



**Herman D. Koppel** Composer & Pianist  
Koppel • Blöndal Bengtsson • Koppel Quartet  
Chamber Music

Jana  
cord



# Herman D. Koppel

Composer & Pianist

## CD 1

HERMAN D. KOPPEL

String Quartet nr 2 op. 34

String Quartet nr 3 op. 38

Piano Quintet op. 57

## CD 2

HERMAN D. KOPPEL

Ternio op. 53 b

Sonata for cello and piano op. 62

Suite for Solo Cello op. 86

Trio for Violin, Cello and Piano op. 88

## CD 1

HERMAN D. KOPPEL

String Quartet nr 2 op. 34

The Koppel Quartet

Recorded DR 18.05.1962

[1]	Allegro fresco, con espressione	6.04
[2]	Molto andante	7.39
[3]	Con vivezza	6.23

String Quartet nr 3 op. 38

The Koppel Quartet

Recorded DR 15.03. 1957

[4]	Allegro	12.29
[5]	Andante	10.37
[6]	Vivace	7.06

Piano Quintet op. 57

The Koppel Quartet • Herman D. Koppel, piano

Recorded Copenhagen 1956

Courtesy of EMI

[7]	Allegro con brio	9.08
[8]	Andante con molto espressione	8.46
[9]	Allegro moderato con leggerezza	8.28

## CD 2

HERMAN D. KOPPEL

Ternio op. 53 b

Erling Blöndal Bengtsson, cello • Herman D. Koppel, piano

Recorded DR 25.09. 1971

[1]	Allegramente	3.14
[2]	Tempo di passacaglia	4.06
[3]	Allegro giocoso	5.15

**Sonata for cello and piano op. 62**

Erling Blöndal Bengtsson, cello • Herman D. Koppel, piano

Recorded Copenhagen dec. 1959

Courtesy of Louisiana-Records

[4]	Allegro	8.47
[5]	Chaconne	7.34
[6]	Allegro con brio	5.14

**Suite for Solo Cello op.86**

Erling Blöndal Bengtsson, cello

Recorded DR 25.09. 1971

[7]	Preludium: Adagio	4.22
[8]	Prestissimo	2.02
[9]	Molto Tranquillo	3.12
[10]	Vivace	1.27
[11]	Adagio - Allegro energico	3:29

**Trio for Violin, Cello and Piano op. 88**

Béla Detreköj, violin • René Honnens, cello • Herman D. Koppel, piano

Recorded DR 26.10. 1973

[12]	Allegro, con leggerezza	3.32
[13]	Vivace, sempre con leggerezza	3.16
[14]	Tema con Variazioni	6.02
[15]	Toccata. Vivace con forza	3.02

## HERMAN D. KOPPEL: CHAMBER MUSIC

Herman D. Koppel's lifelong activity as a performer and composer of chamber music grew out of his collaboration with his violinist brother, Julius, two years his junior. The list of chamber music works with piano comprises approximately ten duos with violin, cello or woodwind instruments, and an equal number of trios, quartets, quintets, and sextets. Among twenty works for other kinds of instrumental combinations, from duos to quintets, the six string quartets, composed between 1929 to 1979, are the most important.

The works documented on this CD were composed during the same period of time and show Koppel's command of very different means of expression: The two string quartets influenced by Carl Nielsen, Stravinsky, and Bartók, the Baroque character of Ternio, the echoes of Brahms in the Piano Quintet and of Prokofiev in the Cello Sonata, and finally the mosaic-like forms of the Cello Suite and the Piano Trio, which reflect Koppel's encounter with the avant garde music of the 1960s when he performed piano compositions by Stockhausen, Boulez, and by his older son Thomas Koppel.

## The Koppel Quartet

Else Marie Bruun (born 1911), 1st violin and Julius Koppel (born 1910) viola, husband and wife, were the permanent members of The Koppel Quartet which was for more than fifty years, one of the leading Danish chamber ensembles. They started playing chamber music together as students at The Royal Academy of Music and formed The Koppel Quartet together with the violinist Andreas Thyregod and the cellist Torben Anton Svendsen, after they both joined The Royal Orchestra in 1936. Thyregod and Svendsen were later succeeded by other players. From 1951 to 1975 The Koppel Quartet were the main protagonists at the annual Chamber Music Days at Hindsgavl Castle.

