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## C A R L N I E L S E N A N D T I V O L I

By Knud Ketting

When the extremely popular Hans Christian Lumbye (1810-74), after nearly 30 years leading the music at Copenhagen's Tivoli Gardens, decided that the 1872 Tivoli season would be his last, popular opinion demanded that one of his sons, Georg or Carl, should take over his job. They were both musical and had played the violin in their father's orchestra

However, the management of Tivoli wanted to seek the opinion of professional experts. They established a committee of notables, consisting of Johann Peter Emilius Hartmann, Niels W. Gade and Holger Simon Paulli whose job it would be to choose a successor to the ageing Lumbye. The committee appointed Balduin Dahl as the new music director, and he had to suffer the indignity of being booed and hissed at his first appearance as conductor on 11th May 1873.

Nevertheless, he proved to be the right choice, even though people secretly smiled at his exaggerated gestures, his large, starched shirt-front and above all his highly characteristic, sharply pointed moustache. No one could ever claim that Dahl did not know about Tivoli and the Gardens' musical traditions. As a youth he had played bass drum in the Pantomime Theatre orchestra which his father conducted, and since 1864 he had been leader of the brass band in the marquee on the so-called bazaar-lawn.<sup>1</sup>

The Concert Hall orchestra had a sizeable weekly menu: three one-hour concerts every single night of the season, from the beginning of May until mid-September, at 7.30, 9.00 and 10.30pm, except for Sundays where it would be four concerts starting at 7.00. For all this there would be a total of eight hours of rehearsal per week, meaning that most of the music would have had to be played without any rehearsal at all.

The conductor would be the same every night. In fact until about 1920 the conductor himself was responsible for the orchestra's personnel and salaries. He was

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1 On Dahl's appointment to Tivoli, see, for example, Kaj Aage Bruun's section on music in *Tivoli Minder samlet af Ernst Mentze og Harald H. Lund* [Memories of Tivoli collected by Ernst Mentze and Harald H. Lund], Copenhagen 1943, 120-122, or Carl Muusmann's chapter on outdoor entertainments in Julius Clausen and Torben Krogh (eds.), *Danmark i Fest og Glæde* [Denmark Celebrating], 5 (1935), 129.

hired along with the orchestra, as it were, which, however, proved unsustainable once the musicians had organised themselves into the Copenhagen Orchestral Society (*Københavns Orkesterforening*) and begun to make professional demands.

So when the young Carl Nielsen, having finished his studies as a violinist at the Conservatoire in Copenhagen, began playing more or less regularly in the concert hall orchestra at the beginning of 1886,<sup>2</sup> it was Balduin Dahl who was on the podium every evening. But it could also happen that composers were permitted to conduct their own music. Only one did so with any regularity, namely Emil Hartmann (1836-98), son of the aged J. P. E. Hartmann, who for many years had two or three one-hour concerts with his own music – new works as well as old – as a rule towards the end of the season. This lasted right up to his death.

### The Composer's Debut

Already in Lumbye's time it had become a tradition some way into the season, when the orchestra was properly played in, to hold a weekly symphonic concert. This was the middle Saturday session, when the many short, popular numbers gave place to large works, often by the Viennese Classics.

Thus, when Nielsen succeeded in persuading Dahl to programme his newly composed *Andante tranquillo e Scherzo* for strings, he shared the bill with Haydn's Symphony No. 102. The date was Saturday 17th September 1887, and this was Nielsen's official debut as a composer. He himself played the violin in the orchestra. He also got his first reviews. They could hardly be called comprehensive, but they must still have made him happy. *Berlingske Tidende* called the work 'a really engaging work, which bears witness to good inventive gifts and tasteful instrumentation. It was received with unreserved applause, and the Scherzo was played da capo.'<sup>3</sup> The opinion of *Nationaltidende* was more or less the same: 'Yesterday evening in the Concert Hall, Haydn's Symphony in B flat was preceded by an Andante tranquillo and Scherzo by the young musician Carl Nielsen, who himself took part in the performance. This piece of music, which was particularly well orchestrated and competently played throughout, was warmly applauded, and the Scherzo had to be repeated.'<sup>4</sup>

2 It is not possible to discover exactly how often Nielsen played in the orchestra, in which he presumably deputised throughout his student years. The composer first began to keep a diary when, shortly after having won a place in the Royal Theatre Orchestra in 1889, he took sabbatical leave and travelled abroad the following year, and there do not seem to be systematic records of Tivoli personnel from this time in the archives, since, as mentioned, it was not Tivoli but the chief conductor who personally engaged the musicians. See also note 16, however.

3 *Berlingske Tidende* 19.9.1887. Reviews generally came out the day after a concert; but at this time *Berlingske Tidende* did not appear on Sundays.

4 *Nationaltidende* 18.9.1887.

