

# Follia and anomalies

## Travels towards contemporary madness

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### Background:

La Follia, or Folies d'Espagne is a fascinating cultural treasure that transcends time and place.

Originating as one of the oldest remembered European musical themes, a rural dance from the Iberian Peninsula, it has evolved over centuries into a sophisticated musical form inspiring over 150 composers worldwide.

The name follia – which translates to madness or folly – comes from its original expression on the edge of normality with connections to fertility rituals.



Theme of La Follia, A. Corelli



First performance in Lille Sal with RAMA students and Ensemble Hermes

### Main themes:

How to offer the audience an overview of the constant evolution of musical styles?

What could a contemporary Danish Follia sound like?

How does music, despite constraints, demonstrate infinite human creativity and offer an escape into an imaginary world?

### Method:

The Royal Academy of Music Aarhus, the Danish composer Christian Balvig, the Aarhus-based string collective Ensemble Hermes and Museum Ovartaci collaborated to artistically answer these questions.



Christian Balvig, composer and arranger

### Results:

Three concerts were held, featuring follias from different eras. The anonymous follia known as the Rodrigo Martinez Follia, those of F. Geminiani, J.S. Bach, C.P.E. Bach, S. Rachmaninov, and a new composition by Christian Balvig titled "Follia Nature".

C. Balvig also arranged and emphasized some compositional gestures of Rodrigo Martinez, C.P.E. Bach and S. Rachmaninov follias.

C. Balvig's follia connects the strength and continual development of the theme of la follia with nature's ever-evolving force.

The performance at the Museum Ovartaci and its visit gave the chance to deepen the notion of creativity, to question limits of normality, the variations of the human mind and to reaffirm art as a tool for releasing constraints.

The project as such produced a contemporary take on the follia-tradition – offering a productive new approach to this significant part of musical heritage.



Ovartaci's artwork

Mini-documentary by Malte Bülow :

