but continued to find other possibilities. Finally, she became a pupil of the sculptor August Vilhelm Saabye in Copenhagen.

At that time nobody could know that in 1915 – 33 years later – Anne Marie would move in as a sculptress to exactly this honorary studio residence in Frederiksholms Kanal 28A with her composer husband Carl Nielsen, their three grown-up children and their Funen housekeeper, Maren Hansen. She may have been proud that she succeeded in doing so. On top of that, in 1908 she had become the first woman artist to receive an official commission for an equestrian monument of King Christian IX.

Artistically, both Carl Nielsen and Anne Marie Carl-Nielsen were at the height of their careers in these years, and the residence in Frederiksholms Kanal was the most spacious and spectacular apartment they ever lived in. A lot of life and art unfolded between these walls, and it became the last home for both artists.

The long yellow building alongside the canal, with its big, barred windows and a beautiful view of the small boats in the water, was part of the Civil Service Storage Yard in Copenhagen (Fig. 1). It was built around 1770 on Frederiksholm, near the old part of the town and Slotsholmen with the Christiansborg castle; a

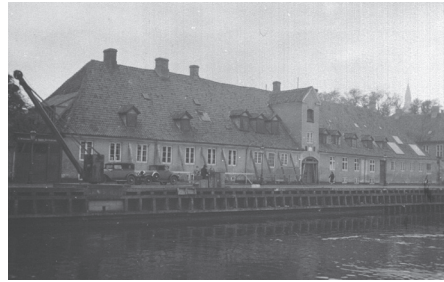


Fig. 1. The Civil Service Storage Yard in Frederiksholms Kanal. The studio residence stretched from the end of the house to the left up to the gateway in the middle of the building. Photo: The Royal Library, unknown photographer, © Museum Odense. The photograph is undated, but the cars seem to be from around the late 1920s.

group of small islets, which at the end of the seventeenth century was filled in and included in the city. From the residence there was also a beautiful view of Christian IV's brewery with its enormous red roof.<sup>2</sup> This large building is now a museum for royal sculptures from different castles, gardens and urban spaces.

The honorary studio residence housed several prominent sculptors, who became professors at The Royal Academy of Arts – all of whom were commissioned to undertake major official tasks: Johannes Wiedewelt, Nicolai Dajon, Herman Ernst Freund, Herman Vilhelm Bissen and Vilhelm Bissen.

1 Anne Marie Telmányi, *Mit barndomshjem. Erindringer om Anne Marie og Carl Nielsen skrevet af deres datter*, Copenhagen 1965, 13

2 The building called Tøjhuset (the armoury), which Anne Marie Telmányi mentions in her memoirs (p. 105), is behind Christian IV's brewery and cannot be seen from the windows.

Amongst them, Freund was the most important for the residence, as he decorated several rooms in beautiful Pompeian style. Freund was a pupil of Bertel Thorvaldsen in Rome. His extensive decoration of the residence in Copenhagen was made as a token of love for his wife and with inspiration from his visits to Pompeii and Herculaneum. As decorations in the typical ochre and red colours, he applied small motives from Roman mythology (after Wilhelm Johann Karl Zahn's reproductions), and he made new arrangements of the rooms, and not least imaginatively designed furniture' in applewood and mahogany. For many reasons, the interior decoration became Freund's life work.

The interior decoration was part of the significant Italian inspiration on Danish culture in the early 19th century, but Freund's decorations were rather early: Thorvaldsen's Museum, which was decorated in a similar style, opened in 1848, whereas Freund died 1840. The furniture and several of the painted wall pieces were later moved around or sold to the Danish Design Museum and to Frederiksborg. But many of the paintings remained an important part of the residence in Frederiksholms Kanal.

