

David and Bathsheba

an Opera-Oratorio in Two Acts by Ståle Kleiberg

The Biblical story of David and Bathsheba has a lot of present-day relevance. In this story, individual emotions interact with political actions and their consequences. Fundamental ethical questions are thus being raised, on the macro- as well as the microlevel. And not least, the story illustrates how these two levels may be connected.

From the opening bars, Kleiberg's music establishes a very particular orchestral and harmonic colour, one effect of which is to 'place' the events beyond our reach. It would be trivial to describe this distancing of the action as a mode of exoticism, but there is nonetheless a whiff of the East about the tone of the work, evocative of the time and a distant place. This is anything but a retreat into some oneiric fantasy world, removed from our contemporary reality. Rather the remoteness of the setting, together with Kleiberg's non-naturalistic approach to the drama, gives the work something of the character of myth. This enables it to speak to us as all myths speak to us, of deeper truths.

Trondheim Symphony Orchestra and Vocal Ensemble — Tõnu Kaljuste

Anna Einarsson, Johannes Weisser, Nils Harald Sødal, Fredrik Akselberg and Lars Johansson Brissman

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by Ståle Kleiberg



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Act I

- 1 Introduction (Orchestra) 3:05
- 2 Psalm 8 (Chorus) 6:21

Scene 1

- 3 My Lord, your servant Uriah the Hittite (Joab, Chorus) 1:38

Scene 2

- 4 Who is this that looks out like the dawn? (David) 5:11
- 5 Who is she? (Joab, David) 2:40
- 6 Come to me Bathsheba (David, Bathsheba) 2:06
- 7 It is the Lord who gave you your authority (Chorus) 2:29

Scene 3

- 8 Uriah! Have you not a young wife? (Joab, Uriah) 1:42

Scene 4

- 9 He would not come, my Lord (Joab, David) 2:42

Scene 5

- 10 O Husband you are lost to me (Bathsheba) 6:26

Scene 6

- 11 Eat! Drink! (Uriah, David) 4:41
- 12 Down with the poor and honest man! (Bathsheba, Uriah, Chorus) 4:19

Act II

Scene 1

- 13 You are welcome Nathan (Joab, David, Nathan) 2:08
- 14 There are two men in your city (Nathan, David) 4:40
- 15 Psalm 51 (David, Chorus) 7:33

Scene 2

- 16 You are come to tell me my son is dead (Bathsheba, Joab) 2:49
- 17 Why has the fruit of my orchard failed? (Bathsheba) 4:29

Scene 3

- 18 Where are the robes you have torn? (Bathsheba, David) 6:28
- 19 The breath in our nostrils (Chorus) 3:48

Total playing time: 75:25

Libretto by Jessica Gordon

Bathsheba: Anna Einarsson, mezzo soprano

David: Johannes Weisser, baritone

Joab: Nils Harald Sødal, tenor

Uriah: Fredrik Akselberg, tenor

Nathan: Lars Johansson Brissman, bass

Trondheim Symphony Orchestra Vocal Ensemble

Bodil Egseth, chorus master

Trondheim Symphony Orchestra

Tõnu Kaljuste, conductor

Ståle Kleiberg's *David and Bathsheba* was premièred in 2008. It soon took on a life of its own, with new performances in Norway as well as abroad, which is not at all surprising, given Kleiberg's track record as a composer.

Kleiberg was born in Stavanger in 1958. He lives in Trondheim, where he is Professor of Music at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. His works are often to be found on concert programmes in Norway and abroad. Most of his works are composed to commission, many of them from outstanding orchestras, ensembles and performers. Kleiberg's music is also well represented on CD, and several of the discs have received highly favourable international reviews.

Ståle Kleiberg's music is characterised by a distinctive form of extended tonality and by meticulous attention to coloristic details. This is especially the case in his orchestral works, including his first symphony, *The Bell Reef*, and his *Violin Concerto*, both released on two different portrait CDs with the Trondheim Symphony Orchestra. In all his music he demonstrates a total command of *métier*. Form and content – inasmuch as these can be considered separate – always embody the multi-layered complexity that makes up a great work of art. Yet the music is highly communicative, speaking to a broad audience in a direct and immediate way.

It is precisely this combination of compositional craft, artistic complexity and immediacy of expression that has brought great success to a number of works by Kleiberg, including his *Requiem – for the victims of Nazi persecution*, which is one of his most frequently performed works. Kleiberg's Requiem was performed in Washington National Cathedral on 11 September 2004, i.e. on the Memorial Day for the terrorist attacks on Manhattan and Washington DC. It was broadcast nationally in the US, recorded on CD with the Washington National Cathedral choir and chamber orchestra, and has since been given many international performances. The Requiem is the principal work in a trilogy of compositions dealing with the same subject matter: the others are the orchestral work *Lamento: Cissi Klein in memoriam* and the cello concerto *Dopo*.