Works by Mozart and Carl Nielsen formed the basic repertoire of the Koppel Quartet, but contemporary music was also prominent in the programmes that the ensemble performed at concerts all over Denmark, in the Nordic countries and in the Netherlands, Great Britain and Germany, as well as in numerous radio broadcasts. Gramophone recordings were made of part of their Danish repertoire: Three of the Nielsens quartets, three of those of Holmboe, the first five of Koppel's quartets and also his Piano Quintet which was commissioned by the ensemble,

and works by Poul Rovsing Olsen, Axel Borup-Jørgensen, and Per Nørgård. The Koppel Quartet received The Danish Gramophone Award in 1956 for their recording of Holmboe's third and Nielsen's fourth quartet.

### Erling Blöndal Bengtsson

Born 1932, appeared as cello soloist at the age of four and made his debut with orchestra at the age of ten. He studied in the USA with the famous Russian cello virtuoso Gregor Piatigorsky and has performed all over the world. Contemporary music has always been central to the repertoire of Blöndal Bengtsson. He has given first performances of fifteen solo concertos with orchestra, including several by Danish composers. In 1953 Blöndal Bengtsson started teaching at The Royal Danish Academy of Music where later he was appointed professor. Since 1990 he has been professor at The School of Music of the University of Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Among a great number of gramophone recordings are cd's of the Bach solo suites, of the sonatas of Beethoven and Brahms, and of solo concerti of Haydn, Boccherini, Schu-

mann, Dvorak, Lalo as well as of Blöndal Bengtsson's Danish contemporaries Holmboe, Koppel, Maegaard, and Nørholm.

The collaboration between Blöndal Bengtsson and Herman D. Koppel began in 1946 with a performance of the Shostakovich Trio together with the violinist Henrik Sachsen-skjold. Later followed gramophone recordings of Brahms' Sonata in E minor, Stravinsky's Suite Italienne and other short pieces for cello and piano. Over the years the two artists played numerous radio broadcasts and recitals all over Denmark.

## String Quartet no 2

The first movement is a chain of mutually freely associating sections. Over pulsating chords the first violin unfolds a melodic line, starting with a syncopated ascending three-note figure, whose second interval, a 4th, is prominent throughout the movement. After an ascent the figure is turned downwards\*, the cello follows in canon, and the middle parts are put in motion as well. The melody culminates fortissimo two octaves higher than at the beginning, but then subsides. A new ascent\* is completely dominated by the three-note figure and its inversion without reaching as high up as before, and landing on the lowest notes of the cello. With a dancing accompaniment on open strings the 1st violin and the viola present a syncopated pizzicato-theme\* which works itself into a fortissimo, once again ending on the lowest string of the cello.

A cantabile recapitulation of the pizzicato-theme leads into an expanding section where all instruments take turns in a melodic development. A sudden pianissimo\* reminds us of the beginning of the movement, interrupted by a dramatic fortissimo foreshadowing the solemn second movement. The pizzicato-

theme returns in a new guise, and a short version of the first section of the movement makes a resolute end.

The melancholy minor character of the viola theme beginning the slow moving second movement, soon gives way to a more happy rendering by the 1st violin, and a little later\* to a graceful interchange between the instruments. The happy mood is continued in a violin solo\* while the lower instruments pick up the first theme. The dialogue continues between the instruments both in pairs and one at a time until they reach the climax of the movement. The initial theme returns\* cantabile in the 1st violin and is brought to an end by the viola.

The first part of the last movement is urged on by a hectic pulse in quintuple time with changing beat. A stubbornly repeated b is the outset for three melodic arches moving up through three octaves to a point\* where a long cantabile violin melody in four beats overflows the quintuple marcato pulse, which in turn, with growing intensity, leads the section to a climax. In the middle section\* the instruments accompany each other two by two in pleasant harmony through gently waving melodic lines, culminating after

short chirping interpolations in a cheerful 4<sup>17</sup> melody, whereupon\* the marcato-pulse opens a summary of the agitated first part of the movement.

