

2022

# ON MUSIC AND POST-HUMANISM

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ASPECTS OF  
MUSICOLOGY  
IN FINLAND

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IN 2022

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# EDITORIAL

BY Lasse Lehtonen

2022 has been an extremely turbulent year, to say the least. Just as cultural life was gradually becoming free from the restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the geopolitical situation in Europe changed dramatically with Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February. In Finland, this turn of events sparked a heated debate about the political and cultural standing of the country. For many, the attack became a long-awaited opportunity to finally brush off the last remnants of so-called "Finlandisation" in the political sphere. Indeed, politicians in Finland have firmly articulated that Finland's place is unmistakably in the West and in the EU.

Yet political and cultural spheres function on different grounds. Whereas political standings are, to a certain extent, relatively easy to determine, cultural organisations have faced difficulties in assessing how they should react to the new situation. While no-one obviously supports the war and countless concerts have been organised in support of Ukraine in Finland, it has been much more uncomfortable to assess whether it is, for example, justified to ban individual Russian musicians from participating in international competitions. These questions arose with two notable competitions in Finland, the Sibelius Violin Competition and the Maj Lind Competition, both of which were organised in 2022. The debate is still ongoing.

Yet at the same time, one can sense a feeling of liberation in cultural life and society at large due to the lifting of restrictions related to the pandemic. The number of concerts and other cultural events organised in Finland rose dramatically in 2022. While certainly a pleasing change for all concertgoers, the lifting of restrictions has been even more important to the many performers, composers and concert organisers who were suddenly stripped of the possibility to engage in their occupations. It remains to be seen, however, how serious a blow the pandemic left on cultural life in Finland.

This year's printed issue of *Finnish Music Quarterly* does not address the pandemic or the geopolitical situation, though, but introduces aspects of music in Finland in our post-pandemic times. The first theme discusses musicology in Finland from a variety of viewpoints, whereas the

second package of articles addresses the issue of diversity and equality in the Finnish music scene. The third theme is devoted to the work of Kaija Saariaho, who turned 70 in October 2022 – an anniversary that was celebrated with countless performances. The last package of articles focuses on the various ways in which music intertwines with machines, the environment and other non-human entities.

The year 2022 has marked some notable changes for *Finnish Music Quarterly*. The long-time editor-in-chief, Anu Ahola, left her post at the end of 2021. Music journalist Kare Eskola inherited her chair for half a year, after which I became editor-in-chief in the autumn. You can certainly sense the touch of various editors on the pages of this printed issue, but whether for *Finnish Music Quarterly* or for cultural and geopolitical life, we truly hope that we can look forward to 2023 being an optimistic year.



Lasse Lehtonen © Sebastian Trzaska



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# ASPECTS OF MUSICOLOGY IN FINLAND

*What characterises musicological research conducted in Finland? How do musicology and artistic research differ from each other, and where do they intersect – or do they?*

Illustration by Eija Vehviläinen



# WHO'S AFRAID OF THE MUSICOLOGIST?

## An Overview of a Discipline

BY Eero Tarasti



© Liisa Takala

**“Let us accept as a starting point that one can be a musicologist if one has been trained as a musician and as a scholar. Failing to meet either of these two criteria removes the foundation from talking about music,” writes musicologist Professor Eero Tarasti in his column.**

How difficult is it to become a musicologist? Certainly not easy – but perhaps worthwhile. After all, musical life rests

squarely on the shoulders of this profession, which introduces the public to the secrets of the musical world. Musicology, literally “music science” in Finnish (*musiikkitiede*) and German (*Musikwissenschaft*), is a Janus-faced phenomenon in that one can only be a musicologist if one is also a musician, at least to some extent. Yet musicians have sometimes been unwilling to accept musicologists into their guild: there are as many jokes about musicologists as there are about viola players. A musicologist is an unsuccessful musician, they say; if MENDELSSOHN wrote *Songs without Words*, is musicology not *Words without Songs*?

## MUSICOLOGY IS PERHAPS THE MOST DIFFICULT DISCIPLINE IN ACADEMIC CURRICULA.

### Studying the mystery of music

Others find something profound in the analogy between music and language. This leads to contemplation of music as signification and communication, as *semiotics*. Semiotics is a discipline that one has to study systematically in order to understand its basic approach to musical signs. Musical semiotics has evolved into its own distinct paradigm in both musicology and semiotics. Some great semioticians such as CLAUDE LÉVI-STRAUSS and ROLAND BARTHES also wrote about music, but mostly they did not say anything – since, as reasonable scholars, they knew that without musical competence their theorising would have remained rather superficial. I have often heard when lecturing at a musicology conference that “Tarasti is not a musician, he is a semiotician”, and conversely at semiotics conferences that “Tarasti is not a semiotician, he is a musician”. This illustrates the dilemma of the musicologist, the dual identity.

Then there is the idea that music is *culture*. Because it is culture, one does not even need to read the notes on the page, they say. Here, we should remember what conductor JORMA PANULA said is the main issue in any kind of music education: the score, the score, the score! In any case, any would-be anthropologists would do well to remember how one of the classics in that discipline, ALAN P. MERRIAM, once defined the field: music itself, musical behaviour and musical concepts. Today, active research into *music itself* is represented by cognitive studies and brain research. Music has unquestionably improved neurologists’ understanding of how the brain functions.

As with many other disciplines, with musicology we must admit that it is difficult to define where exactly we might find its core, its true essence. Interest in and the influence of musicology have mushroomed. Applied musicology thrives on its contact with actual music-making – composing, educating, performing, administration, management. It guarantees that in any country with an active musical life there are no unemployed musicologists. The demand is endless, starting with the preparation of scores for performers and with historical performance practices. It also rubs shoulders with politics and social issues, one example being post-colonial analysis. Musicology is a key issue if we wish to understand how musical life functions. To quote Lévi-Strauss, it is one avenue to the mystery of music. © Translation: Jaakko Mäntytjärvi

However, the non-verbal art of music depends on those who *speak* about it, those who maintain the discourse. That is *symbolic power*. Musicology is also a discipline that belongs to the humanities and presupposes an understanding of philosophy, scientific method, epistemology, aesthetics and a wealth of other scientific disciplines ranging from anthropology to the other branches of the arts, from aesthetic education and psychology to computer-assisted research.

Without this knowledge, we would never be able to penetrate the deepest essence of music. When an illustrious musicologist such as CARL DAHLHAUS argues that the most abstract ideas are the ones that are the most revolutionary and transform the history of music, how could we know what these deepest codes of tonal art are unless we were able to make them explicit with concepts stemming from human sciences?

### The dual identity of the musicologist

Let us accept as a starting point that one can be a musicologist if one has been trained as a musician and as a scholar. Failing to meet either of these two criteria removes the foundation from talking about music. Even the greatest musicians are often unable to describe conceptually what exactly it is that they are doing. The flipside of the coin is that music theories can seem abstract and aloof. Moreover, there is a great deal of intellectual writing and plausible research on music that is groundless and hypothetical simply because the writer lacks practical contact with music-making. Therefore, whoever opts to study musicology must accept that this requires a dual competence. That is laborious. Hence, musicology is perhaps the most difficult discipline in academic curricula.

This is also the reason why musicology can only flourish in the long-established academic environment of universities. Most music academies include music research in their curricula. But do future musicians have the time to learn all the historical and systematic knowledge and, above all, the skills required to write about music at a scientific level? If musicology is left to the conservatories (many of which now call themselves “universities”), there is the danger of falling into the habit of endlessly repeating old practices, because renewal requires the ability to “transcend” those practices by exploring theoretical alternatives.

So what are typical musicologists like? Some believe in *history*: that music stems from historical knowledge of its practices through the centuries. Yet we should remember what Carl Dahlhaus noted: we do not go to a concert to listen to a Mozart concerto or a Beethoven symphony as a document of a man living in the 18th century but because these works have *ästhetische Gegenwartigkeit*, aesthetic contemporaneity – they have a message that speaks to us directly. Moreover, music history is also a historical phenomenon, and thus we have various musicologies, depending on which country and which time period they are linked to.





BY Riikka Hiltunen

## Artistic research at the Sibelius Academy focuses on musician-based knowledge

**Doctors of Music have been graduating from the Sibelius Academy over the past 30 years. The spectrum of research undertaken at the academy is broad but its principal strength is in artistic competence, which helps open up new research prospects.**

The Sibelius Academy is the only music university in Finland. More than 200 Doctors of Music have graduated from the academy since 1990. The first to do so were in the genre of classical music, but the doctoral programme soon expanded to cover all genres at the Sibelius Academy. A doctoral student can choose between three programmes:

research study, applied study and arts study. The artistic doctorate's dissertation includes both artistic and written components. The applied programme students design a development project, which can include various forms of publications and outcomes, and the research programme leads to the more traditional dissertation.

Professor of Folk Music Dr KRISTIINA ILMONEN reports that the policy for artistic doctorates has shifted over recent years. Previously, the "practice as research" approach was dominant, focusing on deepening musicianship and on artistic performances. Now, the emphasis is towards "practice-based" and "practice-led" approaches: musicianship and creative work are seen as a foundation for academic research.

"The previous approach produced brilliant artistic work that contributed to improvements in the arts sector," says

Ilmonen. "However, our artistic doctoral graduates continued their postdoc life mainly as musicians and creative artists. I consider it important for musicians to develop their research skills too, so that they can make an expert contribution to society and engage in debate in the field of academic research."

Shifting to a more research-oriented method still allows for multiple approaches.

"It is typical of artistic research that it employs multiple methodologies and is experimental. Musical acts or works of music may constitute the material for a study, or its method, or its outcomes – and often all three at once," Ilmonen explains. "A professional musician or composer can identify relevant questions based on their practice that would be difficult to identify from the outside."

As the artistic research results in the form of musical performances or compositions as such might be fully understandable only for a small expert audience, candidates are expected to link their work to existing scientific and artistic debate.

"Completing a doctorate represents a steep learning curve for someone trained as a musician. Everyone who has survived the ordeal swears by how hugely it has helped their artistic thinking processes," says Ilmonen. "Sometimes you're wearing your artist's hat, and then you put on your researcher's hat to think about how you can conceptualise your art. Changing hats is immensely fruitful and enriches an artist's practice."

### CfAR looks beyond doctorates

In 2013 the Sibelius Academy, the Academy of Fine Arts and the Theatre Academy were amalgamated as the University of the Arts Helsinki. In addition to the various doctoral schools, the University has three joint research units focusing on postdoctoral research. *Historyforum* concentrates on researching the history of music and other arts, *CERADA* is about arts education research and *CfAR* (the Centre for Artistic Research) was created to boost artistic research.

Professor and composer OTSO LÄHDEOJA notes that he is interested in the interface between artistic research and arts studies, which is where he positions himself. Lähdeoja's chair is a joint one between the University of the Arts Helsinki and the University of Helsinki, and a similar joint chair is held by associate professor SUSANNA VÄLIMÄKI.

"Our common goal is to make artistic research and arts studies talk to each other more. Their boundaries are ambiguous and not always relevant from a research standpoint," Lähdeoja explains.

The quantity of artistic postdoctoral research depends on the units and is constrained by resources. Kristiina Ilmonen notes that there are very few paid research positions at the moment, and the professors do not always have time to do research:

"I am the only Professor of Folk Music in Finland, but my remit is mostly in teaching. Fortunately, the leadership

## A PROFESSIONAL MUSICIAN OR COMPOSER CAN IDENTIFY RELEVANT QUESTIONS BASED ON THEIR PRACTICE THAT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO IDENTIFY FROM THE OUTSIDE.

of the University of the Arts Helsinki are now on the ball. They have clearly recognised the importance of research resourcing," says Ilmonen.

### Plurality is the strength of research

Ilmonen considers the division into arts universities and academic universities to be somewhat outdated:

"The very name of the University of the Arts Helsinki is kind of a burden. It is an illusion that science and art form a dichotomy. Arts universities and academic universities are not mutually exclusive; they simply have different profiles. We need different universities and the various departments of arts research in them to achieve a plurality of views, a range of interests, interaction and conflicting views."

Both Ilmonen and Lähdeoja recognise the quality of artistic work as a strength of the University of the Arts Helsinki, but there is growing interest in artistic research beyond the sphere of professional musicians too. Within the Sibelius Academy, the feeling is that the discussion about the nature of artistic research is done and dusted and now it is time to get down to it.

"We've spent a lot of time justifying its existence. Now we need to do stuff and to work together," says Lähdeoja.

Professor ANNE KAUPPALA, Director of the Uniarts History Forum unit, also sees a decline in the doctrine of the separation of art and science.

"We're returning to a time before the 19th century, when musicians would also write and do research. It is a huge benefit that music is the main thing at the Sibelius Academy, so we have never had to have a debate about the importance of arts research like at other universities."

Kauppala considers it a strength that a broad range of expertise and knowledge on music can be found under the same roof. This is one of the major advantages of the University of the Arts Helsinki. In Central Europe, for instance, entering an academic university may be the only option for a musician wishing to pursue a research career, since music education institutions do not have the authority to confer doctorates.

"We don't ask permission for artistic research," summarises Kauppala. "We just do it." © Translation: Jaakko Mäntyjärvi



# JEAN SIBELIUS WORKS USES ARCHIVAL RESEARCH TO PROBE THE CREATIVE PROCESS

BY Lasse Lehtonen

Jean Sibelius Works is compiling a critical edition of the complete works of Sibelius, based on a variety of archival sources. The study is building a fascinating picture of the composer's creative process while also challenging the traditional notion of what a "work" is.

It is like being a detective. There is no better way to describe the archival research undertaken by Jean Sibelius Works (JSW), the project to compile a critical edition of the complete works of JEAN SIBELIUS.

Consider this: the sources for a single piece of music may range from melodic sketches and printer's proofs to letters and diary entries, and some sources have to be chased around the world. They can be found just about anywhere, a case in point being an early version of the choral work *Hail, O Moon* – which was discovered on a sheep farm in 2015.

"We are putting together a puzzle. There are all kinds of pieces that we have to fit together to gain an impression of what the sources are and of their chronology and lineage," summarises Professor TIMO VIRTANEN, editor-in-chief of the project.

Virtanen joined JSW soon after it was launched in 1997. At the moment, the project employs six editors. The complete works are being published by Breitkopf & Härtel, the Sibelius Society of Finland and the Finnish National Library, which holds an extensive collection of manuscripts donated by the Sibelius family. But the source material is constantly growing, an example being the addition of material from the former archives of publishers Lienau, obtained in 2020.

When ERIK TAWASTSTJERNA, Professor of Musicology at the University of Helsinki, completed his voluminous biography of Sibelius in 1988, notorious music critic SEPPO HEIKINHEIMO from the *Helsingin Sanomat* newspaper declared bluntly that the composer had now been picked clean. ANNA PULKKIS, who has been editing piano and chamber music works for JSW, is familiar with the quip.

"Hasn't everything already been said that there is to say about Sibelius? I get that a lot. The short answer is no," says Pulkkis with amusement. "There is a lot still to study, details to fill in, information to update."

Virtanen concurs: "I would say that only through this project are we beginning to understand what the sum total of Sibelius's output really is."

## Research born of a wealth of material

The body of musical material that JSW draws on can be described in a word as huge. SAKARI YLIVUORI, who is editing Sibelius's choral works, is all too aware of this.

"Editing choral works is no different from editing any other kind of music, except that the volume of material available is enormous. Choral works exist in separate voice parts and in numerous arrangements for various ensembles."

One might imagine that the sheer magnitude of the task would make it remarkably difficult to create a critical edition. While that may be true in some cases, Ylivuori has a somewhat different angle:

"You can never comprehend the evolution of a work by looking at a single manuscript; you need a body of sources to do that. What is more relevant than a single source is the role of that source in the lineage of sources."

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OTHER THAN THE  
COMPOSER'S OWN WORDS."**



© Markku Pihlaja

Sakari Ylivuori

In the archival research conducted by JSW, an individual composition comes to be understood as a puzzle to which multiple sources contribute rather than as a monolithic entity. The challenge with the material is that often there are gaps in the puzzle. It is particularly frustrating when a particular source is known to exist but no-one knows where it is. Ylivuori provides an example with *The Lover*:

"[Choir conductor] HEIKKI KLEMETTI wrote in a letter to Sibelius that he had performed the work 'with the alterations'. So we know that Sibelius requested changes to be made to the work, but because we haven't found the copy of the score used by Klemetti, we don't know what this refers to."



Then there are cases where the location of a source is known but researchers do not have access to it. This may happen with private collections. With luck, a connection with the owner may be made, and a researcher may be able to take photos of the material, for instance. But having access to the manuscript itself is very different from just having a copy of it.

“Digital images and copies lose a surprising amount of important information,” Ylivuori explains. “For instance, you cannot distinguish the ink layers in the corrections made.”

Virtanen points out that Sibelius’s manuscripts are a national treasure in Finland. Storing the manuscripts appropriately is important.

“In private ownership, providing safe conditions for manuscript storage is often challenging. It is therefore important to ensure that these manuscripts are appropriately stored. Ideally, of course, we would like to see them here at the National Library,” says Virtanen with a smile.

### Sources tell the story of a life that was lived

What is the practical impact of comparing sources when editing a piece? Ylivuori gives an example of performance notes entered in the score by Sibelius when conducting a choir. The editor must consider carefully why the composer would have requested such changes.

“The acoustics of the space or the resources of the choir may have required a different dynamic or emphasis on a particular voice part. But it is also possible that Sibelius was making an actual revision to his composition. It’s often difficult to tell which is which.”

This example shows that the research undertaken by JSW extends far beyond the music on the page. Changes made are chased down by looking at letters, diaries, reviews and even such mundane things as receipts for payments made to copyists – anything, really, that has anything at all to do with the creative process, performances and reception of a particular work.

“Preparing the actual printed music and conducting background research are inseparable in editing,” Pulkkis explains. “They are not independent strands of inquiry, they are intermeshed. We do not accept the conclusions of earlier research as gospel; we always go back to the primary sources.”

This is also apparent in the publications. Although at the core of each volume is a critical edition of a musical work, the end product also contains a wealth of new research findings. For instance, the research documents the broader context for each source, i.e. the circumstances in which the work was created. Pulkkis hopes that the project will help dispel the time-honoured image of a composer compelled to write out masterpieces by a force of creativity.



Anna Pulkkis and Timo Virtanen

© Lasse Lehtonen

“Sibelius wrote a lot of bread-and-butter pieces – which is exactly what a professional composer does! Composers do not have a moral obligation to create art for art’s sake.”

Virtanen estimates that JSW will comprise some 60 volumes when completed. The project is about halfway through, with 35 volumes published to date and several more in the pipeline. What is the status of JSW in the field of research and music editing in Finland?

“We’ve become a sort of Editor Central in Finland,” says Virtanen. “The experience acquired in this project has been leveraged in other critical editions and in the operations of the Finnish Musical Heritage Society.”

