

KETIL BJØRNSTAD
NIGHTWALKER



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NIGHTWALKER

CD 1

NIGHTWALKER *Svarttrostens imperativ*

01	NIGHTWALKER (TWILIGHT VERSION)	03:41
02	A CERTAIN MOOD	02:08
03	REGRET	02:03
04	TRUST	02:40
05	PROMISE	05:30
06	HER SMILE (COW CRADLE SONG)	04:57
07	DARKNESS	02:57
08	ON THE EDGE	03:51
09	THE LETTER	02:26
10	NIGHTWALKER (PAST MIDNIGHT VERSION)	01:45
11	THE SECRET	02:52
12	EXPECTATIONS AND ANXIETY	04:25
13	LONGING	01:30
14	APOLOGY	04:35
15	SO WHAT	02:41
16	UNDERSTANDING	03:20
17	THE SUITCASE	02:48
18	THE REPLY	02:37
19	ON THE MOUNTAIN	02:18
20	CONSEQUENCE	02:19
21	A HIDDEN PLACE	03:10
22	BETWEEN THE LINES	01:28
23	NIGHTWALKER (EARLY MORNING VERSION)	01:56
	TOTAL TIME	67:57

CD 2

NIGHTWALKER *Fender Rhodes-version*

01	NIGHTWALKER (TWILIGHT VERSION)	03:30
02	A CERTAIN MOOD	02:03
03	REGRET	01:54
04	TRUST	02:39
05	PROMISE	03:59
06	HER SMILE (COW CRADLE SONG)	05:01
07	DARKNESS	03:08
08	ON THE EDGE	03:45
09	THE LETTER	02:35
10	NIGHTWALKER (PAST MIDNIGHT VERSION)	02:13
11	THE SECRET	02:55
12	EXPECTATIONS AND ANXIETY	03:17
13	LONGING	01:43
14	APOLOGY	02:53
15	SO WHAT	02:38
16	UNDERSTANDING	03:28
17	THE SUITCASE	02:39
18	THE REPLY	02:22
19	ON THE MOUNTAIN	03:15
20	CONSEQUENCE	01:46
21	A HIDDEN PLACE	03:18
22	BETWEEN THE LINES	01:34
23	NIGHTWALKER (EARLY MORNING VERSION)	01:56
	TOTAL TIME	64:31



CD 1

NIGHTWALKER *Svarttrostens imperativ*

Allerede før vi flyttet til Frogner Plass i 1967 hadde jeg likt å gå ute om natten. Særlig om høsten, når vinden blåste og løvet falt fra trærne, men også i vinternatten, vårnatten og sommernatten, ofte i Oslos gater, eller i nærheten av en hytte ved Eftang, et kystparadis mellom Sandefjord og Larvik, der en ung jente som interesserte meg veldig ferierte med sin familie. Knut Hamsun skrev romanen *Svermere*, og selv var jeg vel, som nå, en svermer som suget inn alle inntrykk fra naturen, der jeg gikk for meg selv og tenkte tanker jeg ikke selv helt kunne begripe. Musikken var dessuten alltid en følgesvenn. Da Frognerparken ble min nærmeste nabo i 1967 og i årene fremover, gikk jeg mellom Gustav Vigelands skulpturer opp til *Monolitten*, parkens høyeste punkt, der menneskekropper hugget i sten kravler oppover, oppover; en videreutvikling av Edvard Munchs *Menneskeberget* som Munch mislikte at kollegaen kopierte. Men der, på toppen av parken, hadde jeg utsikt over byen, Uranienborg-spiret og Ekebergåsen. Jeg kunne se ut fjorden til Nesodden og følge lysene fra de siste flyene som skulle lande på Fornebu, den gamle og stemningsfulle flyplassen som hadde rullebanen helt ut i vannet.

