AINO SIURUA

22. april 2026
Kl. 19.30

Konservatoriets Koncertsal
Julius Thomsens Gade 1

DEBUTKONCERT

In the Shadow of Light

CELLO

DET KONGELIGE DANSKE MUSIKKONSERVATORIUM

Gratis adgang

dkdm.dk

PROGRAM

KAIJA SAARIAHO (1952-2023)

Jing

Åsne Sjølie Sandegren, mezzosopran

JOHN TAVERNER (1944-2013)

Akhmatova Songs

IV. Couplet

Åsne Sjølie Sandegren, mezzosopran

ALFRED SCHNITTKE (1934-1998)

Sonate for cello og klaver nr. 1

Largo
Presto
Largo

Kristoffer Nyholm Hyldig, klaver

PAUSE (20 MINUTTER)

ZOË MARTLEW (F. 1968)

Salat Babilya

JOHN TAVERNER (1944-2013)

Akhmatova Songs

VI. Death

Åsne Sjølie Sandegren, mezzosopran

PĒTERIS VASKS (F. 1946)

Grāmata čellam for solo cello

Fortissimo
Pianissimo

JEAN SIBELIUS (1865-1957)

To seriøse melodier for cello og orkester opus 77
Cantique "Laetare anima mea"
Devotion "Ab imo pectore"

Arrangeret af Hjörtur Páll Eggertsson

Dirigent: Hjörtur Páll Eggertsson
Celloensemble: Cansin Kara, Torbjørn Eika Jørgensen, Jonas Risbo
Jia Gao, Ziqing Lin, Juliane Soewarta, Amalie Askjær Staunæs og Tiril Lorås Ystgaard
Anna Ottilie Ravnsberg Frederiksen, harpe

AINO SIURUA

I am a Finnish cellist based in Copenhagen, currently completing my postgraduate soloist diploma at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in the class of Richard Krug. During my studies in DKDM Ii also had the privilege to be tutored by Toke Møldrup, Morten Zeuthen, and Andreas Brantelid, who have each influenced my artistic voice and approach to the cello.

As a performer, I have assisted and worked with orchestras such as the Aalborg Symphony Orchestra, Copenhagen Phil, and the Danish National Symphony Orchestra, as well as the Malmö Opera, Malmö Symphony Orchestra, and Sønderjyllands Symphony Orchestra.

Alongside my performing career, I work as a cello teacher at Tårnby Musikskole, where I have a sweet and inspiring cello class that I am fortunate to be working with.
Besides classical music, I enjoy spicy food for its warmth and intensity - a glimpse of which can be found in today's programme - and listening to K-pop.

THANK YOU

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my teacher, Richard Krug, whose musicality is deeply inspiring and who never becomes sceptical of my sometimes rather "crazy" ideas, but instead encourages me to explore them.
Many thanks go also to my previous teachers at the Royal Danish Academy of Music, Toke Møldrup, Morten Zeuthen, and Andreas Brantelid, for their guidance, inspiration, and support throughout my studies.
A special thank you to Åsne, Kristoffer, Hjörtur and the best cello ensemble for sharing the stage and music with me. It is a true joy to make music together.
Thank you, Panos, for your patience, especially in moments when I insist on playing violin repertoire on the cello.
And finally, my heartfelt thank you to two truly powerful women, my mother and grandmother. Periksi ei anneta.

PROGRAM NOTES

This program grew out of my curiosity with extremes; between darkness and brightness, stillness and violence, control and the edge of losing it. These contrasts are not distant from each other, but they exist side by side, often within a single gesture.
Many of these pieces feel as if they are confronting something final, for example death, silence, or the fear of unraveling. There are moments where the music seems to resist and others where it lets go completely, slipping into something unstable, almost unrecognizable.
For me, this concert is about inhabiting those extremes. It is about confronting the tension before resolving it. It is in these moments, at the edge of control and clarity, that the music feels most urgent and most human.

