



Lotta Wennäkoski

Kalevi Aho

Photo: Maarit Kyöharju  
Photo: Roneal Etienne

**Iiro Rantala's Sanatorio Express in Frankfurt**

The Frankfurt Chamber Opera is staging the German premiere of *Sanatorio Express* (Pikaparantola) by the internationally renowned Finnish composer and jazz pianist **Iiro Rantala** on 13–31 July. The libretto, by **Minna Lindgren**, has been translated into German. The opera (premiered by the Finnish National Opera in 2018) transports the audience to a bizarre sanatorium where a healing charlatan conducts his business with a motley crew of patients. Full of humour and highly accessible music, this opera lovingly follows the classical opera buff. Rantala's latest opera, *The Magic Melodica* – a highly acclaimed sequel to Mozart's *Magic Flute* – was premiered at the Komische Oper Berlin in 2021.



Iiro Rantala

Photo: Act/Gregor Hohberg

**Highlights at Finnish festivals**

**Lotta Wennäkoski** is the profile composer at the 2024 Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival alongside **Sebastian Fagerlund**. The programmes will include many works by her, including the premiere of *Sic* for two violins. **Mikko Heiniö's** *Concerto for Kantele, Violin and Strings* will be performed at the festival by the Ostrobothnian Chamber Orchestra, **Antti Tikkanen** (vl) and **Eija Kankaanranta** (kantele), who is the soloist in **Juhani Nuorvala's** *Concerto for Kantele and Tape*.

The Katrina Kammarmusik festival in the island province of Åland has likewise chosen Wennäkoski as its house composer. One of the works will have its first performance. There will be music by **Pehr Henrik Nordgren** as well.

**Kalevi Aho** is the composer-in-residence at the 2024 Kumaus chamber music festival with premieres of two of his works. He can also be sighted and heard at many of the festival events in Lappeenranta (see: Premieres).



Mats Larsson Gothe

Photo: Gehrmans

**Mats Larsson Gothe**

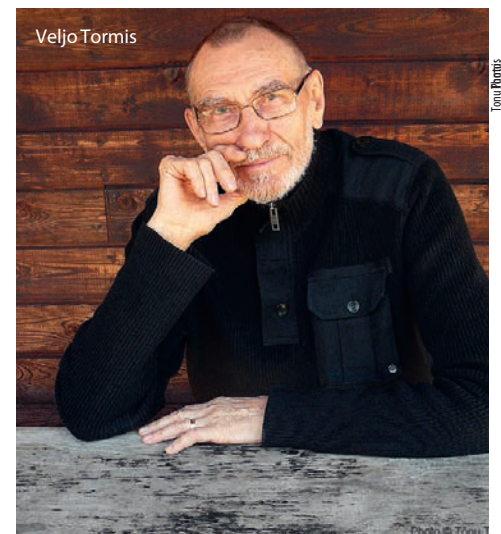
**Mats Larsson Gothe** has been awarded the Rosenberg Prize by the Swedish Society of Composers “for his technically consummate and deeply moving works that stand as a monument over musical innovation and expressivity”. The prize will be handed out in connection with the premiere of his *Symphony No. 4*, performed by the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra under **Marta Gardolinska**, during the Baltic Sea Festival in Stockholm on 31 August.

Conducted by **Santtu-Matias Rouvali**, Larsson Gothe's *Submarea* will receive its UK premiere by the Philharmonia Orchestra on 3 November at the Royal Festival Hall in London, accompanied by **Joakim Odelberg's** underwater films from the Nordic coasts.

**Choral works by Tormis in Estonia**

Some choral works by **Veljo Tormis** can be heard on 15 June at two big events in Estonia. Items from the cycle *Forgotten Peoples* will be performed in Tartu by the Chœur de l'Orchestre de Paris, which previously programmed Tormis's works in Paris in March 2023. There is also video and lighting design in the concert, which is part of both the Tartu 2024 Finno-Ugric Days and the main programme for European Capital of Culture Tartu.

The Estonian Union of Male Choirs celebrates its 35th anniversary on 15 June as well, featuring songs by Tormis in a large concert at Rakvere Linnamägi, a contemporary open-air stage adjacent to Rakvere's medieval castle.



