


REPERTOIRE TIPS

Works for smaller-sized orchestra

Due to the current coronavirus restrictions many concert producers are asking for repertoire for smaller-sized orchestras. Here are some exciting pieces for chamber ensemble, chamber orchestra and string orchestra, some with a soloist. We have also included a few staff favourites – ones that have struck our fancy in performance or have left fond memories. You find more repertoire for smaller-sized orchestra listed on our web sites.

CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

JÖRGEN DAFGÅRD

Esprit (2012) Dur: 24' 
1111-1000-pf-str (11111)

The music in Dalgård's constantly flowing *Esprit*, is fast throughout the piece. It has a swinging pulse and at times an almost jazzy feel. It starts lightly and playfully, but gradually the course of events gets more and more adventurous and filled with drama, to finally reach a euphoric ending.




KIRMO LINTINEN

Ballata Concertante
(2015–16) Dur: 12'
octet: 0011-1000-str (11111)

This is a vibrant piece intended for performance without a conductor. Lintinen's ingenious stylistic allusions were triggered by the music of the Trecento, for *Ballata Concertante* speaks the language of the 14th century with a catchy "modernist twist". The solo winds act like a vocal trio. The instruments are the same as in Schubert's Octet, so the two works make good programme partners.



BENJAMIN STAERN

Bells and Waves (2010) Dur: 30'

11 instruments:
1121-0000-01-pf-str (10111)

An eventful chamber symphony in five movements, that seethes with life and energy. It is rhythmically complex and playful. At times one can imagine church bells in the distance and boats slowly gliding by in the fog. In the last movement the music gushes forth in a torrent of rapid toccata-like figures until it finally fades away and disappears into nothingness.



LOTTA WENNÄKOSKI

Hele (2018) Dur: 13'
12 players:
1111-1100-01-str (11111)

An energetic work in which, according to critics, Wennäkoski "utilized the slide whistle amid frantic and agile ensemble writing to sometimes atmospheric, sometimes cartoonish, but always surprising effect." Hele was commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Gustavo Dudamel. It is a rhythmically playful piece including some extraordinary instruments such as a typewriter.



CHAMBER / SINFONIETTA ORCHESTRA


DANIEL BÖRTZ

Sinfonia 11 (2006) Dur: 22'
2222-2200-10-0-str

A markedly dramatic Sinfonia in four movements, in which fits of rage lurk even in the loveliest of passages. The middle movements vacillates between hope and despair while the outer movements are at the same time epic and concentrated.



MATS LARSSON GÖTHE

The Apotheosis of the Dance
(2012) Dur: 10' 
2222-2200-11-str

Larsson Göthe's ingenious companion piece to Beethoven's 7th Symphony, begins with a bobbing, modulating, chromatic ascending motif. He then continues to reflect on themes from the symphony. The aim was to write a piece that could be listened to as a standalone composition, without prior knowledge of Beethoven's work; but also that the experience would hopefully be enhanced still further if the listener was already familiar with the original symphony.




JYRKI LINJAMA

Allerheiligentag II (2009)
Dur: 16'
2222-2200-10-str

This symphonic meditation begins tenderly. The original Finnish folk chorale shimmers through the orchestral texture, at times more directly, at times more disguised. A lyrical work, it would be ideally suited together with Mozart's or Faure's Requiem. It was commissioned for a church concert held before All Saints' Day in 2009. The timing of the premiere in relation to the church year influenced the work and its title.



MARIE SAMUELSSON

The Eros Effect and Solidarity
(2016) Dur: 12' 
2222-2200-01-str
Text: George N Katsiaficas Swe/Eng

In the third part of Samuelsson's Love Trilogy the orchestra musicians get to play dual roles, as the music is intertwined with recitation of words from George N. Katsiaficas' article 'The Eros Effect'. The tranquil mood and delicacy permeates the whole work, including exquisite strings and wind parts.