Many of Kleiberg's works have a literary source. Poetic images often give rise to musical associations and these imagined sound worlds may in turn form the basis of the com-

poser's inspiration. One excellent example of this is the hour-long *Roseinduet* (the *Rose Window*) for narrator, organ and chamber orchestra, first performed in the Nidaros Cathedral, Trondheim in 1992, and later released on CD with Daniel Harding as conductor.

The present recording is a successor of 2Ls Grammy-nominated release from 2009, *Treble & Bass: Concertos by Ståle Kleiberg*. Like the previous disc, the present one has been made in close cooperation with the Trondheim Symphony Orchestra, this time conducted by Estonian maestro Tõnu Kaljuste.

War and Peace: Ståle Kleiberg's *David and Bathsheba*

Immanuel Kant argued that war and peace are not opposites: that each contains a residue of the other, and that each has consequences for the other. It is a maxim that resonates in Ståle Kleiberg's opera-oratorio *David and Bathsheba*. The biblical narrative (2 Samuel 11) illustrates how the private domain of human emotions can impinge on the public domain of politics (including war). It illustrates further how both domains revolve around relationships of power, a point that is reinforced by the face-to-face encounters in Jessica Gordon's libretto for Kleiberg's work. It is of course David's political power, and his abuse of that power, that enables the seduction of Bathsheba and the betrayal of Uriah. We may have difficulty extricating this singular narrative from the web of intertextual references surrounding it, and maybe it is not necessary or helpful to do so. Bathsheba bathes in all innocence, but she evokes nonetheless countless literary renderings of the siren archetype, so often in oriental guise. Later we may see her as Agave, the grieving mother who is complicit in her own son's death. Uriah, in contrast, is a guiltless victim, a pedigreed war hero, the embodiment of virtue, incorruptible. But even that characterisation can have its down side, for we are reminded that war and its heroes have been all too often presented as the romance of history.

Naturally David is at the centre of this story. His is the 'hamartia', the tragic flaw from which the events flow, and his is the 'anagnorisis', the recognition – specifically the self-recognition – that might hold out some hope of forgiveness and redemption. 'There is a time for grief, and there is a time for grieving to end', he tells an unresponsive Bathsheba. Yet this is no Nietzschean catharsis, where David might emerge 'strong enough for freedom', 'knowing his darkness as his light' and 'at last becom[ing] whole'. It is both more ancient and more modern than that. David may indeed grow in self-knowledge, but the consequences of his actions remain. The death of Uriah, and of



all other victims of self-aggrandising wars, will not be purged quite so easily. This is as it should be, and it stands as a warning to politicians everywhere. It is the sense of responsibility, the ethical duty, we have towards the other, this story tells us, that gives us true meaning as subjects. Of course the sceptic may wonder if ethics can ever really influence the political domain, a domain that (according to Emmanuel Levinas) is of its very nature violent and prone to degeneracy. Terry Eagleton's answer, not entirely devoid of hope but certainly devoid of illusions, seems germane. If the political tends towards the degenerate, he argues, the most ethics appears to be capable of 'is to shake it up from time to time'.

The tale of David and Bathsheba is told here in an elevated poetic language that eliminates inessential detail and eschews or minimises naturalistic dialogue. Jessica Gordon's libretto is suggestive of biblical poetry (leaving aside that Psalms 8 and 51 are incorporated whole), but it is no less suggestive of certain Eastern divans, to which biblical poetry can in any case be related. The lyrical soliloquies of both David and Bathsheba are characteristic. They are extended set pieces: we may think of eclogues in a pastoral-erotic tradition in Act I, and of elegies or laments in Act II. Again the range of literary reference is wide. A yet more stylised feature is the chorus, which comments on the events but also moralises, and even – in a certain sense – teaches us how we ought to respond to these events. The opening chorus (Psalm 8) is a hymn of praise and a warning to the over-mighty, but it also glories in mortal man ('Thou hast made him little less than a god'). Compare this description, consonant with David's subsequent actions, with the sentiments in the closing chorus ('Our life will blow over like the last vestige of a cloud; as a mist is chased away by the sun's rays and overborne by its heat, so will it too be dispersed'). And is there a *promesse de bonheur* in the final line? 'But God created man for immortality'.

Already through his genre title ('opera-oratorio') Kleiberg signals that his approach will be far removed from naturalistic drama. Four 'chorales' (their voice leading concealing a surprising level of dissonance) serve as architectural pillars, but also as 'alienating' devices in the Brechtian sense, distancing us from the immediacy of the action. Indeed the inclusion of Psalms 8 and 51, familiar to all, serves to emphasise that a well-known story is presented rather than a drama enacted. The unison 'O Lord our God' from Psalm 8 exposes a theme that interjects as an accompaniment to this chorus, whose chorale-like textures only really begin with 'Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings'. Likewise, the apparently antithetical '[Thou hast] crowned him with

glory and honour' introduces for the first time a recurring punctuation figure. The second chorus comes as the die is cast, and its measured tones are a reminder that our mortal power is merely on loan, that judgement will fall on those who abuse it. The third (Psalm 51) is a reiterated incantation that accompanies (and perhaps universalises) David's plea for mercy, while the last is a closing reminder of our mortality, and of what might transcend it. These four set pieces do not exhaust the role of the chorus. Exactly as in Greek tragedy, it can also have a more participatory dramatic function, as in the dynamic 'Down with the honest man' in Act I, Scene 6, where it might be taken to represent the populace.

