

4 SEPTEMBER

WEDNESDAY SERIES 1

Helsinki Music Centre at 19.00

CHIEF CONDUCTOR'S DEBUT

Hannu Lintu, conductor

Christoffer Sundqvist, clarinet

The Helsinki Music Centre Choir, coach **Tapani Länsiö**

*Erkki-Sven Tüür: Clarinet Concerto Peregrinus Ecstaticus,
fp (Yle commission)*

22 min

INTERVAL 20 min

Maurice Ravel: Daphnis et Chloé

55 min

I Première partie

Introduction et Danse religieuse

Scène – Danse générale

Danse grotesque de Dorcon – Scène

Danse légère et gracieuse de Daphnis

Scène – Danse de Lycéion – Scène (Les pirates)

Scène – Danse lente et mystérieuse

II Deuxième partie

Introduction

Danse guerrière

Scène – Danse suppliante de Chloé

III Troisième partie

Lever du jour – Scène

Daphnis et Chloé miment l'aventure de Pan et de Syrinx

Danse générale

Interval at about 19.40. The concert ends at about 21.10.

Broadcast live on Yle Radio 1, Yle Teema and the Internet (yle.fi/klässinen).

PARACHUTES OPEN!

The Chief Conductor of the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra has a very challenging job. The orchestra of the Finnish Broadcasting Company (Yle) is Finland's national orchestra and duty-bound to set high quality standards for music in Finland – both performance and composition.

The FRSO has been in the habit of training its future Chief Conductors itself, in one way or another. Many of them, such as Paavo Berglund, Jukka-Pekka Saraste and Sakari Oramo, developed as musicians in the ranks of the FRSO before mounting the podium before it. Hannu Lintu's ties with the orchestra have also evolved over time: he began conducting it nearly 20 years ago, first for minor recording assignments, later as the trusted conductor of great repertoire, and as our Principal Guest Conductor.

Before tonight's inaugural concert, we have given 40 concerts together; this would, by any reckoning, be an unusually strong foundation for a closer partnership. The orchestra's widespread, greater-than-ever coverage on the Yle channels also promises the new season a good start. And our ticket sales have broken all previous records.

Hannu Lintu writes in the foreword to our season's brochure: "Neither we, the performers, nor the audience can possibly understand music at every level. Above all, this is not necessary: the important thing is to approach every composition with an open mind and ears, in a spirit of adventure. The American composer and musician

Frank Zappa aptly crystallised the vital importance of an irrational attitude: "A mind is like a parachute. It doesn't work if it is not open."

I hope that powerful concert experiences will inspire the FRSO's audiences to keep their parachutes open during Hannu Lintu's first season as its Chief Conductor.

Tuula Sarotie, General Manager

ERKKI-SVEN TÜÜR (b. 1959): CLARINET CONCERTO PEREGRINUS ECSTATICUS

The title of the clarinet concerto *Peregrinus Ecstaticus* ('Ecstatic Pilgrim' in Latin) offers us a hint for the interpretation of the soloist's character. Imagine a pilgrim's quest, full of obstacles and hazards, towards his desired goal; his perseverance and vigour alternating with exhaustion and fatigue; conquering actual physical obstacles combined with spiritual struggles...

The composition commences with an actively progressing theme in the lower register of the clarinet, supported by percussion instruments and the pizzicato of strings. Orchestral wind instruments are introduced as the clarinet moves into higher registers. It is as if the soloist sets the orchestra in motion, gradually invigorating it. The relationship between the soloist and the orchestra becomes increasingly in-

teractive and as the piece progresses, it becomes unclear who is influencing whom.

The clarinet concerto consists of three movements that are performed *attacca*. The first movement also comprises three sections, as it reflects the structure of the entire piece. In the middle, cadenza-like section, time seems to stop and through this the soloist finds a new perspective and strength to continue the journey. The third and much more intense section ends with a big chord. Then, a wonderful world of microcosms is opened up by “zooming into” the chord. This comprises the second movement that conveys introspection and illuminative colour solutions. Towards the end of the second movement, short passages with material from the third movement start cropping up and thus gradually form the transition to the third movement.

The relationship between the clarinet and the orchestra is in constant fluctuation, as impatient struggles and rapid ascents and descents are followed by focusing on moments that may transform into extensive enlightening visions in a different temporal dimension; these are, in turn, followed by ecstatic bursts of joy, etc.

However, this composition is not an attempt to describe such a journey. On the most abstract level, this is the very journey. I came up with this story and the title of the piece after I had already finished the score. Thus, this is not programme music. As I have also said earlier, I would be delighted if this piece inspired listeners to create their own

“stories”, in the hope that the music touches the creative core of the audience.

