

Curriculum

Professor Gert Mortensen

Percussion soloist

Gert Mortensen was born in Denmark in 1958. He was trained in the prestigious soloist class at The Royal Academy of Music in Copenhagen and is now professor, head of timpani and percussion, the same place.

For 24 years he held the position as the principal percussionist of The Royal Danish Orchestra. At the same time he became recognised as one of the leading concert percussionists in the world.

Gert Mortensen received the Carl Nielsen Grant, the Jacob Gade Award, the Gladsaxe Music Prize as well as the Music Critics Honorary Award.

Along with the composer Per Nørgaard and the conductor Simon Rattle, Gert Mortensen studied Indonesian gamelan music. He brought home various instruments not ordinarily found in the Western European panoply of percussion instruments.

In addition to Per Nørgaard, other leading Scandinavian composers such as Niels Viggo Bentzon, Svend-David Sandström, Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen, Poul Ruders and Askell Masson have written works especially for Gert Mortensen.

His career includes solo and symphony concerts with several European orchestras among others The National Polish Symphony Orchestra and The BBC Philharmonic at the Proms, Royal Albert Hall. He'd also done a number of television and radio performances in most of Europe, USA, Japan and Australia.

Gert Mortensen has been a guest artist at many international events including the ISCM World Music Days, Warsaw Autumn, the festivals in Edingburgh, Bergen, Kuhmo, Portogruaro and The Stockhausen Festival. He also holds master classes at various music colleges in Europe and he has been tutor of The European Community Youth Orchestra conducted by Claudio Abbado.

Gert Mortensen has also made music videos and internationally acclaimed CD's for the record company BIS. A new recording of Per Nørgaard's Percussion Concerto with orchestra conducted by Ian Latham König has been released on Da Capo Records.

Always searching for new sounds Gert Mortensen has created a new instrument: "The Glassophone": a nine octave glass instrument made of mouthblown glass used in the ancient wineindustry of Italy, probably the largest glassinstrument in the world.

Recently he created an open-air musicdrama in Italy "Farm-o-rama", a major performance for chamber orchestra, ballet, ancient tractors and other agricultural machinery and tools, animals and fireworks!

On occasion Mortensen forms a percussion duo with English percussionist Evelyn Glennie.

Gert Mortensens repertoire encompasses the greatest works for percussion in the 20th and 21st century. His recitals are a veritable "one-man show", a fascinating display of instruments from all over the globe. The variety of instruments along with his musical expression, body language, movement and rhythm create the process which one critic has called "art created from the liberation of natural energy in a spectrum of primordial force, ecstasy, mysticism, meditation and the explosion of life..."

Recordings: BIS: lp 256, BIS CD 256, BIS CD 482, Gramm. 101CD, Da Capo CD 403, BIS CD 511.