The expressive core of this work lies in four monologues, two assigned to David and two to Bathsheba. The most formalised of these are the two 'arias' sung by Bathsheba, both in a lyrical triple time, and both with a clear internal repetition structure. In the first of them (Act I, Scene 5), a traditional da capo design (A A' B A) mirrors Bathsheba's antithetical responses to Uriah and David, where A represents nostalgia and regret for her husband and B her illicit attraction to the King. This is the most extended set piece in the work. It is not out of place to compare it to a Schubertian ideal of 'singability' in modern guise, where the essential meaning of the poetic text finds its perfect embodiment in a self-contained accompanied melody, and where the accompanying figure is designed to capture the poetic image synoptically. This is no less true of Bathsheba's second aria (Act 2, Scene 2), which is a lamentation on the death of her son, this time following an A A' B design, where B culminates in the punctuation figure and segues into the final dialogue between David and Bathsheba.

David's first aria (Act I, Scene 2), describing his infatuation with Bathsheba's beauty, has the same repetition structure (A A' B), and it culminates in the same punctuation figure, but its duple metre distinguishes it from Bathsheba's arias, and the prominence of the harp in the characteristic accompaniment figure adds a telling element of associative symbolism, drawing on pedigreed images of David the Psalmist. Certain musical rhymes also serve to point up the emotional conflict here, with one phrase in particular setting the King's recognition of Uriah's honourable character against his susceptibility to Bathsheba's seductive allure. The King's second aria (Act 2, Scene 1) is his rendition of Psalm 51, shared with the chorus. Here the underlying repetition structure is provided by the choral incantations, while David's line, constantly responsive to the prosodic and semantic nuances of the poetic text, is more arioso than aria.

Setting aside Nathan's extended pronouncement at the beginning of Act 2, which transmits the judgement of God to David, the narrative elements of this opera-oratorio are confined largely to a set of highly condensed dialogues linking and occasionally interrupting its various set pieces. These dialogues culminate in the final exchange between David and Bathsheba, where they are face-to-face following the death of their son, another innocent victim in this tragedy, another instance of 'collateral damage'. In terms of a classical plot archetype, this exchange is a peripeteia, just as David's earlier plea for mercy represented an anagnorisis. It is the key moment in the drama – its culmination in many ways – and its significance is made explicit in musical terms. Even as Bathsheba's lamentation draws to a close, we become unexpectedly aware that we are in a familiar terrain. The orchestral prelude to the work returns with haunting effect at this point, and the melodic lines we heard in purely instrumental terms earlier are now the basis of the vocal duet between the two central protagonists. This is an extended repetition, and it even incorporates the unison line that had earlier introduced Psalm 51 ('O Lord our God'), but that is now attached to David's plea to Bathsheba to 'learn to be forgiven'.

It is a measure of Ståle Kleiberg's ever-growing stature as a composer that each new work creates its own world, relatable to his output as a whole, but at the same time utterly distinctive. This is especially true of *David and Bathsheba*. From the opening bars the work establishes a very particular orchestral and harmonic colour, one effect of which is to 'place' the events beyond our reach. It would be trivial to describe this distancing of the action as a mode of exoticism, but there is nonetheless a faint whiff of the East about the tone of the work, evocative of a distant time and a distant place. Partly it is the instrumentarium, which for large sections of the work highlights vibraphone, harp and celesta as a 'base' colour – even at times a kind of continuo – over which solo woodwinds perform their arabesques. And partly it is a matter of harmony, where recurring harmonic fields, quietly dissonant, are highly characteristic. Yet the effect of this very specific colouring is anything but a retreat into some oneiric fantasy world, removed from our contemporary reality. Rather the remoteness of the setting, together with Kleiberg's non-naturalistic approach to the drama, gives the work something of the character of myth. This enables it to speak to us, as all myths speak to us, of deeper truths. When the chorus reminds David of the true nature of worldly power, and when Nathan delivers his solemn judgement, we should all pay heed.

Jim Samson, 2012

The **Trondheim Symphony Orchestra** played its first concert in 1909. However, the beginning of the modern professional orchestra dates back to 1947. In more recent times the orchestra, with its 90 musicians, has established a high reputation not just in local contexts but for the whole country. The international standing of the orchestra is also high, following successful tours of Germany, Austria, Spain, the Czech Republic, China and Poland, as well as favourable reviews for several of its numerous recordings. The Grammy-nominated 2L-disc *Treble & Bass: Concertos by Ståle Kleiberg* is an excellent example of this. The Trondheim Symphony Orchestra presents weekly concerts with well-known soloists and conductors, but it also participates in opera and ballet, as well as jazz concerts, school concerts, and concerts for families and children. The current Chief Conductor is Krzysztof Urbanski.

