

25 OCTOBER

FRIDAY SERIES 4

Helsinki Music Centre at 19.00



Sakari Oramo, conductor
Ismo Eskelinen, guitar

*C. P. E. Bach: Sinfonia for Strings and
Continuo in B Minor Wq 182/5*

11 min

*I Allegretto
II Larghetto
III Presto*

*Sebastian Fagerlund: Transit, Concerto for Guitar and
Orchestra, fp (Yle commission)*

20 min

*I Moderato con anima
II Intenso, liberamente
III Espressivo
IV Ritmico
V Brillante
VI Intenso*

INTERVAL 20 min

*Edward Elgar: Variations on an Original Theme
for Orchestra, Op. 36 (Enigma)*

30 min

I Theme (Andante)

II Variation No. 1 C.A.E. (Elgar's wife, Alice) (L'istesso tempo)

III Variation No. 2 H.D.S-P.

(Hew David Steuart-Powell, amateur pianist) (Allegro)

*IV Variation No. 3 R.B.T. (Richard Baxter Townshend, author)
(Allegretto)*

*V Variation No. 4 W.M.B. (William M. Baker, squire)
(Allegro di molto)*

*VI Variation No. 5 R.P.A. (Richard P. Arnold, musician)
(Moderato)*

*VII Variation No. 6 Ysobel (Isabel Fitton, viola pupil of Elgar)
(Andantino)*

VIII Variation No. 7 Troyte (Troyte Griffith, architect) (Presto)

*IX Variation No. 8 W.N. (Winifred Norbury, music-lover)
(Allegretto)*

*X Variation No. 9 Nimrod (August Johannes Jaeger, publisher)
(Adagio)*

*XI Variation No. 10 Dorabella (Dora Penny) (Intermezzo)
(Allegretto)*

*XII Variation No. 11 G.R.S. (George Robertson Sinclair, organist)
(Allegro di molto)*

*XIII Variation No. 12 B.G.N. (Basil G. Nevinson, cellist)
(Andante)*

*XIV Variation No. 13 xxx (not identified by initials,
Lady Mary Lygon) (Romanza) (Moderato)*

*XV Variation No. 14 E.D.U. (nickname, Elgar himself) (Finale)
(Allegro – Presto)*

Interval at about 19.45. The main concert ends at about 20.45.

Broadcast live on Yle Radio 1 (orchestral concert) and on the Internet
(yle.fi/klassinen).

THE LATE-NIGHT CHAMBER MUSIC (Boccherini's Fandango Quintet)
will begin in the main Concert Hall after an interval of about 10 minutes.
Those attending are asked to take (unnumbered) seats in the stalls.

LATE-NIGHT CHAMBER MUSIC

Ismo Eskelinen, guitar

Hannu Vasara, violin

Maria Puusaari, violin

Riitta-Liisa Ristiluoma, viola

Jukka Rautasalo, cello

Luigi Boccherini: Guitar Quintet in D, G. 448 (Fandango) 22 min

I Pastorale

II Allegro maestoso

III Grave assai

IV Fandango

CARL PHILIPP EMANUEL BACH (1714–1788): SINFONIA FOR STRINGS AND CONTINUO IN B MINOR WQ 182/5

Of the 19 Sinfonias by Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, 10 were composed in Hamburg. The first 6 of these 10 date from 1773 and the other 4, for a larger orchestra, from 1775–1776. The Sinfonias for Strings (Wq 182) were commissioned by Baron Gottfried van Swieten, a keen music-lover and at the time the Austrian Ambassador in Berlin.

Van Swieten was well aware of Bach's reputation as a composer who defied tradition and sought to blaze a trail of his own. In commissioning the Sinfonias he therefore gave him a free hand and urged him to forget any technical difficulties they may incur. Before Bach sent them to Berlin, he had them played at the salon of a certain Hamburg professor where, as one who was present on the occasion reported, "the original, bold progression of ideas and the great variety and novelty in the forms and modulations" were enthusiastically received.