They were visible in the Nielsen family's home, as may be seen on several photos and paintings from the time, and they appreciated them: 'Everything in this old house was beautiful, doors, wainscots, small inserted Pompeian compositions, and the door frames into

the big living room were nicely decorated with ivy leaves...' (Fig. 2).<sup>3</sup>

When the Nielsen family moved into the residence in 1915, after a decade of occupation by two generations of the Bissen family, the old building was in a very bad condition, with water in the basement, rats, and so on. Therefore they carried out several big restorations in the beginning and once again later. Solid stoves were installed, in 1919 they got electric light, and from 1921 restorations of the roof, attics, toilets, down-spouts, and a water pump in the basement were going on; also the bulwark and the outer walls needed major restoration.

The Nielsen family now had a big home in the centre of Copenhagen, with a very low monthly rent of 600 kroner. The telephone was situated in the entrance. The three big rooms ensuite, alongside the canal, were the living room, dining room and at the end Carl Nielsen's music room with a grand piano and a big desk with many books and scores (Fig. 3).

With a view onto a lovely little patio (Fig. 4) in the back was the kitchen, a bedroom for the composer and a larger one for his wife. In the end and at a lower level on the ground there were two huge studios for the sculptress. On the first floor were bedrooms for the children and the housekeeper, Maren, and yet another studio (for a schematic of the rooms layout, see Fig. 7).

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3 Anne Marie Telmányi: *Mit barndomshjem*, 105



Fig. 2. Anne Marie Telmányi: *Interior from Frederiksholms Kanal*, ca. 1917, oil on canvas, the Carl Nielsen Museum, © Museum Odense.

The large residence in the centre of Copenhagen also gave room for many interesting guests. The Niensens' daughter Anne Marie (Søs) Telmányi remembered how friends and acquaintances frequently came to the house and engaged in intellectual discussions about art and life: 'These conversations could interest

them so much, that they remained sitting hour after hour and Maren had to be sent into town. Mother could come up from the studio around 4–5 o'clock, and suddenly tell Maren "Well, now we will be ten for dinner at 6 o'clock."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Anne Marie Telmányi: *Mit barndomshjem*, 104



Fig 3. Carl Nielsen's music room, Frederiksholms Kanal. Photo: Ulf Nilsen, 1945, Carl Nielsen Museet, © Museum Odense.

Life in Frederiksholms Kanal did not directly influence Carl Nielsen's musical style, but he enjoyed being near to several important institutions. Just behind the residence in a more modern part of Copenhagen was Tivoli and nearby in a new building housing the Music Conservatoire.

As a composer he just carried on writing on his fourth symphony, *The Inextinguishable*, which had its first performance in 1916. During the years before, he had finished a songbook for Johan Borups Højskole, located just at the other end of Frederiksholms Kanal. In 1915 he finished *A Score of Danish Songs*, together with Thomas Laub.

Shortly after their moving in, Carl Nielsen's 50th birthday was celebrated with a table set up in the studio for 70 guests. The party was not a real success, as it also revealed the couple's severe matrimonial crisis, that was culminating just around that time.<sup>5</sup>

We know that when Anne Marie Carl-Nielsen applied for the honorary residence in 1914, she was considering a divorce because of her husband's infidelity.<sup>6</sup> Now that she had set up house for herself and economically was quite well off, she could ask for a separation much

<sup>5</sup> See CNB V.

<sup>6</sup> Anne Christiansen, *Anne Marie Carl-Nielsen født Brodersen*, Odense Bys Museer 2013, 235ff.



Fig. 4. From the magazine *Women of the Time*: The garden in Frederiksholms Kanal 28A. From the left Anne Marie (Søs), Carl Nielsen and Anne Marie Carl-Nielsen; at the window Irmelin. Approx. 1917, © The Carl Nielsen Museum, Museum Odense.

more easily. In this respect, she was very tough and courageous for her time, as it was quite uncommon for a woman to ask for a divorce.

Like Carl Nielsen, she was dedicated to her work. For years she worked on the big equestrian monument of King Christian IX. It was unveiled at the entrance to the inner yard of Christiansborg Castle in 1927. She also made a great many other sculptures on various scales and remained working almost until her death in 1945. In 1916, when the Danish Women Artists' Association was founded, she became a member of the board.

