



Photo: Mats Backer

## Larsson Gothe's warm-hearted Selma

It is fantastic that there is an opera about two septuagenarians... A very beautiful and warm-hearted performance; a well thought-out production with elaborate and attractive set designs and costumes. The merry tone indicates a rustic comedy. The music is eclectic and entertaining... Larsson Gothe is good at painting with the orchestra, but he also knows how to write for the voice, and conductor David Björkman sees to it that this is convincing. *Expressen* 27.2.

Emil Jonason plays with intensity and perfect balance, a marvellous expression of the power of music... Larsson Gothe has an amazing ability to lend musical lustre even to what seems trivial. High and low get on well together in a manner that is typical Selma Lagerlöf. *Svenska Dagbladet* 27.2.

Mats Larsson Gothe's music is tastefully spiced with musical references – there are a number of distinct allusions to Brahms's String Quintet for Clarinet – but elements of folk music are also prominent. It is melodious and lucid, with brief flashes of syncopated percussion or ingenious melodic figures in, e.g., the woodwinds... This is not just an opera about Selma Lagerlöf, it is also a work that evinces fervent passion about literature, art and music. *Aftonbladet* 27.2.

### Mats Larsson Gothe/Maria Sundqvist: SELMA – and a beautiful tale from a happy time

World premiere: Wemland Opera/David Björkman, sol. AnnLouise Lögdlund, Katarina Giotas, Emil Jonason etc. 26.2.2026 Karlstad, Sweden



Photo: Romain Etienne

## Brilliant virtuoso stuff

Julian Bliss opines that the two finest Clarinet Concertos of this millennium are those by Kalevi Aho and Magnus Lindberg. Aho's Concerto begins with tumultuous drama. The second movement features an extensive cadenza, and the work culminates in wild, sarcastic dance rhythms in the middle movement. Towards the end, the music turns to expansive slow tempos and a mystical feel. *Rondo* 1-2026

### Kalevi Aho: Clarinet Concerto

CD: BBC Scottish SO/Taavi Oramo, sol. Julian Bliss  
Signum SGCD898

## Glacial sonorities and heartfelt joik in Ovlá

Damström deserves the highest possible commendation for a work that must be the most beautiful she has ever written. The fundamental atmosphere remains, in a manner typical of her, strongly narrative and forward-driving, with an immediate address to the listener. At the same time, she continually adds more strings to her bow, lending the music an increased degree of complexity. *Hufvudstadsbladet* 26.1.

Cecilia Damström's music – cool and glacial in its sonorities – does not clash with Emil Kärlsen's beautifully composed, deeply heartfelt joiks. Rather, the two worlds intertwine harmoniously. *Rondo* 18.1.

The joiks function much like arias in the operatic tradition: moments of concentrated emotional truth. Narrative progression is carried through more conventional melodic writing, offering space for reflection and continuity. Alongside these two musical spheres, a third layer emerges through Damström's modernist orchestral language, familiar from her earlier works. This serves as a reflective narrative voice, observing events from a broader perspective and illuminating Ovlá's inner turmoil. *Helsingin Sanomat* 18.1.

### Cecilia Damström/Juho-Sire/Siri Broch Johansen: Ovlá

World premiere: Oulu City Theatre, Oulu SO/Rumon Gamba, sol. Emil Kärlsen, Anne Maddji Heatta, Ánndaris/Anders Rimpä, Sara Margarethe Oskal etc. 16.1.2026 Oulu, Finland



Photo: Sung-Won Yang

## A colourful Heiniö premiere

In this commission by the festival, Mikko Heiniö relied on tonal colour and space. It was exciting to hear how the percussion placed in a chapel on the left responded to the trumpets upstairs, while the organ at the back engaged in dialogue with the orchestras. A sensitive touch was provided by a lone oboe in the pulpit. *Turun Sanomat* 5.2.

### Mikko Heiniö: Domklang

World premiere: Navy Band/Jarkko Aaltonen, Markku Hietaharju, organ, 3.2.2026 Turku, Finland (Katedraali soi festival)



Photo: Cefimans Musikförslag

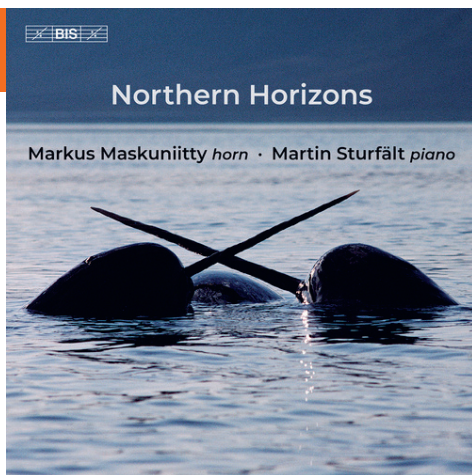
Emmy Lindström and Malin Broman

## Lindström's witty and entertaining violin concerto

Malin Broman's lovely pianissimi and sensitive expression created a quiet mood of restful darkness and glistening frost, supported by an equally pattering and deferring orchestra...there were lingering impressions of spookiness and singability, distorted reflections and reminiscences of folk music. The piece was accessible, entertaining and witty, and I have rarely heard so many positive comments from an audience after a premiere. *Sundsvalls Tidning* 30.1.