Critical editions of works by composers such as TOIVO KUULA, LEEVI MADETOJA and FREDRIK PACIUS have been prepared in Finland. JSW also has an international dimension, as it has participated in joint research ventures in the Nordic countries and elsewhere in Europe. And even without that, the project would have an international dimension through its publisher.

“Breitkopf & Härtel was the first publisher in the world to begin publishing the complete works of individual composers in the nineteenth century,” Virtanen points out. “We value this tradition highly.”

Through the volumes published, the impact of JSW is not limited to academia.

“I am delighted by how often we receive queries from musicians about manuscript materials,” says Ylivuori. “Awareness of these materials has clearly increased in the musical community.”

“We are making Sibelius’s entire output available to musicians,” Pulkkis continues. “This includes genres that have previously been unjustly neglected.”

### Mosaic-like creative process

Writings by composers about their work are often used as entry points for interpreting their compositions and the genesis of those compositions. However, as Ylivuori points out, composers consciously construct an artist profile with their writings. He applies what is known as genetic editing in his work, questioning the finality of the completed work and focusing on the process rather than its end result. The reasoning here is that the creative process could have taken a different turn.

“This is an eye-opener. In many cases, the manuscript material reveals that the genesis of a work is completely different from what the composer claims. Indeed, the text-critical approach is more interested in everything other than the composer’s own words.”

Sibelius, to take the matter at hand, endeavoured to create an impression of a logically progressing creative process. Yet, as Virtanen explains, his sketches and other archival sources reveal that this impression is completely false, at least as far as Sibelius’s larger works are concerned: he typically jotted down fragmentary ideas and then began to consider how those ideas could fit together.

**“SIBELIUS WROTE:  
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OF HIS COMPOSITION  
PROCESS.”**

“The shape of any particular work did not begin to emerge until Sibelius had worked out what material could go into which piece. This is diametrically opposed to the notion of organically evolving a work out of a few thematic germs.”

Pulkkis names the Sonatina for violin and piano and the Sixth Symphony as examples:

“Material originally intended for the Sixth Symphony ended up in the Violin Sonatina – and the Sixth Symphony shares its origins with a second Violin Concerto that Sibelius never completed! Constant shifting between various alternatives was very typical of his creative thinking.”

Sibelius also had a habit of revising his works after the first performance, and in some cases even after publication. In the context of JSW, this raises the issue of how to define a “completed work”. Ylivuori points to the choral work *Natus in curas*, for which Sibelius wrote at least ten different endings. One of these ended up in the first printed version – but this choice was made by Sibelius at the last moment, being forced to meet a deadline. Can it therefore be justly regarded as the composer’s final word regarding the ending of the piece?

This brings us back to the importance of understanding the function of each source in the big picture. Virtanen considers that in this respect Sibelius himself explained it best:

“Sibelius wrote: ‘It is as if God Almighty had thrown down pieces of a mosaic from heaven’s floor and asked me to find out what the original pattern was.’ This, ultimately, is the best description I have read of his composition process.” ©

Translation: Jaakko Mäntyjärvi





# DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY IN

# FINNISH MUSIC IN 2022

Illustration by Eija Vehviläinen

*Despite notable improvements in equality in music and music institutions in Finland, much remains to be done. How do the topics of equality and diversity surface in Finnish music in the 2020s?*



# EQUITY OR EQUALITY?

BY Amanda Kauranne

**What concrete actions have been taken to advance equality in the Finnish music industry and how can diversity be promoted? Researcher Heidi Partti, musician-pedagogue Puro Paju, festival director Linda Suolahti and head of communications Sanni Kahilainen talk about programming, the possibilities of pedagogy and questioning the prevailing models.**

The Finnish music industry must do better on equality, diversity and inclusion – that was a clear statement approved by the Finnish Musicians’ Union conference in May. A survey conducted earlier this year revealed that 76 per cent of respondents have experienced inappropriate behaviour within the past five years.

In particular, women, non-binary individuals, young people, freelancers and non-Finnish speakers had experienced discrimination, according to a survey carried out as part of the *Vastuullinen musiikkiala* (Responsible Music Industry) project. Just over 1,000 people working in the Finnish music sector responded to the survey.

What kinds of projects have been carried out to advance equality in the music sector? What kind of future is the industry building?

**Youthful first impressions are key**

“When the Equity in Composing project began in 2019, there was momentum towards equality in the music field. Issues of equality and diversity were popping up in discussion and research,” says HEIDI PARTTI, Professor of Music Education at the University of the Arts Helsinki’s Sibelius Academy.

For a year and a half, the pilot project provided composition studies, mentoring and opportunities for peer learning for a group of young people. Because the starting point was to identify gender-related segregation, opportunities were offered especially for girls and non-binary youngsters.

“We experimented with various pedagogical development activities in an effort to find new or alternative ways to teach composition,” says Partti. The project culminated with a composition concert in late 2020, which can still be viewed on YouTube. After the project, some of the young people applied for vocational studies in composition or music.

“We began the study with the question of why the professional composing field is gendered. Through the project, we gained a deeper understanding of how important composition pedagogy and the choices associated with it – and the values behind these choices – are in realising equality. In addition to focusing on the professional field, dismantling the situation must be done at all levels of music education. We need to look at what beliefs, traditions and narratives guide practical behaviour in pedagogical situations,” she says.

An article by Partti and composer RIIKKA TALVITIE on the canon of art music is now in peer review. In another article-in-progress, Partti examines how personal and culturally shared narratives affect career choices.

In this article, we’ll hear about the Responsible Music Industry and *Esiinnyn edukseni* (Safe at Every Stage) projects from SANNI KAHILAINEN, head of communications at the Musicians’ Union; the *Yhdenvertaisesti säveltäen* (Equity in Composing) project from researcher HEIDI PARTTI, the *Musequal festival* from violinist and festival director LINDA SUOLAHTI and the Global Music educational programme’s pedagogy and values from musician and teacher PURO PAJU.



Heidi Partti



Riikka Talvitie



Linda Suolahti

“The typical image of an art-music composer is a white, heterosexual cis man from a privileged background, a lonely genius. Our project disassembled these stereotypes as various professional composers talked about their wide range of career paths,” she says.

“While the project was excellent, I hope there is no need to do this again in the future! I return constantly to the importance of music education at comprehensive schools. It reaches all pupils in each age group and lays the foundation for the future of music in Finland. That’s why it’s crucial that every single child and young person receives quality music education in which everyone has an equal opportunity to find their own voice through diverse ways of making music,” says Partti.

“Every time a child or young person, regardless of gender, ethnic background or the socio-economic status of their parents, gets the opportunity to create their own music, equality progresses, as generations gradually grow up seeing musical creativity as accessible to all. The role of teachers is crucial here. What kind of critical reflections do they make on the canon of art music and the history of music, for instance? Can they help students understand what’s behind these phenomena?”

**“WE NEED TO LOOK AT WHAT BELIEFS, TRADITIONS AND NARRATIVES GUIDE PRACTICAL BEHAVIOUR IN PEDAGOGICAL SITUATIONS” - HEIDI PARTTI**

**Worth the effort**

Where then can compositions by female and non-binary composers be heard? One place is the MUSEQUAL FESTIVAL, which has shown since 2016 that it’s possible to run an artistically high-quality, diverse festival by programming music from outside the canon, says its artistic director, violinist LINDA SUOLAHTI.

“Women composers are in the minority today, as they have been throughout history, in Finland and around the world. In the early years of the festival, it was really challenging to find the repertoire,” she says. “When recordings or sheet music from works weren’t readily available, we had to spend part of our budget on planning the repertoire, for example by ordering sheet music and records. All of our programmes can be found on our website, partly because they provide information to others who are looking for repertoire beyond the canon,” says Suolahti.

Nowadays, more information can be found online, as well as from sources such as the newly published book *Daughters of Tones: Finnish Female Composers in the Long 19th Century* (2022) by NUPPU KOIVISTO and SUSANNA VÄLIMÄKI.

The Musequal festival supports women in the field in many ways, such as buying services from female entrepreneurs and raising composers’ profiles through the visual arts. Works by composers of colour are heard throughout the festival programme. Commissioned works and composer residencies are also concrete moves towards equality, in Suolahti’s view.

“We commissioned four works from our first residency composer, CECILIA DAMSTRÖM, which was significant in her career. I’m wary of the idea of how people in closed circles decide who gets the next commissioned work or recognition. So we organised an international competition to choose the next residency composer, where the members of the board did not know who submitted the compositions and only the names of the finalists were announced. The competition



was won by Iranian-born composer Rouzbeh Rafie,” says Suolahti. “I hope that other festivals will dare to change their familiar repertoire. Naturally, you can’t recommend or remember a work that you’ve never heard and that therefore does not evoke emotional memories.”.

What if there was no canon?

“It’s not egalitarian to think that we’re all the same in terms of culture and skill. We have different values and starting points – and that’s how it should be. It’s important to welcome diversity,” says musician Puro Paju, a teacher on the Sibelius Academy’s Global Music degree programme, which is expanding from bachelor’s and master’s programmes to include youth education as well.

“Starting with the entrance exams, we build the idea that inclusiveness and equality are core values in our education. We’re working to dismantle colonialist thinking. Through actions and pedagogical exercises, we build the opportunity for everyone to be seen as themselves and to express their ideas safely. This allows us to do things within so many cultures,” says Paju.

The study language is English, but support is provided during the first years of study so that language is not an obstacle. Scholarships are available for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Studies can be pursued with any musical background or instrument.

“Almost all professional music training requires a certain level of knowledge of Western music theory, except ours,” they say. “If a student’s music culture starts from a modal starting point, for example, there’s no point in requiring knowledge of Western harmony. Therefore we try to design entrance exams so as to allow people from many backgrounds to participate.”

The jury itself is diverse. The core team of teachers includes representatives of different genders and sexual

minorities, as well as people of various ethnic backgrounds from four continents.

“That already improves an applicant’s chances of having a jury member who understands the culture they represent. We try to consider cultural diversity and gender balance within each group of incoming students. Of course, skill is always the most important,” Paju emphasises.

Representation matters

The Global Music programme is not a “world music” course where one first learns to play Cuban and then Indian music. As each student is an expert and skilled representative of some kind of musical culture, students learn a lot from each other. Each of them develops their artistic identity by simultaneously deepening their own area of strength and bringing it into contact with other cultures.

“In this way of working, starting with the human encounter, there is an opportunity to get closer to real communal equality. Our approach to music is also evident on the concert stage, when our Global Orchestra brings together traditional instruments from many cultures with Western instruments to harmoniously play music composed for them,” says Paju. “It’s important to see from an early age that people from a wide variety of backgrounds can play different instruments as respected musicians. In the future, it should be possible to study music from around the world at music schools.”

“The situation has changed for the better, but I’m still the only teacher who identifies as non-male who teaches ensemble players in the Music Education department at the Sibelius Academy of the University of the Arts Helsinki. Sometimes I notice that that’s more important than I’d like it to be. Still, some students who identify as non-male, especially instrumentalists, experience so much questioning of their musicianship that they do their final projects on the topic.



Puro Paju



Sanni Kahilainen



The Musicians’ Union’s Community Coordinator Anna Dantchev presenting the ‘Safe at every stage’ project at G LiveLab Helsinki.



Panel discussion about the results of the “Equality in the Music Industry” survey and how the music industry should improve.

I wish that everyone was able to focus on music rather than their role as a player in a community.”

Stronger measures on the way

Sanni Kahilainen, head of communications at the Musicians’ Union, points to recent studies on equality themes.

“A study called *Yhdenvertaisuus musiikkialalla* (Equality in the Music Industry) was commissioned by the Musicians’ Union and the Finnish Music Creators’ Association along with other music industry groups. We weren’t surprised by the findings that most had experienced inappropriate treatment based on their language, background, skin colour, sexual orientation or gender,” she says. “The project was carried out by Inklusiiv, an NGO focusing on diversity, equity and inclusion. Based on the respondents’ experiences, it drew up recommendations for better working models.”

Concrete guidelines can also be found on the Safe at Every Stage website, which went online in May, offering extensive information on what to do when encountering discrimination. A number of music industry groups have been involved in developing these rules aimed at creating safer spaces.

The project is led by the Musicians’ Union’s newly appointed Community Coordinator, ANNA DANTCHEV.

“We wanted to allocate resources to have a contact person focusing on diversity, organising events that actively create safer spaces and monitoring what should be done to promote equality,” she explains.

The future is young

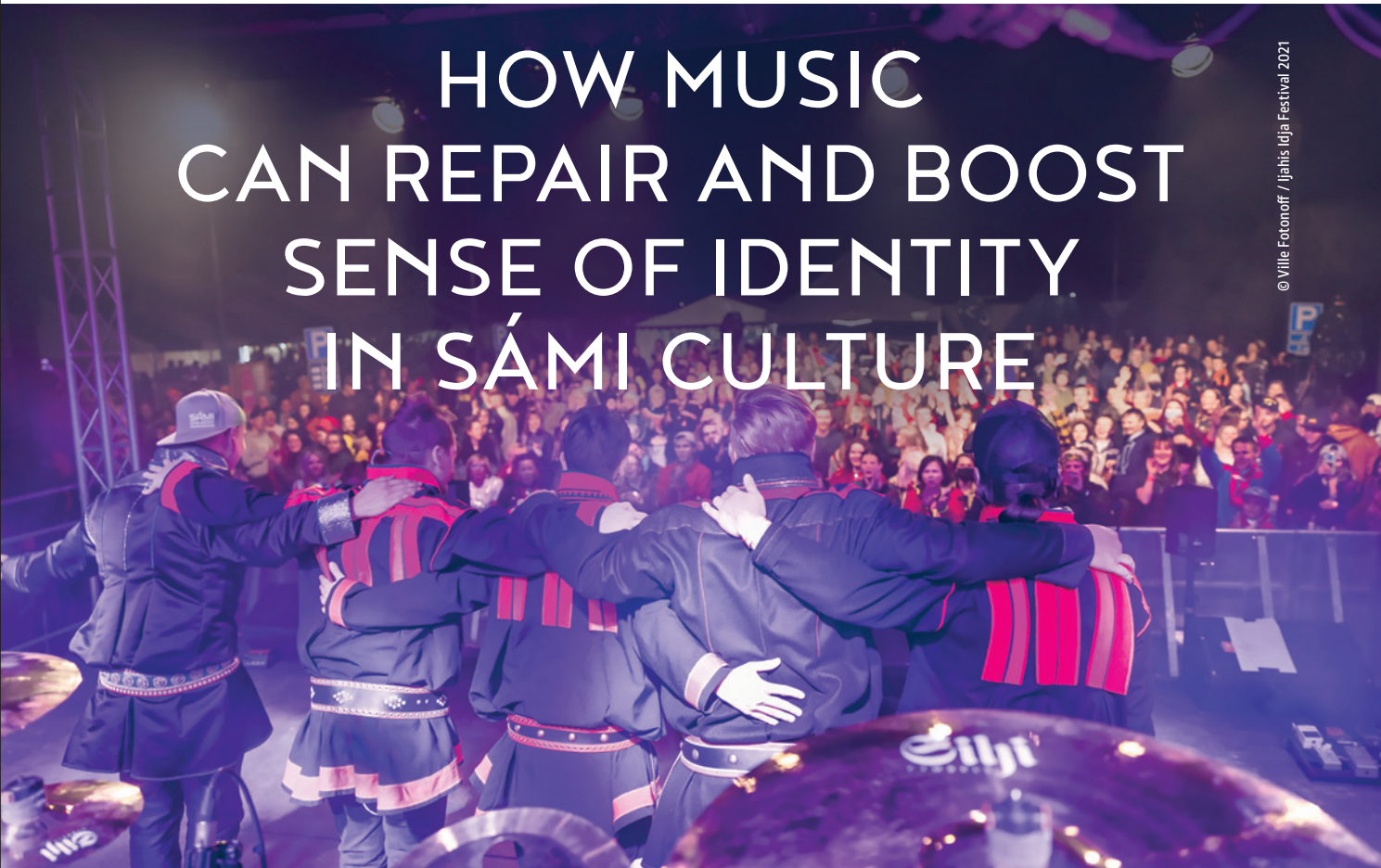
“Among young people, there is more of an assumption that no-one should face discrimination. The culture will change with them,” says Kahilainen. “But if the music sector seems reactionary, do young people want to be involved in it? We need to show that our sector can meet the challenges and close the inequality gap by creating diversity and bringing new perspectives into our structures.”

“I dream of a future where young people can create their own music no matter what they look like or where they come from,” says Professor Heidi Partti. “In this way, the professional field will diversify and flourish, too. We might start to think that definitions of music quality are not just about aesthetics, but about whether our ways of making music are equitable and offer opportunities to a wide variety of people.” © Translation: Wif Stenger



# HOW MUSIC CAN REPAIR AND BOOST SENSE OF IDENTITY IN SÁMI CULTURE

© Ville Fotonoff / Ijahis Idja Festival 2021



Ijahis idja is a festival celebrating the music of indigenous peoples and has been held in Inari since 2004. The event is the only music festival held in Finland that concentrates on Sámi music.

BY Saara-Maria Salonen

**The Sámi musical landscape is not about breaking into the mainstream and making money – it is often about building community, revitalising and maintaining culture and language, as well as helping Sámi people have a stronger sense of pride in their identity.**

If you go to a Sámi party, the music in the background is exactly what you would expect at any gathering. You will hear the latest viral songs, old bangers and pop songs that are heard at pretty much any party around the world. But then there are the others – songs that nearly every Sámi person knows, but are virtually unknown to anyone outside the community.

The young Sámi people have grown up with their Sámi superstars – everyone knows AILU VALLE, AMOC, SOFIA JANNOK or JON HENRIK FJÄLLGREN. New stars are constantly coming up: the Sámi Music Academy and Sámi

Grand Prix are creating and promoting new artists each year. Most people outside the Sámi homelands, and those unfamiliar with the community, are not aware of the wonderful arts and music scene of Sápmi. Sámi artists are often welcome as guests at arts festivals or cultural happenings around the world, but you will not see them at more mainstream festival stages together with mainstream artists. And that is okay – while it would be amazing to see Sámi superstars on the same line-up as mainstream artists, these artists are often from the community, to the community.

The Sámi musical landscape is not about breaking into the mainstream and making money – it is often about building community, revitalising and maintaining culture and language, as well as helping Sámi people have a stronger sense of pride in their identity.

“Music can be the starting point of building identity. It is communication and it preserves the philosophy of Sámi life; it is a crucial part when considering what it is to be a Sámi

person,” says ANNA NÄKKÄLÄJÄRVI-LÄNSMAN, a Northern Sámi musician whose long career has spanned from working with orchestras to research. Näkkäläjärv-Länsman is most well known for her yoiking – yoik is a traditional Northern Sámi vocal music style. She has released two albums with her band Ánnámáret Ensemble, and her latest record is an ethereal, dreamlike album, *Nieguid duovdagat – Dreamscapes*, which came out in 2021 under the name Ánnámáret.

