
CARL NIELSEN AND NANCY DALBERG

Nancy Dalberg as Carl Nielsen's pupil, assistant and patron

By Lisbeth Ahlgren Jensen

Nielsen's activities as composer, violinist, conductor and teacher brought him into contact with a large number of people over the years, and thanks to his charming personality, many of these came to enjoy close bonds of friendship with him. In several cases his friendships developed into a means of practical and human support that was of incalculable significance for him. His circle of acquaintances included the landowners Bodil and Viggo Neergaard at Fuglsang manor house on Lolland, Charlotte Trap de Thygeson at the Damgaard estate, business entrepreneurs such as the directors Carl Johan and Vera Michaelsen, and the Mannheimer family of bank directors in Gothenburg, as well as fellow-musicians and one-time pupils.

We may add to these the name of the composer Nancy Dalberg. She was Nielsen's pupil, she helped him with the fair copying and instrumentation of some of his works, and she belonged to his personal circle of acquaintances. But Nielsen also played an important role in her career as a composer, since it was not least through his professional and friendly support that she secured public performances of her first larger works.

The purpose of this article is to illuminate their friendship in its various aspects, as seen in diffuse and diverse sources, including their correspondence, Nielsen's diary entries, musical materials and concert reviews. The aim is to contribute to a description of the circle around Nielsen. As an admirer and patron, Nancy Dalberg may be compared with the Michaelsens, and as a musical assistant she may be compared with, for example, the pianist Henrik Knudsen and the composer and music historian Knud Jeppesen. Finally as a composer she shares certain characteristics with several of Nielsen's other pupils whose music is nowadays virtually unknown; and by this she may be taken to exemplify several of the composers who are generally held to stand in his shadow.

Nancy Dalberg as a pupil of Carl Nielsen

It has not been possible to determine when or in what circumstances Nancy Dalberg first came into contact with Nielsen. They could have met at a social gathering, and

the idea that she should go to him for composition lessons may therefore have arisen in conversation. But it is also conceivable that she may have sought him out without further introduction in his capacity as the country's leading composer, because she was looking for supervision after her previous teacher, the Norwegian conductor-composer Johan Svendsen, died in 1911. In any case their acquaintance developed over time, to the point where composition lessons and discussion of musical topics went hand in hand with social contact, which also came to include their spouses and other members of their families.

Nancy Dalberg was born in 1881, the daughter of the enterprising factory owner and pharmacist Christian Hansen, by his second marriage to Agnes Mathilde Hedemann.¹ She grew up on the south Funen estate of Mullerup, but at the age of only 20 she married the engineer-officer Erik Dalberg and after this time lived in Copenhagen. The marriage remained childless and was dissolved a few years before Erik Dalberg's death in 1945. In her youth Nancy Dalberg had private piano lessons with Professor Ove Christensen, and she reached a standard at which in 1907 she was able to give a public evening piano recital for charity.² In 1909 she began to study music theory and composition with Johan Svendsen, and after his death she may possibly have continued her studies with the composer and violinist Fini Henriques before finally becoming a pupil of Nielsen's.

Among her compositions held in the collection of the Royal Library there is a bound notebook,³ which contains fair copies of compositions by both Nancy and Erik Dalberg. These compositions, almost all of them songs with piano accompaniment, are carefully signed and dated between summer 1909 and autumn 1910. We may therefore assume that they were made in connection with studies with Johan Svendsen. Although the idea of including compositions by both husband and wife in the same book may have been a joint project, in the long run it was Nancy Dalberg who was the persistent one. The greater part of the songs, together with a short piece, *Stemning* (Mood), for cello and piano, were composed by her, but in several cases they were fair-copied by her husband. At the Museum of Musical Instruments in Copenhagen several songs by Erik Dalberg are preserved, with text and melody by him, while his wife supplied the accompaniment. Some of the songs were evidently composed as *pieces d'occasion* to celebrate family occasions; for example, a *Ballade* by Erik Dalberg has the title 'in comic song

1 These and following details of Nancy Dalberg's biography are based on Grethe Holmen, 'Hilda Sehested og Nancy Dalberg,' *Nye Toner* (special issue of *Forum for Kvindeforskning*, 1986), 29-36.

2 The programme for the concert, which took place in the Hornung & Møller Hall on 20th March 1907, is in *DK-Kk Småtrykssamlingen*. Works included Beethoven's Sonata in F minor, Op. 57 (*Appassionata*), Chopin's Fantasy in F minor and a Mozart sonata with violinist Frederikke Philip.

3 *DK-Kk*, Nancy Dalberg, MA ms 6198.

style, dedicated to the composer Nancy Dalberg', and on the envelope: 'written for the grandchildren at Mullerup'.⁴ The multi-talented Erik Dalberg was also a keen portrait painter, and gradually painting came to overshadow his interest in composition, although he continued to be good for a witty song-text when the situation demanded.

It was probably more advanced training in composition that Nancy Dalberg sought from Nielsen, which is to say that she wanted to gain the foundations for composing instrumental music. We have, for example, a series of exercises in counterpoint, dated November 1912, and since many of these are identical to certain exercises that Nielsen himself did in connection with his counterpoint studies in the 1890s,⁵ it seems likely that it was he who set them; which indicates that her studies with him began at the end of 1912 (though the exercises may also have been taken from a collection that was used by other teachers or was recommended for self-teaching). But there can scarcely be any doubt that it was Nielsen who at some point gave her the task of scoring Mozart's Symphony in G minor, K. 550, from the piano-duet reduction. For instance, her instrumentation, with excerpts from all four movements, carries his commentary in the margins; for example, on page 2 he wrote: 'Horn and oboe (four voices) never sound good together; better oboes and bassoon or horns and clarinets'.⁶

As a student Nielsen himself had prepared for quartet composition by studying examples from the Viennese Classics; for instance, he 'modelled' a movement in F major on the thematic and modulatory structure of Beethoven's String Quartet Op. 18 No.1 (see the article by Friedhelm Krummacher in this volume, pp. 89ff.), and he used this approach later in teaching Knud Jeppesen, whom he gave the task of composing a quartet based on Mozart's String Quartet in A, K. 464. Jeppesen writes: 'So my first task was to copy a Mozart string quartet: that is to say, inventing new themes in Mozartian style, but precisely following his modulatory and, especially, formal plan.'⁷ It is not

4 *I Skæmtevisestil, tilegnet Komponisten Nancy Dalberg*. Compositions at The Museum of Musical Instruments in Copenhagen. The grandchildren in question were presumably Nancy Dalberg's nephews and nieces.

5 Carl Nielsen's counterpoint studies (DK-Kk, CNS 359) were apparently made in advance of his composition of the choral work *Hymnus amoris* in 1895. (see Torben Meyer & Frede Schandorf Petersen (eds.), *Carl Nielsen. Kunstneren og Mennesket*, Copenhagen 1947-1948, vol. 1, 132).

6 *Horn og Obo (4-Stemmigt) klinger aldrig godt sammen, derimod Obo-Fagot eller Horn-Clarinet*. DK-Kk, MA ms 6233, Nancy Dalberg. The instrumentation is for flutes, oboe, clarinet in B flat, bassoon, two horns in F, timpani and strings.

7 *Saaledes fik jeg som første Opgave at kopiere en Strygekvarter af Mozart, d.v.s. saaledes at jeg dannede nye Themaer efter Mozart, men ellers fulgte Modulationsgangen, og især Formen nøjagtigt*. Jeppesen's quartet is preserved in manuscript (DK-Kk, Knud Jeppesen Archive IV, 12). Jeppesen also described his studies with Nielsen in 'Carl Nielsen paa Hundreårsdagen' [Carl Nielsen at his Centenary], *Dansk Aarvog for Musikforskning* (1964-1965), 137-150.

improbable that Nielsen should have taught Nancy Dalberg according to the same principle, and that in addition to teaching her counterpoint and instrumentation he should have suggested that she study Viennese Classical quartets with a view to mastering thematic work and quartet texture, which would then also stand her in good stead when she came to compose for orchestra.

