

FOREWORD: CONCERT OVERTURE

In 1900, Sibelius devised a Concert Overture whose musical material is derived from his stage work *Jungfrun i tornet* [The Maiden in the Tower] (JS 101, 1896). This is an opera or ‘dramatic ballad’ in one act with a duration of 40 minutes, consisting of an overture and eight scenes for four vocal soloists, mixed choir and orchestra. Not much is known of the origins of *Jungfrun i tornet*, and the genesis of the Concert Overture is even more obscure.¹

The Maiden in the Tower (1896)

In April 1896, Sibelius was commissioned to write a single-act work for the stage to a libretto by Rafael Hertzberg.² The plan was to perform the work at a fundraising event of the Helsinki Philharmonic Society, the “*Allegrì Lottery*”, on 7 September 1896.³



Figure 1. Jean Sibelius, 21 November 1896.⁴

Sibelius, 30 years old at the time, thus had about six months to complete the commission. Sibelius conducted three performances of the work himself in Helsinki, on 7, 9 and 16 November 1896. There were only 20 musicians in the orchestra;⁵ the strings probably numbered 32221.⁶



Figure 2. Ernst Röllig prepared two copies of the Violin 1 part and one copy of each of the other string parts.

Following the performances in Helsinki, there were plans to perform *Jungfrun i tornet* at the Royal Opera in Stockholm,⁷ at the Finnish Rural Theatre in Viipuri⁸ and at the Mikkeli Song Festival,⁹ but nothing came of these plans. Sibelius conducted the overture from the opera in Turku in 1900.¹⁰

The libretto by Rafael Hertzberg tells the story of a Maiden who is in love with a peasant (titled the Lover) but who is also coveted by the dastardly Bailiff. The Bailiff imprisons the protesting Maiden in a tower in the castle. After a lengthy search, the Lover discovers the whereabouts of the Maiden. An altercation between the Bailiff and the Lover is broken up by the Chatelaine. The Bailiff is punished, and the lovers are reunited. The common people praise the goodness of the Chatelaine and the triumph of love.

The libretto has been criticised as naïve ever since the premiere. It is no surprise that the text comes across as childish, since it is based on a traditional

¹ Hannikainen, Tuomas 2018. *Neito tornissa – Sibelius näyttämöllä*, pp. 22–30. (Helsinki: Unigrafia)

² “I just visited Sibelius to ask him to write a one-acter for the autumn lottery, for which [Rafael] already agreed to write the text. Sibelius was so nice and agreeable.” Letter from Emmy Achté to her daughter Aino, 25 April 1896. Aino Ackté-Jalander archive, Finnish National Library Coll. 4.1. Thanks to Prof. Anne Kauppala for her observations regarding the Ackté letters.

³ Helsinki City Archive Ca:2. Also *Uusi Suometar*, 3 November 1896. “For the benefit of the Philharmonic Society.”

⁴ “Åbo Akademi University image collections”. Nyblin, Daniel (1896?). Sibelius Museum archive, Turku Sm nro 8849.

⁵ *Nya Pressen*, 8 November 1896.

⁶ The score calls for nine wind players (1121 2110). The percussion was probably played by a single musician, leaving 12

for the strings (32211). The original orchestral material only includes one copy of each of the string parts except 1st Violin.

⁷ *Åbo Tidning*, 15 October 1896: “*Jungfrun i tornet* apparently [...] will be taken up by the Royal Opera in Stockholm.”

⁸ “I intend to perform his ‘Jungfrun i tornet’ next autumn, in Finnish of course. It will be fun to have Sibelius’s name on the programme. Yes, that Sibelius!” Letter from Jalmari Finne to Anna Sarlin, 24 June 1905. Finnish National Archive, Finne collection.

⁹ “I beg of you as nicely as I can: please help me and give me [your consent to perform] ‘Jungfrun i tornet!’” Letter from Aino Ackté, 3 November 1913. Finnish National Archive, Sibelius family archive.

¹⁰ *Åbo Underrättelser*, 7 April 1900.

