

29.9.2022
THURSDAY SERIES²
HELSINKI MUSIC CENTRE AT 19:00

HANNU LINTU
CONDUCTOR

ANDRÈ SCHUEN
BARITONE

Magnus Lindberg:
Serenades

15 min **19**

Gustav Mahler:

18 min

Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen

I Wenn mein Schatz Hochzeit macht (When my love has her wedding day)

II Ging heut' morgen über's Feld (I walked across the fields this morning)

III Ich hab' ein glühend Messer (I have a gleaming knife)

IV Die zwei blauen Augen von meinem Schatz

(The two blue eyes of my love)

INTERVAL 20 MIN

**John Corigliano:
Symphony No. 1**

41 min

I Apologue: Of Rage and Remembrance

II Tarantella

III Chaconne: Giulio's Song

IV Epilogue

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Interval at about 19:45. The concert will end at about 21:00.

MAGNUS LINDBERG: SERENADES

The request from the Chicago Symphony Orchestra for an orchestral serenade was, for Magnus Lindberg (b. 1958), a chance to ask himself what ‘serenade’ and ‘nocturnal’ actually meant in his personal musical context. The result was a piece finished in 2020 and finally premiered in December 2021 with Hannu Lintu conducting.

Magnus Lindberg is the international star of Finnish modernism. His music may be characterised as a fanfare-like scamper beneath which lavish undercurrents flow towards lavish peaks. His explosive energy has, over the past 15 years, become increasingly refined, more clearly mirroring musical history and his own musical memories.

Not surprisingly, evening and night do not sound tranquil in Lindberg’s mind, for his dusk is seething with frenetic calls. He uses the plural form of his title, *Serenades*. Alien forces erupt in a typically Lindbergian turbulent rhythmic stream. Recent works by him, this one included, have often carried a nostalgic Sibelian echo cleverly filtered through different stylistic layers. *Serenades* may also call to mind the quirky nocturnal landscapes of Mahler’s seventh symphony.

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GUSTAV MAHLER: LIEDER EINES FAHRENDEN GESELLEN

Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen (Songs of a Wayfarer) was the first vocal work by Gustav Mahler (1860–1911) in a style unmistakably his. Many of its melodies found their way into his first symphony.

Embarking on his career as a conductor at the age of 20 or so in the 1880s, Mahler was himself something of a wayfarer or ‘journeyman’ roaming from one theatre to another. From 1883 to 1885 he was a conductor’s assistant at the theatre in Kassel. His superior, Wilhelm Treiber, was a bully, and Mahler fell hopelessly in love with the soprano Johanna Richter.

Like Schubert in his settings of poems by Wilhelm Müller, the beloved in Mahler’s songs chooses another and throws the wayfarer into despair. He senses the fresh

beauty of nature, but can no longer envisage a future for himself. In the last song, he flees from the town where everything reminds him of the object of his affection. The music – which morphed into a haven of tranquillity in the third movement of the symphony – proceeds with a funereal tread, a motif Mahler would use again and again in his symphonies.

The cycle ends calmly beneath a linden tree, which would seem to allude to the “Linden” of Schubert’s *Winterreise*. Does the speaker commit suicide, or is he able to make a new start in life? Do the *Winterreise* linden’s branches tempt him to hang himself or to rest? Mahler leaves the way open to many interpretations.

JOHN CORIGLIANO: SYMPHONY NO. 1

America's John Corigliano (b. 1938) was, he said, a reluctant symphonist. He was more interested in partnership and communication, and there was potential for this in, for example, the film scores and concertos for which he was known.

The AIDS epidemic that broke out in the early 1980s nevertheless persuaded him to change his mind. He lost several friends to the disease and, being homosexual, felt the epidemic keenly at a personal level. As more deaths were reported, he was moved to address the issue as a composer, and symphonic form seemed to provide a suitable medium for this. The symphony he composed in 1988–1989 won the Grawemeyer Award in music composition. In the first movement (Apologue: Of Rage and Remembrance), the melancholy sound of a piano playing a tango melody by Isaac Albéniz can be heard from afar. The movement is dedicated to a pianist friend whose favourite piece was this tango. In the second movement (Tarantella), Corigliano was thinking of the music executive to whom he had dedicated the "Tarantella" movement of his piano suite *Gazebo Dances*. Hence the movement is based on the manic Italian folk dance once used as a remedy for the madness brought on by a tarantula's sting.

For the slow movement (Chaconne: "Giulio's Song") Corigliano picked melodic motifs from an old recording of him improvising with a former cello-playing student pal Giulio. The core element is an emotional solo cello soon joined by a second

cello – Giulio's teacher, who likewise died of AIDS.

Side by side with the physical aspect of grieving is the consolation brought by memories. Into the third movement Corigliano weaves short epitaphs dedicated to other lost friends for different instruments to "sing". These wordless messages evoke a musician community rent apart by the epidemic. In the last movement, the symphony's big brass section whips up mighty waves in which the signature motifs of the friends from the previous movements are once again repeated, but now serenely.

*Programme notes by Auli Särkiö-Pitkänen
translated (abridged) by Susan Sinisalo*

HANNU LINTU

Chief Conductor of the Finnish National Opera (FNO) since August 2021, Hannu Lintu is one of the most celebrated Finnish conductors on the international circuit, conducting the finest orchestras around the world. He came to the FNO after occupying the post of Chief Conductor of the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra from 2013 to 2021.

This season, Lintu's repertoire at the FNO consists of *Die Walküre*, premiered this autumn, and in spring 2023 *Turandot* and *Siegfried*. Even before his present appointment as Chief Conductor he had conducted many highly-acclaimed productions at the FNO, among them *Tristan und Isolde*, *Kullervo*, *Wozzeck* and *Ariadne auf Naxos*.

One of Lintu's guest highlights during the ongoing season will be conducting the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. Other forthcoming engagements include appearances in Lisbon, St. Louis, Glasgow, Atlanta, Amsterdam, Berlin and London.

Lintu has recorded with the FRSO and a number of other orchestras on the *Ondine*, *BIS*, *Hyperion*, *Naxos* and *Avie* labels and has received a Gramophone Award, two ICMA awards and two Grammy nominations.

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ANDRÈ SCHUEN

Italian baritone Andrè Schuen comes from the Ladin-speaking region of South Tyrol and grew up speaking three languages – Ladin, German and Italian. He studied the cello before embarking on voice studies at the University Mozarteum Salzburg, where he graduated in 2010.

From 2010 to 2014, Schuen was a member of the solo ensemble of the Graz Opera. He has since made guest appearances at, among others, the Theater an der Wien, the Teatro Real in Madrid, in Lisbon, at the Hamburg, Bavarian and Vienna State Operas, and at the Aix-en-Provence and Salzburg Festivals.

In concert repertoire, Schuen has collaborated with many top orchestras and conductors – the Berlin Philharmonic and

Simon Rattle, the WDR Orchestra and Jukka-Pekka Saraste, the Swedish Radio Symphony, and the Bamberg Symphony and Daniel Harding, to mention just a few.

Schuen has recorded works by Schumann, Wolf, Frank Martin and others with pianist Daniel Heide and is at present working on the three Schubert song cycles for Deutsche Grammophon.

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. 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, Saari-aho, 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.