

1.10. AT 19:00
HELSINKI MUSIC CENTRE

ANJA BIHLMAIER
CONDUCTOR
JOHANNES PIIRTO
PIANO

Igor Stravinsky:
Concerto in E-flat Major "Dumbarton Oaks"
1. *Tempo giusto*
2. *Allegretto*
3. *Con moto*

Aleksandr Skrjabin:
Piano Concerto in F-sharp Minor, Op. 20
1. *Allegro*
2. *Andante*
3. *Allegro moderato*

INTERVAL 20 MIN

Robert Schumann:
Symphony No. 4 in D Minor, Op. 120
1. *Ziemlich langsam – Lebhaft*
2. *Romanze: Ziemlich langsam*
3. *Scherzo: Lebhaft*
4. *Langsam – Lebhaft*

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

LATE-NIGHT CHAMBER MUSIC:

Clara Schumann:

Piano Trio in G Minor, Op. 17

1. *Allegro moderato*
2. *Scherzo. Tempo di menuetto — Trio*
3. *Andante*
4. *Allegretto*

TAIJA ANGERVO

VIOLIN

TOMAS NUNEZ

CELLO

KIRILL KOZLOVSKI

PIANO

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Interval at about 20. The concert will end at about 21, the late-night chamber music at about 21:30. Broadcast live on Yle Radio 1 and Yle Areena and later, from 20:00, on Yle Teema. Repeat on Yle TV 1.

IGOR STRAVINSKY: CONCERTO IN E-FLAT MAJOR “DUMBARTON OAKS”

Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971) liked playing Bach and was particularly fond of the *Brandenburg Concertos*. Number three, for strings, served as a model for *Dumbarton Oaks*, with its three-movement construction and playful counterpoint. The shifting time signatures and pungent timbres are, however, pure Stravinsky.

In 1937, Stravinsky was asked by a certain Mr and Mrs Woods Bliss to compose a piece of music for them to commemo-

rate their 30th wedding anniversary. The resulting concerto was named *Dumbarton Oaks* after the estate they owned in Washington DC. Its three movements are performed without a break. The first is a bubbly one incorporating a hint of the opening theme of Bach’s third *Brandenburg*, the second is an airy, ironic and lyrical one, and the third is determined and full of zest.

ALEXANDER SCRIBIN: PIANO CONCERTO IN F-SHARP MINOR, OP. 20

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The F-sharp minor piano concerto by Alexander Scriabin (1872–1915) has been described as Chopinesque, but it is not a traditional contest between soloist and orchestra. In scope and texture, it has a chamber music-like feel. Its traditional three-movement construction appears on closer examination to be a combination of modern geometry with modulations and progressive harmonies.

Piano and orchestra are closely interwoven in the wistful opening movement built on a series of falling notes from which the whole main theme derives. The slow movement presents four variations

on a quasi-folk-song theme. Scriabin was fascinated by synaesthesia (meaning that he connected keys with colours), and he saw F-sharp major as bright blue, like a water-colour landscape overlaid with piano adornments. The finale is back in the original minor key, but the piano part glitters more than ever. Quirky rhythms make the rises and falls unpredictable and the music swings into a bright A major; but the ultimate contest is only won in the optimistic coda.

The copyright to the performance material of the Scriabin concerto is held by Compofactor MusikVerlag - Matthias Spindler.

ROBERT SCHUMANN: SYMPHONY NO. 4 IN D MINOR, OP. 120

Inspired by the popularity of his first symphony, Robert Schumann (1810–1856) began work on a second one in D minor almost immediately, but its premiere was not a success and he put it aside. Not until ten years later did he produce a new version, which was published as Symphony No. 4.

Schumann is thought to have been inspired to write his Symphony in D Minor by the C-minor symphony (no. 5) of Beethoven. This is most audible in the main section, Scherzo, of the first movement and in the transition to the finale. The first movement begins with a slow, heavy-hearted introduction. The thematic treatment reaches far beyond that of a

traditional sonata-form movement before finally arriving at a triumphant D major.

The unison oboe and cello theme of the slow Romanze (Romance) is a variation on the mournful tune of the opening movement. In the middle is a romantic section ornamented by a solo violin in twirling arabesques. The third movement again follows without a break and consists of a thudding main section framing a dainty Trio for strings and woodwinds. The theme of the finale is heralded in with brass fanfares after a brief, spell-binding pause. From then onwards, Schumann builds up a chase that is marked by fugatos, accented rhythms and chopped repeats and ends on a victorious note.

