



## POLLUX WIND QUINTET

was formed in 1997 in Helsingborg, Sweden, by leading musicians from the Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra: Johan Skeppstedt Andersson, flute; Carl Andersson, oboe; Per Johansson, clarinet; Åshild Henriksen, French horn; and Magnus Nilsson, bassoon. Ever since its formation, the group has undertaken an active performance schedule, both in Sweden and abroad. Many composers have been inspired to write works directly for POLLUX, including Wolfgang Plagge, Lennart Fredriksson and

Reine Jönsson. In the autumn of 2000, the ensemble members were invited to the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, England, as specialist chamber music instructors. In October 2003, POLLUX represented the vibrant chamber music life of Helsingborg at the "Swedish Radio Music City of the Year" festival, where they performed a highly acclaimed concert, which was broadcast live on radio from Dunkers kulturhus, a prominent cultural institution in Helsingborg. POLLUX has performed concerts in Darmstadt and Jülich in Germany, and has also collaborated with renowned pianists such as Hans Pålsson, Nico Benadie and Johan Ullén.

## **JOHN FERNSTRÖM (1897–1961)**

### **Quintet for Wind Instruments op. 59**

John Fernström was born in China, the son of missionaries. In 1913 he began his studies at the Malmö Academy of Music and went on to become a violinist with the Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra from 1916 to 1939. In 1950, Fernström founded the Nordic Youth Orchestra, which is still highly active to this day. Fernström's works include twelve symphonies, several solo concertos, chamber music and vocal compositions. For the premiere performance of the Quintet by Den Danska Blåsarensemblen (The Danish Wind Ensemble) at the Swedish Music Days in Copenhagen in 1943, John Fernström wrote the following programme note: "The Wind Quintet opus 59 is a piece of chamber music that adheres completely to traditional forms. It thus makes no revolutionary claims, choosing rather to become the solid, natural artistic expression for five musically experienced and technically ambitious wind players coming together to bathe their souls in the joy of performing chamber music. It is, therefore, not an attempt to make the world a better place; its purpose is simply to emphasise the joy of making music together." Fernström's music is usually firmly anchored within tonality and classical forms. The first movement of the Quintet begins with a melody for the bassoon and oboe in unison, soon imitated by the clarinet and oboe. A second theme is then presented by the oboe, based on tonal

repetition, which is subsequently imitated by the other instruments. The second movement is also characterised by a contrapuntal structure with imitation. Clarinet and bassoon open with a contemplative dialogue. The introduction of the main theme is almost identical to the opening of the Prelude to Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*. In the middle of the movement, the French horn leads the ensemble into a short agitated passage before the "Tristan" motif returns in the flute accompanied by the clarinet. The flute opens the quick three-act dance of the third movement, and the contrasting middle section is dominated by bassoon and horn. The Quintet closes with a playful rondo – a perfect conclusion for a piece that focuses on the joy of making music.

## **WOLFGANG PLAGGE (b. 1960)**

### **Wind Quintet op. 105**

Wolfgang Plagge was born in Oslo, Norway to Dutch parents. He began playing the piano and composing at only four years of age. When he was ten years old, Plagge won an international piano competition on British national television, and when he was twelve he made a sensational debut concert in Oslo. Since then he has gone on to establish a successful international career as a solo pianist and chamber musician. As a composer, Plagge had works published as early as by the age of twelve, and today he has a comprehensive list of compositions, including symphonic works, chamber

music, pieces for solo piano and sacred music. Plagge has a particular interest and passion for wind instruments, and his Horn Sonata No. 1 has had considerable impact, becoming one of the required works in several horn competitions. The Wind Quintet op. 105 was written in 2000 specifically for POLLUX. The Wind Quintet opens with a long, woven melody inspired by folk music, which is presented against a backdrop of beautiful "Stravinsky" chords. This is followed by a passage in which the instruments hold a dialogue with one another in short phrases. This section closes with a return of the introductory melody as a cantus firmus over the dialogue. The next section is characterised by chords crashing off a single, sustained tone, creating considerable tension. After some moments, the flute, clarinet and oboe try to break free from the stubborn tone using quick incantatory twisting tones, but the note remains steady, not ceasing until the horn takes up the long, introductory melody again. The flute follows this impulse, and the Quintet rounds off with bright major chords, with only the bassoon holding onto a hint of a minor third.

