

12.10.

FRIDAY SERIES 3

Helsinki Music Centre at 19:00

ICELAND and ESTONIA 100 YEARS

Anna-Maria Helsing, conductor

Arto Noras, cello

Jüri Reinvere: Through a Lens Darkly 17 min

Sergei Prokofiev: Rêves, Op. 6 12 min

Anna Porvaldsdóttir: Dreaming 17 min

INTERVAL 20 min

Antonín Dvořák: Cello Concerto in B Minor, Op. 104 40 min

I Allegro

II Adagio, ma non troppo

III Finale: Allegro moderato – Andante – Allegro vivo

The LATE-NIGHT CHAMBER MUSIC will begin in the main Concert Hall after an interval of about 10 minutes. Those attending are asked to take (unnumbered) seats in the stalls.

Paula Sundqvist, violin

Tuija Rantamäki, cello

Sonja Fräki, piano

Antonín Dvořák: Piano Trio "Dumky"

31 min

1. *Lento maestoso – Allegro vivace – Allegro molto*

2. *Poco adagio – Vivace*

3. *Andante – Vivace non troppo*

4. *Andante moderato – Allegretto scherzando – Allegro*

5. *Allegro*

6. *Lento maestoso – Vivace*

Interval at about 20:00.

The concert will end at about 21:15,

the late-night chamber music at about 22:00.

Broadcast live on Yle Radio 1 and Yle Areena. It will also be shown in two parts in the programme "RSO Musiikkitalossa" (The FRSO at the Helsinki Music Centre) on Yle Teema on 21.10. and 4.11., with a repeat on Yle TV 1 on 27.10. and 10.11.

JÜRI REINVERE (b. 1971): THROUGH A LENS DARKLY

Jüri Reinvere has been described as a true cosmopolitan with Estonian roots. It well reflects his sojourn in many lands, for since his youth in Estonia, he has lived in Poland, Finland, Sweden, and since 2005 Germany. But it also says something about his art, for his works often address pan-European questions of humanity, identity and existence independent of nationality.

Reinvere applies a variety of stylistic and expressive approaches, from minimalist textures to modernistic complexity and expressive intensity. He has also made a name for himself as a poet and essayist and has won numerous prizes for both musical compositions and essays.

In 2017, the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra commissioned Jüri Reinvere to compose a new work for a concert honouring the Ingmar Bergman centenary in February 2018. The result was *Through a Lens Darkly*. The premiere included a visualisation, but this is not marked in the score. The piece is the first of three orchestral works composed in quick succession; the next was *Und müde vom Glück, fingen sie an zu tanzen* (2018), which was conducted by Paavo Järvi in Pärnu in August this year.

The commission for *Through a Lens Darkly* fell on fertile ground. In the early 1990s, Reinvere had become friends with the Estonian-Swedish pianist Käbi Laretei, who introduced him to her ex-husband Ingmar Bergman. The great

director became a close friend and important mentor of the young composer. Theirs was not simply a master-apprenticeship relationship, for they often talked about music, and Reinvere would sometimes express his own views as a composer and act as Bergman's guide.

The title of *Through a Lens Darkly* alludes to both Bergman and Laretei and thus pays homage to two people who meant a lot to him. On the one hand it is an adaptation of Bergman's film *Såsom i en spegel* (1961, *Through a Glass Darkly*), which is dedicated to Laretei, and on the other it alludes to Laretei's memoir *Såsom i en översättning* (2004, *As in Translation*), the title of which was Reinvere's suggestion.

Reinvere describes *Through a Lens Darkly* as a psychologically narrative work. It has no programme pointing directly to Bergman, but according to Reinvere, certain situations typical of Bergman's film can be detected.

SERGEI PROKOFIEV (1891–1953): RÊVES, OP. 6

Even as a young man, Sergei Prokofiev was already assuming the role of a daring iconoclast in St. Petersburg musical circles. Yet in 1906, still a budding composer only 15 years old, he was still quoting Tchaikovsky, Wagner and Grieg as his favourite composers. He rapidly changed his mind, however, so that only two years later he was penning a little piano piece called *Suggestion*

Diabolique. Ruthlessly aggressive, it was a minor sensation when he played it at a concert of new music in St. Petersburg in December 1908.

While *Suggestion Diabolique* is a distinctly “Prokofievan” piece, its 17-year-old composer was still seeking a style all of his own. He had for some time felt an attraction for the strangely enchanting music of Alexander Scriabin. In early 1910, he went to meet Scriabin and showed him a piano transcription he had made of the first movement of that composer’s Symphony No. 3, *The Divine Poem* (1902–1904).

Inspired by this meeting, Prokofiev set about composing an orchestral work. He decided to call it *Rêves* (Dreams), and in doing so nodded in the direction of Scriabin and his orchestral miniature *Rêverie* (1898). The concert at which he conducted the premiere of his new work in St. Petersburg in late 1910 marked his debut as a conductor. Unfortunately, no critics were present; they had all gone to a Scriabin concert held on the same evening.