The Sinfonia Wq 182/5 is the only one of the group in a minor key. As in his other Sinfonias, Bach used the three-movement format popular in Northern Germany, tying the movements firmly together without a pause in between. He then spiced the music with his characteristic variety and sudden switches of dynamics, moods and

textures. The first movement is slower than usual for C.P.E. Bach (*Allegretto* instead of the *Allegro* familiar from his other Sinfonias for Strings), but despite its more leisurely pace, the movement is marked by a great breadth of spirit ranging from lamenting tones to boisterous bluster. The gently rocking slow movement is outwardly more even-tempered but not without its inner tensions. The *Presto* finale is ablaze with intensity.

SEBASTIAN FAGERLUND (b. 1972): TRANSIT, CONCERTO FOR GUITAR AND ORCHESTRA

Anyone setting out to compose a guitar concerto faces two very special challenges. First, the composer of classical music is not often familiar with the techniques of playing the instrument, in the way that he or she may be with the piano or the basic instruments of a symphony orchestra. Second, the guitar easily gets drowned by the orchestra.

"I seldom work with an instrument whose idiomatic technique is so unfamiliar," says Fagerlund. "But I didn't want to let myself get bogged down in my preconceptions of what is idiomatic for the guitar. Ismo Eskelinen told me to let my imagination freely roam, and he would decide whether what I wrote was playable. I was surprised how many ways some things can be done on a guitar. And it was interesting that

in composing for the guitar, I had to dig deeper than usual in my expression; to consider how the material I used would lend itself to the guitar.

“Making room for the soloist is quite a job in a guitar concerto. Though the music is quieter than is usual in my works, this doesn’t mean it can’t be intensive. What interests me is the way the guitar is an organic part of the whole; I didn’t want too much of a contrast between the soloist and the orchestra.”

There is no profound reason for the title, *Transit*. “Transit” means “passing through” and for Fagerlund the way his material returns and transforms in the course of the concerto, like a spiral. He says it has three main elements: 1) a descending line, manifest in both falling motifs and compacting harmonies, 2) arpeggio-like material that sits naturally on the guitar and that may also be assigned to other instruments, and 3) a rhythmically strong, syncopated motif.

The concerto is in six parts or movements joined without a break and tracing a broad and varied arch. The descending line providing a frame for the work as a whole makes its appearance in the opening bars. At first, the music is delicately transparent and almost pointillist, but the events grow denser as the movement proceeds. From time to time the guitar engages in close dialogue with the orchestra. The second movement has an expectant air to it and allows the soloist to improvise a short cadenza against long background string notes. The falling motif appears in the third part in a greatly drawn-out version on the strings. The mood grows tenser and leads the orchestra to a

powerful climax. The rhythmic element is most striking and accented in the fourth movement, in which the guitar also uses percussive effects. The momentum continues in the fifth, but is less rhythmic and determined. Finally the concerto adopts a meditative mode, and not until the end does the guitar reveal its true character, as the descending line and the arpeggio material blend as one; as it crystallises, the music grows ethereal and fades away.

EDWARD ELGAR (1857–1934): VARIATIONS ON AN ORIGINAL THEME FOR ORCHESTRA, OP. 36 (ENIGMA)

The *Enigma Variations* began life as keyboard improvisations. Elgar had, for some time, been keen to compose a large-scale work for orchestra but had not hit on a suitable solution to the problem of form. The answer lay in a set of variations, on a theme that had presented itself while he was improvising.

The name *Enigma* (meaning “riddle”) is Elgar’s own, for it is a set of variations on a hidden theme that is not actually played. Many have tried to solve this riddle, but without arriving at any generally accepted answer.

The *Enigma Variations* are dedicated “to my friends pictured within”, and together constitute a beautifully-orchestrated musical gallery of people in Elgar’s immediate circle, referred to

in the score by their initials. The first, C.A.E., pictures his wife, who faithfully stood by him during the difficult years of his career. The heart of the set is the noble No. 9, *Nimrod*, that is often performed on its own. The person in question was Elgar's best friend, the music publisher Augustus E. Jaeger. Contrasting with the exalted beauty of *Nimrod*'s music is humour, as in the opening bars of No. 11, which depict the bulldog of organist George Robertson Sinclair as it dog-paddled upstream after falling in the River Wye. The last variation, E.D.U., is a portrait of Elgar himself, nicknamed Edu by his wife. It also carries references to the wife and Jaeger variations, as if to indicate that of all the characters portrayed, these were two of Elgar's dearest.