Tõnu Kaljuste founded the renowned Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir and the Tallinn Chamber Orchestra. He has also been Chief Conductor and First Guest Conductor of the Swedish Radio Choir, Chief Conductor of the Netherlands Chamber Choir and conductor of the Estonian National Opera. Kaljuste is currently professor and head of the conducting faculty at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, and is frequently engaged by outstanding orchestras and choirs all over the world. He has collaborated closely with composers such as Kurtag, Penderecki, Kanchelli and Schnittke, and is particularly celebrated as a champion of Estonian composers, notably Arvo Pärt, Erkki-Sven Tüür and Veljo Tormis. His discography includes many recordings with ECM, Virgin Classic and Caprice Records. His three world première recordings of works by Arvo Pärt for ECM were each Grammy-nominated, and other recordings have won prestigious prizes such as Diapason d'Or, Cannes Classical Award, Edison Prize, and Brit Award. In 2004 he founded the Nargen Festival. With Kaljuste as its artistic leader, the festival has been, and still is, a huge success.

Anna Einarsson graduated from the Malmö Music Academy and later from the Norwegian National Opera Academy, where Ingrid Bjoner was her professor. Her debut at the Norwegian National Opera took place in 1998 as Dryade in Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos*. Later operatic roles, in Scandinavia as well as abroad, include Maddalena in *Rigoletto*, the title role in *Carmen*, Flosshilde in *Rheingold* and *Götterdämmerung*, Rosswise in *Die Walküre*, Third Lady in *The Magic Flute*, Nancy in *Albert Herring*, Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Olga in *Eugen Onegin*, Azucena in *Il Trovatore*, Amneris in *Aida*, Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*, Anitra in *Peer Gynt*, Abel in Scarlatti's *Il primo*

omicidio, Audne in Ole Olsen's *Stallo*, and Julie in Antonio Bibalo's *Miss Julie*. Anna Einarsson is also a much sought-after concert and oratorio singer. She is frequently engaged at major concert venues and festivals throughout Europe, and has made a number of radio and CD recordings.

Johannes Weisser was born in 1980. In 2004, he made his debut at the Norwegian National Opera as well as at the Komische Oper Berlin, in both houses as Masetto in *Don Giovanni*. Since then he has appeared at the Salzburg Festival, Staatsoper Berlin, Theater an der Wien, Théâtre de La Monnaie, Théâtre de Champs Elysses, Festspielhaus Baden-Baden, Opéra national du Rhin Strasbourg, Opera Bilbao, Komische Oper Berlin, The Royal Danish Opera and The Norwegian National Opera in roles such as Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*, the title role as well as Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, Papageno in *The Magic Flute*, Ramiro in *L'heure espagnol*, Achilles in *Giulio Cesare*, Schaunard in *La Bohème*, Agamemnon in *Iphigénie en Aulide* and Giove in *La Calisto*. Johannes Weisser is also a much sought-after concert, oratorio and recital singer, and he regularly appears in concert venues and festivals throughout Europe. He has recorded the title role in *Don Giovanni*, Telemann's *Brocks Passion*, and Haydn's *Die Schöpfung* for Harmonia Mundi, Haydn's *Applausus* for Capriccio, as well as a highly praised recital album with songs by Grieg for SIMAX.

Nils Harald Sodal became a member of the soloist ensemble at the Norwegian National Opera in 2012, following a successful career as a freelance soloist. Sodal has been engaged at a large number of European opera houses in major roles from the operatic repertoire, and has received highly favourable reviews in journals like *Opernwelt* and *Opernglas*. He is also frequently engaged as a soloist in productions of contemporary music. Major roles at the Norwegian National Opera include the title role in *Peter Grimes*, Alfredo in *La Traviata*, Alfred in *Die Fledermaus*, Don José in *Carmen*, Scaramuccio in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Goro in *Madama Butterfly*, Lyngstrand in Söderlind's *Fruen fra havet*, Doufi in Nørgård's *Det guddommelige tivoli*, David in Kverndokk's *Den fjerde nattevakt* and Pilate in Hvoslef's *Barabbas*.

Fredrik Akselberg studied at the Music Academy in Stavanger and at the Royal College of Music in London, where he received the Thomas Mohrherr Prize in the Peter Pears' Singing Competition. He continued his studies at the International Opera Studio at the Staatsoper Hamburg, after which he became a member of the ensemble at

Theater Kiel. His numerous operatic engagements have included Andres in *Wozzeck* at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, Count Almaviva in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and Pastore in Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* at the Norwegian National Opera. Fredrik Akselberg is also much in demand as a concert singer, and has appeared in concert halls and festivals throughout Europe.