### String Quartet no 3

A gentle waving theme is repeated in the 1st violin with the addition of increasingly profiled lower parts, ending up with a rapid, stubbornly repeated contrasting figure in the cello, taken up by the viola with scattered chord interpolations from the other instruments. These two elements occur all through the movement in different versions: \*a long 1<sup>27</sup> melodic expansion of the theme over a continuation of the constantly moving contrasting figure, and the figure as the impetus to \*an energetic outlet which leads on to the 3<sup>02</sup> rounding off of the first part of the movement after a short recollection of the theme and its second part. Even the melodic and rhythmic ornaments of the inserted episodes\* are related to the theme and its lower parts. The middle section is polyphonic with 3<sup>46</sup> the lower part of the theme as its starting point\*. The contrast figure is cited briefly\*, 5<sup>39</sup> and the polyphony is condensed into increasingly shorter melodic fragments and is finished off by the viola with three short attempts at

the theme. Accompanied by pursuing rhythmic figures, the 2nd violin plays *cantabile* the lower part of the theme three times\* whereupon the middle part dies out. It is followed by a compressed recapitulation, only half the length of the first part of the movement. 6<sup>22</sup> 7<sup>34</sup>

The sad mood of the second movement with its dense sweet harmony is underlined by muted sound. A rhythmically searching melody moves up three octaves, starts all over again *espressivo*, develops into a forte, *dolce* and dies away. The lively middle part is played without mutes; a spiral with a syncopated beginning moves from the viola to the violins and back again after a *fortissimo* where everybody fiddles away. As in the first movement the recapitulation is highly compressed.

With an energetic cycling accompaniment as background, the last movement opens with a carefree melodic development with rhythmically staggered imitations. This game is interrupted\* by a quieter theme which begins as a 1<sup>34</sup> descending melodic line, with pizzicato-accompaniment. The line is turned upside down\* and is followed by a reminiscence of 2<sup>16</sup> the opening melody played by the cello\*. The 2<sup>33</sup>



The Koppel Quartet and Herman D. Koppel



quiet theme returns\* in half tempo cantabile, 3'05 reminding us of the beginning of the first movement. In the compressed recapitulation\* 4'41 the quiet theme emerges espressivo as the climax just before the final sudden increase in pace.

### The Piano Quintet

The work is arranged with the piano and the strings as equal partners. The first movement starts off with a series of forceful themes in dense, dark colours. They are replaced\* by a lighter grazioso melody with birdlike figures. The themes develop one by one in the middle part of the movement\* where several keys 2'11 emerge simultaneously. The first part of the movement is repeated\* in a shortened version and with a different distribution of the instruments. It all culminates in traces of the first theme, played appassionato, slowly dying out before the final striking full stop. 3'40 5'32

A repeated formula of three times four pizzicato notes is the basis of the first part of the second movement. The piano starts off with harmonically descending lines, reinforced by harmonies in a mixture of major and minor. The strings interrupt, and while the ostinato-formula loses itself in piano configurations, they

unfold in a harmonically reinforced melody and then in a canon-like section. After a pianissimo passage the ostinato emerges in the piano, viola and cello parts as the starting point for a modified recapitulation of the first part of the movement, followed by an agitato of increasing tempo and volume. The agitation calms down, the first part of the movement is resumed once more and dies away, quoting a part of the ostinato. 1'42

The last movement begins with swirling figurations in the piano and a violin melody, light as a butterfly, which in turn is taken over by the piano. The unstable tonality of the melody creates a tense impression, which is reinforced by the following rhythmic and dynamic development and dominates a seductive waltz section\* floating on top of a sombre 2'56 ostinato in the piano. The movement starts all over again\* but is driven towards a dynamic climax which in turn is replaced by an incorporeal cantabile of muted melodic lines. Once again the introduction of the movement\* returns, this time interrupted by the waltz section rendered with strong vehemence before a hectic presto conclusion. 2'56

## Ternio

Ternio was the first piece by Koppel that Blöndal Bengtsson played. The original is for violin, but according to Blöndal Bengtsson the composition suits the greater volume of the cello even better. The work is technically not too difficult, and the concise form has given much pleasure to his students all over the world.

The first movement begins with a jolly hopping theme followed\* by an innocent melody. It fades away\*, and fragments of the two ideas alternate until\*. After a shortened repetition of the first section and a concluding crescendo, the movement ends the way it started.

The second movement is more serious. The cello unfolds a sad melodic espressivo on top of an eight bars long passacaglia theme played dolce by the piano in different versions.

The last movement also builds on two thematic ideas, which\* become more and more virtuosic. A shorter repetition of the first section begins\*, but the ensuing crescendo is abruptly cut short by the passacaglia theme from the second movement. After a short

cadenza gaiety returns with the opening bars of the movement.