**REINE JÖNSSON** (b. 1960)

**Wind Quintet – "Light, Slightly Moving"**

Reine Jönsson was born in Skåne in the south of Sweden, where he still lives to this day. He studied at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm between 1981 and 1990 under Sven-David

Sandström and Daniel Börtz, among others. His list of works, which began with electroacoustic music in 1984, has expanded to include operas, such as Strändernas Svall (Return to Ithaca) and Cecilia och Apkungen (Cecilia and the Monkey King), as well as many varied instrumental pieces. All his works have imaginative titles, such as En Tråd i Väven (One Thread in the Web), Om Hjärnan (On the Brain) and Himlen... Vänta! (Heaven... Wait!). Reine Jönsson says of his process of composition that as he is working on a large piece, such as an opera, he feels the need move on to music of a smaller scale, after which he again feels the desire to take on a larger work. This is how the Wind Quintet came into being, between two larger works. The title "Light, Slightly Moving" offers associations with the illumination of a landscape or a room with a simple torch – the complete picture is unclear to begin with, but details gradually glimmer through and become clear. Everyday details are lit unusually, making them more interesting and thrilling. A closing major chord is displayed in a fresh light, and the illumination of a barely noticeable repetition of ticking tones in the first movement causes its significance to swell in the last movement. The music is written largely polyphonically and the instruments rarely play purely chordal passages. We can clearly perceive Reine Jönsson's love of the Renaissance here, as his music tends to avoid overwrought contrasts and unduly dramatic culminations.

Instead, a calm and light atmosphere pervades his music. Jönsson himself says that his music aims to be both static and animated.

### **LENNART FREDRIKSSON** (b. 1952)

#### **Quintet for Winds – “Castor and Pollux”**

Lennart Fredriksson is a composer, violinist and conductor. Until the end of the 1980s, Fredriksson was principally active as a chamber musician, in particular as the leader of the Berwald Quartet. He has also often worked as concertmaster of the Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra. “Castor and Pollux” was composed specifically for the POLLUX ensemble, a commission for the inauguration of Dunkers kulturhus in Helsingborg in April 2002. “The name of the ensemble got me thinking about the Greek myth of Castor and Pollux and their inseparability,” says Fredriksson of the piece. As twins – like Castor and Pollux – the outer movements are carved from the same musical material. The opening andante consists of a melodic strand that wanders through the various instruments, a motif that is given the freedom to expand and develop in both the following allegro and in the final movement of the work. The music reaches a culmination that leads into a cadenza for the clarinet. The allegro is taken up again after this cadenza, and the movement is rounded off with rapid runs in the flute, which ultimately descend into oblivion. The second movement is melodious (cantabile) and expressive with long, sustained melodic lines (portato).

The third movement opens with a cadenza for the bassoon, a counterpart to the earlier clarinet cadenza. When the other instruments venture in, we hear the melodic strand from the first movement again, which then leads us into an allegro with a hint of tango – perhaps a dance for Castor and Pollux themselves? After a reminder of the work’s opening andante, the Quintet ends in a lively spirit.

### **LARS-ERIK LARSSON** (1908–1986)

#### **Quattro Tempi**

Lars-Erik Larsson was employed as musical leader and producer at Radiotjänst (Swedish Broadcasting Service), where he remained until 1954. Between 1947 and 1959 he was the first professor in composition at what is now the Royal College of Music in Stockholm. As a composer, Larsson is most well known for the choral work *Förklädd Gud* (God in Disguise), orchestral works and chamber music. He also wrote music for twenty-two films and even some popular hits. Larsson’s international breakthrough as a composer came with the premiere performance of the *Sinfonietta* for string orchestra at the ISCM (International Society for Contemporary Music) Festival in 1934. *Quattro Tempi* can signify four distinct times during a day, during a year or, quite simply, four different musical tempi. Lars-Erik Larsson perhaps also had in mind the variety of ages represented in the Society of Swedish Composers. The Society celebrated



**ÅSHILD HENRIKSEN** was born in Porsanger in the north of Norway, and spent her childhood on the island of Tjømø in the Oslo fjord. She studied with Frøydis Ree Wekre at the Norwegian Academy of Music and also with Peter Damm at the Carl Maria von Weber Music College in Dresden, Germany. Åshild became the principal French horn player with the Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra in 1979. She has performed as soloist with several Norwegian orchestras, including the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra and the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, and together with the Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra she has performed no less than six different horn concertos. In 1994, Åshild won third prize in the Scandinavian French Horn Competition in Mikkeli, Finland, and in the spring of 2005, Åshild recorded a CD for French horn and orchestra with the Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra under conductor Hannu Lintu called "Favourites for Horn".

