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Estonia and Estonians on the international musical scene 2000

by Prit Kuusk

Estonian music and the musicians from Estonia have strengthened their positions in international music life from year to year. Of course, elan and vivacity of such kind could start developing after regained national independence only, after long years of Soviet occupation during which several outstanding Estonian musicians had to consider all possible restrictions and limitations and some even had to leave the country.

Perhaps best known internationally from those Estonian musicians residing abroad are the conductors from the Järvi family (Neeme Järvi, his elder son Paavo and today also his younger son Kristjan), and the composer Arvo Pärt who is living in Berlin at the moment. Also Eri Klas has worked with several orchestras in many

countries and all the mentioned conductors have their own orchestras abroad. And **Tõnu Kaljuste**, the choir conductor has won more international recognition as artistic director of the three chamber choirs nominated as best in Europe (those of Holland, Swedish Radio and Estonian Philharmony) and he quite often performs with orchestras. Both Klas and Kaljuste are living in Estonia at the moment. However, two internationally recognised Estonian pianists and professors have been working for many years in Germany – **Arbo Valdma** as piano professor at Cologne Higher Music School and **Kalle Randalu** as piano professor at Karlsruhe and Freiburg Higher Music School. In addition to them a younger generation of Estonian musicians has come to the international arena, who can enjoy excellent conditions for professional development and self-realisation opened up in the recent 10 years of re-established Estonian statehood. Under new and changing circumstances the Republic of Estonia has been trying hard to find new resources and opportunities for supporting culture at large.

In the years of occupation our musicians' participation in international competitions or opportunities of performing were most rare – I can recall the victory of Kalle Randalu at ARD competition in Munich in 1985 and prizes some choirs won in their competitions. When choirs could make their concert trips more often, the best Estonian instrumentalists practically never performed abroad. We are particularly sorry for several outstanding Estonian vocalists, who are close to finishing their professional careers today and of whom the world knew nothing in their prime.

However, many young Estonian musicians have found opportunities to study abroad and they have achieved remarkable results within quite a short time – and the year 2000 has been one of the best in this respect. At the same time Estonia has developed fast at organising their own music events which have raised considerable international interest and accordingly, musicians of international renown can consider Estonian managers equal and reliable partners. They have also found in Estonia very emotional audience and skilled leaders of music events which motivates them come here and return again. And so they do come again! Thanks to that international festivals, series of concerts and other music events taking place in Estonia have won wide recognition and broadened in

scope. So the image of Estonia as a land of music grows together with its composers and performers.

Foreign instrumentalists in Estonia

The most central Estonian concert organisation **Eesti Kontsert** has also organised so-called “festivals for one instrument” in recent years. The year 2000 was dedicated to percussion instruments: the festival was named “Pauken” where participated musicians from 9 countries, including Japan, India and Ethiopia. The 2001 spring flute festival was carried out under the name “Flutish Kingdom”. The international festival for orthodox music “Credo” has become a tradition already (7th time) and this year it took place in two cities – Tallinn and Stockholm under supervision of its artistic director Valeri Petrov. The festival “Triialogos” also became quite fascinating – as symbiosis of the three– artistry in words, music and science, among leaders of which were besides Estonian musician Taivo Niitvägi also Vladimir Martynov and Tatyana Grindenko; there was also Bractwo Lutni from Poland performing. The most outstanding musician of the Gregorian festival was Dom Daniel Saulnier from Solesmes Abbey in France. A totally new event was the international festival of piano duos with participation of ensembles from St. Petersburg, Moscow and Munich.

Many famous ensembles have visited Tallinn, including Orchestra of the 18th century (Amsterdam) with Thomas Zehetmair conducting and Symphony Orchestra of Radio Holland with its Estonian chief conductor Eri Klas; the last mentioned also performed on the international festival “Symphony orchestras of the world” organised by Eesti Kontsert. The Symphony Orchestra of Radio Frankfurt commissioned Estonian composer Erkki-Sven Tüür to write a violin concerto for their 70th jubilee and performed it also during its trip in Tallinn and Tartu with Isabelle von Keulen’s excellent solo and Hugh Wolff conducting.

During traditional “Days of Estonian Music” last spring the annual board meeting of European Conference of Promoters of New Music took place in Tallinn. Tallinn was also honoured by a visit of Franz Müller-Heyser, Vice-President of the International Music Council and the President of the German Music Council.

And last but not least: we have lived centuries side by side with our Nordic neighbour – the Finns as a nation and a state – but we had not managed so far to organise together a song festival, which has an important role in both respective ethnic cultures. However, in the summer of 2000 on both sides of the Finnish Gulf a joint Finnish-Estonian song festival took place for the first time. In Skien, Norway a next in order Nordic Song Festival was organised where also Estonian choirs participated. Age Juurikas, young Estonian pianist was invited to perform on the festival of young instrumentalists of the Nordic countries “Nordic talents”.

Estonian musicians on international festivals

To start with performers of earlier music we have to mention the fact that Tallinn vocal ensemble Vox Clamantis conducted by Jaan-Eik Tulve participated in Gregorian Choir 25th anniversary celebrations in Paris. In addition to that they also took part in the festival of Gregorian Choirs in Belgium and performed together with the Gregorian Choir of Paris in Pontigny monastery, France. The choir gave an interesting concert in Paris with organist Aare-Paul Lattik performing organ pieces by Arvo Pärt and Gregorian chorales. Vox Clamantis also performed in Beirut, Lebanon on jubilee celebrations of St. Joseph University. The ensemble Tallinna Linnamuusikud (Tallinn Town Musicians) conducted by Taivo Niitvägi participated in the festival of early and traditional music “Les Orients Musicaux 2000” in Provence. The ensemble “Rondellus” conducted by Robert and Maria Staak took part in two prestigious celebrations of medieval music in Europe – “Montalbane” festival in Freyburg, Germany and in Thoronet festival in France performing at the same time in Aix-en-Provence for the French Radio program for classical music “France Musiques”. One of the best known and recognised Estonian ensembles of early music Hortus Musicus (established in 1972) conducted by Andres Mustonen performed after a long time again in Shostakovich Hall in St. Petersburg and in Rachmaninov Hall of Moscow Conservatory on the concert in memory of Oleg Kagan.

Now a few words about tours made by the Estonian music troupes. **The ballet troupe of Estonian National Opera** participated most successfully in the festival of St Demetrius in Thessaloniki, Greece performing de Falla Great charmer – love and Bizet-Schedrin Carmen with prima ballerina of the theatre **Kaie Kõrb** and her partner **Viesturs Jansons** in leading roles. For the beginning of their 95th season, the opera troupe of the theatre made a tour to Cyprus performing Bizet Carmen with **Riina Airene** in the main role and music director **Paul Mägi** as conductor. Both ballet and opera troupes were invited back. **Estonian National Male Choir** (chief conductor Ants Soots) visited Detroit and Minneapolis on the invitation of Neeme Järvi at the end of 1999. At the beginning of 2000 they performed on Millennium Concerts in Hamburg, Helsinki, and Geneva. On the invitation of Eri Klas to participate in the celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the Tampere Town Orchestra they performed with him Twelfth Symphony by Shostakovich (Babii Jar). The Choir has won international recognition for performing and recording this very special work. The Choir has also performed it with Eri Klas in “Liturgica” festival in Jerusalem where they also played Requiem by Cherubini. Whenever abroad, they have always performed a capella introducing Estonian choral music, in particular the choir pieces composed by Estonian classics Veljo Tormis, Eduard Tubin and Gustav Ernesaks.

Tours made by the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir

Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir performs very often on international stages, usually with Tallinn Chamber Orchestra, both conducted by Tõnu Kaljuste. From autumn 2001 the choir will be conducted by Paul Hillier, internationally known as the conductor of the Hilliard Ensemble. Several tours of the choir and concert cycles are related to task of introducing the new records they have made. At the beginning of the year they made a tour consisting of 12 concerts in the USA and Canada – Toronto, New York, Kansas City, Ann Arbor, Chicago, Houston, San Francisco, Vancouver where they performed Bach’s cantatas, Requiem by Estonian com-

poser Erkki-Sven Tüür and Kanon Pokajänen and Berliner Messe by Arvo Pärt. In some places they introduced the new CD with Choir music by Veljo Tormis, including Litany to Thunder. It was their fifth visit in the USA. In April they went to a tour in four Dutch towns (where they performed John's Passion by Arvo Pärt), then to Norway and Germany (including Munich, performing Kanon Pokajänen by Arvo Pärt). The choir also represented Estonia with music by Veljo Tormis on the world exhibition EXPO in Hannover. They also made a tour to Japan with Tallinn Chamber Orchestra where they were asked to perform besides Bach also Te Deum by Arvo Pärt. Te Deum was also performed on the eminent choir festival in Espoo, Finland together with Requiem by Erkki-Sven Tüür and the program for the 70th jubilee of Veljo Tormis, in which the most recent piece composed by the old master Final words of Kalevala was performed. Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir finished the year with emotional Christmas concerts in Holland (Estonian music, mostly by our classics Cyrillus Kreek and Arvo Pärt), including the one in Hertogenbosch Cathedral for the Dutch Royal Family and Government which was transferred on the Dutch TV.

Tõnu Kaljuste has had several other remarkable concerts with his other choirs in Sweden and Holland. He also conducted the concert of the Swedish Radio Choir dedicated to the 65th birthday of Arvo Pärt with the composer attending the event in Stockholm. During the concert they also recorded *Como anhela la cierva* and *Cantiques des Degres* by Arvo Pärt, performed some pieces of the newest Swedish music and also works by Veljo Tormis. With Dutch Chamber Choir he has performed several classical masterpieces (Vivaldi, Mozart, Martin) in Holland; these programs have also included *Inquietude du fini* by Erkki-Sven Tüür. The choir has also performed Dutch music on the tour "Europa Musicale" in Budapest, Prague and Munich and recorded a CD with music by Frank Martin.

Estonian choirs on the international scene

Tallinn Boys' Choir (conductor Lydia Rahula) participated in renown festivals for youth choirs in Ottawa, Canada ("Kaggik") and Huntsville, Estonian Boys' Choir (conductor Venno Laul) represented Estonia on the EXPO in Hannover and other celebrations in Germany. Tallinn Technical University Male Choir (conductors Jüri Rent and Siim Selis) performed in Canada. The girls' choir Ellerhein (chief conductor Tiia-Ester Loitme) made their longest concert tour so far in Japan introducing on numerous concerts mostly the music by Veljo Tormis. Tartu University Chamber Choir made a tour to Sweden and performed in the oldest churches in Vadstena, Uppsala, Norrsund and Sigtuna. Tartu Academic Male Choir performed in St. Petersburg during celebrations dedicated to the 140th anniversary of the Estonian Church of St. John there. We are particularly happy about revival of contacts with musicians of St. Petersburg after the collapse of the Soviet Union as several of Estonian choirs – the Male Choir of the Estonian Academy of Sciences, Tallinn Technical University male Choir, ensemble Hortus Musicus and opera soloists Urve Tauts and Mati Palm have performed there. In Moscow special concerts were organised to commemorate the best known and most beloved in Moscow Estonian opera singer Georg Ots. In the Central House of Artists there was a concert dedicated to his 80th birth anniversary and in the opera house Helikon there was a concert to observe the 25th anniversary of his death with participation of several outstanding Russian opera soloists.

The dynasty of the Järvi

The activities of the conductors Järvi at introducing Estonian music and performing with several world famous orchestras deserves special attention. Neeme Järvi is employed as chief conductor of two orchestras at the moment – that of the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. With the last mentioned orchestra he also celebrated one of his professional jubilees – 10 years in the position of the chief conductor with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. In Gothenburg he has been the chief conductor since 1982. Besides his own orchestras he has also conducted several other collectives as guest conductor and recorded several CDs. Neeme Järvi also got a permission from the world famous violinist Itzhak Perlman to come and act as the first guest conductor with his Detroit orchestra. He constantly performs new American music in Detroit and introduces Estonian music at the same time. Very few of the most celebrated American orchestras can allow the luxury to repeat the same program on 3–4 nights, as it usually happens in Detroit because of the most active and interested audience. Hence, all concerts of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra are recorded and transferred over the radio. In 2000 the weekly broadcasts reached over one million listeners on nearly 500 stations who tune in to hear the Detroit Symphony Orchestra on General Motors Mark of Excellence radio broadcast series, making DSO the most listened to orchestra of the nation.

