

# REPERTOIRE TIPS *Music for children*

## KIMMO HAKOLA

Mara and Katti (2011)

Dur: 55'

Libretto: Johanna Jokipaltio  
(in Finnish)

Children's opera for 4 soloists,  
descant choir and ensemble:  
cl, hp, pf, acc, vla

The opera is packed with action and contains plenty of food for the imagination. The story is about Mara, who meets a singing cat called Katti. During their journey, they encounter the rat king, languish in prison and escape on a scooter. Hakola's virtuosic fairytale music creates a musical adventure all of its own. Entertainment, humour and intelligent sophistication go hand in hand while the music switches from one genre to another, from children's song, minimalism and Baroque to archaic style or Balkan music.



## FREDRIK HÖGBERG

Higgins & Mr. Wrengengengeng (1993) Dur: 50'



Text in Swedish and English  
A musical fairy tale/ballet for  
narrator, dancers and orchestra:  
2222-2220-13-0-pf-str

An exuberant musical fairy tale and dance performance. The narrative grew out of the collaboration of a hundred preschool children. It is about the little princess whose unicorn is abducted by the evil wizard Mr. Wrengengengeng. She gets help from the good-natured Higgins, who lives alone in the forest with his flowers. We also meet the pirate "Piano", a pair of dancing cactuses, evil trolls, et al. The music is stirring, imaginative, humorous and entertaining. It is

rhythmical and full of dance, Spanish rhythms, waltzes, jazz, folk music and rumbling troll drums.

## PEKKA JALKANEN

The Trip to Panama

(Oh, wie schön ist Panama)

(1989) Dur: 28'

Text: Janosch (in Finnish,  
Swedish, English or German)  
A musical fable for narrator,  
treble recorder, harpsichord  
and ensemble: fl/af/2perc/  
str(44321)

This is a delightful, through-composed musical fable based on a charming story of friendship and adventure by Janosch. A bear and a tiger are taking a trip to the Panama of dreams. In the course of their exciting adventure, they meet live beasts of the forest and learn new things. According to Jalkanen, the work takes the form of a set of variations in which the musical texture moulds itself around the events of the plot.



## ERLAND VON KOCH

Pelle Svanslös/Pelle Schwanzlos/Peter Tailless, the Cat

(1948/88) Dur: 60'

Libretto: Gösta Knutsson (in  
Swedish and German)  
16 soloists and orchestra:  
1111-1110-01-pf/cel(kbd)

A colourful children's opera based on the popular children's books by Gösta Knutsson about the adventures of a cat without a tail. You meet his friends but also cats that constantly tease him for being tailless. The opera consists of 33 short musical numbers, divided into seven scenes, in which the composer captures the characters of the various cats in the story by giving them an easily recognisable theme. The opera's frisky, rhythmic and light-hearted music matches to perfection the good humour and high spirits of the text.



## ILKKA KUUSISTO

Muumiooppera/Die Muminoper/The Moomin Opera

(1974) Dur: 65'

Libretto: Esko Elstelä after Tove Jansson (in Finnish or German)  
7 soloists, 2 other roles, dancers and orchestra: 1111-2111-02-hp-str

A jolly opera based on the children's book Moominsummer Madness by Tove Jansson, in which a nearby volcano causes a massive wave to flood Moominvalley. The Moomins and their friends take refuge in the opera house as it floats by and begin studying this vocal art. Kuusisto's music gleefully borrows from many genres and introduces its young audiences not only to traditional opera but also to oratorio, operetta and even dance music.



## BENJAMIN STAERN

Snödrottningen/The Snow Queen (2016) Dur: 70'

Libretto: Anelia Kadieva Jonsson after H.C. Andersen (in Swedish)  
11 soloists, children's chorus and orchestra: 2222-2220-02-hp-pf/sampler-str

The Snow Queen is based on H.C. Andersen's well-known fairy tale about Gerda, who ventures out to save her friend Kai after he has been abducted by the Snow Queen. The evil and the goodness are easily recognizable in the music, depicted with sharp dissonances and noise, or in major/minor harmonies. The music is congenial with the tale, it is full of flashes of wit and swarming with musical references. It is an opera replete with excitement, humour and a heart-warming message, friendship's victory over evil.