If a new piece proved to be successful at Tivoli it would often be repeated a few days later. The conductor normally reckoned on a fairly rapid turnover of repertoire; so in this case he could take advantage of having something that was both new yet rehearsed. But since September 17 was the penultimate evening of that season, there was no possibility of immediately repeating the piece. And for the following season Nielsen had another new work ready which he preferred Dahl to conduct. So the *Andante tranquillo e Scherzo* was not performed again – not at Tivoli, and not anywhere else during Nielsen's lifetime.<sup>5</sup>

## Opus 1

The new piece that the young Nielsen presented to Dahl was also for strings, but this time labelled as his official Opus 1. When the orchestra premiered it on Saturday 8th September 1888, it was more than a week after the original planned date of 31<sup>st</sup> August, because Dahl had to programme instead three pieces by the long-since forgotten American composer Arthur Bird (1856-1923), who was then living in Berlin.<sup>6</sup>

Dahl conducted the *Suite for Strings* and virtually dragged Nielsen from his place among the violins in order to receive the applause. The reviews were once again positive, though not all equally well informed. *Avisen* commented, amongst other things:

The young man obviously has much in his musical heart that he wants to say, and what he told us this Saturday was presented in a pleasing, concise form, modest and engaging, with fine part-writing and beautiful fullness of sound, which reveals a precise and expert ear for string writing. There is every reason to congratulate the young man on this (so far as we know) public debut. The Suite was a definite success; the middle movement had to be played da capo,<sup>7</sup> and after the last one the composer, whose extreme youth obviously appealed to people, was called back three times. This applause was well earned, and we hope that it will inspire Mr. Nielsen to renew his efforts to bring his unmistakable talent to fruition. The performance of the Suite was superb, and Mr. Dahl

5 On other aspects of the work and its fate, see Peter Hauge's editorial introduction in *Carl Nielsen, Works*, vol. II/ 7, xi-xiii.

6 *Scène orientale* and *Caprice oriental*, both for flute and orchestra, and Bird's First Symphony in A. All three were new for Tivoli, and the Symphony was brand-new, having been premiered in Breslau just two weeks before. The pieces for flute and orchestra were so well received that Dahl programmed them again on 18<sup>th</sup> September, with the same soloist, the Royal Theatre musician, Viggo Andersen.

7 Unlike nowadays it was the custom at that time to clap between movements, and the conductor therefore knew which movement(s) of a given composition the public had particularly liked.

has earned our warm appreciation for taking the young generation under his wing; unfortunately there are so few places in this country where they can take refuge.<sup>8</sup>

Not all the newspapers found the concert worth discussing. The day after it, *Aftenbladet* certainly contained an article about Dahl. But it had nothing to do with music:

Walking along Strøget [the main shopping street in central Copenhagen], you cannot avoid meeting several times a day a one-horse carriage driven by a coachman in yellow frock coat. This is music director B. Dahl from Tivoli using haulage contractor Levin's carriage as his practice tool. Several times D. has had to pay for his lack of skill as a driver with broken carriage poles etc, because he didn't know that a driver's first duty is to keep to the lines, so that the horse doesn't fall ... During the day you might suppose that the reason for speeding would be fear of arriving too late at Tivoli; but he's in a worse hurry on his way home in the evening. If these lines alert the police to the irresponsible driving of this unskilful coachman before there are any accidents, it will please many, including your respectful X.<sup>9</sup>

Later the same year, on 16<sup>th</sup> October, Nielsen himself conducted his *Suite for Strings* at the Odense Music Society (Odense Musikforening), and in the following Tivoli season Dahl obviously considered that the young violinist-composer was also mature enough to conduct his colleagues in the Tivoli Orchestra. This took place on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> May 1889, and for that occasion Nielsen revised the last movement, which was now preceded by the slow introduction we know today. Again the work was a success. And this time there was a chance to play it again the following Sunday, again with the composer conducting. But this was no special distinction for Nielsen. At both concerts he shared the bill with his composer colleagues Gustav Helsted (*Valse lente* and *Adagio* and *Romance* for Violin), Robert Henriques (*Aquarelles*) and Louis Glass (*Tarantelle*), who also conducted their music.

Given how popular and how often played the *Suite for Strings* is nowadays, we might well wonder why it did not become a favourite Tivoli piece. But after 1889 it was not played again there until 1914, then in 1915 for Nielsen's fiftieth birthday, and then again only ten years later for his sixtieth birthday in 1925. And that is all during his lifetime. And the *Suite for Strings* represents the last occasion Nielsen used Tivoli as a platform for his latest work.

8 *Avisen* 10.9.1888. On the reception as a whole and other circumstances surrounding the suite, see Peter Hauge, *op. cit.* xiii-xviii

9 *Aftenbladet* 9.9.1888.

### A 'Real' Orchestral Work

The next interesting Tivoli season in connection with Nielsen is 1892, when his new composition, a Romance for Violin and Orchestra, was performed three times (Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> May, repeated on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> May and Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> June). Dahl was again the conductor. Who the soloist was we do not know for sure. But from the work's later history at Tivoli it is safe to assume that it was the then leader of the orchestra.

In Nielsen's official work-list there is no such thing as a Romance for Violin and Orchestra. The explanation is that the orchestration was not Nielsen's own and that the work was not even originally for violin but for oboe – namely the Romance from the two Fantasy Pieces for Oboe and Piano, Op. 2, here orchestrated by the Bohemian-born violinist-composer Hans Sitt (1850-1922), who was attached to the Leipzig office of Nielsen's publishers, Wilhelm Hansen, and whom we may suppose Nielsen met during his 1891 visit to Leipzig.<sup>10</sup>

The Romance proved to be rather popular at Tivoli, and from 1923 when Svend Christian Felumb, the oboist at the première of the Wind Quintet in 1922, became principal oboist of the Tivoli Orchestra, it was also done with oboe soloist. It might almost be said that Sitt's orchestral arrangement was made more or less with Tivoli in mind, since it was hardly ever played anywhere else, either in Nielsen's lifetime or since.