“Nowadays Sámi pop music is significant,” Näkkäläjärv-Länsman says. Young Sámi people around the world can find more interest in their culture through music.

But the artist is often balancing between minority versus majority culture, old and new, traditional and modern. They will try to appeal both to Sámi audiences and to those outside the community. Näkkäläjärv-Länsman quotes Northern Sámi historian and academic VELI-PEKKA LEHTOLA, who has explained the duality in Sámi arts: different things speak in different ways to Sámi audiences and to people outside the Sámi community.

“If an artist has used traditional or archival yoik, that can be a yoik of an ancestor or a specific place. A Sámi person can have a personal connection to the person or place,” Näkkäläjärv-Länsman says.

“In the Sámi view of the world, ancestors are still a reality in our time, and we are responsible for our actions towards them: there can be a spiritual and philosophical connection to a song. But a person who does not know the yoik or the person or history can listen to the song as just a song, listen to the arrangements of the instruments and listen to the melody of the yoik,” she continues.

Like Anna Näkkäläjärv-Länsman, INGÁ MÁRET GAUP JUUSO is also more familiar with traditional yoik – but she does it with her own twist. In 2022 Gaup Juuso won the

© Lada Suomentine



Anna Näkkäläjärv-Länsman

© Samamari Blinnikka-Tyrväinen



Ingá Máret Gaup Juuso

song contest category of the Sámi Grand Prix in Kautokeino, Norway – the song contest could be described as the Sámi Eurovision. While Gaup Juuso has grown up around traditional yoik, she is now best known for her award-winning song *Dovdameahttumii* and her work with her band Tundra Elektro, which represents a more modern type of Sámi music.

“I feel that yoik is growing in popularity in Europe,” Gaup Juuso states. Her winning song is featured on one of Norway’s biggest radio playlists, and her art is welcomed by the Norwegian art scene. She finds it strange that Sámi artists are not welcomed in the Finnish mainstream in the same way.

“Maybe Finnish ears are not so used to listening to yoik,” she wonders. Gaup Juuso finds that Sámi artists are often exoticised in Finland, and political and cultural questions undermine the art itself. “If I wear my Sámi dress I easily become an object and it does not always feel good,” she says.

Gaup Juuso underlines the importance of yoiking and Sámi music to the Sámi. Music can be a way of bringing more confidence and pride to young minds – not to forget the Sámi people living outside the Sámi homelands, who do not have the same access to culture as those living closer to the region. For them, hearing Sámi music and finding Sámi arts can be a key feature in maintaining that connection with the culture that otherwise could be lost.

“If you think of Sámi parties, you can guarantee that when there is yoik the party is blowing up,” the veteran yoiker says. In her 35 years, Gaup Juuso has already had a long career in Sámi music, and has seen the development that Sámi music has gone through. “Even back in the day, yoiking has been done together,” she continues.

The Sámi artists are raising a storm in their local communities. Even though they are not often heard in the mainstream music scene, their importance to the local community is as strong as ever. Generations of Sámi people have had to figure out how to find themselves, how to find that balance between the two cultures – and music is such a helpful tool in this. ©



# HUOM

## REVIVING ORCHESTRAL MUSIC THAT HISTORY FORGOT

BY Kare Eskola



Susanna Mälkki and the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra in a reading session.

**Whose are the voices we hear at concerts? Which stories are conveyed through art music, and which are not? The Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra is engaged in a project titled HUOM, History's Unheard Orchestral Music. The project is reviving orchestral music written by Finnish women composers in the 19th and 20th centuries.**

A couple of years ago, a debate about plurality in art music arose again in Finland, this time with a bigger noise than usual. ALEKSI MALMBERG, General Manager of the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, notes that everyone was forced to contemplate who have been, are and will be in the canon of Western art music.

"I became aware of plurality issues back when I was a musicology student. Improvement has been slow; art music is so deeply rooted in the chauvinist worldview of the upper

classes of the 19th century," says Malmberg. As General Manager, he began to contemplate how to explore plurality in a sustainable way. While orchestras already have the duties of upholding the tradition of Western art music and of creating a future for that tradition with new music, there is also a third duty:

"We may examine history critically and search for that which has been neglected. That was the initial impulse for HUOM."

Malmberg was joined in designing the project by SUSANNA VÄLIMÄKI, Associate Professor of Art Studies at the University of Helsinki. She had been researching Finnish women composers of the 19th and early 20th centuries in a project titled "Daughters of music", and with this the concept of HUOM came together: finding orchestral music written by historical Finnish women composers, making fair copies of the material and having the orchestra play it in a reading session. This would make it possible to re-evaluate our musical heritage by making these works available for

concert use, to publish them and to tell the story of this music and its makers.

"We needed a network where music scholars, archives, publishers, the orchestra and its conductor dedicate part of their everyday work to this common goal," says Malmberg.

### Reading sessions bring music to life

Finding orchestral music neglected by history is not an easy task, but Susanna Välimäki and NUPPU KOIVISTO-KAASIK had already unearthed a hundred or so women composers born in Finland in the 19th century.

"The problem is that a lot of their orchestral works have been lost, such as the symphonies written by IDA MOBERG and BETZY HOLMBERG," says Välimäki. "The music was never published or recorded."

In the 19th century, most students at conservatories across Europe were women and musical performance at the grass-roots level was largely the domain of women, but for ideological reasons women back then almost never attained a place in the canon as orchestral composers. Finnish women composers wrote quite a lot of solo songs, dances, children's music and music for gymnastics.

"I suppose we should redefine the profile of a composer," says Välimäki. "But for HUOM we did find ballet music and other dance music, appealing miniatures and concertos, the latter being a genre in which women who were also performers could somewhat more easily be heard as composers."

This body of music has been preserved in archives but in manuscript form.

"It was a surprise how laborious it was to edit the music to a point that it was usable for a reading session," says Välimäki. They did it anyway, because SUSANNA MÄLKKI, Chief Conductor of the Helsinki Philharmonic, considered it vital that the music should not remain just notes on paper but should be performed at least at reading sessions. The first session in 2021 was an emotional event.

"It was a heartfelt moment to realise that it was the first time in a hundred years that anyone had heard this music," says Aleksi Malmberg. "There have been so many compos-

ers who wrote accessible and compelling music but never got their voice heard."

"Indeed, many tears were shed," Susanna Välimäki confesses. "But isn't it great that the music and the stories behind it have the power to move people so profoundly?"

Musical experiences and narratives are key tools in how HUOM is re-evaluating history.

"An orchestral concert is always a reflection of a particular worldview, indicating whose stories are considered important," Välimäki explains. "If you never hear music written by women of the past, you may unconsciously acquire the view that women's stories are not important. Then, when you hear music whose story you can identify with, it may be a truly moving experience."

### Musicology is action

Some of the discoveries made in the HUOM project have been programmed at concerts of the Helsinki Philharmonic, but there are also efforts to disseminate this music more widely. Music publisher Fennica Gehrman has been publishing works by historical women composers in collaboration with researchers.

"We principally deal with composers of our own time, but because of the history of our company we take a keen interest in the history of Finnish music," says publishing manager JARI ESKOLA. "Besides, it fits into our strategy of plurality."

Eskola's job is to read music, but he nevertheless considers the performing of the music discovered in the HUOM project to be the main thing. "Hearing music is the best way of understanding it."

Practical music-making is also motivating for Susanna Välimäki in her research.

"Research is not just about me writing articles that someone else then may or may not apply in practice. It has been inspiring to find that musicology is action and that all this is being put into practice with the entire network pitching in." Välimäki notes that HUOM is a uniquely broad and systematic example of collaboration between music scholars and performing musicians. "It used to be the case that scholars and musicians did not necessarily even try to understand each other, but cooperation has become increasingly common."

"HUOM illustrates that music studies and musical performances are both part of our society," says Aleksi Malmberg. "I am proud that the Helsinki Philharmonic has brought a wide range of people together to think about what we might perform and why."

And although HUOM is described in publicity as a "project", it has no end date or ultimate deliverable.

"We may shift our focus and our operating models, but I already feel that this is a practice that has come to stay. It will also help the orchestra think about how we want to contribute to changes in society at large." © Translation: Jaakko Mäntyjärvi



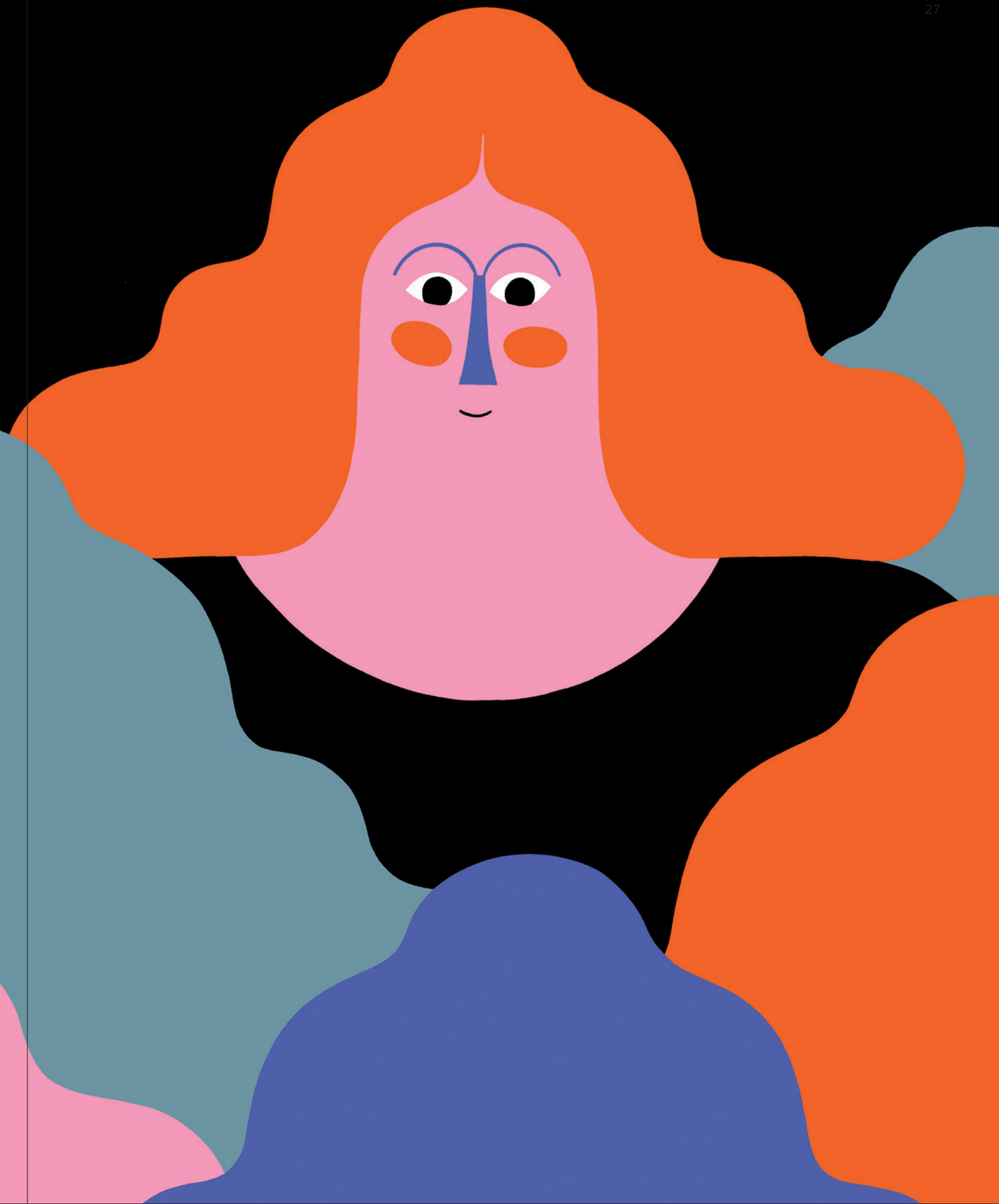
The Helsinki Women's Orchestra and conductor Heidi Sundblad-Halme



# KAIJA SAARIAHO 70

*Composer Kaija Saariaho turned 70 in 2022. Her original musical thought and captivating works have resulted in fascinating artistic collaborations and international prominence on an extraordinary scale.*

Illustration by Eija Vehviläinen





# KAIJA SAARIAHO, MATER



Kaija Saariaho, Emilia © Stefan Bremner

BY Susan McClary (Case Western Reserve University)

“With the opening sonority of each of her works, Kaija establishes a vibration that resonates deep inside the listener’s body along with a spectrum of overtones that grow out of that original sonority but that also foreshadow the complex contradictions that compel us to identify with and follow the web she weaves,” writes Susan McClary in her essay on Kaija Saariaho’s work.

This collection celebrates the extraordinary accomplishments of KAIJA SAARIAHO, whom most of us regard as the greatest living composer – not the greatest *woman* composer, though she certainly is this, but the greatest, period. Over the course of the past fifty years, Kaija has created masterpiece after masterpiece, winning most of the international awards available to musicians and securing a permanent place in the programming of symphony orchestras, chamber groups and opera houses. And she has done so without surrendering a bit of her artistic integrity to a populist strain of postmodernism. Even as her stringent musical language challenges listeners still anchored in older idioms, she has proved able to engage and electrify them.

In contrast to many of her modernist colleagues who write to explore abstract schemata, Kaija composes to communicate. With the opening sonority of each of her works, Kaija establishes a vibration that resonates deep inside the listener’s body along with a spectrum of overtones that grow out of that original sonority but that also foreshadow the complex contradictions that compel us to identify with and follow the web she weaves. I am quite sure that I do not breathe between the beginnings and conclusions of her compositions, and I continue to live inside those sonorities long after I have left the performance space.

Although audiences may respond first to the astonishing sensual beauty of her music, they soon sense the

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psychological and ethical urgency of her work. In this essay, I want to focus on Kaija’s vocal repertory and, in particular, her unprecedented focus on motherhood. Mothers rarely appear as major characters in the history of opera or, for that matter, in mainstream cinema. Given that all humans come into being only by means of this process, pregnancy, labour and childbirth are literally universal experiences. Yet these experiences are mostly regarded as unworthy of artistic attention, especially compared with the romanticised sex act leading up to impregnation: the centre of virtually all our conventional plots. As the United States grapples to respond to the recent ban on abortion – *even* in cases of rape or incest, *even* to save the life of the mother – we have discovered the ignorance and callousness of many of our lawmakers. Some of them are already bringing murder charges to women who miscarry, estimated to occur in as many as one in four pregnancies. Pregnancy has become a life-or-death proposition.

Like many other female artists, Kaija long resisted identifying as a “woman composer”. But her perspective changed radically when she became pregnant and gave birth to her first child, ALEKSI BARRIÈRE, in 1989. Rather than regretting this transformation, she saw it as an opportunity. In her words: “As a mother, I have access to many things that men could never experience. Before having children, I really was up in the air most of the time. The earthly aspect became more present with children. Has my music changed with motherhood? Of course.”



In choosing to identify herself in her music as a woman and a mother, Kaija risked a great deal. She reports that “I really felt some people’s suspicions when I had my first child, suspicions like: this is the end of her serious music, she’ll become too sentimental”. And some of her subsequent works received contemptuous reviews from critics who specifically ridiculed her decision to foreground such issues. When I give talks about these pieces, I still have to field objections from female composers and musicologists who argue that women should stick to the gender-free abstractions developed by their male colleagues; they actually express fear in the face of Kaija’s breaking of long-established taboos. It is not only abortion, in other words, that provokes controversy but also the alternative – namely childbearing.

### Sentimentality, femininity and masculinity

Let’s return to the word “sentimental”, which Kaija used to describe how women composers are expected to sound. European music theory has long made use of gendered binary oppositions: a masculine theme stakes out the turf for standard symphonies while a sweet lyric theme allows for some relief before being assimilated to the key of the first theme in the recapitulation, exactly the way a wife is expected to take on the name of her husband; masculine cadences are the ones that absorb all the energy leading up to that point while feminine ones deflect modestly; men act as the agents in operas, while female characters mostly get acted upon (or else pay the consequences). And given those associations, what artist of any integrity would want to identify with those weaker positions?

Keep in mind that women novelists, poets and visual artists usually understand their experiences as women as central to their artistic agendas. Nobel Laureate TONI MORRISON wrote from her experiences as a Black woman; FRIDA KAHLO drew on her life as a disabled Mexican woman for her representations. When she was young, Kaija immersed herself in literature by women. She writes:

In the beginning of my compositional studies, I tried in vain to find a model in the world of music; female composers were few and far between. No doubt this is why I was interested in the lives of female writers, and took pleasure in reading their diaries, letters and biographies, in addition to their works. Besides Virginia Woolf, the two figures who meant the most to me were Sylvia Plath and Anaïs Nin [because] of their urge to combine – at least that’s what it seemed to me – a “woman’s life”, meaning their roles as mother, and their artistic careers.... I was searching for a way of life, I was reading these diaries as survival manuals.

If the equivalent of WOOLF or PLATH did not exist in music then, they do now, thanks in large part to Kaija’s own brave imagination. So when I discuss Kaija as “woman composer”,

## IN CONTRAST TO MANY OF HER MODERNIST COLLEAGUES WHO WRITE TO EXPLORE ABSTRACT SCHEMATA, KAIJA COMPOSES TO COMMUNICATE.

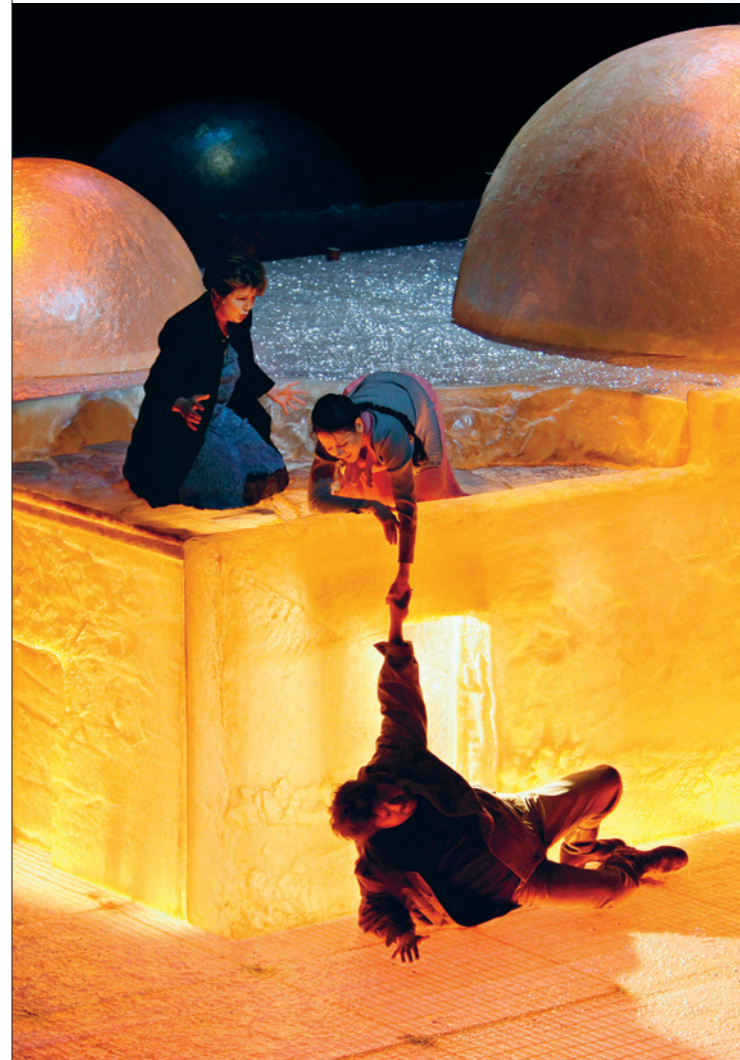
it is because she has given voice to so many dilemmas particular to women.