Erkki-Sven Tüür

MAURICE RAVEL (1875–1937): DAPHNIS ET CHLOÉ

Daphnis et Chloé is an ancient pastoral romance about a young goatherd and a shepherdess who discover the pleasures of love. On a bright spring afternoon, love is in the air and the consequences are inevitable.

The story of the two young lovers has fired the imagination of many, not least Maurice Ravel (1875–1937), who in his ballet suite of 1912 indulged in an orgy of musical sensuality and refined stylisation, of intoxicating timbres and impassioned rhythms. The resulting suite represents *art nouveau* in music, like an early 20th century Parisian emporium with all the perfumes and evocations brought by luxuries from lands afar. The orchestration is translucent, the colours as from a painting by Gauguin. The symbolists believed in developing the senses and enhancing the experience of pleasure, and the ancient myth is accordingly infused by Ravel with mind-blowing exoticism. His music thus abounds in strange scales and modes, mysterious tone colours, odd rhythms and shifting time signatures, a battery of castanets, crotales and other oriental instruments, wood-

winds that writhe like a belly-dancer in a Parisian café, circus, and enchanting string freeze-frame visions of dawn.

As a special effect the suite uses a wordless choir that reiterates – and finally shouts – a swinging, dotted motif: sighing, desire, hypnosis, ecstasy. A century ago, this was exotic music.

Ballet, in the early decades of the 20th century, was a major platform for artistic experiment, a source of inspiration for composers, choreographers, artists and fashion designers such as Ravel, Stravinsky, Picasso, Matisse, Coco Chanel, Satie and Cocteau. Sports fans may recall the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City, when US Sarah Hughes skated to victory to the strains of music by Ravel.

Susanna Välimäki (abridged)

AN INTERVIEW WITH HANNU LINTU

Hannu Lintu, you are beginning your term as Chief Conductor of the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra with the premiere of a clarinet concerto by Erkki-Sven Tüür. What made you choose this particular work?

We're keen to support the solo and international ambitions of our FRSO players, and Toffe Sundqvist expressly wanted to commission a concerto from Tüür. Tüür finished it ages ago, but the premiere was postponed when I arrived on the scene a bit like a *deus ex machina* and announced that I would make it

my opening number. The fact that the concert has one of our own players as soloist and a world premiere is symbolic. From now on, every season planned by me will begin with a new commission.

I've conducted a certain amount of music by Tüür, and he is, so to say, a great guy – he's easy to get on with, and the information is clear in his fine scores. And another advantage here is that the concerto was ready a year ago, so there's been plenty of time to find out what it's like.

So what is it like, then?

It follows one prototype of the modern concerto, which in turn resembles the concertos of the first half of the 19th century, being in one movement or played as a single entity. To me, it often seems that modern concertos have reverted to the concept of a work in one coherent whole but divided into three sections differing in character. One thing these sections have in common is that the beginning and end are often similar in their material and tempos, and in between is something quite different. This works well, because it provides the potential for kindred thematic relationships between the movements.

The work relies to a great extent on imitation, in that the soloist plays something to which the orchestra reacts as in canon. Contrasting with this technique is a world of huge, slow masses spreading right across the orchestral register. The soloist, the ecstatic pilgrim, travels through a musical

landscape, and some kind of development takes place, some kind of seeking and finding. He's not a hooded pilgrim crawling along like Tannhäuser to Rome; rather, his quest is joyful and extroverted, and at the end is a strong sense of having arrived.

You are conducting the complete Daphnis et Chloé ballet suite.

Because this is my first concert as Chief Conductor, it was important to choose something that would require every player in the orchestra to be on the platform. No one needs to be left hanging around in the café, and there's also the Helsinki Music Centre Choir, which I've been following with interest. The ballet has a large number of solos, so all the section principals have a chance to give their best. This work therefore says something about the standard of the orchestra and its soloist potential. It's one of the most virtuosic and colourful in the orchestral repertoire, and it ends with a flourish – and that's important, too.

Daphnis et Chloé has often featured at turning points in my career, and I could call it one of my favourite works. I conducted the *Daphnis Suite No. 2* for my diploma in 1996. All in all, *Daphnis et Chloé* is one of the few ballet scores that can be performed in its entirety. Because the majority of ballets consist of padding for minutes on end. Though *Daphnis et Chloé* does have a lot of ballet-like gestures, too, and various transitional episodes, they are musically all so magnificent that their concert performance is, to my mind, justified.