### A Popular Success

As the summary in the appendix to this essay clearly shows, things went slowly at first for Nielsen in terms of the Tivoli repertoire. Nevertheless in the course of his life he ran up a total of 859 performances there, which is to say roughly a quarter of all the Nielsen performances we know of.

He himself only took part in a few of them. But he attended a good many others, especially when the larger works were put on, for example symphonies, for which he would often break off his summer residence away from Copenhagen in order to be present.

The most prominent item in the repertoire summary reflects the popular success Nielsen had together with Holger Drachmann with the song *Du danske Mand* (You Danish man). In 1906 this went into the summer vaudeville that played every year in Glassalen (the Glass Hall). This hall had been Tivoli's concert hall until 1902, when it was replaced by a new larger hall in Moorish style. It had no fewer than ca.1200 seats and was also the first concert hall in Tivoli where food and drink were not served.

*Sommerrejsen* (The Summer Journey), as this show was called, really caught on and was performed no fewer than 69 times. Drachmann and Nielsen's song, which

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<sup>10</sup> The Romance, in Sitt's orchestral arrangement, was printed and published that year by Wilhelm Hansen.

was sung in the show by the actor Henry Seemann, was added to The Summer Journey, which otherwise had text by Anton Melbye and music by Olfert Jespersen.<sup>11</sup> The popularity of the song would prove long-lasting. It was sung all over Denmark, and at Tivoli it cropped up in different arrangements a further 23 times over the years. All in all this song became Nielsen's most popular composition, at least in numerical terms – even more so than *Jens Vejmand* (Jens the Road-mender), the song that is always quoted as his greatest, and at the same his worst paid, success.

### The Symphonic Debut

A full commentary on the statistics of Nielsen performances at Tivoli is beyond the scope of the present article. But there are two obvious questions to be answered. When did Nielsen's symphonies first feature at Tivoli? And when did his music become popular enough to be part of the daily, non-rehearsed standard repertoire?

In 1891 a member of the famous Lumbye dynasty finally succeeded in taking over at Tivoli. Dahl succumbed to heart trouble, and his successor was Georg Lumbye (1843-1922) who, however, did not last long in the post.<sup>12</sup> While the 1897 season was in full swing he had to be replaced by Joachim Andersen and then by Frederik Schnedler-Petersen, both of whom would come to play a role in this story.

The conductor and flautist Joachim Andersen (1847-1909) replaced Lumbye from the beginning of 1898. He had higher artistic ambitions than his predecessors. He was also a significantly better conductor, whose career had taken him to St. Petersburg and Berlin. He became the first to conduct a Nielsen symphony at Tivoli. This was on 10th August 1901, so there was only Nielsen's First Symphony to choose from. Looking at the reviews it is evident that this performance was regarded as an experiment. For example, G. H. K. wrote in *Dannebrog*:

At the tenth symphonic concert last night we heard Carl Nielsen's Symphony in G minor, Opus 7. The main justification for performing this music at the Tivoli Concert Hall would be that it gave the general public the chance to get to know a work by a Danish composer of the younger generation, for the Symphony's intrinsic merits did not warrant it. It is – like the greater part of this composer's output – inaccessible and rugged, often bizarre and far-fetched without being in any way brilliant, although it has to be admitted that is also has some good details. But there is nowhere for the ear to relax into any flowing melodic line. It is one continuous run-up, nothing more. The best move-

11 On Drachmann and Nielsen's involvement in the project, see Torben Meyer & Frede Schandorf Petersen, *Carl Nielsen. Kunstneren og Mennesket* [Carl Nielsen. The Artist and the Man], Copenhagen 1947-1948, vol. 1, 286-7.

12 See, for example, Carl Muusmann in Julius Clausen and Torben Krogh, *op.cit.*, 174.

ment is the Andante, which is the most coherent in this large, unruly composition. It was very well played under the intelligent direction of Joachim Andersen.<sup>13</sup>

Who can blame Andersen for not immediately continuing to experiment with programming Nielsen's symphonies, even though from the following season he had two to choose from? He passed away somewhat unexpectedly, just eight days before the beginning of the 1909 Tivoli season, and his place as chief conductor was taken by the violinist and conductor Frederik Schnedler-Petersen.

### **The Carpenter and his Orchestra**

Schnedler-Petersen, who was soon dubbed by players and public *Snedkeren* (the Carpenter), had studied in the year below Nielsen at the Copenhagen Conservatory, and they had pursued their studies together in Berlin during the winter of 1890-91. They knew each other well, and Nielsen had been the conductor at the concert in Copenhagen in 1905 where Schnedler-Petersen made a final effort to secure a career as soloist, playing the Beethoven and Mendelssohn concertos in the same programme.

Since Schnedler-Petersen came onto the scene so late in 1909, the orchestra's members had already been engaged by Joachim Andersen. Before the following season, however, he ran into trouble with the Copenhagen Orchestral Society, apparently because he did not know the orchestra's custom and practice with regard to the engagement, or rather re-engagement, of the musicians.

According to the musicians and their association/trade union, Schnedler-Petersen should have informed the two musicians he did not want to re-engage in 1910 already at the conclusion of the 1909 season. However, he only did so when the musicians' contracts (which did not contain such a provision) were to be signed in January 1910. This the musicians considered to be too late, and since negotiations did not immediately produce a result, the parties agreed to take the matter to arbitration.