Hva gjorde jeg der oppe på utsiktspunktet, ofte helt alene? Bare en enslig nattevandrers, helt borte ved porten til Kirkeveien. Jeg tenkte, jeg svermet, jeg la planer om både erobringer og forlis, jeg hadde andre sats av Brahms fiolinsonate i A-dur i hodet. Ikke det raske, folkeviseaktige temaet, men de tre rolige, vandrende partiene der fiolinen til slutt synger som en svarttrost. Og så skrev jeg et dikt:

NATTVALS

Byen begynte å bli rar igjen

*og da klokken slo ett
oppdaget han at alle husene
og gatelyktene var på plass
i tåken*

Han ruslet hjemover

*De trette bena ble liggende
i et røkfyllt lokale
hvor man hadde brukt millioner
av ord på å snakke forbi hverandre*

Natten var tiden for å våkne, å se seg selv i det indre speilet; fange dimensjonene i hva et liv kunne være. Gå, gå, tenke, tenke, og plutselig stanse opp – ved en monolitt, en statue, under et tre, på en strand. Alene med seg selv, og allikevel med den dype lengselen etter samhörighet med noen andre:

*Nå kunne han igjen være seg selv
mens lungene langsomt ble rene
og øynene i mørke rom
åpnet seg i undring
over gatens vemodige sang*

*I parken gneldret en hund
og en blågrå drosje fikk lys på taket*

*Han så alt sammen
og tenkte det var rart
at man måtte gå i selskaper
for å føle seg ensom*

MØTE OM NATTEN

*Det var drømmen min som fortalte meg
at hus kan våkne om natten
Da begynner de å gå, ikke fort
men langsomt
slik at ingen merker når de flytter seg
En natt så jeg at Frognerveien 58
hadde gått helt til Monolitten
Midt i parken sto det høye huset og stirret
på sokkelen til Vigeland med alle de kravlende
og strevende menneskene
Den var ubevegelig
Hadde ingenting å si
Det hadde ikke Frognerveien 58 heller
Og likevel hadde de begge så mye å fortelle
om mennesker og hendelser
helt tilbake til tredvetallet
«Husker du selvmordet? Han som hoppet ut?»
Frognerveien 58 lengtet etter å si det, å bli hørt
Alle hus lengter etter å si noe, å bli hørt
Monolitten lengtet også etter å si noe:
«Jeg så hvem som stjal Sinnataggen!»*

Men alt var stille
Begge var skapt i betong og sten
To hjelpeløse kolosser
Midt på natten
I Kirkeveien 11 var det lys i et vindu
Var det noen andre som også så det?
Frognerveien 58, som langsomt snudde
gikk motvillig over broen
og tilbake til Frogner plass
fant sin egen tomt
stilte seg opp i sedvanlig positur
Alle hus og skulpturer bærer på historier
Den natten var det Frognerveien 58
og Monolitten som ville
fortelle hverandre alt

Senere flyttet jeg til Vestre Sandøya på Sørlandet, ikke langt fra innløpet til Tvedestrandfjorden, der Richard Wagner i sin tid nesten hadde forlist i en dramatisk storm, før skipet søkte nødhavn innenfor de livsfarlige skjærene, og komponisten fikk ideen til *Den flygende hollender*.

Det var en øy med trange veier og bare én bil. Den tilhørte handelsmannen. Ellers syklet og gikk vi, skjønt, det fantes også noen traktorer iblant oss.

Jeg elsket å gå på disse veiene om natten. Ofte fulgte jeg min venn, forlagsredaktøren, hjem fra lange rødvinkvelder. Vi holdt hverandre i armen og gikk forsiktig. Han var ti år eldre enn meg. Han var min fortrolige. Han var min versjon av Elgars *Nimrod*. Han hadde oversatt de store mestere til norsk. Han hadde vært på feil side under krigen. Vi kunne snakke om alt. Han var den mildeste og klokeste mannen på kloden, og han inviterte meg alltid opp til et siste glass rødvin i stuen sin, i hytta der han bodde med sin oversetterkone, og med utsikt til leden der ute i Skagerak, hvor nattens båter gled langsomt mot sine fjerne mål, som stjerneskipp.

Så gikk jeg hjem igjen alene. Snublet noen ganger, men ikke så full at jeg ikke kunne stirre opp mot Melkeveien, Orions Belte, Karlsvogna og alle de andre vennene i Universet.

Før jeg svingte inn mot Haven, der jeg bodde, stirret jeg alltid innover på øya, mot Moskva, der den unge poeten som plutselig hadde bosatt seg sammen med oss, satt og skrev gjennom natten. Det lyste fra et stearinlys i et vindu. Og snart falt sneen.

Ingenting er så stille som dét.