Lars Johansson Brissman has established himself as one of the most sought-after concert and oratorio singers in the field, both in Sweden and abroad. Brissman studied at the Royal College of Music and at the University College of Opera in Stockholm. As an opera singer, he has participated in numerous productions at the Royal Opera in Stockholm, Folkoperan and Drottningholm Court Theatre, in repertoire from Monteverdi to newly composed operas. He has also made a number of recordings with the Swedish Radio Choir and the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra. Brissman has been awarded the Kristina Nilsson Award, the Joel Berglund Award, and the prestigious Royal Swedish Academy of Music Award.

Jessica Gordon (author of the David and Bathsheba libretto) is both a musician and a writer. After a degree in English at Oxford University and a Ph.D. in Renaissance Studies at the University of Warwick, she studied lute performance at the Royal College of Music in London with Jakob Lindberg. After ten years devising and performing programmes of Renaissance music and words, she now works mainly as a writer. In 2004 her first libretto, an adaptation of Joan Aiken's *The Cuckoo Tree*, with music by Rachel Stott, was performed at the Frome Festival, UK. Other credits include numerous works for radio and stage, including *No Other Gods* (2006), *Footprints to Paradise* (broadcast by PRI, 2006), *Mother of God* (PRI and Washington National Cathedral, co-commission with Andrew Smith, 2006), *The Medieval Magic Carpet* (with Gothic Voices, 2007), *Jamestown* (PRI, 2007), *The Night Before Christmas* (PRI, 2008). She is currently working on a novel about the life of Suzannah Ibsen.

David and Bathsheba libretto by Jessica Gordon
based on The Second Book of Samuel, chapters 11-12, and on Psalms 8 and 51

Act I

Introduction

Psalm 8, Chorus:

Oh Lord our Lord
How excellent is thy name in all the earth!
Thy glory is praised as high as the heavens.
Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings,
Hast thou rebuked the mighty,
Silenced the enmity of thy foes.
When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers,
The moon and the stars set on high by thee,
What is man that thou art mindful of him,
Mortal man that thou shouldst care for him?
Yet thou hast made him little less than a god,
Crowned him with glory and honour.
Thou hast made him master over thy creation,
Put all things under his feet:
All sheep and oxen, all beasts of the field,
The birds in the air and the fish in the seas,
And all that move along the paths of the ocean.
Oh Lord our Lord,
How excellent is thy name in all the earth!

Scene 1

Joab: My Lord, your servant Uriah the Hittite has done great deeds outside the walls of Rabbah.

Chorus: O David, beloved of the Lord! The good deeds you have done have pleased Him. Your house shall never fail. You are wise and just above all men. O David, favoured of the Lord!

Scene 2

David: Who is this that looks out like the dawn,
beautiful as the moon, bright as the sun, majestic as the starry heavens?

She is beautiful:

Her hair like a flock of goats streaming down the mountainside,
Her teeth like a flock of ewes come fresh from the dipping,
Her neck a tower of ivory,
Her breasts like twin fawns of the gazelle,
Her navel a rounded goblet that never shall want for spiced wine,
How beautiful, how entrancing you are, daughter of delights!
You are stately as a palm tree
and your breasts are the clusters of dates.
I will climb up into the palm to grasp its fronds.
May I find your breasts like clusters of grapes on the vine, the scent of your breath
like apricots, your whispers like spiced wine flowing smoothly to welcome my caresses.
Gliding down through lips and teeth.

David: Who is she that bathes in that courtyard below?

Joab: She is Bathsheba, daughter of Eliam and wife of Uriah the Hittite.

David: Uriah lies under canvas in the field, far from home.

He does not sleep in silks nor bathe in sweet water; the dust of the field is in his hair.

He is an honourable man.

He has gone forth to fight and has left his treasure at home.

He has left his vineyard in my care.

I cannot eat of this fruit. It is forbidden.

I must not eat of this fruit; I must be righteous.

Oh the scent of the vine is sweet!

It is honey on my tongue.

Love is strong as death,
passion is cruel as the grave.

I will taste this fruit.

David: Come to me, Bathsheba! I shall feed you with apricots and honey. Come, my dove! My little nut-tree! More precious than the rarest of my orchards are you to me.

Bathsheba: And like an orchard shall I bear fruit. Your seed has found fertile soil.

Chorus:

It is the Lord who gave you your authority: your power comes from the Most High.
He will put your actions to the test and scrutinise your intentions.
Though you are viceroys of his kingly power, you have not been upright judges;
you do not stand up for the law or guide your steps by the will of God.
Swiftly and terribly will he descend upon you,
for judgement falls relentlessly upon those in high place.

Scene 3

Joab: Uriah! Have you not a young wife who longs for your return? Go home!

Uriah: I cannot. My troops lie in the field.

Joab: Uriah! Go home! It is the King's command.

Uriah: I cannot go home. My troops lie in the field. I cannot go home to the pleasures of my bed.

David: I have tasted this fruit.

Scene 4

Joab: He would not come, my Lord.

David: You told him I commanded it?