Järvi's Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra made a next in order concert tour to America (incl. Washington Kennedy Center and New York Fisher hall, performing also Third Symphony by Arvo Pärt). They also visited France and Holland together with such famous performers as violin cellist Juri Bashmet and vocalists Barbara Bonney and Anne-Sofie von Otter. Järvi recorded with GSO for BIS company two outstanding pieces of Estonian music– Concerto piccolo by Arvo Pärt and Trumpet concerto by Eino Tamberg with Hakan Hardenberger playing the solo. As guest conductor he has worked with the Orchestre de Paris, Stochholm Royal Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra Japan Philharmonic Orchestra, Lausanne Chamber Orchestra performing also Double Bass Concerto by Eduard Tubin and Concerto for

String Orchestra by Jaan Rääts. Neeme Järvi also conducted the *Carmen* performances in Opera National de Paris and Tzar's bride performances by Rimski-Korsakov in San Francisco Opera. With the WRD Symphony Orchestra of Cologne he managed to carry out a project designed and prepared for several years – oratorio *Des Jona Sendung* (Jonah's Mission) by the Estonian classic Rudolf Tobias, which was performed with extraordinary success twice in the Great Hall of the Cologne Philharmonics with German choirs and international team of soloists, on the second night with standing ovations.

He also conducted the Symphony Orchestra of the Royal Academy of Music in London on the festival "Pärt in Profile" dedicated to the jubilee of Arvo Pärt. In summer 2000 he laid foundation to the master classes for young conductors as part of the David Oistrach festival in Pärnu. His daughter flutist **Maarika Järvi** also performed on Pärnu festival (Flute Concertino by the Estonian composer Kuldar Sink) as well as his nephew **Teet Järvi**, one of the best known Estonian cellists.

The career of **Paavo Järvi** as a conductor has been most remarkable. With Harrison and Parrott management he made a debut with 13(!) recognised symphony orchestras in 2000 only, in addition to that he made his debut in the series of Promenade Concerts in Royal Albert Hall, London. Among orchestras he has made his debut with have been Berliner Philharmoniker, Orchestra Filarmonica della Scala Milano, Orchestra del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino Firenzes, Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI Torino, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Orchestre National de France, Verbier Festival Orchestra in Switzerland, symphony orchestras in Indianapolis, Atlanta and Pittsburgh (USA), San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, Osaka Philharmonic Orchestra and Cologne WRD Symphony Orchestra. Paavo Järvi, too, has managed to introduce Estonian music in his programs, especially works by Arvo Pärt, such as his First and Third Symphony, Cantus in memory of Benjamin Britten, Fratres and Tabula rasa, but he also conducted the US Premiere of Exodus by Erkki-Sven Tüür in Atlanta. Paavo Järvi has always compiled his programs with participation with famous soloists from Leon Fleischer to Karita Mattila and Gidon Kremer as well as with representatives of the young

generation, such as Leif Ove Andsnes, Vadim Repin or Hilary Hahn. Paavo Järvi has signed a contract with Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and will start as music director there from the fall 2001.

Kristjan Järvi has been working with popular Absolute Ensemble in New York and introducing Estonian music, work of Erkki-Sven Tüür in particular. From his European debuts we have to mention the concert with the Holland Radio Symphony Orchestra in Concertgebouw, Amsterdam performing Second Symphony by Lepo Sumera. He has conducted many concerts with ERSO (Estonian National Symphony Orchestra), also Paavo Järvi has performed with the mentioned orchestra.

Eri Klas in Holland, Finland and in the USA

Activities of Eri Klas as a conductor has also won wide international recognition. He is the chief conductor of two orchestras at the moment – these are Holland Radio Symphony Orchestra residing in Utrecht and Tampere Philharmonic Orchestra in Finland. He also conducts operas with this orchestra in Tampere. He also continues as the first guest conductor with the Finnish National Opera and as a music consultant to Israel Sinfonietta in Tel Aviv. Eri Klas made a concert tour in Estonia, Latvia and Finland with his Dutch orchestra and recorded in Estonia the CDs with music of Alban Berg and Bernard Wagenaar, American-Dutch composer. He also took Tampere Symphony Orchestra to Holland, where they performed in the famous Concertgebouw. In Hilversum he acted as professor on the international Kondrashin courses for young conductors. His American tour of 2000 included work with symphony orchestras in Denver, Detroit, St. Louis, Minneapolis and National Symphony Orchestra in Washington. With the last mentioned orchestra they also performed *Festina lente* by Arvo Pärt. He also performed with his Dutch orchestra Estonian music – the very popular overture No.2 by Veljo Tormis was a jubilee greeting to the composer and *Perpetuum mobile* by Arvo Pärt.

Other Estonian conductors performing abroad

Estonian conductors Arvo Volmer (chief conductor of the Estonian National Orchestra until spring 2001) and Paul Mägi have worked with most outstanding symphony orchestras in Moscow. Paul Mägi also conducted Carmen on the 10th anniversary of the new Moscow opera troupe Helikon, and before that he went with the troupe to the tour in performing in Champs Elysee Theatre, Paris and Grand Festival Hall, Salzburg.

Vello Pähn is in great demand as a ballet conductor and has been constantly engaged in Hamburg, Paris and elsewhere. In March-April he conducted 25 performances of Cindarella by Prokofiev in Paris with the National Orchestra. It is a performance produced by Nureyev in 1984. (Vello Pähn has cooperated with Nureyev for several times). After that the Paris Ballet participated in inaugural celebrations of the Lowry Art Centre, Manchester performing Bajadere (produced by Nureyev) and again conducted by Vello Pähn. With the ballet troupe of the National Opera Paris he performed in autumn in La Sacala, Milan. In summer he conducted an opera festival in Savonlinna, Finland, where the leader of the festival, opera bariton Jorma Hynninen considered Pähn conducted Faust by Gounod the biggest success of the celebrations.

One of the greatest authorities maestro **Roman Matsov** (1917–2001) performed every month with orchestras in Russia and Germany in spite of his advanced age.

Tours of Estonian instrumentalists

Young pianist Ave Nahkur went to a grand tour as the winner of “IBLA Grand Prize 1999” (in duo with Greek pianist Eleni Iroidou) to America – and performed on 10 concerts in Carnegie Hall, UNO residence in New York and State Arkansas (there she also participated in master classes at Arkansas University, Little Rock).

Pianist **Lauri Väinmaa** had a solo recital in Musahino Culture Centre, Tokyo as a presentation event of three CDs of Estonian piano music recorded with him for the company Warner Classics

/Warner Music, Japan.

Estonian duo **Villu Veski** (saxophone) and **Tiit Kalluste** (accordeon) participated in the 6th British Saxophone Congress organised by the Royal College of Music.

Pianist and music theoretician **Vardo Rumessen** had a solo recital in New York in the series of concerts arranged by recording company Pro Piano. He also delivered a lecture on “Rudolf Tobias and his oratorio Des Jona Sendung on the conference of East-European spiritual music in Chemnitz, Germany.

Estonian music beyond borders of Estonia

Estonian music has been quite often performed by instrumentalists of other countries, it has been broadcast in foreign radio stations and commented on in press. A special concert was arranged to commemorate recently deceased Lepo Sumera (1950–2000) on the Riga festival of the new music.

German pianist Wolfgang Lindner performed the whole piano cycle *Starry Sky Cycle* by **Urmas Sisask** in Everswinkel, Germany; the title of the concert was “There is sky in you”. Ostrobothian Chamber Orchestra, Finland, conducted by Juha Kangas also often performs and records Estonian music (mostly Sumera and Tüür for the company Finlandia Records). The Tokyo Philharmonic Choir conducted by Chifuru Matsubara (who also organised the trip for the girls’ choir Ellerhein to Japan) performed a special program of Estonian and Finnish music in Tokyo and Osaka and came with it also to a concert tour to Estonia and Finland.

Choral music by **Veljo Tormis** was performed on Arvo Pärt Festival (by Choir of the Royal Academy of Music) and Covent Garden Festival (by the Latvian National Choir) in London. On the same London festival the works of Arvo Pärt’s professor Heino Eller *Dawn and Twilight* were performed with Neeme Järvi conducting. Among events of EXPO cultural program in Hannover there was a concert of Japanese and Estonian girls’ choirs “Sieben Exponaten” with premieres of *Sampo cuditur* (based on Finnish national epic *Kalevala*) by Veljo Tormis and *Zwei Beter* by Arvo Pärt.

The new choir piece by **Arvo Pärt** Cecilia, virgine romana was premiered by Santa Cecilia Academia Choir and Orchestra with Myung-Whun Chung conducting in Rome. Pärt's work Como anhela la cierva was also performed by the orchestra of Paris Opera with its chief conductor James Conlon.

Similar to Arvo Pärt's music, works of **Erkki-Sven Tüür** were also performed in well-known music halls; the following of his most recent pieces were performed: Motus I for percussion instruments by Pedro Carneiro in Purcell Room, London. New York Absolute Ensemble with Kristjan Järvi organised a concert on his works in the series of "Portraits of composers" in Miller Theatre of Columbia University where all – Architectonics, Motus I, Symbiosis, Conversio, String Quartet and Sonatina for two pianos were performed. The concert was transferred in Radio WNYC.

Swedish radio P-2 broadcast one of the best Estonian operas of all times Cyrano de Bergerac by **Eino Tamberg** recorded with Estonian Theatre troupe conducted by Paul Mägi.

International recognition won by Estonian musicians

Estonian musicians enjoyed extraordinary international attention and recognition in 2000.

Conductor **Tõnu Kaljuste** won the Cannes Classical Award in the field of 20th century choir music (for recording Psalms of Repentance by Alfred Schnittke with the Swedish Radio Choir for the company ECM). He also won the eminent Edison Classical Music Award in Holland for recording Canti carnascialeschi by Robert Heppner with the Dutch Chamber Choir for the Donemus Company.

Composer **Veljo Tormis** won the Baltic Prize for Arts in 2000 for the music written in recent years.

Peep Lassmann, Rector of Estonian Music Academy, was elected to the Board of L' Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Academies de Musique et Musikhochschulen on the annual conference of the organisation in Vicenza, Italy.

Conductor **Arvo Volmer** was awarded the prize of the Finnish

Radio “The Record of the Year” for the CD on symphonic work of Finnish classic Leevi Madetoja recorded with Oulu Town Orchestra for the company Alba Records.

And prizes won on international competitions: conductor **Olari Elts** won the eminent Sibelius competition in Helsinki. Before that he had won the Jorma Panula competition for young conductors of the Baltic and Nordic countries in Vaasa, Finland.

The orchestra piece *Loodekaar* (Northwest Bow) by **Jüri Reinvere** (28) won the first prize on UNESCO International Rostrum of Composers in the category up to 30 years of age; from among 66 pieces by composers from 35 countries it was positioned 5th and was selected to the 10 recommended works. The piece Floreo (1996) by **Mari Vihmand**, a winner of earlier times, was selected to be recorded on the set of 6 CDs on best works of International Rostrum of all times by the International Music Society as its jubilee issue.

Piano duo **Kai Ratassepp – Mati Mikalai** won the first place on the 49th ARD competition in Munich. and had the opportunity to perform on the final concert with the Symphony Orchestra of the Radio Bayern; they also won the second prize and a special prize on Silvio Omizzolo competition for piano duos in Padua, Italy. On the similar competition in Kaunas, Lithuania they won the II prize and three special prizes.

Pianist **Marko Martin** won the II prize and two special prizes on the 3rd Esther Honens competition for pianists where there were participants from 14 countries.

The New Tallinn Trio was awarded the II prize and a special prize from the audience on the 2nd Brahms competition for chamber ensembles in Gdansk, Poland.

Kalev Kuljus was the only oboist who reached the finals and won the IV prize on the 13th competition for wind instrumentalists in Bayreth, Germany.

Bass soloist **Ain Anger** (National Opera Estonia) won the competition for young opera singers on the competition “Amber Sea Voices” in Jurmala, Latvia.

Concerts with Estonian musicians has attracted attention of influential newspapers. The New York Times has published articles on concerts with all three conductors Järvi. Even the work of young

Kristjan Järvi with the Absolute Ensemble residing in New York (*"Absolute Ensemble: Putting Music back Together Again"*). British critic Martin Anderson published an interesting article on Veljo Tormis and his work in the journal *Tempo* ("We Should Know Who We Are.").

And finally we can also rejoice over the success of Estonian classical music. Besides the fact that Neeme Järvi deserved standing ovations after performing *Des Jona Sendung* by Rudolf Tobias in the Grand Hall of the Cologne Philharmonics, the famous Martin Anderson said in the interview to the journal *Fanfare* that he would place without any hesitation this particular piece of recorded music among the five best CDs which have influenced his life.