## Sonata for Cello and Piano

The artists were both inspired by the collaboration on Ternio. The Concerto for Cello and Orchestra as well as the Sonata were written at the request of Blöndal Bengtsson. The Sonata had a triumphant first performance in 1956 and incorporates the experience that Koppel gained from the previous works. Blöndal Bengtsson considers it to be a major work in the Danish chamber music canon. He states that in this, as indeed in all Koppel's works, he lets the cello sing. Blöndal Bengtsson also emphasizes the advantage for both musicians of the 'firework' character of the Finale. He recalls how he visited Koppel while he was composing the piece and heard the Chaconne for the first time. Normally he never suggested more than minimal alterations to Koppel's works, but in this case he suggested the use of pizzicato in variation 7 and of artificial harmonics in variation 11.

First movement: Over a brisk wandering motion in the piano the cello unfolds an expanding cantabile melodic line. Ever more lively figures in both instruments create a

more passionate expression. The climax is reached by a forceful, simple song, first in the cello, then in the piano\*. The song fades away and is followed by a gently singing theme\*, likewise presented in turn by the instruments. After a shadow-like interruption, marked fluendo, the singing theme is resumed con anima by the cello supported by an impatiently repeated bass figure crescendo e animando. This leads on to a new culmination fortissimo marcato\*. After a shortened and dramatized recapitulation\*, the tempo is doubled\*, and the marcato culmination concludes in a jubilant brioso\*, which the first theme of the movement brings to a triumphant full stop.

The eight bars long chaconne theme of the second movement is recapitulated in modified form as the first of sixteen variations. In the following three, marked espressivo and cantabile, a twisted melodic line grows out of the piano, is distributed among the instruments and is developed fully on the piano while the cello reinforces the chaconne bass. According to Blöndal Bengtsson, he and Koppel called variation 5 'the Bartok-Variation'. Together with the next two it makes a happy game of staccato and pizzicato. The following three variations marked

furioso\* move from agitated figures to stubborn rigidity. The sequence comes to a stop with a slow variation\* where the piano plays a gentle melody with muted chords accompanied by dreaming cello harmonics. The fierce expression abruptly returns, leading through variations 8-10 to a dynamic climax whereupon the movement ebbs away. The theme now returns in its original form\* followed by a long, calm variation and finally a melodic and harmonic recapitulation.

4'33 The last movement frolics in an interchange between virtuoso expansion, singing expression and fury carried forward on an unbroken flow of distorted rhythm.

## Suite for Solo Cello

Suite for Solo Cello was first performed at a private recital and since then has only been performed in the radio broadcast which is issued on this CD. Blöndal Bengtsson describes it as an outstanding work, although it demands a lot of musical attention from the soloist and the listeners as well. He especially points out the beautiful third movement. The Prelude alternates between walking and dancing movements. It takes off with four notes striding up two and a half octaves. This

four note figure is immediately repeated and recurs several times separating the different sections of the movement, finally in inversion. In the Prelude we also hear two figures which occur all through the Suite: A turn 1 whole tune down - 1/2 tune up, heard for the first time as an extension of the four note figure, and a fall of intervals of 4ths played three times\* and soon after\* linked together with the turn figure.

1'07  
1'16

In the second movement the constant three-beat movement, which is only interrupted a few times, is imbued with the turn and fall figures. The first appearance is at notes five to ten. The final climax of the movement\* 1'33 consists of the turn figure descending chromatically two octaves, followed by an ascent in intervals of 4ths, ending on an irregularly accentuated interchange of two notes, a feature which had already marked the middle point of the movement\*.

0'53

The third movement is characterized by double stopping. It begins with a 5th that returns later in different pitches, played in a meditative pianissimo. The five last notes resume the 'turn and fall' figure.

The fourth movement revives the three-beat movement of the second movement, but the rhythmic changes occur more often. The tonal pattern is influenced by the turn figure and different inversions of it.

The fifth movement opens with the falling intervals of 4th, slowly at first, but then in a quick version that recurs at significant turning points in the movement, each time linked to the turn figure. The movement comes to an end with the turn figure emphasized by double stops.

### Trio for Violin, Cello and Piano

In the first movement the strings move along in parallel or in contrary motion, at the beginning with long notes and big intervals, arched over the bright, sharp staccato harmonies of the piano in recurring kaleidoscopic patterns, repeated and replacing each other, while the melodic line of the strings is constantly changing. In between the strings imitate the piano figures, start a dialogue or play individually. The movement starts all over again, is interrupted by a syncopated interpolation and ends with the upper part of the first bars of the opening played in four octaves.