ALBERT SCHNELZER

Burn My Letters – Remembering Clara (2019) Dur: 12'
2222-2200-10-str

Schnelzer's work, inspired by Clara Schumann's letters to Johannes Brahms, is constructed as a dialogue between a wild and free flute (Clara) and a more thoughtful bassoon (Johannes). The music captures the energy of Clara's hectic life as a touring musician. But there are also contrasting quiet and melancholy sections where the mother, the friend and the human being Clara, with her doubts, fears and sorrows shines through. Jointly commissioned by the Los Angeles CO, Gävle SO, RTE National SO and Sinfonia Lahti for Clara Schumann's 200th anniversary.



BENJAMIN STAERN

Wave Movements (2011)
Dur: 11' 
2222-2200-11-0-str

Staern's water-inspired opening piece is bubbling with energy. It drips, it ripples, it flows and it eddies. The waves roll and wash over one. And it all ends up in a magnificent climax.



JONAS VALFRIDSSON

John Bauer Overture (2019)
Dur: 15'
2222-2200-01-str

Valfridsson's new overture has a magic shimmer and a scent of deep forests, with glittering brooks and shadowy lakes. Sometimes it is seductively beautiful, at other times almost threatening, but incessantly captivating. This is the third part of a trilogy of works inspired by the fairy-tale painter John Bauer.



ERLAND VON KOCH

Nordic Capriccio (1943)
Dur: 6' 
2222-2210-10-str

Von Koch's exuberant fantasy overture, inspired by a folk motif from Dalecarlia, opens with a "troll-drum" timpani solo which later returns linking the various sections together. It is a spectacular mixture of whirling dances and sweeping beautiful strings. A highly suggestive piece reminiscent of wide open landscapes as well as midsummer dancing.



STRING ORCHESTRA

KALEVI AHO

Letter to the Netherworld / Kirje tuolle puolen (2018) Dur: 12'
strings (55432)

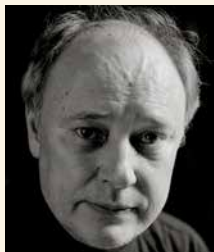
Subtitled 'Pehr Henrik Nordgren in memoriam', this is a work dedicated to the memory of fellow-composer Nordgren. Letter to the Netherworld is a musical conversation in which the violins ask the low strings questions and the rich viola tones act as catalysts. The result is beautiful, moving music.



ANDERS ELIASSON

Ein schneller Blick... ein kurzes Aufscheinen (2003)
Dur: 17' 

This is a fine example of Eliasson's exquisite string writing. The title is not a quote but a distinctive feature of the work. The music begins with a minimalist and frenetically repetitive rhythmical energy which is followed by a more melancholy 'Tranquillo' section. The concluding 'Presto' has an almost fiddler-like drive.



MIHKEL KEREM

String Sextet 'Restless Night'
(2004) Dur: 30' 

Kerem, himself a violinist, writes idiomatic and hauntingly beautiful music for strings. The idea of the String Sextet was connected to Schönberg's Verklärte Nacht so that the two pieces could be performed together. The mood goes from calm to agitated and finds peace at the end with a long, meditative stretch in D major.




VELI-MATTI PUUMALA

Rime (2013) Dur: 24'
strings (55432)

Quiet moments are often a mystical fundamental element of Puumala's works. His music is crystal clear and breathtaking, and Rime alludes to the frosty autumn fields of Central Ostrobothnia. The thread running through it is a folk melody noted down by Toivo Kuula. This piece was premiered by the Ostrobothnian Chamber Orchestra.




TOMMIE HAGLUND

Serenata per Diotima
(2014/15) Dur: 14' 

An altogether delightful work that either opens your mind to the rest of the concert, allowing you to leave everyday life behind, and experience beauty in the present moment; or a work that gets you to make a landing at the end of the concert, and to go home with an intensity of feeling and an openness to the beautiful.