In the first surviving letter from Nancy Dalberg to Nielsen, the topic is a string quartet that she must have composed under his guidance. The letter was written in December 1914 and deals with a planned performance of the quartet at her house, with the participation of Nielsen, violinist Peder Møller and cellist Carl Meyer. She left it to Nielsen to decide who should be invited to play viola.⁸ So it was he who helped her to establish musical contacts. At Christmas she could look back on her quartet exercises as one of the highpoints of her year, and she wrote a heartfelt letter of thanks to her teacher, whom she still called 'Hr. Kapelmester' at this point; later she called him, in a slightly humorous tone, 'Master', and in the summer of 1921 they began to use the informal 'du' instead of the formal 'De', when addressing each other.

At the same time may I again thank you for the festive evening you prepared for me a couple of days ago. It was simply with a feeling of happiness that I sat and listened as my notes came to life – especially in the Adagio and the Finale. I would not have believed such a beautiful performance possible after only one rehearsal. It was an evening I shall never forget; and it was just overwhelming for me to experience such great joy. How amusing the rehearsals were. And just the fact that you, Herr Kapellmeister, and the other artists were sitting here and playing something of mine: that was just like being in a fairy tale! I am still going around in party mood; but I shall probably pull myself together soon and start working.⁹

Nancy Dalberg's excitement at hearing her quartet played so beautifully could not be disguised, and it was presumably this occasion that encouraged her to put on her first public composer's concert the following year. This took place on 8th November 1915

8 DK-Kk, CNA, I.A.b., letter from Nancy Dalberg to Carl Nielsen, 12.12.1914.

9 *Samtidig maa jeg have Lov til endnu engang at sige Tak for den festlige Aften, De beredte mig forleden. Det var ligefrem med en Følelse af Lykke, at jeg sad og hørte paa, hvordan mine Toner fik Liv – særlig i Adagio'en og Finalen. En saa smuk Udførelse havde jeg ikke troet var mulig efter kun én Prøve. Det var en Aften, som jeg aldrig vil glemme; og det virkede helt overvældende paa mig at opleve saa stor en Glæde. Hvor var de Prøver morsomme – og blot det, at De, Hr. Kapelmester, og de andre Kunstnere sad her og spillede paa noget af mit, det var næsten som at opleve et Eventyr! Jeg gaar stadig rundt i Feststemning – men jeg skal nok snart tage mig sammen og være flittig. DK-Kk, CNA, I.A.b., letter from Nancy Dalberg to Carl Nielsen, 'Christmas 1914'.*

in the Odd Fellow Palæ's so-called 'Lesser Hall' and consisted of a mixed programme of Nancy Dalberg's instrumental music and songs. It began with the String Quartet in D minor mentioned above, then two groups of songs, separated by two compositions for cello and piano. At the end Nielsen conducted her *Scherzo for String Orchestra* with an ensemble put together for the occasion. The concert was reviewed in all the main newspapers,¹⁰ and although critical opinion was mixed, there were many words of praise for the debutante composer, the conductor and the musicians and singers.

Nielsen also conducted at Nancy Dalberg's next composer's concert, on 14th March 1918 in the Odd Fellow Palæ's 'Greater Hall'. This took the form of a purely orchestral concert, presenting two of her new works: her Symphony in C sharp minor, together with a one movement orchestral piece entitled *Capriccio*. The concert also included a repeat performance of her *Scherzo for String Orchestra*.¹¹

It did not escape the press's attention that this was the first time a Danish woman had had a symphony of her own performed, and the reviews were therefore more concerned with the question of how far a woman was able to compose music in large forms than with how Nancy Dalberg had solved the task. *Kristeligt Dagblad* explained, for example, that 'Her symphony was not, however, the contribution that at this point establishes woman's equal rights with man's',¹² while *Nationaltidende* on the other hand took the view that the work 'was so well crafted that many of her male colleagues might have lent their name to it'.¹³ Opinions on her gifts as a symphonist were therefore divided. Several reviewers praised her technical mastery of the orchestral forces and considered that she had matured as a composer in the intervening years;¹⁴ others, however, suggested that her musical ideas were not sufficiently significant to form the basis of symphonic development.¹⁵ Nielsen's participation in the concert was only sporadically discussed. For example *Kristeligt Dagblad* stated that 'by conducting he placed his imprimatur on his pupil's work' (*ved at dirigere ligesom satte sit Navn som Stempel paa sin Elevs Arbejde*), while *Vort Land* concluded its review with a curt summary: 'Mr Carl Nielsen assumed his duties as the evening's conductor with easy mastery'.¹⁶ So it was not said at the time that Nancy Dalberg only had her music performed because Nielsen took it upon himself to put it on, although the fact that he supported her was

10 On the reception of Nancy Dalberg's concerts, see my article in *Fund og Forskning* 45 (2006).

11 The programme also included Eugen d'Albert's Piano Concerto No. 2 in E flat, with Agnete Tobiesen as soloist.

12 *Hendes Symfoni blev imidlertid ikke den Indsats, som paa dette Punkt godtgjorde Kvindens Ligeberettigelse med Manden. Kristeligt Dagblad* 15.3.1918.

13 *var saa godt gjort et Musikerarbejde, at mangen en af hendes mandlige Kolleger meget vel kunde være den bekendt. Nationaltidende* 15.3.1918.

14 *Hovedstaden* 15.3.1918 and *Vort Land* 15.3.1918.

15 *Nationaltidende* 15.3.1918 and *Berlingske Tidende* 15.3.1918.

16 *Hr. Carl Nielsen bestred med Overlegenhed Hvervet som Aftenens Kapelmester.*

doubtless of great personal significance for her. It is another matter that he apparently did not make much attempt to perform her orchestral works, for example in the Musikforening, where he was conductor at this time (1915-1925). The only example of Nielsen suggesting a specific composition task to Nancy Dalberg was in 1916 when she contributed two single-voiced melodies – *Ja, I Bølgetoner bløde* (Yes, you soft sounds of the waves, text by Holger Drachmann) and *Vandet risler* (The water trickles, Johannes Jørgensen) – on an equal footing with several other Nielsen pupils, to a song collection that Nielsen was editing for the College teacher Johan Borup's *Dansk Sangbog* (Danish Songbook) . This songbook may be considered a forerunner to the *Sangbogen 'Danmark'* (Songbook 'Denmark'), to which she contributed a single-line melody for *Her kommer nu din lange Dreng* (Now here comes your tall boy, text by Zacharias Nielsen).¹⁷

Nancy Dalberg composed instrumental music for progressively larger forces, beginning with the String Quartet (1914), then the *Scherzo for String Orchestra* (1915) which is conceived as a five-part string texture with the double basses chiefly doubling the cellos, and finally two works for full orchestra , the *Symphony in C sharp minor* (1917) and *Capriccio* (1918). Whether she was following a plan that Nielsen had set forth for her instruction, or whether she herself wished to address the various genres in this order, is uncertain, but the next logical step on her path as a composer was apparently an orchestral overture, which, however, remained unfinished.¹⁸ From the beginning of the 1920s there is evidence that she wanted to try out her powers on an opera. Her choice of subject fell on the Swedish author Selma Lagerlöf's breakthrough work of 1891, the novel *Gösta Berlings Saga*. However, she did not receive the author's clearance to use the novel as the subject of an opera, since Lagerlöf had shortly beforehand given the Italian composer Riccardo Zandonai permission to use it for the same purpose.¹⁹ In this connection Nielsen, who was then working as guest conductor in Gothenburg, wrote a letter of commiseration to Nancy Dalberg:

It was really too tedious [Nielsen uses the Swedish word 'tråkigt'] that Selma[*] had already promised herself despite her advanced years; but to be frank I am not anxious about you, as you may have noticed at our last meeting at your house.

17 *Nye Melodier til de nyere Sangtekster i Johan Borup's Dansk Sangbog redigeret af Carl Nielsen* [New melodies for the recent song-texts in Johan Borup's Danish Songbook, edited by Carl Nielsen], 1916 and *Melodier til Sangbogen "Danmark"* [Melodies for the songbook 'Denmark'], compiled by Carl Nielsen and Hakon Andersen, 1924.

