

18.4.

WEDNESDAY SERIES 14

Helsinki Music Centre at 19:00

Dima Slobodeniouk, conductor

Yuki Koyama, flute

Jean Sibelius: Pelléas and Mélisande, suite, Op. 46 25 min

1. *At the castle gate (Grave e largamente)*

2. *Mélisande (Andantino con moto)*

3. *At the seashore (Adagio)*

4. *A spring in the park (Comodo)*

5. *The three blind sisters (Tranquillo)*

6. *Pastorale (Andantino pastorale)*

7. *Mélisande at the spinning wheel (Con moto)*

8. *Entr'acte (Alla gavotta) (Allegro)*

9. *The death of Mélisande (Andante)*

Perttu Haapanen: Concerto for Flute and Orchestra, fp 25 min
(Yle commission)

INTERVAL 20 min

Arnold Schönberg: Pelléas und Mélisande, Op. 5 45 min

Interval at about 05. The concert will end at about 21:20. Broadcast live on Yle Radio 1 and at yle.fi/areena.

SIBELIUS PAINTS A DREAM-LIKE VISION...

In the latter half of the 19th century, a movement called symbolism was born in the arts as a counter-reaction to the naturalism and realism that showed life just as it is. Above all, it was favoured by poetry and painting, but it was also a source of inspiration in prose, music, theatre and dance. Symbolism emphasised the influence of the subconscious, an often dream-like "other reality".

The play *Pelléas and Mélisande* by the Belgian Maurice Maeterlinck premiered in 1893 has inspired numerous composers. The first was William Wallace, a Scot, in 1897, followed a year later by Gabriel Fauré and in 1902 by Claude Debussy in his only opera. Arnold Schönberg was also contemplating an opera on the same topic, and in March 1905, Jean Sibelius composed some incidental music for a performance of the play at the Swedish Theatre in Helsinki. The story had, it would seem, become highly fashionable.

Pelléas and Mélisande is a triangle drama. Prince Golaud finds Mélisande weeping by a stream and takes her home to live with him. She nevertheless falls in love with his half-brother, Pelléas. They meet at a romantic spring, where she loses her wedding ring and Golaud becomes suspicious. He sends his little son Yniold (he has been married before) to spy on the lovers, catches them in the act, kills Pelléas and wounds Mélisande. At the end, Mélisande gives birth to an unnaturally small daughter and dies in childbirth. Golaud tries un-

successfully to kill himself and spends the rest of his days broken-hearted.

Jean Sibelius composed most of his music for *Pelléas and Mélisande* in 1904: a suite of dream-like music that strongly creates the mood of Maeterlinck's drama. The play and its music were both hits. The original music comprised an introduction and four Acts.

At the castle gate is an overture. The second movement paints a picture of Mélisande weeping by the stream, a mournful cor anglais beautifully conveying her mood. *At the seashore* is a short Adagio in which the plot slightly thickens. Act II begins with *A spring in the park* – a short, exquisite waltz in which the lovers meet and Mélisande accidentally drops her ring. In the overture to Act III, Golaud's suspicions are aroused and the mood turns nasty. This Act also includes the ballad *The Three blind sisters* that is sometimes performed on its own. The narrow melodic range has a medieval ring to it. In the *Pastorale* that ends Act III, Golaud warns Pelléas to keep away from his wife. Mélisande sits at her spinning wheel, in music that sounds both threatening and disconsolate. Before the end is an *Entr'acte* but Sibelius omitted the scene in which Golaud kills Pelléas and wounds Mélisande. The suite ends with the moving *Death of Mélisande*. Golaud is left wondering about the relationship between his half-brother and his wife in one of the most beautiful *Adagios* Sibelius ever wrote.

... WHILE SCHÖNBERG MAKES TIME STAND STILL

Arnold Schönberg originally planned his *Pelléas and Mélisande* as an opera, unaware that Claude Debussy was already writing one based on the same play. On discovering this, he therefore decided to compose a big symphonic poem in one movement instead – one that had more drama than Debussy's opera or Sibelius's sombre music for the stage.

When Schönberg composed his *Pelléas and Mélisande* in 1903, he was still a Late Romantic; atonality and 12-tone music lay far ahead in the future; his harmonies were, however, already very chromatic and there were signs of the shape of things to come. Maeterlinck's play seeks in places to "make time stand still", and Schönberg's most atonal episodes maybe correspond to these. The *Leitmotif* or "signature motif" attached to Golaud, for example, and the main love scene between Pelléas and Mélisande have more traditional harmonies. Shortly before beginning his tone poem, Schönberg had completed his first large-scale work, his *Gurrelieder*, and the idiom of this is not far removed from that of *Pelléas and Mélisande*. They could even be regarded as sister works.

Pelléas und Mélisande begins in twilight mood. Following the example of Wagner, Schönberg assigns each of his characters a personal motif. He also adds a "fate" motif. He does not explicitly indicate what is happening in each Act or Scene, since this is not stage music. More important for him is atmos-

phere. True, one episode may be said to describe the lovers' feelings, and another the relationship between Golaud and Mélisande. The last section returns to the characters' Leitmotifs in flowing Late-Romantic vein.

