



**KALEVI AHO** (arr. 1998)  
Hosianna (Vogler) Dur: 3'   
3333/3431/str, organ  
Vom Himmel Hoch/From  
Heav'n on High /Enkeli Taivaan  
(Praetorius) Dur: 7'

3333/4331/2perc/str, organ  
Fine arrangements for symphony orchestra made by Kalevi Aho for a Christmas release by the Lahti Symphony Orchestra in 1998. Known for his skills as an arranger, Aho has a consummate gift for handling an orchestra and creating a rich, full sound. From Heav'n on High begins with a three-minute introduction in which the winds have a chance to shine and in dialogue with the organ.



**JOONAS KOKKONEN**  
Joululauluja lapsille/Christmas  
Songs for Children (1956-66)  
Dur: 7', Arranger: Jouko Linjama (2003)  
Text: J. Suomalainen, E. Ahokainen, O.  
Paloheimo, J. Haavio (Fin), voice and

orchestra: 1111/2000/str  
These four songs were originally published in a version for voice and piano. To words by four Finnish poets, they are: 1. Jouluna (At Christmas), 2. Aattoiltana (On Christmas Eve), 3. Metsän joulu (The Forest's Christmas) and 4. Legenda (Legend). The mood varies from devout and hymn-like in Christmas Eve to the lively melody of Legend accompanied by pungent figures in seconds.



**ILKKA KUUSISTO**  
(arr. 1967-83)  
24 Suomalaista joululaulua/24  
Finnish Christmas Carols   
Text: Fin/Swe, some songs also in English,  
voice and orchestra: 2fl/hp/str (33221)

Kuusisto's delightful arrangements for small orchestra are lasting favourites. Among them are some of the best-loved Finnish Christmas carols, such as the five Sibelius songs op. 1. Most of them are scored for strings only, but some also include a harp or two flutes. The arrangements have also been recorded, and soloist on the disc is Soile Isokoski.



**NILS LINDBERG**  
A Christmas Cantata (2002)  
Dur: 50' , Text: Bible's Christmas  
Gospel (Eng) S, Bar, mixed chorus, big  
band: 1000-1440-11-0-pf-4saxdrums-db  
Lindberg's cantata is based on traditional  
English Christmas carols joined together by newly written  
music to texts taken from the Bible. It comprises a delightful  
mix of Christmas melodies, Swedish folk music, classical and  
jazz.



**ARMAS MAASALO**  
Jouluatorio/Christmas  
Oratorio (1945) Dur: 45'  
Text: H. Jalkanen, I. Salomies, Bible  
(Fin), S, T, Bar, mixed chorus, orchestra:  
2200-2230-11-org.hp-d-str

The tradition of performing the Christmas Oratorio has, ever since its premiere, fallen to St John's Church, Helsinki, where Maasalo was the organist. He was one of the great names in Finnish church music – composer, choir leader and Professor. The vocal solos in the Oratorio are sublimely beautiful. The music strongly reflects the Finnish hymn tradition and the choral fugues are honed to perfection.



**HILDING ROSENBERG**  
Den Heliga natten/The Holy  
Night (1936) Dur: 32'   
Text: Hjalmar Gullberg/Christmas Gospel  
(Luke) (Swe), S, A, T, B, narrator, mixed  
chorus, orchestra: 1120-2200-11-0-cel-  
str (reduced version: organ and strings)

This is a colourful drama in which the orchestral texture conjures up images of shepherds out in their fields, the light radiating from heaven, Mary swaddling her child, Herod raging, etc. Rosenberg's harshness gives way here to a more lyrical tone. For Joseph, Mary and the shepherds

the music has an almost pastoral character, while the Wise Men are depicted with a more oriental tone language and other rhythms.



**JAN SANDSTRÖM**  
Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming  
(1987/2007) Dur: 4'30"   
string orchestra

Jan Sandström's magical choral classic here in a version for strings. The orchestra is divided into a smaller group (string quartet) that plays Praetorius' hymn in slow motion (preferably in baroque style without vibrato), and a larger string-orchestra group that plays Sandström's harmonizing music in ordinaro.



**SVEN-DAVID SANDSTRÖM**  
Christmas Oratorio (2004)  
Dur: 35'; Text: Christmas Gospel (St. Luke)  
(Swe), S, Bar, mixed chorus, orchestra:  
2222-2222-12-0-str

In his oratorio Sandström wanted to create a magical and mystical atmosphere. The work is divided into ten short movements and in some places it is breathtakingly beautiful. But round the romantically exquisite melodic solo and duet sections the choir contrasts now and then with rapid rhythmic figures, and the orchestra's brass and percussion conjure up the occasionally violent nature of the Nativity story.



