VELJO TORMIS (b. 1930) has composed almost exclusively for the voice: hundreds of songs, song cycles, large-scale compositions for choirs, some stage works, and only the occasional instrumental piece. His own explanation is that for him, music begins with words; he does not have "purely musical" ideas. He has emphasized that he cannot (or does not want to) write music for pleasure or entertainment; his music always has something to say about the world, nature, men and peoples. Tormis is a real master of choral sound and large-scale choral composition. His colourful, almost orchestral writing for voices is always remarkable, to say nothing of his skill at creating tensions with the cumulative, seemingly monotonous repetition of an ancient folk tune.

Tormis was the eldest son of music-loving farmer, amateur violinist and conductor Riho Tormis, the parish clerk at Vigala Church. The church choir practised at their home, his mother singing alto and Veljo often sitting next to her. The church choir sang all kinds of music, and like most Estonian choirs of that time took part in local social events and national song festivals. This early experience of choral music and his involvement with national ideas and feelings related to the Estonian choral movement were certainly important for the future composer. At the age of 12 Veljo...
Tormis went to Tallinn to study music. A year later he was accepted for the organ class at the Conservatory. In 1951 he continued his composition studies at the Moscow Conservatory with Professor Vissarion Shebalin, graduating in 1956. Shebalin supported his student’s interest in national style based on the use of folk music.

In Estonia, the years around 1960 were marked by the enthusiastic study of modern musical ideas made possible by the general intellectual liberation in the Soviet Union. The young composers Arvo Pärt and Kuldar Sink became the leaders of the local avant-garde, experimenting with serial techniques at a time when neoclassical models were more widespread. Modern composition techniques and an anti-romantic attitude to folk music made their breakthrough in the music of Tormis in 1959–1967. In 1958 he led a student expedition to the little Estonian island of Kihnu, where they attended a real traditional wedding with old folk songs and dances. This event proved so enchanting that it changed Tormis’s attitude to the use of folk material. He then wrote the Kihnu Island Wedding Songs (1959), a cycle based on thorough study of Kihnu songs.

His acquaintance with the music of Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály during a visit to Hungary in 1962 was to have a great influence on Tormis. He has confessed that the choral compositions of Kodály were particularly close to him, and one of his most popular cycles, Autumn Landscapes (1964), was influenced by it. Some years later Tormis finished his first great cycle, Estonian Calendar Songs (1967), for men’s and women’s choir, drawing widely on the enchanting primeval power of ancient folk tunes. This was the starting point for “the real Tormis style”, as we know it, and several choral suites based on ancient folk songs of different peoples followed (Livonian Heritage in 1970, Votic Wedding Songs in 1971, and many others). No longer did Tormis use a folk tune as a melodic idea for motivic development; instead, the old rustic songs sounded in his compositions in their original manner. Around them he built truly symphonic choral textures and dramatic musical structures.

The scope of Tormis’s search for archaic material widened in the 1970s from the nearest Balto-Finnic peoples to a variety of traditions, giving rise to such works as North Russian Bylina (1976), Bulgarian Triptych (1978) and Latvian Bourdon Songs (1982). Sometimes he wanted to use traditional material close to the singers (such as Latvian songs composed for a Latvian choir). But no less important was his deep conviction that the ancient song traditions of different peoples have much in common: they reflect a way of life that is closer to nature, its beliefs and morals.

Tormis has often encouraged foreign choirs to sing his compositions in translation, as he insists that the singers and audience should understand what the song is about. However, words do have their musical aspect; music follows the rhythms and accents of verse prosody. Singable translations of texts have therefore been made under his careful supervision and some compositions have versions in different languages. In the 1990s, Tormis composed several works using English and Latin translations of the Finnish epic the Kalevala. These include Kullervo’s Message (1994, commissioned for The Hilliard Ensemble and using W. F. Kirby’s English translation as the original text for the composition) and Incantatio maris aestuosi (1996, based on the Latin version by Tuomo Pekkanen). An interesting work is The Bishop and the Pagan (Piis-pa ja pakana, 1992), commissioned for The King’s Singers, the text of which combines a medieval sequence telling the story (in Latin) of an English priest killed in Finland, a Finnish folk song reflecting the same event (in Finnish) and comments (in English).

