

Carl Nielsen Centre – Grand Opening – Call for papers

To mark the opening of the Carl Nielsen Centre at Museum Odense, an international hub for Nielsen studies, all aspiring and established Nielsen scholars are invited to attend the

International Carl Nielsen Conference 2026: Carl Nielsen and Beyond. Music, Musical Cultures and Future Nielsen Studies

Date: Thursday 22 October 2026 – Saturday 24 October 2026

Venues: Carl Nielsen Centre, Museum Odense, H.C. Andersen Centre, SDU Odense, and Danish National Academy of Music (Syddansk Musikkonservatorium), Odense.

Conference committee: David Fanning (University of Manchester, UK), Christopher Tarrant (Newcastle University, UK), Bjarke Moe (Royal Danish Library, Copenhagen), Thomas Husted Kirkegaard (Aarhus University), and Michael Fjeldsøe (Museum Odense, Carl Nielsen Centre, editor-in-chief of Carl Nielsen Studies).

Call for Papers:

The conference welcomes contributions for **open sessions** on topical issues related to Carl Nielsen and his musical environment as well as contributions to the **specific themes mentioned below**.

Theme 1. CREATIVE PROCESSES AND PERFORMATIVE PRACTICES: The creation of musical works and beyond

What can we learn from studying the full creative process from sketches and drafts to practice-based feedback from rehearsals and performances?

It has long been recognised that a work of art does not arise in lofty isolation in the consciousness of a single creator but is the result of extensive social interactions and cultural processes. Critical studies of sketches and drafts and of performance material that bears traces of the work's interaction with musicians and conductors can contribute to a decentralisation of the concept of the work and a relativisation of ingrained value hierarchies. What can be said about the creative processes by studying the life history of the work including how musicians interact with the works today?

Theme 2. INCORPORATING THE PAST: Counterpoints. 'The Culture of the Line'

How did Nielsen's interest in counterpoint and music from the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries influence aesthetic ideals and stylistic developments in his music and beyond?

In Nielsen's homespun musical historiography, he identifies the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries as aesthetic high points. He admired the music of Palestrina and the composers of the late baroque as pinnacles of musical achievement, even connecting J.S. Bach with the healthy aspects of music and of life more generally. As a student Nielsen studied counterpoint intensively, and this attitude to voice leading and texture registers strongly through his entire compositional output. What was it that Nielsen valued about

contrapuntal textures, and how did he use counterpoint in his music to pursue particular communicative ends?

Theme 3. RE-CREATING HISTORIOGRAPHY: Marginalized composers in musical cultures of Nielsen's time.

How does the current interest in female and marginalised composers reshape the contexts and concepts of musical cultures in Nielsen's time and beyond?

We welcome contributions that explore how expanding the repertoire reconfigures narratives, interpretative frameworks, and archival practices through which Nielsen's musical milieu and its networks have been understood. What new constellations emerge when we consider the full range of composers and musical actors operating within and around Nielsen's world, including those historically marginalised or overlooked? How might such perspectives unsettle the frames that have shaped readings of Nielsen – modernism, national style, organicism, and more – or illuminate the social, institutional, and practical dimensions of musical life? By opening these lines of enquiry, the conference seeks to foster fresh, critically attuned accounts of musical culture around the turn of the twentieth century, encouraging diverse historical, analytical, and methodological approaches.

Theme 4. FUTURE NIELSEN STUDIES

How do we imagine and shape the future of Nielsen scholarship?

Statements, roundtable and open discussions.

Deadline and contacts

Deadline for abstracts: **5 June 2026**, approx. 300 words, in English, please mark if it is for an open session or relates to one of the specific themes. Please send to: Michael Fjeldsøe, mfj@museumodense.dk, cc. Jonas Faurholt Høegh, jfh@museumodense.dk.

Accompanying events

22 October at 7pm: Odense Symphony Orchestra 80th Birthday Concert

Performs: J. Nordin: Tillykke! – John Frandsen: Concert for Orchestra (world premiere) – Carl Nielsen: Symphony No. 5, cond. Christian Øland

23 October at 5 pm. Concert with Christina Bjørkøe and pupils and friends, with lieder and instrumental music by female composers, Nielsen and maybe Rosenhoff.

Until 24 October. Exhibition of 47 Nielsen letters, sealed until 2026, Museum Odense.

Free admission to the Carl Nielsen Museum, and the Carl Nielsen Childhood Home.