**DAVID SAULESCO**  
Christmas Oratorio (2013)  
Dur: 55'; Text: Saulesco/Christmas Gospel  
(Matthew and Luke) (Swe),  
Mz, T, Bar, mixed chorus, narrator, fl, cl,  
2 tpt, 2 perc, organ, str

David Saulesco depicts the Christmas narrative with warmth and humour, and in a postmodern tone language. The music varies between harsh expressionistic sonorities and Nordic romantic melancholy. It is easily accessible but still challenging and harmonically exciting.



**FREDRIK SIXTEN**  
A Swedish Christmas  
Oratorio (2009) Dur: 50'   
Text: Ylva Eggehorn/from the Christmas  
Gospel (Swe) S, descant choir, mixed  
choir, wind quintet, strings

This work is permeated by elements of Swedish folk music and contains both light and darkness. The newly written texts are meant to show that the innocent child was surrounded by darkness, poverty, alienation and death. But the oratorio is also full of joy and songs of praise. Sixten lets a soprano take the role of the evangelist and instead of more soloists he lets two choruses play different roles.



**ANDERS SOLDH (ARR.)**  
O helga natt/O Holy Night  
(Adolphe Adam) Dur: 4'  
Santa Lucia (trad.) Dur: 3'  
När det lider mot jul  
(Ruben Liljefors) Dur: 3';

2222-2200-01-0-str  
Three popular Christmas songs in arrangements for chamber orchestra by Anders Soldh. Suitable for both amateur and professional orchestras. Included in the series "Popular Arrangements for Orchestra".



**JEAN SIBELIUS**  
Viisi Joululaulua/Five Christmas  
Songs Op 1 (1895-1913) Dur: 15'  
Arranger: Harri Wessman (1994)  
mixed choir, fl-str (reduced version:  
4 voices, fl-str4) (Fin)

Wessman made his highly workable transcriptions as a commission from the Espoo Music Institute. They afford small ensembles an opportunity to perform these popular Sibelius songs. In addition to the version for choir and orchestra there is one for four voices, flute and string quartet. Around the middle, Wessman has inserted a piece of his own, a Meditation for strings in the style of Sibelius.

## Rousing fun and energy

The program opened with the U.S. premiere of "Flounce," by Lotta Wennäkoski ... This is a rowdy and loud, of course, work, tempered only by a melancholic passage on Cally Banham's oboe. The rest was whimsically scored (a slide whistle?), and rousing fun. *St Louis Post 29.9.*

### Lotta Wennäkoski: Flounce

US premiere: St. Louis SO/Hannu Lintu, 28.9. 2018 St. Louis, USA

Rounding out the first half was Wennäkoski's **Hele**, an eccentric and energetic respite from the broodiness of the first two works. Wennäkoski utilized the slide whistle amid frantic and agile ensemble writing to sometimes atmospheric, sometimes cartoonish, but always surprising effect. *New Classic LA/15.11.*

### Lotta Wennäkoski: Hele

World premiere:  
Los Angeles Philharmonic/  
Susanna Mälkki,  
13.11.2018  
Los Angeles, USA

Photo: Mikko Kyöharju

Lotta Wennäkoski

## Between jazz, classical and impro

Pietilä's work operates freely somewhere between jazz, contemporary classical and free improvisation... In *Three Strides of Light* for piano, Risto-Matti Marin radiated a confident concentration in a wicked boogie-woogie in which the melody line in the right hand gradually escalated into a ferar romp. *Hufvudstadsbladet 29.10.*

### Esa Pietilä: Chamber music

Kamus Quartet, Risto-Matti Marin, piano, Veli Kujala, accordion, Janne Tuomi and Harri Lehtinen, percussion, Esa Pietilä, saxophone, 26.10. Helsinki, Finland (Pietilä focus concert)



Esa Pietilä

Photo: Petrus Stenroos

Anneleen  
Lenaerts



Photo: Marco Borggreve

## Fine opening for the season

Aho's Harp Concerto Mearra was a fine opening for the autumn season of the St. Michel Strings. As their soloist they had Anneleen Lenaerts, a world-class harpist and principal in the Vienna Philharmonic, who filled the church with the tones both daintily elfin-like and solidly grand piano-like she conjured forth from her instrument. *Länsi-Savo 18.9.*

### Kalevi Aho: Mearra

Finnish premiere: Mikkeli City Orchestra/Erkki Lasonpalo, sol. Anneleen Lenaerts, harp, 16.9.2018 Mikkeli, Finland