En nattevandrer kan ha et helt liv i hodet mens han går. Denne suiten er bygget på både drømmer og erfaringer, sinnstilstander som vi alle har, med sine brå skiftninger, og ofte med en dramaturgi vi ikke forstår, før vi først i ettertid kan skjønne hva som hendte, og hvorfor ting ble som de ble.

Hele suiten er skrevet i løpet av vinteren, våren og sommeren 2022, det mørke året som ingen av oss hadde forutsett. Jeg drømmer ofte at jeg fortsatt går om natten,

men mest i musikkens landskap. Jeg har det hele i hodet, mens mennesker jeg har møtt passerer i revy. Musikk kan ofte være å fange et øyeblikk, et minne, og gjøre det til nåtid igjen.

Januar 2023 kom. Sneen kom. Catharina gikk ut i hagen vår ved Bunnefjorden og fotograferte den unge svarttrosten som satt i frukttreet og ennå ikke hadde fått gult nebb. For meg var det en hilsen fra fortiden, fra Brahms, fra Frogner plass og Frognerparken den gangen. Blackbird singing in the dead of night.

CD 2

NIGHTWALKER – om å minnes ungdommens klanger

For meg har desember alltid vært den fineste måneden for å gå i studio og spille inn et album. Jeg husker de store vinduene i begge de to Rainbow-studioene. Mørket utenfor. Sneen som ofte lavet ned. I Propeller Studio, ikke veldig langt unna Rainbow, finnes det et lignende vindu ute i Green Room, der man kan sitte for seg selv og stirre ut i natten mellom opptakene, eller plutselig møte på en av ungdommens store stjerner som jobbet i et annet studio-rom samtidig, akkurat som i Abbey Road. Under forrige innspilling i Propeller kom Girl In Red plutselig inn med hunden sin. Av en eller annen grunn snakket vi engelsk til hverandre, selv om hun var fra Horten og jeg var fra Oslo.

C. Bechstein var ett av min ungdoms viktigste instrumenter. Og Propeller har en C-modell jeg kjenner godt, først fra *Vindings Music* (ECM), som ble spilt inn i Pettersens Kolonial i Hønefoss. Senere spilte jeg inn *Shimmering* (Grappa) på det

samme instrumentet, og deretter *Images* (Grappa), da det hadde blitt overtatt av Propeller. Og så sent som i 2021 spilte Anneli Drecker og jeg inn *Between Hotels And Time* (Grappa) med det samme instrumentet, og med den unike Mike Hartung som tekniker.

Også et flygel er alltid avhengig av sin tekniker, sin vedlikeholder. Trond Hellstrøm har sin flygelbutikk noen stenkast fra der jeg bor ved Bunnefjorden, og det er alltid spennende å komme innom for å sjekke ut de forskjellige instrumentene han har inne til enhver tid. Selv innenfor rammen av samme flygelmerke er det store variasjoner, og dette instrumentet var ekstraordinært, varmt og mørkt i klangen, og med en tyngde i anslaget som inspirerte til å tenke ekstra dynamisk. Slik kom man helt nær den musikken man ønsket å uttrykke.

Og derfor gikk også innspillingen, som alltid på dette instrumentet, så fort. Inspirasjonen kom øyeblikkelig. Jeg og tekniker Mike Hartung spilte inn *Nightwalker* i løpet av en søndag i adventstiden.

Men i Propeller sto det også et Fender Rhodes el-piano. Den første 88-tangenters MK1-versjonen kjøpte jeg allerede i 1972. Jeg hadde i flere år vært forhekset av piano-lyden som kom på Miles Davis' *In A Silent Way*. Den hadde både Joe Zawinul, Chick Corea og Herbie Hancock ansvaret for. Tre av mine helter blant jazzens banebrytere, sammen med Keith Jarrett. Hvorfor kastet de seg over dette instrumentet samtidig? Kanskje fordi Fender Rhodes-pianoet som Harold Rhodes hadde begynt å utvikle allerede rett etter andre verdenskrig, var konstruert som et akustisk piano. Det hadde hammere, men istedenfor å berøre pianostrenger, traff de tynt metall som vibrerte

opp mot en elektromagnetisk pickup. Den sendte signalene gjennom en kabel til en ekstern forsterker og høyttaler. Jeg brukte instrumentet på mange av mine første Philips-innspillinger. Så glemte jeg det i mange år. Men der sto det igjen, rett ved siden av C. Bechstein-flygelet, og jeg spurte Mike om vi ikke kunne bruke tiden vi hadde til overs på å spille inn *Nightwalker* en gang til, men denne gang på det elektriske Fender Rhodes-piano som jeg så langt hadde oversett.