Karelian singing game where a maiden is imprisoned in a chamber. Hertzberg reckoned that this traditional game was “the oldest known Finnish drama – or opera, because everything is sung”..¹¹



Figure 3. Cover of the libretto booklet.¹²

Jungfrun i tornet dates from the transitional period in Sibelius’s composing career. Its idiom is unusually bright compared with the rest of Sibelius’s output.¹³ The first half is comfortably domestic in nature, but towards the end one may detect international influences.¹⁴

After the turn of the century, the opera was not performed again until 1981, then at the initiative of conductor Jussi Jalas, Sibelius’s son-in-law. He commissioned a new full set of fair copies of the music.¹⁵ All subsequent performances and recordings have used Jalas’s material.¹⁶ Edition Wilhelm Hansen published the work, also using Jalas’s material, in 1983 and a revised edition in 2014. The manuscript score written and used by

Sibelius himself and the instrument parts prepared by Ernst Röllig have been preserved in their original turn-of-the-century state and are deposited at the Finnish National Library.¹⁷

Concert Overture (1900)

The year 1900 was a year of adversity for the Sibelius family: their youngest child, Kirsti, contracted typhoid and died in February. Aino, the mother, was not well, and Janne was drinking heavily.¹⁸ In professional terms, however, the year was a promising one: Kajanus was planning to conduct Sibelius’s music on the European tour of the Helsinki Philharmonic, culminating at the Universal Exposition in Paris. Sibelius’s works were beginning to be published internationally on a major scale.¹⁹ In July, he would make his *début* abroad, in Stockholm, as a symphonic composer.

At Sibelius’s composition concert on 7 April 1900,²⁰ a last-minute change was made to the programme: instead of *Swan of Tuonela*, the concert opened with the overture to *Jungfrun i tornet*, which had not previously been performed in Turku.²¹ It was a success: the *Uusi Aura* newspaper noted that “the work was received with great pleasure”.²² *Åbo Tidning* wrote that the overture was “characterised throughout by the originality and richness of its creator’s invention, even though it must necessarily be considered one of Sibelius’s minor works”.²³ The overture was followed by the *King Christian II Suite*, movements from the *Press Celebration Music* and the *Song of the Athenians*.

¹¹ Häyhä, Johannes 1893. *Bilder ur folkets lif i östra Finland*. Helsingfors: Folkupplysningssällskapet skrifter LXXXI, p. 11. Swedish translation by Rafael Hertzberg 1893.

¹² Finska litteratur-sällskapetets tryckeri [Finnish Literature Society]. Helsingfors 1896.

¹³ “I think of my opera [*The Building of the Boat*]. [...] I am trying to make the entire opera very folk-like (*folkprägel*). That is – I wish [to make it] accessible.” Talas, Suvi-Sirkku 2003s 61. *Tulen syntä: Aino ja Jean Sibeliusen kirjeenvaihtoa 1892-1904*, p. 61. Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society. Finnish translation by Oili Suominen. [Correspondence between Aino and Jean Sibelius.]

¹⁴ Hannikainen 2018, pp. 136–140.

¹⁵ Edition Wilhelm Hansen

(www.musicsalesclassical.com/composer/work/22916) and Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra music library.

¹⁶ Except for the performances conducted by Tuomas Hannikainen.

¹⁷ Finnish National Library, manuscript collection UBHels 0942-0943.

¹⁸ Goss, Glenda Dawn 2009. *Sibelius: A Composer's Life and the Awakening of Finland*.

Barnett, Andrew 2007. *Sibelius*, p. 134.

¹⁹ I am indebted to Timo Virtanen D.Mus. for this observation.

²⁰ *Åbo Underrättelser*, 10 April 1900. The programme was repeated under José Eibenschütz on 10 April 1900.

²¹ “The programme has been amended in that instead of ‘Swan of Tuonela’ it will include the overture to ‘Jungfrun i tornet’, not previously performed in Turku.” *Åbo Tidning*, 7 April 1900.

²² *Uusi Aura*, 8 April 1900.

²³ *Åbo Tidning*, 8 April 1900.

Jean Sibelius'
Kompositions-KONSERT

Lördagen den 7 april
kl. 1/8 e. m.

i Brandkårahuset
under den ädliga medverkan af *Musikaliska Sällskapets orkester*, förstärkt med amatörer och medlemmar af *Åbo bataljons musikkår*.