Kaija Saariaho: Jing
Kaija Saariaho's Jing (2006) draws on an ancient Chinese poem, often attributed to Li Qingzhao, whose text gives voice to solitude, memory, and an unrelenting grief.It portrays the life of an old woman who is looking back on her past. The poem unfolds in fragments: repeated words ("search, seek… cold, naked… sorrow, pain") create a sense of restlessness and emotional dislocation, as if language itself is struggling to contain the feelings.
Images from the poem (passing wild geese, withering flowers, evening wind, and rain tapping on leaves) are not illustrated directly but translated into atmosphere. The cello creates a sound landscape in which the voice seems both accompanied and isolated, echoing the poet's sense of distance from the world and from past companionship.
At its core, the text moves toward a profound question: how can the single word "sorrow" ever express the depth of human feeling?

John Taverner: Akhmatova songs
John Tavener's Akhmatova Songs sets texts by the Russian poet Anna Akhmatova, whose writing bears witness to personal loss and spiritual endurance. Tavener, deeply drawn to the contemplative and the sacred, approaches her poetry with a musical language of simplicity and intensity.
In The Couplet (No. 4), Akhmatova' in her short text: ("For me praise from others – as ashes, / But from you even blame – is praise.") distrusts praise of her own work. Tavener reflects this psychological intensity through an insistent, recurring motif that circles the same musical space to the point of obsession.
In Death (No. 6) according to the composer's note "The poet is looking forward to her own death (with a suggestion of personal afterlife life); its inevitability and her own longing for it. The poet bids a painful farewell to her beloved homeland and steps into the cabin that has been particularly prepared for her."

Alfred Schnittke Sonata for cello and piano No. 1
Alfred Schnittke's Sonata for Cello and Piano No. 1 (1978) stands as one of the most uncompromising chamber works of the late twentieth century. Written during a period of personal and artistic tension, the sonata alternates between raw aggression and romantic lyricism, echoes of Baroque counterpoint and modernist dissonance.
Tonality briefly surfaces only to be dissolved or distorted, as if the music itself cannot sustain a single identity for long.The cello and piano engage in a tense dialogue creating the sense of two voices struggling to communicate across an emotional void and all heard through a fractured lens.
The result is a work of intense psychological charge, a voice continually trying (but sometimes failing) to hold itself together.

Zoë Martlew Salat Babilya
Salat Babilya was inspired by music from Iraq and more specifically by the oud, a variety of Middle Eastern lute dating back to antiquity.The oud is resembled through only the use of pizzicato, harmonics and ornaments on the cello.
According to the composer "The particular oud piece that inspired this one was written to help lull the children of Bagdad to sleep during bombing raids and bears the same title, which translates from the Arabic as "Babylonian Prayer".

Pēteris Vasks: Grāmata čellam for Cello Solo
Latvian composer Pēteris Vasks is known for deeply spiritual and emotional music, often reflecting themes of nature, humanity, and inner struggle. Grāmata čellam ("The Book") is one of his most striking works for solo cello.
Rather than following a traditional storyline, it explores a journey of emotional extremes through two strongly contrasting sections.
The first part, "Fortissimo", is turbulent and aggressive. It drives forward with relentless energy, using harsh musical gestures and intense rhythmic figures. To my first impression of the piece, the very opening reminded me of a Morse Code intense message. The music grows in tension until it reaches a desperate climax, demanding an emotional commitment from the performer.
In stark contrast, the second part, "Pianissimo," opens in a free, almost improvisatory manner. Gradually, it transforms into a lyrical Andante cantabile, where a long, singing melody unfolds. This section offers a sense of reflection, consolation, and spiritual calm. The work closes quietly, recalling earlier material as if fading into memory.
The piece can be heard as a metaphorical "book" of human experience, moving from conflict and despair toward contemplation and transcendence.

Jean Sibelius: Two pieces for cello and orchestra
Jean Sibelius's Cantique and Devotion, written in 1914-1915, are two pieces for cello (or violin) and orchestra and together they are forming the "Two Serious Melodies", Op. 77. The pieces showcase a pairing of spiritual uplift and deep, dramatic reflection .
Cantique's alternate title in latin "Laetare anima mea" (rejoice my soul) expresses joy while Devotion's Ab imo pectore translates to "the depths of my heart". It was added as the partner to Cantique later, and represents a deeper, more emotional contrast.