Det var et dristig forslag. Fender Rhodes-pianoet var oftest et supplerende instrument i datidens jazz og rock, slik det fortsatt er. Og her skulle jeg spille i over en time helt alene. Utfordringene var store. Selv om instrumentet har masse dynamikk, er ikke anslaget alltid så kontrollerbart. Et litt for hardt trykk kan gi tonen en hardere og mer brutal lyd, men der ligger også gleden og mulighetene. Det uventede. De brå skiftningene fra frase til frase.

Som på syttitallet, da Svein Erik Børja produserte, sendte vi pianolyden gjennom en orgel-leslie. Da fikk instrumentet den susende og nesten spøkelsesaktige intensiteten som kunne skape nye, uventede ideer og en helt unik atmosfære. Som om instrumentet levde sitt eget liv. Jeg følte meg nesten som en guttunge igjen, der jeg satt og fant tilbake til et elsket instrument fra min ungdom, og jeg måtte spørre meg selv: Hvorfor har vi to vært så lenge borte fra hverandre?

Da også den elektriske versjonen av *Nightwalker* var spilt inn, spurte jeg min nære venn, samarbeidspartner og platemogul Helge Westbye i Grappa om det var mulig å tenke seg albumet i to versjoner, en akustisk og en elektrisk. Han tente øyeblikkelig

på idéen. Han er omtrent like gammel som meg, og han husket alt som skjedde i jazz og rocken på syttitallet, da vi begge var unge. Selv hørte jeg hvor store forskjellene ble på de to versjonene, enda jeg spilte de samme komposisjonene, men med forskjellige improvisasjoner. Jeg ble drevet inn i min egen musikk fra en helt annen vinkel. Jeg tenkte på Robert Frosts erkjennelsesdikt: *The Road Not Taken*. Nå kunne jeg gjøre et valg som inkluderte begge retninger, og to vidt forskjellige terreng å bevege seg i samtidig, men i samme landskap.

Oslo 13. januar 2023
KETIL BJØRNSTAD



CD 1

NIGHTWALKER – *The blackbird's imperative*

Even before we moved to Frogner Plass in 1967, I liked going out at night. Especially in the autumn, when the wind was blowing and leaves were falling from the trees, but also during the winter, spring and summer nights, often in the streets of Oslo, or near one of the cottages at Eftang, a coastal paradise between Sandefjord and Larvik, where a young girl I was very interested in used to go on holiday with her family. Knut Hamsun wrote the novel *Dreamers*, and I was no doubt then, as I am now, a dreamer who absorbed all my impressions from nature, where I spent time alone and had thoughts I could not entirely understand myself. Besides, music was my constant companion. When Frogner Park became my nearest neighbour in 1967 and the following years, I walked amongst Gustav Vigeland's sculptures up to the *Monolith*, the highest point in the park, where the human bodies carved in stone climb upwards, ever upwards: a further development of Munch's *Human Mountain*, which Munch was displeased that his colleague copied. But there, at the top of the park, I had a view over the city, the spire of Uranienborg Church and the hill of Ekeberg. I could look out over the fjord as far as Nesodden and watch the lights of the last flights landing at Fornebu, the old, atmospheric airport with a runway that continued all the way out into the water.

What did I do up there at that lookout point, often all alone? Just a solitary night-walker, drifting towards the gate opening onto Kirkeveien. I mused, I dreamt, I made

plans for both victory and utter ruin, I had the second movement of the Brahms A major violin sonata in my head. Not the quick, folksong-like theme, but the three calm, meandering passages where the violin ends by singing like a blackbird. And I wrote a poem:

NIGHT WALTZ

The city started to get strange again

*and when the clock struck one
he discovered that all the buildings
and streetlamps were in place
in the fog*

He strolled homewards

*His tired legs came to rest
in a smoke-filled pub
where people had used millions
of words to talk past each other*

*Now he could be himself again
while lungs slowly became clear
and eyes in dark rooms
opened in wonder
at the plaintive song of the street*