**PER JOHANSSON** was born in Åmål, Sweden. His first clarinet teacher was Gunnar Pehrstad, and after two years at the Falun Conservatory of Music, Per studied for four years with Sölve Kingstedt at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm. Following this, Per studied three more years with Professor Hans Deinzer in the prestigious soloist diploma programme at the Music College in Hanover, Germany. Per has performed in Sweden, Norway, Finland, Holland, Germany, Austria, Italy and Brazil. In 1994 Per was awarded

fifth prize in the international clarinet competition in Markneukirchen, Germany, and in November 1996 he reached the semi-finals for duo performance with pianist Nico Benadie at the annual International Chamber Music Competition in Caltanissetta, Sicily. In 1998 Per became the principal clarinetist for the Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra.

**MAGNUS NILSSON** was born in Gothenburg, Sweden. He studied at the Academy of Music in Gothenburg with Arne Nilsson and Asger Svendsen, and at the age of only 19, Magnus was appointed as bassoonist in the Norrköping Symphony Orchestra. In 1985 he was awarded second prize at the IDRS Bassoon Competition in Boulder, Colorado, and in 1987, after further studies in Rome and Philadelphia, Magnus became principal bassoonist with the Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra. Magnus has performed recitals all over Europe, Australia, USA, Korea and China, and in 2006 he gave the world premiere performance of the bassoon concerto "Auroral Dances" by the Swedish composer Albert Schnelzer with the Fort Wayne Philharmonic Orchestra in USA, a work he reprised in 2008 with the Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra. Magnus is in constant demand for masterclasses, solo recitals and other concerts in Seoul with the United Bassoon Ensemble, and in 2009 he performed with the renowned Accademia Nuova Musik Bolzano in Italy.

its 50-year anniversary in 1968 and Quattro Tempi for wind quintet was intended as a tribute for this occasion. Earlier in the 1960s, Larsson had experimented with a personalised variation of the twelve-tone technique, but with Quattro Tempi, among other works, he returned to the composition of music that aimed at utmost simplicity combined with great ingenuity. This was an aesthetic stance that Larsson maintained in all his later works. The opening movement, Tranquillo, creates an atmosphere of sunny, rustic mornings with twittering birds. After a calmer chorale-like passage, the movement ends peacefully with the hint of a cuckoo call in the distance. The second movement is full of activity, with instruments chasing each other incessantly through short, dynamic phrases. The third movement embraces an autumnal and melancholy tone, while the final movement re-establishes the opening movement's light, pastoral mood. Bassoon and horn share a simple canon, which takes its inspiration from folk music, and after a playful dialogue between the clarinet and flute, a slower version of the melody follows in a minor key before the movement rounds off with a repetition of the opening section.

**JOHAN SKEPPSTEDT ANDERSSON** was born in Östersund, Sweden. Johan studied with Torleif Ander at the Ingesund Music College in Arvika, Sweden. Following this, he undertook five years of studies at the Malmö Academy of

Music under Anders Ljungar-Chapelon, Sven-Olof Johansson and Bertil Melander, and in the spring of 1999 he studied at the Royal College of Music in London. On several occasions, Johan has appeared with orchestras as a soloist, such as in his performances of the Mozart Concerto in G and the Jolivet Flute Concerto with the Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra, and has performed numerous chamber music concerts. In the autumn of 2002, Johan became the co-principal flautist with the Malmö Symphony Orchestra, and from January 2008 Johan has been the principal flautist with the Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra.

**CARL ANDERSSON** was born in Hässleholm, Sweden. In 1982, Carl appeared as soloist at the event "Open House for Young Musicians" in the renowned Berwaldhallen concert hall in Stockholm, and some years later he became the principal oboist for the International Youth Orchestra. Carl studied at the Malmö Academy of Music under Professor Jörgen Hammergaard and at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm under Alf Nilsson. Following his studies, Carl was actively engaged as a freelance musician for both shorter and extended periods in all of the major Swedish symphony orchestras. From 1993 to 1995 he performed with the Stockholm Royal Court Orchestra, and since 1995 Carl has been oboist and cor anglais specialist with the Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra.



# POLLUX

## WIND QUINTET

Johan Skeppstedt Andersson  
flute

Carl Andersson  
oboe

Per Johansson  
clarinet

Åshild Henriksen  
French horn

Magnus Nilsson  
bassoon