

REPERTOIRE TIPS Chamber operas



KALEVI AHO

Frida y Diego - Fresco operistico (2013)

Dur: 148'

Libretto: Maritza Núñez (Spa)

9 sol, 1121-1111-02-hp.theremin-str-mixed choir

The opera picks out dramatic twists in the lives of Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera, and of Lev Trotsky, exiled in Mexico. Frida's alter ego is also present. Aho's music shines and glows in sumptuous Latino colours. The 29-piece orchestra includes such instruments as a Mexican folk harp and a theremin. The mood varies from dreamy to wildly carnivalistic, and there is also some sharp political parody.



SVEN-ERIK BÄCK

Tranfjädrarna/The Twilight Crane/

Die Kranichfedern (1957) Dur: 55'

Libretto: Bertil Malmberg after a play by Junji Kinoshita (Sw/Eng/Ger)

4 sol, 1001-1000-11-0-cel-str (00321) - mixed choir

Opera in five tableaux based on a Japanese tale about the consequences of greed. The farmer Yohio saves the life of a crane, who in gratitude returns to him in the form of a woman, Tsu. From crane feathers she weaves the most beautiful textiles, but her husband must never see her weaving. The suggestive plot is told by very simple means: the song melody lies very close to the spoken word, and the transparent orchestral texture has a Japanese touch.



DANIEL BÖRTZ

Svall /Surge (2003) Dur: 100'

Libretto: Claes Fellbom (Sw)

8 sol, 2221-2210-11-pf-str-mixed chorus á 8

Surge is a two-act tragedy based on real events, two widely publicized honor killings that took place in Sweden in the beginning of the 2000s. The vocal parts range from the most beautiful lyrical song to purely spoken words. The music is rich in nuances and underlines and deepens, in abrupt changes, moods and emotions. A small chorus comments on the course of events, and the baritone saxophone plays an important role as the mouthpiece of brutality.



KIMMO HAKOLA

Marsin mestarilaulajat/Die Meister-

singer vom Mars (2000) Dur: 70'

Libretto: Matti Hagelberg, Karla Loppi (Fin/Ger)

4 sol, fl-cl-vl-vc or chamber orchestra & CD

This is a "comics opera". Hakola has translated Hagelberg's cartoons into a humorous work which is absurd, surrealist and one of the most delightful contemporary operas. The music wildly blends ingredients in a post-modern spirit and presents some astonishing combinations, such as minimalism and Baroque. Piia and Anu Komi in the leading roles made the premiere in 2000 an absolute riot.



FREDRIK HÖGBERG/ NICOLAI DUNGER

Stilla min eld/Appease My Fire (2016)

Dur: 120'

Libretto: Kerstin Gezelius/Alexander Onofri (Sw/

English translation is under way)

5 sol, fl-cl-pf-perc-string trio

The plot is set in a luxurious flat in central London. Hans K. Rausing, heir to the TetraPak conglomerate, locks himself in with his dead wife Eva for two months. The two had vowed eternal love to one another, not even death could separate them. A poignant and deeply tragic story about love and drug abuse, based on true events. The music is kept close to the feelings described in the text. It is very direct and melodious with a dark, melancholy tone.



OLLI KORTEKANGAS

Yhden yön juttu/One Night Stand

(2011) Dur: 120'

Libretto: Michael Baran (Fin)

18 sol, 1121-2110-02-hp-pf(+synth)-el.guit-str-

mixed choir

This modern opera is a detective and love story hybrid. The main role is sung by either a soprano or, in the alternate cast, a tenor – hence the love is between either two women or a man and a woman. There was a new approach to processing the opera in real-time interactivity in workshops at the Sibelius Academy.

In the skilful music classical is mixed with contemporary sound phenomena such as popular music and jazz.



TIMO-JUHANI KYLLÖNEN

Tango solo (2010) Dur: 54'

Libretto: Maritza Núñez (Spa)

1 sol, fl/acc/pf/string quartet

Tango Solo is a monologue opera, a song to love and dreams. The events are set in night-time Buenos Aires. Nicole (soprano) awaits the arrival of a comet and hovers on the borders of madness, death and life. The opera is simultaneously dreamy, sensual, passionate and realistic. Kyllönen's music carries tango and milonga references, and the accordion gives the opera a feeling of Argentina.



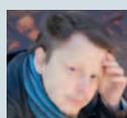
JYRKI LINJAMA

Die Geburt des Täufers (2010) Dur: 85'

Libretto: Jyrki Linjama, Matti Kontio, Jussi Tapola (Ger)

4 sol, 0000-1000-01-str

This church opera is about the birth of John the Baptist and places texts from the Bible, the Gospel according to Luke and The Song of Songs in touch with the present day. Linjama works with musical-historical layers and uses them to construct an impressive, moving drama. The well-crafted music truly speaks to the listener, rises in places to lofty heights and culminates in The Magnificat.



VELI-MATTI PUUMALA

Anna Liisa (2006) Dur: 145'

20 sol, 2121-2220-02-pf-str

Libretto: Puumala, Tiina Käkelä-Puumala (Fin)

A powerful, timeless work with a message and hailed by the critics as a great new Finnish opera. The libretto is based on the classic play of the same name by Minna Canth and addresses the themes of the status of a young woman with a secret, and liberation in a rural community. Folkloristic music plays an important part in it and there are often some beautiful ballad-like episodes.



SVEN-DAVID SANDSTRÖM

Föreställningen/The Performance

(2013) Dur: 60'

Libretto: Katarina Frostenson (Sw)

3 sol, cl-perc-pf-string quartet

Three women find themselves at the mental hospital La Salpêtrière in Paris in the late 19th century, waiting for their turn to expose their states of mind before the world-renowned Dr. Charcot and an audience of celebrities. One can sense the women's apprehension and anxiety in the music's rapid fluctuations between the deeply painful and the joyful lovely melodies. An ingenious feature are the deep Balinese gongs that accentuate the darkness in the story.



TAPIO TUOMELA

Äidit ja tyttävät/Mothers and Daughters

(1999) Dur: 100'

Libretto: Paavo Haavikko (Fin)

10 sol, 2221-2111-20-pf-str

The focus in this opera inspired by The Kalevala is on strong, archetypal women and the Don Juan-like character of Lemminkäinen. The writing for the orchestra is colourful, and the vocally-rewarding music allows room for both bel canto and more speech-like techniques. The women's singing tradition rooted in folk music also has a place in the work, in the form of a trio of women who comment on the events.



CARL UNANDER SCHARIN

Hummelhonung/Sweetness (2001)

Dur: 135'

Libretto: Magnus Carlberg after a novel by Torgny Lindgren (Sw)

7 sol, 1111-1110-01-0-synth-str (11111)

A burlesque thriller in two acts about brotherhood, madness, hate and death. Two elderly terminally ill brothers in a remote country district hate each other with a passion. The only thing keeping them alive is the will to survive the other. The music is very well balanced, suggestive and minimalist.