ARTISTS

Kristoffer Hyldig is a Danish pianist active across a wide range of repertoire, as a soloist and chamber musician, and a founding member of Messiaen Quartet Copenhagen. He co-directs the Båstad Chamber Music Festival and serves as artistic director of the Fejø Festival. His recording of Vingt regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus received international acclaim and was named Album of the Year by Danish Radio (P2) and Politiken in 2023.

He has performed widely across Europe, Asia, North Africa, and the United States, including at Carnegie Hall, and is the recipient of several awards, including the Léonie Sonning Talent Prize and the Danish Music Critics' Artist Award.

The Icelandic cellist and conductor **Hjörtur Páll Eggertsson** moved to Denmark in 2017 to study cello at the Royal Danish Academy of Music. He has experience as both an orchestral and chamber musician and has performed as a soloist, including with the Iceland Symphony Orchestra. From 2020 to 2022, he was a student at the Malko Conductors' School. As a conductor, he has participated in masterclasses with Herbert Blomstedt, Fabio Luisi, and Jorma Panula, and has worked with the Aarhus Symphony Orchestra and Copenhagen Phil.

In 2025, he began his studies with Giordano Bellincampi in the soloist class at DKDM. Alongside his studies, he has also participated in Dirigentløftet Danmark. In 2024, he made his debut with the Iceland Symphony Orchestra and has been invited to return in 2026.

Åsne Sjølie Sandegren finished her studies at the Opera Academy in Copenhagen in 2025 after studies at The Royal Danish Academy of Music and UiT The Arctic University of Norway. She has studied with Helene Gjerris, David Kempster and Hanna Hjort amongst others. Åsne had her debut at The Royal Danish Theater in Puccini's Suor Angelica as one of the Le Cercatrici. She has portrayed roles such as Marcellina in Le nozze di Figaro, The title role in L'Enfant et les sortileges, Arsamene in Serse, Lady Bertram in Mansfield park, and Mercedes in Carmen.

Åsne has performed as a soloist with Copenhagen Philharmonics, Ensemble Storstrøm, Arctic Sinfonietta and RDAM symphony orchestra amongst others, and been involved in festivals such as Copenhagen Opera festival, Hirtshals Opera festival, Arctic Chamber Music Festival and Rued Langaard festival.

Norwegian folk music has always been an important part of Åsne's life, and she is looking for ways to bring it into her artistry and musicianship. Together with Aino she is exploring the voice and the cellos sound through different styles in classical music and Norwegian folk music.

LYRICS

Kaija Saariaho Jing
Translation by Aleksi Barrière

I search search, seek seek;
cold cold, naked naked;
anguish anguish, sorrow sorrow, pain pain.
A moment of warmth, then it flew away, gave way to winter.
How hard it is for a heart to find peace.
And how could a few cups of weak wine
bring warmth, when the cold evening wind is a-coming?
A gash in my heart
when the wild geese fly by,
Those friends from times past.
Yellow flowers cover the earth,
they wither with sorrow;
who would bother picking them up now?
I linger by the window,
how can I endure loneliness when the darkness comes?
The wu-t'ung's leaves flicker in fine rain,
the drops are drumming amidst the yellow fog:
tien tien ti ti.
How could one single word
sorrow
say anything at all?

Taverner Akhmatova Songs
Translations from the Russian by Mother Thekla Orthodox Monastery of the Assumption Normanby, Whitby, North Yorkshire. 2002 Chester Music Ltd.

IV COUPLET
For me praise from others - as ashes,
But from you even blame - is praise.

1931

VI DEATH
I was on the border of something Which has no certain name...
A drowsy summons,
A slipping away from myself...

Already I stand at the threshold to something, The lot of all, but at a varying price...
On this ship, there is a cabin for me
And wind in the sails - and the dread moment Of the parting with my native land.

1942