

Program Note:

In essence, *Non-Stable Equilibrium* is a succession of brief musical gestures, or iterations, surrounded by silence. Each gesture is derived from one of three different musical segments; a cell – three crotchets long – and two phrases, both four bars in length. The cell is gradually expanded as the piece progresses, while the two phrases are presented only in fragments. Each of the three materials has a different musical character and identity; however they are all inspired by Norwegian folk-music and Jazz-phrasing.

Conceptually, the piece is based on the psychological notion of *Working Memory* and the way it defines the listener's boundaries for musical recall and recognition. The premise is that the audience is gradually made aware of the gist of the different materials as the piece develops. However, where the potential for specific musical recognition occurs, this is often subverted as the music diverges from a previously imposed pattern. One might say that at times our ability to process the information is surpassed by the complexity of what we hear. In contrast, elsewhere, we are given a lot of time to digest a small amount of material.

Throughout, *Non-Stable Equilibrium* plays on the audience's notions of expectation and surprise. In places it follows our anticipations, in others it does not. The proposal is that the listener's experience fluctuates between genuine recognition and bewilderment.

The title is taken from the following quotation from Nils Lennart Wallin's *Biomusicology*:

The Transition from potential, only virtual, sound patterns to actual sound gestures and music is caused by changes in the agent's sensomotor and mental tonus through exchange of energy between him and his environment, from a non-stable equilibrium (rest) to active states of fluctuation. A non-stable equilibrium is a state full of creative possibilities. Silence, therefore, to be broken and transformed into sound gestures or music, is a kind of analogue to the quantic vacuum that is postulated in some modern cosmological models for the creation of the universe... it is not passive, but conceals its power in order, at a certain moment, to release all thinkable combinations of acoustic and kinetic energy into a world of music and dance.