

19.1.

FRIDAY SERIES 7

Helsinki Music Centre at 19:00

Matthias Pintscher, conductor

Javier Perianes, piano

Bernd Alois Zimmermann: Photoptosis 13 min

Ludwig van Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Minor 30 min

I Allegro con brio

II Largo

III Rondo (Allegro)

INTERVIEW 20 min

Ludwig van Beethoven: Symphony No. in B Flat 34 min

I Adagio – Allegro vivace

II Adagio

III Minuet (Allegro vivace)

IV Allegro ma non troppo

Bernd Alois Zimmermann: Stille und Umkehr 10 min

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.

Pasi Eerikäinen, violin
Jakob Dingstad, viola
Mikko Ivars, cello

Bernd Alois Zimmermann: String Trio 12 min
I Introduction. Sostenuto molto
II Adagio
III Finale. Allegro molto, ma non troppo

Matthias Pintscher: Study II for Treatise on the Veil 15 min

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 streamed at yle.fi/areena.

The first half of the concert will be shown on Yle Teema in the programme RSO Musiikkitalossa (The RSO at the Helsinki Music Centre) on 28.1. with a repeat on 4.2. on Yle TV 1 and the second half on Yle Teema on 3.2. with a repeat on Yle TV 1 on 10.2.

BERND ALOIS ZIMMERMANN (1918–1970): PHOTOPTOSIS

Born a century ago, Bernd Alois Zimmermann (1918–1970) succeeded in making a lasting impression on Western music before his untimely death – especially after the strict adherence to serialism was relaxed in the 1960s. Whereas many modernists relied on a single technique or vision of society, Zimmermann embraced pluralism and total pessimism.

Zimmermann described the work he did as “Klangkomposition”, and his music as a spherical form of time. By this he meant the rejection of traditional, symmetrical and pre-ordained structures, but he was also referring to music in relation to its own history, to the coexistence of past and future in contemporary music. These are all focal elements of his late work *Photoptosis* of 1968, a commission from Gelsenkirchen Bank in Northern Germany.

Photoptosis (a Greek word meaning roughly ‘incidence of light’) is more of a solemn ritual than a mere experiment with timbre, as the performing instruction *religioso* indicates. The inspiration behind Zimmermann’s composition was the monochrome wall areas of the foyer at the Musiktheater im Revier, Gelsenkirchen decorated by Yves Klein, captured in the metallic tones of the opening. The short, somewhat mysterious collage section incorporates references to Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony,

Wagner’s *Parsifal* (trumpet) and the slow movement of Bach’s first Brandenburg Concerto. The longest quotation is from the Scriabin’s *Poem of Ecstasy*, elaborating on its idea of a universal crescendo.

The musical growth and expansion without the help of tempos, themes or rhythms culminates at the end as the orchestra is transformed into a living, shimmering, billowing mass of sound amid which the various orchestral sections and individual instruments engage in a carnival of timbre.

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827: PIANO CONCERTO NO. 3 IN C MINOR, OP. 37

The first drafts for the third Piano Concerto by Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) date from 1796. He completed the first version in 1800, but he had still not fully finalised it by its premiere in 1803. By the time he published it in 1804, his audience was already prepared for his second, heroic-dramatic period.

For Beethoven, the key of the third Piano Concerto, C minor, represented conflicts requiring dramatic solutions. The structure of the first movement is concentrated; the very first phrase of the long orchestral introduction can be broken down into particles that serve as nuclear motifs in what lies ahead. The piano enters with great self-assurance and the theme presented by the or-

chestra, but it then goes on to vary both this and the singing second theme, travelling to far-distant keys.

The interaction between piano and orchestra gets closer and closer, and their fates seem to be soldered together. The actual development section of this sonata-form movement is short, but the music is in fact developing all the time. The brilliant cadenza and following coda are woven into the whole in masterly fashion. Just when the solo cadenza at the end was written is not certain.