18 DK-Kk, MA ms 6185, Nancy Dalberg, Sketch for an Overture for Orchestra.

19 Riccardo Zandonai, *I Cavalieri di Ekebi*, (ca. 1923).

Because I think that for the time being it is still better for you to be working with absolute music. Remember that every art-form makes its own unalterable demands, which it mercilessly exacts before it will allow its practitioner to use it as 'applied' art. And operatic music is indeed in a way only applied music; it's the same relationship as if one wanted to place a finely broken-in horse before a carriage.²⁰

So nothing came of an opera by Nancy Dalberg, but she did compose a single song to a text from *Gösta Berlings Saga*: 'Marianne Sinclair's Song', which she asked the author's permission in 1925 to publish.²¹ It was not published until 1935 in a version for voice and piano, but it also survives in manuscript in a version for voice with orchestral accompaniment, which indicates that she had perhaps made a start on composing the opera *before* she contacted the author or perhaps had not entirely given up the thought of using the larger orchestral forces in connection with Selma Lagerlöf's text.

It is hard to say what we should read into Nielsen's words to her that she should still 'for the time being' work with absolute music, in preference to forcing her orchestral ability to submit to the demands of dramatic music. Should his remarks be understood as a positive evaluation of her talent for composing instrumental music or as a negative evaluation of her gifts for composing vocal music and creating dramatic music? As a whole it is not known what Nielsen thought about Nancy Dalberg's compositions, but if he had thought that she had no talent, he would scarcely have appeared in front of the orchestra at the two above-mentioned concerts. In summer 1918 Frederik Schnedler-Petersen conducted Nancy Dalberg's orchestral work *Capriccio* in a concert at Tivoli, but her symphony did not have any other complete performances. Only in 1935 and again in 1946 – after Nielsen's death – did she succeed in having two movements (under the title *Two Orchestral Pieces*, Op. 9) played by the Danish Broadcasting Corporation, so it is no wonder that over time she lost the urge to compose orchestral music and instead concentrated on chamber music and songs. That Nielsen did not

20 *Det var jo 'tråkigt' nok at Selma [*] allerede havde forlovet sig paa Trods af sine ældre Dage; men oprigtigt talt saa sørger jeg ikke paa Dine Vegne, hvad Du maaske kunde mærke paa mig ved vor sidste Samtale hos Dig.*

Jeg tror nemlig at det endnu en Tid er bedre for Dig at arbejde med absolut Musik. Husk paa at hver Kunst har sine egne uforanderlige Krav som den ubønhørligt stiller inden den tillader sine Udøvere at benytte den som 'anvendt' Kunst. Og Operamusik er jo paa en Maade kun anvendt Musik; det er samme Forhold som om man vilde sætte en fint tilreden Hest for en Vogn. DK-Kk, CNA, I.A.c, letter from Carl Nielsen to Nancy Dalberg, 24.4.1922. The asterisk in square brackets refers to a remark added by Dalberg in the margin of the letter, where she mentions her approach to Selma Lagerlöf.

21 Royal Library, Stockholm. L.1:1:48, letter from Nancy Dalberg to Selma Lagerlöf, 16.2.1925.

participate in her composer's concerts in 1922 and 1929 may therefore rest on the fact that on these occasions she presented herself in several smaller genres, which did not require his services as conductor.

Just as it is hard to determine when she began to study with Nielsen, so it is hard to determine when she finished her studies with him. Apparently she continued to have the same relationship with him in musical questions as he had had with his theory teacher Orla Rosenhoff after his studies at the Conservatoire; that is, they continued to discuss musical questions or she requested commentaries to her compositions while they were in progress. In 1923, for example, Nielsen wrote to her: 'I am glad that you have been working, and I should like to see the piece at Telmányi's one of these days.'²² And when in autumn 1927 she sent him her newly published *Scherzo Grazioso for Violin and Piano*, Op. 8, dedicated to Telmányi, he thanked her only 'provisionally', at the same time as he expressed the hope that Telmányi would perform it at one of his concerts.²³ We may suppose that on some later occasion he commented in more detail on the violin piece, but this is not documented in their correspondence. On an earlier occasion he had thanked her for a gift, which evidently was accompanied by a musical greeting: 'Telmányi was just round with us when it arrived, and Telmányi sang and read the words and the music at sight while at the same time laughing his head off.'²⁴ It is not known what musical joke from Nancy Dalberg managed to evoke such an abandoned mood in the Nielsen family, but the episode shows that her acquaintance with Nielsen had moved far beyond the respectful politeness with which she addressed him in 1914. An example of the fact that he for his part valued her musical judgment is provided by a letter from 1928, in which he confides to her:

Sometime I shall show you some passages in my new Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra, where the part-writing in the instruments is so free that I really have no idea how it will sound. Maybe it won't sound good, but it doesn't amuse me to compose music if I only stick with the same manner.²⁵

22 *Det glæder mig at Du har arbejdet og jeg vil gerne se Tingen hos Telmanyi en af Dagene.* DK-Kk, CNA I.A.c., letter from Nielsen to Nancy Dalberg, 'Fredericia' 30.8.1923.

23 DK-Kk, CNA, I.A.c., letter from Nielsen to Nancy Dalberg, 'Damgaard' 20.9.1927. Partly reproduced in Irmelin Eggert Møller & Torben Meyer (eds.), *Carl Nielsen Breve*, Copenhagen 1954, 247.

24 *Telmanyi var netop hos os da den kom og Telmanyi sang og læste Ordene og Musikken fra Bladet medens han samtidig lo af fuld Hals.* DK-Kk, CNA, I.A. c., letter from Nielsen to Nancy Dalberg, 'Damgaard' 24.6.1922.

25 *Jeg skal engang vise Dig nogle Steder i min nye Konsert for Klarinet og Orkester, hvor jeg har en saa fri Stemmegang i Instrumenterne at jeg virkelig ingen Anelse har om hvordan det vil klinge. Maaske lyder det ikke godt, men det morer mig ikke at komponere Musik hvis jeg skal blive ved paa samme Maade.* DK-Kk, CNA, I.A.c., letter from Nielsen to Nancy Dalberg, 'Damgaard' 31.4.1928. Partly reproduced in Møller & Meyer, *op. cit.*, 254-55.

Nancy Dalberg as musical assistant

As the teacher-pupil relationship gradually receded into the background, their friendship developed in a more social direction. In spring 1920 Nielsen and the Dalbergs took part in a package tour to Spain, along with another couple from Nielsen's close circle: the company director Carl Johan Michaelsen and his wife Vera. From this trip a photo has survived of Nielsen on a beach in Malaga, flanked by Nancy Dalberg og Vera Michaelsen. This was not the only time Carl Nielsen went abroad with Nancy Dalberg. They both attended performances of their works at a festival concert in 'Den danske Uke' ('Danish Week') in Oslo in November 1926. Nancy Dalberg had her String Quartet No. 2, Op. 14 performed, while Nielsen was represented by his *Suite for Klaver*, Op. 45 and Flute Concerto.²⁶

Most often they met in Copenhagen, however, where Nielsen liked to play billiards with Erik Dalberg,²⁷ or the couples met over a game of bridge or for lunch.²⁸ In 1924 Nielsen stated in a letter to his daughter and son-in-law that he had heard Nancy Dalberg's Quartet (No. 2 in G minor) at her house the previous evening,²⁹ and when in summer 1925 he was driving through Funen on his way to Damgaard near Fredericia, he began on the way to think of Dalberg's hospitality:

In Nyborg we rang through to 'Mullerup' and asked whether they would like to have us to stay there. They were delighted and so we arrived for a meal at 6 o'clock Since it was Dalberg's 50th birthday on Sunday 12th, we naturally had to stay there until Monday.³⁰

Nielsen had earlier visited Mullerup,³¹ where Nancy Dalberg's mother in her widowhood assembled the family in the summer, and so he had got to know several of the family members. In summer 1918 he had been invited to spend some time at Mullerup, but had to decline the friendly invitation, since at that time he was busily occupied with composing his incidental music to Oehlenschläger's *Aladdin*. In this connection he wrote:

26 Nancy Dalberg's presence at the Oslo concert is confirmed by the Norwegian newspaper *Tidens Tegn* 12.11.1926, while Nielsen's stay in Oslo is documented in a letter to his wife, see Torben Schousboe (ed.), *Carl Nielsen. Dagbøger og brevveksling med Anne Marie Carl-Nielsen*, København 1983, 510.