As one who enjoyed the trust of both sides, Nielsen, who at this time was a permanent conductor at the Royal Theatre, was chosen as a member of the arbitration panel. He managed to hold two meetings before the Orchestral Society withdrew its agreement to arbitration and instead threatened to go on strike. This came to nothing, because the matter was settled on 25<sup>th</sup> April by direct discussions between the orchestra, the Orchestral Society and the Tivoli board. Schnedler-Petersen was also present. The musicians had to give way on every point and got nothing out of the conflict other than negative press coverage.<sup>14</sup> On Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> May 1910 Tivoli opened

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<sup>13</sup> *Dannebrog* 11.9.1901.

<sup>14</sup> *Berlingske Tidende* 23.4.1910 and especially *Politiken* covered the story in some detail.

its doors as planned, with both orchestra and conductor at their places in the concert hall. Two days later, in good order and discipline, H. C. Lumbye's centenary was celebrated.<sup>15</sup>

The musicians in Tivoli's Concert Hall orchestra were, though hardly well provided for, still a little better paid than their colleagues who were not so fortunate as to be in the country's only all-year-round orchestra, the Royal Theatre Orchestra (*Det Kongelige Kapel*). While Nielsen himself was playing as a deputy in the Tivoli orchestra, he was paid 4.25 kroner per evening.<sup>16</sup> He played in the group of so-called *secondo* instruments. In 1904 the payment was raised to 6 kroner for the first *primo* violin (leader), 5 kroner for other *primo* instruments and 4.50 kroner for the *secondi*. This fee was still unchanged in 1910. The other orchestra in the pleasure gardens was always slightly worse paid (in 1904, for instance, 4.75 kroner for *primo* instruments and 4.25 kroner for *secondi* in the wind band, the same in 1910, but in addition 5.25 kroner for the first *primo* clarinet, who had also acquired a kind of leader status). But this difference evened out during the war years, so that all the musicians had roughly the same payment, though always according to their status in their respective orchestras.<sup>17</sup>

The First World War brought relatively drastic changes in Danish living conditions (food prices went up by more than 75% and fuel by 175%), and musicians' salaries followed suit (for musicians without solo duties 185 kroner in 1916, 250 kroner in 1918, 450 kroner in 1920 per month, by comparison with a yearly average wage for a worker in these years of, respectively, 127, 195 and 380 kroner, i.e. 69, 78 and 84% of musicians' wages, which does not say much for the work of the Copenhagen Orchestral Society in respect of its effectiveness as a trade union).<sup>18</sup>

### The Carpenter and Nielsen's Symphonies

Frederik Schendler-Petersen took up Nielsen's First Symphony again already during his first Tivoli season (Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> July 1909). And from 1915 and onwards there would hardly be a Tivoli Season when the Carpenter did not programme at least one Nielsen symphony (See, Appendix, pp. 98 ff.).

15 The centenary of his birth actually fell on 2<sup>nd</sup> May, but Tivoli was not open on that day.

16 The amount comes from Nielsen's notebook for the years 1888-90, now in the *Carl Nielsen Archive* in the Royal Library, group I.C.1.

17 These and the following rates of pay are taken from the Copenhagen Orchestral Society's yearly so-called schedule of wages, which in the case of the years cited is retained in *Småtrykssamling* (Collection of Pamphlets and Corporate Publications) in the Royal Library in Copenhagen.

18 Sven Aage Hansen and Ingrid Hansen, 'Sociale brydninger 1914-39' [Social clashes 1914-39], *Dansk Socialhistorie*, 6 (1980), 74 and 177.



There were 21 such performances in all, one conducted by Dahl, one by Nielsen himself (the Fifth Symphony on his sixtieth birthday, 9<sup>th</sup> June 1925) and all the others by Schnedler-Petersen.

He even dared to perform the Sixth Symphony at Tivoli, on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> June 1927. That concert is memorable because it seems to have been the only time that Nielsen experienced being hissed in a concert hall. Earlier there had been a so-called scandal with a performance of the Fifth Symphony in Stockholm, conducted by Georg Schnéevoigt; but Nielsen was not present on that occasion.

Along with the Sixth Symphony, which had only been performed once before in connection with Nielsen's sixtieth birthday, Schnedler-Petersen chose to put on the first Tivoli performance of *Pan og Syrinx* (Pan and Syrinx) (1918). K. F. (Kai Flor) in *Berlingske Tidende* would normally try to take some kind of positive attitude towards whatever he heard in Copenhagen's concert halls. The same goes for this concert:

For the second symphony concert last night at Tivoli, music director Schnedler-Petersen, with his usual commendable care for Danish music, prepared an interesting Carl Nielsen programme. The main ingredient was the latest of the symphonies, the much disputed No. 6, only known from its première last winter,<sup>19</sup> and perhaps a somewhat courageous choice for Tivoli, given the fact that even for a symphony concert there you cannot expect to find a musically educated audience ...