Her most recent opera, *Innocence*, features three principal women: Tereza, whose child was murdered in a school shooting; Patricia, the mother of the shooter; and Stela, the unsuspecting bride whose potential for reproduction hangs in the balance. Ten years after the violent incident, both mothers still suffer the repercussions – guilt and immeasurable loss – of that act as they find themselves face to face at a wedding celebration. Stela will learn over the course of the opera how her choice of husband risks perpetrating a toxic gene pool. Of course, many other survivors in the opera also give voice to trauma, including the multilingual students who testify to their inability to lead normal lives, as well as their teacher and a priest, who castigate themselves for failing to protect their charges. I happened to be on a panel discussion with Kaija in November 2015 when she learned of the terrorist attack on the Bataclan Concert Hall and feared that her son might have been a victim; I have watched her as she suffered for several hours waiting to hear of Aleksis’s fate.

The subject matter of *Innocence* seems ripped from the front page of yesterday’s headlines with ever more frequent school shootings. But Kaija has been grappling with the joys and dangers of motherhood since she first decided to compose texted music. Her 1996 song-cycle *Château de l’âme*, for instance, includes along with love songs a ritual chant from Ancient Egypt dealing with the healing of children. Yet it is in her two operas *Adriana Mater* and *Émilie* that she confronts these issues most powerfully.

### Women’s fates on the stage

Kaija and her magnificent librettist AMIN MAALOUF developed the plot of *Adriana Mater* when she mentioned that she could feel two hearts beating inside her when she was pregnant. The protagonist, Adriana, has been raped during wartime, bringing to mind the women of Ukraine who now suffer such assaults on a daily basis. In the crucial middle act of the opera, Adriana’s sister tries to persuade her to terminate the pregnancy that resulted from the rape. But Adriana, echoing Kaija’s imagery, replies that she feels that second heart; even while fearing that the child might inherit



Adriana Mater, Suomen kansallisooppera © Heikki Tuuli

but she has nonetheless lived in anguished uncertainty ever since.

The stakes are even higher in Kaija’s monodrama of 2011, *Émilie*. ÉMILIE, MARQUISE DU CHÂTELET, died in childbirth in 1749 at the age of 42, just as she was completing her translation of ISAAC NEWTON’s *Principia* – long the standard version of this crucial study in France. An accomplished physicist, astronomer, mathematician, musician and writer, she was an intimate friend of Voltaire and a strong influence on the *encyclopédistes*. Scientists who have recently assessed her pioneering work find that she anticipated aspects of EINSTEIN’s Relativity and the game theory that makes possible much of our digitised culture.

As Émilie approaches the due date for both her translation and her child, she has a strong presentiment that she will not survive labour. The monodrama traces her warring emotions during her final week: her memories, scientific speculations, fears, hopes and desires. But this towering intellectual knows – just as surely as any criminal on death row – that her days are numbered, that she is now in countdown.

“Sentimental” is scarcely the adjective that comes to mind with the horrifying subject matter and often brutal sonorities Kaija produces in *Adriana Mater* or *Émilie*. Our laws concerning pregnancy are so harsh in part because we fail to acknowledge the very personhood of women. In the history of opera, women may express emotions, but they still mostly conform to patriarchal concepts of what women should be like; the gender-specific existential struggles they often endure find no place on the stage.

Of course, Kaija also composes for male characters, most memorably in her portrait of Jaufré Rudel in *L’amour de loin* and the ghostly encounters in *Only the Sound Remains*. But regardless of her subject matter, her musical language dives deep inside her subjects, inviting listeners to share the contradictory strands of lived experience. Music has an unmatched capacity to instil empathy, to immerse us as if without mediation in the feelings of someone entirely different. The other arts share that ability, but music’s rhythmic embodiment, its infinite shades of sounds, its dynamic trajectories bypass the eye and the page to register directly on the hearer’s interiority.

No-one does this more effectively than Kaija Saariaho, whose decision to allow her experiences of motherhood to permeate much of her work will inspire audiences and composers for generations to come. Hers is precisely the voice we need to hear in our troubled time. Yet even when she engages with social issues, it is always her music – her ability to draw the listener into her deep resonances and dense contrapuntal webs, the unparalleled range of colours and fragrances she creates, the sheer sonorous beauty of her works – that finally matters. ☉

QUOTATIONS FROM KAIJA SAARIAHO’S WRITINGS: “My Library, from Words to Music” (1987), trans. Jeffrey Zuckerman, *Music and Literature* No. 5 (2014).

the violent tendencies of his father (also Stela’s dilemma in *Innocence*), she chooses to carry it to term.

But this decision does not qualify as an unambiguous triumph for the anti-abortion crowd. The remainder of the opera traces the ways in which both Adriana and her son, Yonas, must handle the consequences in their lives that bear the mark of Cain. The shame of his conception leads Adriana and her sister to lie to Yonas about his origins. When he learns of it outside the home, he seeks to murder his father as revenge. He stops at the last minute before shooting, allowing Adriana to claim that he is after all her child rather than his father’s.

Yet despite this rather bittersweet reconciliation at the end, the opera traces the terrible consequences of this pregnancy on the lives of everyone involved. It follows that initial foetal heartbeat to its unending aftermath. Kaija and Maalouf do not offer easy solutions or celebrate childbirth as an unambiguous good. Adriana never regrets her choice,



# KAIJA SAARIAHO AND OLLI VIRTAPERKO: A CONVERSATION

BY Olli Virtaperko

Composers Kaija Saariaho and Olli Virtaperko sat down to talk about the meaning of art and music. In this dialogue between composers from different generations, fascinating insights emerged into the structures of and changes in writing music, and the world of music at large.

Original photo: Olli Virtaperko; editing: Lasse Lehtonen / Minna Luoma

OLLI VIRTAPERKO – One of the themes that has been rolling around in my mind for a long time is how the symphony orchestra is structurally trapped at the beginning of the last century. It would take quite a different set of tools to make the symphony orchestra capable of reflecting our day and age in its instrumental line-up. How do you feel about the relevance of the sound of the symphony orchestra and the current state of the institution?

KAIJA SAARIAHO – This is really interesting for me, because around the time I was completing my studies, it was taken for granted that there was no future for the symphony orchestra. When I moved to France, they had [Ensemble] L'itinéraire and the Ensemble Intercontemporain, and then Ensemble Modern and Avanti! were founded. The symphony orchestra was regarded in much the same light as opera: both were stuffy and expensive systems, and it would only take a few years to get rid of them, and then electronics or synthesisers would create completely new colours and opportunities.

Well, it certainly didn't turn out that way! Since then, I've written major orchestral pieces myself, and I've enjoyed the concentration of human energy in an orchestra. There's something quite irreplaceable about it. Never mind that an orchestra is a sort of relic of ages past – I've come to appreciate it. Few musical contexts offer the thrill of energy that a symphony orchestra can generate. For me, it's empowering. I've been both avidly opposed and avidly in favour, and there's no way I could now even try to form an objective opinion about the relevance of the symphony orchestra. What is important is that the balance between contemporary music and core repertoire in orchestral programming should be healthier. The institution needs to be revitalised in one way or another.

ov – There are two things in parallel here: the status of contemporary music in a concert culture that is heavily biased towards the past, and the issue of the make-up of a symphony orchestra. For example, is there any point in holding on to the massive violin sections that historically emerged simply as a means of amplifying the sound, before the advent of electronic amplification? Do you recognise this problem?

KS – Partly, yes, but if we began amplifying the violins, it wouldn't be the same as having those 16 first violins actually on stage – the human experience is different. As for the instruments of the orchestra, I quite happily discard some of the most standard instruments in my orchestral works. And on the other hand, there's a huge number of percussion instruments today that were not available in Beethoven's time. Having said that, for a composer to be able to express themselves in their own idiom in this day and age, they should have the right to choose their palette according to their needs. Inevita-

bly, this may run up against the structures and financial constraints of an orchestra. Being compelled to consider such things does force us [composers] towards a middle ground, of course.

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- KAIJA SAARIAHO**

ov – Indeed. I've found that in criticising the orchestra institution I'm wearing two hats, so to speak, representing diametrically opposed value sets. Criticising symphony orchestras for having the wrong instruments and playing the wrong music seems undeniably valid, but on the other hand the sensation of working with an orchestra is overwhelming – as you said, it's about empowerment and shared energy like nothing else. It must be said in defence of the instruments of the symphony orchestra that they've been found to have sound resources for which they were never designed: we need only consider multiphonics on the clarinet or the rich array of noises that the strings can produce. Nevertheless, these are in effect unintended by-products of the original purpose for which those instruments were made, prompting the question of whether we shouldn't be designing instruments from the ground up to cater to the sound ideals of our time. That would lead to a very different orchestral line-up, and we wouldn't need to amplify existing instruments, as with the electric guitar. We would invent new acoustic instruments. Wouldn't that be fascinating?

KS – Certainly, but how could such a thing gain wider interest? There have been all sorts of attempts of this kind.

ov – The scenario I've toyed with is converting the rearmost desks in the strings into flexible freelance positions, which would free up resources for, say, having five new musicians/instruments in the orchestra to begin with. This means that orchestras could play MAHLER and STRAUSS just as before [with violins in those flexible positions], but composers would have easier access to something like a concert accordion or a saxophone section. This tiny amount of structural flexibility would yield huge added value in musical opportunities, as it would become financially more feasible to score for unusual instruments. The problem here is that in order to work worldwide, this would have to be an internationally established practice, because otherwise works written in such a context would not gain traction beyond the country where they were written. This seems quite unrealistic.



WHEN YOU MEET YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING THEIR OWN UNIQUE YOUTH, YOU REALISE THAT THERE’S NO REASON FOR PESSIMISM. – OLLI VIRTAPERKO

KS – True. There was actually a time beginning in the late 1980s when it seemed that orchestras were broadening their horizons to include electronic instruments. The trend was that every orchestra should have a synthesiser, and as those instruments got better, they were able to imitate all kinds of keyboard instruments, like harpsichords. Composers were excited about this, and I myself wrote for [synthesisers] in *Du cristal... à la fumée*, but when that piece was performed again, the equipment available was completely different. Technology advances so rapidly that the DX7s that were state of the art at one point had been replaced with new, better instruments. With the rapid developments and turnover in synthesiser models, orchestras began to lose interest.

OV – You’ve included electronics in your orchestral works. Have you come up against problems because of outdated software or having to apply old technology in a new context?

KS – It’s a perennial problem, because you have to keep updating your software all the time. I’m fortunate to have JEAN-BAPTISTE [BARRIÈRE] taking care of all this for me. But it’s an endless slog, and over the years I’ve come to consider that if a particular musical idea doesn’t absolutely require electronics to produce, then I won’t use electronics. Rehearsal times are shorter, no-one has time for a sound check, or the sound check is minimal, and then you have to work out things on the fly in concert. I’ve rarely been completely satisfied with it. So once again it’s a question of conception coming up against reality.

OV – It sounds like established practices in the orchestra world are so robust that if you want to deviate from the standard you’re asking for real trouble, or at least substantial difficulties.

KS – That’s very much the truth, because in this more than in anything else, time is money.

© Jonte Knif



Olli Virtaperko with the Cornucopia Ensemble.

On working with orchestras and musicians

OV – I still recall attending a rehearsal for the world premiere of your clarinet concerto *D’Om le Vrai Sens* at Finlandia Hall in October 2010 where you said that when you go home, you go through the rehearsal in your head, listening to it again, as it were. Do you really have the ability to make an audio recording in your head and later play it back from the hard disk of your mind to analyse it?

KS – Well, with the score, of course. It’s how I do things, I’ve learned how to do it. I can quite clearly recall a rehearsal, and I write notes based on that.

OV – Do you communicate directly with the soloist or the orchestra, or do you go through the conductor?

KS – Both the soloist (if there is one) and the conductor. Sometimes the conductor pretends to be so busy that they don’t have time for a debriefing. What I do then is give the conductor the list of notes I compiled and say that all these things need to be fixed.

OV – How important is it for you to have trusted musicians – people who are already familiar with the aesthetics of your music and have performed your pieces under your supervision over a long period of time?

KS – It’s hugely important! These days, I don’t want the premieres of my orchestral works to be conducted by conductors who have never performed any of my music. Those conductors just don’t know where to begin, however big stars they may be. It’s a foreign language to them, and that’s all there is to it. There’s really no

chance for someone unfamiliar with my music to come to grips with its logic on the basis of a single work.

OV – It’s quite clear that you have a need to control the end result in performances of your works as far as possible. But going from the world of the orchestra to the world of opera, with a range of soloists with very different expressive idioms, one might imagine that the potential for control over, say, the choice of soloists would be very limited. How much can a composer influence casting? Are there collisions of conflicting ways of making music?

KS – I do exercise quite a bit of control in premiere productions, and I do have influence over the casting, if only because of the voice types required. Sometimes you get men who are WAGNER singers, and then it’s just a question of working through things together. If I ask for a glissando, then it’s a glissando that I want, not a portamento. Also, every singer has a different and unique voice.

OV – What made you venture into opera in the first place? I recall that you once declared that you would never write an opera – yet here we are, many operas later!

KS – As much as I loved to listen to *Tristan und Isolde* on record, all of the operas that I saw live in my youth – because my family wasn’t a musical one – were at the old National Opera. They did perform large-scale works too, but largely I got the feeling that the singers were there just to showcase their voices. I can’t recall seeing anything very interesting, apart from *Silkkirumpu* (The Damask Drum) by PAAVO [HEININEN]. And then there

© Jean-François Gornet



“Few musical contexts offer the thrill of energy that a symphony orchestra can generate,” says Kaija Saariaho.

were *Ratsumies* (The Horseman) [by AULIS SALLINEN] and *Viimeiset kiusaukset* (The Last Temptations) by [JOONAS] KOKKONEN in Savonlinna. At the time modernism was on the rise, and the question was raised whether such grandiose stuff was needed any more. But once I moved to Germany and went to the Stuttgart Opera, and particularly once I moved to Paris, I saw quite incredible works such as *Wozzeck* [by ALBAN BERG]. The opera productions I saw in Germany and France were comprehensive artworks, meetings of artists. I recall Paavo [Heininen] once saying to me: “Opera is how you define it.” That was important for me to hear at that particular time.

On the future

OV – I recall a column you wrote for FMQ in 2019, where you described a summer course and the young composers from around the world that you met there. The tone in that column was positive and hopeful. Has your outlook lightened up?

KS – Maybe not my worldview as such, but my confidence in future generations, certainly. Their reality is completely different from mine because of when they were born. I see today in relation to a golden age in Europe when we were free and had no war and everything was about growth and increasing prosperity. Now that that has collapsed, I see little hope for the future. Then again, I meet young colleagues who have grown up in a very different reality and for whom the ‘global village’ concept with ubiquitous digital connections (a nightmare for myself) is no problem and they can navigate it effortlessly. I’ve come around to the notion that there’s a time and place for everything and that people of my age should definitely not be in decision-making positions. Younger people should take over, as they have more physical energy and brain capacity!

OV – Well, I’m more than twenty years younger than you, but even I’ve noticed that the boundless energy of youth is a thing of the past, and I do feel ‘old and tired’ sometimes. But when you meet young people living their own unique youth, you realise that there’s no reason for pessimism. Each new generation will discover a new energy and reform the world in ways that may seem frightening from some perspective but which nevertheless move things forward. When you imagine that your personal reality is the only reality there is, it’s difficult to perceive anything that is outside yourself and your feelings and your experiences.

KS – Yes, I do see that, and I also understand that that applies to every one of us. After all, every one of us is unique. © Translation: Jaakko Mäntyjärvi



# “KNOWN TO HER FRIENDS AS KAIJA”

## A MUSICAL JOURNEY WITH TRUSTED INTERPRETERS

BY Anu Jormalainen

**Over the decades, numerous musicians and ensembles around the world have performed the music of Kaija Saariaho. Without long-term relationships with trusted interpreters, the Finnish composer’s music would have travelled quite a different path.**

“Kaija.” In this story, KAIJA SAARIAHO, 70, one of the world’s most respected classical music composers, is repeatedly referred to familiarly by her first name.

And no wonder – the interviewees are long-time friends of the celebrated composer and trusted interpreters of her work: cellist ANSSI KARTTUNEN, 62, soprano ANU KOMSI, 55, and pianist PIA VÄRRI, 56, who have performed her work together and separately. To all of them, Saariaho is a close colleague, friend and source of inspiration whose music is inextricably intertwined with their own career paths.

### In harmony

“A 40-year partnership born by chance. We’ve had parallel careers and progressed together.”

That’s how cellist Anssi Karttunen, one of Finland’s best-known musicians internationally, describes his time with

Saariaho. The story began in the early 1980s with the meeting of two Finnish strangers who happened to move to Paris at the same time. Regular interaction quickly deepened into friendship.

“At first, neither of us spoke French. We reported to each other daily, had long phone calls and together learned about living in France.”

Between discussions about everyday life, they talked about music. Over the years, the two shared worldviews and grew together artistically as Karttunen helped the composer to understand the cello. In 1988 she dedicated her first solo cello work, *Petals*, to him.

“When Kaija brought me the sheet music for *Petals*, it was completely ready. She had fully developed her writing for cello, and there was no need to change anything.”

*Petals* opened a path towards a new type of cello literature. “It was more like the first fruit of our friendship than a search for collaboration. Our friendship began to generate music, and it has never stopped doing so,” says Karttunen.

This includes six solo pieces, four orchestral works and an innumerable number of duets, trios and so on. The two artists’ connection remains vibrant.

“If you talk on the phone for an hour almost every day for 40 years, then maybe you can call it friendship,” says Karttunen wryly.



Artist friends Anssi Karttunen and Kaija Saariaho in Helsinki, 1992.