In memoriam Lepo Sumera 08.05.1950 – 02.06.2000

by *Merike Vaitmaa*

*...like the best Nordic composers his music can take you on strange and rewarding exploratory journeys through your own mind.
DJF, "Gramophone", December 1994*

Lepo Sumera was one of the central figures in the cultural life of Estonia. He was considered to be the greatest living symphonist in Estonia, and a pioneer in electro-acoustic music. He was an appreciated author of chamber music who was always asked to write new pieces by musicians: they knew he would understand the nature of their instruments. Lepo Sumera was an accomplished lecturer and organiser of music life, and a bright personality whose sharp-witted responses could even surprise his close friends.



In the spring of 2000 public attention became focused on him for particular reasons. On May 8 he celebrated his 50th birthday, and a number of his works, among them the two brand-new ones – Concerto Grosso and the Sixth Symphony – had been performed in the week before the jubilee. On June 2 Estonia was shocked by his sudden death. As the sad news spread, numerous obituaries were published, also outside Estonia, including *The Independent* and *MusikTexte*, and in a number of online issues. All of them highlighted his unbelievable energy and abundance of original ideas; some called him ‘mountaineer’ and ‘torchbearer’...

Biographic outline

Lepo Sumera studied composition with Veljo Tormis at Tallinn Music High School since 1964 and, from 1968 with professor Heino Eller at Tallinn Conservatoire (from 1992 the Estonian Academy of Music) being the last student tutored by the old master. After Prof. Eller’s death (1970) he studied with Heino Jürisalu, graduating in 1973. Between 1979–1982 he took post-graduate studies at Moscow Conservatory.

Sumera’s works have been performed in many countries: Australia, the USA, Japan, New Zealand, Mexico, Cuba, Finland, Sweden, Norway, the UK, France, Italy, and Germany. CDs with his symphonic works are available all over the world bearing BIS labels. The symphonies have been recorded with Malmö SO conducted by Paavo Järvi. His chamber works have been recorded by Finlandia Records, Erdenklang and Estonian companies. His list of works includes the ballets *Anselmi lugu* (Anselm’s Story, after E.T.A. Hoffmann; 1977/78) and *Sisalik* (The Lizard, libretto by Andrei Petrov after Aleksander Volodin; 1987/93), chamber multimedia opera *Olivia meistrikläss* (Olivia’s Master Class, libretto by Peeter Jalakas after Ervin Õunapuu, 1997), six symphonies (1981–2000), three instrumental concertos, cantatas, chamber music, piano pieces, electro-acoustic and multimedia works, more than 50 film scores.

He was awarded numerous annual music prizes and four national prizes in Estonia. He also won a prize for the best film music score at the international festival in Espinho (Portugal). His Fifth

Symphony (1995) was chosen the 1st recommended work at the International Rostrum of Composers in Paris in 1996.

Lepo Sumera started to work as a recording engineer for the Estonian Radio when still a student. In the beginning of the 1980s he was a consultant at the Estonian Composers' Union. He began teaching composition at the Estonian Academy of Music and was made a professor in 1993. He was one of the founders of the Electronic Music Studio at the Music Academy and worked as its first director in 1995–1999. He lectured in the Summer Courses of New Music in Darmstadt (1988, 1989) and in Musikhochschule in Karlsruhe (1992). He was elected Chairman of Estonian Union of Composers by his colleagues in 1993 and re-elected twice, in 1996 and 1999.

There is an item most extraordinary for a composer on Lepo Sumera's service record: in 1989-1992 he was Minister for Culture of Estonia. In the late 1980s, the turbulent years of change and hope for freedom in East-European countries, numerous intellectuals generated constructive ideas and were involved in politics. Actually, the word 'politics' had a different meaning in those years. The Communist Party was still the only existing party in Estonia, and for more than 40 years it had been unthinkable that someone not belonging to it would have been approved for a post of a headmaster, not to speak of that of a minister. In this respect, Sumera was apolitical and it was his advantage for public opinion: he was the first person to take the position of a high civil servant without party membership.

The years of his term in office were not easy for Estonia. As Minister for Culture, Sumera certainly could not put all his plans into practice. However, in one of his last interviews in May 2000 he said he had never regretted these years, "interesting as hell – everything changing, and so much in the build-up stage", but he never ever thought of accepting such a post later when things began to proceed more smoothly.

Beside his varied occupations reported in biographic data, he was invited to participate in numerous committees, councils and juries. With his energy and vigour he was able to solve organisational problems faster than anyone else. It might seem unbelievable that he ever found time for writing music. However, his list of

works demonstrates that he did, and the years when serving as minister, were no exception, despite being undoubtedly the hardest. Still, no piece of music written in these years – among others, the Piano Concerto and the Fourth Symphony – can give any reason to suspect their author of taking things too easily. He always knew that, in the first place, he had to be a composer. The answer to the question, how he was able to combine writing music with all his other duties, may be found in the character of his creative process. The intensity of his lifestyle definitely had its effect undermining his health.

The Beginning

Ostinato Variations (1967) for piano is the earliest piece on the list of works of Lepo Sumera. He had withdrawn most of those written in his school years (1964–1968), but left this one. In October 2000 the piece was performed at his memorial concert. The majority of the audience had never heard it before; only now they could admire its fascinating musical ideas and integrity and were impressed by the amazing maturity of the 17-year composer.

One could wonder about the idea of Ostinato Variations. The piece begins with a 12-tone-theme and is based on motifs derived of the theme, yet it does not sound like dodecaphonic music. The story about composing the piece can serve as a sample of its young author's independent thinking: he wrote the piece completely by himself, during summer holidays before his last year of studies with Tormis in Tallinn Music High School.

Years later, Sumera told it as 'a funny story': "I had heard next to nothing about 12-tone method, but I was looking for means of using all the twelve tones. I found such patterns that enabled it and wondered then what I should do next. I can remember I did not want to exercise harmony I had learned at school and tried to apply polyphonic devices. Since I had not studied polyphony as a discipline yet, it was so easy to write! Omitting the odd notes in the theme, I constructed the part for the left hand. ... So I went to Tormis in the autumn. He asked if I knew that a lot of things I had used, occasional triads and other ones, were denied by rules of the 12-tone technique. I asked, what was this 12-tone technique all

about? He then advised me to read the book by Krenek [Studies in Counterpoint, New York 1940] which I read indeed.”

Later he applied 12-tone technique in most of his works until 1977 – In memoriam (1972), Fughetta and Postlude for piano (1973), *Mäng puhkpillidele* [Play for wind instruments] (1976), Two pieces for Violin Solo (1977). Nevertheless, in none of them did he surrender himself entirely to rigorous rules of dodecaphony. He used this technique in definite sections as means for certain musical characters – dramatic, like in In memoriam or grotesque, like in Play for wind instruments –, and contrasted them with other means and characters. Yet the texture is always coherent and the different devices used in the work have been yielded to the dramatic line of the overall form. A similar stylistic approach can be found later, in the 1990s, in works by Erkki-Sven Tüür (b.1959).

Lepo Sumera’s works started to appear in concert programmes in the early 1970s. His first orchestral work In memoriam, written while still a student and dedicated to the memory of Professor Heino Eller, was his breakthrough on the international musical arena. All the Estonian conductors of the 1970s, including Neeme Järvi and Eri Klas, performed it in Estonia and elsewhere: in major Russian cities, in Denmark, Bulgaria, Germany, Finland and Cuba.

Birth of a Symphonist

The symphony orchestra remained Sumera’s favourite medium, and the symphony became the most essential genre in his compositions. His use of orchestral colours displays his remarkable power of imagination. At the same time, timbre has an important dramatic function in his music.

The symphony as a genre matches Sumera’s individual gifts: he usually develops musical material at great length, patiently ‘diving’ into it, to disclose its diverse and sometimes completely unexpected qualities. Every composition has its individual dramatic line. Both form and dramatic lines are closely connected to the microstructures of musical material. In his interviews he explained that ideas for the musical material, the timbres and form of a new work emerged in his mind simultaneously. In several occasions he described his working process in vivacious terms:

“In the beginning, it is like a cloud, an image of the overall form you can eye in a moment. This visual image is important, further on you work as if using a microscope, trying to see separate sections, textures...”

“If you start with writing them down at once, or if you try ‘to touch’ the material, to fix particulars too soon, then the other parts disappear and even the one you have fixed goes to ashes. It is similar to dreams: you may open your eyes too soon, and then it is gone.”

“I cannot write down the first bar before I would know how the piece will end, before knowing the whole thing by heart, with its timings and duration, the construction, the parts of the different instruments...”.

His ability to work outside his workroom even in detail can explain, how he was able to write despite his countless other commitments. And what is more remarkable, his way of composing is closely related to the integrity of his works and his capability of ‘long-distance’ thinking.

Sumera’s symphonies are ‘real’ symphonies, with both meditation and action in their semantics, with a variety of musical events. He undoubtedly was a narrative composer, though in his commentaries he never told any programmatic ‘stories’ and only seldom gave such hints – for instance, that the Latin title of the Fourth Symphony, “Serena Borealis” (1992) could be associated not only with the North wind and serenity but also with sirens (Greek: se[re]n). Despite occurring dramatic collisions, his music maintains its introvert and reflective approach.

The sonic aura in his works is never ordinary or commonplace, and his works abound in subtle solutions regarding timbre. The tone colour is also treated as an important dramatic factor. He confessed: “Sound has always had a magic power over me”. His passion for sound magic was perhaps the main reason why his ideas in one work often grew into themes for other compositions. His First Symphony (1981) was born from a piano piece, the first one of the Two Pieces from the Year 1981.

This piano piece has become Lepo Sumera’s most frequently performed work, a kind of his musical cachet. It also marks a turning point in his musical style.

Diatonic modes, long sections of motives repetition and variation that appear in complex polyrhythmic and tonally ambiguous textures are characteristic to his works written in 1981–1986. At first sight, the abundance of motive repetitions in them suggests an influence of minimalist music. Nevertheless, several other characteristics in Sumera's works totally disagree with basic principles of the minimalist aesthetics: contrasting sections and suggestive climaxes, his profound concern about the overall form of a work. In fact, American minimalist music was not known in Estonia until 1983 and Sumera derived his repetitive technique from the archaic Estonian runo songs.

Since the late 1980s he preferred chromatic synthetic modes, some of them created by him, and he paid special attention to the variety of harmonic colours in his works. The meditative first and last movements of the Third Symphony (1988) are based on the same long succession of chords (a device the composer would apply frequently in his later works), each movement of the work possessing its own instrumental colour. The first movement, with its long-breathed line in brass section that is repeatedly 'disturbed' by an independent pulsation of the percussion instruments, belongs to the most imaginative creations of the composer.

There is a peculiar semantic casting in Sumera's output. His chamber music and choral works – not just each one, but many of them – display all grades of humour, from the playful and delicate one to the bold grotesque. In his symphonies he wrote down his most serious and painful experience, none of the six reveals the person with a vivid sense of humour behind them. Even his three instrumental concertos are close to the symphonies in this respect.

The Last Decade

The 1990s were prolific and diverse years in Lepo Sumera's creative life. He wrote some of his most inventive chamber music, such like *Mäng kümnele* (Play for Ten), subtitled "Canone terribile, alla diavola" (1995) and *Odaliskid* (Odalisques), a cycle of four pieces for flute, guitar and cello (1997/99). Having been mainly an instrumental composer before, he now applied human voice more frequently and displayed remarkable sensitivity to its various possibil-

ities. At least two of his vocal scores of the 1990s, *Three Sonnets of Shakespeare* for soprano, speaker, boys' chorus and orchestra (1996) and the multimedia chamber opera *Olivia meistrikläss* (*Olivia's Master Class*, 1997) belong to the peaks of his work.

Electro-acoustic music became increasingly important in his work during the last decade of his life. In his film scores he had been using electronic means since the middle 1970s when the cultural ideology did not accept electronic music for concert stages. In 1989 Sumera composed his first electronic piece, *From 29 to 49* for guitar, cello and tape. Hereafter, he was particularly attached to the real-time electronics. He loved sitting at the mixing console and perceived the wider meaning of this activity for composers as a chance to regain a 'has-been' – the unity of composing and performing processes.

