



Rued Langgaard Edition

Rued Langgaard
RES ABSÛRDA!?
For blandet kor og orkester
Tekst af komponisten
RES ABSÛRDA!?
For mixed chorus and orchestra
Text by the composer

(1948)

BVN 354

Kritisk udgave ved
Critical edition by
BENDT VIINHOLT NIELSEN

www.ruedlanggaardedition.dk

Rued Langgaard Edition, Gråbrødrestårde 18.st., DK-1156 Copenhagen K, Denmark

Phone: +45 33 13 54 45 / Email: info@ruedlanggaardedition.dk

Rued Langgaard: Res absùrda!? (BVN 354)

© 2012 by Edition · S, København

BVN-numre refererer til Bendt Viinholt Nielsen: *Rued Langgaards Kompositioner. Annoteret værktørfortegnelse*. Odense Universitetsforlag, 1991.

Hovedredaktør for Rued Langgaard Udgaven på Edition · S: Bendt Viinholt Nielsen.
Redaktionsassistent på nærværende udgivelse: Ole Ugilt Jensen.
Engelsk oversættelse: Rudiger Meyer.

Rued Langgaard Udgaven blev etableret i 2000 med støtte fra Carlsbergfondet.
Den her foreliggende udgivelse er støttet af Augustinus Fonden.
Edition · S' virksomhed støttes af Statens Kunstråds Musikudvalg.

Spilletid: ad libitum (ca. 4-6 minutter)

Rued Langgaard: Res absùrda!? (BVN 354)

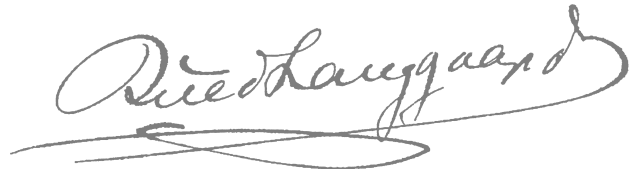
© 2012 by Edition · S, Copenhagen

BVN-numbers refer to Bendt Viinholt Nielsen: *Rued Langgaards Kompositioner / Rued Langgaard's Compositions. An Annotated Catalogue of Works. With an English Introduction*. Odense University Press, 1991.

General editor of the Rued Langgaard Edition published by Edition · S: Bendt Viinholt Nielsen.
Editorial assistant on the present publication: Ole Ugilt Jensen.
English translation: Rudiger Meyer.

The Rued Langgaard Edition was established in 2000 with the support of the Carlsberg Foundation.
This publication was subsidised by the Augustinus Foundation.
The activities of Edition · S are supported by the Danish Arts Council Committee for Music.

Duration: ad libitum (c 4-6 minutes)



Rued Langgaard Edition

OM UDGAVEN

Denne kritiske førsteudgave af *Res absurda!?* er baseret på komponistens egenhændige partiturrenskrift, som foreligger i Det Kongelige Bibliotek i København (Rued Langgaards Samling, RLS 111,1).

Udgiverens tilføjelser og rettelser er typografisk markeret i partituret ved hjælp af skarpe parenteser og buer med brudt streg. Orienteringsfortegn i runde parenteser skyldes udgiveren. Faste fortegn for klarinet er tilføjet af udgiveren.

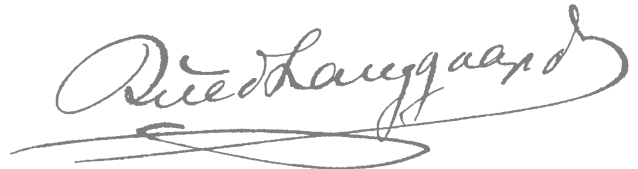
Der henvises i øvrigt til den separate revisionsberetning, som kan downloades fra Rued Langgaard Udgavens hjemmeside www.ruedlanggaardedition.dk.

ABOUT THIS EDITION

This first edition of *Res absurda!?* is based on the composer's autograph fair copy preserved in the Royal Library, Copenhagen (Rued Langgaard Collection, RLS 111,1).

Editorial additions and corrections are typographically identified in the score by square brackets and slurs and ties with a broken line. Cautionary accidentals in round brackets are also editorial, as are fixed accidentals for clarinets.

For further information see the separate critical commentary available for download from the website of the Rued Langgaard Edition (www.ruedlanggaardedition.dk).



Rued Langgaard Edition

OM *Res absurda!*?

