



Karin
Rehnqvist

Blodhov
Bloodhoof

monodrama for mezzo-soprano
and eight instruments

Winner of the 2019 Järnåker Prize

Score

The 2019 Järnåker Prize

“The 2019 Järnåker prize is awarded to Blodhov, a work that weaves contemporary chamber music together with Nordic folk music into a unique, dramatic composition in both its form, content and expression. The work is a highly charged monodrama for mezzo-soprano and chamber ensemble that, thanks to its emotional depth, never lets go of the listener. The thematic, dramatic and poetic origin can be found in Gerður Kristnýs’ poetic story Blodhov, which is based on a fable from the Old Norse Edda about power, threat and abuse. By setting the poems to a responsive and empathic musical score, an intensive and touching image emerges of the maltreated woman’s pain, loneliness and memories. The music has a rich timbre that varies between dynamic extremes and expressions; from the painful cries and earthly tones to the naturally lyrical and beautiful melodies that are occasionally brought out in a mere whisper.

By allowing the exploratory sound worlds and playing techniques of contemporary art music to blend with the rich, ornamental lines of folk music, the old fable’s violent message is neatly fused together with burning issues of our day. The work thus ties together the old with the new, musical traditions with auditory innovations, and ancient mythology and modern poetry with painful human endeavours and burdens through the ages—all conveyed by means of an outstanding application of the intimate, dramatic and magnificently expressive possibilities allowed by the chamber music format.”

The story

In *Blodhov*, Icelandic poet and author Gerður Kristný (born 1970) develops a story from the *Poetic Edda* that tells about how the god Freyr falls in love with a female giant called Gerður. Blodhov is the name of the mighty black horse upon which Freyr sends his servant Skírnir to fetch Gerður. Using threats, Freyr has her brought to him and forces himself on her. Kristný brings a new angle to the story by telling it from the perspective of the woman Gerður.

Prolog (Prologue)	9
1. Minnena (Memories)	13
2. Vår (Spring) – instrumental	24
3. Skírnir	32
4. Lament	44
5. Huggtandsmörkret (Sabre-toothed darkness) – whispered, prerecorded voice	50
6. Nej (No)	71
7. Mamma (Mother).	81
8. Tanken längtar hem (In my mind I fly home).	88
9. Nio nätter av fruktan (Nine nights of fear).	99

INSTRUMENTATION

Flute (also Bass Flute, Alto Flute and Piccolo)

Oboe (also Baritone Oboe)

Clarinet in B^b (also Bass Clarinet and Contrabass Clarinet)

Percussion

2 Large Bass Drums, Vibraphone, Glockenspiel, Flat Gong (Kungari), Tam-tam,
Bundle of twigs, Large Thunder Sheet, 2 Car springs (horizontal), Large Gong,
Movement 2 also: Small Bells, Small Triangles, Thin metal sheet, High metal object,
and more ad lib

Piano (also computer)

Violin

Viola

Cello

Score in C

Voice register: d–b^{b2}, the technique of kulning is asked for, see <https://karin-rehnqvist.se/eng/about-kulning>.

Microphones: Since the piece spans a very wide register with great dynamic variations, the voice could be carefully boosted.

In movement 5 the voice should be prerecorded.



= double trill, with two different pitches, unarticulated



= small crescendo at the end of the note, the next note starts at origin dynamics, e.g. mp < mf mp,
play legato to the next note



= quarter tones

Skírnir is pronounced Skirtnir.

Blodhov should be performed mainly senza vibrato, when not said so. Vibrato may be used for colouring.

Grace notes before the beat.

Accidentals apply to the bar.