Kimmo Korhonen (abridged)

LUIGI BOCCHERINI (1743–1805): GUITAR QUINTET IN D, G. 448

Italian cellist-composer Luigi Boccherini did not compose anything for the guitar of his own accord, but luckily for us, the Marquis de Benavent, an amateur guitarist, asked him to write him some chamber music for guitar and string quartet for his personal use.

Boccherini, who lived in Madrid for most of his adult life, supplied the Marquis with 12 Quintets, seven of which have been preserved. They are all transcriptions of earlier chamber works for ensembles of different kinds.

The one best known is that to be heard today, ending with a lively *Fandango*, a dance widely familiar on the Iberian Peninsula. The castanets and clapping characteristic of Flamenco music are also a vital element of the *Fandango*. The opening movement is in pastoral mood and features a stylised imitation of shepherds' bagpipes.

Jukka Rautasalo (abridged)

SAKARI ORAMO

Sakari Oramo is Chief Conductor of the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic and the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Principal Conductor of West Coast Kookola Opera and Chief Conductor of the Ostrobothnian Chamber Orchestra. He was Chief Conductor of the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra 2003–2012 and is now its Honorary Conductor, and from 1998 to 2008 he was also Music Director of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

Oramo's countless guest engagements have taken in appearances with the Berlin, Vienna and New York Philharmonics, the Boston, Chicago and San Francisco Symphonies, the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra and the Dresden Staatskapelle. Highlights of the 2012/2013 season included concerts with the Vienna Philharmonic, the Chicago Symphony and the Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra, and a United States tour with the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic.

Sakari Oramo received an Honorary Doctorate in summer 2004 from

the University of Central England in Birmingham. In summer 2008 he was awarded the prestigious Elgar Medal in recognition of his work to further the reputation of Elgar and his music, and in 2009 he was honoured with a British OBE for his services to music. The Finnish President awarded him the Finlandia Medal in December 2010.

ISMO ESKELINEN

An international career launched with competition prizes at the age of 17 has taken Ismo Eskelinen to such great concert halls as the Berlin Philharmonic, the Amsterdam Concertgebouw and London's Royal Festival Hall. Among this season's engagements are appearances with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the Tampere Philharmonic, the Chamber Orchestra of Lapland and the Kymi Sinfonietta.

Eskelinen has a repertoire spanning music from the 16th century to the present day. His collaborations with composers such as Einojuhani Rautavaara, Aulis Sallinen, Jukka Tiensuu, Olli Mustonen, Sebastian Fagerlund, Kirmo Lintinen, Leo Brouwer and Helmut Lachenmann have resulted in numerous premieres and discs.

Eskelinen is the first guitarist to have been invited to many festivals, among them Moritzburg, Charlottesville and Schaubeck. GFA USA is just one of the guitar festivals to which he has been invited to perform and to teach. His discs have been highly-acclaimed worldwide.

Artistic Director of the Sonkajärvi Soi

festival since 1992, Eskelinen has also masterminded programmes for the Avanti! Chamber Orchestra and others.

JOINT FRSO AND SIBELIUS ACADEMY TRAINING PROJECT

Playing in this concert are five young musicians as part of a new joint FRSO and Sibelius Academy training project. The five Academy students selected via auditions were assigned to an FRSO or section leader as their personal coach.

Sara Mansnerus and Aleksi Kotila (violin), Oili Tuhkanen (viola), Anna Liukkonen (cello) and Iikka Järvi (double bass) will sit beside their coach at concerts for three concert weeks. The leaders will coach them in the repertoire for the week ahead and they will receive feedback on their performance during the actual concert week. The concert weeks correspond to Sibelius Academy orchestra periods and will earn the students credits.

The students will next have a chance to play in the concerts conducted by Hannu Lintu on 20 December 2013 and Mario Venzago on 12 February 2014.

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 ar-

chive. 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.