Of all the works composed by Prokofiev in his youth, *Rêves* comes closest to Scriabin. It is dominated by an elegant world of sound and a richness and warmth characteristic of the Late Romantic period combined with the shifting harmonies of impressionism. Despite being an early work by Prokofiev – the only opus-numbered orchestral one to precede it being the Sinfonietta of 1909 – it is orchestrated with a sure hand and is already artistically consistent.

Rêves begins in dusky nocturnal mood, in deep-hued waves evocative

of Rachmaninoff’s *Isle of the Dead*. The music slumbers in its own dream reality, twice building up to a moderate climax. It becomes more active in the second half, painting with a thinner brush and thickening towards a radiant peak, from which it then sinks back to the nocturnal twilight of the opening.

ANNA PORVALDSDÓTTIR (b. 1977): DREAMING

“I grew up in a tiny coastal village, and there was so much space around us. On the one side you have the enormity of the ocean, then on the other the majesty of the mountains. You’re always close to nature, and you feel at one with it.”

Recalling the landscapes of her childhood may possibly seem irrelevant did not Nature and the stimuli it provided pop up so often in the music of Anna Porvaldsdóttir. Often, this is deliberate, underlining the inspiring influence on her work of the Icelandic scenery. But “Nature” should, in speaking of her music, be understood in the broad sense of the word, not just as an objectively-perceived landscape but as a more profound, elemental life force of subterranean volcanic energy and tectonic friction.

Anna Porvaldsdóttir has become one of Iceland’s internationally best-known composers in the present decade. *Dreaming* (2008) is a key work in her career to date in that it won her the Nordic Council Music Prize in 2012. Since then, she has received other distinctions: the New York Philharmonic’s

Kravis Emerging Composer Award in 2015 and the Lincoln Center's Emerging Artist Award in 2018. In April this year, Esa-Pekka Salonen conducted the commissioning New York Philharmonic in the premiere of her *Metacosmos*, and Alan Gilbert will conduct the Berlin Philharmonic in its European premiere in January 2019. Right now, her order book is full for several years ahead.

"Dreaming" is an appropriate title for a work by Anna Porvaldsdóttir, since dreaming about the material and structure of a work is an essential part of her composition process – a period in which she immerses herself in its sound world before actually sitting down to sketch and write. The orchestra is the instrument with which she feels most at home. She loves the opportunity of working with various textures and materials, she says, and of superimposing different levels to create a flowing texture of sound materials and harmonies.

In the typical Porvaldsdóttir manner, *Dreaming* is slow, picturesque, captivating music, its sound world rich and multilevel. The changes are slow but have an air of inevitability, of organically growing and transforming.

Dreaming begins with percussion on the borders of silence, and the first bars are played without a conductor. The subterranean forces lead to a big eruption, after which a broad sweep of melody emerges from the landscape (at this point the score tells the cello "thoughts of nature"). At the end, Porvaldsdóttir applies an aleatoric loop technique in which the individual players repeat a given section at their own pace. The conductor stops conducting

and finally "becomes motionless", as indicated in the score, while nevertheless giving the players discreet signs to indicate when each loop ends. The music gradually fades away, led by a solitary cello.

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK (1841–1904): CELLO CONCERTO IN B MINOR, OP. 104

"If I had known that it was possible to compose such a concerto for the cello, I would have tried it myself," huffed Brahms in 1896, after his cellist friend Robert Hausmann had given him a private hearing of the brand-new cello concerto by Antonín Dvořák.

Dvořák put the finishing touches to his cello concerto in B Minor in New York, in winter 1894–1895. He did, however, make some amendments to it on his return to Europe in early summer 1895, following the illness and death of his dear sister-in-law. He dedicated the concerto to his cellist friend Hanuš Wihan and promised him its premiere, but scheduling proved difficult and the soloist at the premiere in London in March 1896 was the English cellist Leo Stern.

Not without reason did Brahms extol Dvořák's concerto, for it is nowadays one of the most popular and high-rating cello concertos of the Romantic era. Dvořák brilliantly succeeded in solving one of the problems of all concertos, and especially ones for the cello, of making sure the soloist does not get drowned by the orchestra. He also filled

his work with some of his most beautiful and most expressive melodies.

The concerto is in three movements. The opening one begins with an orchestral exposition before working over the themes with the solo leading the way. Despite its gentle opening and minor key, the main theme shows determination and reveals its true spirit in an expansive grandioso version. By contrast, the second theme sings in a major key. The opening theme dominates the fairly short development section. The recapitulation begins with the second theme and the main theme is not heard until the end, in a fine major-key version.

Like the first movement, the slow one begins with a motif presented by a clarinet. The most stirring moment is the sentimental melody in the middle section, borrowed by Dvořák from one of his own songs. It was one of his sister-in-law's favourites and was added by Dvořák when he heard she was gravely ill.

The finale also begins with a link to the opening movement, for despite being played *pianissimo*, it sets off with a determined, march-like theme that will be the core of its rondo form. At the end, Dvořák allows the music to subside into a stretch of calm, with a flashback to the opening theme of the first movement and a fragment of the sentimental song from the second. This was added by Dvořák last of all, after hearing that his sister-in-law had died.