— PROGRAM: —

1. *Ouverture till „Jungfrun i tornet“.*
(För liten orkester).
2. *Suite ur musiken till „Kung Kristian II“.*
Nocturno.
Elegie.
Mazette.
Serenade.
Ballade.
3. *Tablémusik:*
a) *Preludium för trä- och hornblåsare.*
b) *Scener.*
Bodendom.
Biskop Henrik öper sinars.
Hertig Johans höf.
Gustaf II Adolf.
Finslands uppvaknande.
4. *Atemarnes sång.*
(För kör och orkester).

Biljetter säljas i dag i Frenckell-
ska bokhandeln samt vid ingången.
Numrerad plats å 3 mk, onummerad
å 2 mk och 1: 50 å läktaren.
(A.T.1.40)

Figure 2. Åbo Underrättelser, 7 April 1900. The programme begins with “Overture to *The Maiden in the Tower* (for small orchestra)”.

One might imagine that the opening number at the composition concert in Turku was the first number of *Jungfrun i tornet*, the *Ouverture*.²⁴ However, evidently this was not the case. The *Ouverture* only lasts three minutes and is not substantial enough for a concert opener. Also, it is not feasible to perform the *Ouverture* as a separate number, because its final measures prepare a transition to the following music and remain hanging in the air, so to speak (see Facsimile 2).

The original material of *Jungfrun i tornet* contains numerous amendments, additions and cuts made by Sibelius in blue pencil.²⁵ The cuts are entered in all

the orchestral parts as well.²⁶ In order for these cuts to work smoothly, Sibelius made slight amendments to the musical content (see Facsimile 2). On closer examination, these cuts and additions generate an organically progressing orchestral work about 12 minutes in duration.

It seems obvious that what Sibelius conducted in Turku on 7 April 1900 was a new orchestral work based on *Jungfrun i tornet*. It has come to be called the Concert Overture to distinguish it from the *Ouverture* in the opera.

Music from the opera incorporated into the Concert Overture

The Concert Overture comprises music from the overture to the opera and from Scenes 4, 7 and 8.²⁷ The orchestration is the same as in the opera (1121 2110 10). Although the vocal parts were not deleted from the score, they were likely not included in the Turku performance: the concert advertisement states that the overture is “for small orchestra”. Some of the essential vocal lines were replaced with instruments (see Facsimile 3).²⁸

The music of the overture to the opera is included in the Concert Overture almost in full, except for a cut made near the beginning (see Facsimile 1). The percussion and horns have a lot more to do in the Concert Overture than in the opera (see Facsimile 4).

The music of the *Ouverture* (mm. 1–238 in the Concert Overture) sets a Kalevala mood and presents thematic material associated with the characters. Motifs that recur in the opera scenes include the music for the Bailiff’s flirting (mm. 45–72), the music presaging the fight between the Bailiff and the Lover (mm. 173–180) and the music reflecting the violent nature of the Bailiff (mm. 207–229).

²⁴ Dahlström, Fabian 2003. *Jean Sibelius: Thematisch-Bibliographisches Verzeichnis Seiner Werke*. See also Hannikainen 2018 and Lundberg – Selander 2001.

²⁵ Sibelius’s handwriting was identified by Timo Virtanen. Sibelius habitually used a blue pencil in 1900.

Opus number 20 was later assigned to *Malinconia*, a piece written later in spring 1900, following the death of Kirsti.

²⁶ Not all of the amendments made to the parts were transferred to the score.

²⁷ For a detailed description of the music reused from the opera proper, see Hannikainen 2018, pp. 127–128.

²⁸ Not all of the vocal parts were converted to instrument parts.

Scene 4 (mm. 239–249 of the Concert Overture) features the pastoral music associated with the honest peasant, the Lover. The Concert Overture skips over some of the modulations in Scene 4 and the yearning latter half of the scene.

After a pause, the Concert Overture goes straight into the combat music of Scene 6 (mm. 350–443). The fight between the Bailiff and the Lover is at times surprisingly light-hearted (cf. ‘Kullervo Goes to War’ the 4th movement in *Kullervo* op. 7 (1893)). The music of Scene 6 of the opera is included almost intact in the Concert Overture.