In general the audience seemed fascinated and amused by Nielsen's sense of humour. There was some scattered hissing after the symphony and already after the Humoresque (!) [second of the four movements], but this was swallowed up by the applause, first directed towards Schnedler-Petersen, who was to be congratulated for his performance of the Symphony and also of the delightfully engaging evocation, Pan and Syrinx, and last but not least towards Nielsen who received the applause from his seat in one of the front rows.<sup>20</sup>

In *Politiken* H. S. also tried to be positive. After a long description of the Symphony, he concluded, "In one respect this evening was 'historic' for Nielsen. The loud applause after the performance was mixed with a certain amount of hissing. Good for Nielsen! He is now sixty-three and still capable of giving offence. Well done!"<sup>21</sup>

In *København* P. G. was even more direct: 'After the Symphony there was some clapping, but certainly also a good deal of hissing.'<sup>22</sup>

19 The interval between the performances was longer than Flor suggests – the première took place on 10<sup>th</sup> December 1925.

20 *Berlingske Tidende* 19.6.1927.

21 *Politiken* 19.6.1927.

22 *København* 19.6.1927.

How Nielsen reacted to all this is not easy to discover. The best source for such knowledge would be a letter to his wife; but she was with him in Copenhagen at that point, so they did not correspond on the matter. Another possibility would have been a letter to one of his composer friends, such as Wilhelm Stenhammar or Bror Beckman. Unfortunately Stenhammar had died earlier that year, and we have no Nielsen letters to Beckman later than 1924, even though Beckman was to live another five years, which is not easy to explain, given the fact that we have no fewer than 120 up to that point.<sup>23</sup> Did Nielsen really stop writing to Beckman? Or did his letters become so embittered, like the interviews he gave around the time of his sixtieth birthday in 1925, that Beckman did not think posterity should pry into them?

At any rate Schnedler-Petersen had now found the limit of what was possible at Tivoli. He programmed the Flute Concerto later that season (Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1927) with the original soloist, Holger Gilbert-Jespersen. But the even more radical Clarinet Concerto was not played at Tivoli during Nielsen's lifetime. Apart from the operas this was the only major composition of his that the composer never heard there.

### The Popular Nielsen

The second question we set out to answer was: when did Nielsen's music become popular enough to become part of the regular, unrehearsed Tivoli repertoire of short, easily accessible orchestral pieces? The first condition was obvious – there had to be pieces by Nielsen of the right character and length. And if we look at the general survey in the appendix to this article, it is clear that scarcely had *Maskarade* been premiered at the Royal Theatre (on 10<sup>th</sup> November 1906) than Tivoli in its summer 1907 season performed the popular Hanedans (Cockerel's Dance) from the opera's third act, no fewer than six times.

As is fairly well known, the Overture from *Maskarade* did not originally exist in a form designed for concert performance. This Nielsen made good by providing a concert ending before a concert in Stockholm on 26<sup>th</sup> November 1907. The intention was for Nielsen himself to conduct on this occasion, but he fell sick at the last moment, and it was Tor Aulin who directed the première of the concert version instead. Schnedler-Petersen took it into the Tivoli repertoire four years later, where it became one of the staple items, along with the 'Cockerel's Dance' (see appendix). During Nielsen's lifetime the 'Cockerel's Dance' notched up some 158 performances at Tivoli and the Overture seventy-five.

Gradually the 'Cockerel's Dance' became part of the more or less ritual programming for the opening night of the Tivoli season. It was played at some point on

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23 Copies of these 120 letters are in The Royal Library, Carl Nielsen Samling.

every opening night from 1911 onwards, except for three years. Other permanent fixtures were Joachim Andersen's 'March in Honour of King Christian X' and Kuhlau's Overture to *Elverhøj* (Elf-Hill) as introductions to the first half of the concert, and naturally, it is tempting to say, Lumbye's 'Champagne Galop' as a conclusion to the second half. There were a couple of seasons where Schnedler-Petersen tried to vary the musical fare by doing the *Maskarade* Overture or the 'Oriental Festive March' from *Aladdin* instead of the 'Cockerel's Dance'. But in general there was no opening night without a piece by Nielsen.

It is possible to gain some idea of how it sounded, since there is a 1924 recording of the 'Cockerel's Dance', conducted by Schnedler-Petersen, admittedly recorded in Berlin, where the players may have been better, but where on the other hand they did not know the music. All in all therefore, this recording, now reissued on CD, surely represents quite well what the Tivoli regulars would have heard with the Carpenter at the head of the fourty-or-so-strong orchestra.<sup>24</sup>

### Birthdays in Tivoli

As Nielsen by degrees rose to prominence in Danish musical life his birthday, 9<sup>th</sup> June, became a more and more public affair. Seeing that its date fell within the Tivoli season, Schnedler-Petersen had a good opportunity to mark his friendship by remembering his old friend in the concert hall programme on the very day.

In this way he devoted the entire 7.30pm concert on Nielsen's 50th birthday to his music (*Helios*, Suite for Strings, 'Cockerel's Dance' from *Maskarade*). The normal placing for such a programme would have been the 9pm concert but Nielsen had arranged a big party at his home in Frederiksholms Kanal 28A, and Schnedler-Petersen had therefore been accommodating by making sure that the meal could begin around 9. In fact there were seventy invited guests, who spread into the garden behind the house, where lanterns were hung all around.

For Nielsen's 60th birthday in 1925 two whole concerts was devoted to him. At 7.30 Schnedler-Petersen conducted the Suite for Strings and the Violin Concerto with Peder Møller, who had also given the première thirteen years earlier. At 9.00 the composer himself was on the podium with his Fifth Symphony and *Fynsk Forår* (Springtime on Funen), with Sylvia Schierbeck, Anders Brems and Albert Høeberg as soloists.