Osmo Tapio Räihälä

PERTTU HAAPANEN: CONCERTO FOR FLUTE AND ORCHESTRA

"An awareness of tradition is vital in an artist ... but an intelligent awareness of tradition may also be an attempt to sever the relationship with the past as far as possible."

This is a good angle from which to examine the composer ethos of Perttu Haapanen (b. 1972). Here is a composer who cleverly walks a tightrope that has post-WWII Finnish and European modernism at one end while at the other end being firmly secured in new expressive devices and sources of inspiration such as electronic music and video art. Perttu Haapanen studied composition at the Sibelius Academy with Erkki Jokinen and Paavo Heininen (hence the strong link with the Finnish avant-garde) and electro-acoustic music at IRCAM in Paris. His network and familiarity with the field led to his being appointed Artistic Director of the Time of Music Viitasaari festival.

Some may hear in his music echoes of modern impressionism. He seeks inspiration in many directions, such as

the Japanese anime that provided the initial impetus for *Compulsion Island* premiered by the FRSO in 2014; but he may also pick and give new shape to linguistic impulses and bodily experiences. Most of his earliest works were for small ensembles, but this century he has taken a firmer grip on orchestral music. He has honed his linguistic ideas in a number of choral works in recent years, and even invented a language all of his own, as in the chamber opera *Solity:d*. Just recently, he has increasingly incorporated video art in his music, giving it a new expressive dimension. Ultimately, however, his sources of inspiration do not seem to be very important, for as he says: "When I turn an idea into music, it begins operating on music's terms and its origin no longer matters."

Osmo Tapio Räihälä

"The *Concerto for Flute and Orchestra* (2018) ties in with my previous commission for the FRSO, *Compulsion Island* (2014) in that it opens the door on a parallel universe, as it were. The materials and expression have certain things in common. The way the piece breathes, and especially its two-stroke dimension – ranging from, say, yoga breathing to the harsh wheeze of a respirator – is one of the basic precepts. This is often audible at surface level, but it also concerns the principles on which the music proceeds, at times almost via binary alternation. The textures and individual strands of melody often also

derive from a single or several simultaneous two-stroke layers. Though the orchestra and flute materials swap places and are both akin to the breathing principles, the flute at times comes close to speech-like expression in Baroque terms whereas the orchestra is an abstract ritualistic system.

My mode of expression is contrasting situations and musical objects as if displaying them in different positions without trying to underline their interpretation. Their encounter, or collision, may thus generate meanings, directly and freely. One example here is the juxtaposition of extravagantly beautiful harmonies laced with microintervals with often two-stroke, ritualistically and repeatedly commanding forces. Examples of the latter are the march machines and the objects extending the battery of percussion instruments. The squeaky toys, the commanding whistles, the harsh clatter of an old typewriter and the screaming of a drill simultaneously evoke associations with the absurd and with stylised structural violence. Demarcation and the mutual absorbing of meanings are fundamental to the ability of Western music to reach beyond language and image. Music that is emptied of meaning or restricted to a one-sided philosophical, ideological or commercial rationale loses its power.

The *Concerto for Flute and Orchestra* was commissioned by the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra and composed for Yuki Koyoma."

Perttu Haapanen 2018

DIMA SLOBODENIOUK

Dima Slobodeniouk was born in Russia but emigrated to Finland when he was 16. His career as a conductor has followed a steady upward curve towards international acclaim, one landmark event being his debut in February this year with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.

Slobodeniouk has been Music Director of the Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia since 2013 and from autumn 2016 Principal Conductor of the Lahti Symphony Orchestra. He is also Artistic Director of the latter orchestra's annual Sibelius Festival and has previously served as Artistic Director of the Oulu Symphony Orchestra and the Korsholm Music Festival. He has conducted practically all the main Finnish orchestras and guested worldwide. This season, for example, has included his debut not only in Berlin but also with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra and in Sydney, Chicago and New Jersey. He also makes return visits to the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic and the Orchestre National de Lyon. His schedule for this summer includes appearances with the Boston Symphony and at Tanglewood in the United States.

Beginning his musical studies with the violin in Moscow, Dima Slobodeniouk went on to become a pupil of Jorma Panula, Leif Segerstam and others at the Sibelius Academy in Finland and later of Ilja Musin and Esa-Pekka Salonen. In his work he has, he says, combined his Russian roots with

his Finnish musical training and drawn on the strong musical heritage of both countries.

Russian and Finnish music feature large in Slobodeniouk's repertoire, and his years with the Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia have enriched its Spanish element. He also conducts a lot of new music and has recorded works by Lotta Wennäkoski, Sebastian Fagerlund, Kalevi Aho, Einojuhani Rautavaara and other contemporary composers.

YUKI KOYAMA

Yuki Koyama started to play the flute when he was six years old, when his teacher was Megumi Horii. He has reaped success in many competitions, took the first prize at the 7th Biwako International Flute Competition and the 73rd Music Competition of Japan, and in 2004 was the winner of the Kobe International Flute Competition.

Yuki Koyama has given recitals in various parts of Japan and worked with many of his country's orchestras, such as the NHK Symphony, New Japan Philharmonic, Japan Philharmonic, Tokyo Philharmonic and Osaka Symphony. He has been 1. solo flute in the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra since autumn 2014.

Programme notes translated
(abridged) by Susan Sinisalo

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).