

## Kalevi Aho: The Rejoicing of the Deep Waters (1995)

3333asax/4331/11/str (10 min)

"Don't believe in the rejoicing of the deep waters at all, the waves are ruthless. But listen to them too, even more carefully. Listen to them so that you can learn to hear and save us before we have all drowned." In the opera "Before We All Have Drowned" by Kalevi Aho (b. 1949) a woman driven to suicide listens to fateful music on record which she describes as being too faultless.

The piece she is listening to is The Rejoicing of the Deep Waters, the key to the tensions within the opera, a unique brand of music within music that reveals the undercurrents flowing deep in the gloomy recesses of the mind. The Rejoicing of the Deep Waters is not just a sound prop in the opera, however. It is threatening music, its cruel outbursts disguised at times as frisky frolics, but gathering force at the end in surging waves.

## Erik Bergman: Meditation and Emotion, Op. 148 (2001)

2222/4331/14/str (12 min)



Bergman the composer (b. 1911) has elements of 'homo ludens', a playful, experimental man of intellect with the frank, open mind of a child. He is a confessed modernist who regards the search for novelty as the artist's primary vocation – but it may be nearer than we suspect.

Meditation and Emotion, Op. 148 is a study by the 90-year-old maestro of musical gestures and mentalities. The opposing elements in it band together in instrumental, textural and characteristic blocks that collide in fascinating manner. Bergman is an inveterate provoker eager to discover what musical ideas do to one another. Impulsive emotions are a driving force in life, but maybe meditation and emotion are not mutual antagonists but actors in an endless partnership, a marriage of convenience.

## Kimmo Hakola: Sinfonietta (1999)

2222/2220/10/str (15 min)

The Sinfonietta by Kimmo Hakola (b. 1958) is an orchestral tour de force bursting with energy and never pausing for breath. At no point does the music relax the tempo marking *Allegro furioso*. Like a shark, it is doomed the moment it stops. The classicist spirit nevertheless gives the work a feeling of order: the unceasing action on the strings generates continuity and the brass steady chorale motifs.

Hakola has here thrown together seemingly incompatible ingredients that, coerced by the break-neck speed, discover means of coexistence. The wild excesses are also viewed with humour: this is the blustering of an angry middle-aged, not a young man. Kimmo Hakola has proved himself one of the most distinctive composers of his generation, and one who never fails to surprise his listeners. In the Sinfonietta he stuns them with his unscrupulous outspokenness.

## Mikko Heiniö: On the Rocks, Op. 68 (1998)

3333/4331/13/pf/dbl cel/str (13 min)

"On the Rocks is mentally dedicated to the sheer cliff beside which my summer composing bower stands. Hence the fleeting fragments of the folk song 'Kalliolle, kukkulalle' [On a rock, on a hill, my house

# HOW ABOUT THESE FOR A START?

*New music is a vital, organic part of orchestras' normal concert offering. Composers have been overjoyed to be given an opportunity to write for large audiences, which have in turn come to expect something new and unexpected to supplement the staple classical diet.*

*New works may be stimulating, uplifting, rousing, enchanting, amusing or annoying, but always they aim to blow away aural cobwebs and inspire new thoughts – and to serve as a reminder that anything is possible in music. The following is a selection of Finnish (and one Estonian) works suitable as the opening numbers of concerts: to set the mood, to spice up the conventional repertoire, to set the imagination racing and to spark off a chain of inspiration.*

I will build." Mikko Heiniö (b. 1948) flirts in *On the Rocks* with many references, from rocky shores to drinks and the ice cubes that soothe the runner's aching muscles. One of Heiniö's summer pleasures is running the Marathon.

*On the Rocks* proceeds via carefully-timed tempo and well-chosen rhythmical changes like a long-distance runner towards the finishing line, though his feet may drag at times. It even makes a detour to a rock club, the throbbing beat of which calls to mind the vigour – but also the amusing earnestness – of youth music. In between these humorous touches Heiniö creates a lyrical cantabile that occupies the foreground towards the end like the image of a beautiful summer.

## Olli Kortekangas: Winter Music (1999)

2121/2220/11/str (10 min)

The music of Olli Kortekangas (b. 1955) abounds in subtle borrowings and allusions, and a freedom growing out of crossover, multi-styled ideas. Kortekangas nowadays hops nimbly across borders both musical and other, and no longer feels any need to justify his leaps with parodies and polemics. Composed in 1999 for the Oulu Symphony Orchestra not far from the Arctic Circle, *Winter Music* is nevertheless not entirely a traditional Finnish landscape.

The salient feature of *Winter Music* is its visual character: the different shades of white in the snow, the various degrees of coldness, and the myriad ice-crystal formations. This is offset by romantic warmth, along with calm and simple melodies that remind one of the bracing pleasures of winter. *Winter Music* refuses to give in to arctic hysteria or be depressed by the seasonal darkness, preferring to focus on the lighter aspects of winter.

