

REPERTOIRE TIPS

Music reflecting peace, light, hope and freedom

TIMO ALAKOTILA

Hope 2021 (2021) Dur: 5'
for string quintet and piano

Hope 2021 was commissioned by Kaustinen Chamber Music Week. The topic invokes a hope for a brighter future (the piece was written during the pandemic). The middle section, a wistful minuet with features of folk music, is sandwiched between a bright opening and closing melody.



DANIEL NELSON

Chaplin Songs (2020) Dur: 41'
for soprano, mixed choir & orch: 2222-4231-11-1-pf/cel-str
Text: Charlie Chaplin (Eng)

Nelson has transformed Chaplin's iconic final speech from the movie "The Great Dictator" into a monumental work that pays homage to peace, freedom and democracy. The music is impassioned and fluctuates effortlessly between the rhythmically forceful and delicate moments and melancholy contemplation. At its heart the soprano soloist embodies the light with a recurring, shimmering, clear melody that concludes the work with the words "We are coming out of the darkness".



ANDERS PAULSSON

Celebration Suite (2013) Dur: 22'
2111-ssax-2sasx-2tsax-bsax-0221-05-1(opt.)-str-e-bass

This joyful suite in five movements was written on commission for the 20th anniversary of South Africa as a democracy and contains musical elements from South African songs of freedom, folk music, jazz and art music in the Western tradition. "The power of the music functions as a harmonising link between cultures – a connection that words alone cannot create", says Paulsson.



EINOJUHANI RAUTAVAARA

Angel of Light (Symphony No. 7) (1994)
Dur: 38'
2222-4331-12-hp-str

Rautavaara's Grammy-nominated and Cannes Classical Award-winning Angel of Light is the culmination of all his stylistic syntheses. A breakthrough work, it brought him international fame. The landscape of this compelling, mystical piece is painted with broad strokes. There are sweeping gestures, and the final movement is almost cinematic. Powerful, richly allusive but eminently approachable music.



KARIN REHNQVIST

When I Close My Eyes, I Dream of Peace (2016) Dur: 10'
for mixed choir

Rehnqvist has called this work a peace project and the text consists of one single sentence, spoken by an eleven-year-old Croatian boy during the Balkan War: "When I close my eyes, I dream of peace". In the first part the English text is mixed with onomatopoeic syllables in a folklike tune. In the second part the choir is divided into six groups that sing the sentence in 12 different languages where each has its own melody inspired by the musical tradition of the respective culture. There is also a shorter version of the piece consisting of only part 2 with an introduction.



MARIE SAMUELSSON

The Eros Ect and Solidarity – Love Trilogy No. 3 (2016) Dur: 12'
2222-2200-01-0-str

Samuelsson draws inspiration from George Katsiafas' concept of "The Eros Ect", which explores how people can create freedom through solidarity, peace movements and love. The musicians take on dual roles, as the music is interlaced with recitations and whispering, with the introductory words: "Humans have an internal need for freedom." The music is tranquil and searching, with long drawn-out sonorities and fragmentary solos. This finely-tuned atmosphere permeates the entire work, including the exquisite sections with strings and winds.



VELJO TORMIS

Varjele, Jumala, soasta (God, Protect Us from War, 1984) Dur: 6'
for male choir and tam-tam
Text: Kanteletar (Fin, Lat)

This impressive, ritualistic piece is an expression of primal fear of war and a prayer to God. The hypnotic rhythm is interrupted towards the end as the male voices swell into a powerful cry for peace, described in Classics Today as "the most terrifying tam-tam crescendo ever recorded." The ending is simply hair-raising.



TAPIO TUOMELA

Pace (Peace, 2025) Dur: 8'
for mixed choir
Text: Joh. 14:27 (Ita)

Pace is a plea for peace. It was inspired by Gesualdo's madrigal Moro, lasso. The listener is left in no doubt of its topical message, since the brief text is also recited in the middle of the piece in the local language of the performance. There are chromatic, increasingly rhythmic crescendos, and the music is coloured throughout by melodic, sighing vocalises and repeated utterances of the words "la pace".



LOTTA WENNÄKOSKI

valo joka (the light, which, 2016) Dur: 7'
for soprano and violin
Text: Salla Susiluoto (Fin)

"Dusk... you are but hope between darkness and light." Thus begins this piece by Lotta Wennäkoski closely ruled by the poem overlapping and influencing its composition. It is a virtuosic duet in which the soprano shines interpreting the capricious music and the message of the intense text.



MATTHEW WHITTALL

The Return of Light (2015) Dur: 25'
for mixed choir & orch: 2222-2200-01-pf-str
Text: wordless

A glittering work sparked off by an account by an Arctic explorer when he saw the sun rise after the long winter darkness. According to the enthusiastic critics, the soundscape conjured forth by Whittall is fascinating, and the way conventional music-making is gradually approached and the sun at last shines forth is magical.



In the New Light of Spring (Oboe Concerto, 2024) Dur: 21'
for oboe and strings

Whittall's ability to convey impressive images is witnessed here. The work opens with gentle string harmonics, like sunlight filtered through moving clouds. The oboe steps in and the music becomes darker. The dichotomy between light and shadow animates the rest of the piece and the quality of light is forever changing.

JAN YNGWE

In State of Emergency (2019) Dur: 6'
for mixed choir and two percussionists
Text: Ketty Ninyabandi (Eng)

A powerful work to a hopeful text by the Burundi poet and human rights activist Ketty Ninyabandi. The music strikingly combines choruses and percussion, and comprises solo parts as well, which creates a dramatic and a highly emotional experience. It starts out as a call for help but ends in brightness with the words "we exhale hope".



No More War! (2022) Dur: 3'

for mixed choir
Text: Asif Andalib (Eng)

An impactful and expressive piece, composed as a direct response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. The music opens dramatically, with growing intensity in both dynamics and voice leading, as the voices gradually become more numerous, stronger, and increasingly agitated. The piece culminates in a tender, ascending chorale with the words "Learn to Love Please" – a heartfelt plea for peace and human understanding.