

Magnar Åm

Piano Improvisations

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- 1 Piano Improvisations Pt. 1 30:48
- 2 Piano Improvisations Pt. 2 26:29

When music's motion meets mine.

Improvisation is different from composing in the fact that while composing I am always free to change my mind, erase and write again, in improvisation I must accept everything as it comes and make the best out of it. Thus, from improvising I learn to forgive every moment and constantly use what it brings to build a meaningful form.

My wish is that the very same attitude can find its way into my communication with other people and nature, and to life in general: to accept every random happening as a gift that helps me add ever deeper meaning to life.

Magnar Åm



YouTube Video: <https://youtu.be/sHd-jtmadFc>

Recorded in Grue Church, Norway 16. July 2023
Tonmeister: Ove Berg

Recording, editing, mastering and cover design: Ove Berg, Nordic Sound

Cover photo of Magnar Åm: Knut Arne Aarset
Photo, Magnar Åm in Grue Church: Ove Berg
Piano Technician: Kristian Hanken

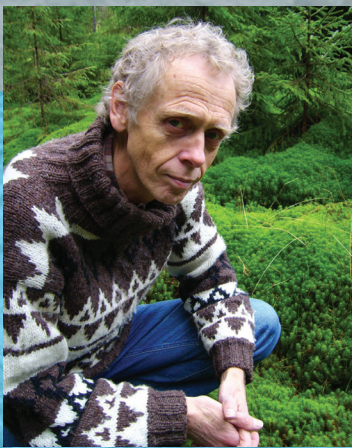
Immersive Audio, Dolby Atmos Streaming: Apple Music and Tidal.
7.1.4 Dolby Atmos Music Mastering by Ove Berg, Nordic Sound.

Magnar Åm: www.magnaram.com

Nordic Sound: www.nordicsound.no

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Magnar Åm (b. 1952) is a Norwegian composer whose very distinctive and personal voice has earned him international recognition. Just as the word “neoclassical” could be used to describe the works of some contemporary composers, the term “neo-spiritualist” could apply to Åm’s music. He belongs to a tradition in which simplicity and complexity embody two sides of the same search for a spiritual content in music.

His tonal universe always has a spiritual motivation. In his view any other approach would be a paradox, because our true identity is based on spirituality. It is all about expressing the spirit in material terms. He seeks to imbue his music with a soul, enabling listeners to identify with it.

While finishing his secondary education at U. Pihl’s Secondary School in Bergen in 1971, he also completed his studies as organist and choirmaster at the Bergen Conservatory of Music. He studied composition with Ketil Hvoslef in Bergen (1971) and Ingvar Lidholm at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm (1971-72).

Magnar Åm held his organ debut in 1971. He had his breakthrough as a composer the following year with the work *bøn for strykere, kor og sopransolist* (prayer for strings, choir and soprano soloist). Since the mid-1970s he has been a full-time composer living in Volda, where he is also a choirmaster. The Norwegian Government awarded him a guaranteed income for artists starting in 1979, in later years converted into a senior fellowship until April 2019. In 2006 he received Berlin’s “Europäischer Komponistenpreis” at the Europäischer Musik Sommer Berlin festival for *det er ’kje snøen som fell, det er me som stig* (‘tisn’t the snow falling, it’s us leaving the ground), a work commissioned for and performed by the Norwegian National Youth Orchestra. He was awarded Arne Nordheim’s Composer Prize in 2009 and TONO’s Edvard Prize in 2014, the latter for his viola concerto *inngang, nærvær, utgang* (entrance, presence, exit). Åm has composed two operas based on novels by Tarjei Vesaas: *Isslottet* (The Ice Palace) and *Kimen* (The Seed), which premiered in 2014 and 2018, respectively. He is planning to write an additional opera, based on *Fuglane* (The Birds), to complete the trilogy.

Since 1975 Magnar Åm has held various seminars in composition and improvisation throughout Norway, and since 2005 he has taught the bachelor’s degree course Intuitive Composition/Improvisation, as well as a course in the philosophy of music, as an adjunct professor at Volda University College. There he also developed, and for several years taught, the master’s level interdisciplinary arts courses Creating Meaning and Playful Truth Approach.

A complete list of Magnar Åm’s works can be seen at the National Library site: www.nb.no/noter and on his home page: www.magnaram.com

Recordings on the Nordic Sound label:

Samanfuga / Organ Works (2006), ømhetens tre (2012), Soli Deo Gloria / Requiem for Organ (2022)

