

### KALEVI AHO

String Quartet No. 1 (1967)  
Dur: 30'

Aho's first string quartet provides a fascinating insight into the musical world of an 18-year-old. When he showed it to his teacher, Einjuhani Rautavaara, he was told that there was no longer any need to study tonal harmony and formal constructions because he would pass the exams straight away. The quartet begins in variation form. The lyrical second movement has a light, virtuosic middle section that proceeds to the third, quick movement and on to a chorale-like final.



### TOBIAS BROSTRÖM

String Quartet No. 1 (2013)  
Dur: 24'

Broström's first string quartet starts out with a lovely, softly billowing first movement. It passes over into an energetic and dancing 'Allegro', followed by the 3<sup>rd</sup> movement's magical, shimmering 'Calmo', and the rhythmically violent 4<sup>th</sup> movement's pizzicatos. With its whirling sextuplets the 4<sup>th</sup> movement reconnects with the first, and the opening bitter-sweet violin theme returns. Composed for Brooklyn Rider.



### CECILIA DAMSTRÖM

Letters (2018) Dur: 15'

Written as a commentary on Janacek's second string quartet "Intimate Letters", Damström's music is inspired by the lines that Janacek wrote to his beloved Kamila. In her music, Damström tries to depict the feelings and words that form the content of his correspondence: heaven, hope, fear, fire and much more. The work is dedicated to the Brodsky Quartet and was written on commission from the Netherlands Stift Festival.



### KIMMO HAKOLA

String Quartet No. 4 (2016)  
Dur: 13'

Hakola's short but wildly intense quartet got an enthusiastic reception at its premiere and was said to have the makings of a small-scale cult work. Its "heavy riff", players stamping on the floor and other such things provide plenty of surprises. In the composer's own words, it has the playful, defiantly dramatic, surprising, capricious and unrestrained *tour de force* of a youthful entity, and it continues his line of exciting quartets; his first on the Unesco Composers' Rostrum in 1987.



### HALVOR HAUG

String Quartet No. 1 (1985)  
Dur: 22'

A theme consisting of five tones, Bb-A-Ab-B-G, dramatically opens Haug's first string quartet. The tone material recurs later in various ways through its six contrasting but connected sections, and the whole string quartet is concluded with the theme in its original form. Composed for the Norwegian String Quartet.



### MATS LARSSON GÖTHE

In modo lido (Ein Heiliger Dankgesang) (2017) Dur: 4'

A reflection over the slow third movement in Beethoven's String Quartet No. 15. Larsson Göthe describes how deeply he was moved when he heard this for the first time, a feeling that Beethoven had in some way tied together past and present in his lyrical tone language, based on the Lydian church mode. This is something that repeats itself in Larsson Göthe's piece, which despite the small format contains the formal framework – introduction, exposition, development and coda. Composed for the project Beethoven #without filter and Upsala Chamber Soloists.



### INGVAR LIDHOLM

Three Elegies and Epilogue (1947/86) Dur: 20'

In 1940, the 19-year old Lidholm composed an 'Elegiac Suite' in three movements for string quartet, where one can find traces of inspiration from both Sibelius and Stenhammar. More than 40 years later he wrote a short epilogue, "a Hiliding Rosenberg con reverenza," to celebrate his friend and teacher's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. When Lidholm in 1986 appended this 'Epilogue' to the 'Three Elegies' he had a reason: he "wanted to see if the youthful tones had any relevance to the composer who wrote the Epilogue."



### JYRKI LINJAMA

String Quartet No. 2 "Allerheiligtentag III" (2018) Dur: 20'

Allerheiligtentag III is based on a Finnish folk chorale for All Saints' Day. Linjama became so attached to the harsh, beautiful melody that it has generated a whole cycle of works. This string quartet is in three movements tensed in different ways by contrasts. The first has both swinging softness and cutting sharpness, the Scherzo the wildness of a dance of death and lyricism, and the finale the irrevocability of a funeral march and tender melodiousness.



### KAI NIEMINEN

String Quartet No. 3 "Gestures of Winter" (2017) Dur: 20'

The four string quartets by Kai Nieminen were inspired by the experience of a starry Arctic night, unsullied by street lamps or other light pollution. The world of sound in each of the four captures the wintry atmosphere and light of Maritime Lapland. Gestures of Winter bears the epithet "Time Around Northern Night Skies..." The most recent, 4<sup>th</sup> quartet was premiered at a streamed concert given by the Sea Lapland String Quartet on 16 February.



### PEHR HENRIK NORDGREN

String Quartet No. 11 (2008)  
Dur: 21'

Nordgren's quartet is introspective and devout in tone. Its distinctive soundscape is the result of the abnormal tuning, which returns to normal in the lively Rondo and is "as if a light were shining from a very confined space". The Lamentoso interlude is an excruciatingly beautiful meditation on a chorale theme, and the short closing Pietoso epilogue is like a flash of another reality.



### SEPPÖ POHJOLA

String Quartet No. 4 (2006)  
Dur: 33'

Pohjola's first four string quartets have been recorded and the reviews have not been stinting with their praise. According to the late Jouni Kaipainen, the fourth is one of the greatest works by Pohjola and a landmark in Finnish quartet literature. It has two large sections separated by a general pause. Pohjola here varies canonic themes with considerable invention and imagination. The second part evolves and proceeds at times with a lively onward drive. But listen especially to the magical ending: what a delicate, impressive texture!



### CARIN MALMLÖF-FORSSELLING

The Silver Quartet (1988)  
Dur: 13'

Five short movements written in a positive and harmonic spirit. Even if there is a certain melancholy that pervades the tone language itself, the overall impression is still bright with the two lively outer movements, and the third movement's energetic Scherzo played entirely pizzicato. As if to underline the work's character, the last movement has been given the marking *Allegro con felicità* (happy allegro).



### EINOJUHAN RAUTAVAARA

String Quartet No. 1 (1953)  
Dur: 22'

The new Urtext edition sheds new light on this quartet from Rautavaara's Neo-Classical early period, with his corrections and comments. Stravinsky and Finnish folk music are present in the rhythmical first movement; entering later is a characteristic scale of alternating half and whole tones. After the Slavic romanticism of the slow movement (*Andante*), the fiddler returns in a cheerful *Gigue*.



### ALBERT SCHNELZER

String Quartet No 2 – Emperor Akbar (2009) Dur: 12'

Inspired by a novel by Salman Rushdie, the character Emperor Akbar's complex personality is reflected in Schnelzer's music. The string quartet starts out literally with the emperor decapitating a young rebel. After that, rhythmical and violent passages alternate with achingly beautiful, contemplative scenes. A commission from the Nordland Music Festival for the Brodsky Quartet.



### MATTHEW WHITTALL

Bright Ferment (String Quartet No. 2) (2019) Dur: 9'  
Strange Geography (String Quartet No. 3) (2019) Dur: 10'30"

Quartet No. 2 was commissioned for the Banff International String Quartet Competition. It opens with delightful energy and proceeds towards a more lyrical section featuring some exquisite moments. The compact, introvert third quartet shares the same strands of musical DNA – polyrhythmic beats plus the repetition and reflective beauty typical of Whittall's music.