Duration: 40 min

Commissioned by Statens Musikverk, with additional support from
Helge Ax:son Johnsons Stiftelse

Composed for Lena Willemark and ensemble recherche

Text from the poem *Blodhov* (*Blóðhófnir*, *Bloodhoof*) by Gerður Kristný

Translated from Icelandic into Swedish by John Swedenmark

Adapted by Karin Rehnqvist and Svante Grogarn – sung in Swedish

World premiere	24 May 2019; Gothenburg Concert House
	Lena Willemark, ensemble recherche
	Light and staging: Svante Grogarn

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Score: GE 14094 | Parts available on hire

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For Lena Willemark and ensemble recherche

Blodhov

(Bloodhoof)

monodrama for mezzo-soprano and eight instruments

Prolog

(Prologue)

♩ = 50 Freely

Karin Rehnqvist 2016–2019

The musical score is written for six parts: Bass Flute, Baritone Oboe, Bass Clarinet in B \flat , Percussion, Piano, and Mezzo. The score is in 5/4 time and consists of five measures. The tempo is marked '♩ = 50 Freely'. The key signature is one flat (B \flat).

Bass Flute: Rests in all measures.

Baritone Oboe: Rests in all measures.

Bass Clarinet in B \flat : Rests in measures 1 and 2. In measure 3, it plays a melodic line with a 'shadow note' annotation. Dynamics include *ppp* and *p*. In measure 4, it plays a melodic line with dynamics *mf* and *p*.

Percussion: Rests in all measures.

Piano: In measure 1, it plays a triplet of notes with the instruction 'inside, muffled tapping on the rim with mallet, with pedal' and dynamic *mp*. In measure 3, it plays a glissando with the instruction 'gliss inside, mallet' and dynamic *p*. In measure 4, it plays a note with the instruction 'ord.' and dynamic *p*. The left hand (l.v.) plays a note in measure 3 with dynamic *p*.

Mezzo: Rests in measures 1 and 2. In measure 3, it plays a note with the instruction 'lamenting, free syllables slow, wide vibrato' and dynamic *mp*. In measure 4, it plays a melodic line with a fermata and dynamic *mp*. In measure 5, it plays a melodic line with a fermata and dynamic *mp*.

5

B. Fl.

B. Cl.

Perc.

Pno.

Mezzo

senza vibrato sempre

p

pp

friction sound; sandpaper block + hands on bass drum

p

inside, mallet

ord.

mp

inside, mallet

p gliss.

mf *mp*

3

10

B. Fl.

B. Cl.

Perc.

Pno.

Mezzo

To Cl.

mp

3

ord.

mp

p gliss.

p *mp*

mf *mp*

3

pinched voice *pp*

A

15

B. Fl.

Perc.

Pno.

Mezzo

inside, mallet

ord.

mp

p

gliss.

mf

mp

ord.

19

B. Fl.

B. Ob.

Perc.

Pno.

Mezzo

mp

inside, with nail

ord.

inside, mallet

p

mf

gliss.

p

mf

freely; deep exhaling, sounds from the throat (gurgel)
pass the hand quickly back and forth in front of the mouth while singing, and more

Repeat as many time
as needed, to be interrupted

26

B. Fl. *mp*

B. Ob. *pp* *ord.* *mp*

Cl. *mp*

Perc. *3 To Vibr.*

Pno. *p* *ord.*

Mezzo

1. Minnena

(Memories)

Subito
♩ = 60
30 To A. Fl.

B. Fl.

B. Ob.

Cl. To B. Cl.

Perc. **Vibraphone with bow, no vibrato**
mf

Pno. **gliss inside with nail**
mp

Mezzo **no vibrato**
mf
Min - n ne - na
< f mf
m - m - de e
f

Subito
♩ = 60

Vln. I *mp*
p *< f* *p* *< f* *p* **jeté**

Vla. *p* *p* *< f* *p* *< f* *p* *< f*

Vc. *p* *p* *< f* *p* *< f* *p* *< f* *p*

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for a full orchestra and a mezzo-soprano. It begins at measure 30 with a 'Subito' marking and a tempo of quarter note = 60. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The time signature changes from 4/4 to 5/4 and back to 4/4. The woodwinds (B. Fl., B. Ob., Cl.) play sustained notes with accents. The percussion part features a vibraphone played with a bow, producing a sustained, ethereal sound. The piano part includes a glissando with a nail. The mezzo-soprano part has lyrics 'Minnena' and 'm-m-de e' with dynamic markings ranging from *mf* to *f*. The strings (Vln. I, Vla., Vc.) play a rhythmic accompaniment with dynamic markings from *p* to *f*. The score concludes with a 'jeté' marking in the first violin part.