NAXOS

DDD

8.553757

Uuno KLAMI

Kalevala Suite • Sea Pictures

Lemminkäinen's Adventures on the Island of Saari

Turku Philharmonic Orchestra

Jorma Panula

Uuno Klami (1900 – 1961)
Suomenlinna Overture, Op. 30 • Kalevala Suite, Op. 23 • Lemminkäinen's Adventures on the Island of Saari • Sea Pictures

Uuno Klami belonged to that generation of composers who emerged in the 1920s, shortly after Finland had gained her independence, and set about offering a more "European" alternative to the National Romanticism that had hitherto held sway in Finnish music. But while the other prominent Finnish modernists of the 1920s – Ernest Pingoud, Väinö Raitio and Aarre Merikanto – all turned in frustration during the next decade towards a safer and more traditional idiom, Klami reached the height of his creative powers in the 1930s. He succeeded in putting together a harmonious synthesis of Finnish thematic materials and stylistic influences from abroad.

It is something of a mystery just how and why Uuno Klami found his way into the world of music. He was born in Virolahti on the shores of the Gulf of Finland, close to the present border with Russia, and neither his immediate family nor his childhood surroundings offered much in the way of musical stimuli. On the other hand, he did develop a love of the sea from an early age, and this is reflected and expressed in his orchestral suite *Sea Pictures*. Klami's path to become an artist was not made any easier by the loss of his father at the age of three and his mother when he was sixteen. Nevertheless, he knew what he wanted, and already in elementary school he announced his intention of becoming a composer. He left school at fifteen and studied on three separate occasions between 1915 and 1924 at the Helsinki College of Music, now the Sibelius Academy. The breaks in his education there were not through any shortage of talent, but a simple lack of funds.

While he was still a student in the early 1920s, Klami aroused attention with his natural leaning for things international and cosmopolitan. In particular he felt drawn to French music, and after completing his studies in Helsinki in the spring of 1924 he set off for a year in Paris, where he met Maurice Ravel and Florent Schmitt among others, and heard a good deal of the new writing of the day. On his return to Finland in spring 1925, he brought with him a piano concerto entitled *Une nuit à Montmartre* that was rich in Parisian moods and colours. Uuno Klami's final breakthrough to the wider Finnish public came in September 1928 at a Helsinki concert of his works, where the greatest acclaim went to his *Karelian Rhapsody*, an orchestral piece that covered familiar Finnish material in a quite new fashion. Shortly afterwards, Klami made his second study-trip abroad, to Vienna (1928 – 29).

Above all, Klami was a brilliant manager of the orchestra. His most important models were Ravel and Stravinsky, but he was a broad-minded composer with catholic tastes, and could as easily cope with stylized Spanish moods or archaic primitivism, even arranging jazz ingredients on occasion. Uuno Klami's principal works are the colourful orchestral fresco *Kalevala Suite* (1933 – 43), the large oratorio *Psalmus* (1935) for mixed choir, soloist and orchestra, and a ballet *Whirls* (1957 – 60), that was left unfinished at his death. He also composed a good deal of other orchestral music, two piano concertos, a violin concerto, and two fine concertante works for cello and orchestra. Klami was elected to the Academy of Finland in 1959 as its composer representative, but he died of heart failure less than two years later in May 1961.

Klami's second concert devoted to his music was in Helsinki in December 1931. One of the works played was *3 Bf*, now known better as the closing movement of the popular orchestral suite *Sea Pictures*. Apart from indicating an interest in matters meteorological (the title refers to the Beaufort Scale of wind velocity), *3 Bf* shows off Klami's

strong admiration for Ravel, since the *Boléro* theme appears to be lurking here in the background. The influence of Ravel and of French music in general is present elsewhere in *Sea Pictures*, for example in the opening movement *The Foggy Morning*, which brings to mind the delicate orchestral lyricism of Ravel and Debussy. The impact of French culture on the broader level can.be seen in the third movement *The Deserted Three-Master*, which was inspired by Paul Valèry's poem. By contrast, *Captain Scrapuchinat* takes us towards the Spanish moods of de Falla. Rather more traditional in style are the *Nocturne (Song of the Watch)* and *Scène de ballet. The Deserted Three-Master* and *3 Bf* both date from 1930; the other movements were written in 1931 – 32.

Klami's orchestral monument is the powerful *Kalevala Suite*, which took on its final shape during a creative process that sprawled across more than a decade. It seems likely that many years earlier, while he was in Paris, Klami may have pondered a work based on the Finnish national epic *Kalevala*, spurred by a copy of the work he borrowed from the Sorbonne Library. Initially he appears to have been planning a large *Kalevala*-inspired secular oratorio, and in one 1931 newspaper interview he even claimed to have completed it, but all that has survived is the introductory movement, an early version of *The Creation of the Earth*, which was later worked up into the first movement of the *Kalevala Suite*.