### From Paris to the world

Coloratura soprano Anu Komsa has also known Saariaho for more than three decades. They first met at the Finnish Broadcasting Company Yle’s M1 music studio in 1988 during a radio recording of Saariaho’s *Adjö* (1982).

“At the time, I was still a Sibelius Academy student and an active member of the Avanti! Chamber Orchestra. We met again the following year in Paris, where I was studying singing.”

In 1989, at the Savonlinna Music Academy, Komsa met another musician friend and Saariaho interpreter, pianist Pia Värri, who now lives in Paris.

“We have this Komsa-Värri axis, which just clicked wonderfully. It’s quite extraordinary,” says Värri.

Värri got to know Saariaho in 2000 through *Iltarukous* (*Evening Prayer*), a song based on a poem by EINO LEINO and dedicated to Komsa.

“I had played some of Kaija’s pieces, and we knew each other because the Finnish circles in Paris are very small,” the pianist recalls.

Saariaho’s work is intertwined with Komsa and Värri’s musical expression, including premieres and recordings. Milestones are *Leino Songs* (2000–07) and *Saarikoski Songs* (2013–20), which can be heard on the duo’s pandemic-era album *Sumun läpi* (*Through the Mist*, 2021).

### Trust between the lines of notes

Experience from long years of cooperation is apparent in how new works are created.

“We don’t need to discuss much, because Kaija knows my voice so well,” says Komsa.

“It’s such a trusting relationship that you can say anything. At the point when Kaija starts the composition process itself, we no longer talk about the work,” says Karttunen.

Sometimes, though, the composer may approach Karttunen to check a detail, ask a technical question or send a couple of notes or a rhythm.

“For Kaija, music is comprehensive and involves so much personal feeling that she goes beyond all the technical issues. What makes her music unique is how she experiences the composition even before she composes it, as a visual or emotional metaphor. I imagine that Kaija’s music comes in through many doors: visual, emotional and practical. All of this brings together music that could not be born otherwise.”

Indeed, Saariaho’s music must be understood beyond what is in the sheet music.

“Kaija has her own unique notes and tone. It’s instantly recognisable. Her music has its own kind of strong expressiveness, harmonies and spectra, which must all be conveyed to the listener. The notes are just a raw copy of a world that is beyond them,” says Värri. Karttunen agrees.

“Kaija’s music cannot be ‘heard on paper’ in the classic manner. There are so many subtle little colours that vary slightly every time,” he says. “It’s still a mystery to me how a composer can imagine them so accurately in her own head.”

Saariaho’s music offers a challenge for musicians as it calls for unusual methods of sound production. In the case of the cello, this includes distorting the sound by adding bow pressure.

“It’s not a negative thing; it becomes part of your vocabulary,” says Karttunen. “As performers, we have to learn that the vocabulary of an academically trained cellist suddenly grows ten times larger, and we need to learn to use it.”

### Safety in interpretation

According to Komsa, performing Saariaho’s music requires “an excellent ear, an ambitious approach to clear intonation, passionate phrasing and an open mind”.

Musicians who work frequently with Saariaho often mention freedom of interpretation. According to Värri, Saariaho’s pieces must be performed with the heart. In addition to sensitivity and self-discipline, they also call for “courage, including inner courage”.





Pianist Pia Värri and soprano Anu Komsa at the *Sumun läpi (Through the Mist)* album release concert at the Helsinki Music Centre in 2021.

“Kaija trusts our artistic vision of her music. She doesn’t forbid anything; there’s no single correct interpretation. Kaija trusts the performers to give their all, and the music is alive,” says Värri.

Karttunen approaches Saariaho’s work from an emotional standpoint.

“For me, Kaija’s music is pure emotion. I try to convert all the technical and practical things related to playing to the level of feeling,” he says. “Interpretation does not mean trying to add something of my own to it but letting the music flow through me as directly as possible.”

Playing Saariaho’s music brings Karttunen a sense of security, as he recognises his friend in the works.

“For me, performing Kaija’s music is a safe place and an experience that’s accompanied by the joy of being able to convey a message and show how important it is to me. Even though I travel the world alone, I’m never alone thanks to the music composed for me by friends. They are always with me on the concert stage.”

Passing on the compositional torch

Saariaho and Karttunen grew into new music along with composer MAGNUS LINDBERG. A close working and friendship relationship led to recognising the strength of their peers.

“We realised how precious it was that we happened to get to know each other at just the right moment, when we were still young enough,” recalls Karttunen.

The trio hatched the idea of an international Creative Dialogue workshop, which has been organised in cooperation with the Sibelius Academy since 2008. The workshop creates dialogue between young instrumentalists and composers from different countries and offers the opportunity to work on new pieces.

“This is a part of the musician’s life that’s not usually taught at music colleges,” explains Karttunen. “We’ve tried to talk a lot about how the best things can arise naturally. When, through friendship and getting to know each other, you learn everything from each other that you can’t learn from a book. That creates the kind of relationships that I’ve had with Kaija and Magnus for 40 years.”

So far, Creative Dialogue has brought together 166 composers and musicians from around the world. For Karttunen, sharing his experience has become part of his great purpose in life.

“Every day at Creative Dialogue, the musicians are presented with new music that no-one has ever played before. We’re there, but not as teachers.”

Border-free role model

When asked to sum up the significance of Saariaho and her music, her regular interpreters do not hesitate.

“Kaija is a role model for all of us: a leading star in art music whose value globally is on par with JEAN SIBELIUS,” says Komsa.

Värri recalls an experience in the remote French countryside, where a young man commented on one of her concert programmes: “Oh, I would have so loved to hear Kaija Saariaho’s music.”

“I think it’s a sign of a great composer when the audience that enjoys Saariaho’s music is so international and comes from such socially diverse backgrounds,” the pianist adds. Värri has been impressed by Saariaho’s exemplary, pioneering career, in which “a creative musical gift that’s so incomprehensible charts its own unique path with no alternatives”.

“She was able to compose in the male-dominated world of the 1980s and ’90s. Kaija is an extremely important example for the younger generations: a composer who has had success with her own music, and who continues to be successful.”

Saariaho’s background and strength of will have also impressed Karttunen: “She has moved ahead inexorably, based completely on her music and art, without ever compromising herself.”

As Karttunen sees it, Saariaho has a unique gift for everyone.

“A good way to understand our world just a little bit better is to listen to the music of Kaija.” © Translation: Wif Stenger

FROM THE ECHOES OF DREAMS: AN ANNIVERSARY POEM FOR KAIJA SAARIAHO

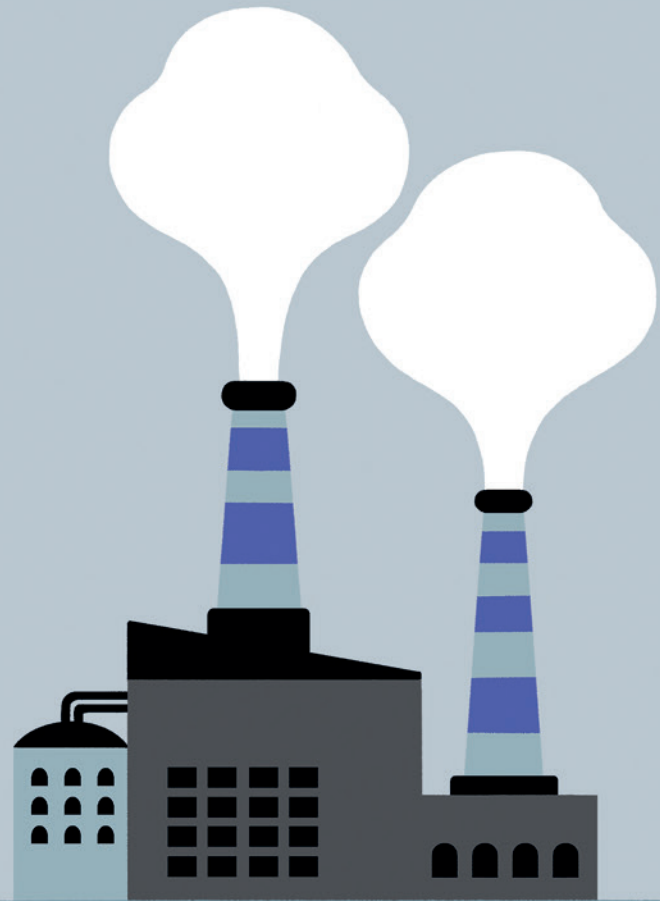
BY Marjo Heiskanen

From the Echoes of Dreams

For the sheer richness  
that we may confront the mien of the rain and remember it with snow  
that in the sunshine we can slice a sliver of mandolin  
and in rubber boots tread into the long illuminations, there to measure  
the infinity that builds a lodging by the breve of the campfire  
For the chance  
to pluck a flaxen chime from a haystack, pass it  
along, run it across  
a companion’s cheek  
                  hither and thither  
and for then the invisible, the inaudible  
the palpable                   oh how palpable!  
to rise up from afar, surge towards us  
                  our stashes  
                  our treasures  
and touch the apex of an all-seeing profundity that arches so mightily  
and allows us to preserve even a whisper of it and to share it  
And that we may hear their footsteps, Clémence, Émilie and one who lived  
                  yearning, that we may notice this too  
and savour such an oeuvre, remember  
that this is far from all  
that happens next, to us, in others far away  
                  within us  
there in the sheltered warmth of our earlobes  
ardent with joy we thank you  
for thus, I see,  
you echo

Translated by David Hackston





*Music is not merely the sphere of humans interacting with each other. Music also manifests itself through communication between humans, nature, machines and traditions.*



# ON MUSIC AND POST- HUMANISM

Illustration by Eija Vehviläinen



# A CHAIN OF GENERATIONS

Konsta Jylhä and Jari Valo © Leo Torppa / Finnish Folk Music Institute



Kaustinen Festival 2018 © Risto Savolainen

# IN KAUSTINEN

BY Amanda Kauranne

In December 2021 Kaustinen fiddle-playing was included on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The Kaustinen fiddling tradition has remained unbroken ever since the instrument first made its way to Finland some three hundred years ago. How does a living tradition pass from one generation to another, and what does the everyday music scene in Kaustinen look like?

Every summer in July, during Finland's biggest and oldest folk music festival, music takes over the town of Kaustinen, with playing heard everywhere in performance venues ranging from the official festival arenas to informal bush jams. The festival's first seed was planted in Kaustinen's music-minded soil back in 1968, and it remains the annual highlight in the small Central Ostrobothnian municipality.

I like Kaustinen most during winter, when the festival buzz has died down and only the shell remains. Perched on top of a hill in the town centre, the red Pelimannitalo – Folk Musicians' House – looks on as children frolic in the snow in the same place where festival guests congregate in the summer. Music is present in the winter as well, but in a more subdued way, as part of everyday life.

Each week, the lobby of the Folk Art Centre comes alive with an adult folk music group as well as the children's group NÄPPÄRIT. The Youth Association's folk dance groups rehearse weekly, with dancers ranging from toddlers to young adults, all accompanied by the ensemble OTTOSET. In addition to hearty meals, the local Pelimanni restaurant has regular jam sessions on the menu. You may even get exposed to music while shopping for pastries: the Pesola Bakery is a popular hangout for folk players, much in the same way as the legendary group Kaustisen Purppuripelimannit used to congregate in the Santeri Café – there is even a tune dedicated to the establishment, composed by KONSTA JYLHÄ, the figurehead of the group.

## Music playing everywhere

MATTI HAKAMÄKI, Director of the Finnish Folk Music Institute, is hard-pressed to nominate another small geographical area anywhere in the West where playing instruments is as popular as it is in Kaustinen:

"Here, in our municipality of 4,000 people, we have hundreds of players. And for many who haven't picked up instruments themselves, playing represents



Matti Hakamäki

© Lauri Oino

the traditions of the family and the region. It has a certain cross-generational pull, which is tightly woven into this community's tapestry."

Hakamäki himself did not grow up in Kaustinen, but he and his family have made their home there. "Our four children play with Näppärit and the younger ones are also folk dancers. My wife and I are both music professionals, and our family ideology is reflected in our choice to replace our living room TV screen with instruments scattered all over the sofa. This makes it easy for everyone just to pick up an instrument and start playing for pleasure. Still, we are not immune to having to keep reminding our kids to practise," he confesses.

"During the winter months, folk players perform infrequently, lying low in their own cocoons," says Kreetta-Maria Kentala, a classical violinist specialising in Baroque music and a folk fiddler with strong roots in Kaustinen. "Then there is a mighty crescendo towards summer and the festival, where players are busy for the entire week, performing with their own village ensembles and combining forces with all Kaustinen players in the massed concerts. Although amateurs, they have the skills to be comfortable on the stage and to learn often large chunks of music in just a few rehearsals. Sometimes it can actually be more challenging working with professionals," she laughs.



Vilja Rautiainen

© Juha-Matti Rautiainen

"The Kaustinen Festival is the best thing in the whole world," exclaims VILJA RAUTIAINEN, an 11-year-old violinist and keyboard player from Kaustinen. "The atmosphere is fun, with all the playing going on." Rautiainen dedicates two evenings a week to music: on Wednesdays she plays violin in the Näppärit group, and on Thursdays she has band and piano lessons in Kokkola at the Central Ostrobothnia Conservatory's pop/jazz stream.

## A long way to get there

In addition to music, the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage listing covers a larger concept titled "Kaustinen fiddle playing and related practices and expressions". "The concept of a living tradition is centred around the community. Instead of valuing a tradition based on how old or how beautiful it is, you must consider whether the community feels that their tradition is worth protecting," Hakamäki illustrates. "During the first stages of the application process, we asked our community what the tradition is, and who are the ones who practise it. As a result of extensive discussions, it was decided that the application title would include our most well-known symbols, in other words Kaustinen and the fiddle, although the tradition itself covers a variety of





Esko Järvelä

instruments, folk dancing, singing and traditions around celebrations, as well as all the related handicraft traditions from the wider region. Definitions are allowed to change and will change according to what the practitioners of that tradition think.”

The decision-making UNESCO committee session last December was watched via a livestream at the Folk Musicians’ House. Naturally, the positive result was welcomed with music. Playing continued through two consecutive evening jams, and the local primary school organised a festive procession.

“Around forty players turned up for the second jam session. These were people who do something entirely different for work and play for fun. Although Kaustinen tunes can sometimes be difficult, everyone joined in for every single piece. The overall mood was unreal,” says violinist ESKO JÄRVELÄ, whose folk music ensembles Frigg, Baltic Crossing and Teho. have enjoyed international success.

#### Järvelä family players

Esko Järvelä comes from a folk music family in which all five siblings play the violin. Both their father MAUNO JÄRVELÄ, known from the ensemble JPP and for his famed Näppäri teaching method, and their grandfather JOHANNES are recipients of the Master Folk Musician title. While Esko

is now known as a violinist, his first instrument was the harmonium.

“In day care, I started improvising on the harmonium and when my father discovered this, he taught me some basic chords. Soon I was accompanying traditional tunes that were already familiar to me, with music being such an organic part of our family life. Some of my favourite tapes as a child were of my grandpa playing the fiddle, with his mate ARVO MYLLYKANGAS accompanying him on the harmonium. I could not imagine better music than that.”

The playing tradition continues with the children of Esko and his wife, keyboard player PILVI JÄRVELÄ:

“Sometimes they get excited about something outside the daily grind of their set lesson pieces, and I try to support them as much as I can. Last summer, our eldest got interested in the Kaustinen purppuri dance sequence. The first rehearsal was challenging, but he managed to learn everything in time for the festival,” Järvelä smiles.

#### Flowing with music

“Because I learned the Kaustinen playing style when I was very young, traditional music now stems from somewhere so deep within me that no amount of formal education with its critical approach has managed to touch it. When I play art music, I try to get into a headspace where music flows

as freely and independently as when I play folk music,” says violinist KREETA-MARIA KENTALA about the effects of tradition.

Music was always present in Kentala’s childhood home. Her mother ANNI KENTALA was a classically trained singer, while her father AARO KENTALA was a church musician and music teacher who is best known for his long-term work with the Kaustinen Wedding Choir. He was a tutor for the folk music groups at the Perhonjokilaakso Community College and a curator for the local programme contributions for the Folk Music Festival.

“My father learned to play the fiddle as an adult, taught by my mother’s father WILJAMI NIITTYKOSKI, one of Kaustinen’s best-known folk music composers. My father decided to teach me to play the violin and took me along to all his folk music activities, all summer and all winter long. When my playing started to improve, we would visit my grandpa Wiljami every second Sunday. The afternoon included a couple of hours of fiddling, accompanied on the harmonium by my mother and my aunt AIRI. Family music-making at its best!”

At that time, the late 1960s, it was not yet common for girls to play the fiddle. Kantele and harmonium were offered for girls, but the fiddle was considered too boisterous for them.

“It looks like it will take quite some time for this to change, and that is the reason I have made a conscious decision to also be active in the folk music field – there are still not too many female folk players,” Kentala says.

Out of all the many Kaustinen ensembles, my favourite is probably Kentala’s all-female line-up Akkapelimannit, who mix larrikin humour with virtuosic and masterly playing. Their interpretations, especially of Niittykoski’s tunes, are unparalleled.

#### Genre-free Kaustinen

Wiljami Niittykoski is also a relation of young Vilja Rautiainen. “I have not played my great-great-grandfather’s compositions yet, but I could start learning them soon,” she muses. “At home, we listen to a lot of music. My mum plays the violin, and my dad makes ambient music. My dream is to start a rock and heavy metal band, where I would sing and play the keyboard. I could even play the violin if needed”, says the 11-year-old instrumentalist.

The band would no doubt be well received in Kaustinen. “All music is appreciated here, regardless of the genre,” Matti Hakamäki explains. “Perhaps the fact that different musical styles have not had to compete against each other has enabled our tradition to remain alive. For folk musicians, it has always been equally natural to play classical music pieces and traditional wedding tunes. Good playing skills are valued.”

“Kaustinen tunes are structurally quite complex, with finicky melodies and witty harmonic progressions. Once these tunes have been played and heard since childhood, the step towards classical music is not such a stretch in the end,” Kentala adds.

#### What next?

My best Kaustinen memory is from a few years ago, when I got to participate in a guided walk in the nearby countryside, as a prelude to the festival. The unique geological formations, the folk myths around the Pööskallio rock and the special Kaustinen way of storytelling made a lasting impression and further deepened my experience of the local traditions. Perhaps this treasure trove can be experienced by more and more festival guests in the future.

“My wish is that the UNESCO endorsement would help create more tourism and work opportunities for the cultural sector. The Folk Musicians’ House could become the centre

for the town’s folk music scene and offer an annual season of performances open to the general public. I hope that the endorsement will also lead to increased financial support, because investment is required to keep the tradition going,” Kentala reflects.