CARIN MALMLÖF-FORSSLING

Release (1973/93) Dur: 9' 

Release was composed over a period of twenty years. It demonstrates that music can be both dramatically contemplative and restfully intense. The first movement from 1973, was supplemented in 1992 with an 'Adagio funebre', composed after a personal loss. She then added a short and lighter 'Allegro con spirito' to function as a bridge between the old Release work and the concluding elegy.



EINO JUHANI RAUTAVAARA

Divertimento (1953) Dur: 9' 

The three-movement Divertimento is a youthful work by Rautavaara. In addition to its fresh, folk-song spirit and the influence of the Ostrobothnian folk music tradition, it bears echoes of Hungarian rhythms. Also suitable for student orchestras, it is now available in a revised edition.




PAAVO HEININEN

Sinfonietta Op. 66i
(1996/2000) Dur: 19'

Dance rhythms are strongly present throughout Heininen's big opus 66, which is a treasure trove embracing several works for string or chamber orchestra. The Sinfonietta is in four movements (Sonata, Scherzo, Elegia and Ricercata), all waltzes. Together they trace a symphonic arch. Commissioned by the Lapland Chamber Orchestra.



ROLF MARTINSSON

A. S. in Memoriam
(1999/2001) Dur: 12' 
Op 50a for 15 strings (54321)
Op 50b for string orchestra

In his stunning tribute to Arnold Schoenberg and his masterpiece 'Verklärte Nacht', Martinsson has sought to mirror the vocabulary, gesture and musical characters present in Schoenberg's works. The 49th bar quotes a moving passage from Verklärte Nacht, as a sounding acknowledgement of the work's influence on A. S. in Memoriam.



HERMAN RECHBERGER

Polar Night / Kaamos (1972)
Dur: 5' 

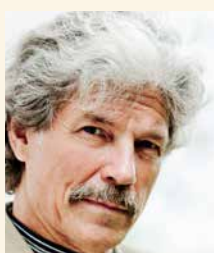
Rechberger has often looked beyond Western culture, chiefly in the direction of Arabian music, but this piece turns towards Nordic myths and folk music. It opens mysteriously and proceeds in a burst of energy. The mood keeps changing, creating mystical visions, and effective glissandos precede a haunting violin solo in the middle section.



MIKKO HEINIÖ

Minne (1996) Dur: 18'

Minne features both rhythmic fireworks and lyrical moments. It consists of three movements each different in character. Hovering in the background of Martellato are rhythm and blues; Cantabile is marked by expressive, singing polyphony and Animato is a quick, throbbing dance. Premiered by the Ostrobothnian Chamber Orchestra and Juha Kangas.



JUHANI NUORVALA

Variationes ex "Bene quondam" (2017) Dur: 24'

Here are eight variations on Bene quondam dociles in the medieval Plae Cantiones collection. The solo viola binds the movements together and the theme passes through different eras, musical cultures and styles. Shifting rhythms, archaic tones, toe-curling sounds, beautiful flageolet notes and gamelan allusions, hints of tango and rock – all these can be found in this relaxed, enjoyable piece.



MARIE SAMUELSSON

Five Seasons (2017) Dur: 12'
strings and sound file

Samuelsson's elegiac comment on Vivaldi's The Four Seasons, is composed for string orchestra with the viola and electronically processed sounds in the center. Poems from a collection by Mimmi Palm mark the start of each new part and season. The music is influenced by the sounds connected with climate change and global warming; more insects, more storms and more rain.




PEKKA JALKANEN

The Serf of Viro / Viron orja
(1980) Dur: 6'30
two violins and strings (44321)

This work won an award in a competition seeking works using folk music in new ways. Jalkanen's music has a mystical appeal, setting an old folk tune that runs like a hypnotic scarlet thread through the texture, which grows from a minimalist lightness towards dramatic moments executed using web technique.



PEHR HENRIK NORDGREN

Transe-Choral (1985)
Dur: 33' 
15 strings (54321)

A work in two broad sections, the idea being for the listener to mentally prepare for the second by listening to the silence after the first. Its painful chorale themes ultimately lead to a radiant, almost sacred, trance-like final motif.