In 1980, one of Tormis’s greatest works, the ballet-cantata Estonian Ballads, was premiered at the Estonian National Opera. It is scored for chorus, soloists and orchestra, and the stories of the ballads are represented by dancers in abstract and modern style. This was a difficult period for the Estonians, for the political climate in the Soviet Union had become harsher during the late 1970s. As a reaction, Tormis wrote several song cycles that almost brought him the aura of a dissident. He has always been outspoken, though in musical terms, about what he thinks about life around him. Some of his most serious compositions are also related to the new turning point in Estonian history.
The 1990s were an extremely productive decade for Tormis, bringing numerous international commissions due to the explosive spread of his music, particularly after the 1990 symposium of the International Federation for Choral Music in Tallinn (including a special concert of Tormis’s music) and the 1992 tour of the World Youth Choir in Spain (when Tõnu Kaljuste conducted the *Curse upon Iron* to great acclaim). After his 70th birthday in 2000 Tormis officially announced that with *The Singer’s Closing Words*, based on the epilogue to the *Kalevala*, he had finished his creative career and would retire. He has, however, been amazingly active during the past decade or so and devoted all his energy to editing earlier compositions, supervising performances and recordings of his music all over the world, and teaching the style of singing old folk songs at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre and the Viljandi Culture Academy. It is true that he has not composed any new works, but the number of transcriptions of earlier compositions is steadily growing. In 2009 Tormis composed a series of pieces for string orchestra called *Reminiscentiae* that are arrangements of earlier choral compositions from different periods and now form a cycle of orchestral music lasting nearly an hour. *Reminiscentiae* was premiered in summer 2010 for Tormis’s 80th birthday. He says it is like gazing from the top of a mountain back over the road he has travelled during his long creative life.

**Urve Lippus**
Professor of musicology,
Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre

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**SELECTED WORKS BY VELJO TORMIS**
All works are published by Fennica Gehrman unless otherwise mentioned.

**MIXED CHORUS**

**A. Series, cycles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Three Songs from the Epic</em> / <em>Kolm laulu eeposest</em> (1960)</td>
<td>trad., in Estonian</td>
<td>Carus-Verlag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Thirteen Estonian Lyric Folk Songs</em> / <em>Kolme esiti liurilist rahvalaulu</em> (1972)</td>
<td>trad., in Estonian</td>
<td>Carus-Verlag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Three Estonian Game Songs</em> / <em>Kolm eesti mängulaulu</em> (1972)</td>
<td>trad., in Estonian, English</td>
<td>Carus-Verlag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Three Setu Work Songs</em> / <em>Kolm setu töölaulu</em> (1976)</td>
<td>trad., in Estonian</td>
<td>Carus-Verlag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Dialectical Aphorisms</em> / <em>Dialeetilised aforismid</em> (1978)</td>
<td>Juhan Liiv, in Estonian</td>
<td>SP Muusikaprojekt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Reflections with Hando Runnel</em> / <em>Mõtisklusi Hando Runneliga</em> (1981)</td>
<td>Hando Runnel, in Estonian</td>
<td>SP Muusikaprojekt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Four Game Songs from Sangaste</em> / <em>Neli Sangaste mängulaulu</em> (1981)</td>
<td>trad., in Estonian</td>
<td>Carus-Verlag</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Five Estonian Folk Dances* / *Viss eesti rahvantsu* (1982) | Chorus sings while dancing (also for women’s chorus) | trad., in Estonian |
| *Nostalgia* (Eight Estonian Favourite Songs) (1985) | Text in Estonian, English |
| *Nine Estonian Harvest Songs* / *Üheksa eesti õõkustalaulu* (1987) | trad., Estonian | Carus-Verlag |
| *Four Estonian Lullabies* / *Neli eesti hällilaulu* (1989) | trad., in Estonian |
| *Six Estonian Children’s Songs* / *Kuus eesti lastelaulu* (1989) | trad., in Estonian |
| *Forgotten peoples* / *Unustatud rahvad* (1970–89) | A series of six cycles | |
| *Votic Wedding Songs* / *Vadja pulmalaulud* (1971) | trad., in Votic |
| *Izhorian Epic* / *Isuri eepos* (1975) | trad., in Izhorian |
| *Ingrian Evenings* / *Ingerimaa õhtud* / *Inkerin Ilat* (1979) | trad., in Ingrian-Finnish dialect, English |
| *Two Songs by Ernst Enno* / *Kaks laulu Ernst Enno sönadele* (1998) | Text in Estonian, English, German | Carus-Verlag |