Veljo Tormis

Photo: Tormis

**NORDIC HIGHLIGHTS 2/2024**  
NEWSLETTER FROM GEHRMANS MUSIKFÖRLAG & FENNICA GEHRMAN

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Photo: Ville Järvelä

Cecilia Damström

### Cecilia Damström news

Cecilia Damström's accordion concerto *Permafrost* was selected as one of the recommended works for broadcasting and concert presentation at the 70<sup>th</sup> International Rostrum of Composers in Vilnius in May. Her orchestral work *Extinctions* is nominated for the Nordic Council Music Prize 2024; the winner will be announced in October in Reykjavik, Iceland. Pekka Kuusisto and Tampere Raw will premiere Damström's *Earth Songs*, a concerto for violin and chamber ensemble, on 18 September. The seven-movement work (*Ozone, Sea, Sun, Earth, Wind, Forest, Life*) will be performed together with video projections by Marek Pluciennik.

### Celebration tour with Anders Paulsson

In connection with South Africa's celebration of 30 years as a democracy, composer and soprano saxophonist Anders Paulsson will embark on a European tour with the South African MIAGI Youth Symphony Orchestra in August, with concerts at Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg and Konzerthaus Berlin. Paulsson's *Celebration Suite* 🎧, which he wrote when South Africa celebrated 20 years of democracy, will be performed during the tour.



Anders Paulsson

Photo © Fialdelia Convention Centre

### Erkki Melartin anniversary

Next year will witness the 150th anniversary of the birth of Erkki Melartin (7.2.1875 – 14.2.1937) – one of the most prolific Finnish composers of all times. His extensive oeuvre includes six symphonies, symphonic poems, a violin concerto, stage music, chamber music for various combinations of instruments and hundreds of piano pieces and songs.

The anniversary will be celebrated in various concerts, exhibitions, programmes and talks. An extensive listing is available on the Erkki Melartin Society home page. The latest publications by Fennica Gehrman are the *Per speculum in enigmatae* for piano, *Symphony No. 3* (study score) and *Three pieces for brass quintet* – a set of transcriptions by Kari Karjalainen based on Melartin's piano works.



Laura Michelin

Photo text: Photo: Inaaja Sjöström

### Staern's Flute Concerto

Benjamin Staern is the artistic partner with the Västerås Sinfonietta. In February his trumpet concertino *Surprise* was performed by soloist John Axelsson, and 17 October will see the world premiere of his flute concerto *Älvalek (Dancing Fairies)*, inspired by a painting by the Swedish artist August Malmström. The soloist is a previous winner of the Soloist Prize, Laura Michelin. The concerto was commissioned jointly by the Västerås Sinfonietta, Dalasinfoniettan and the Uppsala Chamber Orchestra.

### Gehrmans at chor.com

On 26–29 September 2024, the German and international choir world will meet in Hannover for chor.com, one of the most important events in the European choral world. Gehrmans will showcase the latest publications of Swedish choral music and participate in reading sessions of Swedish repertoire with Professors Lone Larsen and Anders Eby. Larsen's groundbreaking ensemble VoNo will push the boundaries of Swedish choral music in their performances, and the German version of Rolf Martinsson's much-loved *Lukas-Passion* will be performed in concert by the Musikhochschule Hannover and presented in a seminar with the school's Professor, Andreas Felber. Hope to see you in Hannover!



Photo: Penthouse Studios

### Focus on Lara Poe

Lara Poe's music is rapidly gaining ground. Her *Laulut maaseudulta* (Songs from the Countryside) for voice and orchestra is to be premiered on 25 August at the 2024 London Proms by the orchestras of the Sibelius Academy and the Royal College of Music (see: Premieres). After the Proms, the work will travel to the Helsinki Festival for a concert on 1 September.

The Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra will focus on Poe in the 2024/25 season with performances of her *Kaamos* 🎧, *Onerva Songs* and a new commission to be premiered on 12 February 2025.

Lara Poe is one of two theme composers at the Korsholm Music Festival, where several of her solo and chamber works will be performed in July. She will also have a solo piano piece premiered at the Presteigne Festival in Wales, on 23 August.

Lara Poe