27 DK-Kk, CNA, I.A.c., letter from Nielsen to Nancy Dalberg, 'Fredericia' 30.8.1923.

28 Torben Schousboe (ed.), *op. cit.*, 601, 518. DK-Kk, CNS, letter from Nielsen to Emil Telmányi 1.7.1924.

29 DK-Kk C II,10., letter from Nielsen to Anne-Marie and Emil Telmányi 24.1.1924.

30 *I Nyborg ringede vi til "Mullerup" og spurgte om de vilde have os. De blev henrykte og saa var [vi] der til Middag Kl. 6.... Da det var Dalbergs 50 Aars Fødselsdag om Søndagen den 12 maatte vi naturligvis blive der til Mandag.* DK-Kk, CNS, letter from Nielsen to Emil Telmányi, 'Damgaard' 15.7.1925.

31 Schousboe, *op. cit.*, 435, letter from Nielsen to Anne Marie Carl-Nielsen 17.7.1920.

Dear Mrs Dalberg,

I'm in a hurry – the post on Sunday had gone before I stopped work for breakfast – to thank you for all your invitations, which unfortunately I can't accept. Before I could get down to 'Aladdin' again, several days went past, and I'm up against it, with the theatre already beginning to ask about my fair copy. I don't have a note of the fair copy ready yet, and only a third of the composition itself is finished. Now that I have got things well under way here, I must now see about finishing it off. How I would love to come to Mullerup! It's horrible to have to sit down to work at a time when one should be resting ...³²

Nielsen's lamenting tone must have made a deep impression on Nancy Dalberg, and it straight away engendered an offer to help him with the fair copy of *Aladdin*. Her handwriting may indeed be found on various pages of the fair copy of the score, which Knud Jeppesen also helped to produce.³³ To judge from the notation, pp. 83-107 (No. 14), pp. 133-87 (Nos. 17-18) and pp. 245-61 (No. 29) are all her fair copies, which is to say nearly a third of the entire score.³⁴ She may have begun work already in summer 1918, since it was several of the dance numbers that were composed first that she wrote out, while the fair copy of No. 29 was apparently made later. Even a month before the first performance of the play at the Royal Theatre on 15th February 1919 Nielsen had not completed the score, so he was under intense time-pressure to produce a fair copy of the material and may therefore have been glad of Nancy Dalberg's assistance. The source for the dance numbers that she wrote out (Nos. 14, 17, 18) is a draft in short score (source **G** in Carl Nielsen Works, vol. I/8), which only contains sporadic indications of instrumentation. Together with the drafts a sheet of notepaper has been preserved, on which under the headings 'Negro Dance' and 'Wedding Music' (corresponding to Nos. 17 and 18) Nancy Dalberg raised a series of questions concerning the scoring. For example, she wanted to know what rhythm the basses should have, whether a passage in the strings should be 'pizz. sempre', what the spacing for particular chords should

32 *Kære Fru Dalberg!*

Jeg skynder mig – Posten i Lørdags var gaaet inden jeg kom op fra mit Arbejde til Prokost – at takke Dem for Deres alles Indbydelser, men det gaar desværre ikke. Inden jeg atter kom i gang med Fortsættelsen af 'Aladdin' her gik der flere Dage og jeg har Kniven paa Struben fra Theatret der allerede begynder at spørge efter Renskrift til Udskrivning. Af Renskriften har jeg ikke en Node endnu og af Kompositionen er vel godt en Tredjedel færdig. Jeg maa nu, da jeg er kommet godt i gang igen her, se at blive ved til Enden. Hvor gerne vilde jeg komme til Mullerup! – Det er nu ogsaa skrækkeligt at man paatager sig et Arbejde i en Tid, hvor man burde hvile ...

DK-Kk, CNA, I.A.c., letter from Nielsen to Nancy Dalberg, 'Damgaard' 12.8.1918.

33 Cf. *Description of Sources* (source **A**) in Carl Nielsen Works, I/8, (2000), *Aladdin*, ed. David Fanning.

34 Nancy Dalberg's fair copy corresponds to pp. 75-89, pp. 115-65 and pp. 205-27 of the published score, *Carl Nielsen, Works*, I/8.

be, and whether the cellos in a particular passage should be doubled by horn and bassoon.³⁵ There can therefore be no doubt that she carried out some of the scoring of the ‘Chinese Dance’, ‘Negro Dance’ and ‘Dance and Chorus’, partly from Nielsen’s sparse indications in the draft, partly after having consulted him. The work must have been carried out to Nielsen’s complete satisfaction, because when he asked her in 1921 to help score the choral work *Fynsk Foraar* (Springtime on Funen), he flattered her with the reminder that she was already familiar with his working methods: ‘I really prefer you for the job because you know my working methods best, and I’ve seen with *Aladdin* what that means.’³⁶

In connection with Springtime on Funen there are more details about how the collaboration proceeded. After Nielsen had gained her agreement that she would score the music, he wrote to her:

I’m working as hard as I can to finish Springtime on Funen, and now I think I should come over and visit Mullerup. If you can now make a fair copy of everything I am sending you herewith, then I can manage to deliver it (the whole thing) for the 1st [of September 1921]. So my plan is: now you will do the fair copy and then I shall come over with the rest, which you will write out while I sit in your deck chair, and then it will be sent to Copenhagen from Mullerup. Does this suit your mother and you? I look forward to seeing you, but I am upset that you have been unwell, and now you must please get totally well. Remember that I must make some use of you; I’m thinking only of myself; I shall suck the last drop of the lemon!³⁷

With a (here omitted) quotation from Holberg’s comedy *Den Stundesløse* (The Restless One): ‘Are you writing, guys?’³⁸ Nielsen evidently briefly entertained the thought of asking another person to do the work, while he himself relaxed and enjoyed life. Then the letter continues with practical indications for how the work should be carried out:

35 Carl Nielsen, *Works*, I/8, source **G** (layer K).

36 Jeg vil nemlig helst have Dem dertil, da De nu bedst kender min Arbejdsmetode og jeg har set i ‘Aladdin’ hvad det vil sige. DK-Kk, CNA, I.A.c., letter from Carl Nielsen to Nancy Dalberg, ‘Damgaard’, 26.7.1921.

37 Jeg arbejder alt hvad jeg kan for at blive færdig med ‘Fynsk Foraar’ og saa er det min Mening at komme over at besøge Mullerup. Vil De nu skrive rent, hvad jeg hermed sender saa kan jeg naa det og det skal være afleveret (det hele) til den 1^{ste}. Min Plan var altsaa: Nu skriver De dette rent og saa kommer jeg over med Resten, som De skriver mens jeg driver i Deres Liggestol og saa sendes det til København fra Mullerup. Passer det Deres Moder og Dem? Jeg glæder mig til at se Dem, men det har gjort mig ondt at De ikke har haft det godt og nu har De værsgo at blive helt kvik. Husk paa at jeg maa jo have nogen Nytte af Dem, jeg tænker kun paa mig selv; jeg suger den sidste Draabe af Citronen! DK-Kk, CNA, I.A.c., letter from Nielsen to Nancy Dalberg, ‘Damgaard’, 22.8.1921.

38 Skriver I, Karle?

Everything I have marked () should not be included in the vocal score, and where I have put * I ask you to make it pianistic. At the beginning (the first four or five pages) I was thinking more of an orchestral sketch for your use than of a possible instrumentation, but for the time being it's a question of completing the vocal score; the other can wait. The penultimate bar on page 3 and the first on page 4, right-hand part, should be



The bracket (at the last two bars on page 5) means that it should go into the left hand. I think we should notate the tremolos in this way throughout



On pages 8-9 it's done this way.

