



Hugo Ticciati and Žibuoklė Martinaitytė

A marvellous Finnish premiere

Focusing on detailed expressivity, the soloist and ensemble delivered a captivating musical narrative, unveiled at an absorbing pace under Slobodeniouk. Once set afloat, the musical processes of EKAGGATA transpired according to their inner logic, to wondrous effect.

jarijuhanikallio.wordpress.com/15.3.

Žibuoklė Martinaitytė: EKAGGATA for violin and strings

Finnish premiere: Ostrobothnian CO/Dima Slobodeniouk, sol. Hugo Ticciati, 7.3.2025 Kokkola, Finland

Lara Poe's adventure in BaroqueLand

Poe's snappy Baroque dances were fleeting adventures in lands of pungent modernist rhythms and contemporary spectral harmonies before arriving safely home on the final chords.

Turun Sanomat 14.7.

Lara Poe: *Petite Suite d'après Couperin(s)*

World premiere: Finnish Baroque Orchestra/Anthony Marini, 13.7.2025 Kemiö, Finland



Lara Poe



BENJAMIN STAERN WORRIED SOULS

GÄVLE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
EMIL ELIASSON • KARIN DORNBUSCH

Impressionistic and expressive Staern

The synesthetic impulse is vividly apparent in the orchestral scores presented here... The musicians interpret Staern's sometimes eclectic, but always gripping and, above all, wonderfully vivid music in a manner that is as colorfully impressionistic as it is "screamingly" expressive. A true cinematic experience for the ears! *FonoForum* 8/2025

Benjamin Staern: *Threat of War, Worried Souls, Symphony No. 1 – Polar Vortex*

CD: Gävle SO/Emil Eliasson, sol. Karin Dornbusch, cl. (Swedish Society SCD 1190, 'Worried Souls')



Aulis Sallinen

Dramatic Shaka from Sallinen

Shaka is passionate, dramatic music reflecting the story of the warrior chief. In addition to the ensemble and reciter, it brings in voices from the past... These fragments create an intoxicating sense of distance amid the immediacy of live music. *Helsingin Sanomat* 9.6.

Aulis Sallinen: *Shaka – Melodrama for reciter and ensemble*

World premiere: Festival ensemble/Jan Söderblom, sol. Matti Leino, 5.6.2025 Naantali, Finland

Standing ovation for The Horseman

Haavikko's magnificent opera libretto is packed with powerful, often paradoxical crystallisations and a myriad possible meanings. Sallinen's music is likewise dominated by dark shades and often sparing vocal lines. The broad stylistic scale ranges from takes on archaic chants and bells to minor-key hues and dense modernistic harmonies. In the third Act, especially, the music erupts in a vehement bout of emotion. The orchestra gave a spirited rendition of the compelling score and the choir bestowed the climatic moments with an intoxicating intensity. *Suomen Kuvalehti* 12.5.

Aulis Sallinen, Paavo Haavikko: Ratsumies (The Horseman) 🎭

Finnish National Opera Orchestra/Hannu Lintu, sol. Mika Kares, Miina-Liisa Väreä etc., 9.5.2025 Helsinki, Finland



Photo: Mika Saastamoinen/Finnish National Opera

Sandström's ingenious Sonnets

I listen again and again, trying to put my finger on why I think this feels so peculiar, so naked. Beauty alternating with points of pain ... When you least expect it Sandström pulls the mat out from under you and exhibits his acuity of sound and ingenious craft of composition. It is brilliance that balances over an abyss of velvety, heavy darkness where you would like to linger on. *Svenska Dagbladet* 30.5.

Sven-David Sandström: Sonnets of Darkness and Love 🎧

CD: Swedish Radio Choir/Kaspars Putnīš, sol. Nils Landgren voc/tbn (ACT8005)

Nils Landgren & Swedish Radio Choir
Sandström: Sonnets of Darkness and Love



Wennäkoski's shimmering world of sound

Lotta Wennäkoski is basically a sensitive lyricist, but her musical idiom has, over the years, acquired an increasingly forceful edge and the dramatic characters have become ever more marked. Gringolts was the optimal interpreter of this music and the tonal nuances he coaxed from his Stradivarius seemed almost endless... At times brutally barren, at others seductively shimmering but always an effectively construed world of sound. *Hufvudstadsbladet* 9.5.

Lotta Wennäkoski: Prosoidia (Violin Concerto) 🎻

Finnish premiere: Lahti SO/Hannu Lintu, sol. Ilya Gringolts, 8.5.2025 Lahti, Finland

Enchanting musical texture

Enchanting music, descriptive at many levels and where necessary not steering clear of romanticism. This requires basic operatic virtues of the soloist: sensitivity and the ability to fully live the part. The closing aria fades away into a moving hum.

Keskisuomalainen 22.7.

Olli Kortekangas: Alkyone (Suite from the opera Isfäglarna)

World premiere: Helsinki CO/Henriikka Teerikangas, sol. Minna-Leena Lahti, sopr., 20.7.2025 Konnevesi, Finland

Extremely expressive Aho quartet

Aho's fifth string quartet to the memory of a dear friend struck a personal, arresting note... Overall, it sounded extremely expressive but the intensity was mostly subdued. A deeply elegiac tone pervades the large four-movement form, in which introverted passages alternate with feather-light, virtuosic textures.

Hufvudstadsbladet 13.6.

Kalevi Aho: String Quartet No. 5

World premiere: Kamus Quartet 12.6.2025 Helsinki, Finland

Impressive and wonderfully approachable

Bliss is virtuosic in these two technically demanding but approachable concertos (by Aho and Lindberg). In some respects, they are strikingly similar; both make enormous demands on the soloist, which include multiphonics, passage-work that requires fearsomely accurate articulation, and sustained passages in the highest, most treacherous register of their instruments. *The Guardian* 29.8.

Kalevi Aho: Clarinet Concerto 🎷

CD: BBC Scottish Symphony/Taavi Oramo, sol. Julian Bliss (Signum SIGCD898)



Kalevi Aho

Photo: Hans Lindén
Photo: Anna Grundström



Albert Schnelzer

Schnelzer's Tales of Darkness and Sorrow

Schnelzer's quality lies in his ability to create a dense atmosphere. He brings out the dark sides of the tales but adds a dash of humour. With his eye on the master, he comes up with a shimmering orchestration that is varied by powerfully bobbing sections bordering on the bizarre – a bit like a combination of Ravel's "La valse" and film director Terry Gilliam's pictorial world... The balancing act between humour and seriousness gives the work in the end a safe landing. *Helsingborgs Dagblad* 21.8.

Albert Schnelzer: Tales of Darkness and Sorrow

World premiere: Helsingborg SO/Magnus Larsson, 20.8.2025 Helsingborg, Sweden (Helsingborg Piano Festival)