In the Glassalen too, where Ferdinand Hemme conducted, the entire second concert was given over to Nielsen's music. It contained the *Festive Prelude* (originally composed as a piano piece to celebrate the new century), a Fantasy from *Maskarade* and the 'Cockerel's Dance', together with six songs, including *Underlige aftenlufte* (Strange Evening Breezes) and *Jens Vejmand* (Jens the Roadmender), sung by the royal

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24 Reissued on *Carl Nielsen Songs – Choral Works*, Danacord DACOCD 265-267.

opera-singer, Carl Madsen. Nielsen was not able to attend, since this was also at 9.00, the same time as he was conducting in the Concert Hall.

This time it was not the composer himself who hosted the subsequent party. The newspaper Politiken arranged a festive banquet in one of Tivoli's restaurants, Nimb, where Nielsen was regaled with speeches and a torchlight procession.<sup>25</sup> In the Concert Hall it was moreover not only on the birthday itself that Nielsen's music was played. They "warmed up" with the Third Symphony on 6th June. Four days later there followed the Overture to *Maskarade*, then on each of the three following days, *Saga-Dream*, 'The Cockerel's Dance', the *Maskarade* Fantasy, and finally on 15th June once again the Overture to *Maskarade*. Probably no other Danish composer ever experienced this kind of thing, before or since.

The full list of Schnedler-Petersen's markings of Nielsen's birthday is as follows (Fig. 1).

- 1911 *Maskarade*: 'Cockerel's Dance'
- 1912 'Du danske Mand' ('You Danish Man'), in front of the Concert hall
- 1915 Helios; Suite for Strings; *Maskarade* 'Cockerel's Dance' (fiftieth birthday)
- 1923 Symphony No. 5
- 1925 Suite for Strings; Violin Concerto; Symphony No. 5; Springtime on Funen  
(Nielsen himself conducted the two last-named works) (sixtieth birthday)
- 1926 *Saga-Dream*
- 1928 Symphony No. 3
- 1930 Fantasy on Motifs from *Maskarade*

FIG. 1: Nielsen's birthday concerts in the Tivoli Concert Hall (9<sup>th</sup> June in every case)

### Performance Fees and Copyright

Tivoli therefore made extensive use of Nielsen's music, especially after Schendler-Petersen took over as musical director. But we have to remember that in general composers were not paid for the performances of their music in those days. Only if they conducted it themselves might they perhaps get a fee in that role. But in this respect Schnedler-Petersen was less inclined to step aside than his predecessors had been. He was more ambitious as a conductor and wanted to show that he could handle even very complex music.

In 1915, for instance, he programmed the Schoenberg Chamber Symphony. In his memoirs, he states quite frankly that he had to work on it for more than

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25 For further details see Meyer & Schandorf, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, 248-50.

three weeks with the musicians and ask them to take their parts back home and practise, which was unheard of at that time. He adds: 'My orchestra really put an enormous effort into this, but in spite of that neither the performers nor the audience enjoyed it.'<sup>26</sup>

Members of the audience hissed that night, just as they would later with Nielsen's Sixth Symphony. But shortly beforehand Schnedler-Petersen had given the first Tivoli performance of Nielsen's Third Symphony, the *Sinfonia espansiva*, and when the Saturday after the Schoenberg concert he repeated the Nielsen symphony, the reviewers came back and wrote about it again. They declared it a masterpiece – as opposed to the Schoenberg, naturally.

The first to bring up the question of Tivoli paying for the performance of music was the widow of the composer Johan Svendsen, who died in 1911. Through a well-known Copenhagen lawyer she asked the Tivoli management to pay for their numerous performances of such popular Svendsen pieces as the *Festpolonaise*, and she leaked her claim to the press in order to lend it more weight. Her financial circumstances seem to have been tight, and various musicians, among them Nielsen, had been giving their services free in order to help her out.

But in this first round Tivoli did not give in. Only in 1924 did they sign an agreement that gave Danish contemporary composers some remuneration for the performance of their music. They were pioneers in doing so, because KODA, the agency set up to protect the performing rights of Danish composers did not start its operations until two years later, incidentally thanks to the efforts of Nielsen, among others.<sup>27</sup>

If we consider the general statistics for Tivoli, it is apparent that in 1925, when the arrangement came into effect for the first time, there was an enormous increase in the number of Nielsen performances. In part this may of course be explained by the festivities surrounding Nielsen's sixteenth birthday. But maybe it is also true that Schnedler-Petersen was happy to do something for his old friend from conservatoire days who after his years as conductor at the Royal Theatre had never again really been comfortably off.

Was there some kind of deal between the two of them? We have no grounds to presume so. Nor do we know how much money was involved, since KODA long ago discarded its old payment papers, and the historic Tivoli material is for the time being not available for consultation.

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26 Frederik Schnedler-Petersen, *Et Liv i Musik* [A Life in Music], Copenhagen 1946, 120.

27 On the founding of KODA see Peter Schønning, *Komponistrettighederne 1926-2001* [Composers' Rights 1926-2001], esp. 21-31.