The sonic spell did not tempt him to neglect control over the general shape of a work. The consistency and intensity in his *Ja nii tagasi ja edasi* (*And so Backwards and Forwards*) for seven instruments and live-electronics (1991) and *Mäng kahele* (*Play for Two*) for violin and percussion with live-electronics (1992) can remind us of his symphonies. On the other side, the electronic sound provided him with new models for orchestral textures. For example, the extraordinarily long uninterrupted melodic lines, together with an almost imperceptibly changing texture of the *And so Backwards and Forwards* were reborn in the slow movements of the Fourth Symphony 'Serena Borealis' (1992). The sonic element in the Fifth Symphony (1995) is more important than ever before in his orchestral works; the piece contains long sections of texture music and aleatoric counterpoint.

It seems natural that Lepo Sumera, with his experience in working with film directors, got interested in multimedia events. His chamber opera *Olivia's Master Class* (the libretto by the stage director Peeter Jalakas after the novel of the same title by Ervin Õunapuu, 1997) and *Südameasjad* (*Heart Affairs*, 1999) have been peaks of the multimedia events in Estonia. In both of them, use of video tape and real-time video processing result from the basic ideas of the works.

There are two main characters in *Olivia's Master Class*. A man striving to a perfect mastership (the role for a drama actor) has sev-

eral names, e.g. Caspar David Friedrich, Admiral Nelson and Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen. His (their) wife or beloved Olivia (soprano) wanders through different lives, remembering all of them. The video tape based on paintings by Caspar David Friedrich is not a mere background but includes a number of scenes during which the 'real' protagonists perform in ensembles with their virtual images.

The entire material for Heart Affairs was derived from a human heart – from its sounds and rhythms, and the cassette made by echocardiography. The account of the origin of the work is remarkable, albeit grievous. Lepo Sumera had his heart controlled for the first time in 1997. He saw the echocardiogram of his heart and immediately recognized the artistic qualities of the 'portrait'. With his Heart Affairs he did not aim at perpetuating his own heart but to reveal something higher – the excellence and fragility of human beings. To succeed, he had to apply recordings of a perfectly healthy heart, and he was given the chance. The video and audio tapes resulted from complex developing procedures (the video tape was made by Artur Talvik). In addition, the work involves four musicians whose parts include sections of improvisation. In a performance, both musical and visual components are modified in real time and merged with the sound and images recorded on tapes. No performance of the Heart Affairs can duplicate another one, yet the work always climaxes in gorgeous rhythms of the heart.

The last months in Lepo Sumera's life were full of particularly intense work with new scores and rehearsals. The Concerto Grosso for soprano saxophone, percussion, piano and symphony orchestra was first performed on the 29th of April. His jubilee concert on the 6th of May included the Estonian premiere of the Violoncello Concerto (1998/99) written for David Geringas who magnificently played the solo part, as he had done also in the first performance in the Hague (1999). Yet the first performance (by the National Symphony Orchestra of Estonia under Arvo Volmer) of his brand-new Sixth Symphony was expected most and proved to be the summit of the evening.

The Sixth Symphony consists of two movements. The 1st movement alternates the parts indicated as *Andante furioso* with meditative 'delaying' (*Andante – Rubato – Lunga, quasi senza misura*)

→ characterised

and ends with a gradual 'freezing' of the dramatic elements. The 2nd movement, Andante, is ~~possessed~~ by multi-layered but translucent textures and ambiguous expression, with intertwined reflection, anguish, resignation and transfiguration.

In the end of May Lepo Sumera told his wife Kersti that he had completed the Second Piano Concerto, the premiere of which with Kalle Randalu as a soloist had been planned on the 6th of July. As we know, he was not given the time to write it down. His list of works closed with the Sixth Symphony – as if a clever scriptwriter had planned a symphony to be his last work. And finally, one more feature was added to the malicious 'plot' of the 2nd of June 2000: Lepo Sumera was to participate in a performance of his Heart Affairs in the evening, but his own heart stopped in the morning of the same day.

New Estonian CDs

by Igor Garšnek

Estonian Portraits. Duo Concertante – Tauno Saviauk (flute), Tiit Peterson (guitar). Music by Raimo Kangro, Tõnu Kõrvits, Ester Mägi, Peeter Vähi, Jaan Rääts, René Eespere and Urmas Sisask.

Antes Classics

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The compositions recorded by Tiit Peterson and Tauno Saviauk as *Estonian Portraits* date from 1991 to 1999 and were all dedicated to the two instrumentalists performing them there. The resultant portraits not only offer examples of the latest music from Estonia but also represent the two musicians forming the Duo Concertante. In addition, they are to be understood as seven self-portraits of the seven Estonian composers who wrote them. Whatever the idea or subject behind a work may be, the composer always marks it with her or his personal signature.

Raimo Kangro (1947–2001) is perhaps the best known por-

traitist among Estonian composers. His eleven-part *Display* series consists of pictures for different chamber instrumentations together with musical portraits of Steve Reich, Mozart, and Schubert. Tõnu Kõrvits (b. 1969) can be regarded as a musical water-colourist. His compositions are always pictorial and convey the same artistic feeling encountered in impressionistic feeling. Ester Mägi (b. 1922) depicts what must be wonderfully beautiful Estonian landscapes in her music: virgin forests, crystal lakes, and old farmhouses. Her compositions offer evidence of close contact with Estonian folklore. Jaan Rääts (b. 1932) is the abstractionist among Estonian composers. His works are well proportioned and sometimes even stamped by geometrical regularities. Peeter Vähi (b. 1955) sometimes appears to be a genuine graphic artist, as, for example in his Four Engravings of Reval or To His Highness Salvador D with its touch of surrealism synonymous with the name Dalí. René Eespere (b. 1953) is more of a drawer than a painter. His melodic precision of detail and clarity place him on a par with the great engravers. Urmas Sisask (b. 1960) depicts the universe – galaxies, constellations, planets, and comets. Sisask obtains his inspiration from the mysteries of the starry sky.

Lepo Sumera. Film Music by Lepo Sumera.

Antes Classics

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One of the most outstanding Estonian symphonic composers Lepo Sumera (1950-2000) was also a productive master in this particular field of music. Visual arts had inspired Sumera for decades – he wrote his first film music as early as in 1973. On this record we can find his best compositions of 1980-ies. He co-operated with many Estonian producers, his most innovative ideas were expressed best in anima films. One of the most remarkable examples of the kind is music for the cartoon ‘The Hell’ by producer



Rein Raamat. There are two pieces – Can-Can and Tango, both clearly demonstrating composer’s ironical approach to the world of thinking which exactly corresponds to the satire expressed in the film by Rein Raamat.

Contrary to other composers writing for films Sumera seemed to prefer natural instruments to electronic devices – the latter were mostly used for adding colour to acoustic instruments. This CD is undoubtedly different in the line of his many recordings as it opens his world of musical thought simultaneously from different angles – we can hear jazz-like improvisations as well as stylistic treatment of melodies from the times of romanticism.

Urmas Sisask. Starry Sky Cycle – Southern Skies.

Lauri Väinmaa (piano).

2001 Finlandia Records

Urmas Sisask (b. 1960), an Estonian composer and amateur astronomer, has studied composition with René Eespere in the Estonian Academy of Music. His main activities, besides composing serious music, include astronomic observations



and numerous concert lectures in the Musical Planetarium in his native village of Jäneda. Urmas Sisask’s interest in shamanistic activities was deepened during so-called singing revolution, and he feels that rituals represent one of the most important forces that help Estonians carry on.

Starry Sky Cycle – Southern Sky consists of 26 piano pieces, each of them representing a portrait of a constellation in the Southern Sky. He made his astronomic observations in Australia. *Starry Sky Cycle – Southern Sky* is a sequence to the earlier collection of piano pieces *Starry Sky Cycle* (1980–1987), the music of which depicts constellations of the Northern Sky. Also the first *Starry Sky Cycle* was recorded with pianist Lauri Väinmaa for Finlandia Records.

Lauri Väinmaa's (b. 1961) repertoire ranges from Bach to Schnittke and Pärt with particular emphasis on Bach, Beethoven, Liszt, Brahms and Prokofiev. It includes 32 sonatas by Beethoven, complete piano music by the second Viennese School and by Pärt. He has recorded complete piano music of Arvo Pärt for BBC in London.

Poème d'amour. Leena Laas (violin) and Nata-Ly Sakkos (piano).

© Leena Laas 2001

On this CD we can find short romantic pieces – romances and serenades by classics of the 19th century Europe and Russia (Beethoven, Rubinstein, Tchaikovsky, etc) and by classics of the 20th century Estonia (Artur Lemba, Heino Eller).

Romantic music seems to suit violinist Leena Laas and pianist Nata-Ly Sakkos perfectly. Lembi Mets, music critic has commented on this CD as follows: this lyrical-nostalgic program has offered both female musicians an opportunity to express their secret desires – to be fine and fragile, and a bit weak and coquettish at the same time – but always warm and loving. For lovers of intimate and romantic chamber music this CD is of particular value.

Leena Laas (b. 1966) began her music studies in Narva (Estonia). She graduated from the Estonian Academy of Music receiving a MA. Leena Laas has played in KREMERata BALTICA, an orchestra whose founder, leader and soloist is Gidon Kremer, as well as in Estonian National Symphony Orchestra.

Nata-Ly Sakkos (b. 1950) is a well-known Estonian pianist, her most remarkable achievements are in chamber music. She has performed with most of the best Estonian musicians. Nata-Ly Sakkos has participated in more than 60 premieres.



Tango King Astor Piazzolla. Arvo Leibur (violin), Terje Terasmaa (vibraphone), Heiki Mätlik (guitar).

© Arvo Leibur / Heiki Mätlik 2000

The trio Arvo Leibur, Heiki Mätlik and Terje Terasmaa have performed for several concert seasons since 1995/96. They have performed different concert programs such as ‘Campanella’ (with Niccolo Paganini’s music), ‘The Melodies of White Christmas’, ‘Viva España’ and now – ‘Tango King Astor Piazzolla’.

Astor Piazzolla (1921–1992) composed hundreds of tangos, and also music for plays and ballets, influenced by tango music. His tangos are full of dramatic and romantic elements without any nostalgia. The influences of American jazz music and modern concert music can be heard in tangos composed by Piazzolla, through these aspects he changed the sound language and form of tangos to suite the nowadays.

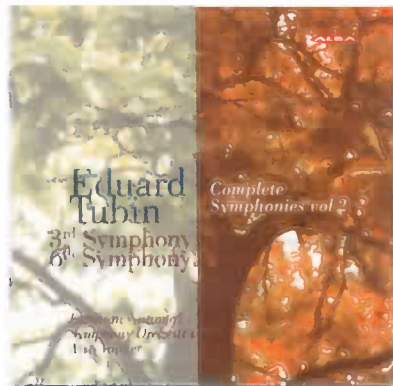
The music on this record has been arranged to violin, vibraphone and guitar by the performers themselves.



Eduard Tubin, Complete Symphonies vol. 2: Symphony no. 3, Symphony no. 6. Estonian National Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Arvo Volmer.

© 2000 Alba Records

Eduard Tubin (1905–1982) is one of the most well-known and often performed Estonian composers. His importance lies in his sym-



phonic scores and stage works. Ten symphonies, operas *Barbara von Tisenhusen* and *The Parson of Reigi* and ballett *Kratt* ('The Goblin') belong to the classical repertoire of Estonian music. Tubin was the first student of one of the most prominent composers of the country, professor of composition, Heino Eller. The Second World War changed radically Tubin's life and forced him to emigrate to Sweden in 1944, where he lived the rest of his life.

In co-operation between Arvo Volmer, Estonian National Symphonic Orchestra, Estonian Radio and Finnish company Alba Records the idea of 1990-ies to record all the symphonies by Tubin was put into practice. The first CD (with Symphonies No. 2 and No.5) was mentioned with distinction in the leading magazine for recordings of classical music Gramophone, this CD is the second in the series.

Arabesque. Henn Rebane
(accordion).

Music by Domenico Scarlatti, Louis Claude Daquin, Camille Saint-Saens, Ernesto Lecuana, Vladimir Zolotaryov, Pasqual Marquina, Francisco Tarrega, Astor Piazzolla, John Gort and George Dinicu.

© 2000 Henn Rebane

Henn Rebane (b. 1952) was born in Kohtla-Järve (Estonia). At the age of five he was taught how to play accordion by his father. Later he studied accordion in Jõhvi and Tallinn and graduated from Tallinn Conservatory (now Estonian Academy of Music) in 1977. After that he worked as accordion teacher in Tallinn and in Kokkola Conservatory (Finland). He has also toured several countries in Europe.