### Emmy Lindström: November Night in Jakobstad – Violin Concerto No. 1

World premiere: Nordic CO, sol & leader Malin Broman, 29.1.2026 Sundsvall, Sweden



## Northern Horizons

Markus Maskuniitty horn · Martin Sturfält piano

### Exciting horn pieces

Benjamin Staern's Day and Night is a complete hit – continuously captivating and a real showpiece... Schnelzer's I Remember River Clear draws its inspiration from the Klarälven River in Värmland and flows smoothly forward in fivetime. The result is a folkmusic-inspired play with nationalromantic elements.

*Musikrevyn 22.2.*

**Benjamin Staern: Day and Night,**  
**Albert Schnelzer: I Remember River Clear** 🎧

CD: Markus Maskuniitty, hn, Martin Sturfält, pf,  
BIS 2712 "Northern Horizons"



Esa Pietilä

### Esa Pietilä: Aphelium Journeys

Pietilä uses the string quartet to rich and modernistically detailed effect. Here, his music is effectively delivered by the Skatta Quartet in a high-precision recording. [...] The ideas burgeoning in the two Quartets burst into flame in the Saxophone Concerto that completes the trilogy. Pietilä's tenor sax introduces a new element to the music, expanding his idiom to cosmic proportions. *Rondo 1-2026*

**Esa Pietilä: String Quartets 1&2, Blazing Flames** 🎧

CD: Skatta Quartet, Esa Pietilä, sax.  
Alba ABCD 490 "Aphelium Journeys"

### Brass brilliance by Rautavaara

The concert opened with Rautavaara's A Requiem in Our Time, with which he won the Thor Johnson Composition Competition for brass band in the USA back in 1954. Its punchy brass brilliance recalling big band music bears echoes of bright, brash and busy Mahattan. *Helsingin Sanomat 10.12.*

**Einojuhani Rautavaara: A Requiem in Our Time** 🎧

Helsinki PO/Jorma Panula, 8.12.2025 Helsinki, Finland



Sanntu-Matias Rouvali and Daniel Nelson

### Steampunk Blizzard sparks with energy

Daniel Nelson's seven-minute Steampunk Blizzard opened with metallic brightness and tightly wound energy. Conceived as a "steam engine ballet in a snowstorm", it evokes a fantastical contraption gathering force, answered by clattering percussion, abrupt brass punctuations and interlocking rhythmic figures. Percussive drive fused with a steady groove, the textures layered yet never opaque. Rouvali kept the machinery cleanly articulated, preventing the rhythmic build-up from thickening the texture. The result was brisk and focused, its energy tracing a compact arc that built swiftly and dissipated without excess. *Bachtrack 21.2.*

**Daniel Nelson: Steampunk Blizzard**

New York Philharmonic/Sanntu-Matias Rouvali, 18.2.2026 New York, USA

### Klami's marvellous masterpiece

The Kalevala Suite by Uuno Klami is a marvellous and successful essay in escaping the influence of Sibelius. Klami evokes the national epic in his own idiom, spiced with influences from the aesthetics of Ravel and particularly of Stravinsky. The work culminates in the fierce forging of the wondrous device known as the Sampo. *Helsingin Sanomat 8.12.*

**Uuno Klami: Kalevala Suite** 🎧

Finnish RSO/Nicholas Collon, 6.12.2025 Helsinki, Finland

### Finest version of Pettersson's 8th

The Eighth is one of Pettersson's finest and best-known, recorded at least five times... This new interpretation is tauter, now even more attuned to Pettersson's obsessive-compelling idiom and manifestly sounding so. Indeed, in terms of orchestral virtuosity, I would aver that this is the finest, most confidently played version yet. Interpretatively, what Lindberg – now the most experienced Pettersson conductor of them all – does so well is to let the music flow, and at pace when needed. *Gramophone March 2026*

**Allan Pettersson: Symphony No. 8** 🎧

CD: Norrköping SO/Christian Lindberg  
BIS 2740

### A compelling piece by Helena Tulve

This deeply poetic work drifts by like a dream and is wonderfully brought to life by Paavo Järvi. Though placed in the delicate role of an opening piece, it nonetheless became the real highlight of the evening. *Resmusica.com 21.2.*

The piece consists of slow shifts of sound material, with gradually evolving nuances, almost imperceptible tempo variations and subtle percussive punctuations. The orchestra, under Järvi's expert leadership, brings out the shimmering, resonant, meticulously divided sonorities of the piece – a language rooted in the spectral tradition. *Diapason 19.2.*

**Helena Tulve: Wand'ring Bark** 🎧

French premiere: Orchestre de Paris/Paavo Järvi, 18.2.2026 Paris, France



Helena Tulve

Photo: Henna Saunela