

24.10. AT 15:00
HELSINKI MUSIC CENTRE
PAAVO HALL

FRSO FESTIVAL THOMAS ADÈS
THE ENDLESS PARTY

THOMAS ADÈS
PIANO

JENNY CARLSTEDT
MEZZO-SOPRANO

HAN SHI *violin*, **PASI EERIKÄINEN** *violin*,
EZRA WOO *viola*, **YUKI KOYAMA** *flute*,
CHRISTOFFER SUNDQVIST *clarinet*,
FÁTIMA BOIX CANTÓ *clarinet*,
GIUSEPPE GENTILE *clarinet*,
OTTO VIRTANEN *bassoon*,
JUKKA HARJU *French horn*

1

Henry Purcell (arr. Thomas Adès):

Four Songs

1. *Come Unto These Yellow Sands*
2. *Full Fathom Five Thy Father Lies*
3. *An Evening Hymn*
4. *By Beauteous Softness*



Igor Stravinsky:

Three Shakespeare Songs

1. *Music To Hear, Why Hear'st Thou Music Sadly?*
2. *Full Fathom Five Thy Father Lies*
3. *Spring*

Igor Stravinsky:

Berceuses du Chat

1. *Sur le poêle*
 2. *Intérieur*
 3. *Dodo*
 4. *Ce qu'il a, le chat*
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Igor Stravinsky:

Elegy for JFK

Igor Stravinsky:

The Owl and the Pussy-cat

VÄLIRAIKA 20 MIN

2

Thomas Adès:

*Three Berceuses from
The Exterminating Angel, fp*

György Kurtág:

Hommage à R-Sch. op. 15d

1. *Vivo*
(Merkwürdige Pirouetten des Kapellmeisters Johannes Kreisler)
2. *Molto semplice, piano e legato*
(Eusebius: der begrenze Kreis...)
3. *Feroce, agitato*
(... und wieder zuckt es schmerzlich Florestan um die Lippen...)
4. *Calmo, scorrevole*
(Ich war eine Wolke... jetzt scheint die Sonne)
5. *Presto (In der Nacht)*
6. *Adagio, poco Andante*
(Abschied: Meister Raro entdeckt Guillaume de Machaut)

Leoš Janáček:

Concertino

1. *Moderato*
2. *Più mosso*
3. *Con moto*
4. *Allegro*

Interval at about 15:35. The concert will end at about 16:30.

THOMAS ADÈS

English composer Thomas Adès (b. 1971) began making a name for himself in musical circles in the first half of the 1990s, when he was still only in his early twenties. They reckoned he would go far, and have not been disappointed – but probably not quite as anticipated. His first great work was the chamber opera *Powder Her Face* (1995), a fanciful tale about the notorious, decadent Duchess of Argyll. Its success lent his breakthrough a suitably scandalous edge, but his art soon became more profound, as demonstrated by his orchestral *Asyla* (1997).

Success has not resulted in a loss of integrity for Adès. Drawing on fine-tuned harmonies, rhythmic details and masterly orchestration, he has succeeded in endowing even traditional gestures with idiosyncratic ambiguity. Light and darkness, barbarity and tenderness, irony and gravity live side by side.

Conscious and subconscious stand in a balanced relationship in Adès's composition: "The music in my mind is a sort of underground river that flows on all the time, and it's looking for a channel," he once said. "So in a piece, for example, with an idea, text and character, they are just the channel and I have to let them dig out, if you like, the piece from the rock." (*BBC Music Magazine* July 2013)

His many great works for orchestra have stood out like fixed points in Thomas Adès's career: *America: A Prophecy* for mezzo-soprano and orchestra (1999), the violin concerto *Concentric Paths* (2005), *Tevot* (2007), *In Seven Days* for piano and orchestra (2008), *Polaris* (2010), *Totentanz* for mezzo-soprano, baritone and orchestra (2013) and the piano concerto of 2018. He has, however, also written works for smaller ensemble that are equally important in his portfolio.

Since *Powder Her Face*, Thomas Adès has composed two operas: *The Tempest* (2004) inspired by Shakespeare's play, and *The Exterminating Angel* (2016) based on the film written and directed by Luis Buñuel. His three-parts ballet *Dante*, after the classic *Divine Comedy*, was premiered at Covent Garden on October 14th.

Another vital aspect of Adès the composer is his all-round musicianship: he is also a fine pianist and conductor. He has been Artistic Director of the Aldeburgh Festival and Britten Professor of Composition at London's Royal Academy of Music.

HENRY PURCELL: FOUR SONGS

In 2012 and 2017, Thomas Adès arranged four songs by Henry Purcell (1659–1695) as a cycle for voice and piano. He described Purcell's settings of English texts as 'magnificent'; "The way that emotion, the rhythm of the words, is rendered into music is incomparably natural and powerful," he says.

By Beauteous Softness is part of the ode *Now Does the Glorious Day Appear* written by Purcell to celebrate the birthday of Queen Mary in 1689. The passacaglia, a musical form of continuous variation over a recurring figure in the bass, was one of Purcell's favourite types of composi-

tion, and the three-bar bass theme of this song supports a melodic line of astounding beauty.