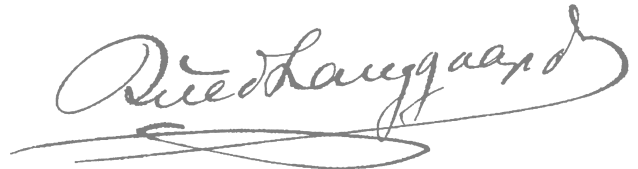
Det mærkværdige stykke blev komponeret den 1. juni 1948 i Ribe og instrumenteret mellem den 6. juni klokken 3.30 morgen og den 8. juni klokken 5.15 morgen ifølge Langgaards præcise angivelser i partiturrenskriften. Langgaard formulerer stykkets latinske titel på vekslende måde. På første nodeside for oven skriver han *Rês absurda?* – på titelsiden, som udgiveren har valgt at henholde sig til, står imidlertid *Res absurda!*? På en side foran i partituret forklarer Langgaard titlen således: “Res absurda = Urimelighed”. Begrebet kan også oversættes som “meningsløshed” eller “absurditet”. Værkets fulde sangtekst er identisk med titlen.

Langgaard indsendte partituret til Statsradiofonien, som kort efter returnerede det ledsaget af institutionens standard-afslag, der lød: “Idet man vedlagt tilbagesender Partituret til Deres Komposition *Res absurda*. For *blandet Kor og Orkester* beklager man at måtte meddele Dem at Statsradiofonien ikke vil kunne finde Anvendelse herfor i Udsendelserne.” Langgaard reagerede prompte ved at indsende partituret påny sammen med afslagsbrevet, forsynet med hans kommentarer. Ud for titlen *Res absurda* havde han skrevet “Netop!” – og for neden: “Uvenlige Skrivelser modtages ikke. Mine Mesterpartiturer kan

De brænde”. Ved Langgaards død i 1952 befandt manuskriptet sig i radioens nodearkiv, hvorfra det senere blev overført til Det Kongelige Bibliotek. En koncertopførelse har endnu ikke fundet sted, men i 2008 blev stykket indspillet af DR Radiosymfoniorketret og Thomas Dausgaard (Dacapo 6.220519). Varigheden af denne indspilning er 5½ minut.

Stykket er et sarkastisk, selvbiografisk udsagn fra en komponist, der følte at livet som kunstner var meningsløst. Hans lod var at skabe “store papirkurvsværker”, som han skrev i et brev til Statsradiofonien. Værket udtrykker denne absurditet ved selv at være absurd. Kompositionens 30 takter, hvoraf t. 1-10 er identisk med t. 11-20, skal gentages hurtigere og hurtigere indtil det hurtigst mulige, hvorefter satsen afsluttes med en C-dur-akkord. Denne effekt, at skrue tempoet gradvist op for hver gentagelse, er ikke ny i Langgaards musik. Allerede i *Sfærernes Musik* (1916-18) findes en passage, hvor kor og orkester gentager fire takter med den ‘meningsløse’ sangtekst *do re mi fa sol la* i alt 14 gange i stadigt hurtigere tempo.

Bendt Viinholt Nielsen, november 2011



Rued Langgaard Edition

ABOUT *Res absurd!*?

This strange piece was composed 1 June 1948 in Ribe and orchestrated between 6 June 3:30 a.m. and 8 June 5:15 a.m., according to Langgaard's precise indications in the score manuscript. Langgaard indicated the Latin title of the piece in different ways. On the first page of notation at the top he writes *Rès absurd!* – on the title page however, which the publisher has chosen to refer to, stands *Res absurd!*? On a page at the beginning of the score Langgaard explains the title as follows: “Res absurd! = Unreasonableness”. The expression can also be translated as “meaninglessness” or “absurdity”. The entire song text of the work is identical with the title.

Langgaard submitted the score to the State Broadcasting Service, which shortly after returned it along with the institution's standard refusal, which was: “Since we herewith return the score for your composition *Res absurda*. For mixed chorus and orchestra we regretfully inform you that the State Broadcasting Service will not be able to make use of it for broadcasts.” Langgaard reacted promptly by submitting the score once again along with the letter of refusal, furnished with his comments. Opposite the title *Res absurda* he had written “Exactly!” – and below: “Unfriendly letters are not accepted. You can burn my

masterly scores”. At Langgaard's death in 1952 the manuscript was found in the Broadcasting Corporation's music archive after which it was transferred to the Royal Library. A concert performance has not yet taken place but in 2008 the piece was recorded by Thomas Dausgaard and the DR Radio Symphony Orchestra (Dacapo 6.220519). The duration of this recording is 5½ minutes.

The piece is a sarcastic, autobiographical statement from a composer who felt that life as an artist was meaningless. His lot was to create “large wastepaper-basket-works”, as he wrote in a letter to the State Broadcasting Service. The work expresses this absurdity by itself being absurd. The composition's 30 bars, of which bb. 1-10 are identical with bb. 11-20, should be repeated faster and faster until the fastest possible tempo, whereafter the movement is concluded with a C Major chord. This effect, of increasing the tempo gradually with each repetition is not new in Langgaard's music. Already in *Music of the Spheres* (1916-18) a passage can be found in which choir and orchestra repeat four bars with the ‘meaningless’ song text *do re mi fa sol la* for a total of 14 times in a gradually faster tempo.

Bendt Viinholt Nielsen, November 2011