Joab: A man with a conscience is like a stubborn mule. There is no arguing with him. Uriah sleeps at the city gates and nowhere else.

David: Urge him again.

Joab: I have, my Lord. He will have none of it.

David: He is too honourable. Send him to me then. I shall dine with him. He will not refuse his King. He must sleep with his wife.

Joab: Must? When Rabbah falls you will put a governor there.

David: I will.

Joab: It is a fair city. I find the air agrees with me.

David: I would choose a governor whose loyalty to me has been proven.

Joab: I am yours to command, my Lord.

David: Uriah will dine with me. I will send him to his wife, but...

Joab: ...if he does not go. There are other ways. War is a dangerous business. Even the best of soldiers may be killed by a single arrow.

David: You understand me, Joab.

Joab: Send me word and I shall see that Uriah does not return.

Scene 5

Bathsheba: O Husband, you are lost to me, like the sands of the desert that fly on the wind and are gone. I shall not see you again. For your honour is a noose about your neck, your good name that you prize so much, is an arrow in your side.

O come to me, Husband, when the evening is still, when the scent of the cinnamon lies heavy in the air. Let us lie again together, your left hand under my head, your right arm round me. Pluck the fruit that is yours, pick the lilies of your garden; for fruit over-ripe will soon rot and lilies past their time will fester.

King David delights in the lilies. He loves to walk by the streams where the lilies grow. In the beds where balsam grows have I opened to him. He has knocked and with my own hand I have opened to him.

For he is a cedar, a bunch of myrrh as he lies on my breast, a cluster of henna. He took me into the wine-garden and gave me loving glances. He refreshed me with raisins, he revived me with apricots. His whispers were sweetness itself.

The door that was closed with planks of cedar, he has unlatched. In gold and ivory has he clad me. I am his and he wears me as a seal upon his heart.

O Husband, you are lost to me, like the sands of the desert that fly on the wind and are gone. I shall not see you again. For your honour is a noose about your neck, your good name that you prize so much, is an arrow in your side.

Scene 6

David: Eat! Drink! This wine is of the finest. Here are rare fruits from my orchard. Eat! Your courage and honour shine out like a light in the darkness, that other men may see the better by it. Come now, drink! Let us be merry this night and forget the troubles of war. What, have you no stomach?

Uriah: I cannot eat, my Lord, while troops still lie upon the field of war.

David: Perhaps you would go home. To dine with a king is nothing to the soft pleasures of a wife.

Uriah: That cannot be.

David: She is ugly and old then?

Uriah: She is sweet as spring rain.

David: But you have been many months in the field. Does your blood not burn in your veins at the thought of your wife?

Uriah: I cannot enjoy the comforts denied to others.

David: What?

Uriah: It is not just, my Lord. It is not right. Forgive me Lord I cannot.

David: I am your king. Will you disobey my laws?

Uriah: You are my king; I would obey you in all things. But there is a greater king whose law is absolute. His law I cannot break. My conscience speaks louder than your command. Forgive me, Lord. I cannot do this.

David: Let it be so then. I do not command you. I ask you, as brother might ask brother. You are a good man. Sleep with your wife this night and none shall know of it. Tomorrow you shall return to the field without dishonour.

Uriah: My Lord, I cannot.

(David returns to his seat, seals the paper and hands it to Uriah, who comes to receive it.)

David: We will send word to Joab. Your honour will be rewarded.

Chorus: Down with the poor and honest man! Let us tread him underfoot.

Bathsheba: Oh my Husband, you are lost to me. For the soft caress of a silken bed have I lost you.

Chorus: Down with the honest man. Let us tread him underfoot.

Bathsheba: Oh my husband you are lost to me. And the fruit of our orchard shall never ripen.

Uriah: I would come to you, my dearest, my love,
As the desert hare runs, so would I speed to you:

As the arrow flies, so would I fly to your breast.

But the trumpets are calling,

The swords are all unsheathed,

My enemy awaits.

Forget me not, my dearest, my wife, as night falls:

At the lighting of lamps, remember me.

Chorus: Down with the honest man! Let us tread him underfoot! Weakness is proved to be good for nothing.

Bathsheba: Oh my husband, you are lost to me

Like the sands of the desert that fly on the wind and are gone. I shall not see you again.

For your honour is a noose about your neck, your good name that you prize so much, is an arrow in your side.

Uriah: Remember me. Remember me. My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast.

Act II

Scene 1

Joab: You are welcome, Nathan. The King is at table. Take some wine with us!

Nathan: There is a judgement to be made.

Joab: Judgement can wait. We are feasting. Sit here. Drink!

David: Come, drink to my son, good Nathan. My firstborn of Bathsheba. Tell us, will he be great among men? He is strong as a ram, a young ram. Tell us, will he be great among men. Is he not strong and beautiful?

Nathan: There is a judgement to be made.

David: Then speak.

