



Mats Larsson Gothe

Vigour and urgency

"Lied von der Erde" kicks off with repeated iterations of a gruff, unison stabbed G in the strings... Its most interesting episode occurs at its centre, a massive contraction which incorporates some eerie, lonely textures before its pulse cranks up to reiterate the feeling of vigour, urgency and possibly violence heard at its opening. Larsson Gothe could not hope for better advocacy than that provided by the Ostrobothnians. Their performance is exceptional.

Music Web International 26.2.

Mats Larsson Gothe: Lied von der Erde

CD: Ostrobothnian CO/Malin Broman (Alba ABCD 473) 'Recharged by Nature'

Enchanting Lintinen

Impressionistic tones joined folk song-like tunes played with nothing short of fervour... Lintinen is, as we know, a jazz wizard, but this piece was all calm and collected. *Helsingin Sanomat 22.1.*

Kirmo Lintinen: La permanenza della memoria

World premiere: Jyväskylä Sinfonia, Meta 4 Quartet, 18.1.2024
Jyväskylä, Finland



Wennäkoski's reputation is growing

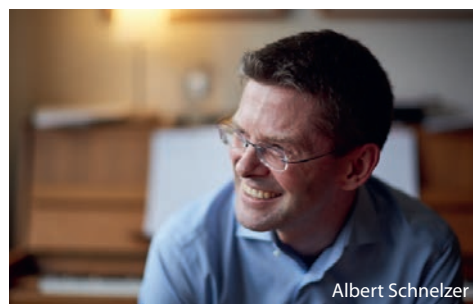
This arresting album, which just won a Gramophone Award, should add another boost to Wennäkoski's music... With all the color and alluring textures in her music, it's not surprising to learn she studied with the late Kaija Saariaho. While *Flounce* is pure symphonic flamboyance, with its madly flitting winds, sonic booms and buzzing strings, the three-paneled *Sedecim* shows a darker, subtler side of Wennäkoski's orchestral prowess... *Sigla*, her harp concerto, feels like a ballet of swirling color, tamed by a central slow, ghostly movement. *npr.org 13.12.*

Lotta Wennäkoski: Harp Concerto 'Sigla', Flounce, Sedecim

CD: Finnish RSO/Nicholas Collon, sol. Sivan Magen (Ondine 1420-2)



Photo: Hanna Salmela



Albert Schnelzer

Humorous and intense Schnelzer

Hungarian folk music, Turkish rhythms and interpolated ciphers were some of the building blocks in Albert Schnelzer's *Aksak* and *Ciphers*... a variegated, snappy, humorous and intense work, with good momentum and something of an illusory cheerfulness where one senses an underlying seriousness. *Falukuriren 1.12.*

Albert Schnelzer: Aksak and Ciphers (chamber orchestra version)

Dalasinfonietta/Hugo Ticcianti, 30.11.2023 Falun, Sweden

Jubilantly voluptuous

Hakola's concerto is a postmodern blend of styles, irony, humour and playfulness... fiery virtuosity broke out in the finale of jubilant, carnivalist features. Hakola is a master at mixing different stylistic elements in a brew that is all his own. The point where the soloist and strings toss quick motifs to one another was fun. *Helsingin Sanomat 10.12.*

Kimmo Hakola: Violin Concerto

Helsinki PO/Jukka-Pekka Saraste, sol. John Storgårds, 8.12.2023 Helsinki, Finland



Photo: Marco Borggreve

John Storgårds and Kimmo Hakola

Kalevi Aho turned 75 in March

Spot-on Aho symphony

It begins with drumming with a big battery... Aho hits the hall spot-on. It has the same effect on the hips as rhythm music: gets them swaying. The subtlety of contemporary music lies in its unpredictability. You never know what's coming next, but the 18th symphony was a real ambush. It was, says Aho, dictated by Russia's attack on Ukraine and Finland's concurrent brutalised atmosphere. *Etelä-Saimaa 14.2.*

Kalevi Aho: Symphony No. 18

World premiere: Saimaa Sinfonietta/Erkki Lasonpalo, 8.2.2024 Mikkeli, Finland



Cecilia Damström

Fascinating and imaginative Extinctions

"Extinctions" is characterized by the earth's resonant rumble. The composition cleverly utilizes different instrumental groups and colours in depicting evolution, from dense strings in the forest to the clarinets' erratic frogs and the Jurassic brass. Pressure waves and dust clouds come to life in the percussion section. The music is colourful and visual but never merely illustrative.

Helsingin Sanomat 27.1.

Damström has created a fascinating score, to say the least; full of exciting sonorities, colours and suggestive orchestral effects... The lion's share consists of de facto intensely meditative, well-nigh mystically vibrating and calmly tentative passages, that lend all the more effective relief to the few explosive discharges.

Hufvudstadsbladet 27.1.

Cecilia Damström: Extinctions

World premiere: Finnish RSO/Chloé Dufresne, 26.1.2024 Helsinki, Finland

Exquisite Permafrost

"Permafrost" stands as a truly exquisite and masterful creation, impeccably crafted with no superfluous elements. Its accessibility is remarkable; making it a true pleasure to listen to. I dare say, it's a musical gem that is bound to grace many stages in the years to come... an unsurpassed success! *Keskipohjanmaa* 20.2.

Cecilia Damström: Permafrost

World premiere: Ostrobothnian CO/
Jan Söderblom, sol. Sonja Vertainen, acc.
16.2.2024, Kokkola, Finland



Solitary Poems

These works, while modern, manage to be accessible and enjoyable without lacking any interest... Paulsson's playing is sensitive and imaginative, with plenty of colour and tonal variety... This is beautiful, approachable contemporary music that showcases the craft of a wonderful saxophonist.

MusicWeb International 24.1.

Various composers: Solitary Poems – 23 pieces for soprano saxophone

CD: Anders Paulsson, ssax (BIS SACD 2644)



Pehr Henrik Nordgren

Nordgren and Aho

Nordgren drew on folk melodies ranging from laments to fiddle tunes. Written in 2006, the suite looks backwards, to a lost time of cohesion, and still could not be more topical today... If anyone, Nordgren knew how to write for string orchestra, and the orchestra succeeded in getting the last ounce out of the varied soundscapes.

In the Aho concerto, the low strings of the "netherworld" reply to musical questions posed by the violins. Aho's music is not mellowed by the ultimate universal question. It is direct, open, clear. The last question, fading into the heights, produces a moving end. *Keskipohjanmaa* 20.1.

Pehr Henrik Nordgren: Kuvia maaseudun menneisyydestä (Pictures on Rural Past)

Kalevi Aho: Kirje tuolle puolen (Letter to the Netherworld)

Ostrobothnian CO/Juha Kangas, 19.1.2024 Kaustinen, Finland
(Kaustinen Chamber Music Week)



Karin Rehnqvist

Powerfully sounding dystopia

"Silent Earth" is convincing in its spontaneity... The Concert Hall Choir sang with a vigour evincing sometimes great pain, and sometimes great melancholy. It was not difficult to associate to "Aniara" in the depiction of the planet's destruction. But here it was just so much more brutal when the orchestra exploded in a resounding volcanic eruption... Still, in the end it was the sorrow for everything that had been lost that prevailed when the music faded away slowly and softly.

Helsingborgs Dagblad 3.11.

Karin Rehnqvist: Silent Earth

Helsingborg SO, Helsingborg Concert Hall Choir/Peter Szilvay,
2.11.2023 Helsingborg, Sweden