All indications for instrumentation naturally should be omitted.

It's true: page 1, bars 25-26 naturally not in octaves.

In greatest [haste] best wishes to you and yours, and most of all to you

Your

Carl Nielsen.³⁹

So Nancy Dalberg was first asked to prepare the vocal score, which was to be used for preparatory rehearsals and was therefore the most urgent. After that she orchestrated the music from Nielsen's draft, which is notated in short score with occasional indica-

39 Alt hvad jeg har sat () ved skal ikke med i Klaverudtoget og hvor der staar * beder jeg Dem gøre det Klavermæssigt. I Begyndelsen (de første 4 a 5 Pag) har jeg nemlig mere tænkt paa Orkesterskitse til Deres Brug end eventuel Instrumentation, men [det] gælder foreløbig om at faa et Klaverudtog færdigt; det andet maa vente. Næstsidste Takt Pag 3 og første Takt Pag 4 skal i højre H. være



Klammen (ved de to sidste Takter Pag 5 betyder at det skal ligge i venstre H. Jeg tror vi skal notere tremoloerne paa denne Maade overalt



Ved Pag 8-9 er det gjort paa den Maade.

Alle Notaterne ang. Instrumentation skal naturligvis ikke med.

Det er sandt: Pag. 1. Takt 25-26 skal der naturligvis ikke spilles Oktaver.

I største [Hast] mange Hilsener til Dem og alle og mest til Dem fra Deres

Carl Nielsen.

DK-Kk, CNA, I.A.c., letter from Nielsen to Nancy Dalberg, 'Damgaard', 22.8.1921.

tions of instruments above and below the systems.⁴⁰ It is not possible to determine how much of this work he supervised from his comfortable deck-chair at Mullerup, just as we cannot be sure *when* he made the instrumental indications in the short score. In principle most of them could have been written after Nancy Dalberg had made the piano version, but his mention in the letter of ‘Orchestral sketches for your use’ indicates that part of the instrumentation was already given in the draft, since he sent it to her on 22 August. It is interesting therefore that in comparing Nielsen’s draft (source **C** in Carl Nielsen’s Works, vol. I/8) with the fully written-out orchestral score (source **B**) we can see that the indications of scoring were not followed in every case. Some examples of differences between the draft and the full score follow.⁴¹

In the introductory movement, *Allegretto un poco*, at bars 5-9, the short score notes that the scoring should be for horn and bassoon; but in the orchestral score the horns are doubled by violas, and the bassoon by cellos and double basses. This makes the texture fuller and also means that the low strings knit the passage together more organically with the introductory thirds-motif in the upper strings.

At bars 9-12 the short score specifies ‘trb.’, by which Nielsen may have meant either ‘tromba’ or ‘trombone’; but the passage in question is actually scored for flute, oboe and clarinet. Since trombones are not otherwise used in this choral work, this alteration may be a case of the composer or Nancy Dalberg correcting an error on his part. On the other hand, if he imagined the dominant trumpet timbre at this point, we should observe that he (or she) reserves it for bb.21 ff., where it is brought in to double flutes, oboe and horn in a *crescendo* passage.

In bar 13 the draft notates on the first beat a chord consisting of the notes d-f, which is omitted in the full score. Apparently the chord was omitted so that the violins’ seesawing thirds-motif should be more clearly audible, before the counterpoint enters in horn and violas at the second beat.

In bars 100-101 the draft specifies ‘Cello, *ingen C.B.*’ (cello, without double bass), but in the full score the bassoon is used, perhaps in order to reinforce the timbral contrast at the transition to the entry of the soprano solo in bar 102.

In a whole succession of cases the short score’s indications of instrumentation are not merely scanty but absent altogether.⁴²

So the orchestrator at any rate had a great deal of freedom, and the above-mentioned doublings, alterations and omissions may just as easily have been the work of Nancy Dalberg as of Nielsen. The most probable course of events is that they worked

40 See also Niels Krabbe’s Preface to *Springtime on Funen* in *Carl Nielsen, Works*, III/1, 2000

41 See also facsimile of Carl Nielsen’s draft with indications for scoring in *Carl Nielsen Works*, III/1, xxxviii-xxxix.

42 A list of differences in scoring between short score and full score is given in Table 1.

out the scoring jointly during Nielsen's stay at Mullerup at the end of August 1921, at the same time as she was working on the vocal score. It should be noted that Nielsen's draft (source C) did not contain the terzet (bb.105-11), which forms part of the concluding movement. The pagination of the draft score shows that there are some pages missing between pages 24 and 29, and an explanation of this may be that the terzet was notated on the missing pages 25-28 along with the continuation of the *Dance Song*. The last folio in the draft, page 29, contains on its reverse side a sketch for another work ('Og Klokketaarnet styrted' ['And the Bell-tower tumbled'] for Einar Christiansen's play, *Cosmus*), which is dated 'Damgaard 10.9.1921', indicating that Nielsen took his draft for *Springtime on Funen* with him back to Damgaard when he left Nancy Dalberg's house at the beginning of September. Her instrumentation of the choral work therefore either took place at lightning speed, in the barely 10 days that Nielsen spent at Mullerup, where she also wrote out the vocal score at the same time; or she later had the draft sent back to her, whereupon the job of instrumentation could proceed in peace and quiet. Indeed, this part of the work may have been put off to Copenhagen, where Nielsen and Dalberg perhaps consulted over the task in the course of the autumn or winter.

Despite the reservations to which the above-mentioned considerations give rise, it seems likely that the alterations in the instrumentation were carried out by the orchestrator, by Nancy Dalberg; for only when she came to set the music into score did it become clear how inadequate the short score was with regard to instrumental colour and the texture and spacing of chords. Nielsen's short score therefore mirrors his intentions mainly at the general level, i.e. his thoughts as to whether this or that section should be scored for strings or wind, for high or low strings, for woodwind or brass etc. That Nielsen should have entrusted Nancy Dalberg with the task shows that he must have had full confidence in her craftsmanship and musical abilities. And if he had objections to certain of her alterations, he must nonetheless have accepted them. His addition of, amongst other things, dynamic markings and metronome marks in the score, for instance, shows that he went through, and in the process approved of, the material for preliminary rehearsals.

We can say unequivocally that Nancy Dalberg's great contribution in preparing the material for *Springtime on Funen* is characteristic of her helpfulness, but for her part she also presumably derived benefit from it. The work gave her an unsurpassable insight into the master's workshop, together with – not least – the knowledge of having collaborated on one of his greatest choral works. Perhaps it was even in connection with the instrumentation of *Springtime on Funen* that she herself got the urge to embark on composing a large music-dramatic work, namely the opera on *Gösta Berlings Saga*.

It is possible that Nancy Dalberg also had something to do with the performing material for Nielsen's Fourth Symphony (*The Inextinguishable*). As early as Christmas

1915, a month before the work was premiered in Copenhagen, she wrote to him: 'I hope very much that I shall be allowed to help with writing out the symphony – which we did speak about last time – if you dare trust me with this.'⁴³ Of the handwritten set of parts that was used for the premiere, only the duplicate string parts have been preserved, and these were written by another copyist.⁴⁴ So if Nancy Dalberg helped with the writing-out, this was probably with the wind parts. As yet there is no evidence for this, but after Nielsen conducted the Symphony at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam at the beginning of March 1920, he thanked her for her 'help with the parts',⁴⁵ which suggests that she may have supported him in one way or another. At this point in time the parts had already been printed. So for the 1920 Amsterdam performance it may perhaps just have been a question of her sending off the parts for use at the concert.