“In a way, this is only the beginning of our journey,” Hakamäki says. “We must be able to utilise the endorsement, both locally and nationally, to give a proper boost to folk music, folk dance and education, and to build the public profile of our living tradition. But we must be smart in our efforts so that we preserve our traditions for the next generations in a format that the Kaustinen community can identify with. If the ties with players get broken, our connection to the living tradition will be broken as well.” ©

Translation: Hanna-Mari Latham



Kreeta-Maria Kentala



# MUSIC-MAKING AMONG PEOPLE, MACHINES AND NATURE

BY Milla Tiainen

**"As the climate crisis accelerates and other societal threats emerge, musicologists can join in demonstrating that the close coexistence of humans with each other and with non-human creatures is a feature not only of non-Western worldviews and musical cultures as explored and shown by ethnomusicologists but of Western cultures too," writes Milla Tiainen, PhD and current Chair of the Finnish Musicological Society.**

© Bo Stranden / Studio Auran Kuva

## THE POTENTIAL OF CRITICAL POST-HUMANISM IN MUSIC STUDIES

In spring 2022 the opera *All the Truths We Cannot See: A Chernobyl Story*, composed by ULJAS PULKKIS to a libretto by musicologist GLENDA DAWN GOSS, was premiered at the Music Centre in Helsinki. The opera is based on the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in April 1986 but also takes a more general look at the relationships between humans, technology and nature. It refers to the serious threats to life on Earth resulting from humans – with their aspirations, ideologies and technological devices – imagining themselves superior to the natural environment.

Soon afterwards, I found myself looking at projects by the composer, sound artist and scholar OTSO LÄHDEOJA. In *4-Hands Electroacoustic DJ's* (2020), he and ALEJANDRO MONTES DE OCA experimented with four-handed DJ'ing in a live remixing of musical materials prepared by themselves. There is a link here to Lähdeoja's ongoing research project titled *Intersubjectivity in Music: The Perspective of Technological Mediation*. This is about examining ways in which digital technologies not only shape music as a sonic event but also enrich the interaction of music-making humans.

After this technology-facilitated ensemble, I came across the role of music in a very different study. Scientists at the FUNCTIONAL FOODS FORUM at the University of Turku are exploring how playing pieces of music with various frequencies and tempos affects the maturation process of cheeses, as measured by microbial changes and simply their flavour. This pilot study was inspired by winemaking: around the world, vintners play Gregorian chant and other such things to the maturing wines.

The above three examples illustrate the myriad ways in which humans, technology and the wider physical world interact in musical practices. The opera *All the Truths We Cannot See* is linked to a more general ecocritical philosophy that is gaining ground in music as in other branches of the arts. The mainstreaming of ecocritical perspectives has been explored in recent years in such musicological works as *Current Directions in Ecomusicology* (2016) edited by AARON S. ALLEN and KEVIN DAWE or, to take a Finnish example, *Musiikki ja luonto* [Music and nature] (2019) edited by JUHA TORVINEN and SUSANNA VÄLIMÄKI.

My feeling is that musicology in general needs more of the above *post-humanist* approach in order to strengthen its scientific and societal relevance.

For some readers, the term 'post-humanism' may recall the excitement about cyborgs and virtual reality, or it may be associated more broadly with aspirations in science fiction and technological development of augmenting human performance with machines and with genetic manipulation. If understood in this way, post-humanism is a bad fit with the statements in which Finnish musicologists have defended the relevance of arts research and of the humanities in general.

In the present article, however, I use post-humanism in a meaning that is wonderfully summarised by philosopher MURIEL COMBES in her study *Gilbert Simondon and the Philosophy of the Transindividual* (2012): "What can a

human do insofar as she is not alone?" The critical post-humanism encapsulated in this question does not envision superhumans or the demise of the human species. As BRUNO LATOUR and ROSI BRAIDOTTI among others have proposed, critical post-humanism emphasises the fundamental evolution of human behaviour *in interaction with* various non-human beings and processes.

Technologies designed by humans have an impact on how humans behave by both facilitating and limiting how we sense things, how we think, how we communicate, how we consume and how we make war or peace – and how we make and experience music. Human life is part of a broader ecological context where numerous other species, material parameters and circumstances affect our survival and our actions, just as human acts and attitudes affect those who coexist with us.

The need to develop critical post-humanism in musicology has to do with notions of the cumulative and self-correcting nature of human knowledge, which are a motivating factor for scientific research. The way in which we make and use music and address our surrounding reality with it, in local and global networks, cannot be sufficiently comprehended with traditional concepts in human sciences where agency is only assigned to humans and not to nature or technology.

Developing a post-humanist approach also has to do with the sort of worldview and ethical values the research is supposed to espouse. For decades, humanist research has questioned the original European humanist ideal of the human being as a self-contained individual, because this image of humans does not help us understand why human culture always evolves in interaction. Post-humanism expands on the self-criticism of humanism on the basis of the insight that our largely European conceptions of the individual and of humanity are a key component not only in the oppression of non-European and non-white other humans but also in the exploitation of the non-human natural environment.

As the climate crisis accelerates and other societal threats emerge, musicologists can join in demonstrating that the close coexistence of humans with each other and with non-human creatures and beings is a feature not only of non-Western worldviews and musical cultures as explored and shown by ethnomusicologists but of Western cultures too. The fact that all human activity depends on relationships with other creatures and other processes is a richness and an ethical guideline that will provide scope for our research and our aspirations for decades to come. ©

Translation: Jaakko Mäntyjärvi



# ELECTRONIC SOUNDS AND VINTAGE MACHINES

© University of Helsinki

BY Kimmo Korhonen

The University of Helsinki's Music Research Laboratory & Electronic Music Studio celebrated its 60th anniversary last autumn. Over the decades, it has expanded its activities to become a versatile, wide-ranging music and sound research laboratory.

Depending on one's perspective, 60 years may seem like a short or long time. As it covers most of the history of electroacoustic music, the 60th anniversary of the University of Helsinki's Music Research Laboratory & Electronic Music Studio (UHMRL) is a significant milestone. From a Finnish perspective, it has been a pioneer in the field.

The university's electronic music studio was born just after the first wave of electroacoustic music. Its operation has gone through many phases over the decades, evolving from a workshop for creative work to, above all, a research infrastructure where sound and music are studied and research methods such as sound analysis are developed. Nowadays, the studio's activities are characterised by a breadth that serves many sciences and perspectives.

The university's Head of Musicology, Associate Professor SUSANNA VÄLIMÄKI, emphasises the studio's central, multi-faceted mission.

"After all, musicology encompasses an extremely broad area, from acoustics to history and aesthetics. That is encapsulated in the studio's operations, because for example, sound is studied there from a physics perspective, as sound waves and frequencies, but also music production and technology, as well as the related cultural, social and historical perspectives," she says.

And since it is a 60-year-old institution, it is also a cultural practice in itself that is being studied – "for example, how it has influenced the history of Finnish music and electroacoustic music in particular," notes Välimäki.

## A university electronic music studio is born

The University of Helsinki's electronic music studio was born in 1962, when three young students, ERKKI SALMENHAARA, ILKKA ORAMO and ILPO SAUNIO proposed the idea to professor of musicology ERIK TAWASTSTJERNA, renowned for his research on JEAN SIBELIUS. Also invited to join in as a technical expert was ERKKI KURENNIEMI. Salmenhaara, Oramo and Kurenniemi had been classmates at the Normal Lyceum of Helsinki. In the spring of 1960, they had been featured in the newspaper *Uusi Suomi*'s youth column for their experimentation with electronic devices in the school's organ loft.

The University of Helsinki's electronic music studio is the oldest active facility of its kind in the Nordic region. Electronic sounds created in the studio were first heard in public in January 1963 as part of the Helsinki Student Theatre production of MAURICE MAETERLINCK's play *The Death of Tintagiles* (*La Mort de Tintagiles*).

The university studio's early history has been studied by MIKKO OJANEN, PhD, a university lecturer in musicology who is responsible for the studio's operations and related teaching work. His 2020 dissertation on the history of Finnish electroacoustic music focused on Erkki Kurenniemi (1941–2017), the driving force of the institution in its early years.

"Kurenniemi was a theoretical physics student and amateur radio operator, but he was also familiar with music,



Adjunct Professor Susanna Välimäki, with Erik Tawaststjerna in the background.

and for instance had listened to KARLHEINZ STOCKHAUSEN as a schoolboy. He combined technical and artistic knowledge," says Ojanen.

Kurenniemi is remembered perhaps more as a developer of a number of electronic instruments than as a composer. He worked at the university studio without pay, as a "volunteer assistant".

"Kurenniemi wanted to break away from the more traditional approach based on tape editing and instead turned to computational, computer-controlled sound production. Kurenniemi's method of device construction is comparable to today's DIY electronic instrument trend. His devices look very much like prototypes and did not have labels to indicate what each button did. So he always had to be on hand at the studio to help when someone wanted to use the equipment that he had developed and built," explains Ojanen.

## Pioneering operations

In the early years, works were created in the studio by Kurenniemi and Salmenhaara as well as HENRIK OTTO DONNER and JUKKA RUOHOMÄKI. Swedish composer FOLKE RABE also created two pieces at the University of Helsinki studio.



## THE UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI'S ELECTRONIC MUSIC STUDIO IS THE OLDEST ACTIVE FACILITY OF ITS KIND IN THE NORDIC REGION.

“Two other Swedes, RALPH LUNDSTEN and LEO NILSSON, also came to Helsinki in search of sounds. They obtained synthetic and automatically sequenced sounds here that were only possible a bit later in Stockholm,” says Ojanen.

Besides the university, it was also possible to create electroacoustic music at the Finnish Broadcasting Company (Yle) and at the Sibelius Academy. However, neither institution had its own regular studio in the 1960s.

“At Yle, projects were implemented as individual composers’ projects beginning in the late 1950s, but the equipment was always assembled for each project and dismantled again afterwards. Yle’s experimental studio was not established until 1972, and it did not begin full-fledged operations until the mid-1970s,” explains Ojanen.

“Another difference was that it was much more difficult to get into Yle to do projects. In comparison, the university studio was a low-threshold place that was easier to enter.”

Electronic music instruction began at the Sibelius Academy in 1972 but the school did not get its own studio until 1978. Before that, Sibelius Academy students went to the university studio to do practical work.

Kurenneimi gradually withdrew from activities at the university studio in the 1970s after he set up his own company, Digelius Electronics Finland. Emerging in his place was Jukka Ruohomäki (1947–2022), who maintained the equipment and provided instruction but was also a significant electroacoustic composer in his own right. He was nominally responsible for the studio’s operations until the mid-1980s, but his contribution decreased after he started working in 1978 at Tööt-Filmi, which focused on animated films. In the early ’80s, the studio was maintained by British-born ANDREW BENTLEY (b. 1952), later a professor of music technology at the Sibelius Academy.

After Kurenneimi and Ruohomäki, the third major figure in the university studio’s history was KAI LASSFOLK (1961–2021). He began his studies in 1983, becoming a teacher himself within a few years. As a university lecturer, he was responsible for the operation of the studio for more than 30 years, until his early death from a serious illness. In 2012, during his tenure, the studio moved to its current premises, adjacent to other arts research facilities.

### Broad-based operations

Although the early development of electroacoustic music was closely connected to the modernism project and the avant-garde, the university studio operated across a stylistically broad field without prejudice.

“This shows the essence of the studio’s low-threshold, open-minded character,” says Ojanen. “For example, EINO-JUHANI RAUTAVAARA worked there with tape recorders, but so did popular music producers. For example, Ruohomäki made electronic sounds for several pop records. Sounds were also made at the university studio for plays, radio plays and exhibitions.”

Naturally for a university studio, this broad scope was also realised on a more general level, not only in creative work but also in the study of music technology and various music research projects. Such research focused on both electroacoustic music and highly traditional acoustic music. As an example, Ojanen cites Lassfolk’s studies on evaluating sound quality.

“Kai wrote programmes for sound quality visualisation that reveal a lot about the works or instruments. As a code writer, he was on a level of his own. For instance, he evaluated the sound quality of a violin and studied the components of a good instrument’s sound. Using computational methods, he was able to create an image of what happens to a violin sound during the first 10 or 20 milliseconds, how that sound is aroused and so on.”

Välimäki provides another example of the studio’s breadth.

“In one of Lassfolk’s courses, the students recorded a Beatles song as an experiment,” she recalls. “The students investigated it from the inside out to figure out how it was constructed. There were the musicians, using microphones and equipment from that era. They studied how they were placed in the space and recorded the performance, reconstructing the original recording event. This was practical, phenomenological research that expanded their historical understanding.”

The opportunities offered by the studio extend beyond music research to supplement other arts and interdisciplinary research. For instance, the studio is used for phonetics and cognitive science, as well as strands of historical, archaeological and cultural studies that study sound, such as archaeoacoustics (sound archaeology), developed at the University of Helsinki by RIITTA RAINIO, PhD.

### Today’s challenges

The university studio’s current operating environment is completely different from when it was founded six decades ago. One major change is linked to the explosive proliferation of home computers. Does that pose a challenge to the studio’s operations?

“You can do amazing things with home computers these days, but I still don’t see them as a threat to the studio and its work,” says Ojanen. “We also look at things critically, and

© Lasse Lehtonen



Susanna Välimäki and university lecturer Mikko Ojanen working at the studio.

many people focused on artistic work get new ideas here. We’ve had excellent courses where almost half of the participants have been from the Sibelius Academy and half from the university. We’ve got creators and researchers to talk to each other.”

Ojanen points out that the facilities and equipment, including the range of microphones, are exceptionally good. When you get good musicians into the studio, what they create ideally complements the purely machine-made music.

“And even though the reel-to-reel recorders and synthesisers are old devices, handling them is highly educational and also helps advance the work done on the computer,” he says. “At the same time, of course, they teach students about the history of music technology.”

Now, however, there is concern about cuts in the University of Helsinki’s budget for arts research programmes.

“After all, we have a collection that’s completely unique in terms of cultural history, about 400 tapes including many unreleased electronic works, as well as most of the electronic instruments built by Kurenneimi 50–60 years

ago, along with other more conventional instruments. The studio also has a mission to preserve tangible, intangible and digital cultural heritage, and the studio’s instruments must be used and repaired so that they stay in good condition.”

Välimäki emphasises the meaning and importance of the studio for today’s scientific research into music.

“The essence of musicology is how the sound material is conceptualised; musicology develops concepts and methods to explain why something sounds the way it does. The studio offers research and teaching opportunities that are essential for this.”

Välimäki stresses the societal networking of music technology. After all, society has very rapidly become oriented towards technology and media.

“Nowadays, music technology is a central issue throughout the cultural sector. Musicologists must know at least something about music technology and its development and understand the connection between music and technology,” she says. ©



BY Santeri Kaipainen

# THE OTHER WEST COAST:

## JUSSI FREDRIKSSON AND THE TURKU JAZZ SCENE

Jussi Fredriksson and drummer Mika Kallio © Jori Huhtala

For more than a decade, jazz musician Jussi Fredriksson has played a significant role in building up the Turku jazz scene. The Baltic Archipelago Sea's environment is featured on his recent solo album, both as a source of inspiration and as a cause for concern.

"I have been going to the Archipelago Sea since the age of one, when my parents bought a summer cottage on the island of Korpo. With each passing year, my own mental landscape has been shifting increasingly towards the archipelago. During the pandemic, it felt natural to leave the city and spend time there instead – both at sea and at the cottage – and around the same time the idea was born to create an entire project around that theme," explains pianist, drummer, composer and cultural advocate JUSSI FREDRIKSSON.

This was the initial spark for the Jussi Fredriksson Trio's third album *Archipelago Sea Tales*, released in 2021. During his composition process, Fredriksson spent time on different Archipelago Sea islands, each providing a unique source of inspiration – a particular natural element, or a colour.

"I have synaesthesia, which leads me to associate each key signature and pitch with a specific colour, yet I had not

really utilised this attribute in my previous compositions. This time round, I started thinking about all the different colouristic landscapes found in the archipelago and tried to combine them in my mind with the specific colours I associate with key signatures."

*Red Ochre*, for example, refers to the typical red ochre paint that is a classic exterior house colour in the archipelago and which Fredriksson associates with E major, whereas *Rock* manifests itself through a grey B minor key. The polytonal *Splatter* depicts sunlight reflecting on sprays of water, creating a rich palette of colour combinations.

"I prefer to think of these examples as a smattering of colours, as opposed to some sort of systematic scheme permeating the entire album. Different locations also have their own meanings: my piece *Käkkärämänty* (*Twisted Pine*) came about after discovering an exceptionally fine pine tree on the island of Brännskär, and *Rock* was inspired by the flat rocks of Aspö," Fredriksson says.

### Jazz for the Baltic Sea

The Jussi Fredriksson Trio took *Archipelago Sea Tales* on tour last September through Jazz Finland's touring scheme. The most fitting performance location in view of the overall

theme was the Seili (Själö) island, where the trio's gig was presented by Turku Sea Jazz.

"The island is also home to an environmental research base, so the milieu felt very authentic vis-à-vis the album's themes. The tour itself had an environmental angle, with Jazz Finland measuring and attempting to reduce the carbon imprint and environmental effects caused by their touring activities," Fredriksson points out.

The Archipelago Sea is the only area inside Finland's borders that has been identified as a Hot Spot by HELCOM (Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area). The marine area has been classified as a significant eutrophication site, largely due to South-west Finland's agricultural nutrients leaching into rivers and subsequently into the Baltic Sea. The concern for the well-being of the archipelago can be heard on the album.

"For example, the track *Dead Sea* ties in with this concern – the name reflects a scenario where the sea has become dead. We are already experiencing the effects of pollution in our everyday lives, for example when you cannot go for a swim in the Baltic Sea because of blue algae. I am an active participant in the campaign to safeguard various protection measures, and to persuade farmers to adapt restorative practices available to them, such as treating their fields with gypsum."

According to Fredriksson, jazz music audiences are not large enough for his trio and their environmental activism to really make a notable impact.

"However, event organisers are better placed to influence. Through Archipelago Sea Jazz, a series of four festivals, we raise funds in conjunction with ticket sales towards environmental organisations such as the John Nurminen Foundation, as well as collaborating closely with the Keep the Archipelago Tidy Association."

### From concert series to production organisation

Ever since 2011, there has been a gradual infiltration of non-performance-related cultural activities into Fredriksson's life.

"That year, Turku was one of the European Capitals of Culture, and I was involved in founding the Flame Jazz event as part of the year's programme. Our goal was to present high-quality jazz concerts and events in Turku throughout the year," Fredriksson says.

Fredriksson was born in Turku and Flame Jazz gave him an incentive to move back to the city.

"In my youth, the Turku jazz scene was pretty much non-existent save for the annual Turku Jazz Festival, which was the only event where you could hear professionals perform. VILLE HERRALA and I were the only Turku kids from our generation who ended up becoming professionals in jazz music."