**B. Solo and chamber music**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>A Offering to Sea</em> / <em>Vee saatri</em> (1962–63)</td>
<td>trad. by Jüri Liivik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Three Songs from the Northwest</em> / <em>Kolm laulu loodele</em> (1963)</td>
<td>trad., in Estonian, German, English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Estonian Love Songs</em> / <em>Eesti karjakundid</em> (1965)</td>
<td>trad., in Estonian and English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Reflections of Estonian Folk Songs</em> / <em>Mõtisklusi eesti rahvalauludest</em> (1973)</td>
<td>trad., in Estonian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Six Estonian Pop Songs</em> / <em>Kuus eesti poplaulu</em> (1974)</td>
<td>trad., in Estonian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Soviet Love Songs</em> / <em>Sõjalaal karjakundid</em> (1975)</td>
<td>trad., in Estonian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sixteen Estonian Pop Songs</em> / <em>KaksTeen eesti poplaulu</em> (1977)</td>
<td>trad., in Estonian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sixteen Estonian Children’s Songs</em> / <em>KaksTeen eesti lastelaulu</em> (1978)</td>
<td>trad., in Estonian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**C. Orchestral music**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Kalevipoeg</em> (1960)</td>
<td>Kalevipoeg, in Estonian, English, German</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Eesti rahvalaulude kogum</em> (1972)</td>
<td>trad., in Estonian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Eesti rahvalaulude seiklust</em> (1974)</td>
<td>trad., in Estonian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Nostalgia (Eight Estonian Favourite Songs)</em> (1985)</td>
<td>trad., in Estonian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Erkeke hamba laulu</em> (1987)</td>
<td>trad., in Estonian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Isuri eepos</em> (1975)</td>
<td>trad., in Izhorian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ingerimaa õhtud</em> / <em>Inkerin Ilat</em> (1979)</td>
<td>trad., in Ingrian-Finnish dialect, English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Vepsa rajad</em> (1983)</td>
<td>trad., in Vepsian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**D. Children’s songs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Six Estonian Children’s Songs</em> / <em>Kuus eesti lastelaulu</em> (1989)</td>
<td>trad., in Estonian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sixteen Estonian Children’s Songs</em> / <em>KaksTeen eesti lastelaulu</em> (1989)</td>
<td>trad., in Estonian</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**E. Chamber music**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Four Song-cycles</em> / <em>Neli laulu kogum</em> (1961)</td>
<td>trad., in Estonian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Three Sets of Songs</em> / <em>Kolme laulu kogum</em> (1963)</td>
<td>trad., in Estonian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Three Sets of Songs</em> / <em>Kolme laulu kogum</em> (1965)</td>
<td>trad., in Estonian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**F. Vocal works**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>The Re-establishment of Independence in 1991 – A Vision of Estonia</em></td>
<td>Text may be that the meanings and musical symbols embedded in these songs can be fully grasped only by people who have some experience of that life, but the message of Tormis’s music in general has demonstrated its power regardless of language or time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 1990s were an extremely productive decade for Tormis, bringing numerous international commissions due to the explosive spread of his music, particularly after the 1990 symposium of the International Federation for Choral Music in Tallinn (including a special concert of Tormis’s music) and the 1992 tour of the World Youth Choir in Spain (when Tõnu Kaljuste conducted the *Curse upon Iron* to great acclaim). After his 70th birthday in 2000 Tormis officially announced that with *The Singer’s Closing Words*, based on the epilogue to the *Kalevala*, he had finished his creative career and would retire. He has, however, been amazingly active during the past decade or so and devoted all his energy to editing earlier compositions, supervising performances and recordings of his music all over the world, and teaching the style of singing old folk songs at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre and the Viljandi Culture Academy. It is true that he has not composed any new works, but the number of transcriptions of earlier compositions is steadily growing. In 2009 Tormis composed a series of pieces for string orchestra called *Reminiscentiae* that are arrangements of earlier choral compositions from different periods and now form a cycle of orchestral music lasting nearly an hour. *Reminiscentiae* was premiered in summer 2010 for Tormis’s 80th birthday. He says it is like gazing from the top of a mountain back over the road he has travelled during his long creative life.