## Aladdin and Tivoli

Another valuable contribution to the popular Nielsen repertoire at Tivoli arose in the form of the music to Johannes Poulsen's Royal Theatre production of Oehlenschläger's play, *Aladdin*, premiered in February 1919. Since the music in this production was performed under dubious circumstances, Nielsen wanted to salvage as much of it as possible for the concert hall, and here Tivoli and Schnedler-Petersen came to his aid.<sup>28</sup>

His starting-point was the hand-written material of eight excerpts, made for the 1921 season, where they were premiered successfully on Saturday 25 June in the presence of the composer. We may suppose that the composer had a hand in the choice of pieces, since he repeatedly borrowed this material for performances he himself conducted, not only in Denmark but also in Sweden and Germany.<sup>29</sup> This material, not written out by Nielsen but containing various additions in his hand (which prove that he used it), is still in Tivoli's music archive. It was slightly damaged by water in the sabotage of the Tivoli concert hall during the German occupation in World War Two, and it is not in use any more.

If for no other reason than the scandal surrounding the Royal Theatre's treatment of the *Aladdin* music, all the reviewers showed up at the Tivoli concert. In *Berlingske Tidende* K. was especially prophetic:

There is tremendous inventiveness in these eight character-pieces, which are highly individual throughout. Here there is no attempt at effect-making, as the subject matter might have invited, and yet each of the pieces does precisely the job it is meant to. Overall the *Aladdin* music contains many qualities that should make it popular at Tivoli, and it should not be long before certain of the dances become permanent ingredients in the orchestra's programmes.<sup>30</sup>

Schnedler-Petersen repeated all eight pieces at a concert a few days later (Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> June 1921). Then he chose three as the most suitable for use at Tivoli. These three became firm favourites, as may be seen from the Appendix to the present article. Tivoli's Symphony Orchestra made gramophone recordings of five of them; but this was after Nielsen's and Schnedler-Petersen's time, on 31<sup>st</sup> January 1936, when the or-

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28 On the performance history of *Aladdin* see David Fanning's editorial introduction in *Carl Nielsen, Works*, vol. I/8, xi-xx. A set of musical material in Tivoli's archives was not brought to the attention of the editor until after the publication, and this therefore appears only in the list of sources in the later edition of Nielsen's orchestral suite from *Aladdin*, Copenhagen 2002, edited by Niels Krabbe and based on *Carl Nielsen, Works*, vol. I/8.

29 The seven most often performed orchestral excerpts from *Aladdin* were only printed posthumously, in 1940.

30 *Berlingske Tidende* 26.6.1921.

chestra recorded the Oriental Festive March, the 'Hindu Dance', 'Negro Dance', 'Aladdin's Dream and Dance of the Morning Mist' and 'The Market at Ispahan' for HMV under the direction of Svend Christian Felumb.

### More than Duty

It should by now be quite obvious that Schnedler-Petersen tried hard to promote the music of his friend throughout his time at Tivoli. During the last season that Nielsen was to experience, in the summer of 1931, the composer had the chance to do a return favour, by being part of the committee established by Tivoli to help choose an assistant conductor, who from 1932 would be able to take some of the burden from the ageing Schnedler-Petersen. The choice fell on Svend Christian Felumb, the oboist who was supposed to have a concerto from Nielsen, but never did.

However extensive the Carpenter's promotion of Nielsen at Tivoli may have been, it is in reality only part of the story: the summer season of it. For he tried to keep his orchestra together more or less the whole year round by running a series of popular winter concerts on Sundays at the Odd Fellow Palace. The series was called *Palækoncerterne*, and it had been initiated by Joachim Andersen. Schnedler-Petersen took it over and ran it from 1909 until 1931, when competition from the newly established Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra became too tough.

Here too he did his best for his friend Nielsen, as he also did when he guest-conducted abroad. It is well known that Nielsen organised a concert in Paris in October 1926 with the help of his Danish friends. Less well known is the fact that Schnedler-Petersen was invited for three consecutive years in the late 1920s by the Orchestra Philharmonique de Paris and used the opportunity to do both the Second and the Third Symphonies. Plus naturally his 'signature tune', the 'Cockerel's Dance'.<sup>31</sup>

No one, apart from the composer himself, conducted so much Nielsen. No one tried so hard to embrace it all, from the simplicity of the 'Cockerel's Dance' to the complexity of the *Sinfonia Semplice*.<sup>32</sup>

Nielsen may perhaps have thought this or that concerning Schnedler-Petersen, who had a reputation for ranking a good, relaxed relationship with his musicians higher than the improvements he might have achieved by pressing them.<sup>33</sup> But the composer

<sup>31</sup> See Schnedler-Petersen, *op.cit.*, 145-8.

<sup>32</sup> In his memoirs (*ibid.* 112) Schnedler-Petersen comments that throughout his time at Tivoli he kept records of how often an individual piece was played, in order to ensure that the programmes were sufficiently varied. In some instances he must have taken a liberal view of these records, for there are examples of Nielsen pieces from the standard repertoire being played several times in the same week, on occasions even the same piece, for example the 'Cockerel's Dance', which was played on 31<sup>st</sup> May and again on 5<sup>th</sup> June 1920.