In Scene 7 (mm. 444–500), the Chatelaine breaks up the men’s fight and punishes the Bailiff despite his protestations. The people praise the Chatelaine’s sense of justice (mm. 479–500). In Scene 8 (mm. 501–639), the lovers are reunited (mm. 501–524). The people’s rejoicing continues from m. 524. The Lover’s theme (mm. 551–617) escalates towards the joyous concluding fanfares. The music of Scenes 7 and 8 is included intact in the Concert Overture.

Why the Concert Overture?

Sibelius may have had his eye on the international market when devising the Concert Overture. As early as in 1896, *Åbo Tidning* reported that *Jungfrun i tornet* was to be performed at the Royal Opera in Stockholm.²⁹ In their review of the premiere, the *Uusi Suometar* newspaper envisioned international potential for the work: “his music in this opera has a Finnish stamp to it, yet there are also universal European features in it. This will undoubtedly be to its advantage for its potential to gain performances beyond our borders.”³⁰

In spring 1900, the Helsinki Philharmonic Society was searching for suitable repertoire for their coming tour of Europe. With this in mind, Sibelius reviewed his completed works and wrote new versions of *Swan of Tuonela*, *Lemminkäinen’s Return* and the First Symphony. An important concert in Stockholm was scheduled for July, and Sibelius was just entering a working relationship with the German publishers Breitkopf & Härtel. At this time,

Sibelius did not yet have very much to offer an international audience, particularly in the way of works that fit the bill of an overture. All of his orchestral works had a strong national flavour.³¹

Under these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that Sibelius returned to *Jungfrun i tornet* in 1900 and began to refashion its material into a concert work. The composition concert in Turku was an opportunity for giving it a trial run.

There may have been a personal reason for performing the Concert Overture on 7 April. Sibelius is reported to have mourned the death of his daughter Kirsti on 13 February 1900 so profoundly that he was never able thereafter to speak of her.³² Sibelius may have wanted to avoid the funereal *Swan of Tuonela* in the wake of Kirsti’s passing and thus replaced it with the more upbeat Concert Overture at the concert in Turku.

The Concert Overture and *Kullervo*

When Sibelius was planning opus numbering for his works in 1911, he drew braces linking Overture (*Jungfrun i tornet?*) op. 7 and *Sinfoniska digter* [Tone poems] op. 8, and between the two he wrote *Kullervo*. Both works are accompanied by a note indicating that they were to be revised (‘omarbetas’).

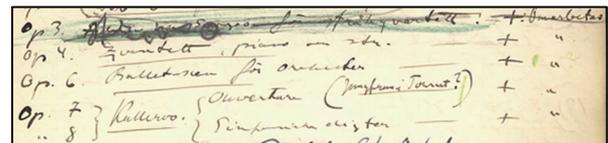


Figure 3. Extract from Sibelius’s diary, 13 August 1911: “Suggestions for missing opus numbers”.

What could this confusing entry mean? Did Sibelius plan to combine the Concert Overture with the ‘tone poems’ in *Kullervo*, i.e. movements 2 to 5? To be sure, the Concert Overture would well have suited such a function in terms of its nature and duration. A buoyant opening movement would have provided an antidote to the criticism that *Kullervo* was “long-winded”.³³ Had he proceeded with this rewrite, he might have further improved

²⁹ See footnote 7.

³⁰ *Uusi Suometar*, 8 November 1896.

³¹ Goss 2013, p. 276.

³² Tawaststjerna 1981a, pp. 168–169.

³³ Oskar Merikanto writing in *Päivälehti* in 1892, quoted in Hannikainen 2018, p. 80.

the compatibility of the Concert Overture with *Kullervo* for instance by expanding its orchestration.