Nancy Dalberg was far from the only one who helped Nielsen with fair copying or instrumentation. Only when the collected edition of Nielsen's works is completed in 2008 and an overview of the source material available, will there be the basis for determining who contributed to the arrangement or completion of which compositions. But already from the existing Nielsen literature and the work with sources to date, it is possible to establish a list of those who assisted him in various ways. In 1905 the pianist Henrik Knudsen, for example, fair-copied parts of the manuscript of the opera *Masquerade*,⁴⁶ and Knudsen and the Dutch composer Julius Röntgen collaborated on both the instrumentation and fair copying of the music for Holger Drachmann's play *Hr. Oluf, han rider – (Sir Oluf, he rides)*.⁴⁷ In addition Knudsen made the piano reductions of Nielsen's Third Symphony, of both his operas and, in collaboration with the composer Hilda Sehested, a four-hand piano arrangement of his Symphony No. 2 (*The Four Temperaments*).⁴⁸ Knud Jeppesen was also asked to assist his then teacher:

In the autumn of 1915 he was approaching the conclusion of the Fourth Symphony (*The Inextinguishable*) and was some way into the finale. Shortly before Christmas he then said: 'Now I can't manage any more. Jeppesen, could you take it with you (I was going on holiday to West Jutland) and do some of the filling-in? There are some doublings there that are absolutely obvious.' Of course he didn't have to ask twice, above all because I would thus have the opportunity to get inside the score. So I filled in the passages in question, and my youthful

43 DK-Kk, CNA I.A.b., postcard from Nancy Dalberg to Nielsen, 'Christmas 1915'.

44 According to the Description of Sources in *Carl Nielsen, Works, II/4*, 2000
Symphony No. 4, the surviving string parts were copied by the former Nielsen student Johannes Andersen, composer, hornist and copyist.

45 DK-Kk, CNA, I.A.c., letter from Nielsen to Nancy Dalberg, 'Ghent' 10.3.1920.

46 Cf. *Description of Sources* in *Carl Nielsen, Works, I/1-3, Masquerade, Critical Commentary*, 1999.

47 Cf. *Description of Sources* in *Carl Nielsen, Works I/4*, to be edited in late 2005.

48 Cf. *Description of Sources* in *Carl Nielsen, Works II/2*, 1998.

handwriting is still there in the pencil score, where it probably looks so impersonal alongside his characteristic scrawl.⁴⁹

Jeppesen also assisted with the fair copying of *Aladdin*. Finally it should be mentioned that the violinist Emil Telmányi, who amongst other things helped with the fair copying of the Flute Concerto, collaborated on the publication of various works of Nielsen's, and in several cases made revisions before the publication.⁵⁰ Time pressure and an aversion to fair copying were probably the main reasons why Nielsen made such assiduous use of musical assistants, and the fact that so many offered their services may be understood in the light of Jeppesen's declaration that it was at once an honour to be asked and at the same time an opportunity to become closely acquainted with Nielsen's compositions. Of course there is also the fact that it was sound policy to let a pianist arrange piano reductions and a violinist edit the violin music – even though Nielsen himself was also a violinist.

A letter from Nielsen to Nancy Dalberg, written while he was preparing the dress rehearsal of *Masquerade* in 1922, gives an impression of the kind of work that was needed in the revision or preparation of materials:

Telmányi and I have been working for 8 days on the material for 'Masquerade'. You can imagine that we sent you many friendly thoughts in this time. We could have used your help, which you are so generous with, always when we're up against it!

There was a mass of small mistakes and new corrections, so that every single part had to be gone through.⁵¹

Carl Nielsen's benefactors

The hospitality Nielsen experienced during several summers at Mullerup may be compared with what he encountered from Viggo and Bodil Neergaard on the Lolland manor house of Fuglsang, with Charlotte Trap de Thygeson at Damgaard in Fredericia, with Vera and Carl Johan Michaelsen in their summer villa in North Sealand and with the Mannheimer family in Gothenburg. Not only did this circle of acquaintances offer him friendship and company, but they also provided him with peaceful working con-

49 Jeppesen, *op. cit.* 143.

50 Kirsten Flensburg Petersen, 'Emil Telmányi tilføjelser' [Emil Telmányi's additions], *Fund og Forskning* (2002), 219-20.

51 *Telmanyi og jeg har nu arbejdet 8 Dage med Materialet til 'Maskerade'. Du kan tro vi har sendt Dig mangen venlig Tanke i den Tid. Vi kunde have brugt Din Hjælp, som Du er saa rigelig med, altid naar det kniber!*

Der var en Masse smaa Fejl og nye Rettelser som var nødvendige saa hver eneste Stemme har maattet gennemgaas.

DK-Kk, CNA, I.A.c., letter from Nielsen to Nancy Dalberg, 'Damgaard' 11.8.1922.

ditions in comfortable rural surroundings or, as was the case with his friends in Sweden, private accommodation in the periods when he was working as Guest Conductor in Gothenburg and otherwise would have been forced to rent a room or live in a hotel. Nielsen's longing for rural surroundings is expressed in many of his letters; for example, he wrote to Nancy Dalberg during a stay at Damgaard in summer 1928:

You know that my wife is in Italy – ... – and so I have come over here in order to work in peace and quiet. In Copenhagen it gets really difficult to keep control over one's own time. It's a terrible reward for getting older and better known in one's field; in other words – for becoming an authority. It's terrible if you can't or don't want to come across as a bitter and twisted boor.⁵²

So Nielsen found it hard to insist on peaceful working conditions when he was staying in Copenhagen. But rather than isolate himself completely from his surroundings, he preferred to arrange things such that he could enjoy the company of good friends and at the same time find peace for his creative work. Virtually from his first visit to Fuglsang he had enjoyed the privilege of a study with a piano: 'therefore I shall be extremely glad if I can borrow a piano and a place where I can work; preferably a little, secluded room or a former servant's room, if it can be found,'⁵³ he wrote to Bodil Neergaard in 1906. With time his return visits to Fuglsang came to stand for a return to the secure world of his childhood home:

When I still had both my parents and my childhood home in Funen, it was always the case that when the world was against me and I was in despair or fed up with everything, then this thought was strongly accompanied by a sense of longing: Now I want to go home; now I can't cope any more, I want to go home. Something of this has transferred to Fuglsang; it's as though I have a good friend behind me, something secure which remains there and is a consolation.⁵⁴

52 *Du ved at min Kone er i Italien – ... – og saa tog jeg herover for at arbejde i Ro og Fred. I Kjøbenhavn bliver det efterhaanden virkelig vanskeligt at faa Lov til at raade over sin egen Tid. Det er en skrækkelig Gevinst at blive ældre og dermed bekendt i sit Fag, med andre Ord: en Fag-Autoritet! Skrækkeligt, ifald man da ikke kan eller vil optræde som en bidsk og afvisende Grobrian. DK-Kk, CNA I.A.c., letter from Nielsen to Nancy Dalberg, 'Damgaard' 31.5.1928.*

53 Letter from Nielsen to Bodil Neergaard, 'Ny Strandly, Skagen', 26.7.1906, copy in DK-Kk, Carl Nielsen Edition.

54 *Da jeg endnu havde begge mine Forældre og mit Barndomshjem i Fyen, saa var det altid saaledes at naar Verden gik mig imod og jeg blev fortvivlet og kjed af alting, saa kom denne Tanke meget stærkt ledsaget af Længsel: Nu vil jeg hjem; nu kan jeg ikke holde det ud længere, jeg vil hjem. – Noget af dette er gaaet over paa Fuglsang; det er som om der staar en god Ven bagved mig, noget trygt som bliver ved at være der og er en Trøst. Møller & Meyer, op. cit., 156, letter from Nielsen to Bodil Neergaard, 9.2.1916.*

While Fuglsang attracted Nielsen especially thanks to its flourishing musical life and the happy activities which the company and surroundings offered, Damgaard was rather more attractive for him with its rural tranquillity and its hostess's strict way of life, which presumably strengthened his work-discipline. At Damgaard there were no telephone, electric light or modern bathing facilities, but there were frequent visits from painters or musicians, and evenings were passed with music-making and intellectual conversation. In the course of time Nielsen composed there, amongst other things, parts of his University Cantata, his Third, Fifth and Sixth Symphonies, the Three Piano Pieces Op. 59, the incidental music for *The Mother* and a succession of songs, and after his first visit in 1908 he also introduced several of his own acquaintances, among them Knudsen and the composer Thomas Laub.⁵⁵