<sup>33</sup> See, for example, the reminiscences of singer Anders Brems, not published in their entirety but excerpted in the journal of the Danish Carl Nielsen Society, *Espansiva*, 16-17 (2001), 34.

was not ungrateful. Just a few months before his death, he took the opportunity to thank the Carpenter in public. When it became common knowledge that the above-mentioned Palækoncerter would have to close down on 1st March 1931, Nielsen sent a letter to Schnedler-Petersen, to be published in *Politiken*. He wrote, among other things:

You have done more than your duty for Danish music, both as director of the Tivoli symphony concerts and as conductor of the Palækoncerter.<sup>34</sup> For this please accept the most heartfelt greetings and thanks of one who really benefited from your warm interest, your rich initiative and your never-failing sense of duty towards good art, as your programmes through the many years amply testify.

Give me your hand. I shake it, hoping for better times for our art. Just now we have to bow our heads before the freezing apathy reigning over the whole country when it comes to good music.

With warmest greetings from your old friend

Carl Nielsen

Damgaard, 26<sup>th</sup> February 1931<sup>35</sup>

## A P P E N D I X

### Comprehensive Survey of Nielsen Performances at Tivoli 1887-1931.

The following survey is based on meticulous study of Tivoli programmes, which are housed in the Royal Library's Småtryksafdeling (Collection of Pamphlets and Corporate Publications). The statistics include not only the concerts in Tivoli's concert hall, but also performances with the wind band and in Glassalen, together with one or two on Kunstnerplænen (the Open Air Stage). Performances in the concert hall account for more than 90 % of the material.

34 Schnedler-Petersen was conductor of the Copenhagen Municipal Public Concerts from 1912-31.

35 *Du har gjort mere end din Pligt over for dansk Musik, baade som Chef for Tivolis Symfoniorkester og som Leder af Palækoncerterne og den offentlige Musik i København. Modtag derfor en varm Hilsen og Tak fra en af dem, der har nydt godt af din varme Interesse, dit rige Initiativ og din aldrig svigtende Pligtfølelse over for den gode Kunst, hvad dine Programmer gennem de mange Aar noksom beviser.*

*Giv mig din Haand. Jeg trykker den, medens vi haaber paa bedre Tider for vor Kunst. Men vi er nødt til at bøje vore Hoveder under den isnende Ligegyldighed, der nu hersker over for den gode Musik i det ganske Land.*

*De bedste Hilsener fra din gamle Ven / Carl Nielsen / Damgaard, 26. Februar 1931.*

*Politiken* 28.2.1931. See also Schnedler-Petersen, *op.cit.*, 107-8, and John Fellow (ed.), *Carl Nielsen til sin samtid* [Carl Nielsen to his Contemporaries], Copenhagen 1999, 593-4.



Total

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Total

In 1925 the Danish National Radio started to broadcast nationwide. Unfortunately, an agreement with Tivoli was only reached after the festivities in connection with Nielsen's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday. Having finished the 1925 season, Schnedler-Petersen, who happened to be a member of the Radio Board, complained about the technical quality, and broadcasts from Tivoli were not resumed until 1928<sup>37</sup>.

## A B S T R A C T

The basis for the article is a complete overview covering every performance of music by Carl Nielsen in the summer season of the Copenhagen pleasure garden, Tivoli, during the composer's lifetime (1865-1931). For the first years after becoming a professional violinist, Nielsen made his living from playing in the Tivoli orchestra. And it was in Tivoli he made his official debut as a composer in 1887. When his fellow student from the Academy of Music, Frederik Schnedler-Petersen at the beginning of the summer season 1909 took over as musical director in Tivoli, the Nielsen performances really took flight. The article lists in all 744 performances, which stylistically range right from the popular songs to the symphonies. Schnedler-Petersen was not afraid to present the rather conservative Tivoli audience with some musical challenges whenever the orchestra's rather tight work-schedule permitted a moment for rehearsing these. But as Nielsen's music became increasingly experimental, he too had to give up. The sixth symphony (1925) was only performed once in Tivoli and the clarinet concerto (1928) not at all. Nielsen's birthday on the 9th June was in the Tivoli season and Schnedler-Petersen nearly always found some way of marking the event. Nielsen's 60th birthday in 1925 was particularly festive with performances by the three Tivoli orchestras, a torchlight procession and a banquet in one of the best restaurants in Tivoli. Finally the article also briefly describes Schnedler-Petersen's efforts outside Tivoli on behalf of Carl Nielsen, not least abroad where he was without any doubt the composer's most diligent musical ambassador.

*Translated by David Fanning*

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37 Several Nielsen works were broadcast live: *Maskarade*: Overture (14.07.1925, 16.08.1925, 20.08.1925, 27.07.1928, 04.06.1929, 15.08.1929, 21.08.1929), *Maskarade*: Hanedans (16.07.1925, 15.08.1928, 11.06.1930, 15.08.1930), *Aladdin*: Aladdins Drøm og Morgentaagernes Dans (30.07.1925, 27.08.1925), *Aladdin*: Orientalsk Festmarsch (30.07.1925), *Aladdin*: Negerdans (30.07.1925), Symphony no. 3 (03.06.1930), *Pan og Syrinx* (19.06.1930), Flute Concerto (10.06.1931), and *Maskarade*: Udtog (15.08.1931). All these performances were by the Tivoli Symphony Orchestra conducted by Schnedler-Petersen, except for *Pan og Syrinx* which was played by the Berlin Police Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Camillo Hillebrand. In 1925, the Danish National Radio had 46.000 registered listeners, at Nielsen's death more than 200.000.