The long sleep

The opera and numbers extracted from it appear in various plans around the turn of the 20th century: a proposed production in Mikkeli got as far as being announced in the press in June 1897, but the project folded because Sibelius never completed his rewrites.³⁴

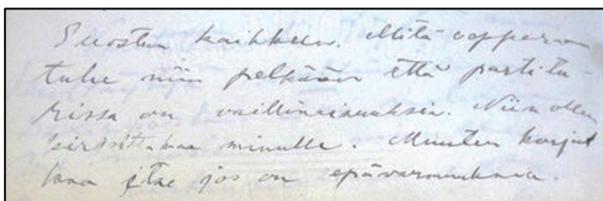


Figure 4. Letter to Jalmari Finne, 28 October 1906.³⁵ Finne was planning to perform *Jungfrun i tornet* in Viipuri (in Finnish) in summer 1907. Sibelius, who usually was very particular about his works, gave Finne this astonishing authorisation: “I agree to everything. As for the opera, I fear that there are deficiencies in the score [!] – please rectify any uncertainties yourself.”

In 1906, there were plans to perform both *Jungfrun i tornet* and a separate scene from it (Scene 3, known as *Kevätkuoro* [Spring Chorus]) in Viipuri.³⁶

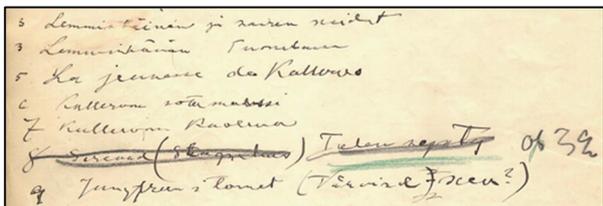


Figure 5. Diary page, 5 February 1910. “Old pieces to be revised”: *Jungfrun i tornet* (Värvind [Spring Wind] scene?).

On 5 February 1910, Sibelius made a list in his diary of works requiring revision. These included *Lemminkäinen* and *Kullervo* and also *Jungfrun i tornet* (Värvind [Spring Wind] scene?).

In 1913, Aino Ackté begged Sibelius to conduct *Jungfrun i tornet* at the Mikkeli Music Festival. Sibelius declined, referring to the libretto as the reason for this. The music also required revision, but at that point he could not spare the time.³⁷

Later in life, Sibelius deprecated his orchestral works of the late 19th century and sought to discourage performances of them. However, the revised versions of *En saga* and the *Lemminkäinen Legends* have entered the core orchestral repertoire, and *Kullervo* is an established masterpiece even though it was never revised. By contrast, *Jungfrun i tornet* and the Concert Overture sank into oblivion. They are written with a somewhat lighter touch, a style to which Sibelius never later returned in his orchestral works.

According to a famous anecdote, Sibelius banned further performances of *Jungfrun i tornet*, saying: “The maiden shall stay in her tower.”³⁸ As it happens, this may be an over-interpretation or even a misinterpretation of what Sibelius actually said. Harold Johnson explains the origin of the ban in his book on Sibelius, reporting that when conductor Warwick Braithwaite (described by Johnson as “English”, though he was from New Zealand) once indiscreetly asked Sibelius whether this miniature opera would be published after his death, he was drily but perhaps not without humour informed: “She will remain in the tower and not come out.”³⁹

While Sibelius reworked the material in *Jungfrun i tornet* into the Concert Overture, he never revised the opera itself. Like *Sleeping Beauty*, it remained dormant for nearly 100 years, with the Concert Overture by its side.

³⁴ “Sibelius has not finished the revision of ‘Jungfrun i tornet’.” Letter from Emmy Achté to Aino Ackté, 28 April 1897. Aino Ackté-Jalander archive, Finnish National Library Coll. 4.1.

³⁵ Finnish National Archive, Finne collection.

³⁶ “Next year at the Viipuri Song Festival we wish to perform the Spring Chorus [Scene 3] from your opera ‘Jungfrun i tornet’.” The entire opera was to be performed there “next February”. Letter from Jean Sibelius to Jalmari Finne, 28 October 1906. Finnish National Archive, Finne collection.

³⁷ “With all my soul I wish I could be of service to you with ‘Jungfrun i tornet’ and to conduct it. But – it is quite

impossible! Quite impossible! The text!! As for the music, it would need to be revised. But for that, unfortunately, I now have no time.” Letter to Aino Ackté, 12 November 1913.