Henn Rebane himself about CD *Arabesque*: "During the recent years I have had an opportunity to play very different styles. The music on this CD is important for me: these works are very special and clear. This record or 'concert' consists of various classical

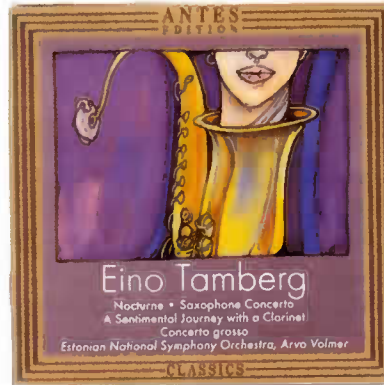


arrangements and original music composed for accordion, and the album is meant to be listened from the beginning to the end to get full impression.”

*Eino Tamberg. Nocturne,
Saxophone Concerto, A
Sentimental Journey with a
Clarinet, Concerto grosso.
Estonian National
Symphony Orchestra, con-
ducted by Arvo Volmer.
Antes Classics
© 2000 Bella Musica
Edition*

Eino Tamberg (b. 1930) has been known to the Estonian musical world ever since he released his songs on lyrics by Sandor Petöfi (1955) and the *Concerto grosso* (1956). This latter work marked the breakthrough of the ‘new wave’ of Estonian music into international music life in the late 1950s. Although Tamberg has written music in all genres, in the last three decades symphonic and stage music have dominated his work. Eino Tamberg does not use dissonant atonality in his works (only in the *Toccata* for symphony orchestra, written in 1967, did he use the serial technique) and pure folkloristic material. His work is characterised by his epic, occasionally lyric and passionate style, which gives rise to vivid timbre images and mostly consonant, euphonious sounds. Eino Tamberg is one of the main representatives of Neo-classicism in Estonian music. In 1990s, elements of Expressionism became more prominent in Tamberg’s work.

Eino Tamberg finished his *Concerto grosso Op. 5* in the summer of 1956. Both the title and structure of this three-movement work have their origins in the Baroque musical form of the same name. The structural principles of this form as well as the style of musical expression characteristic of this period (similarly to works by Händel, Corelli et al.) inspired Tamberg to create an ensemble concerto. In addition to using the old form (in the first movement



the contrast of *solo* and *tutti*, in the second movement the solo instruments, in the third *tutti*), it has a range of intonations which indicate a certain closeness to the Western European Baroque style. Nevertheless, the *Concerto grosso* grew out of the diverse possibilities of contemporary music and is very fresh and vivid. The *Concerto grosso* was first performed in March 1957 in the Estonian Radio, and the first concert performance took place in the same year in Moscow.

The saxophone has been one of the Tamberg's favourite instruments ever since he wrote his first works. He started to use it in his earlier work – the symphonic suite *Prince Gabriel* Op. 2 (1955) and the *Concerto grosso*. The *Saxophone Concerto* (1987) is written for small orchestra. The composer later followed the same direction with *Nocturne* and *A Sentimental Journey with a Clarinet*.

Eino Tamberg's interest in the literature and theatre is also evident in the titles of his musical works. The title of his *Sentimental Journey with a Clarinet* Op. 96 (1996) was adopted from 'A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy' written by English sentimental author Laurence Sterne in 1768. *Nocturne* Op. 90 (1994) is a work of night music. Eino Tamberg has said: "There are all kinds of things in the night. Not only lyrical landscape scenes but also yearning and intense passion. A night can be mysterious or threatening. We can hear birds singing at night, but also sounds of a distant foghorn and thunder. And sometimes, very rarely, you can hear the sound of piano drifting in through your window..."

Days of Estonian Music 2001

by Igor Garšnek

“Days of Estonian Music” – the festival of the Estonian music is a tradition which came into being in 1979. More than 20 years it has been the biggest local event and an opportunity for the majority of composers to present their new ideas and compositions. One of the most important characteristics of the festival has been its organisation during all years of its existence, and namely, pieces of very young composers often still studying at the academy, have been included into programs of the concerts. Young composers and instrumentalists of today can be future masters – we should not forget that the conductor of the first “Days of Estonian Music” was Neeme Järvi... At the head of organisers of the first festivals were such composers as Jaan Rääts and Eino Tamberg, in 1990-ies there

were Lepo Sumera (1950–2000) and Raimo Kangro (1949–2001). So has developed this important and broad forum for Estonian music culture and the public, which has always been focussed on both – innovative ideas hand in hand with Estonian classical music.

Days of Estonian Music 2001 (between April 7–13) were regrettably extraordinary in that sense that we could not see among the members of the organising team two outstanding Estonian composers- there was neither Lepo Sumera at the head of the Estonian Composers Union as its chairman nor Raimo Kangro. It does not mean, however, that their works were not performed during the last festival. They were in the program as usual and there were even two premieres by Raimo Kangro – among those his last piece Three spring visions for a chamber ensemble.

There were 8 concerts on 7 days and it started with the duo Villu Valdmaa (baritone) and Martti Raide (piano) with the program “ A century with Estonian chamber songs” in the Town Hall and ended with the concert in the Dome, dedicated to the Good Friday, where “Heinavanker” (Hay-wagon) – an ensemble of clerical music- performed “John’s passion” by Arvo Pärt. During the week numerous pieces of Estonian music could be enjoyed being performed by Estonian National Symphonic Orchestra, Estonian National Male Choir, Tallinn Chamber Choir, NYVD Ensemble, Hortus Musicus and traditionally by numerous soloists and chamber ensembles. Side by side with innovative pieces by new composers experimenting with electronic compositions (Kairi Kosk, Mirjam Tally) there were works by our classics (Artur Kapp, Cyrillus Kreek) in the programs of concerts.

Organ music

Aare-Paul Lattik, a young organist, performed in St. Nicholas Church and offered both, Estonian classics and premieres. We could enjoy Sonata no.1 by Artur Kapp (1872–1952), which he wrote at the age of 18. Artur Kapp was studying at St. Petersburg Conservatory at that time with prof. Homilius and he had written the piece for his organ lesson. Quite by chance prof Rimski-Korsakov happened to hear it and persuaded the young student to come and learn with him composition. And after that, of course,

Artur Kapp went to lessons of Rimski-Korsakov.

Aare-Paul Lattik also performed some pieces by contemporary composers. Among those was the CV (2001, premiere) by Mati Kuulberg (1947–2001), which created simultaneously a warning-provocative and expecting effect with its static of low rigid phonic background. The development of sound seems to be built to “cumulation of masses” in one direction. It was broken by cascading stream of atonic layers, opposed by a counterpoint on repetitive element. The piece has quite a suggestive summary where in a static soundscape both end registers of the organ meet. Those in its turn die away in order to clear ground for the three fatal strokes of the bell. The message of the work is clear even if the audience does not know to whom the bell tolls. Only a few months later we could understand it had been meant for the composer himself, because he died on June 14, 2001 leaving for us this piece as his last legacy.

A Piece without name no.3 (premiere 2001) by Jaan Rääts (b. 1932) is his only organ composition so far. Neo-classical traits of the composer are also here evident as they are visible in his earlier works. It would be quite difficult to say that his development of musical facture could be called un-organ like. However, his musical ornaments and moving patterns of rhythm created a vision of imaginary string instruments.

Estonian Choir music

showed a manifold repertoire at this festival. The first part of the concert of the Estonian Male Choir (conducted by Ants Soots) was fully dedicated to premieres of Estonian composers. Most remarkable of those were *Ja päike tõuseb* (And the Sun rises again, Ecclesiastes 1:5-7) by Tõnu Kõrvits (b.1969) and *Song of Solomon* (The Bible: Song of Solomon, sentences ch. 1-4) by Raimo Kangro (1949-2001). In the work of Kõrvits we can observe interesting neo-impressionist soundscapes, where choir phrasing in legato seemed to illuminate the music internally. In Kangro's *Song of Solomon* the facture was developed in a most interesting form - bright rhythmic motives were used in pulsating imitation. Simultaneously to those constant modulations are exposed, which create an effect of unbroken change as a never-ending song of songs

to the pan-sensual love. *Beatus vir* (Psalm 111) by the young composer Aare Kruusimäe (b. 1972) is quite a complicated piece of music considering its expressive language. Musical ideas of the composer seem to have found interesting solutions primarily in sound vertical and harmonic sequences.

Mammoth concert

A concert lasting five hours was a precedent having no other of its kind and entirely justified its name. It was also crowded with premieres as were the halls and corridors of the Estonian Music Academy. The trio Arvo Leibur (violin), Terje Terasmaa (vibraphone) and Heiki Mätlik (guitar) started in the Chamber Hall. This ensemble has been actively performing in recent years and they have also made several interesting records. The first piece *Skulptuuri hommik* (The morning of a sculpture 2001, premiere) by René Eespere has been inspired by the painting bearing the same name by a Jüri Arrak, one of the most famous contemporary artists. Similar to Arrak's attractive style there are also some "exaggerated" elements, sudden and nervous short motives entwined with longer passionate passages accompanied by soaring sound created by vibraphone. The work is comparable to a moody caprice. The last work by Raimo Kangro (1949-2000) *Three spring visions* (premiere 2001), in which his musical style has been expressed in most positive optimistic and rhythmic devices.

But the initial part of the *Three spring visions* offers somewhat unexpected minor soundscape, also developments of rhythms are not so active as in his previous works. Only the final part is characteristic and recognisable – written by Kangro's hand – full of action and joyful vitality.

In further program new authors and instrumentalists came one after another; of those a piano piece *Invitation to dance* (premiere) by Kristjan Kõrver (b. 1976) performed by Kai Ratassepp deserved attention by its toccata like facture, which was presented by off-beat rhythm shifts and explosive changes back to real beat pianism.

In the opera studio of Estonian Music Academy other premieres followed. Kairi Kosk (b. 1970) is a young composer who recently graduated from the mentioned academy. Her *Illumion* for cello

(Aare Tammesalu) and for live electronic were filled with miraculous sound visions and tinkling meditations. A new and attractive opus anyway.

Mirjam Tally's (b. 1976) *Swinburne* for six performers was a theatrical performance in many respects – it contains texts for actors, singers in costumes and fantastic design music. Quasi-opera vocalism, electric guitar and accordion created unexpectedly a pseudo-nostalgic atmosphere, where both vanguard and decadence could walk hand in hand. They are followed by sly irony and those three together break out finally into grotesque. Later Estonian Radio selected Mirjam Tally's *Swinburne* to represent Estonia on the International Rostrum of Composers 2001.

The percussion group *Pauken Fest Ensemble* is quite a young team considering their age and time they have made music together. However, they proceeded with the work *Meie* (*We*, 2000) by Lepo Sumera, which can be distinguished by its polyphonic rhythm. Sven Grünberg (b. 1956) is undoubtedly one of the pioneers of Estonian electronic music, but at the same time one of the first who started to pay attention to oriental music. The premiere of his *Idam* acquainted the audience with the sound of oriental ritual music performed by such specific instruments as Thibetian cymbals and set of hanging bamboo pipes. A real meeting of the East and West!

Also in the music composed by Peeter Vähi (b. 1955) we can observe the same approach – East meeting West – and the style of his composition in recent years could be characterised with the concept “crossover”. The last piece of this mega-concert was his *Aleatoric heavy* (premiere) performed by the trio Arvo Leibur – Terje Terasmaa – Heiki Mätlik. Heiki Mätlik is the representative of the classical guitar, but as soon as he took the electric guitar, we could expect rock – and so it really was. In this work the violin also becomes amplified but the general effect is that of a fusion-type witty etude. It was rather unexpected in such an academic atmosphere – Leibur played his electronic violin with the same jovial elegance as his colleague Jean Luc Ponty in 1970ies in John McLaughlin's *Mahavishnu Orchestra*.

NYYD concert

NYYD Ensemble (conducted by Olari Elts) is the only ensemble of Estonian contemporary music and it performed in the museum of architecture called Rotermanni soolaladu (Rotermann's salt store). They made one premiere and performed several pieces by older Estonian composers from their green years. The first of them was *Mäng puhkpillidele* (A play for the winds) by Lepo Sumera from 1976. Sumera seemed to have been quite a modernist preferring dissonance in the meaning of the concept in 1970ies. At the same time he was really innovative in his approach to sound colouring which is particularly noticeable in the solo for the flute. A wind quintet as an ensemble can also perform a bit of grotesque and Sumera has used these opportunities with his fine sense of irony. There are parts where the bassoon can "grumble" or where the French horn performs spectacular glissandos. The same could be observed in the second composition by Sumera performed on this concert - *To Reach Yesterday* (1993) for cello and piano. *Confession* (1997) by Mari Vihmand (b. 1967) for sole oboe (Kalev Kuljus) was perceived as atonic confession of the composer about her roaming and attempts to discover interesting timbre solutions for the instrument. And Kalev Kuljus is the best possible leader for such discovery trips. After *Quintettino* (1964) by Arvo Pärt – a piece from his green years with a humorous finale there was a premiere – *Traces* (2001) by Helena Tulve (b. 1972), in which developmental processes of the fine texture presented rather different soundscapes. Sometimes they were presented on sonoral level, sometimes in atonic sound complexes. The work is interesting also in this respect that irritating musical prints seemed to avoid any concrete and so-to-say palpable borders of the form.