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B. Choral compositions

Curse Upon Iron / Raua needmine (1972) for chorus, tenor, bass and shaman drum (also a version for women's or men's chorus)
Text: August Annist on the motives of Kalevala, Paul-Eerik Rummo and Jaan Kaplinski, in Estonian, English

Rumors Are Flying / Küla kuuleb (1973) (also a version for women's chorus)
Text: trad., in Estonian, English

Heaps of Song / Laulu palju (1973)
Text: trad., in Estonian

Tower Bell in My Village / Tornikell minu külas (1978) Concerto for chorus, reciter and bell
Text: Fernando Pessoa, in Estonian, English

Bridge of Song / Laulusild (1981) (also for men's, women's and girls' chorus)
Text: Kalevala, trad. Estonian, in Finnish and Estonian

An Aboriginal Song (tabu-tabu) / Pärismaalase lauluke (1981) for chorus and shaman drum (also for men or women's chorus)

Singing Aboard Ship / Laevas lauldakse (1983) Ingrain ballad
Text: trad., in Finnish, Estonian

We Are Given / Meile antakse (1984) (also for men's or women's chorus)
Text: Juhan Viiding, in Estonian, English

Bride's Farewell / Sponsa suis valedicit / Möörsa hüvastijätt (1990)
Text: Kalevala, in Finnish, Latin

At the Crossroads / Na raspyute / Teelahkmel (1991)
Text: trad. bylina, in Russian

Text: Eino Leino, in Finnish

Forget-me-not / Meelespea. In memoriam Gustav Ernesaks (1993)
Text: trad., in Estonian, English

The Singer's Closing Words / Laulajan loppusanat / Lauliku lõpusõnad (2000) (also for men's chorus)
Text: Kalevala, in Finnish, Estonian, Latin, English

C. Songs

MEN'S CHORUS

A. Series, cycles

Such Songs I–II / Sellised laulud I–II (1962)
Text: Ain Kaalep, in Estonian, English

Men's Songs / Meestelaulud (1964–65)
Text: trad., in Estonian

Hamlet's Songs I–II / Hamleti laulud I–II (1964–65)
Text: Paul-Eerik Rummo, in Estonian

Three Estonian Folk Songs for Men's Chorus / Kolm eesti rahvalaulu meeskoorile (1969)
Text: trad., for two men's choruses

Three Hungarian Folk Songs / Három moldován-magyar népdal / Kolm ungari rahvalaulu (1983)
Text: trad., for Hungarian, Estonian

B. Choral compositions

Three I Had Those Words of Beauty / Kolm mul oli kaunist sõna (1962) A poem for chorus and flute
Text: Paul-Eerik Rummo, in Estonian

Song About a Level Land / Tasase maa laul (1964)
Text: Paul-Eerik Rummo, in Estonian

Days of Outlawry / Lindpruise päevad (1971/1979) fragments for chorus, mezzo-soprano and instruments
Text: Hando Runnel, in Estonian, English

Pictures From the Past of Vormsi Island / Bilder ur Ormsös förflutna / Pildikesi Vormsi minevikust (1983)
Text: trad., in Estonian-Swedish dialect, Estonian, Finnish, English

Double Dedication (Diptych) / Kaksikpühendus (Diptühhon) (1983) (also for mixed chorus)
Text: Marie Under and Gustav Suits, in Estonian

Three Hungarian Folk Songs / Három moldován-magyar népdal / Kolm ungari rahvalaulu (1983)
Text: trad., for women's choir

Once We Will Reappear / Kord me tulem tagasi (1969; alternative title: Our Shadows / Meie varjud) (also for mixed chorus)
Text: Jaan Kaplinski, in Estonian, English

An Aboriginal Song (tabu-tabu) / Pärismaalase lauluke

Once We Will Reappear / Kord me tulem tagasi (1969; alternative title: Our Shadows / Meie varjud) (also for mixed chorus)
Text: Jaan Kaplinski, in Estonian, English
Flight of the Conscript / Nekrutõi põgenemine (1969)
Text: trad., in Estonian, English
SP Muusikaprojekt

We Have Eaten / Sõömad sõóud (1969)
Text: trad., in Estonian, English
SP Muusikaprojekt

Going to War / Sõttaminek (1973)
Text: trad., in Estonian, English
SP Muusikaprojekt

Plague Memory / Katkuaja mälestus (1973)
Ballad
Text: Jaan Kaplinski, in Estonian

The Singer / Laulja (1973)
Text: trad., in Estonian

Litany to Thunder / Pikse litaania (1974)