³⁸ Tawaststjerna 1967, p. 98.

³⁹ Johnson, Harold Edgar 1960. *Jean Sibelius*, p. 83. Finnish translation by Yrjö Kivimies. Helsinki: Otava. [Original Sibelius quote from Johnson, Harold Edgar 1957. “The greatest monument to Sibelius”. In *Suomi-Finland USA* Vol. XII no. 7, 1957.]

EDITORIAL PRINCIPLES

The purpose of this premiere publication is to render the Concert Overture into a readily performable form. It was also considered important that the composer's original notation (and the deficiencies therein) should be seen in the score and in the commentary. The principal sources for this publication are the manuscript score by Sibelius and, to some extent, the orchestral parts. Both sources contain corrections, cuts and additions, mostly in Sibelius's handwriting.

All the annotations made in blue pencil in the material are in Sibelius's hand and probably date from 1900, i.e. they specifically concern the Concert Overture stratum.⁴⁰ The cuts entered in blue pencil can be found in all the orchestral parts, but not all of them are in the score. This may not have been necessary, of course, because the score was mainly used by Sibelius himself. The orchestral parts were used as the principal source for the overall form of the piece (see Example 12).⁴¹

The score as an unfinished feel to it in many respects: the pitches, accidentals, articulations and slurs are not always entirely clear. Many of the markings are illogical or obviously incorrect (see Examples 1, 23 and 28). The parts, copied out by Ernst Röllig, are very clear, but he also copied some of the shortcomings of the score over into the parts, besides introducing new errors in the copying process. Many of the discrepancies between the score and parts on the detail level have been regarded as errors or misinterpretations made by the copyist. These discrepancies have been resolved on the basis of the score.

The parts contain numerous amendments and corrections of pitches, accidentals, etc., made either by Sibelius himself or at his request.⁴² Not all of these had been transferred to the manuscript score (see Examples 21 and 22). The conclusion is that the amendments made to the parts represent the

composer's latest wishes (see Examples 3, 6 and 17), and here too the orchestral parts were used as the principal source (see also Example xx).

With regard to obviously erroneous notation found in both the score and the parts, the editorial decision was to apply the most likely or most feasible solutions. All such editorial decisions are listed in the commentary.

In certain places, Sibelius wrote dynamics or other markings only for one instrument in the score (often the flute or 1st violin) but not for other instruments playing the same material (see Examples 7, 8, 15, 18, 19, 26 and 27). In the present edition, obvious missing dynamics are entered in square brackets in the score, but square brackets are not used in the orchestral parts.⁴³

It would appear that some dynamics were specifically designed for the purposes of the opera, in the interests of balancing the orchestra and the singers. Although such considerations are not necessarily relevant in the Concert Overture, these dynamics have been retained (see Example 28).

Other inconsistencies have been amended where they were considered irrelevant for interpretation or for musical content: beaming has been rendered consistent (see Examples 10 and 25). Passages written *loco* in one source and *8va* in another were entered in the form that is easiest to read. Enharmonic differences between the score and parts have been similarly resolved, and in some cases a clef change was made for legibility (see Example 5).

⁴⁰ Conversation with Timo Virtanen, 13 November 2019.

⁴¹ Not all of the amendments appear in the score, probably because the score was only used by Sibelius himself except for the repeat of the concert in Turku conducted by José Eibenschütz on 10 April 1900.

⁴² Prof. Timo Virtanen has identified Sibelius's handwriting in most of the corrections.

⁴³ However, in some cases Sibelius may have meant an emphasis on an individual instrument, in which case the marking was not transferred to the other parts (e.g. Flute in mm. 630–631).

Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my warmest thanks to Professor Timo Virtanen for numerous consultations, sage advice and generous sharing of his enormous Sibelius expertise. Jari Eskola from Fennica Gehrman provided solid, friendly support at all stages of editing the Concert Overture. The professional skills of music engraver Jani Kyllönen were crucial for devising an easily legible appearance for the music. Last but not least, I would like to thank Jaakko Ilves and the Sibelius Estate for the opportunity to bring this work to publication for the first time.

Porvoo, 25 May 2020

Tuomas Hannikainen