

15.4. AT 19:00
WEDNESDAY SERIES¹⁴
HELSINKI MUSIC CENTRE

KAZUTAKA MORITA
PERCUSSION

NAOKI YASUDA
PERCUSSION

JANI NIINIMÄKI
PERCUSSION

JERRY PIIPPONEN
PERCUSSION

Sauli Zinovjev: Sospirando 1 "Awake"

CHRISTOFFER SUNDQVIST
CLARINET

EMIL HOLMSTRÖM
PIANO

Johannes Brahms: Sonata for clarinet and piano
no. 1 in F minor, op. 120/1

I Allegro appassionato
II Andante un poco adagio
III Allegretto grazioso
IV Vivace

EMIL HOLMSTRÖM
PIANO

Johannes Brahms Intermezzo in A major, op. 118/2
Johannes Brahms: Romanssi in F major, op. 118/5

INTERVAL 20 MIN

CHRISTOFFER SUNDQVIST
CLARINET
EMIL HOLMSTRÖM
PIANO

**Johannes Brahms: Sonata for clarinet and piano
no. 2 in E flat major, op. 120/2**

I Allegro amabile
II Allegro appassionato
III Andante con moto - Allegro non troppo

KAZUTAKA MORITA
PERCUSSION

NAOKI YASUDA
PERCUSSION

JANI NIINIMÄKI
PERCUSSION

JERRY PIIPPONEN
PERCUSSION

Minoru Miki: Marimba Spiritual

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Broadcast live on Yle Radio 1 and Yle Areena.

SAULI ZINOVJEV: SOSPIRANDO 1 “AWAKE”

Audiences in Finland became truly aware of fellow-Finn Sauli Zinovjev (b. 1988) in 2014, as the winner of the third prize in the International Uuno Klami Composition Competition for an orchestral piece called *Gryf* (2013). He has since received commissions from, among others, the Finnish and Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestras, the Tapiola Sinfonietta and the Lausanne Chamber Orchestra.

Zinovjev is a great supporter of artistic freedom and applies it in a synthesis of diverse materials. His expressive range

runs from sustained melodies to intensive webs and a rhythmic pulse, and his works have a strong emotional charge. He has written a series of four ‘Sospirandos’ for different line-ups. No. 1, “Awake” (2017), is for percussion, and the title alludes both to waking up and to the commissioning Awake Percussion ensemble. It unfolds at a leisurely pace, in a soundscape made up of signal-like motifs on a vibraphone and marimba joined by a suspended ride cymbal.

JOHANNES BRAHMS: SONATAS FOR CLARINET AND PIANO IN F MINOR, OP. 120/1 AND E-FLAT MAJOR, OP. 120/2

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The clarinet sonatas by Johannes Brahms (1833–1897) rank among the core repertoire for the instrument. As a genre, they had virtually no precedents, even though composers from Mozart onwards had been writing fine chamber music including a clarinet. Brahms also transcribed versions for viola and for violin.

The sonatas complement each other. The first, in F minor, is more forceful and cast in four-movement symphonic form, while the second is in three less formal movements.

The first movement of the F-minor sonata is a combination of lyrical singing and passionate drama. The slow movement is dreamily tender throughout, while the third is a sunny, folksy intermezzo. The

closing rondo in F major is built round a captivating theme.

The E-flat major sonata has no slow movement, but the singing quality of the work as a whole compensates for this. The themes of the opening *Allegro amabile* are both melodic. The middle movement is a scherzo with a markedly chorale-like Trio section. The closing movement consists of a theme, five variations and a coda. Brahms enriches the texture of the first three variations by reducing the note values; the fourth introduces a deeper dimension, and the minor-key fifth, dominated by the piano, a touch of turbulent drama. The coda steps up the emotional pressure.

JOHANNES BRAHMS: INTERMEZZO IN A MAJOR, OP. 118/2 AND ROMANCE IN F MAJOR, OP. 118/5

By the time he composed his late piano works, Johannes Brahms had travelled a long way from the grand gestures and external drama of the early ones towards self-examination and matters of interpretation rather than technique. The Intermezzo in A major, op. 118/2 is, in its warmth and melodiousness, a typical representative of his late “intermezzo” style. Its emotional depth is enhanced in the middle section dipping into F-sharp minor brushed with a hint of melancholy.

Happy and mournful also join hands in the Romance in F major, op. 118/5. The main theme is traced in octaves in the middle voices and there is a strong pull towards the relative D-minor key. The middle section with its rippling Bach-like ornamentation over a bass ostinato forms a contrast to the main theme, to which the Romance then returns via a passage embroidered with trills.

MINORU MIKI: MARIMBA SPIRITUAL

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The music of Minoru Miki (1930–2011) has a strong element of his native Japan alongside Western tradition. He had begun collaborating with marimba virtuoso Keiko Abe back in the 1960s and in 1983 began composing the Marimba Spiritual for marimba and three percussionists at Abe’s request. The piece has since become a firm favourite with marimba players. It was Miki’s response to the famine from which Africa was suffering at the time. Having lived through the harsh postwar years in Japan, he could well relate to the hunger, and the Marimba Spiritual expresses his feelings. ‘Spiritual’, for him, meant two things: the adjective relating to the

human spirit and the noun for a certain type of religious music, as in ‘negro spiritual’. This latter is manifest here by the soloist and the percussion chorus. The piece begins with a meditative marimba solo and is followed by a ‘lively resurrection’ in which the soloist’s masterly patterns blend with the spirited rhythms of the three percussionists.

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