For a ballet, *Daphnis et Chloé* has an unusually coherent plot. Nothing great and significant happens in it, but the story is very easy to follow. I've read Longus's *Daphnis et Chloé* and it's funny to see how a story written in 3rd-century Greece can be so utterly romantic and schmaltzy; in this respect almost pulp fiction. The eroticism in the story may have been bold at that time. On the other hand, it belongs to the world of Antiquity, with nymphs and Pan and divine intervention at virtually every turn. Though the book is episodic without much form, the ballet is surprisingly logical. The amount of information given in the score is incredible: there are lots of instructions for each voice and endless potential for timbral nuances. *Daphnis et Chloé* is a challenging work, but this makes it infinitely rewarding.

Lotta Emanuelsson

www.hannulintu.fi

CHRISTOFFER SUNDQVIST

Christoffer Sundqvist began his clarinet studies with Bernhard Nylund at the Pietarsaari Conservatory, completed his diploma with Anna-Maija Korsimaa at the Sibelius Academy in 2002 and went on to study with Professor François Benda at the Basel Music Academy. He has also attended masterclasses given by Hans Rudolf Stalder, Guy Deplus, Charles Neidich

and Ronald van Spaendonck, and has studied chamber music with a number of distinguished musicians. He shared the first prize in the Crusell Clarinet Competition in 2002, and received the Pro Musica medal and the first prize in the Juvenalia chamber music competition in Espoo.

Nominated *débutant* of the year by the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra in 2004, Christoffer Sundqvist has been the soloist with almost all the Finnish orchestras in recent years. Abroad he has appeared with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the Gothenburg Symphony, the Basel Symphony and the St Christopher Chamber Orchestra in Lithuania. He is a regular guest at European festivals and engagements for the 2013/2014 season include debuts as soloist with the Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie and the Norrköping Symphony Orchestra.

Also an active chamber musician, Christoffer Sundqvist is a founding member of the Arktinen hysteria (Arctic Hysteria) wind quintet and a member of the Plus ensemble based in Turku. He began as Artistic Director of the Jakobstads Sinfonietta and the Rusk Festival in 2013.

Christoffer Sundqvist has given the world premieres of clarinet concertos by Markus Fagerudd and Sebastian Fagerlund. In autumn 2007 he and Tommi Aalto were the soloists in the premiere of the Concerto for Clarinet and Viola by Aulis Sallinen with the FRSO. With his chamber ensembles, he has premiered numerous new Finnish works, by Pehr Henrik Nordgren, Sampo Haapamäki, Magnus Lindberg,

Atso Almila and others. The most recent fruits of his close collaboration with Sebastian Fagerlund have been the premieres of the clarinet concerto, the trio of 2010 and the sonata of 2011.

Sundqvist's most recent discography includes a disc of the Fagerlund clarinet concerto with the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra (BIS) that won an Emma award in Finland and widespread international acclaim, a disc of concertos by Peter Eötvös and Aulis Sallinen for Alba and an Emma award-winning CD by the Plus Ensemble of music by Jukka Tiensuu (also for Alba).

Principal clarinet with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra since 2005, Christoffer Sundqvist teaches at the Sibelius Academy and regularly holds masterclasses.

THE HELSINKI MUSIC CENTRE CHOIR

Founded in autumn 2011, the Helsinki Music Centre Choir of about 85 singers can, as required, regroup as a male, female or chamber choir. It works in close partnership with the main Helsinki Music Centre occupants: the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra and the Sibelius Academy. Its Artistic Director has from the very beginning been composer Tapani Lämsä and the members are amateurs with a passion for singing.

The HMCC repertoire, planned jointly by conductors Hannu Lintu, Jukka-Pekka Saraste and John Storgårds, con-

sists mainly of symphonic choral and orchestral works and unaccompanied music for large choir, not forgetting contemporary music.

The Choir appears in concert from eight to ten times a year, mainly at the Helsinki Music Centre but also at other venues. Fixtures this year include the Organ Night and Aria festival in Espoo and the Turku Music Festival. The choir's annual All Saints Day concert of unaccompanied music will this year be devoted to hymns and begin at the Helsinki Music Centre at 21.00 on November 2.

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 and its Chief Conductor as of autumn 2013 is Hannu Lintu.

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, Jukka-Pekka Saraste and Sakari Oramo. The FRSO has two Honorary Conductors: Jukka-Pekka Saraste and Sakari Oramo.

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 2013/2014 season it will premiere six Finnish 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 2013/2014 season it will be visiting Central Europe under the baton of Hannu Lintu.

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 stream quality on yle.fi/klassinen.