*In the park a dog yapped
and a blue-grey taxi turned its rooflight on*

*He saw it all
and thought it was strange
that one had to go to parties
in order to feel lonely*

Night was the time to wake up, to see oneself in one's inner mirror, grasp the dimensions of what a life could be. Walk, walk, think, think, and suddenly stop – by a monolith, a statue, under a tree, on a beach. Alone with oneself, and yet with the profound longing to belong with others:

NIGHT ENCOUNTER

*It was my dream that told me
that buildings can wake up at night
Then they start to walk, not quickly
but slowly
so nobody notices they are moving
One night I saw that Frognerveien 58
had walked all the way to the Monolith
In the middle of the park the tall building stood and stared
at Vigeland's plinth with all the clinging
and climbing people
It was immovable
Had nothing to say
Nor did Frognerveien 58
And all the same they both had so much to tell*

about people and events
as far back as the thirties
"Do you remember the suicide? The man who jumped?"
Frognerveien 58 was longing to say it, to be heard
All buildings yearn to say something, to be heard
The Monolith was also longing to say something:
"I saw who stole the Angry Boy sculpture!"
But everything was silent
Both were made of cement and stone

Two helpless colossi
In the middle of the night
In Kirkeveien 11 there was a light in a window
Was there someone else who saw it too?
Frognerveien 58, which slowly turned
walked reluctantly over the bridge
and back to Frogner Plass
found its own site
adopted its usual pose
All buildings and sculptures hold stories
That night it was Frognerveien 58
and the Monolith that wanted
to tell each other everything

Later I moved to Vestre Sandøya on the south coast of Norway, not far from the inlet of the Tvedestrand Fjord, where Richard Wagner was once nearly shipwrecked during a dramatic storm. His ship found a port of refuge beyond the perilous reefs, and the composer was inspired to write *The Flying Dutchman*.

The island had narrow roads and only one car. It belonged to the shopkeeper. The rest of us cycled or walked, although there were some tractors there.

I loved to walk along these roads at night. I often accompanied my friend, a publishing editor, home after long evenings filled with red wine. We would hold each other's arms and walk carefully. He was ten years older than me. We were close friends. He was my version of Elgar's *Nimrod*. He had translated the great masters into Norwegian. He had been on the wrong side during the war. We could talk about everything. He was the kindest and wisest man on Earth, and he always invited me up for one last glass of red wine in his living room, in the cottage where he lived with his wife, also a translator. They had a view to the shipping lanes of the Skagerrak, where the night boats would glide slowly towards their far-off destinations, like starships.

Then I walked home alone. Stumbled sometimes, but I was never so drunk that I couldn't gaze up at the Milky Way, Orion's Belt, the Plough and all our other friends in the universe.

Before turning in towards Haven, where I lived, I always stared into the centre of the island, towards Moscow, where the young poet who had suddenly moved in with us sat and wrote all night long. A candle was burning in the window. And soon the snow would fall.

There is nothing as silent as snow.

A nightwalker can hold an entire life in his head while he is walking. This suite is based on both dreams and experiences, states of mind we all have, with their sudden shifts, and often with a dramatic arc we don't understand, because it is only afterwards that we can grasp what happened and why things turned out as they did.

The entire suite was written in the course of the winter, spring and summer of 2022, that dark year that none of us had envisaged. I often dream that I still walk at night, but mostly in the landscape of music. I have the whole thing in my head, while the people I have met pass in review. Music can often be a question of capturing a moment, a memory, and turning it into the present again.

January 2023 arrived. The snow arrived. Catharina went out into our garden by Bunnefjorden and took a photo of the young blackbird that was perched in a fruit tree, whose beak had not yet turned yellow. For me this was a greeting from the past, from Brahms, from Frogner Plass and Frogner Park from those days. Blackbird singing in the dead of night...

CD 2

NIGHTWALKER – *on remembering the sound of youth*

For me, December has always been the best month to go into the studio and record an album. I remember the big windows in both the Rainbow studios. The darkness outside. The snow that was often drifting down. In Propeller Studio, not far from Rainbow, there is a similar window in the Green Room, where one can sit in solitude

and stare out into the night between sessions, or suddenly encounter a recording star from one's own youth who is working in another room in the studios at the same time, just like in Abbey Road. During my previous session in Propeller, Girl in Red suddenly came in with her dog. For one reason or another we spoke English to each other, even though she was from Horten and I was from Oslo.

