



Cecilia Damström

Cecilia Damström festival and new opera

Uuden Ajan Ensemble and conductor **Tapio von Böhmer** dedicated a festival to **Cecilia Damström's** music on 8-9 March at Helsinki's House of Nobility. The first day showcased her piano quintets *Minna*, *Aino*, and *Helene*, portraying three historical women's fates. The second day featured her orchestral works, including *Tundo!*, *Lucrum*, *Nixus*, *ICE*, *Wasteland*, and the song cycle *Dagbok (Diary)* with soprano **Hedvig Paulig**.

The opera *Ovlá*, to a libretto by the Sami playwright **Juho-Sire/Siri Broch Johansen**, will have its premiere at the Oulu City Theatre in January 2026. Damström is writing the music in close collaboration with Sami musicians. Their voices will be an integral part of the musical composition, honouring their origins and uniting their voices in a joint expression. The opera is a collaboration between the Oulu Sinfonia, the Sami National Theatre Beavvvás and Oulu2026 (European Culture Capital 2026).

Esa Pietilä focus concert

Music by **Esa Pietilä** for a variety of ensembles can be heard at a concert in Helsinki on 30 March. The programme will include two premieres, some solo improvisations, and earlier works such as the *Flute Sonata No. 2* and *Blazing Flames* for saxophone and string quartet. Taking the stage in addition to Pietilä himself will be the Skatta String Quartet, **Sami Junnonen**, **Tuomas Turriago** and the Trio Sonic Decode.

Ilkka Kuusisto in memoriam

Ilkka Kuusisto died on 20 February at the age of 91. He was an active figure in Finnish musical life, always with an engaging twinkle of humour in his eye. A man of many talents, he enjoyed a long and celebrated career as a composer, conductor and arts administrator. He started as a church organist and worked as choirmaster, teacher, publishing director of Edition Fazer and director of the Finnish National Opera. Despite his various roles, he took time for composing and was astonishingly productive, with works ranging from film to vocal music. Kuusisto is especially known for his much-loved, popular operas such as the *Moomin Opera*.



Photo: Music Finland



Eskil Kauppi

New composer – Eskil Kauppi

Gehrmans publishes two orchestral works by the young, up-and-coming composer **Eskil Kauppi** (b. 2001). *Miracle Coast* (2023), is inspired by the beautiful seaside nature of the Swedish west coast, and in the new work *Vingslag (Wingbeat)*, an orchestral suite in four movements, Kauppi has studied the movements of eagles, snapping turtles and sparrowhawks, trying to capture the birds' beating wings. The Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra will premiere it on 8 May. Kauppi has studied composition at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm and will complete his studies at the Malmö Academy of Music this May with a graduation concert featuring his chamber and choral works.



Lotta Wennäkoski

Kalevi Aho

New Wennäkoski and Aho commissions

The Concertgebouw Orchestra and the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra have commissioned a *Recorder Concerto* from **Lotta Wennäkoski**. The soloist, **Lucie Horsch**, has already performed other works by Wennäkoski and will have the exciting job of singing as well as playing. The concerto will be premiered in Amsterdam in October 2025.

Kalevi Aho has been asked to write a new work for piano. It is a commission by Gilmore Artist **Alexandre Kantorow**, with assistance from the Gilmore International Piano Festival. The world premiere is in January 2026 at Lucerne Symphony's piano festival in Switzerland.

NORDIC HIGHLIGHTS 1/2025

NEWSLETTER FROM GEHRMANS MUSIKFÖRLAG & FENNICA GEHRMAN

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 Copen b ä H aapaniemia st hes oloisti n
 Mä tbi w Whittall's O boeC oncerto(Victor N ygård)



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Photo: Emmille Kroon

Johan Ullén

Johan Ullén in London and Toronto

The BBC Concert Orchestra premieres **Johan Ullén's** *One Last Tango (Apocalypse)* a commission from BBC Radio 3. It's a dazzling new piece that imagines a whole sensuous world dancing on the edge of the abyss. **Anna-Maria Helsing** leads the world premiere on 12 June in London.