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CLARA SCHUMANN: PIANO TRIO IN G MINOR, OP. 17

A highly-acclaimed pianist and composer, Clara Schumann (1819–1896) saw 21 of her works published during her lifetime. The piano occupies the leading role in many of the most important ones, such as the Piano Concerto and the Op. 17 Piano Trio. Clara mainly composed when she was pregnant, had to stay at home and could not go on concert tours. Her Piano Trio dates from 1845, when she was expecting her fourth child and was, together with her husband Robert, studying the music of Bach and Cherubini. Maybe the references to her husband's music in the delicate, melancholy opening movement should be understood more as a sign of shared aspirations than as direct loans. She lets the

music have its head and does not allow the piano to dominate the texture.

The Scherzo, with its dotted rhythms, is almost mischievous. The instruments chat among themselves in the Trio. The melody of the slow movement is introduced by the piano before being taken up by the violin and cello. Clara aims at harmony throughout, and a temporary dip into the minor does not greatly upset the mood.

The theme of the sonata-form finale sows the seed of some imaginative treatment. It puts out shoots in the rhapsodic episodes and reaches its apex in the coda.

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

ANJA BIHLMAIER

Anja Bihlmaier emerged as one of the most highly-acclaimed new conductors in the 2010s. She has been Principal Guest Conductor of the Lahti Symphony Orchestra since autumn 2020 and Chief Conductor of the Residentie Orkest in The Hague as of the present season.

Bihlmaier studied the piano and orchestral conducting at Freiburg Conservatory of Music in her native Germany, receiving her conducting diploma in 2006 – the year in which she won third prize in the Dimitri Mitropoulos International Music Competition. She then worked as répétiteur at various German opera houses, and as a conductor at the operas in Chemnitz, Hanover and Kassel. Her debut

with both the Residentie Orkest and the Lahti Symphony in late 2018 soon led to an appointment with both, and she has guested with many other top orchestras (the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester, the City of Birmingham Symphony, the BBC Scottish, Gothenburg Symphony and others).

Today's concert marks Anja Bihlmaier's debut with the FRSO, but she has previously appeared in Finland with the Lahti Symphony, the Tapiola Sinfonietta, and the Turku and Tampere orchestras. The present season includes debuts with the BBC Symphony and BBC Philharmonic, the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra and the SWR-Symphony.

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JOHANNES PIIRTO

Young Finnish Johannes Piirto has been a familiar guest with Finnish orchestras in the past ten years or so, and at festivals such as the Gergiev in Mikkeli, Wien Modern, the Camerata Salzburg and with the Vienna Volksoper orchestra. The present season includes debuts at the Harpa Concert Hall in Iceland and the Vienna Musikverein. Piirto also has experience of chamber music, with partners such as Sarah McElravy and Natalia Gutman, and from 2017 to 2021 he was Artistic Director

of the Helsinki Chamber Summer Festival with the Borea Quartet.

Johannes Piirto studied at the Sibelius Academy: piano with Liisa Pohjola, composition with Tapio Tuomela and orchestral conducting as a pupil of Jorma Panula. He has also engaged in further studies with Stefan Vladar at the Vienna University of Music and Performing Arts and in masterclasses with András Schiff, Dmitri Bashkirov, Menahem Pressler and many others.

THE FINNISH RADIO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra (FRSO) is the orchestra of the Finnish Broadcasting Company (Yle), and its mission is to produce and promote Finnish musical culture.

The Radio Orchestra of ten players founded in 1927 grew to symphony orchestra proportions in the 1960s. Its Chief Conductors have been Toivo Haapanen, Nils-Eric Fougstedt, Paavo Berglund, Okko Kamu, Leif Segerstam, Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Sakari Oramo, Hannu Lintu, and as of autumn 2021 Nicholas Collon.

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. During the 2021/2022 season it will premiere six new works.

Another of the orchestra's tasks is to record all Finnish orchestral music for the Yle archive.

The FRSO has recorded works by Mahler, Bartók, Sibelius, Hakola, Lindberg, Saariaho, Sallinen, Kaipainen, Kokkonen and others. It has twice won a Gramophone Award: for its disc of Lindberg's Clarinet Concerto in 2006 and of Bartók Violin Concertos in 2018. Other distinctions have included BBC Music Magazine, Académie Charles Cros, MIDEM Classical awards and Grammy nominations in 2020 and 2021. Its disc of tone poems and songs by Sibelius won an International Classical Music Award (ICMA) in 2018, and it has been the recipient of a Finnish EMMA award in 2016 and 2019.

FRSO concerts are broadcast live on the Yle Areena and Radio 1 channels, and later on the same evening on the Yle Teema TV channel. Recordings of the concerts are also shown on Yle TV 1.