Symphonic forms

The concert of symphonic forms (April 11) took place in Estonia Concert Hall where Estonian National Symphonic Orchestra, Estonian National Male Choir, Tallinn Chamber Choir and Chamber Choir of Tallinn Music High School performed, conducted by Vello Pähn.

The evening started with *Aditus* (a premiere in Estonia 2000) by Erkki-Sven Tüür (b. 1959) dedicated to the memory of Lepo Sumeru. First we could hear a great orchestral cadence from high registers to low, and then followed a pause. A new cadence and a pause again. And only then a motoric movement began to develop, being strong and dramatic at the same time.

Passiones (1980/2000) by Rene Eespere (b. 1953) for choirs, soloists and orchestra created a monumental but at the same time gloomy/saturnine impression. It was a panoramic musical drama which in its development reaches a final philosophic epic generalisation.

Timo Steiner is considered one of the most promising among young Estonian composers, his cello concert *The Rest of Life* (premiere) was performed by Kristjan Saar. It is a work with somewhat extraordinary developmental characteristics, especially considering the logic of its form and not that much its sound. The form seems to be subjected to a particular disintegration process, due to which the axis relating different elements becomes almost invisible at the end.

The last work performed on the concert was *Tenebrae Responsorys* (premiere) by Tõnis Kaumann (b. 1972). It was performed by the orchestra, Estonian National Male Choir and the soloists from Estonia theatre Kaia Urb (soprano), Mart Madiste (tenor) and Leonid Savitski (bass). Kaumann achieved the greatest effect by developing all musical dramatic processes by creating multiple symphonic layers. Perhaps this made the clarity of musical expression in the 4th movement a bit vague. The following powerful finale fully compensated for the temporary amorphous roaming. We may conclude, it was one of the most interesting concerts within the festival "Days of Estonian Music 2001".

Young Estonian Composers

by Igor Garšnek

Tõnu Kõrvits

Estonian Radio selected Tõnu Kõrvits' Concerto semplice for guitar and chamber orchestra to represent Estonia on the International Rostrum of Composers 1994.

Biography

Tõnu Kõrvits (b. 1969) graduated from the Alo Põldmäe's composition class in Tallinn Music High School (1987). In 1994 he graduated from the Estonian Academy of Music as a student of Raimo Kangro and continued his postgraduated studies with Prof. Jaan Rääts (1994–1998).

In 1993 he made his debut at one of the most important events of Estonian music – annual Estonian Music Festival with a piece for chamber orchestra called *To a Man, in Whose Eyes the Brightness of Polaris Sparkled*. Since then his orchestral and chamber works have always been included in the programs of this festival as well as being warmly received by the Estonian music press.

In 1994 Tõnu Kõrvits was chosen to represent Estonia at the EBU's International Rostrum of composers held in Paris with his Concerto semplice for guitar and chamber orchestra. In 1995/96 concert season the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra (conducted by Vello Pähn) and guitarist Tiit Peterson performed and recorded this piece and it is now available on CD 'White Concerto' (1998). In the same 1995/96 concert season the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra performed his orchestral work *The Blue Gate*. In 1996 the Estonian distinguished contemporary music group NYDD Ensemble (conducted by Olari Elts) performed his septet

Rainbow's Home at the 'ArtGenda' festival in Copenhagen.

Tõnu Kõrvits' early works were quite simple, romantic, tonal and maybe most influenced by post-romantic orchestral composers. Now his style has changed – he uses contemporary techniques and he strives to make his music extremely sensitive, with many shades of colours.

The change came in the work for saxophone quartet and chamber orchestra *The Detached Bridge* which had its premiere in 'Saxomania' festival by the Tallinn Saxophone Quartet and the Tallinn Chamber Orchestra (conducted by Tarmo Leinatamm) in 1998. It is considered to be one of his best works. Critic Igor Garšnek wrote in his review: "The piece was very succinct, with mystical timbres, it was emotionally strained and had a high energetic potency." In the same year Tõnu Kõrvits wrote piano trio *Good Night* and *Three Shakespeare's sonnets* for voice and piano. His quartet *Dome Music* was played in the Contemporary Music Festival in Katowice, Poland. In 1999 he wrote a saxophone quartet *The Assigination* which can be often met in the programs of Tallinn Saxophone Quartet.

The Festival committee Lockenhaus '99, in Austria (the big annual musical event organised by maestro Gidon Kremer) commissioned Tõnu Kõrvits to write a new piece and he wrote *For You, the Messenger of Night* – this work is now included in the concert programs of the orchestra *Kremerata Baltica*.

The Estonian Radio chose Tõnu Kõrvits to represent Estonia in the 'Year 2000 Project' under effigy of EBU. On this occasion he wrote a piece *The Days of Glory* which based on *Viderunt Omnes* by Perotin and was performed by Tallinn Chamber Orchestra and Tallinn Brass (conducted by Tarmo Leinatamm).

Tõnu Kõrvits has also participated in the master course for young arrangers (in Hilversum, Holland, with Metropole Orchestra and conductor Vince Mendoza in 1997), in seminars for young composers ('The Baltic Music' in Boswil, Switzerland in 1996, and 'The Young Composers in the Baltic Area' in Gotland, Sweden in 1997). He also took part in the master class of composer Stephen Montague in Gdansk, Poland in 1998.

Tõnu Kõrvits is also known as a pop music arranger and specialist in orchestration. He has contributed to several pop artists

and light music orchestras and was one of the nominees to the Estonian Musical Prize '98 (as the best arranger). He has also written music for animation films. Tõnu Kõrvits' works have been released by Antes Edition, Eres (both in Germany) and in Warner Chapell Music (in Finland).

Selected works:

Short pieces for two guitars (1991)

A Long-Lasting Farewell for guitar and piano (1993)

Two Preludes for guitar (1995)

Three Psalms for voice and piano (1996)

To My Spiritual Brother for alto flute and guitar (1996)

Moon and Sea for voice and guitar (1998, also available on CD)

Halo for three electric guitars (1999)

Arabesques for organ (2001)

Helena Tulve

In 1998, at UNESCO's International Rostrum of Composers in Paris, Tulve's *à travers*, a piece for chamber ensemble achieved the place among selected works in the category of composers under 30.

Biography

Helena Tulve was born in 1972, in Estonia. She studied composition with Erkki-Sven Tüür at Estonian Academy of Music and afterwards with Jacques Charpentier at the National Regional Conservatory in Paris, which she graduated with the Premier Prix in 1994.

From 1993-1996 she developed her knowledge of Gregorian chant and traditional music at the Parisian National Higher Conservatory of Music and Dance. She has also participated in the summer courses instructed by György Ligeti and Marco Stroppa. In 2000 Helena Tulve was granted the Heino Eller Composition Prize. The same year she was invited as a guest composer to the 'BIG Torino 2000 biennale arte emergente'.

From the autumn 2000, she started teaching at the Estonian Academy of Music.

Her main works are *Öö* (Night) for saxophone quartet (1997;

written in response to a commission from The Stockholm Saxophone Quartet), à travers for 12 players (1998; 2nd Prize in 1998 International Rostrum in Paris), Sinine (Blue) for 14 players (1998), Sula (Thawing) for orchestra (1999) and Vertige for piano (2000).

Helena Tulve's early compositions, which reveal her extensive musical knowledge and precision in the use of details, are already conspicuous for their subtle treatment of sound. Her latest works are characterised by an even greater attention to the intricacies of sound. According to the composer, her creative impulses stem not only from the 20th century music but also from Gregorian chant.

Selected works:

Vertige for piano (2000)

Ithaque for female voice, violin and piano (2000)

Sula (Thawing) for orchestra (1999, commissioned by the NYFD Festival)

(3-3-3-3/ 4-3-3-0/ 5 batt./ 1 pn./ 1 arpa/ 16-14-12-10-8/ didgeridoo)

Passage secret for two clarinets (1999)

Sans titre for harpsichord (1999, commissioned by the NYFD Festival for Jukka Tiensuu)

Sinine (Blue) for chamber ensemble (1998, commissioned by the NYFD Ensemble)

(1-1-1-1/ 1-1-1-0/ 1 batt./ 1pn./ 1-1-1-1-1)

à travers for chamber ensemble (1998, commissioned by the NYFD Ensemble)

(1-1-1-1/ 1-0-1-0/ 1 batt./ 1-1-1-1-1)

Öö (Night) for saxophone quartet (1997, for Stockholm Saxophone Quartet, premiere at the NYFD Festival '97)

Sõnajalad (Ferns) for voice and piano with words by Karl Ristikivi (1994)

Saar (Island) for violin and clarinet (1993)

Exodus for chamber choir (1992/93)

Lethe for chamber ensemble (1991, fl., ob., cl., pn., vc.)

Phainomenon for piano, percussion instruments and tape (1989/90)

Jüri Reinvere

Jüri Reinvere's *Loodekaar* (Northwest Bow) was voted to be the best composition in the category of under-30 composers at the International Composers' Rostrum 2000 in Amsterdam.

Biography

Born in Tallinn, Estonia, on December 2, 1971. Attended Tallinn Music High School 1979–1990, eventually graduating in composition (under Prof. Lepo Sumera) as well as in piano performance (Prof. Urve Lippus). From 1990–1991 studied composition at the Chopin Academy in Warsaw.

Moved to Finland in December 1991. Since 1994 studies composition at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki with Erkki Jokinen and, from 1999, with Veli-Matti Puumala.

Has regularly hosted music programs on Estonian Radio (1995–) and on Finland's Yleisradio (1997–).

Selected works:

Sarabande Noire for piano (1998)

Chute, solo song (text by Tõnu Õnnepalu) (1998)

Northwest Bow, for chamber ensemble (1998)

The Estonian Independent, for reader and pianist (1997)

Ristna, electronic composition (1996)

Winter Music, and Water Dance, for flute and harp (1995)

Double quartet with solo piano (1994)

Three pieces for organ and piano (1987)

Urvaste Nights, for piano (1985)

Mirjam Tally (b. 1976)

Estonian Radio selected Mirjam Tally's Swinburne to represent Estonia on the International Rostrum of Composers 2001.

Biography

Graduated from Estonian Academy of Music in 2000; after studies of composition under Prof. Lepo Sumera and simultaneously developed her knowledge of electronic music with Rauno Remme.

At present, Tally is engaged in post-graduate studies at Estonian Academy of Music, and she regularly hosts programs of contemporary music on Estonian Radio's *Klassikaraadio* channel.

Tally's compositional interests lie in the fusing of acoustic and electronic modes of expression as well as in uncommon instrumental configurations (kannel=Estonian zither, accordion, didgeridoo, tanbur, etc.)

Selected works:

Struktuurid (Structures) for kannel (zither), 1996

Mythos for kannel ensemble and electronics, 2000

Songs, e.g. Kaks vaadet merele (Two Views of the Sea), Närbumatu lumi (Unfading Snow), setting to music the poems of, correspondingly, Artur Alliksaar and Tõnu Õnnepalu.

Tean, et taassünnin linnuna (I Know I'll Be Reborn as a Bird), 2001, for large ensemble.

More information about composers: www.er/klassik

Estonian orchestras, choirs and ensembles

by Igor Garšnek

The Estonian National Symphony Orchestra (ERSO)

was founded in 1926 and for decades it has been the only professional symphony orchestra in Estonia. At present ERSO has 100 musicians and it gives almost 60 concerts a season. ERSO records regularly music for the Estonian Radio and has made recordings for Virgin Classics, Alba Records, BIS, Antes Edition, Globe, Signum, Ondine, Finlandia Records, Consonant Works, Melodija and others. The basic repertoire of ERSO includes classical works as well as music by contemporary composers. In the 1950s, ERSO was the first orchestra in the Soviet Union to perform several works of Stravinsky, Schönberg, Webern and Orff. The third world premiere of several symphonies by Dmitri Shostakovich took place in Tallinn after Moscow and Leningrad.

