



Education

Kjell Samkopf (1952) received his diploma in composition in 1977 from The Norwegian State Academy of Music, tutored by Professor Finn Mortensen. He continued his studies in percussion there with Per Erik Thorsen (Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra) and Einar Nielsen (Royal Academy of Music, Århus, Denmark), and received a degree the following year in percussion. In 1978-79 Samkopf studied sonology and electroacoustic music at the Institute of Sonology in Utrecht, Holland, with Dr. Werner Kaegi. He has had two periods of study in the United States: at Berklee College of Music in Boston in 1979, where he studied jazz vibraphone, and in 1981 at the Creative Music Studio in Woodstock, New York.

Activities as a Composer

Kjell Samkopf's career as a composer extends to many areas. His involvement in music includes chamber and orchestral music, electro-acoustic works, music for choreographed dance, documentary and art house films, television productions, music for educational purposes and a number of works for percussion. He has written over 40 commission works, among these are compositions for the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, The Swedish Radio, Bergen Wind Quintet, the Norwegian Broadcasting Co., Norwegian Cultural Council, Collage Dance Company, Ultima - Oslo Contemporary Music Festival and the Festival of Northern Norway.

Music for dance has a central position in Samkopf's production. He has written music for nine whole night dance performances. His co-operation with the choreographer Lise Nordal deserves special mention. In addition to their involvement with numerous short ballets they have made five whole night performances together: Aqua (1986), Tidevann (Tide) (1990), Til Elise (1996), Entré (2000) and Silent Gliss (2004)

A red thread in Samkopf's work has been a development towards sound. From composing for traditional instruments he has gradually augmented his sound palette to include electro-acoustics and an increasing number of untraditional sound-making objects. In his two outdoor concerts "Sandvika September 8, 1991" and "Oslo October 3, 1992" the main instrumentarium was ten large sound sculptures by the artist Sverre Hoel. The last step in this development is his two sonographic CDs "Mårådalen Walk" (1994), containing recordings of walking, and "Mountain Listening" (1998), containing five sonographical portraits of people listening. These CDs also reveals Samkopf's engagement of the relationship between art and nature. Together with the Dutch sonographer Floris van Manen, Samkopf is currently working on a CD trilogy "An Act of Listening"; in 2002 they released "Music for Large Mountain and Vibraphone", and the second CD, "Listening Ahead - Marimba and Town Hall", was launched 2010.

Kjell Samkopf was the Festival Composer at the Festival of Northern Norway in 1985.

Kjell Samkopf

Composer - Percussionist - Teacher

Activities as a Percussionist

Kjell Samkopf started his professional career as a freelance orchestral musician as a timpanist in Trondheim Symphony Orchestra (1974/75) and as a deputy musician in Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra (1975-82). In 1979 he got a full time position as percussionist in the Norwegian National Opera. From the beginning of the 1980ies he increasingly concentrated on performing contemporary music. Throughout his practice he has participated in several ensembles, namely, the New Music Ensemble (1979-83) and the contemporary music ensemble Octoband (1980-85). In his circle of artistic friends, Samkopf would frequently perform with people such as the poet Kjell Erik Vindtorn and The Fatah Morgana Quartet (1985-97).

Samkopf has had a number of performances as a soloist of his own works in percussion and electronics. Among these are the performances at the Bergen International Festival 1980, the World Music Days in Aarhus, Denmark 1983, a solo tour in Sweden with Rikskonserten 1984, Percussion Days - University of Arizona 1995, Illinois, Festival in Northern Norway 1999 and Son Poetry Festival south of Oslo 2000.

His success has extended to the release of several CDs of his own music. His debut album was the LP "Solo Percussion with electronics" (1983). In 1990 followed the CD "Contemporary Music for Big Band", with Samkopf as a vibraphone soloist in his own works with Sandvika Big Band.

Activities as a Teacher

Samkopf has taught at the Eastern Norway Conservatory of Music (1979 - 1985) and at the Norwegian State Academy of Music (1988 - 2001). In 1994 he became Norway's first Professor of percussion. 2001-2008 he has worked as Associate Professor at the Norwegian State Academy of Music.

His book "Practical Drum School" (Musikk-Husets Forlag A/S 1982) has sold more than 20.000 copies, and is Norway's most used textbook for newcomers in percussion.

Kjell Samkopf received the Cultural Prize of the Municipality of Bærum 1992.