



African National Congress

MISSION IN NORWAY

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND CULTURE

ATTENTION CDES: MIKE DLAMANI AND TILLY

FROM: THANDI LUJABE - RANKOE

DATE: OSLO, 6TH APRIL 1993

RE: CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE.

Thank you very much for the information you sent to this office in connection with the above mentioned conference.

So far we have three names of Artists coming to Johannesburg for the conference.

1. Mr. Kjell Baekkelund: - The great Norwegian pianist.
(Dikki Dewar has a file on Kjell Baekkelund, but still we attach a bit of information on him).
2. Mr. Bjørn Eidsvåg: - Priest, Artist and song-writer in traditions of Folk/rock music.
3. Ms. Kathe Øien: - Artist.
(Dikki Dewar has a whole file on her.).

Best regards.

T. Rankoe



Born in 1930, Kjell Bækkelund began his music studies in 1935. He made his debut at the age of 8 with the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, and was hailed as a child prodigy. However, this development did not suit him, and he withdrew from public appearances. The Second World War interrupted his studies which were then resumed after the war.

Ever since the former child prodigy returned to the concert stage—as a young man—his concert activities have continued to expand.

Kjell Bækkelund has received a number of prizes. He won First Prize in the first Scandinavian Musician's Competition in Trondheim in 1953, was awarded the Harrieth Cohen Medal as «the finest pianist of the year» in London in 1953; received the Paderewski-Medal in London in 1958, and «Dansk Discofilforenings Medalje» for the best recording in 1959.

Kjell Bækkelund has been appointed by several countries and received orders as:

- * *Commander of: The Royal «Nordstjärnsordenen» (Sweden).*
- * *Knight, First Class, of The Royal Norwegian «St. Olavsordenen» (Norway).*

- * *Knight, First Class, of The Danbrogordenen» (Denmark).*
- * *Grand Master of «Lejonsordenen» (Finland).*
- * *Commander of «Falkeordenen» (Iceland)*

He studied in Oslo, with Nic Dirdal and Ivar Johnsen, in Stockholm, with Professor Gottfried Boon, in Vienna, with Professor Bruno Seidlhofer, in Detmold, with Professor Hans Richter-Haase, in London, with Ilona Kabos, and in Positano with Wilhelm Kempff.

Among the many conductors under whom he has played, are Eugene Ormandy, Pierre Monteaux, Dean Dixon, Wilhelm van Otterloo, Skrovatskiy, Nicolai Malko, and many others.

Kjell Bækkelund has never tried to fit into certain categories. On the contrary, he has always tried to away with conventional barriers and frame works. In his home country, he has over the years introduced works by Hindemith, Alban Berg, Stravinskij, Stockhausen and others. He is known as a pioneer of modern music and has been instrumental in introducing a number of works by Nordic composers. The scope of his repertoire ranges from Bach and Händel to the most modern. He has given

Beethoven and Chopin recitals; he has been a conductor at theatre performances of «The Gipsy Princess» and «Die Fledermaus»; has made guest appearances at revue theatres, and has cooperated enthusiastically with jazz musicians. No musical form is foreign to Kjell Bækkelund.

He has travelled on «Recital and Reading»-tours with outstanding artists, and has popularized the classical masters one moment and in the next given major concerts in the world's metropolises.

It is this vital and all-embracing musical activity which characterizes Mr. Bækkelund.

He has made a number of records. For RCA he has recorded Rachmaninov's Second Piano Concerto, Grieg's a-minor concerto, Liszt's concerto nr. 1 in E flat major, Schumann's concerto in a minor, and Tchaikovskij's concerto nr. 1 in b flat minor. The Grieg recording has been an enormous success, having sold 100.000 copies in Norway alone. In the US, his Rachmaninov recording received the greatest acclaim, and in the press was hailed as the best recording since Rachmaninov's.

For Deutsche Grammophon, Kjell Bækkelund has recorded a number of Grieg's greatest composi-

tions for the piano, and for the Sonet label he joined the wellknown jazz pianist Bengt Hallberg in making a recording of «Contrasts» — which now is sold even in Japan. For HMV, he has recorded chamber music with the outstanding Danish cellist Erling Blöndal Bengtsson.

Kjell Bækkelund was the first western musician to be invited to tour China after the cultural revolution. Since then, he has several times revisited China.

At the time Albania began inviting cultural performers, Kjell Bækkelund was one of those first invited. Amongst the more important works of contemporary composers, Bækkelund has also frequently performed Charles Ives' «Concorde-Sonata» (also recorded by CBS), and the full concert piece by Oliver Messiaen «Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant Jesus».

The world famous, legendary american music critic, Harold C. Schoenberg, New York Times, describes Kjell Bækkelund as an extremely important pianist and wrote about his interpretation of Rachmaninoff that it could be compared to Rachmaninoff's own.

Kjell Bækkelund has performed in Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Great Britain, Ireland, Hol-



land, Belgium, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Malta, the Soviet Union, Poland, Hungary, Roumania, Yugoslavia, Albania, Egypt, Kenya, Turkey, Iran, Singapore, the Phillipines, China, Thailand, Australia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Namibia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, India and Mexico.





The Norwegian Pianist Kjell Bækkelund Press Reviews 1991/92:

"... one of the most creative and brilliant instrumentalists of his generation. With a great personality and original profile."

*La Nazione,
Buenos Aires.*

"An excellent pianist, a master of his instrument."

*Busqueda,
Montevideo.*

"Bækkelund should have been given the Nobel Prize in playing the piano."

*Information,
Copenhagen.*

"He is a marvellous artist."

*Politiken,
Copenhagen.*

"One of the greatest virtuosos of our time."

*Helsingin Sanomaat,
Helsinki.*

"A brilliant pianist."

*New York Times,
New York.*

"Impressive!."

Aftenposten, Oslo.