North Russian Byлина / Põhja-vene bõliina (1976)
for chorus and soloists
Text: trad., in Russian

Voices from Tammsaare's Herdboy Days / Hääled Tammsaare karjapõlvest (1976)
Documentary cantata for chorus, soloists, percussion and phonogram
Text: trad., in Estonian

Songs of the Ancient Sea / Muistte mere laulud (1979)
for chorus and soloists
Text: trad., in Estonian

The Viru Oath / Viru vanne (1980)
(also for mixed chorus)
Text: Hando Runnel, in Estonian

The Last Ship (Valse triste) / Viimane laev (1981)
Text: Juhan Smuul, in Estonian, German

The Eagle Flew from the North-East / Kokko lendas kirdest (1982)
Text: trad., in Karelian

Peoples' Friendship Rhapsody / Rahvaste sõpruse rapsoodia (1982)
for chorus and soloists
Text: trad., in Estonian and Russian

Childhood Memory (Herding Calls) / Helletused (1982)
for soprano and chorus (also for mixed chorus)
Text: after Aino Tamm and Miina Härma, in Estonian,


Journey of the War Messenger / Sõjakulleri sõit (1984)
for two men's choruses
Text: Kalevipoeg, in Estonian, English

Let the Sun Shine / Jäta päike paistma! (1984)
Text: Kalevipoeg, in Estonian, English

for chorus and piano (also for bass and piano)
Text: Kalenteletar, in Finnish, Latin, Estonian

for chorus and tam-tam
Text: Kalenteletar, in Finnish, Latin, Estonian

The Seventeenth Canto of the Kalevala / Kalevalan seitsemästoista runo / "Kalevala" seitsemieistkümnes runo (1985)
for chorus and folk instruments
Text: Kalevala, in Finnish

Story of a Betrayer / Ilmiantajan tarina / Äraandja lugu (1986)
Text: Eino Leino, in Finnish, Latin

Text: Juhan Livi, in Estonian

The Political Party Game of the Estonian People / Eestirahva erakonnamäng (1990)
Text: trad., in Estonian, English

The Bishop and the Pagan / Piispa ja pakan / Piiskop ja pagan (1992/1995)
Medieval sequence for an ensemble of soloists (CT, CT, T, Bar, B) (also for chorus and soloists)
Commissioned by the King's Singers
Text: trad., in Latin, Finnish and English combined

Two of Our Days / Kevadkillud (1993)
Text: Kalenteletar, in Finnish, Estonian

Crosswind / Tõmbtuul (1993)
Text: Henrik Visnapuu, in Estonian, English

Kullervo's Message / Kullervo sõnum (1994)
for an ensemble of soloists (CT, T, T, B)
Commissioned by the Hilliard Ensemble
Text: Kalevala, in English

Incantation for a Stormy Sea / Incantatio maris aetuum / Tormise mere loits (1996)
for two men's choruses
Text: Kalevala, in Latin

Christmas is Coming / Jõulud tulevad (1996)
(also for mixed chorus)

A. Series, cycles

Five Songs for Toddlers / Viis laulu mudilastele (1961)
for treble unison chorus, piano
Text: Paul-Eerik Rummo, Lea Tormis, Heljo Maid, in Estonian, Russian
SP Muusikaprojekt

Three Songs by Paul-Eerik Rummo / Kolm laulu Paul-Eerik Rummo sõnadele (1963)
for women's chorus
Text: in Estonian

Nature Pictures / Looduspildid (1964–69)
Four cycles of miniatures for women's chorus

Spring Sketches / Kevadkillud (1966)
Text: Jaan Kaplinski, in Estonian, English

Summer Motives / Suvenemotiivid (1969)
Text: Aleksander Suuman, in Estonian, English

Autumn Landscapes / Sügismaastikud (1969)
(also for mixed chorus)
Text: Viivi Luik, in Estonian, English

Winter Patterns / Talvemustrid (1968)
Text: Andres Ehin, in Estonian, English

Modal Études / Modaalsed etüüdid (1970)

Four cycles of miniatures for children's chorus

Spring Sketches / Kevadkillud (1966)
Text: Jaan Kaplinski, in Estonian, English

Summer Motives / Suvenemotiivid (1969)
Text: Aleksander Suuman, in Estonian, English

Autumn Landscapes / Sügismaastikud (1969)
(also for mixed chorus)
Text: Viivi Luik, in Estonian, English