In 2012 the Turku Jazz Orchestra was founded and 2017 saw the inception of the Jazz City Turku project, where Flame Jazz, the Turku Jazz Festival and Turku Jazz Orchestra pooled their resources. Since 2020 the three

organisations have been operating as one joint association.

"Now for the first time in history we have a Turku-based professional jazz industry organisation, which has made everything easier – starting from securing collaborative partners and managing salary and fee payments. We are not just an orchestra, a festival or a club but a versatile production platform with public funding."

Similar trends are emerging in other Finnish cities as well. The April Jazz Festival, established by the Espoo Big Band, has expanded into a concert series, while events such as the Oulu Music Festival and the SaloJazz Festival offer jazz concert series outside their main event dates. Jazz City Turku has also undertaken the marketing and programming coordination for four Baltic Archipelago jazz festivals, under the umbrella title Archipelago Sea Jazz.

### Making music through changing roles

Participating in municipal politics has proved to be an organic continuation of Fredriksson's work with associations promoting the Turku cultural scene. He is a member of the city of Turku's Cultural and Youth Committee and a deputy member of the City Council.

"After moving back to Turku, I actively sought to participate in politics after identifying certain shortcomings in the cultural sector, particularly around funding structures. Unless you personally know and are able to influence those politicians who defend culture, you must assume an active role in order to change things," contemplates Fredriksson.

Is today's Turku an interesting city culturally?

"Increasingly so each year. We are seeing new investments in culture, with the culture and business hub Logomo operating since 2011, followed by the opening of the Taiteen Talo arts centre this year and the upcoming development of the Turku Concert Hall."

Despite his work for organisations and through elected positions, Fredriksson makes sure to allow time for his own music-making and maintains strict boundaries around his artistic work, blocking out diary dates for intensive free periods earmarked for tours and recordings.

"Over the past few years, my own trio has felt like the perfect vessel for fulfilling my visions as both composer and pianist. In addition, I have toured with POPE PUOLITAIPALE this year, and MIKA KALLIO's *Gong Odyssey* album tour is scheduled for next spring. Saxophonist MAX ZENGER and I have recently started a band called Freezer," Fredriksson says.

"I concentrate on one project at a time: I get a new idea that I want to realise, without thinking too much about whether I am being a musician or an event organiser. For me, the two are effectively the same thing: to be involved with interesting music, whether on or off stage." © Translation: Hanna-Mari Latham





# Recordings

## Contemporary & Classical

### A cycle of Sibelius symphonies



*Jean Sibelius: Symphonies, Tapiola, 3 Late Fragments*  
Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra/Klaus Mäkelä  
Decca, 2022

“Finland’s latest star conductor, Klaus Mäkelä, has caused a bit of a stir with his Decca label debut – a full cycle of Sibelius symphonies, no less. Conductor and orchestra clearly trust each other. That’s why they can fly together – as in the famous ‘Swan’ theme at the end of Sibelius’s Fifth Symphony.” • By Marcus Stäbler

### Quiet philosophy of the everyday



*Lohja City Orchestra / Jukka Untamala, Conductor*  
*Valunta – Aki Yli-Salomäki Orchestral Works*  
Eclipse Music, 2022

“It takes courage to stay true to one’s vision and realise it in a way that feels authentic. Aki Yli-Salomäki’s style evolved in the early 2000s and has remained the same without losing its sincerity. His works, for the most part written for orchestra or large ensemble, plumb subtle emotions of the mind with an aesthetic coherence rather unfashionable in contemporary art music.” • By Auli Särkiö-Pitkänen | Translation: Anni Heino

## Folk & Global

Writers:  
Saara-Maria Salonen  
Tove Djupsjöbacka  
Amanda Kauranne  
Translation:  
Jaakko Mäntyjärvi

### Yoik and choir collaboration without borders



Erik Westberg Vokalensemble/  
Erik Westberg: *SÁPMI*  
Swedish Society, 2022

“The natural rhythms of traditional Sámi singing yoik works well with a choir. In *Suv Dethe: I. Evelina*, Barruk’s singing and yoik joins elegantly with the majestic choir. *SÁPMI* showcases Sámi talent from different areas and generations in a new way, sometimes verging on the psychedelic.” • SMS

### The kantele empress strikes back



Maija Kauhanen: *Menneet*  
Nordic Notes, 2022

“Kauhanen’s one-woman-band concept, where she sings while playing the kantele and percussion, is hugely impressive. Here, she explores the limits of her instrument with experimental, even painful techniques, including using a bow. Her singing voice is confident and wide-ranging, allowing for both belting and lyrical moments.” • TD

### A spoonful of metal makes the folk tunes take wing



Ritva Nero: *Immortal Tradition*  
Bafe’s Factory/Nordic Notes, 2022

“This music is clearly made for dancing – but in what way? That is for the listener to decide: one can dance Finnish and Karelian folk dances with their familiar steps to this music or listen to the metal sounds and make a mosh pit out of it.” • TD

### Rap aesthetics with soil under the fingernails



haapoja & illmari kollektiivi: *Huomeneen*  
Mikko H. Haapoja, 2022

“I enjoy the world haapoja & illmari kollektiivi create, where a folk music mood coexists with rap aesthetics and a soundscape vibe. Folk music is in the air, and the sound is so earthy you can practically hear the soil under the fingernails.” • TD

**“THIS MUSIC IS  
CLEARLY MADE  
FOR DANCING –  
BUT IN WHAT WAY?”**



## Raucous dancing and melancholy tones



Celenka: *Villoi varsa*  
Nordic Notes, 2021

“The varied elements brought together by three strong musical personalities combine in a wide scale of expression and a brilliant constellation of colour. The archival material links the disc to a historical continuum, but it is entirely possible to enjoy this exhilarating music without knowing anything about its backgrounds.” • TD

## Virtuoso weirdness facing a sacred experience



Pelkkä Poutanen: *Pyhä veri vuotaa*  
Eclipse Music, 2022

“Petra Poutanen’s vocal folk music toolkit includes Scandinavian ornaments, Finno-Ugric singing styles and throat-singing techniques. The album makes the point that the need of the human animal to experience the sacred is tied up with the history of sexuality, gender and power.” • AK

## Classics seen with new eyes



Polenta: *Kaustinen Turbo*  
Kansanmusiikki-instituutti, 2021

“Listening to this material as a folk musician is like looking at an everyday object through a kaleidoscope: details, colours and shapes are revealed that I had not previously noticed. Polenta’s innovative arrangements highlight the natural rhythms and lovely melodies of these traditional pieces, and their sound world extends to a grand cinematic feel, complete with angelic harmonies.” • AK

## Embraced by vocals and stringed instruments



Barbora Xu: *Olin ennen*  
Nordic Notes, 2021

“It is easy to understand why Barbora Xu’s music sounds familiar in both Finland and China. The ten tracks on the disc form an attractive whole showcasing the ancient connection between humans, music and nature and, on the other hand, modern cosmopolitanism.” • AK

# Jazz & Beyond

Writers:  
Eero Koski  
Kevin Le Gendre

“ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT PARTICULARLY WELL KNOWN OUTSIDE OF FINLAND, ILMILIEKKI QUARTET IS NONETHELESS A SUPERGROUP”

## Stoking a quiet fire



Ilmiliekki Quartet: *Ilmiliekki Quartet*  
We Jazz Records, 2022

“Although it is not particularly well known outside of Finland, Ilmiliekki Quartet is nonetheless a supergroup, a band of bandleaders who have all worked in a wide variety of contexts, from soul to jazz and electronica. The music can smoulder for lengthy passages but the flame eventually burns bright.” • KLG

## Young guns embrace the risk



Tomi Nikku 5tet: *Light & Shade*  
Flame Jazz Records, 2021

“This new generation of Finnish jazz instrumentalists is crafting a sound that is unlike the traditional Nordic melancholy we are so used to hearing. Tomi Nikku manages to blend the sonorities of postmodern jazz with neo-romantic harmony and counterpoint. The result is a mixture that is able to stand sonically on its own.” • EK

## Living tradition



Nathan Francis: *Diamondback*  
Ajabu! Records, 2022

“It happens that every now and then the globalised music scene provides us with wonderful quirks such as a young US musician moving to Helsinki to study the jazz tradition. But on *Diamondback* the generational or geographical gap is nowhere to be heard. That is the power of tradition.” • EK

## The most Finnish music possible?



Jukka Orma: *Argentiinan Pusta*  
Emsalö Music, 2021

“Strangely enough, the fusion of tango, electronica and instrumental guitar-band rock (known in Finnish as ‘iron wire’, *rautalanka*) results in some of the most Finnish music possible. One instantly gets the concept when a tango album begins with the sound of an Indian tambura drone!” • EK

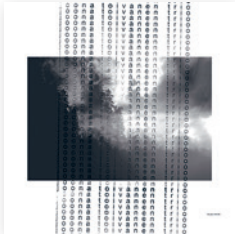
## The new voice on the scene!



Riikka Keränen: *A Vision of a Garden*  
Flame Jazz Records, 2022

“The sound of Riikka Keränen combines elements of post-bop jazz with tonalities and sensibilities of a more pop-oriented approach. Altogether the band and the vocalist are at their best in the more free-flowing compositions such as the beginning and closing tunes *The Little Mermaid I & II*.” • EK

## Two and one does make sense



Joona Toivanen Trio: *Both Only*  
We Jazz Records, 2022

“The semantic clash of the two words in the title *Both Only* is a thought-provoking way into consistently stimulating music. The astute blend of motion and stillness, as if the trio had woven the vocabulary of ambient electronica into the lexicon of acoustic jazz, lends to many of the songs an intriguing sense of meditation-disruption.” • KLG

## Fresh new steps from Ed Partyka



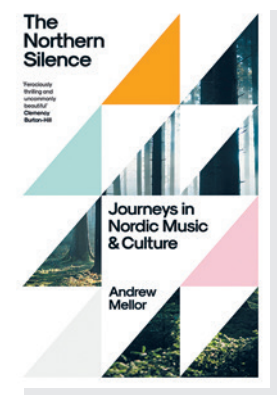
UMO Helsinki Jazz Orchestra: *Last Dance – New Music for Jazz Orchestra by Ed Partyka*  
Neuklang, 2022

“There is a substantial amount of breathing space in the scores, with the brass often being inflected towards soft muted shades instead of bursting into life at every possible juncture. UMO Helsinki Jazz Orchestra maintains its track record of working with the right people on the right music for the right time.” • KLG



# Charting a musical map of the Nordic countries

BY Lasse Lehtonen



“THE BOOK IS ABOVE ALL A PROFUSE AND EXPERT LOVE LETTER TO MUSIC AND LIFE IN THE NORDIC COUNTRIES. MELLOR’S EXPERTISE IN AND ENTHUSIASM FOR HIS SUBJECT COME CLEARLY ACROSS IN THE TEXT.”

*The Northern Silence: Journeys in Nordic Music & Culture*  
Andrew Mellor  
Yale University Press (2022)

Music journalist ANDREW MELLOR would probably not consider himself a cartographer, yet this is a title that I would like to bestow on him. His book, *The Northern Silence: Journeys in Nordic Music & Culture*, opens up like a map that guides the reader to the musical worlds, societies and cultural histories of the Nordic countries. Mellor does not seek to redefine geography, but he does expand on and further specify views presented in earlier literature. His subjective journey takes the form of a complex mosaic, entwining history and the present, music and life in general, and above all the five countries of northern Europe with all their idiosyncrasies.

*The Northern Silence* thus takes a very broad approach, and principally it acquits itself very well. For instance, Mellor manages to tell the tale of post-war political developments and the triumph of the Social Democratic utopia in the various

countries while, in almost virtuoso fashion, presenting a counterpoint of phenomena in the world of music and of his own experiences. There is an endless argument to be had about cause and effect, but Mellor has done his homework well: just as the reader feels that the description of cultural life in the Nordic countries is becoming a little too sweet to be true, we are reminded of the threats to disband orchestras and read comparisons with conditions elsewhere. Mellor employs a similarly broad brush in transitioning from nyckelharpa to kantele, from folk songs to heavy metal, from Lutheranism to Social Democracy and from ALVAR AALTO to IKEA. There are risks involved in such an approach, but Mellor keeps the mosaic admirably coherent. Occasionally, though, the reader is left wishing for a more incisive synthesis amid this rich swirl of narrative.

The backbone of *The Northern Silence* is made up of interviews made for various media over the years, offering glimpses behind the scenes of the world of music. Having been based in the Nordic countries for a

long time, Mellor is at once an insider and an outside observer. His hybrid role yields him fascinating insights on the various cultural circles in which he moves and on their interactions. For example, Finns speak a completely new kind of English to Mellor, but in a similar fashion he discovers something unique in the sound, national status and interpretations of Nordic orchestras.

In considering a book with a subject as broad as this, it obviously becomes a matter of taste what any particular reader would have liked to see included. At the end of the day, however, there is little point in grumbling about the comprehensiveness or lack thereof of the map that Mellor has drawn in *The Northern Silence*; his journey is not and does not claim to be an encyclopaedia. The book is above all a profuse and expert love letter to music and life in the Nordic countries. Mellor’s expertise in and enthusiasm for his subject come clearly across in the text. Nordic readers may view themselves just a bit differently on the map after reading this. © Translation: Jaakko Mäntyjärvi

# Popular Music Made in Finland

BY Pekka Gronow



“IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN THE ‘PROGRESSIVE’ VARIETIES OF FINNISH POPULAR MUSIC AND DO NOT READ FINNISH, THIS IS THE BOOK FOR YOU.”

*Made in Finland: Studies in Popular Music*  
Edited by Toni-Matti Karjalainen and Kimi Kärki  
Routledge (2021)

Do you know Eppu Normaali, Nightwish, Yö, Dingo and Hurriganes? Eppu Normaali, who sing in Finnish, have sold more than a million records – quite an achievement in a country of 5.5 million inhabitants. The more globally oriented Nightwish have reportedly sold more than nine million records worldwide. Yö, Dingo and Hurriganes also belong to the best-known bands in Finland, but few people outside the country are familiar with their music, or even their names.

Therefore *Made in Finland: Studies in Popular Music*, written by established scholars in the field, is a welcome addition to the meagre literature in the English language on Finnish popular music. This book is not intended as a comprehensive guide to all varieties of Finnish popular music; there is very little on the conservative, mainstream varieties of popular music that still dominate many radio channels in

Finland today. But if you are interested in the “progressive” varieties of Finnish popular music and do not read Finnish, this is the book for you.

Like other volumes in the series, *Made in Finland* is a collection of essays. In addition to (what the authors see as) the main narrative of Finnish popular music, the topics include many fascinating marginal areas. PETRI KULJUNTAUSTA writes on early electronic instruments in Finland. PERTTI GRÖNHOLM discusses the rise of minimal techno music in the 1990s. JUHO KAITAJÄRVI-TIEKSO and JUHO HÄNNINEN survey underground music in the age of platforms. I would never have imagined that an “electric light piano” was demonstrated in Finland as early as 1894.

JOHANNES BRUSILA writes on the popular music of the Swedish-speaking minority of Finland. Swedish is the second official language of Finland, but only 0.3 million Finns speak it as their mother tongue today. SAIJALEENA RANTANEN writes about another minority, the Finnish-Americans. At the begin-

ning of the 20th century, there were more than two hundred thousand Finns in America. Most came from poor rural backgrounds and worked in mining, forestry and farming.

The role of Karelia in Finnish music is more complex. In the 19th century, Karelia was the mythical home of the *Kalevala*, the Finnish national epic. SIBELIUS wrote the *Karelia Suite*, and Karelian girls have been celebrated in popular songs since the 1920s. PEKKA SUUTARI concentrates on Karelian influences in the Finnish folk song movement since the 1960s and the role of Karelian immigrants who moved to Finland after the breakdown of the Soviet Union. Like all volumes in the Global Popular Music series, the book ends with an interview with an eminent artist in the field. True to the concept of this volume, the editors have chosen TUOMAS HOLOPAINEN, the leader of Nightwish. ©





# Festivals and performances

## Chamber music series fostering continuity

Hietsu is Happening! runs on the logic of improvisation, while Helsinki Seriös has ambitions to become a new cornerstone of the chamber music scene. Both are examples of how non-institutional concert organisers can foster continuity.

BY Auli Särkiö-Pitkänen

Hietsun Paviljonki in Helsinki is a venue showcasing how to introduce and establish a new kind of chamber music culture in Finland: with an inspiring location and a series of concerts. The building began life as a recreation pavilion with changing rooms for the adjacent beach and was renovated as a venue with studios and an event space in 2015. The following spring, two music event series were established: Klassinen Hietsu and the more eclectic Hietsu is Happening! with a mix of arts and styles. In 2021 both concert series were awarded the State Prize for Music.

It all began when musicians who had happened to book studio space at Hietsun Paviljonki quickly realised the potential of the larger space in the building for performing acoustic music. Unique locations have provided inspiration for a number of other well-established chamber music concert series in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area.

Now that one of Helsinki's tradition-laden venues for chamber music, the concert hall at the R Building of the Sibelius Academy, has emerged from its renovation, it is to be occupied by a new monthly concert series, Helsinki Seriös, as of autumn 2022. The purpose of this series is to resolve the perennial issues of the freelance field – funding and organisation – by establishing a broad base from the outset: numerous musicians and experienced event organisers are involved, and funding has been sought and acquired for the first three years of operation.

While the mantra “location, location, location” still holds, we also need to consider what kind of content

is provided to compete for the interest of the increasingly pluralist tastes of the musical public. The general purpose of the Hietsu is Happening! series is to be an arena for experimentation, bringing together artists from varied backgrounds and allowing various genres of music and branches of art to collide at concerts whose formats may be very diverse. Improvisation is the key to everything, not just in music.

The Helsinki Seriös series, meanwhile, aims for success with a completely different concept. While the classical music sector has long been concerned about the genre labouring under the disadvantage of being perceived as serious and elitist, Helsinki Seriös has cheerfully adopted “serious” as part of its very name. Additionally, Helsinki Seriös does not seek to specialise or to build content thematically. If anything, the series specialises in providing a chamber music series during the winter concert season in Finland to complement the summer festival season. © Translation: Jaakko Mäntyjärvi

## Magnus Lindberg's Piano Concerto No. 3 premiered by Yuja Wang, the SFSO and Salonen

Magnus Lindberg's Piano Concerto No. 3 was recently premiered by Yuja Wang and the San Francisco Symphony, conducted by Esa-Pekka Salonen. The concerto is a virtuoso affair.

BY Jari Juhani Kallio

Given in its eagerly awaited world-premiere performances by YUJA WANG, the San Francisco Symphony and Music Director ESA-PEKKA SALONEN, MAGNUS LINDBERG's outstanding Piano Concerto No. 3 (2020–22) is on its way to becoming a repertory item. The new concerto fuses together the composer's virtuosic grasp of musical form, exuberantly pianistic writing and riveting orchestral mastery, giving rise to a thirty-minute score of special magnificence.

