

7 SEPTEMBER

FRIDAY SERIES 1

Helsinki Music Centre at 7 pm

Hannu Lintu, conductor

Yuja Wang, piano

Pyotr Tchaikovsky: Piano Concerto No. 1 in B Flat Minor, Op.23 33 min

*I Allegro non troppo e molto maestoso – Allegro con spirito
II Andantino semplice – Prestissimo – Tempo 1
III Allegro con fuoco*

Veli-Matti Puumala: Rope, fp (Yle commission) 10 min

INTERVAL 20 min

Igor Stravinsky: Petrushka, a burlesque ballet in four scenes for orchestra (1947 version) 34 min

Scene I: The Shrovetide Fair – The Crowd – The Charlatan's Booth – (Russian Dance)

Scene II: Petrushka's Room

Scene III: The Moor's Room – Dance of the Ballerina – Waltz of the Ballerina and the Moor

Scene IV: The Shrovetide Fair (towards evening) – Dance of the Wet Nurse – Dance of the Bear and the Peasant – Dance of the Gypsy Girls – Dance of the Coachman – The Masqueraders –

The Fight: The Moor and Petrushka – The Death of Petrushka – The Police and the Charlatan – Petrushka's Ghost

Interval at about 7.55 pm. The concert proper ends at about 9 pm.
Broadcast live on Yle Radio 1 and the internet (yle.fi/rso).

PYOTR TCHAIKOVSKY (1840–1893): PIANO CONCERTO NO. 1

No sooner had Pyotr Tchaikovsky finished playing his brand-new first piano concerto to the director of the Conservatoire, Nikolai Rubinstein, in 1874 than Rubinstein began angrily tearing it to pieces. Not even thorough revision would suffice, he said, to redeem it. Poor Tchaikovsky had never foreseen such a reaction, and recovering from the blow vowed he would never change a note. He dedicated his concerto to Hans von Bülow, the German pianist who was the soloist in the highly-acclaimed first performance, in Boston, in October 1875. A few years later Rubinstein had second thoughts and performed the concerto on several occasions, as both the soloist and the conductor. Nowadays it is one of the most popular concertos of the Romantic era.

The opening of this concerto, one of the best known in the classical repertoire, is uniquely striking and captivating. The listener is plunged straight into the work as the piano accompanies the orchestra's flowing melody with mighty chords spilling right across the keyboard. This opening, which breaks with the concerto conventions of the time, is followed by an expansive, grandiose main movement in sonata form the themes of which draw on Ukrainian folk music.

The slow movement begins in serene, delicately lyrical mood, until Tchaikovsky unexpectedly inserts a vir-

tuosic, rhythmically lively scherzo section taking a French chansonette as its theme. Rachmaninoff later arrived at a similar solution in his second and third piano concertos.

The finale is action-packed and dance-like, again making use of Ukrainian folk music. At the end, Tchaikovsky swells the second theme into a mighty melodic flood that, in all its weightiness, in a way constitutes a supporting pillar to match the introduction to the first movement.

VELI-MATTI PUUMALA – AN EXPLORER OF UNFOLDING TIMBRAL WORLDS

Veli-Matti Puumala (b. 1965) is a composer who has, without compromising his artist identity, constantly branched out into new expressive fields. In his earliest works for chamber line-ups dating from the latter half of the 1980s the legacy of Modernism is reflected in both post-Serialist complexity and a wider use of colour. His works of the 1990s are dominated by the series of "*Chains*" for different ensemble and orchestral combinations. In his Double Bass Concerto Taon (2000) he succeeded in liberating the solo instrument from its traditional heavy image. In the Piano Concerto *Seeds of Time* (2004) he addressed a topical problem by allowing fast-moving virtuosity to give way at the end to timeless contemp-

lation. Although vocal music has occupied a relatively remote position in his output, one of his main works – and his biggest – is the psychologically-charged opera *Anna Liisa* (2001–08) based on the Finnish play of the same name by Minna Canth.

