

## Biography Michael Nyvang (b. 1963)

Michael Nyvang is one of the most striking personalities of the new generation of composers, redefining contemporary music in a way so that the music critic Anders Beyer from the countrywide Danish newspaper Information wrote: *“It sounds like a music that one has never heard before, Michael Nyvang seems to be building himself up from scratch, rather than continuing an established tradition”*. Michael Nyvang’s music covers a large palette of expressions and styles, from an hour long solo piece for piano, over symphonic orchestral scores and electro acoustic music to the almost minimalist music in his original work “River and land” for the Hungarian instrument cymbalum, percussion and sound sources, which was first performed during the international music festival in Marseilles, France “Les musiques” 2006.

After playing as a rock and jazz musician, Michael Nyvang studied the saxophone for several years at the Royal Danish Academy of Music, Copenhagen and in Paris. At the same time he took private tuition in composition, and gradually he changed the main direction of his studies from performing to composing. In 1988 he was admitted to the Royal Academy of Music, Århus with composition as his subject, and his teachers included the award winning Per Nørgård and Karl Aage Rasmussen. He took his diploma from the Academy in 1995 and continued his studies in the Academy’s soloist class for composers. The same year he was awarded a three-year working scholarship from the National Arts Foundation. Very few general statements have been made about this generation of Danish composers. However, one thing that most of them seem to have in common is that they are “local”. Each has his or her own private project, and all of them train and work in a domestic, Danish musical milieu. In this respect Nyvang is the exception. Since he began composing he has as a young composer received what are probably his most important impulses during his regular study and working periods in Paris, where he has become very familiar with the composer Tristan Murail, and “spectral music”, the basic idea of which is that a composition can be developed by dealing analytically with the natural, physical qualities of sounds; and this idea linked closely together with the self similar melodic row structures he had encountered with his teachers, Per Nørgård and Karl Aage Rasmussen became very important to Nyvang’s extensive work of developing a theoretical foundation for his music until the end of the 20’th century.

Nyvang has received commissions from several organisations, such as the museum of contemporary art in Roskilde and Ensemble S:i.c, but has in the late 90’ties gone through a period of reflection, where he did not complete many of his works. He wrote music for experimental films, and performance theatre, and in 2002 he moved from Denmark to Paris where he now lives and have found new inspiration and an impressive productivity.

In 2006 Nyvang’s reflections on the nature of creation, and the importance of choice, a personal choice founded in aesthetic and ethic core values, has lead him to renounce the narrow confines of contemporary music: *“I asked my friends and myself the question: What in the creative work process is the most demanding activity? and got from all the same answer: choosing, making up your mind about whether this or that is good or not. And in an almost chocking revelation I little by little understood that no technique or mastery of scientific formulas would assure that you made good choices, good in the sense that your choice was founded in your personal values as a human being, your ethics and feelings about humanity and music, about people and their music, and that the entire structure of the music culture today in Europe had build a fortress around certain types of music, because we were afraid of exposing ourselves to the entirety of humanity, to understand, reflect on, and assimilate, any kind of modern music in our palette of expressions, choosing those elements that truly moved us, and thus creating a personal and emotionally rich and touching music. I understood the importance of studying that what we had learned was bad taste, because we have to ask the question: why is this so good? and not: why do people have such a bad taste, in order to show our love and respect for the people amongst who we live, love and die. It is important*

*for a composer to understand his and his contemporaries reality and emotions about life and music, and be able develop that in a personal and strong universe. I thus renounced the idea of contemporary music as a particular important protected intellectual music, insisting on that all is music, and all has relevance, and every composer has a right to live and have his work respected as a profession. We have to accept this challenge in order to let the music develop freely.”*

Nyvang developed in the following years an interest for the theatre, and cinema, preparing music for contemporary plays and working on a short movie. He followed closely during his years as a student, the making of the music to the Danish director Gabriel Axel's Oscar winning feature film "The feast of Babette", but it was first when he met and started to work for the Greek French composer Georges Aperghis, that he started to work seriously in this direction, getting in touch with amongst others the French author and theatre director Christophe Huysmann, and worked closely with the best musicians within this scene in France, such as Françoise Rivalland and the ensemble S:i.c.

In 2007 Nyvang began working on a fusion of contemporary music and popular music under the stage name Mick Nye, and produced more than 1 hour of new music and a video created by the talented French painter and visual artist Charlotte Guibé. On his own, without support from a publisher or a music label, he developed the name using a laptop and the Internet, and experimented with a large number of different directions in this music, which he little by little made available for free on his websites, with the intention to boot strap from scratch a music group consisting of a mixture of classical and rock musicians, playing a virtuoso and powerful scored music. Nyvang however did not leave the classical contemporary music, working on closing a circle of inspirations from many different territories he completed in 2008 a first version of his symphony "Klukkan" (The bell), and first performed an electronic version of this symphony during the Music Harvest Festival in Odense 2008, with a visual part developed, filmed and edited by Charlotte Guibé.