Nielsen's acquaintance with the businessman Carl Johan Michaelsen went back to 1903-1909, when Michaelsen was one of his pupils; but the association was renewed in 1916 and thereafter developed into a very close friendship, which also included Michaelsen's wife Vera and was of great importance to him during his marital crisis. As mentioned above, the Michaelsens joined Nielsen in a package tour to Spain, and after this time Nielsen was in almost daily contact with the couple, either on visits to their spacious Copenhagen apartment, at their country residence of Højtofte in North Sealand, or by correspondence. One can gain some impression of the Michaelsens' economic standing if one remembers that Nielsen's Clarinet Concerto was first performed at Højtofte in a private concert in 1928. The orchestra, which numbered 22 players, was arranged in the living-room, from where the guests could enjoy the beautiful view over Øresund.⁵⁶ The proceedings are described by Telmányi, who remembered: 'there was a unique atmosphere, a special intimacy, about the whole concert, which included several works. It reminded me a little of the old days, when princes would open their salons to put music in the seat of honour.'⁵⁷

The comparison with traditional patronage, in which princes or well-off private individuals would support an artist – who repaid the beneficence shown them by appearing before the well-to-do, thereby accentuating the latter's cultural good breeding – is not without relevance to the favour that Nielsen enjoyed from several of his acquaintances. Certainly the relationship between artist and patron expressed itself in this case not as a simple exchange of art and pecuniary recompense, but rather as a mutual reinforcement of talent and success, on a somehow equal social level. Telmányi's report of the 'special intimacy', which prevailed at the premiere of the Clarinet Concerto at the Michaelsens', underlines that proximity, company and personal relations between

55 Meyer & Schandorf, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, 310-15.

56 Meyer & Schandorf, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, 298.

57 Emil Telmányi, *Af en musikers billedbog* [From the picture book of a musician], Copenhagen 1978, 186.

the composer and his admirers were the watchwords for this modern type of patronage, which equally included elements of charity, in its meaning of a ‘caring’ for a person: in other words to secure his wellbeing. Nielsen’s patrons contributed to his wellbeing by offering him peaceful conditions for work and recreation, and they did him various other practical services, including, for example, fair copying of scores, while he enriched them by his proximity, his charismatic personality, his artistic reflections and his music. The balance between the artist and his patron was therefore maintained by an exchange of artistic creation and something one might call ‘practical collaboration’ in the creative process. An important aspect of his patrons was equally that they personified the composer’s public, in the sense that they stepped out of the public’s anonymous ranks and took a personal part in his artistic victories, supporting him in a different way from the anonymous public in the concert hall. Several of Nielsen’s pupils testify to his wish and need to share his successes with his friends. For example, he wrote to Nancy Dalberg, after conducting in Gothenburg in 1919:

And everyone is so kind towards me and wants to show it; but, as I said, I still long to hear a word from my friends, therefore —! ... I should still like you and your husband to come up here, so that we could travel home together, for example on Friday, but of course you can’t do that and I’m allowed to fantasise.⁵⁸

The same tone appears in many of his letters to Vera and Carl Johan Michaelsen, for example from a Music Festival in Helsinki, where *Hymnus amoris* was performed:

I look forward to telling you about everything here at this time, but I could only do this with difficulty, since all the acclaim of which I have been the object could easily look like boasting when I relate it.⁵⁹

And in 1924 he declared about his success conducting his own works in Karlsruhe:

Dear Vera!

I have to say it was a great success in Karlsruhe. The orchestra was splendid, and after five minutes work with them, they were on fire for me. ... On the evening

⁵⁸ *Alle Mennesker er for resten saa rare imod mig og vil gerne vise det, men, som sagt, jeg trænger alligevel til at høre et Ord fra mine Venner, derfor —! ... Jeg vilde nok ønske De og Deres Mand vilde komme herop, saa kunde vi rejse sammen hjem, f. Expl. Fredag, men det gør De naturligvis ikke og jeg har jo lov at fantasere. DK-Kk, CNA I.A.c., letter from Nielsen to Nancy Dalberg, ‘Göteborg’, 31.10.1919.*

⁵⁹ *Jeg glæder mig til at fortæller Jer om det hele her i Denne Tid, men jeg kan jo egentlig vanskelig gøre det, da al den Hyldest jeg har været Genstand for let kan se ud som Selvros naar jeg fortæller det. Møller & Meyer, op. cit., 201, letter from Nielsen to Vera Michaelsen, ‘Helsingfors’, 29.5.1921.*

they played even better than at the rehearsals and the orchestra and I infected one another to such a degree that the sparks flew, so to speak. I wish you and Carl Johan had been there.⁶⁰

Dalberg's or Michaelsen's presence at concerts would therefore have increased Nielsen's experience of triumph at the very moment of it, so that he would not have to turn instead to blank paper to depict it in words, which would far from do justice to his enthusiasm.

Occasionally Nielsen's acquaintances supported him also in a more pecuniary manner; for example for his 50th birthday a group of friends bestowed on him a gift of money to finance a trip to Italy,⁶¹ and in 1927 Charlotte Trap de Thygeson invited him for a holiday in Menton.⁶² Michaelsen, who in 1924 presented him with a car, was also among those who financed the creation of Hans Borups Forlag, which in 1926 published the Fifth Symphony with its dedication to 'My friends Vera and Carl Johan Michaelsen'.⁶³ Nielsen had spent part of the winter and spring of 1921 in Michael- sen's guest house, while he was composing the symphony's first movement, and the dedication can therefore be seen as a gesture of thanks towards various friends, who by their human, practical and financial support had made possible the sym- phony's creation.

After Nielsen's death a circle of his influential friends placed themselves at the head of a subscription appeal for the monument that was made by Anne Marie Carl- Nielsen and in 1939 installed on the road Esplanaden in Copenhagen. Among those who were part of this initiative we find, not unexpectedly, Carl Johan Michaelsen, Nancy Dalberg, Bodil Neergaard and Charlotte Trap de Thygeson.⁶⁴ At the same time there was a plan that if there was money left over, this would go into a fund that would be established in Nielsen's name. In her will Nancy Dalberg made a substantial bequest to the Carl Nielsen Fund.⁶⁵

60 *Kære Vera!*

Du kan tro det blev en stor Succes i Karlsruhe. Det var et fortræffeligt Orkester og efter 5 Minutters Samarbejde gik Folkene i Ilden for mig. ... Om Aftenen spillede de endnu bedre end ved Prøverne og baade smittede Orkesteret mig og jeg dem i den Grad at der stod blaa Flamme, saa at sige. Jeg vilde ønske Du og Carl Johan havde været tilstede.
Møller & Meyer, *op. cit.*, 224, letter from Nielsen to Vera Michaelsen, 'Menton', 9.3.1923.

61 Møller & Meyer, *op. cit.*, 151.

62 Møller & Meyer, *op. cit.*, 245.

63 Meyer & Schandorf, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, 197-98.

64 Printed matter in DK-Kk, CNA II.D.2.

65 See Nancy Dalberg's will, National Archive of Sjælland, Lolland-Falster and Bornholm. Executorbo: F 2545 (1949).

In the shadow of Nielsen?

Nielsen had several pupils who, like Nancy Dalberg, could indulge in composing without needing to support themselves by it. This was the case with, amongst others, the lawyers Svend Godske-Nielsen⁶⁶ and Hans Berg,⁶⁷ the landowner's son Ove Scavenius⁶⁸ and the industrialist Carl Johann Michaelsen. Nancy Dalberg's situation can probably best be compared with that of Ove Scavenius, of whom a similar production of music in various genres has been preserved, only a small part of which – a few songs – has been published and performed. Scavenius lived on his father's estate of Klintholm without having a job and therefore had abundant opportunity for composing, but he lacked the drive or motivation to make a name for himself in this regard.

Nancy Dalberg's economic background was sufficiently well-off, thanks to her parents' legacy, that she had no need for other income from publications or concert performances in order to maintain a comfortable lifestyle; but of course that does not mean that she did not want her compositions to be published or performed. Something like half of her 40 or so songs, her *Scherzo Grazioso* (Op. 8) for violin and piano, together with two String Quartets (Op. 14 and Op. 20) were published, and in the years between 1915 and 1937 she mounted five public concerts of her compositions as well as various private concerts in her home. Her activities as a composer were thus motivated by the urge to create music, to *express herself* or *address* the outside world through music. In other words, she did not compose for the drawer, and on the invitation to support the Carl Nielsen monument she signed herself as 'Composer'. She identified herself more with this role than with that of housewife.