The impressionistic feel of the end of the first movement continues in the lyrical slow movement. The key, E major, is a distant one and the piano's meditative opening statement is like a message from an alien planet. The orchestra dispels the mysterious atmosphere that nevertheless returns in the middle section with an oboe-bassoon duet over piano arpeggios. The piano remains the focus of attention. The soloist's comments finally cease on an enigmatic smile.

The volatility of the first two movements is banished by the brilliant, self-confident finale in which the composer now takes precedence over the pianist in a combination of rondo and sonata form that creates a firm architectural structure. The motivic work is as concentrated as in the first movement and the music adopts a stern voice in the development. Capricious, cheerful new themes nevertheless pop in and out in true rondo style and speed the concerto along to an electrifying conclusion.

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827): SYMPHONY NO. 4 IN B FLAT, OP. 60

Movement and rhythm are the driving force of the fourth Symphony by Ludwig van Beethoven. This force is often a somewhat mysterious background one – the up-beat beginning of phrases, willful drum beats, and the numerous tricks designed to lead the listener astray, especially in the finale.

The basic tension is established in the slow introduction to the first movement, in which individual sounds, long notes and recurring staccatos seem to hover in a void. According to Weber, this slow introduction was sure proof that Beethoven was ripe for the lunatic asylum: messing around with the same old notes for minutes on end without any visible goal.

The clue to the slow movement lies in a simple rhythmic motif, and the calm mood is once again veiled in mystery. The rondo form allows Beethoven to run several themes past his listener. On the way, he highlights lone clarinet solos and a dignified horn call that paves the way for the coda.

The Scherzo is the first one in which Beethoven orders the Trio section to be repeated. The whimsical, jerky main section is solemnly boisterous and the Trio calmer but only slightly slower, the winds and strings tooting to one another in blissful pastoral mood. The repeats seem to force the movement into

a never-ending loop until the French horns loftily call a halt.

Odd rhythms and a jokey attitude dominate the cheerful, exuberant finale. Even though the forces behind the symphony appear to have arrived at some kind of consensus, there are still enough tricks and traps to trip up players and listeners alike in the unexpected key changes, subsidiary themes, clarinet and bassoon solos. And when the orchestra's cartwheels at last look like coming to a halt in the final slow-down, Beethoven shows who is master in a final dash that is as unpredictable as it is head-on.

BERND ALOIS ZIMMERMANN (1918–1970): *STILLE UND UMKEHR*

Stille und Umkehr (Silence and Return, 1970) is Bernd Alois Zimmermann's last-but-one composition, preceding only *Ekklesiastische Aktion* incorporating Biblical texts from *Ecclesiastes* and the Grand Inquisitor's monologue from Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*. *Stille und Umkehr* is often thought of as a sort of epilogue to *Photoptosis* and paired with it in concerts. It cannot be regarded (simply) as Zimmermann's personal suicide message.

Stille und Umkehr was composed as a commission from the City of Nuremberg on the 500th anniversary of the Renaissance painter Albrecht Dürer in 1971. Dürer is one of the great voices of conscience in German culture, and

Zimmermann may well have seen him and his works as reflecting the ongoing state of culture. The outcome of his deliberations was grim indeed: the deeply-depressed composer could see no hope for either art or himself and ended his life in August 1970.

The organ point on the note D and the recurring blues rhythm on the snare drum may well reflect the static nature of painting. It is surely not far-fetched to hear the composition as an ascetic funeral procession, the woodwinds expressing arabesque-like condolences, the brass low grunts, and the harp heavenly tinkles. In addition to the conventional mourners, the orchestra features some exotic guests, ominous metallic wheezing, babbling and sawing.

While the constant organ point on D is not monochromatic, the vanishing of colour is an inherent element of *Stille und Umkehr*; the colours have faded away as if the body has been drained of its blood. The irregular drum beat provides no points on which to anchor its heartbeat on D or the floating fragments of melody. Silence prevailed long before the work began and to silence it will return.