ERSO has had Olav Roots, Paul Karp, Roman Matsov, Neeme Järvi, Peeter Lilje and Leo Krämer (Germany), Arvo Volmer for its chief conductors. Since 2001 Nikolay Alexeev (Russia) is the chief conductor and the artistic director of the orchestra.

ERSO has been conducted by Herman Abendroth, Nikolay Malko, Igor Stravinsky, Karel Ančerl, Albert Coates, Carlo Zecchi, Kurt Sanderling, Arvids and Maris Jansons, Kurt Masur, Yevgeny Svetlanov, Maxim Shostakovich, Paavo Berglund, Leif Segerstam, Yuri Temirkanov, Paavo Järvi and others.

Last international tours: Summer 2000: Dalhalla Summer Music Festival in Sweden (cond. Arvo Volmer); September 2000: concerts

in Riga and Vilnius; October 2000: tour in Germany – Bad Homburg, Trossingen, Tübingen, Müllheim, Villingen, Rüsselheim (cond. Arvo Volmer, sol. Ivari Ilja – piano); February 2001: tour in Sweden – Stockholm, Göteborg, Halmstad, Växjö, Jonköping (cond. Vello Pähn, sol. Bengt-Ake Lundin – piano, Sweden).

ERSO has also performed in the Yehudi Menuhin festival Gstaad Musiksommer in Switzerland, in Europamusicale festival in Munich, in the Great Hall of the St Petersburg Philharmonic Society, in the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatoire, in Germany, Sweden, Finland, Kuwait, Bulgaria, Romania, Latvia and Lithuania.

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The Tallinn Chamber Orchestra

was officially founded in 1993. For several years already, Tõnu Kaljuste, the artistic director until 2001, has connected the activities of a universally notable choir, the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir, with the activities of the principal part today's Tallinn Chamber Orchestra. Due to favourable coincidence of various circumstances, this turned out to be the beginning of official activities of the orchestra. Therefore, on the first appearance of the Tallinn Chamber Orchestra in May 1993, the public met with a mature collective which spiritually fitted well together.

Joint work of two collectives directed by Tõnu Kaljuste continued on performing great vocal-symphonic musical forms. In 1993, they produced a CD of works by Arvo Pärt for a record company ECM (under general heading *Te Deum*). For a year, this record remained on the world's Top Ten list and has gained exalting appraisals from critics. According to his own words, the aforementioned performance is the only one which has satisfied the author completely. Co-operation of the Tallinn Chamber Orchestra and the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir with the above record company continued and a new programme comprising the work of Arvo Pärt and Erkki-Sven Tüür was recorded in September 1995.

In October, 1992 the first night of the Te Deum took place in Berlin; in August 1993, a programme of Bach and Pärt was performed in Vancouver, at the World Wide Choir Music Symposium. Grand musical forms of Bach and Pärt are the pillars for co-activities of these two collectives.

The orchestra's instrumental programmes have been prepared mainly together with foreign conductors. Juha Kangas from Finland, Richard Tognetti from Australia, Terje Tønnesen from Norway, Patrick Strub from Germany, Paul Mägi and Vello Pähn from Estonia have worked with the Tallinn Chamber Orchestra. Erkki-Sven Tüür has dedicated to the orchestra his work called A show for a Chamber Orchestra.

All members of the orchestra are qualified musicians often performing with solo programmes and in ensembles. In February, 1994, on a "Great Quintet Wednesday", four quintet casts of the Tallinn Chamber Orchestra performed string quintets by W. A. Mozart.

In September, 1994, the Tallinn Chamber Orchestra together with the Chamber Choir of the Tallinn Philharmonic Society performed successfully at the Torino Festival which initiated a number of invitations. In October, 1995, the Tallinn Chamber Orchestra and the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir performed at the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations in Lincoln Centre, New York and the Headquarters of the UN.

The Tallinn Chamber Orchestra has made two significant recordings: *Crystallisatio* (1996) by Erkki-Sven Tüür together with the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir and *Litany* (1996) by Arvo Pärt with the Hilliard Ensemble, the Chamber Orchestra of Lithuania and the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir. Both of these recordings have served as a purpose for presenting Manfred Eicher, leader of the ECM recording company, for a Grammy Prize as the best producer of classical music. In 1996, Tõnu Kaljuste was set forward for the Grammy Prize for recording *Te Deum* by Arvo Pärt.

In 1995/96, the artistic director and leading conductor of the orchestra was Juha Kangas, conductor of the Kokkola Chamber Orchestra. He prepared five different programmes with the Tallinn Chamber Orchestra, including *L'estro Armonico* by Vivaldi, where

the solos were performed by the members of the orchestra.

In May, 1998, the orchestra together with the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir prepared the concert-performance of opera *Nixon in China* by John Adams (cond. Tõnu Kaljuste).

In April, 2001, the Tallinn Chamber Orchestra together with the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir and the girls' choir Ellerhein performed the Estonian premiere of *Seven Last Words From the Cross* by James MacMillan (cond. Tõnu Kaljuste).

Concert tours of the Tallinn Chamber Orchestra have taken the musicians to Moscow and Finland, to Germany, France, Italy, Canada and the USA.

The Tallinn Baroque Orchestra

gave its first concert in June 1986 and is closely connected with the development of early music interpretation in Estonia. At present it is the only orchestra here which plays on Baroque instruments, being one of the few continuously active Baroque orchestras in Eastern Europe. The Tallinn Baroque Orchestra has developed into an independent and prominent orchestra, its musicians represent the best performers of Baroque music in Estonia. The extensive repertoire including music from the early Baroque to Classicism (plus modern Estonian music) requires excellent qualities from the musicians. The artistic leader and the initiator of the orchestra is its manager and leading cellist Egmont Välja.

Though the orchestra usually performs without conductor, it has worked with many famous conductors (W. Kuijken, H. Gebhard, L. Krämer, S. Layton, etc.), choirs and soloists (S.-L. Kaakinen, K.-M. Kentala, M. Bellini, I. Monighetti, etc.). In addition to active concert performances the Tallinn Baroque Orchestra has recorded the opera *Dido and Aeneas* by Purcell and *The Four Seasons* by Vivaldi, it has made recordings for different Estonian radio stations and the Estonian Television. The orchestra has performed at various festivals in Europe and Scandinavia.

The Tallinn Baroque Orchestra has taken part in all Haapsalu Early Music Festivals, both in the cast of grand vocal works and with separate programs. The most memorable moment of the festival have been Händel's *Messiah*, performed with the Haapsalu

Festival Choir and soloists in 1995, and the concert performance of Purcell's Dido and Aeneas in 1996.

www.concertogrosso.ee

The Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir

was founded in 1981 by its artistic director and principal conductor Tõnu Kaljuste.

It was first formed as the amateur chamber choir Ellerhein, founded by Tõnu Kaljuste's father Heino Kaljuste (1925–1989) in 1966 on the 15th anniversary of the children's choir Ellerhein. In 1971 Tõnu Kaljuste became the conductor of the chamber choir Ellerhein, on the basis of which in 1981 he formed the full-time professional Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir (EPCC).

EPCC has worked with a number of guest conductors, including Sir David Willcocks, Paul Hillier, Helmuth Rilling, Claudio Abbado, Anders Öhrwall, Jon Washburn, Eric Ericson, Ward Swingle, Ivan Fisher, and has performed with many distinguished artists.

At the 1991 Takarazuka Chamber Choir Competition in Japan the choir won three gold medals and was awarded the Grand Prix. Since then the choir has not been involved in any competition, the main activities having been concerts at home and abroad, and recordings under different recording and broadcasting companies.

Concert tours have taken the choir to the USA, Canada, Japan, Australia and majority of European countries. During last few years the approximate number of concerts with one program has diminished to 2, the approximate number of concerts in a year has been 62. The easy conclusion is that the choir prepares about 31 different programs a year.

EPCC's repertoire includes Gregorian chants, music of the Baroque era as well as the 20th century. Its concerts comprise compositions by Bach and works of contemporary composers. Estonian music has always played an important role in the choir's programs. Have a look at the repertoire – the most essential part of it can be seen there.

In the '96/97 concert season the choir was active in two larger concert series: "Chamber Philharmony", based mostly on music by Joseph Haydn and Benjamin Britten, and "Vox Nova" the main subject of which was Arnold Schoenberg's music. The "Chamber Philharmony"-series was held by Tõnu Kaljuste, the artistic director of the "Vox Nova"-series was Olari Elts, the choir's guest conductor in the '96/97 season.

In the '97/98 concert season the guest conductor of the choir was Toomas Siitan, the artistic director of concert series "Vox Antiqua", consisting of medieval music from Magister Perotinus to Melchior Franck. Another series, "Leaders and Gods", was carried out by Tõnu Kaljuste. This one consisted of five operas (concert performances) from different ages, starting with medieval Ludus Danielis (directed by Luchia Nigohossian /BG/FR/) and ending with Nixon in China by John Adams.

In the '98/99 concert season the topical concert series was "Vox Romanticum", consisting of romantic music from different countries: German music was conducted by Tarmo Vaask, American by Dale Warland, Scandinavian by Timo Nuoranne and English music by Paul Hillier.

In the 1999/2000 concert season the main events were concert tours to Israel (with "The New Israel Chamber Ensemble"), Australia (with Australian Chamber Orchestra) and the USA. In spring period a concert series of four, called "Vox Septem Saeculi", was carried out by the choir's young choir master, Mikk Üleoja.

In the '00/01 concert season the topical concert series was "Bach-Beethoven", held by Tõnu Kaljuste, consisting of four concerts representing King's Cantatas and Mass in B minor by Johann Sebastian Bach and Kaiser's Cantatas and Mass in C major by Ludwig van Beethoven. The second half of the season was marked by the choir's 20th anniversary, culminating with the birthday concert on the 1st of July.

Since the '01/02 concert season the principal conductor of EPCC is Paul Hillier.

In addition to concert performances the choir has recorded for different European radio stations and released several CDs under different labels. The Grammy Committee has noticed the choir's works several times: at the 38th Grammy Awards (Oct.'94 –

Sept.'95) Tõnu Kaljuste was nominated for the Best Choral Performance (Category 81) as a conductor with A. Pärt's *Te Deum*; at the 39th Grammy Awards (Oct.'95 - Sept.'96) Manfred Eicher was nominated as the Classical Producer of The Year (Category 77) with three records released by ECM, among them A. Pärt's *Litany* and E.-S. Tüür's *Crystallisatio*; the record *Kanon* Pokajänen raised two nominees at the 41st Grammy Awards (Oct.'97 - Sept.'98): Arvo Pärt as the composer of the Best Classical Contemporary Composition (Category 92) and Manfred Eicher (with this and four other records) as the Classical Producer of The Year (Category 77). More information about the awards mentioned above and other choir's records can be found looking at the discography.

www.epcc.ee

The Estonian National Male Choir

is a professional choir with long tradition and a unique position in the world. It was established in 1944 by Gustav Ernesaks (1908–1993), the Estonian choral music legend who wrote his best compositions specially for the Estonian National Male Choir (known at home as RAM). Besides Ernesaks the choir has been conducted by such luminous Estonian choral conductors as Olev Oja (1964–1991), Kuno Areng (1966–1990) and Ants Üleoja (1991–1997). The present musical director Ants Soots started in 1994 having previously worked with the Estonian Radio Choir. Soots also teaches at the Estonian Music Academy and has led the Estonian Choral Society.

Numerous oratorio performances have brought the Estonian National Male Choir together with such prominent conductors as Riccardo Muti, Leif Segerstam, Gennadi Rozhdestvenski, Paavo Berglund, Jorma Panula, Neeme Järvi, Paavo Järvi, Kristjan Järvi, Maxim Shostakovich, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Saulius Sondeckis, Krzysztof Penderecki, Leo Krämer, Tamas Vetö, Michael Tabachnik, Eri Klas and Andres Mustonen.