A C. Bechstein grand piano was one of the most important instruments of my young years. And Propeller has a Model C that I am very familiar with, first from *Vindings Music* (ECM), which was recorded at Pettersens Kolonial sound studio in Hønefoss. Then I recorded *Shimmering* (Grappa) on the same instrument, and later *Images* (Grappa), when the piano had been taken over by Propeller. And as recently as 2021 Anneli Drecker and I recorded *Between Hotels and Time* (Grappa) with the same grand piano, with the unique Mike Hartung as technician.

A grand piano is always dependent on its technician, who carries out the necessary maintenance. Trond Hellström's grand piano showroom is only a stone's throw from where I live at Bunnefjorden, and it is always a thrill for me to make a visit and check out the different instruments he has on display at any given time. Even among the instruments from a single brand of grand pianos there can be considerable variation, and this instrument was extraordinary, with a warm, dark tone and a firm touch that inspired one to think extra dynamically. This made it possible to become very close to the music one wanted to express.

And that was why the recording process went so quickly, as it always does on this instrument. The inspiration came immediately. Together with technician Mike Hartung, I recorded *Nightwalker* in the course of a single Sunday in Advent.

But in Propeller there was also a Fender Rhodes electric piano. I had bought the first 88-key MK1 version as early as 1972. For several years I had been captivated by the piano sound that emerged in Miles Davis's *In a Silent Way*, for which Joe Zawinul, Chick Corea and Herbie Hancock were responsible. Three of my heroes among the pioneers of jazz, along with Keith Jarrett. Why were they all attracted to the instrument at the same time? Maybe because the Fender Rhodes piano that Harold Rhodes had begun to develop right after World War II was constructed like an acoustic piano. It had hammers, but instead of touching piano strings they struck thin metal tines that vibrated next to an electromagnetic pickup. This sent signals through a cable to an external amplifier and loudspeaker. I used that instrument for many of my early recordings for Philips, and then forgot about it for many years. But there it was again, right next to the C. Bechstein grand piano, and I asked Mike whether we could use the extra time we had to record *Nightwalker* again, but this time on the electric Fender Rhodes piano that I had overlooked until then.

This was a daring suggestion. The Fender Rhodes piano was usually a supplementary instrument in the jazz and rock of that period, as it still is. And here I was going to play for over an hour, all alone. The challenges were substantial. Although the instrument has a wide range of dynamics, the touch is not always easy to control. Pressure that is even slightly too firm can give the tone a harder and more brutal quality, but that is also where the joy and potential lie. The unexpected. The rapid alterations from phrase to phrase.

As we had done in the 70s with producer Svein Erik Børja, we sent the piano sound through an organ Leslie. This gave the instrument the rippling, almost ghost-like intensity that could generate new, unexpected ideas and a unique atmosphere. As though the instrument lived its own life. I felt almost like a boy again, sitting there and finding my way back to a beloved instrument from my own youth, and I had to ask myself: Why have the two of us been apart from each other for such a long time?

When the electric version of *Nightwalker* had also been recorded, I asked my close friend and collaborator, record mogul Helge Westbye from Grappa, if it could be possible to imagine the record in two versions, one acoustic and one electric. He was instantly enthusiastic about the idea. He is about the same age as me, and he remembered everything that had happened in jazz and rock in the 70s, when we were both young. I myself heard how significant the contrasts were between the two versions, although I played the same compositions, but with different improvisations. I was drawn into my own music from an entirely different angle. I thought of Robert Frost's insightful poem *The Road Not Taken*. Now I could make a choice that included both directions, and two far different settings to move within at the same time, but in the same landscape.

Oslo, 13 January 2023
KETIL BJØRNSTAD

All music by Ketil Bjørnstad

Recorded December 2022

Propeller Studio, Oslo, Norway

Engineering and mastering: Mike Hartung

Produced by Ketil Bjørnstad

Instruments:

CD 1: C. Bechstein Grand Piano, Model C. Serial number 196516

CD 2: Fender Rhodes Electric Piano, Mark 1 Seventy Three

The poems *Nattvals* and *Mote om natten* published by H. Aschehoug & Co 1972
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www.ketilbjornstad.com

www.grappa.no