Winter Patterns / Talvemustrid (1968)
Text: Andres Ehin, in Estonian, English

Women's Songs / Naistelaulud (1974–75)
for women's chorus

Incantation for a Stormy Sea / Incantatio maris aetuum / Tormise mere loits (1996)
for two men's choruses
Text: Kalevala, in Latin

Christmas is Coming / Jõulud tulevad (1996)
(also for mixed chorus)
Text: trad., in Estonian, English

SP Muusikaprojekt
Grandparents’ Chest of Tunes / Vananemate viisivakk (1986)
Old school songs for children’s chorus and recorders
Text in Estonian, English

Three Karelian Maidens / Tres virgenes Careliae / Kolme Karjalan neitoa / Kolm Karjala neidu (1991)
for girls’ chorus
Text: Kanteletar, in Finnish, Latin

Finno-Ugric Landscapes / Suomalais-ugrilaisia maisemia / Soome-ugri maastikud (1994)
for children’s chorus
Text: in different Finno-Ugric languages, Finnish

Three Ugric Folk Songs for children’s chorus
Text: trad., in English (Ugric languages in English orthography)
Boosey & Hawkes

A. Series, cycles

Estonian Calendar Songs / Eesti kalendrilaulud (1966–67)
A series of five cycles
Text: trad., in Estonian, English

I Martinmas Songs / Mardilaulud for men’s chorus
Text: Kersti Merilaas, in Estonian, English

II St. Catherine’s Day Songs / Kadrilaulud for women’s chorus

III Shrovetide Songs / Vastlalaulud for men’s chorus

IV Swing Songs / Kiigelaulud for women’s chorus

V St. John’s Day Songs for Midsummer Eve / Jaanilaulud for women’s and men’s choruses

Bulgarian Triptych / Bulgaria triptühhon (1978)
for women’s, men’s and mixed chorus
Text: Elisaveta Bagrjana, in Bulgarian, Estonian

B. Choral compositions

Prologue of Kalevala / Prologus Kalevanus / Kalevalan alkusanat / "Kalevala" algus (1978)
for mixed and men’s chorus
Text: Jaan Kaplinski, in Estonian, Russian

SOLO SONGS

Vocal Miniatures (1955–63)
for high voice and piano

Four Fragments (The Seasons) / Neli kildu (Aastaajad) (1955)
Text: Juhan Liiv, in Estonian, Russian

Melancholy Moments – Four Romances / Nukrad viivud – neli romanssi (1958)
Text: Minni Nurme, in Estonian, Russian

Three Flowers / Kolm lille (1960)
Text: Juhan Liiv, in Estonian, Russian

Little Bunch of Stars / Kümme tähte (1963)
Text: Aleksander Suuman, in Estonian, Russian

Ten Haikus / Kümme haikut (1966)
A cycle of miniatures for voice and piano
Text: Jaan Kaplinski, in Estonian, Russian

There is Our Home / Sääl on me kodu (1968)
Text: Gustav Suits, in Estonian, Russian

Three Stars / Tris zvaigznes / Kolm tāhte (1989)
Text: Māra Zālīte, in Latvian, Estonian

Forging the Sampo / Sampo cuditur / Sampo tagumine (1997)
for girls’ chorus, log drums and anvil (also for men’s chorus)
Text: Kalevala, in Latin

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For C. vocational choirs

COMBINED CHORUSES

There is Our Home / Sääl on me kodu (1968)
Text: Gustav Suits, in Estonian, Russian

Three Stars / Tris zvaigznes / Kolm tāhte (1989)
Text: Māra Zālīte, in Latvian, Estonian

Forging the Sampo / Sampo cuditur / Sampo tagumine (1997)
for girls’ chorus, log drums and anvil (also for men’s chorus)
Text: Kalevala, in Latin

There is Our Home / Sääl on me kodu (1968)
Text: Gustav Suits, in Estonian, Russian

Three Stars / Tris zvaigznes / Kolm tāhte (1989)
Text: Māra Zālīte, in Latvian, Estonian

Forging the Sampo / Sampo cuditur / Sampo tagumine (1997)
for girls’ chorus, log drums and anvil (also for men’s chorus)
Text: Kalevala, in Latin

Boosey & Hawkes

B. Choral compositions

Heavenly Winds / Taevaste tuul (1966)
for women’s chorus
Text: Vilvi Luik, in Estonian, English