JEAN SIBELIUS

Music for the play The Lizard / Ödlan (1909) Dur: 20' 
string ensemble

This incidental music shows Sibelius at his most enchanting, and he looked upon The Lizard as one of the most exquisite works he had ever written. The chromatic and whole-note motifs and mysterious string tremolos are a direct forerunner of Tapiola. According to Sibelius's notes, the ideal instrumentation in this work is nine strings.



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LILLE BROR SÖDERLUNDH

Three Folk Waltzes /
Tre folkliga valser (1945)
Dur: 7' 

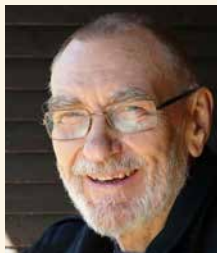
"I have fond memories of Söderlundh's lovely Three Folk Waltzes, which I played together with my orchestra at an outdoor concert in Lund. The spring breezes caused the note sheets to provide an accompaniment with their flapping. And the audience was all smiles listening to this folk tone infused string music, which well reflected the delight and the expectations for the summer that was in the air."




VELJO TORMIS

Reminiscencia (1969/2009)
Dur: 41'
string/chamber orchestra: trp-2perc-str

Reminiscencia consists of choral works transcribed for string orchestra, however some of the five movements include additional instruments. They can be performed separately or in combination. Among them is the hypnotically primitive St. John's Day Songs (Jaanilaulud). The sustained, singing melodies are ideally suited for strings. Rather than a suite as such, this is a sort of "rendezvous of reminiscences".



ERKKI-SVEN TÖÖR

Action-Passion-Illusion (1994)
Dur: 15' 

The rhythmically syncopated opening is indeed an action-packed start to this popular work with Passion, a beautiful, meditative middle movement, at its heart. It sets off in a low register on the double basses and cellos and gradually expands into a chorale-like, intensive outburst.



HARRI VUORI


To Fly, to Fly / Lento (2015)
Dur: 10'
18 strings (44442)

This work pictures the polyphony of swans on the wing and the strange, mesmerising rhythm of their cry. The composer wrote: "In summer 2014, four swans landed on the lake by my summer cottage. My attention was immediately caught by their joint song using the first four notes of a major scale, at times slightly extending their melody up or down." Sakari Oramo conducted the premiere in 2015.



SOLOIST(S) & STRING / CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

KALEVI AHO

Piano Concerto No. 2
(2001-02) Dur: 29' 
piano and 20 strings (65432)

Aho's artfully-constructed concerto is an irresistible combination of virtuosity and playfulness. The last of the three movements, with its suggestion of nursery rhymes, culminates in a take on Big Ben presented by the violas, weaving it into the jubilant counterpoint.




ANTTI AUVINEN

Breathe (2005) Dur: 11'
piano and strings (min. 54321)

Serene and introverted passages alternate with ones bursting with energy. Auvinen creates a host of delicious timbres, some of them requiring extended performance techniques. Breathe is like a beautiful painting that always has a little twist: an interval that causes distortion, a closely premeditated glissando or something else to sustain the listener's interest. A work that leaves no one cold!



TOBIAS BROSTRÖM

Piano Concerto No. 1 – Belle époque (2010/11) Dur: 21' 
piano and strings

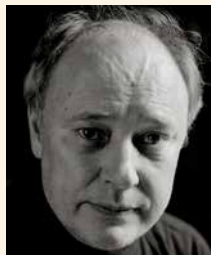
Broström's concerto is a nostalgic retrospect of an epoch long past, viewed in a modern light. You take your seat and the trip begins. Various rooms, milieux and landscapes pass by. They are chiseled out by the soloist and the orchestra, and burst into a wonderful rhythmic finale that carries you out into the evening.