Nathan: There are two men in your city, one rich, the other poor. The rich man he has flocks and herds and fields of plenty. The poor man had but one sole ewe, a lamb he loved, that fed at his own table, that nestled in his arms, that drank from his cup. Like a daughter he loved her, his one ewe lamb. One day a traveller came to the rich man's house. The rich man would not spare a single lamb of his flocks, nor a goat, nor any of his goods, to serve his guest. He took from the poor man his one ewe lamb, the lamb he loved, and served up that. Tell me, my Lord, how should this rich man be served?

David: A curse upon him! Where is he? A man without pity! He shall pay four times over! Where is he? Bring him to me. With my own hand will I smite him!

Nathan: Thou art the man! You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, with the sword of the Ammonites have you murdered him. You have stolen his wife, the wife whom he loved, and taken her for your own. The Lord has seen these things. As you have struck down the innocent, so the son born to you, innocent as he is, shall be struck down. No longer shall you live in peace: the sword shall divide your house and there shall be strife between your sons.

David: I have sinned against the Lord.

Psalm 51, David and Chorus:

Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy steadfast love; according to thy abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!

For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done that which is evil in your sight, so that thou art justified in thy sentence and blameless in thy judgement.

Behold I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

And though thou hast hidden truth in the utmost darkness; through this mystery thou dost teach me wisdom.

Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.

Fill me with joy and gladness; let the bones which thou hast broken dance.

Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, oh God, and put a new and right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.

Then I will teach transgressors the ways that lead to thee, and sinners will return to thee.

Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of thy deliverance.

O Lord open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.

For thou hast no delight in sacrifice; were I to give a burnt offering, thou wouldst not be pleased.

The sacrifice, acceptable to God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

David: Oh Lord, I do not deserve that you should show me mercy, for I have shown none,

Only save my child, save my little son.

Scene 2

Bathsheba: You are come to tell me my son is dead.

Joab: It is so.

Bathsheba: Why must the innocent suffer, Joab? I will tell you. It is because we choose that it should be so. I hear you are to be Governor of Rabbah.

Joab: I am greatly honoured.

Bathsheba: The King values your services.

Joab: I do as he commands me.

Bathsheba: And if he commands you to do evil, do you obey him still?

Joab: The King is a righteous man; he would not command me to evil.

Bathsheba: But if he did.

Joab: I am his servant.

Bathsheba: We are all his servants. Yet still the choice is ours. Leave me, Joab.

Joab: My Lady.

Bathsheba:

Why has the fruit of my orchard failed?

Unripe has it dropped

and rots on the ground.

Why will the birds not sing in my orchard?

They will not sing at the sun's rising

nor at its setting.

Why has the fruit of my orchard failed?

Why have the lilies withered on the stem?

Their petals fallen,

their scent gone.

The sapling that I loved is dead.

Its branches snapped off,

its roots laid bare.

Why have the lilies withered on the stem?

A north wind has torn it from the ground,
the tender sapling that I cherished.

It should have grown strong and sturdy,
a worthy tree.

Now it will never fruit.

I have done this thing.

I have killed the thing I loved.

With my own hand, have I rent my flesh,
the living flesh that I made.

My land is a barren one,
its living springs dried up.

They will come no more to water my orchard.

No more will sweet blossom scent the breeze of the morning.

No more will the leaves give cool shade at midday.

The branches are bare, the ground parched,
burnt by the sun.

My land is barren.

Scene 3

Bathsheba: Where are the robes you have torn for the death of your son?

Where is the dirt on your hands and face for the death of your son?

Where is the fist that beats at your breast for the death of your son?

David: Though I lie upon the ground all day, all night, though I tear my hair and rend
the air with my cries, he will come no more.

Eat, my love. Eat of the good things God has given us.

Bathsheba: I cannot eat. My son is dead.

David: See the morning dawns. The rains of the night are gone. The city is washed
clean. Will you not rise up and come with me?

Bathsheba: I cannot. My son is dead.

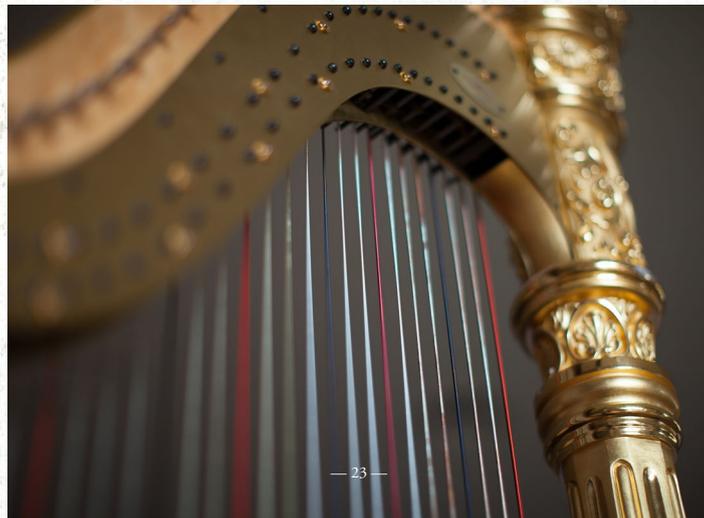
David: The misdeeds of the godless are without remedy. But our Lord has looked with
mercy upon our misdoing. He has not cast us into darkness. The fruit of his orchard
still ripens for us. Come, take of the fruit and eat.