Orphan’s Lament / Vaeslapse kaebus (1966)
for women’s chorus
Text: trad., in Estonian, English
Six Estonian Narrative Folk Songs / Kuus eesti jutustavat rahvalaulu (1969)
for women’s voices and piano
Text: trad., in Estonian
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Four Estonian Narrative Folk Songs / Nel ei eesti jutustavat rahvalaulu (1970)
for men’s voices and piano
Text: trad., in Estonian
SP Muusikaprojekt

Two Estonian Runo Songs / Kaks eesti jutustavat rahvalaulu
(1973–74)
for men’s voices (s, mz) and piano
Text: trad., in Estonian
SP Muusikaprojekt

Melancholy Songs / Kuvumeelseid laulud
(1979)
for voice (mezzo-soprano) and wind quintet or strings
Text: trad., in Estonian
SP Muusikaprojekt

**STAGE WORKS**

The Swan’s Flight / Luigelend (1964–66)
Swan’s Flight (1964–65)
An opera in 3 scenes, 2 acts
Libretto by Ülo Tedre, in Estonian
First performance 1980 (“Estonia” , Tallinn)
Lithuanian Ballads / Lietuvos jautulai
(1991)
for mezzo-soprano, in Estonian
SP Muusikaprojekt

**INSTRUMENTAL WORKS**

Three Preludes and Fugues for Piano (g, b, D) (1955–58)

**SELECTED RECORDINGS BY VELJO TORMIS**

Overture No. 2 (Music from Estonia, Vol. 2)
The Scottish National Orchestra / Neeme Järvi
Chandos CHAN 8656, 1989

Forgotten Peoples
Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir / Tõnu Kaljuste
ECM New Series (2CD) 1459/60-434-275-2, 1992

Ancient voices
R.A.M. / Olev Oja
Far Far 0011 /2, 1994

Bridge of Song
Estonian Radio Choir / Toomas Kaptan
Finlandia Records CD 4509-96937-2, 1995
(Neew release: Veljo Tormis: Choral Works, Apex Finlandia Warner Classics 0927-49871-2)

People of Kalevala
R.A.M. (Estonian National Men’s Choir) / Olev Oja, Ants Soots, Ants Üleoja
Finlandia Records CD 0630-12245-2, 1996

Casting a Spell – Estonian Calendar Songs
Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir / Tõnu Kaljuste
Virgin Classics CD 7243-5-45185-2-2, 1996

Kullervo’s message (A Hilliard Songbook)
The Hilliard Ensemble

The Bishop and the Pagan (Sermons and Devotions)
The King’s Singers
RCA Victor 09026-68255-2, 1996

Litany to Thunder
Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir / Tõnu Kaljuste
ECM 1687, 1999

Heaps of Songs
Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir / Tõnu Kaljuste
Carus-Verlag, Carus 83.400, 2000

Swan Flight
Finnish-Estonian Symphony Orchestra / Anu Tali
Finlandia Records 8573-89876-2, 2001

Vision of Estonia I
R.A.M. / Ants Soots
Alba Records NCD17, 2001

Vision of Estonia II
R.A.M. / Ants Soots
Alba Records NCD20, 2004

Vision of Estonia III
R.A.M. / Ants Soots
Alba Records NCD23, 2004

Estonian Ballads
Estonia Theatre Orchestra, Oratorio Choir / Tõnu Kaljuste (recorded 1989)
Forte FD 0067 /2, 2010

Works for Men’s Voices
Svanholm Singers / Sofia Söderberg Eberhard
Toccata TOCC73, 2007

Veljo Tormis on American Shores
Portland State University Chamber Choir / Bruce Browne
Claron CLP921, 2007

Vision of Kalevala
R.A.M. / Ants Soots
Alba Records NCD35, 2008

Tormis: Choral Works
Holst Singers / Stephen Layton
Hyperion CDA67601, 2008

Overture No. 2 (Dmitri Shostakovich & Veljo Tormis)
Cincinnati Symphoy Orchestra / Paavo Järvi
Telarc CD 80702, 2009

Veljo Tormis on American Shores
Portland State University Chamber Choir / Bruce Browne
Claron CLP921, 2007

Estonian Ballads
Estonia Theatre Orchestra, Oratorio Choir / Tõnu Kaljuste (recorded 1989)
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