Although cast in three movements, the concerto does not follow the usual fast-slow-fast scheme.

“At some point, I started thinking about those three movements coming off almost as if they were three self-standing concertos. Each movement opens with an intense dialogue between piano and strings, which then gives over to further dialogue between piano and winds, followed by a synthesis. I wanted to keep my orchestral writing more disciplined than in the Second [Piano] Concerto. Thus, I've experimented with some filigree in the new concerto,” the composer recalled in our recent talk in Helsinki.

Tailor-made for Yuja Wang, to whom the score is dedicated, Piano Concerto No. 3 is a virtuoso affair.

“In terms of technique, Yuja is certainly one of the most amazing pianists of our time. The speed, the accuracy – those elements are really on the surface of her seemingly effortless playing. Therefore it would have

been far-fetched to write some kind of contemplative piece for her,” Lindberg pointed out.

Regarding the concerto's thematic line-up, there are several recurring groups of motifs and gestures, developed organically in time and texture throughout the concerto, as if three parallel universes were being born from shared parameters. In genuinely Lindbergian fashion, both the solo part and the orchestral writing are remarkably detailed and ever-imaginatively interlocked.

The electrifying opening movement is set in motion with the soloist's gorgeous opening statement of chords and scalar passages, leading to a

long-held harmonic field. A series of ascending musical lines heralds the second movement. Eventually, the instrumental fabric becomes distilled almost into chamber music. Kinetic and resplendent, the third movement is a celebration of all things pianistic. Lindberg also finds endless joy in writing for orchestra, including wonderful moments for timpani, bass drum and pitched percussion, most notably crotales, with gongs and metal plates.

A thunderous world premiere, the performance by Yuja Wang, the orchestra and Salonen was nothing short of a triumph. ©

© Kristen Loken



Magnus Lindberg, Yuja Wang and Esa-Pekka Salonen taking a bow after a stellar world-premiere performance of Lindberg's Piano Concerto No. 3 with the San Francisco Symphony.



## Late-night contemporary music? Solutions at Tampere Biennale

BY Jari Juhani Kallio

Tampere Biennale took place in April 2022. Although many festivals and performing organisations have shown extraordinary creativity in programming contemporary music, at best demonstrating genuine interest in diversity and innovation, one perennial question still remains largely unanswered; what to do with late-night shows?

8 Bits High

Classical and contemporary concerts tend to take place sometime between lunch hours and nine pm. For many years, promoters have been keen on presenting various permutations of late-night programming, with varying success. With late-night events, the balance between artistic integrity and marketability has occasionally been somewhat challenging, and understandably so. Devising programmes where accessibility and ambition meet, without pushing audiences too far out of their comfort zones, is not an easy task to fulfil.

The 2022 edition of Tampere Biennale presented its audiences with four late-night programmes, three of them described in the festival programme as club nights. Alternative venues were combined with alternative programming, which, interestingly, often comes down to ensembles with non-classical instrumentation and amplification, while the musical substance itself may

appear conventional, at least in the context of a contemporary music festival.

The Biennale's first Festival Club brought together two rather different aspects of electronica, in the guise of a joint gig by the improvisational ambient drone duo HLER alongside 8 Bits High, a trio producing music using only Commodore 64 home computers as sound sources. In a nightclub setting, the extended improvisations of HLER, often based on minute variations in soundscapes generated on an Atomosynth Mochika XL synthesiser, came off as challenging oddballs. In contrast, the appealingly ingenious (and danceable) raw electronica of 8 Bits High seemed to be tailor-made to the occasion, at least judging by the audience reaction.

The second club evening, consisting of two sets performed by the duo Nieminen & Litmanen, ventured into the realm of Hammond organ and drums, with a stylistic agenda

encompassing a multitude of genres, from blues and jazz to schlager and pop. While certainly entertaining, with innovative sonics and witty playfulness, one is bound to ask whether or not this was an event specifically related to the Biennale's core agenda. The final club event of the festival, a Game Music Collective gig at G Livelab Tampere, focused on video game music. Game music is gradually gaining more and more presentable status in concert settings, and deservedly so.

In the end, it may very well be that the success of late-night concerts is not tied to any specific musical genre but to the organicity of the continuum between the sounding material and the overall ambience of the venue. The interconnectedness between the programme proper and late-night playlists calls forth a much more intricate artistic vision from the presenters, in order to reach beyond mere entertainment. ©

## Tripla: Made in Finland is a label allowing space for multiple identities

BY Kare Eskola

“Witnessing the well-oiled production machinery of the FNB at work, one can sense that every creative contributor has had enough space and responsibility to dispel any need for power struggles or artistic compromises.”

When we consider what to name a triple bill of ballet, *Made in Germany* would be ironic and *Made in the USA* would be suspect. What should we think, then, of a ballet production titled *Tripla: Made in Finland*? Marking one of the high points of the centenary of the Finnish National Ballet, *Tripla* brings to the stage new works by three internationally successful Finnish choreographers, and the title subsumes a multitude of identities. Ultimately, the most proudly Finnish thing about the evening is how utterly seamlessly the dance, music and staging work together.

The triple bills staged by the FNB commonly highlight the plurality of contemporary dance rather than a common narrative, and the very diversity of the backgrounds

of the choreographers selected for *Made in Finland* in itself reflects the international biography of Finnish contemporary dance. JOHANNA NUUTINEN (b. 1983) is a former member of the FNB and a world citizen in today's generation of dancers; KENNETH KVARNSTRÖM (b. 1963) has made a career out of cross-discipline stage works with Scandinavia's finest dance companies; and his contemporary TERO SAARINEN (b. 1964) has a brutally beautiful idiom of absolute movement that has gone over well particularly in central Europe.

In this narrative, the opening number – Nuutinen's *Surge* – feels unabashedly *Finnish*. This impression is created by the archaic primeval fog on stage but even more so by the music. The natural, seamless music creates just the right sort of conflict with Nuutinen's dance narrative, with its abrupt transitions and criticism of consumerism. The next item on the bill, *Bolero 2.0* by Kvarnström, scrubs away the national-mythical imagery with its visual impact, combining 1970s studio sets with brightly coloured silk tunics. The evening concludes with *Wedge* by Tero Saarinen, which is set to and based on

the Cello Concerto (2017) of composer and conductor ESA-PEKKA SALONEN (b. 1958).

Ultimately, the works included in *Made in Finland* refuse to form part of a coherent single narrative, and the title is little more than a superficial marketing ploy, as titles always are. If we must find something overarchingly Finnish here, then let's decide that in this instance it has to do with the non-hierarchic collaboration between choreographers, composers, set designers and costume designers. Witnessing the well-oiled production machinery of the FNB at work, one can sense that every creative contributor has had enough space and responsibility to dispel any need for power struggles or artistic compromises. The goal was reached through a common effort. And indeed the very fact that a collaboration such as this allows sufficient space for an *auteur* such as Kvarnström shows that the FNB is well prepared for its next century, a time of even greater pluralism. © Translation: Jaakko Mäntyjärvi



Johanna Nuutinen's *Surge*



## Organic equality at the Musequal Festival

BY Jari Juhani Kallio

Composer Cecilia Damström thanking violinist Linda Suolahti and violist Mari Viluksela after the performance of *Celestial Beings*.

Endorsing equality in classical music in artistically meaningful and organic ways is no small endeavour. Yet this was the very goal undertaken in May 2002 at Musequal Festival in Janakkala, about 100km north of Helsinki.

In the post-#MeToo era, arts organisations have been heart-warmingly unanimous in proclaiming their aspirations for equality, but on many occasions the results have been rather superficial. Better than nothing, perhaps, yet all too often the actions taken come down to taking very small steps in programming, while, at the core, it is just business as usual. The simple solution, of course, is to walk down the cancel lane, but these initiatives tend to turn out counter-productive in the long run, however sincere they may be. Thus the real solution seems to lie in establishing genuinely fresh approaches to commissioning, programming and presenting noteworthy musical works by composers from different genders, ethnic and societal backgrounds, aesthetics and approaches.

In this respect, the Musequal Festival in May in Janakkala came off as one of the most promising affairs around. As manifested by the ideology of the festival organiser, the Musequal collective, the festival aims to promote equality in terms of equal realisation of human rights and the equality of people as members of a nation. According to the collective, the main goal is to make the forgotten works of historical female composers more public and enable them to become regular repertoire among both large institutions and individual actors.

With Artistic Directors ANTTI TIKKANEN and LINDA SUOLAHTI at the helm, the two-day festival consisted of five concerts, performed at various locations around Janakkala, alongside a preliminary mid-week evening in Helsinki. The festival programming revolved around the multifaceted music of its Composer-in-Residence, Iranian-born, Europe-based ROUZBEH RAFIE. In addition, notable contributions from CECILIA DAMSTRÖM were featured, alongside new commissions and premieres from MIKKO HEINIÖ and YLVA SKOG.

The festival proved that it is indeed possible to put on a series of top-class concerts without the usual big names, with some minor exceptions. In terms of aesthetics, the festival endorsed an extended stylistic arch from Baroque to various contemporary idioms, from modernism to post-minimalism. Looking at geography, however, the festival remained somewhat Eurocentric, with only a handful of composers from North and South America featured, alongside Rafie. With proper planning involved, the festival programmes came off as organic entities, ones defying standard repertoire in meaningful ways, without making eccentricity an end in itself.

Musequal Festival remained true to its core ideology. Programming was aptly unapologetic throughout, and each musical work was performed with commitment and enthusiasm, while maintaining a delightfully easy-going overall ambience. Still, one hopes that there will be a wider range of audiences attending the festival in the future. Whether this is to be achieved by marketing, timing or logistics remains to be seen, but in any case these programmes deserve to be played to sold-out crowds. ☉

## Time of Music festival celebrated diversity in music

BY Ainomaija Pennanen

The Time of Music festival built its anniversary festival programme on the theme of diversity. Under the banner 'Mundi Novi – New Worlds', the festival showcased ideas and voices that often remain in the shadows.

The Time of Music festival was established in 1982 in a Finland that was largely unaware of international trends in contemporary music – outside the Helsinki area anyway. The Ears Open Society, established in 1977, or the Helsinki Biennale, first held in 1981, could not address all of the interesting issues in the field. For this, we needed the Time of Music festival.

The event focused on courses rather than concerts. The founders considered that the Viitasaari courses would be the jump-start that Finnish musical life required in the field of contemporary music at the time. The courses were very popular in the early years, with more than 100 participants each summer. Now, forty years on, courses are still a major component of the Time of Music festival. This year there were 37 participants, most of them from outside Finland.

In summer 2022 four courses were organised at Viitasaari. Three of these – composition, improvisation and instruments – form the core programme, but the offering also included a course titled "Curating Diversity", which forms part of the core of the Sounds Now project, funded in part through the EU's Creative Europe programme. Over six days, the participants discussed the ethical aspects of the diversity theme and social responsibility from the perspective of contemporary

music. The diversity theme took on a concrete shape even for those who come to the Time of Music festival principally for the concerts. "Mundi Novi – New Worlds" provided a forum for topics and voices that often remain in the shadows, whether because of ethnicity, language, nature, gender or power.

One of the highlights of the festival was the hypnotic work *Feminine* by JULIUS EASTMAN, forgotten for years but recently revived. The programme also featured the world premieres or first performances in Finland of *Answer Machine Tape, 1987* by PHILIP VENABLES, works by JAMES A.-MCEWAN and MIOKO YOKOYAMA for the Ulysses Percussion Ensemble and the audiovisual work *Hibernation*, where animation by JENNY JOKELA and music by SEBASTIAN HILLI told a tale of loneliness, isolation and depression. The string quartet *Three Point Eight* by MINNA LEINONEN, commissioned by the festival, raised the issue of the bearing capacity of the natural environment.

Building such a plurality of concerts and courses would not be possible without international cooperation. The festival has for many years been a member of the Ulysses Network and Sounds Now projects within the EU's Creative Europe programme. For concert audiences, networks such as these manifest themselves in joint commissions that a single festival would be unable to achieve and in appearances by international guests – there were more of them at Viitasaari in this anniversary year than ever before. ☉ Translation: Jaakko Mäntyjärvi

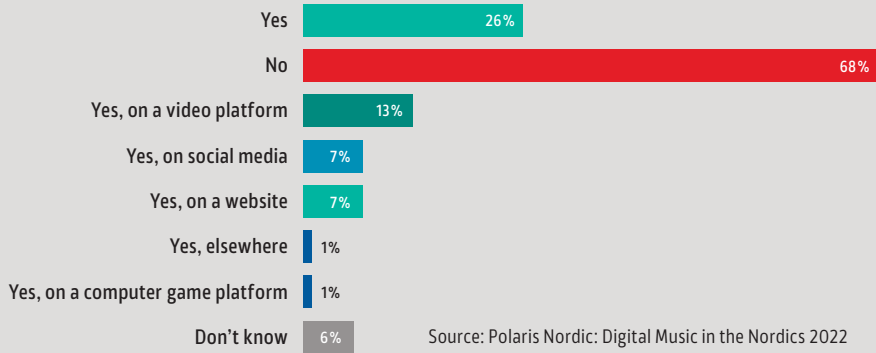


# NOTABLE NUMBERS

## Attendance of streamed concerts in Finland, 2020–2022

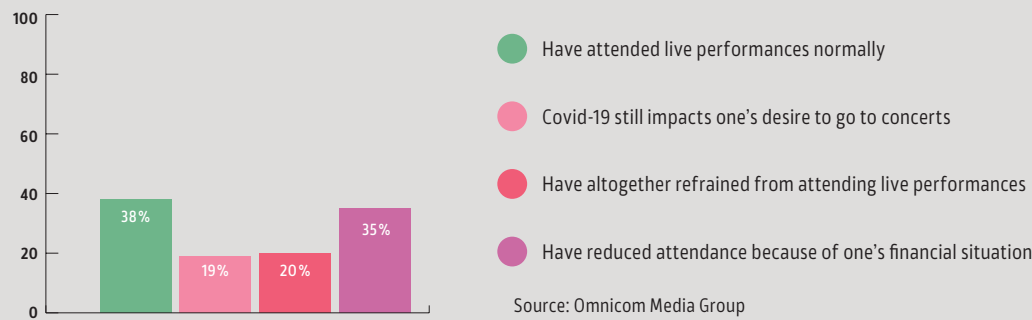
The Covid-19 pandemic saw a global rise in streamed concerts. How attuned were audiences in Finland to streamed performances during 2020–2022?

Have you watched or listened to an online live concert?



Source: Polaris Nordic: Digital Music in the Nordics 2022

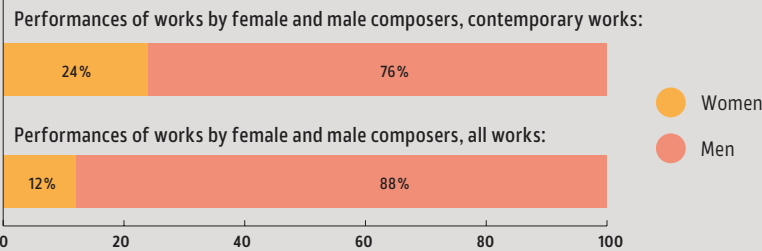
## Attendance at live performances in Finland in 2022



Source: Omnicom Media Group

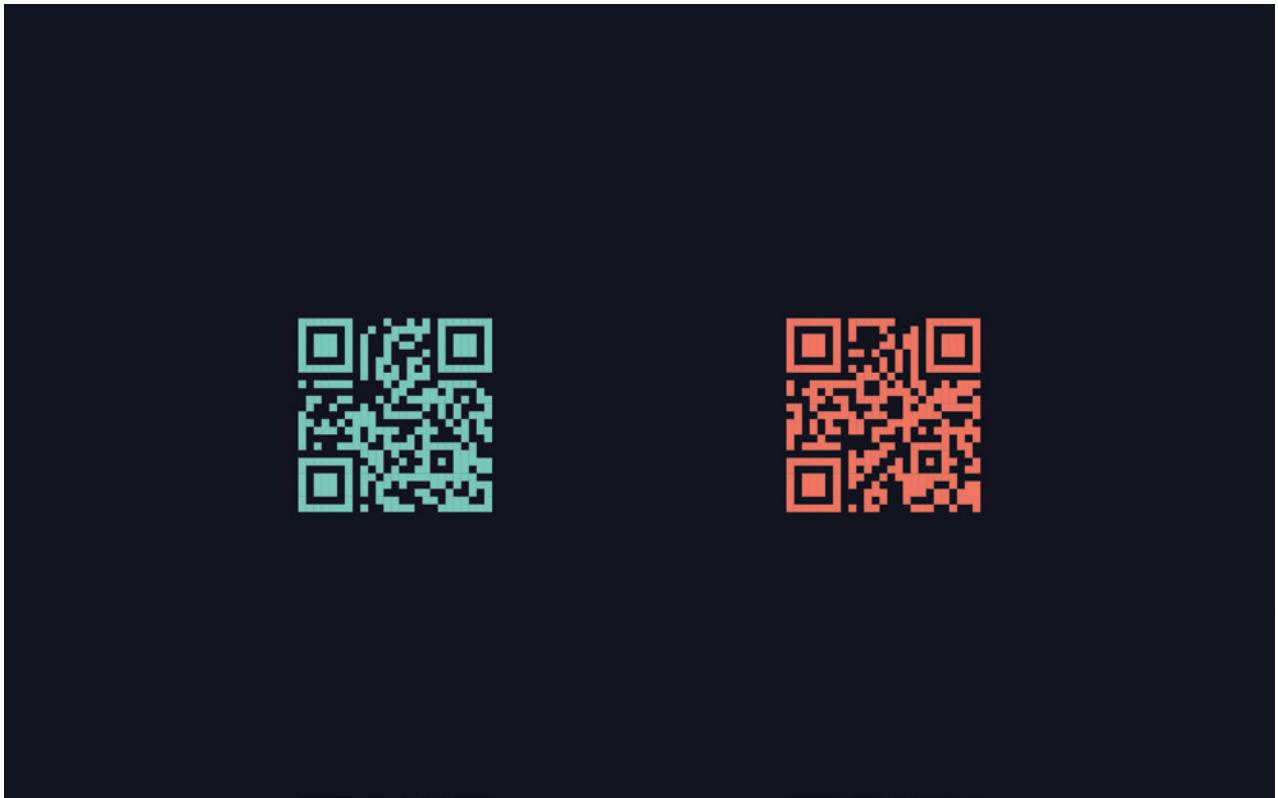
## Gender equality in orchestral performances

A recent survey conducted by the Society of Finnish Composers and the Association of Finnish Symphony Orchestras shows that the number of performances by female composers is higher in contemporary music as compared to all repertoire.



Source: The Society of Finnish Composers / Association of Finnish Symphony Orchestras

Translation: Jaakko Mäntyjärvi



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