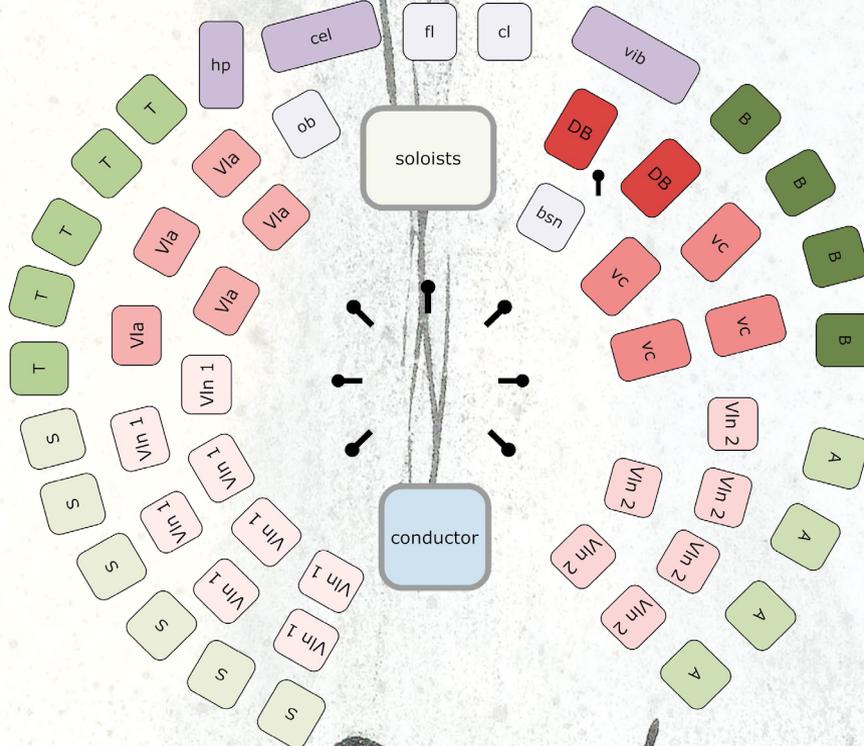
Bathsheba: No fruits can sweeten my misdeeds. Honey will turn bitter on my tongue.
I am spilled upon the ground like water. My son is dead.

David: There is a time for grief. And there is a time for grieving to end. We must learn
to be forgiven.

Chorus: The breath in our nostrils is but a wisp of smoke;
our reason is a mere spark kept alive by the beating of our hearts; when that goes out,
our body will turn to ashes and the breath of our life disperse like empty air.
Our names will be forgotten with the passing of time, and no one will remember
anything we did. Our life will blow over like the last vestige of a cloud;
as a mist is chased away by the sun's rays and overborne by its heat, so will it too be
dispersed.

But God created man for immortality.







2L (Lindberg Lyd) records in spacious acoustic venues; large concert halls, churches and cathedrals. This is actually where we can make the most intimate recordings. The qualities we seek in large rooms are not necessarily a big reverb, but openness due to the absence of close reflecting walls. Making an ambient and beautiful recording is the way of least resistance. Searching the fine edge between direct contact and openness; that's the real challenge! A really good recording should be able to bodily move the listener. This core quality of audio production is made by choosing the right venue for the repertoire, and balancing the image in the placement of microphones and musicians relative to each other in that venue. There is no method available today to reproduce the exact perception of attending a live performance. That leaves us with the art of illusion when it comes to recording music. As recording engineers and producers we need to do exactly the same as any good musician; interpret the music and the composer's intentions and adapt to the media where we perform.

Surround sound is a completely new conception of the musical experience. Recorded music is no longer a matter of a fixed two-dimensional setting, but rather a three-dimensional enveloping situation. Stereo can be described as a flat canvas, while surround sound is a sculpture that you can literally move around and relate to spatially; surrounded by music you can move about in the aural space and choose angles, vantage points and positions.

Morten Lindberg engineer and producer

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Blu-ray authoring **msm-studios GmbH**
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This recording was made by Lindberg Lyd AS with DPA microphones, Millennia Media amplifiers and SPHYNX2 converters to a PYRAMIX workstation. Digital eXTreme Definition is a professional audio format that brings "analogue" qualities in 24 bit at 352.8 kHz sampling rate. DXD preserves 8.4672 Mbit/s per channel linear PCM.

Note on Low Frequency Effect channel: For SACD and FLAC audio files, all six channels (including the Lfe channel) are calibrated for equal playback levels. However, in the audio streams for the Blu-ray the Lfe channel is lowered by -10dB in the mastering process, anticipating a +10dB elevation in cinema-style home theatre playback.