During the years of separation, Carl Nielsen didn't really establish his own apartment but mostly stayed with friends in and outside Copenhagen, frequently dropping by the residence in Frederiksholms Kanal. In the countryside he often visited the estates of Damgaard and Fuglsang or Carl Johan Michaelsen's summerhouse in Tibberup, for extended periods.<sup>7</sup> When he was conducting in Gothenburg, he stayed at a hotel or at the home of Herman and Lisa Mannheimer. In 1918 he bought a tiny summerhouse

<sup>7</sup> CNB VI, 9.



Fig. 5. Family photo from the garden on the composer's 60th birthday. From left to right: Irmelin Eggert Møller, Anne Marie Carl-Nielsen, Eggert Møller, Carl Nielsen wearing one of his birthday presents: a silk dressing-gown, Hans Børge Nielsen, Anne Marie Telmányi, the housekeeper Maren, and Emil Telmányi. The day ended with a festival concert in Tivoli and a torchlight procession. Photo: Thorvald Larsen, The Royal Library, Copenhagen, © Museum Odense.

in Skagen named *Finis terræ*, hoping that Anne Marie would visit him there.<sup>8</sup>

In 1922 Carl Nielsen had a serious heart attack, which led to a long-term rest cure and recurrent illness for the rest of his life. Now Anne Marie Carl-Nielsen forgave her husband, seeing how much he missed her. Nielsen moved into his old rooms in Frederiksholms Kanal, and the married couple found each other again.

In these years the composer grew increasingly famous. His 60th birthday was

the occasion for a huge celebration, which started at his home and ended with a concert in Tivoli and a torchlight procession (Fig. 5). Every day Nielsen received visitors, orders and inquiries at home, besides being the director of the Musikforeningen from 1915–27 and having leading posts at the Music Conservatoire and the Composers' Society. It was obviously too much for him, which is why he often spent time resting and composing outside Copenhagen at Damgaard, Fuglsang or his summer residence in Skagen.

Amongst the children, Anne Marie Telmányi was the most connected to the

<sup>8</sup> CNB VI, 17 and letter CNB 6:125.

residence. She lived and worked there as a painter for several periods, and she described the rooms in her memories and in several paintings. After her father died on 3 October 1931, Telmányi recalled her sorrow at the loss of her father. The residence in Frederiksholms Kanal became so quiet. No young musicians rang the doorbell anymore, Maren became silent, and Anne Marie Carl-Nielsen became more solitary, withdrawn and absorbed in her work.<sup>9</sup> The sculptress lived there for another fourteen years. In the studio she made two monuments – *The Little Flautist* and *Musikkens Genius* – in memory of her husband.<sup>10</sup> Figure 6 shows her at work on *Musikkens Genius* in her Frederiksholms Kanal studio. After her death in 1945, Anne Marie Telmányi donated a great deal of her parent's estate to Odense Bys Museer.<sup>11</sup> Figure 7 shows her plan sketches for the two floors of the Frederiksholms Kanal as she knew it.

Nowadays the whole building and the studio residence in Frederiksholms Kanal are carefully preserved and kept in repair, not at least because of the beautiful decorations of the rooms by H.E. Freund. The residence is still rented out as a private home. Due to its special authentic atmosphere and history, it has been suggested more than once that it

could become a beautiful artist home museum for both Carl Nielsen and Anne Marie Carl-Nielsen, together with the Freund decorations and possibilities for special exhibitions of other former occupiers of the honorary studio residence. Indeed, a wonderful idea.

Eva Hvidt

<sup>9</sup> Anne Marie Telmányi, *Mit barndomshjem*, 187.

<sup>10</sup> *Musikkens Genius* is situated on Grønningen, Store Kongensgade, Copenhagen, and *The Little Flautist* near Carl Nielsen's childhood home in Nørre Lyndelse.

<sup>11</sup> Anne Christiansen, *Carl Nielsen-parrets Kunstsamling*, Odense Bys Museer, 2015, 383ff.