## Tommi Kärkkäinen: Somnium fraude (2002-03)

3333/4431/12/hp/pf/vib/str (15 min)



*Somnium fraude* was one of the three new works commissioned by Esa-Pekka Salonen from young Finnish composers for spring 2003. Tommi Kärkkäinen (b. 1969) has, in many of his works, explored the world of sleep, the drama of dream-like cuts, and transitions from one state to another, at times laser-clear and at others soft and allusive.

*Somnium fraude* means an illusion, a deceptive dream in which things are seldom as they seem. Evolving out of the cooing sounds of the opening idyll on the winds are tense, ominous signals that jolt the mighty engine into motion in spectacular fashion, but always with an element of surprise. *Somnium fraude* bears echoes of contemporary action classics, but the brilliant colours of the music and the elegant execution are Kärkkäinen's very own.

## Veli-Matti Puumala: Tutta via (1993)

2121/2121/02/pf/gtr/str (5 min)

*Tutta via* is one of the breakthrough works by Veli-Matti Puumala (b. 1965). The music of this composer trained at the Sibelius Academy and in Siena is a blend of Finnish hi-tech with Italian vitality to form a strong profile of abundant detail and streamlined movement. In the early 1990s Puumala rocketed to public awareness as one of the most brilliant Finnish composers of his generation.

*Tutta via* is a product of this virtuoso, fast-lane period. The composer dazzles the listener with an orchestral kaleidoscope that, having paused for a second to gather momentum, shoots off on an arduous race through timbres, textures and rhythmic patterns. Every moment a new finishing line looms on the horizon, and the music tosses aside its ideas as soon as it has used them. Amid the hectic flurry is a refreshing jazz scene.



## Einojuhani Rautavaara: Apotheosis (1992, rev. 1999)

2233/4431/13/hp/str (8 min)

"Look, it is summer and a day of sunshine! And whoever dies today will never be lost but will join the company of those who once dared to go their way and live! Live..." A letter sent to his brother by Vincent van Gogh shortly before his death provided a happy ending for the tragic opera *Vincent* by Einojuhani Rautavaara (b. 1927): "Now I can see what the last act seeks to be: an apotheosis!"

The words of the painter's letter literally remained echoing in the composer's head, reappearing first in the finale of the sixth symphony, and finally the independent orchestral work *Apotheosis* that grew out of it. *Apotheosis* takes its glowing colours from the paintings of van Gogh: in the words of Rautavaara, the soft tenderness of an almond tree and an iris, the hedonistic visions of beauty, resplendent in colour, of the scenes from Auvers, but above all praise for the richness of life.

## Herman Rechberger: Landler (2000)

2222/4221/21/str (6 min)

There's something familiar about this piece: a village festival somewhere in rural Austria; people raising their feet to the tune of a waltz or a Ländler; others clapping in time to the music. Browns are bathed in sweat, heads are spinning, in dancers and players alike. Adding to the merry scene are the village geese and bigger beasts, yet the surrealist, wine-befuddled vision has nothing of the Freudian nightmare. Despite all its outlandishness, this limping Ländler is unadulterated joy.

Rechberger is a Finnish composer of Austrian descent. In his music he avidly explores different eras and stylistic genres, chucking together elements normally kept apart to form uninhibited collages. Ländler plays with a dance familiar from musical history, reminding listeners of its wholesome rustic roots and, with its gathering euphoria, making everything sound peculiarly Finnish.

## Veljo Tormis: Overture No. 2 (1959)

3233/4331/11/str (10 min)

The Estonian Veljo Tormis (b. 1930) is known in Finland above all for his choral works brimming with primitive, shamanistic force. His lesser-known orchestral music also has a strong Ugrian charge. The two overtures were written as long ago as 1955 and 1959. No. 2 has lasting freshness and a driving energy that sweeps even the present-day listener along.

In the second of his overtures Tormis demonstrates a sovereign handling of the orchestra. Here is a composer who has the ways and means of Prokofiev and Shostakovich firmly in hand and serves them up with a topping of Estonian optimism. The classical quick-slow-quick structure, the *moto perpetuo* movement on the strings, and the cunning percussion and wind effects forcibly propel the main section forwards, to be beautifully contrasted by the melodic, wistfully lyrical middle section.

## Tapio Tuomela: Jokk (1997)

2222/2221/02/str (11 min)

"An unreal moment of dusk at midnight, waters majestically flowing from rock to rock in the morning mist. The mindless roar of voices raised in song in a village tavern, the lifeless gaze of a Skolt boy seated on the steps of an empty house. – That's how it began. When a year had passed, I asked what name the Skolts use for their river. There was no name. Just Jokk, meaning River."

Jokk by Tapio Tuomela (b. 1958) does not represent the landscaping painting traditionally encountered in Finnish music. It was inspired not only by impressions of nature but also by memories and experiences associated with them. The impact of the gushing water, the mystery and glittering exoticism of Lapland are obvious, but they are tempered by the composer's own moodscapes. The sparkling orchestration, elegant cuts and modern virtuosity are also a reminder of the urban dimension of a composer born in the north of Finland.

Antti Häyrynen



(Photo: Maarit Kyöharju/FIMIC)