Purcell was, it is thought, the composer of *Come Unto These Yellow Sands* and *Full Fathom Five* for Shakespeare's play *The Tempest*, in which both are sung by Ariel. The coloratura ornaments in the melody of the latter are especially appropriate for this 'airy spirit'.

The serene *Evening Hymn* is one of Purcell's best-known songs. The form of this, too, is a passacaglia, but this time the theme is five bars long.

IGOR STRAVINSKY: THREE SHAKESPEARE SONGS; BERCEUSES DU CHAT; ELEGY FOR JFK; THE OWL AND THE PUSSY-CAT

5

Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971) composed songs for the traditional voice and piano during his early period, but in the 1910s began favouring a combination of voice and small instrumental ensemble. For the *Berceuses du chat* cycle he chose voice and three clarinets. The melodic lines are built on short motifs in the spirit of Russian folk music.

The *Three Shakespeare Songs* of 1953 are among Stravinsky's earliest experiments with row technique, though the opening *Music to Hear* is in fact based on a four-note row in various manifestations. The instrumental part is sparse. *Ariel's Song* is again from *The Tempest*, and the closing *Spring* is from Shakespeare's comedy *Love's Labour's Lost*.

Elegy for JFK (1964) and *The Owl and the Pussy-cat* (1966) were Stravinsky's last songs. The former is a setting of words written by W.H. Auden after the assassination of President J.F. Kennedy. Although the short song based on a 12-tone row well expresses the nation's communal grief, it is also Stravinsky's personal tribute to the victim.

In 1966, Stravinsky chose to set to music the entertaining, humorous little poem *The Owl and the Pussy-cat* by the 19th-century poet Edward Lear. Legend has it that this poem, dripping with wry humour, was the first in English to be learnt by heart by Stravinsky's wife Vera.

THOMAS ADÈS: THREE BERCEUSES FROM THE EXTERMINATING ANGEL

Thomas Adès wrote his third opera, *The Exterminating Angel* (2016), after the classic film of that name (1962) written and directed by Luis Buñuel. Ranked as one of Adès's greatest works to date, it covers a wide range of expression along with allusions to other music. He often enhances the surrealist, horrifying element of the events but also finds room for some moments of lyrical beauty.

In 2018, Adès arranged *Three Berceuses* from the opera for viola and piano. The first two draw on the yearning, melancholy duets of the doomed lovers Beatriz and Eduardo. In the bizarre world of the opera, the two commit suicide in a sort of variation on the Wagnerian *Liebestod*. The last song is a version of Silvia's eerie *Berceuse macabre* in which she cradles a dead lamb, thinking she is rocking her son to sleep.

6

GYÖRGY KURTÁG: HOMMAGE À R. SCH. OP. 15D

Hungarian composer György Kurtág (b. 1926) is an absolute master of highly condensed, compact miniatures. Many of his works are chains of flash-like sonic visions.

Hommage à R. Sch. (1990) is scored for the same trio of clarinet, viola and piano as one of Schumann's very last works, *Märchenerzählungen* (*Fairy Tales*). The titles of the movements are references to

Schumann and fictitious characters. The suite is in six movements that cannot be performed individually. In the first five fleeting ones, lively music alternates with the introspection of Schumann's *alter ego*, Eusebius. The long closing movement is like a slow procession.

LEOŠ JANÁČEK: CONCERTINO

Concertino (1925) for piano and chamber ensemble is one of three chamber works composed by Leoš Janáček (1854–1928) in the 1920s; the others were the wind sextet *Mládi* (Youth) and the Capriccio for piano (left hand) and ensemble. They all prove his familiarity with contemporary trends.

The piano in Concertino keeps company with a French horn, in the second movement a high E-flat clarinet (apart from the closing bars), and the ensemble does not play all together until the last two of the four movements. Like many of Janáček's late works, Concertino features repetitions of short motifs and sudden cuts.

Janáček likened the opening declamatory motif to a “grumpy hedgehog”, and the clarinet theme of the second to a “fidgety squirrel”. The third movement contrasts a marching tread with a more expansive idiom. The bright final movement, which fol-

lows without a break, he described as “a scene from a fairy-tale, where everybody is arguing”.

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

JENNY CARLSTEDT

After spending fourteen years (2002–2016) as a member of the solo ensemble of the Frankfurt am Main Opera, Finnish mezzo-soprano Jenny Carlstedt turned freelance and in 2017 was nominated for the Nordic Council Music Prize. Forthcoming productions include Kaija Saariaho’s *Innocence* and the Finnish National Opera and Covent Garden, and the part of Brangäne in *Tristan and Isolde* with Susanna Mälkki conducting. Her repertoire ranges from the Baroque to contemporary opera, and in addition to

Mozart roles includes Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier*, the Composer in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Wellgunde* in *The Ring* and the title role in *The Cunning Little Vixen*. She has guested across Europe – at the Theater an der Wien, the Vienna Festival, in Basel, Copenhagen and elsewhere. Jenny Carlstedt made her highly-acclaimed US debut in 2015, as Mélisande in Chicago. She can be heard on many discs, and in 2016 released a CD of songs by Zemlinsky with the Lapland Chamber Orchestra.

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.