Puumala is one of the most highly-acclaimed Finnish composers of his generation, and the recipient of more awards than almost any other. His radiophonic work *Rajamailla* (*Borderscapes*, 2001) won the international Prix Italia, *Seeds of Time* (2004) the Teosto Prize in Finland, and in 2011 he was awarded the Erik Bergman Prize. The fact that he has been Professor of composition at the Sibelius Academy since 2005 says much about the respect he enjoys.

Kimmo Korhonen (abridged)

ROPE

A rope can join and separate. A rope can save a person from falling, but its pressure may be the last thing a desperate person feels on his or her skin. A rope is strong and rough, but also reliable. The tight-rope walker must be able to rely on his rope, since his life literally depends upon it. A rope must also hold from one side of an abyss to the other. Tight ropes also oscillate, sound, chafe and creak in the way that has a coarse beauty.

This work has a long history. The idea for it first came to me in the late 1990s, when Antero Karttunen, at that time ylä's head of music, commisi-

oned me to write a new work for the FRSO. For a long time it proceeded as a Cello Concerto project, but having just composed two big concertos, I wanted to compose something for orchestra only. I got down to planning it in earnest after my opera *Anna Liisa*. In early 2010 it received my most concentrated attention. The superb FRSO, the new Helsinki Music Centre and several magnificent collaborations with Hannu Lintu prompted me to write something I would never have done only five years earlier. Many things in my music are here taken to extremes, regardless of the risks. The risk-taking made my blood flow more strongly. Once again I'm faced with something new, in a good place. *Rope* (2010–12) is dedicated to Hannu Lintu.

Veli-Matti Puumala

IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882–1971): PETRUSHKA

Petrushka was, for Igor Stravinsky, a link between the colourful, fairytale world of *The Firebird* and the primitive ecstasy of *The Rite of Spring* (1913). Often switching abruptly from one situation to another, the music ranges from vigorous optimism to spiky, naïve humour. Adding special colour is Stravinsky's effective use of Russian folk tunes, already assigned a leading role in *The Firebird*. The strident rhythms with their shifting beat and the use of two keys simultaneously (bitonality) give

the music a sharp, Modernist edge. The original idea of a concert piece is illustrated by the big solo role of the piano, especially in the first half of the ballet.

Petrushka is divided into four scenes or tableaux performed without a break and is set in 1830s St. Petersburg. It is a variation on an old Italian commedia dell'arte story, its characters transferred to a Russian environment. It is also the world to which Stravinsky later returned in his ballet *Pulcinella* (1920). *Petrushka* is about three puppets owned by a Charlatan – *Petrushka*, a Ballerina and a Moor – that suddenly come to life.

The opening scene finds *Petrushka* at a Shrovetide fair brimming with life and revellers. The Charlatan urges the three puppets to dance together. In the second scene *Petrushka* is in his room brooding on his ugliness when the Ballerina appears beside him but is soon frightened by the way he looks. In the third scene the gross, stupid Moor dances with the Ballerina and seduces her. The fourth scene takes place back at the fair, where the Moor chases *Petrushka* and finally kills him with his sword. In the final scene the Charlatan nevertheless spots *Petrushka's* ghost deriding all the people he, the Charlatan, himself has swindled.

Kimmo Korhonen (abridged)

HANNU LINTU

Chief Conductor Designate of the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra for a term beginning in 2013, and for the year leading up to this its Principal Guest Conductor, Hannu Lintu will be continuing his fruitful collaboration with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra for many years to come.

Hannu Lintu studied in the Sibelius Academy's conducting class taught by Jorma Panula, Eri Klas and Ilja Musin. He has further been tutored by, among others, Myung Whun Chung at the Music Academy Siena. Winner of the Nordic Conducting Competition in Bergen in 1994, he graduated from the Sibelius Academy in spring 1996.

Artistic Director and Chief Conductor of the Tampere Philharmonic Orchestra until spring 2013, Hannu Lintu is also Principal Guest Conductor of the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra in Dublin. Previously he had held the positions of Chief Conductor of the Turku Philharmonic Orchestra and Artistic Director of the Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra. He also works regularly with the Avanti! Chamber Orchestra and was Artistic Director of its Summer Sounds festival in 2005. Discs by Hannu Lintu have been released on the Ondine, Alba, Naxos, Ricordi, Claves, Hyperion and Danacord labels. Major forthcoming projects include recordings of the complete Mozart Piano Concertos with Angela Hewitt and the complete Enescu Symphonies. Mr. Lintu will also be recording extensively with the FRSO.