ANDERS ELIASSON

Concerto per violin, viola ed orchestra da camera (2009)
Dur: 25'
0200-2000-00-str

This concerto is characterised by a rhythmic drive and a forceful pulse, where the soloists rush forth with Eliasson's typical restless energy. There is only time for rest in the more melodic and infinitely beautiful middle movement. Jointly commissioned by the Ostrobothnian, Norwegian and Swedish Chamber Orchestras.




KIMMO HAKOLA

Kivi-laulut (Seven Songs)
to Texts by Aleksis Kivi
(2007/2011) Dur: 27' 
baritone and strings (hp-str)
(other versions also available)
Text: Aleksis Kivi (Fin)

"Listening to this work is like alternately enjoying salt and sugar. Delicious melodies follow one after the other: there are folk-like songs, defiant outbursts, heart-rending melancholy – all brilliantly interpreting Kivi's most beautiful poems. The cycle ends with the woe of Song of my Heart that is like a hypnotic lullaby. But beware: the melodies will become lodged in your head on first hearing!"




INGVAR LIDHOLM

Three Songs (1948) Dur: 10' 
mezzo-soprano and strings
Text: Hjalmar Gullberg and
Lope de Vega (Sw)

"When I got to know Ingvar Lidholm's Three Songs at the Royal College of Music, I fell for them right off. His tone language is somehow harsh and warm at the same time. Since then I have sung them many times and above all listened to Anne Sofie von Otter, who sings them with that velvety voice of hers."



ROLF MARTINSSON

Golden Harmony – Soprano
Saxophone Concerto No. 1
(2012) Dur: 23' 
2222-2200-11-0-str

In this concerto Martinsson displays his gift for lyricism. The first two movements are characterised by beautiful and romantic melody lines, embedded in exquisite sonorities. Martinsson himself describes the orchestral garb as "a luxurious alloy of sound from the piccolo, muted strings and trumpets, stopped horns and a bowed vibraphone." The third and last movement offers an energetic finale with breakneck virtuosity.




GÖSTA NYSTROEM

Sångers vid havet /
Songs by the Sea (1942)
Dur: 14' 
mezzo-soprano and orchestra:
1111-2100-11-hp-cel-str
Text: Ebba Lindqvist, Edith Södergran,
Ragnar Jändel, Hjalmar Gullberg
(Sw/Eng)

"There is a strong feeling of something fateful in Nystroem's Songs by the Sea. The first leap of an octave with the text "A day shall come. . .", and then the ethereal continuation that, as it were, meanders downwards, "... when the wind is at a standstill. When the quaking-grass sings and the sun has set." What an ingenious setting of Ebba Lindqvist's text! The vocal contour, the timbre of the orchestra and the poetic visions are fused into an entity of divine geometry. These are five very expressive songs that one cannot help but love."




ALBERT SCHNELZER

Cello Concerto – Crazy
Diamond (2011) Dur: 23' 
2222-2200-11-pt/cel-str
(version for chamber orchestra)

Schnelzer's cello concerto is full of wondrous sonorities and lyrical, lengthy melodic lines, as well as his unmistakable rhythmic, dance-like motives. It is dramatic and expressive. The concerto concludes with an achingly beautiful song for the cello that lingers on after the music has fallen silent.



MATTHEW WHITTALL

Northlands (2009) Dur: 23' 
Album for horn and strings
(min. 55432)

Northlands is readily accessible with its direct beauty. It was influenced by Iceland's epic landscapes and otherworldly light, which had had a powerful impact on the concept for the piece. The CD by Alba won the Record of the Year prize awarded by the Finnish Broadcasting Company in 2017.



VICTORIA YAGLING

Suite for Cello and String
Orchestra (1967) Dur: 15'

Melodic development, traditional handling of the orchestra and delicate, beautiful lyricism combined with passionate energy are Yagling's true self. This Suite, an early work dating from 1967, has often been performed by the Helsinki Junior Strings, also on their foreign tours.