That she remained a marginal figure in contemporary musical life as a composer was hardly Nielsen's fault but must be attributed to a number of other factors, including sexist criticism, which by focusing on her gender rather than on her compositions was not calculated to strengthen her already not massive self-esteem. So she was reproached for lacking feminine sensitivity and for composing too intellectually in her songs, at the same time as her musical ideas were not considered sufficiently significant to be developed in larger orchestral forms. Ignoring the gender stereotypes at the base of such criticism, this was really not worse than the criticism Nielsen's music itself attracted at the outset of his career; but a decisive difference was, doubtless, that he

66 Svend Godske-Nielsen (1867-1935) was a pupil of Nielsen's from 1892 and described his friendship with the composer in his article 'Nogle Erindringer om Carl Nielsen' [Some Reminiscences of Carl Nielsen] in *Tilskueren: maanedsskrift for Litteratur, Kunst, Samfundsspørgsmaal og almenfattelige videnskabelige Skildringer*, (1935, first half-volume), 415. Godske-Nielsen studied law and became head of the State Archive Offices.

67 Hans Berg (1873-1952) studied composition with Nielsen after having trained in law in 1900. His *Six Bagatelles for Pianoforte* were played at Nielsen's Composition Pupils' Concert, 6th March 1907.

68 Ove Scavenius (1884-1973).

had a support-base of admirers and musical colleagues, who could strengthen him through his artistic career, while she did not enjoy much back-up. Her uncertainty concerning her talent may be seen from her attempt to get her *String Quartet No. 3*, Op. 20, published. In a letter to Carl Nielsen she wrote on 4th August 1927 from Mullerup:

I'm writing amongst other things to ask you about one matter in particular: Would it be all right, or would you have any objection, if my new quartet, which of course you do not know at all, was dedicated to you? For it is you I have to thank for the fact that I have been able to produce anything at all by my own hand, something that 'certain people' think is worthwhile. But I could well understand – if you didn't want to have your name on something you don't even know and whose musical value you know nothing about – if you wanted to wait to answer until you have seen the 'object'. But (another 'but'!) in that case how would it be if you were to come over to us for a while – here I have a piece of the rough draft of the beast, the rest of which I have submitted to New Music.⁶⁹

Later on in the same letter she relates that she has sought in vain to persuade the Budapest Quartet to perform the quartet, but that she now hopes for a performance in the society 'New Music'. Apart from this the composer Peder Gram had recommended that the quartet should be played in the 'Danish Concerts Society', but this society had ceased to give chamber concerts. The quartet eventually received its premiere on 20 February 1928 at the hands of the Breuning-Bache Quartet and was received rather positively.⁷⁰

Nielsen's response to Nancy Dalberg's request to dedicate the quartet to him is not known, but when it was eventually published, it was headed 'dedicated to CARL NIELSEN';⁷¹ so it cannot be that he refused. Publication began after Nancy Dalberg had entered into contract with Edition Dania, and after her death in 1949 it was seen through by her executors according to the terms of her will. In the intervening years she had made several attempts to get it published,⁷² and since it would hardly have exceeded her economic means to underwrite the publication herself, we must assume that it was uncertainty that held her back from taking this step earlier than she did – an uncertainty that neither Peder Gram nor a rather favourable newspaper review of the premiere could overcome.

69 DK-Kk, CNA I.A.b., letter from Nancy Dalberg to Carl Nielsen, 4.8.1927.

70 Reviews in *Berlingske Tidende* 21.2.1928 and *Dansk Musik-Tidsskrift*, (April-May 1928), 185.

71 Nancy Dalberg, *Strygekvartet Nr. 3*, Op. 20. Edition Dania, København, ca. 1950.

72 Cf. letters from Nancy Dalberg to, amongst others, the composer Otto Sandberg-Nielsen, 13.11.1936, and to Edition Dania, 23.10.1946 in the archive of Samfundet til Udgivelse af Dansk Musik, Musikhistorisk Museum.

Rather than saying that Nancy Dalberg, from the music-historical point of view, came to stand in the shadow of Carl Nielsen, we can probably conclude that if she felt herself emboldened to try and make a name for herself as a composer, this was due to the fact that for a period between ca. 1913-31 she joined his close circle of acquaintances and was nourished by his creative personality. After his death her self-belief vanished, and her problematic existence with a mentally ill spouse⁷³ was hardly a favourable basis for her further development as a composer.⁷⁴ In this sense she lacked the circle of personal supporters around her, of which she herself had formed a part for Nielsen.

Table 1: Springtime on Funen

| Allegretto un poco | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Bar | Nielsen's indications of instrumentation in the short score, CNS 309c (quotations from the manuscript in italics) | Instrumentation in the full score, CNS 309a og 309b |
| 5-9 | cor. fg. | va. doubles cor; vc., cb. double fg. |
| 9-12 | <i>trb.</i> (trumpet or trombone?) | fl., ob., cl. |
| 13 | chord <i>d,f</i> | omitted |
| 37-40 | ÷ | fl. doubles vl. |
| 47-48 | ÷ | ww.,cor. |
| 56-58 | ÷ | cor. |
| 63-66 | ÷ | fl., then str. |
| 69-73 | ÷ | fl. |
| 99-101 | str. | ww. |
| 100-101 | <i>Cello, ingen C.B.</i> (cello, no double bass) | fg. |
| 106 | ÷ | trgl. (indicated by the sign Δ) |
| 147ff. | <i>Viola og Corno I</i> | ob.,fg.2 double vla. |
| 187-195 | footnote: <i>Viol. I-II og Træbl. *</i> <i>Viol. Fag.1-2 Cello, Corni.1-2</i> (<i>stoppet=con.sord.</i>) | fg.,cor.1-4 con. sord., tr., vc. and from b. 196 |
| 199 | Corno I | vc., cb. |
| 216-222 | ÷ | wind instruments double str. |
| De gamle Ungkarle | | |
| 272 | ÷ | ww. double vocal parts (T.1,2 and B.1,2) |

73 CNA II.A.b., letter from Nancy Dalberg to Anne Marie Carl-Nielsen, 20.6.1943.

74 The author is preparing an article on Nancy Dalberg's music.

Den blinde Spillemand

| | | |
|-------|---|------------------------------------------------|
| 11-15 | ÷ | fl. alternating with cl. |
| 18-26 | ÷ | vl., then str. accompanying the soloist |
| 39-46 | ÷ | fl. doubles vl. (at Coro 2, <i>The Boys</i>) |
| 47-54 | ÷ | ob. doubles vl. (at Coro 2, <i>The Girls</i>) |
| 69-76 | ÷ | fl. and fg. double Coro 2, (<i>The Boys</i>) |

Dansevisen (the short score is incomplete)

| | | |
|------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 9ff. | ÷ | fl., cl.1, cor. 2, tr.1 double S. |
| 9ff. | ÷ | ob., cl.2, tr. 3 double A. |
| 9ff. | ÷ | cor.1,3 double T. |
| 9ff. | ÷ | fg., cor. 4 double B. |

A B S T R A C T

This article throws light on the connection between Nielsen and Nancy Dalberg, one of his less well-known composition pupils. She studied with Nielsen from c. 1912, and in the following years she composed several orchestral pieces and a symphony, which he conducted at her first composer's concert. She was gradually drawn into Nielsen's private circle of acquaintances, and she helped him with the fair copy of *Aladdin* and the orchestration of *Springtime on Funen*, following his indications in the draft score. This says something about his working methods when he was under time-pressure, but also about her expertise with regard orchestration. Nancy Dalberg's own musical output is not extensive, and she did not make a great impact as a composer, but rather than explaining this by her being over-shadowed by Nielsen, the present article points to the fact that he was among those who supported her.

Translated by David Fanning