Programme notes by Antti Häyrynen
translated (abridged) by Susan Sinisalo

MATTHIAS PINTSCHER

Equally accomplished as conductor and composer, Matthias Pintscher sees his two main spheres of activity as entirely complementary. He has been Music Director of the Ensemble

Intercontemporain in Paris since autumn 2013 and joined the composition faculty at the Juilliard School of Music, New York in 2014.

Matthias Pintscher, who comes from Germany, began his musical training in conducting, studying with Peter Eötvös, but composing soon took a more prominent role in his life. In autumn 2010 he became the first Artist-in-Association with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, a partnership that still continues.

His conducting engagements have led Pintscher to appearances with many top orchestras, and in recent years to debuts with the Berlin, New York and Los Angeles Philharmonics, the National Symphony Orchestra (Washington, DC), and the Toronto Symphony. Debuts this season include the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra, the London Symphony and the Berlin Radio Symphony.

Pintscher's extensive output includes chamber and orchestral music (several concertos, for example), vocal works and the opera *Thomas Chatterton*. Works by him have been performed by many orchestras, among them the Cleveland Orchestra, the Chicago Symphony, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the New York and Berlin Philharmonics, the Orchestre de Paris and the London Orchestras.

tigious venues. The many top orchestras with which he has performed include the Vienna, Munich, Los Angeles, New York and London Philharmonics, the Philharmonia, the Chicago and Boston Orchestras, and the Orchestre de Paris. The 2017/18 season includes high-profile concert dates such as returns to the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Vienna Symphony, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and Hamburg Symphony, as well as major debuts with the Cincinnati, Indianapolis and Moscow State Symphony Orchestras.

Javier Perianes records exclusively for harmonia mundi. His discography ranging from Beethoven, Schubert, Debussy, Chopin and Mendelssohn to Turina, Granados, Mompou, Falla and Blasco de Nebra has earned acclaim from press and public alike. Demonstrating "a true lyrical gift" (Gramophone), his most recent album was Schubert's Sonatas D.960 & D.664, and his next release will be in spring 2018: Bartók's Piano Concerto No.3 with the Munich Philharmonic and Heras-Casado.

JAVIER PERIANES

Spanish pianist Javier Perianes has built up a flourishing international career spanning five continents and taking him to some of the world's most pres-

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 has been Hannu Lintu. His predecessors as Chief Conductor were Toivo Haapanen, Nils-Eric Fougstedt, Paavo Berglund, Okko Kamu, Leif Segerstam, Jukka-Pekka Saraste and Sakari Oramo.

The FRSO celebrates its 90th anniversary in the 2017/2018 season, for the Radio Orchestra of ten players made its first appearance on September 1, 1927, at the Aleksanterinkatu 46 studio in Helsinki. It began giving public concerts a few years later and grew to symphony orchestra strength in the 1960s, during Paavo Berglund's term as Chief Conductor.

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 2017/2018 season, the FRSO will premiere six Finnish works commissioned by Yle. The programme will also include concert performances of three operas, the FRSO's first festival of its own and major 20th-century violin concertos.

The FRSO has recorded works by Mahler, Ligeti, Sibelius, Hakola,

Lindberg, Saariaho, Sallinen, Kaipainen, Kokkonen and others, and the debut disc of the opera *Aslak Hetta* by Armas Launis. Its discs have reaped some prestigious distinctions, such as the BBC Music Magazine Award, the Académie Charles Cros Award and a MIDEM Classical Award. Its disc of Sibelius's *Lemminkäinen and Pohjola's Daughter* was Gramophone magazine's Critic's Choice in December 2015 and brought the FRSO and Hannu Lintu a Finnish Emma award in the Classical Album category. Music by Sibelius, Prokofiev, Lindberg, Bartók and others will be recorded during the 2017/2018 season.

The FRSO regularly tours to all parts of the world. During the 2017/2018 season its schedule will include a European tour under Hannu Lintu. The home channel of the FRSO is Yle Radio 1, which broadcasts all the FRSO concerts, usually live, both in Finland and abroad. Its concerts can also be heard and watched with excellent live stream quality in the web (yle.fi/arena).