*Fig. 6. Anne Marie Carl-Nielsen in the studio during her work on the Carl Nielsen monument Musikkens Genius with an assistant (1938). Unknown photographer, the Carl Nielsen Museum / Museum Odense.*

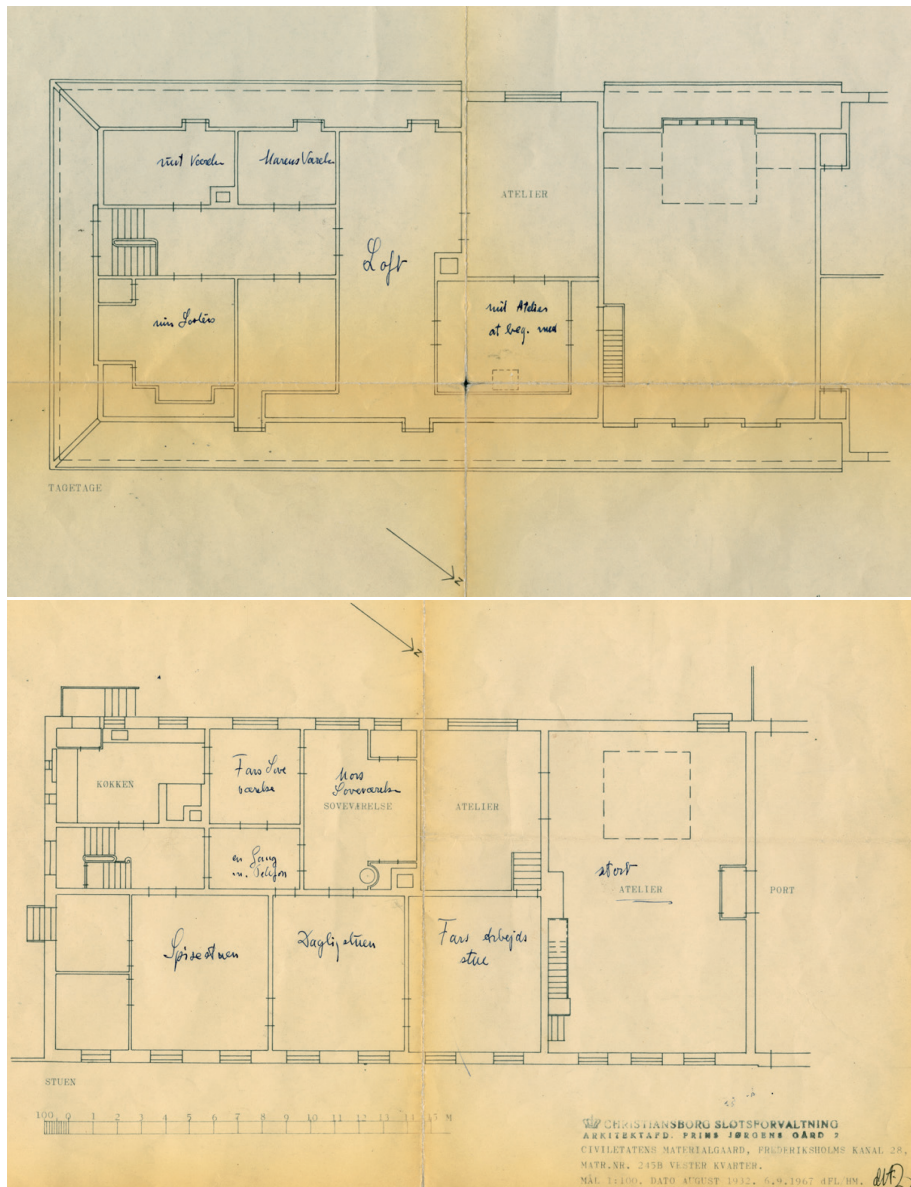


Fig. 7. Plan sketches of the ground floor and first floor in Frederiksholms Kanal 28, with Anne Marie Telmányi's notations of how the rooms were arranged while she and her sister were still living in the residence. Carl Nielsen had his own small bedroom near the kitchen, Anne Marie the big one beside it, while the rest of the family had bedrooms on the first floor. In a big room next to the dining room with a view to the canal was the composer's music room, with a grand piano, a large collection of books and a writing-table.