During its over 50 years of existence the Estonian National Male Choir has given more than 5200 concerts in places as diverse as Sweden, Hungary, Germany, USA, Canada, Finland, Italy, France, Switzerland, Denmark, Belgium, Poland, Israel and all over the former

Soviet Union. Among the more recent major tours and performances the visit to the USA in 1996 has to be mentioned, which included 8 performances in the Los Angeles Music Centre (Sibelius' Kullervo with Esa-Pekka Salonen and Shostakovich's Symphony No. 13 with Eri Klas). Another significant event was the recording (for Virgin Classics) and performances of Kullervo in the spring of 1997 with the Stockholm Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Paavo Järvi. In the same year the Estonian National Male Choir performed the same piece in Järvenpää, Sibelius' hometown with the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra and conductor Jüri Alperden. In the summer of 1999 the choir performed in Germany, singing in performances of two oratorios: Tobias' Des Jona Sendung, and Kapp's Job. The 1999/2000 season included performances in USA (New York, Chicago, Detroit, Ann Arbor, Minneapolis) and Canada (Toronto) where the Estonian National Male Choir performed a cappella and with the Detroit and Minneapolis Symphony Orchestras conducted by Neeme Järvi. In December the choir gave performances in Hamburg, Germany (including Sibelius' Kullervo with Leif Segerstam) as well as in Israel (Cherubini Requiem and Shostakovich Babi Jar under the baton of Eri Klas). The Millennium Project of Estonian music that was prepared to meet the new century, and brought several Estonian choirs and orchestras together to the stage, took the Estonian National Male Choir to Finland and Italy. The season 2000/2001 includes many interesting programs in Estonia as well as trips to EXPO 2000 (Hannover) and Tampere, Finland (Stravinsky's Oedipus Rex).

Recently, recording has become a noticeable part of the choir's activities: it has recorded for Deutsche Grammophon, Virgin, Finlandia, Sony and other labels.

The Estonian National Male Choir has sung also as a part of a large oratorio chorus performing the following works: Penderecki The Seven Gates of Jerusalem; Schönberg Gurre-Lieder; Mahler Symphonies No. 2 and 8, Beethoven Missa Solemnis and Symphony No. 9; Reger Psalm 100; Berlioz Te Deum; Charpentier Te Deum; Liszt Christus; A. Knaifel "Chapter Eight"; Rudolf Tobias Des Jona Sendung; Artur Kapp Job and several compositions of Carl Orff.

E-mail: ram@concert.ee

The NYXD Ensemble

that was summoned by Olari Elts and named after the Estonian festival of contemporary music, NYXD, has been working successfully since its foundation in 1993. Recognizing the fact that the cast and composition of an ensemble is one of the pillars of performing music of the second half of the 20th century, the NYXD Ensemble has pitched upon a flexible, universal line-up, which can vary from just one soloist to the size a chamber orchestra and which is able to cope with anything modern music has to offer.

The NYXD Ensemble has performed works by the greatest composers of the 20th century (Ligeti, Berio, Varčse, Reich, Boulez, Stravinsky, Schönberg, Birtwistle) as well as worked with the leading lights of Estonian music, who have come to increasingly regard the NYXD Ensemble as the performer of their works.

The two main axes of a concert season of the ensemble are two Estonian festivals of new music, the bi-annual NYXD-festival and the annual Tartu New Music Festival (dedicated to works of Pierre Boulez in 1995, to Luciano Berio in 1996, to György Ligeti in 1997, to Harrison Birtwistle in 1998). The ensemble also endeavours to stage a new musical production each season. At NYXD '95, in co-operation with the producer Peeter Jalakas and The Von Krahl Theatre, the ensemble premiered three Estonian chamber operas; in 1996 they performed *The Soldier's Tale* by Igor Stravinsky; at NYXD '97, they premiered the chamber opera *Olivia's Master Class* by Estonian composer Lepo Sumera.

In April 1996 the NYXD Ensemble took part in the new art festival, ART GENDA, in Copenhagen; in the autumn of 1996 – in the BALTIC ARTS festival in London; in August 1997 they participated in the Tampere Theatre Festival with the stage production of Stravinsky's *The Soldier's Tale* (produced by Peeter Jalakas). In the spring of 1996 the NYXD Ensemble recorded its first CD with the entire *Architectonics* series (seven works) by Erkki-Sven Tüür.

In the season 1997/98 the ensemble had a concert series CITY LIFE, named after the work by Steve Reich, the central composer of four concert series that was focused on musical minimalism and repetitive music. The NYXD Ensemble performed at both NYXD '97 and the Tartu New Music Festival '98 (the latter was dedicated

to Harrison Birtwistle).

The NYDD Ensemble's concert series of the season 1998/99 had the general title AVANT-GARDE OR DECADENCE? In 2001 the ensemble had a concert series I GOT RHYTHM, named after the piece by George Gershwin.

Being one of a kind in Estonia, The NYDD Ensemble continues playing works of well-known composers from other countries and encouraging Estonian composers to add their contributions to its repertoire. Last season the ensemble premiered works by some young Estonian composers – Helena Tulve, Tõnis Kaumann, Jüri Reinvere and Mart Siimer.

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The Early Music Concert Hortus Musicus

was founded in 1972. The real province of Hortus Musicus is non-ethnic European music from its beginning to the late Renaissance and the masters of the Baroque. This also explains the choice of instruments and the structure of the consort. Each Hortus Musicus concert is a musical performance with original instruments and authentic attire. The founder, artistic director and most radiant figure of Hortus Musicus is Andres Mustonen.

Although it is early music that is closest to Hortus Musicus, they are also open to new ideas, which, by their spirit and arrangement, fit into the consort's repertoire. Hortus Musicus was the first to perform *Fratres* by Arvo Pärt, who composed it especially for them. Other works by Pärt and a few pieces by younger Estonian composers (including Rein Rannap and Galina Grigorjeva) have also found a firmly established place in consort's repertoire.

In Estonia, Hortus Musicus has initiated several traditions. They

were the first who succeeded in bringing music to its relevant environment – the church. A few years ago, Hortus Musicus has initiated the Baroque Music Festival. In 2001 the performers at this festival included the early music ensemble Musica Petropolitana, Vienna Boys' Choir and Carole Cerasi. Each of the more than twenty recordings presents the whole program as it would be performed on stage.

Hortus Musicus is one of the widest-travelled Estonian ensembles.

The most important landmark in the life of Andres Mustonen (b. 1953), a violinist, early music lecturer and conductor, is the foundation of an early music ensemble Hortus Musicus in 1972, an artistic leader of which he remains until presently. He received his academic education from Tallinn State Conservatoire. Regardless of the fact that he has later studied early music in Austria and the Netherlands, he remains largely self-taught in this field. He is known as a generator of new ideas and energetic organizer. He has initiated several festivals and concert cycles, a Hortus Musicus concert series 'Gate Tower Music', etc. He has received attention and appraisal for his work as a conductor with the chamber and symphony orchestras of many different countries and cities. He enjoys making music in a more relaxed atmosphere, far from a dry academic approach.

The repertoire of Andres Mustonen includes the music of Renaissance and Baroque, Viennese classics and Romantics. He has performed the works of Takemitsu and Prokofiev and Estonian experimental music (Tüür, Sumera, Vähi). He has been the first to perform many Pärt's works; composer has dedicated *Arbos* and *An den Wassern zu Babel sassen wir und weinten* to Andres Mustonen.

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Ensemble Vox Clamantis

was established in 1996 and is made up of young musicians who share the interest in Gregorian chant. Many of the members of the ensemble have been polishing their skills in a Benedictine abbey in

France or singing in the Gregorian Choral of Paris. With the latter, Vox Clamantis is still keeping up close professional contacts, the outcome of which are frequent joint concerts in Finland, Norway, and France. Together a CD was recorded in Luxembourg in April, 1998. Vox Clamantis has set up a goal to reintroduce the simple beauty of unison Gregorian chant to Estonian audience.

The artistic director and conductor of the ensemble, Jaan-Eik Tulve, was born in Tallinn, in 1967. In 1991 he graduated from the Tallinn Conservatory as a choral conductor, after which he took up studies in the National Music and Dance Conservatory in Paris, specialising in Gregorian chant. After graduating in 1993, he became the assistant to Prof. Louis-Marie Vigne at the same course. He has shared his knowledge at several courses in Gregorian chant in countries all over Europe (France, Belgium, Italy, Norway, the Faroe Islands, Lithuania, Finland and Estonia). Since 1996, Jaan-Eik Tulve is active as an instructor in Gregorian chant in Estonian Academy of Music, since 1999 as a consultant in the project “Gregoriana Fennica”, dealing with ancient Finnish manuscripts. He frequently receives initiations to work with diverse monastery choirs, to further instruct those who dedicate one-third of their day to Gregorian chant. An important role in the development of Jaan-Eik Tulve as a musician and Gregorian, is played by the collaboration with Dom Daniel Saulnier from the Benedictine abbey in France.

Since 1992 Jaan-Eik Tulve is engaged as the conductor of the Gregorian Choral of Paris. With this choir he has toured throughout Europe, as well as Lebanon and Morocco, and received several prizes for various recordings. For a recording session he has also conducted the choir of monks from the Sant Antimo monastery in Italy. In 1993 Jaan-Eik Tulve founded the ensemble of medieval music Lac et Mel in Paris, which interprets early polyphonic music; in 1994 the female section of the Gregorian Choral of Paris; and in 1996, in Tallinn, the ensemble Vox Clamantis.

The Early Music Group Rondellus

was formed by Maria and Robert Staak in 1993 to perform and promote Medieval and Renaissance music. Depending on the spe-

cific program, the ensemble includes between two and six singers and instrumentalists, who perform in historical costumes, using replicas of period instruments (lute, fiddle, portative organ, etc.). All members of the group are professional musicians with years of experience in Estonia's finest early music groups. Rondellus repertoire includes both sacred and secular music ranging from Gregorian chant to love and drinking songs, including music of the trouvaires and troubadours, Carmina Burana songs, works by Hildegard von Bingen, Guillaume de Machaut, Gilles Binchois, Josquin des Prez and many others. Rondellus has been recorded by Estonian Radio and has performed numerous concerts in the Baltic states, Scandinavia and elsewhere in Europe.

The Tallinn String Quartet

was founded in 1984. The ensemble has been the one consistently working professional string quartet in Estonia. In addition to a number of recordings that have been made for Estonian Radio and Television, they have recorded several CDs (with two on the BIS label) with works by Estonian composers.

The repertoire is made up of music from Mozart and Beethoven to the 20th century composers, including Estonian music.

The Tallinn String Quartet has toured in the Baltic States, Russia, Finland, Canada, Sweden, Norway, Germany, France, Switzerland, and Denmark.

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In memoriam Raimo Kangro 21.09.1949 – 4.02.2001

by Igor Garšnek

Raimo Kangro remains one of the brightest Estonian composers in the second half of the 20th century. He made his appearance in music in the 1970s being influenced both by Neo-Classicism and Rock styles. Stage music, excluding ballet, had always been important in his work. His opera *Miraculous Story* (*Imelugu*) based on Boccaccio's Decameron attracted attention as early as 1974. The opera was staged at the Vanemuine Theatre and later adapted for television. The music here has brisk rhythms and intonations derived from pop music. It was written in the tradition of comic opera and hence has a free and easy feel, which is indeed typical of the composer's entire work. Kangro's next piece for theatre was the first Estonian rock opera *The Maiden of North* (*Põhjaneitsi*, 1980, co-author Andres Valkonen). The following



year, the National Opera Estonia performed a somewhat more serious opera *Victim* (libretto based on Aleksei Tolstoi's short story *Snake*). With its vivid description of the conflict between the main character and the hypocrites and bureaucrats surrounding him, the opera was socially quite critical for its time. After his chamber opera *Traitor* (1995), Kangro produced an adaptation of Karl August Hermann's (1851-1909) folk opera *Uku and Vanemuine*. He added his own parodical second act, and the whole thing was presented under the title *Uku and Ecu* (1998). Kangro's latest opera *Heart* (1999, libretto by the composer's daughters Kirke and Maarja Kangro) allegorically combines the concepts of *Faust* and *Frankenstein*, although neither character is actually mentioned in the performance – *Faust* as a symbol of knowledge-power and responsibility, and *Frankenstein* as a monster who destroys his creator. Their double character in the opera is embodied by a doctor, a ruthless careerist who sells his soul to the Devil and is eventually killed by his own patient, someone whose heart he has surgically removed and thus unwittingly created a heartless mass murderer.

A Simple Symphony (1976) was written for chamber orchestra. As the title suggests, its musical images are straightforward and memorable. The *Tuuru Chamber Symphony* (1985) and *Sinfonia sincera* (1986) followed.

In the 1990s, Kangro's music has been influenced to a degree by the aesthetics of minimalism, most vividly reflected in the series of chamber works, *Display*. These are a series of musical portraits for various chamber ensembles (including a chamber orchestra).

Besides music for theatre, a significant place in Kangro's work belongs to instrumental concertos, primarily focusing on the piano. He has a total of five such concertos – two for a single piano and three for two pianos. Playfulness, rhythm and attractive musical images – these are the three key words in Kangro's work.

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