Following last year's success, the contemporary dance company BC Ballet (Vancouver) brings *Pieces of Tomorrow* 📺, choreographed by **Medhi Walerski** and set to Johan Ullén's *Infinite Bach*, on tour to Bluma Appel Theatre in Toronto on 29-30 March. It's a powerful exploration of legacy. The rough themes of destruction, creation, and renewal, the dancers embody the cyclical nature of art and life. "Ullén's recomposed Bach sonatas deepens this exploration with a profound layer – the recycling of musical material echoing our approach, enriching our work with a sense of continuity and growth. Loss, transformation, and rebirth", says Walerski.



Photo: Balthazoren

Robert Ruohola

Collaboration with Robert Ruohola

Fennica Gehrman has signed a publishing agreement with **Robert Ruohola** (b. 1995) – a prolific, prize-winning young composer writing in a delightfully original, vibrant style. His catalogue includes works for various line-ups from children's choir to symphony orchestra that have been performed at a number of festivals at home in Finland and abroad.

Fennica Gehrman has published his *Consonance and the Cosmos (Konsonanssi ja avaruus)* 🎧, *Pöjajaiset* and *Dream of a Beautiful Mermaid*, all for orchestra, and *Gates of Light (Valon portit)* for ensemble. Ruohola's *Klami Remixed* 🎧 was one of the recommended works in the 2024 International Uuno Klami Composition Competition.

Peer Gynt opera to be staged in Germany

Jüri Reinvere's opera *Peer Gynt* will be premiered in its original German version at the Bremerhaven City Theatre. There will be five performances starting on 3 May. **Marc Niemann** conducts the opera, and the dramaturgy is by **Markus Tatzig**.

Reinvere wrote his own libretto based on **Henrik Ibsen's** play, and the opera is the composer's exciting interpretation of this famous national epic. The world premiere in Norwegian translation took place in 2014 in Oslo. It was a commission by the Norwegian National Opera 📺 sparked off by the success of Reinvere's first opera *Purge (Puhdistus)*, to the libretto by **Sofi Oksanen**.



Photo: Ely Clarke

Jüri Reinvere

Aulis Sallinen & The Horseman

Aulis Sallinen's (b. 1935) *The Horseman (Ratsumies)* is to be staged at the Finnish National Opera on 9–28 May, 50 years after its world premiere. Composed to a libretto by **Paavo Haavikko**, it was Sallinen's first opera. It won the Savonlinna Opera Festival competition and marked the beginning of the Finnish "opera boom" that precipitated a wave of Finnish operas. The Helsinki production takes the audience on a journey filled with symbolism and historical allegories, presenting a dystopian future where love is challenged in the shadow of oppression.

Gehrmans at ACDA Dallas

Gehrmans participated in the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) National Conference in Dallas 18-22 March. Swedish choral music was presented, focusing especially on female composers. In a reading session people could listen, sing and learn the basics of Swedish diction. In connection with the conference Gehrmans also launched its first collection of digital sheet music, some 150 selected choral works for all voicings and all levels of difficulty. More works will be added continuously.



Emmy Lindström



Photo: Filip Elfrind

Karin Rehnqvist

New works by Rehnqvist and Lindström

Karin Rehnqvist's *Take the Milky Way* for mixed choir and baroque orchestra will be premiered on 26 April under the direction of **Nils Schweckendiek** – marking the Helsinki Chamber Choir's 20th anniversary at the Helsinki Music Centre. **Kerstin Perski** has written a text that once again takes us out into a vast, unknown space with its stars, planets and black holes.

The Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra will give the premiere of **Emmy Lindström's** concerto for orchestra *Rösaring* on 9 May. Named after an area rich with Viking Age remnants, the piece musically depicts a burial ceremony for a female shaman and the young girl destined to succeed her, guiding her people into the future.