Programme notes by **Kimmo Korhonen**
translated (abridged) by Susan Sinisalo

ANNA-MARIA HELSING

Anna-Maria Helsing is in frequent demand with orchestras and opera houses, especially in the Nordic countries. As Chief Conductor of the Oulu Symphony Orchestra 2010–2013 she was the first woman to hold this position in a Finnish orchestra.

Anna-Maria Helsing began her career as a violinist (with diplomas from the Jakobstad Conservatory in Finland and the Academy of Music in Bydgoszcz, Poland). She studied in the Sibelius Academy conducting class 2004–2007 and was chosen to take part in the International Conductor's Academy of the Allianz Cultural Foundation under the guidance of Esa-Pekka Salonen, Gustavo Dudamel and others. In 2011, she was the first conductor to be awarded the Louis Spohr Medal in Seesen, Germany.

In addition to her engagements with most of the major Nordic orchestras, Anna-Maria Helsing has conducted ensembles in Estonia, Germany (Jena, Braunschweig, Bochum) and England. She made her debut with the BBC Philharmonic in Manchester in May, followed in June as conductor of the Philharmonia Orchestra's chamber ensemble in the Music of Today series at the Royal Festival Hall in London.

Anna-Maria Helsing feels a special affinity for modern and contemporary music and has conducted a number of premieres. In 2008, she made her debut at the Finnish National Opera conducting Kaija Saariaho's *Adriana Mater*. Other opera premieres conducted by her have included *Momo* by Svitlana

Azarova at the Royal Danish Opera, Magnus-Maria by Karólína Eiríksdóttir on tour in Scandinavia, and Hallin Janne by Jukka Linkola. She has also performed established operas by Mozart, Cimarosa, Puccini, Mascagni, Madetoja and Bernstein at the Tampere Opera and the Savonlinna Opera Festival, to name but a few.

ARTO NORAS

Arto Noras is one of Finland's most celebrated instrumentalists on the international circuit, renowned for his dazzling technique and feel for style. A soloist and chamber musician of the highest order, he is also a notable teacher.

Noras has an extremely broad repertoire taking in all the main works for cello. He has collaborated with many contemporary composers – Joonas Kokkonen and Aulis Sallinen, for example, have composed a cello concerto for him and he has had a close partnership with Krzysztof Penderecki.

A wide selection of Noras's repertoire can be heard on disc. He has recorded concertos with, among others, the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Helsinki Philharmonic, the Toronto Symphony and the Warsaw National Philharmonic, and chamber music with Bruno Rigutto (Beethoven, Fauré, Franck, Debussy), Ralf Gothóni (Sallinen) and Juhani Lagerspetz (Brahms, Schumann).

Alongside his career as a performing artist, Arto Noras was Professor of cello at the Sibelius Academy from 1970 until his retirement and thereafter at

the Hamburg Musikhochschule. He has held masterclasses the world over.

In 1980, Arto Noras founded the Naantali Music Festival in Finland and has been its Artistic Director ever since. On his initiative, the first International Paulo Cello Competition, of which he is Artistic Director and Chairman of the Jury, was founded and first held in 1991. He has also sat on the juries of many other international competitions.

THE FINNISH RADIO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra (FRSO) is the orchestra of the Finnish Broadcasting Company (Yle). Its mission is to produce and promote Finnish musical culture and its Chief Conductor as of autumn 2013. The Radio Orchestra of ten players formed in 1927 later grew to symphony orchestra size in the 1960s. Over the years, its Chief Conductors have been Toivo Haapanen, Nils-Eric Fougstedt, Paavo Berglund, Okko Kamu, Leif Segerstam, Jukka-Pekka Saraste and Sakari Oramo.

In addition to the great Classical-Romantic masterpieces, the latest contemporary music is a major item in the repertoire of the FRSO, which each year premieres a number of Yle commissions. Another of the orchestra's tasks is to record all Finnish orchestral music for the Yle archive. During the 2018/2019 season, the FRSO will premiere four Finnish works commissioned by Yle.

The FRSO has recorded works by Mahler, Ligeti, Eötvös, Sibelius, Lindberg, Saariaho, Sallinen, Kaipainen, Kokkonen and others, and the debut disc of the opera *Aslak Hetta* by Armas Launis. Its disc of the Bartók violin concertos with Christian Tetzlaff and conductor Hannu Lintu won a Gramophone Award in 2018, and that of tone poems and songs by Sibelius an International Classical Music Award. It was also Gramophone magazine's Editor's Choice in November 2017 and BBC Music Magazine's Record of the Month in January 2018. Its forthcoming albums are of music by Lutosławski, Fagerlund and Beethoven.

The FRSO regularly tours to all parts of the world. During the 2018/2019 season its schedule will include a tour of Finland under Hannu Lintu, to Pietarsaari, Kauhajoki, Forssa and Lahti.

FRSO concerts are broadcast live on the Yle Areena channel and Yle Radio 1 and recorded on Yle Teema and Yle TV 1.