In the second movement the instruments play in a dense mosaic of repeated figures of alternate two or three beats over a constant pulse. This percussion-like character is only broken by chains of notes from the piano. The end is like that of the first movement, rhythmically modified.

The theme of the variation movement consists of the harmonic patterns with which the piano opened the work, more precisely its first thirteen seconds, repeats excluded. The first variation is a diluted version of the theme played by muted strings, the second a more harmoniously full-bodied version. In the third variation the strings play the top part of the theme with a jazz-like piano accompaniment. The three following, airy variations, with the changes of tempo: presto - andante - presto are linked to a lesser degree to the theme. In the last variation, andante, the strings extend the top part of the theme to four octaves over dissonant piano chords, before they meet in yet another modified version of the final bars of the preceding movements.

The final movement begins like a march, but soon the pianist runs away in a breathless increase of pace up and down the keyboard,

accompanying increasingly scattered snatches of melody in the strings. They finally resume the march and finish with a suggestion of the conclusions of the preceding movements.

Mogens Andersen  
English translation Susanne Lange

The Danish version can be found at [www.danacord.dk](http://www.danacord.dk)

Mogens Andersen is a musicologist, until 1999 editor and producer of contemporary music at Danmarks Radio.



Erling Blöndal Bengtsson og Herman D. Koppel / Louisiana 1976

## Herman D. Koppel's Tape Library.

Herman D. Koppel devoted much time to the documentation of his works both as composer and as pianist. From the end of the 40s, he collected live recordings of his own performances, principally those transmitted by Radio Denmark. The outcome is 240 reel-to-reel tapes with more than 600 hours of music partly his own, partly that of his household gods, Nielsen, Bartók, and Stravinsky, some jazz recordings, mainly Louis Armstrong, interspersed with, of course, recordings of performances by the younger generations of Koppels.

The very first recordings are lacquer discs with the first performance of Piano Concerto no. 3 (1947) conducted by Nikolai Malko (sadly not complete), and Louis Cahuzac's interpretation of the Clarinet Concerto from 1948. (Herman D. Koppel Composer & Pianist vol. 1 DACOCD 561-562)

At the beginning of the 50s, the introduction of wire recorders and tape recorders for private use enabled Koppel to carry out his own recordings. The first of these, recorded with a table microphone in front of the radio loudspeaker, are not precisely hi-fi, but they leave an interesting impression of the sound milieu of the time.

major piano works seem to have suffered the same fate; e.g. all Prokofiev's sonatas, Schumann's Symphonic Studies, Schubert's Wanderer Fantasia, and several Beethoven and Schubert sonatas. These are not to be found in Koppel's own archive either.

The editors of Herman D. Koppel, Composer and Pianist invite collectors and music lovers who have in their possession interesting HDK-recordings from the period 1950-70 to contact Danacord. There may be hidden jewels among them, which warrant publication. The tape library was very much part of the daily life of the composer. He often consulted it, and despite the varying sound quality, he found great pleasure in listening to the recordings. These live recordings bear witness to a long and rich musician's life.

For the sound restoration the latest computer-aided sound restoration system Ionizer/Hyper prism from Arboretum Systems have been used.

Björn Asker

Unfortunately, Herman D. Koppel's recordings of

Artistic Editors Mogens Andersen, Björn Asker, Anders Koppel

Assistant Lone Koppel

Sound Restoration Björn Asker

Graphic Design Koyer Grafik

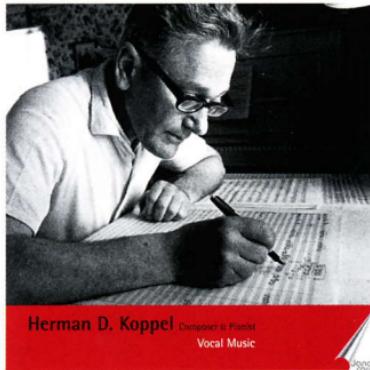
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**NEXT RELEASE VOL. 4**  
**DACOCD 567 – 568**  
Vocal Music by Herman D. Koppel

For the biography of Herman D. Koppel visit  
[www.danacord.dk](http://www.danacord.dk) (DACP 561-562)



Herman D. Koppel Composer & Pianist  
Vocal Music

Erling Blöndal Bengtsson og Herman D. Koppel 1956



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**CD 1**

Total time 76:56

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