In addition to conducting the leading Finnish orchestras, Maestro Lintu has made guest appearances with the Radio Orchestras in Berlin, Paris, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Amsterdam and Madrid, with a number of orchestras in North and South America (such as the Toronto, Houston, Baltimore, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh and St. Louis Symphony Orchestras, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl), in Asia (Tokyo and Kuala Lumpur) and Australia (the Sydney and Melbourne Symphony Orchestras and others). Forthcoming engagements for the 2012/2013 season include appearances with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, the London Philharmonic, the Minnesota Orchestra, the NDR Symphony Orchestra and many of the BBC orchestras.

YUJA WANG

Born in Peking in 1987, Yuja Wang is widely recognised for playing that combines the spontaneity and fearless imagination of youth with the discipline and precision of a mature artist. Regularly lauded for her controlled, prodigious technique, she has also been praised for her authority over the most complex technical demands and the depth of her musical insight.

Wang studied at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing under Ling Yuan and Zhou Guangren. From 1999 she continued in Canada and the USA, graduating from the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia in 2008. In

2002, when she was 15, she won the Aspen Music Festival's concerto competition; in 2006 she received the Gilmore Young Artist Award and in 2010 the prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant.

Yuja Wang is regularly invited to appear with such leading orchestras as the Boston, Chicago and San Francisco Symphonies, the Los Angeles, London and New York Philharmonics and the Tonhalle Orchestra in Zurich. She has performed under numerous great conductors, among them Lorin Maazel, Kurt Masur, Michael Tilson Thomas, Valery Gergiev and Claudio Abbado. She has given recitals in major cities throughout Asia, Europe and North America and has appeared at the Aspen, Verbier and other summer festivals.

Yuja is an exclusive recording artist for Deutsche Grammophon. Her debut recording, *Sonatas & Etudes*, won her the Classic FM Gramophone Awards 2009 Young Artist of the Year prize. She has since released an album of music by Rachmaninoff with Claudio Abbado conducting the Mahler Chamber Orchestra and a collection of encore pieces by Bach, Chopin, Saint-Saëns and others. Her discs have, among others, brought her an Echo award and a Grammy nomination.

THE FINNISH RADIO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra (FRSO) is the orchestra of the Finnish Broadcasting Company (yle). Its mission is to produce and promote Finnish musical culture. Its Chief Conductor as of autumn 2013 will be Hannu Lintu, following a season (2012/2013) as the orchestra's Principal Guest Conductor. The FRSO has two Honorary Conductors: Jukka-Pekka Saraste and Sakari Oramo.

The Radio Orchestra of ten players founded in 1927 grew to symphony orchestra strength in the 1960s. Its previous Chief Conductors have been Toivo Haapanen, Nils-Eric Fougstedt, Paavo Berglund, Okko Kamu, Leif Segerstam and Jukka-Pekka Saraste.

The latest contemporary music is a major item in the repertoire of the FRSO, which each year premieres a number of yle commissions. Another of the orchestra's tasks is to record all Finnish orchestral music for the yle archive. During the 2012/2013 season it will premiere six works commissioned by yle.

The FRSO has recorded works by Eötvös, Nielsen, Hakola, Lindberg, Saariaho, Sallinen, Kaipainen, Kokkonen and others, and the debut disc of the opera *Aslak Hetta* by Armas Launis. Its discs have reaped some major distinctions, such as the BBC Music Magazine Award and the Académie Charles Cros Award. The disc of the Sibelius and Lindberg Violin Concertos (Sony BMG)

with Lisa Batiashvili as the soloist received the MIDEM Classical Award in 2008, in which year the New York Times chose the other Lindberg disc as its Record of the Year.

The FRSO regularly tours to all parts of the world. During the 2012/2013 season it will be heading for Eastern Finland and Southern Europe.

All the FRSO concerts both in Finland and abroad are broadcast, usually live, on yle Radio 1. They can also be heard and watched with excellent live stream quality on the FRSO website (yle.fi/rso).