In 1933 Klami put the finishing touches to the original version of the *Kalevala Suite*, at this time a work in four movements and – if Klami himself is to be believed – going under the title "Choreographic Images of Kalevala". He soon recognized, however, that the overall form of the suite was unsatisfactory, and in 1934 he completed a central scherzo to provide a contrast with two otherwise rather similar movements (*The Sprout of Spring* and the *Cradle Song for Lemminkäinen*). As sometimes happens, this additional material grew rather larger than Klami had expected, and he was obliged to separate it from the *Kalevala Suite* as an orchestral number named *Lemminkäinen's Adventures on the Island of Saari*. The Lemminkäinen in question is the same figure as portrayed in Sibelius's *Four Legends*, a lusty Don Juan character from the pages of the national epic. His adventures on an island full of women became in Klami's hands such a self-sufficient and complete work, an entire symphonic poem with its own rationale, that it was impossible to leave it as one movement of a suite.

Klami returned to the *Kalevala Suite* for the last time in 1943. Now he composed a new scherzo – *Terhenniemi* – and made corrections to some of the other movements. In this five-movement form the *Kalevala Suite* had its first performance in Helsinki in October 1943, at the third concert of works by the composer. The writing of a *Kalevala*-inspired orchestral work cannot have been a particularly comfortable experience for a Finnish composer of Klami's generation. Klami was well aware of the pitfalls of entering "Sibelius territory", above all the master's magnificent symphonic poems written around stories from the epic. To his great credit, he managed to avoid the obvious Sibelian influences and created his own *Kalevala* vision more in the spirit of the works of Stravinsky's Russian works, particularly *The Rite of Spring*.

The opening movement grows from misty mythical *pianissimo* origins but swells to some enormous *crescendos*. This is balanced by the warm and beautiful *Sprout of Spring*, which follows without a pause, and which brings to mind the world of Stravinsky's *Firebird*. The airily orchestrated and dance-like scherzo *Terhenniemi* forms the centre of the piece, and is undoubtedly better suited to the task than the original *Lemminkäinen's Adventures*. The mournful *Cradle Song for Lemminkäinen* forms a second quieter passage

to match *The Sprout of Spring*, before the suite ends impressively with the brilliant, thudding climaxes of *The Forging of the Sampo*. The Sampo was a marvellous magical instrument, the mysterious source of all good fortune in Finnish myth.

Uuno Klami's overture *Suomenlinna* was completed in 1940, and Tor Mann conducted the first performance in Stockholm in March 1941. The score was then lost in the chaos of wartime Germany, and Klami was obliged to rewrite the work in 1944. The name *Suomenlinna* refers to the group of offshore islands in the approaches to Helsinki, which were fortified, being known as "the Gibraltar of the North", in the eighteenth century when Finland was still a part of Sweden, but there is apparently no deeper programmatic content to the music. All the same, a work that emerged in the shadow of World War II is easily seen as an expression of patriotic feeling, and it does represent a more traditional strain in Klami's writing, as well as having a rousing atmosphere devoid of any of the tragic dimensions of warfare.

Kimmo Korhonen

(*English translation by William Moore*)

Turku Philharmonic Orchestra

The roots of the Turku Philharmonic orchestra go back to 1790, when the Turku Music Society was founded. Today the Turku Philharmonic is, with its 74 musicians, the fourth largest symphony orchestra in Finland. The principal conductors of the Turku Philharmonic orchestra have included among others Jorma Panula, Igor Bezrodnyi and Jacques Mercier. Ralf Gothni was appointed the Principal Guest Conductor in autumn 1995, and Hannu Lintu started his work as a newly appointed Principal Conductor in January 1998. The orchestra has been on tour to Estonia, Sweden, Norway, Hungary, Germany, Belgium and Russia and its first recordings for Naxos, Finnish Orchestral Favourites, has made classical music history in Finland by selling over fifty thousand copies. The collaboration with Naxos has continued with the recording of the *Kullervo Symphony* of Jean Sibelius and a recording of selected orchestral works by Einar Englund.

Jorma Panula

Jorma Panula began his career as a theatre conductor in Lahti, Tampere and Helsinki. He was Principal Conductor of the Turku Philharmonic Orchestra from 1963 to 1965. and was later Principal Conductor of the Helsinki Philharmonic and the Rhus Symphony Orchestra. With his appointment as Professor of Conducting at the Sibelius Academy twenty years ago, he became a prime force in the training of conductors in Finland. He has also held chairs in conducting at the music academies of Stockholm and Copenhagen, and his students include the conductors Esa-Pekka Salonen, Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Osmo Vänskä and Sakari Oramo, among others. Besides teaching and working as a conductor, he has also composed a wide variety of music, including a number of successful operas.

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STEREO

DDD

Playing Time 71:46

Uuno KLAMI

(1900-1961)

Suomenlinna Overture, Op. 30
Kalevala Suite, Op. 23 • Lemminkäinen's Adventures on the Island of Saari
Sea Pictures

Turku Philharmonic Orchestra
Jorma Panula

1	**Suomenlinna Overture, Op. 30**	*(11:01)*
	Kalevala Suite, Op. 23	*(39:56)*
2	The Creation of the Earth	6:41
3	The Sprout of Spring	4:33
4	Terhenniemi	6:29
5	Cradle Song for Lemminkäinen	4:17
6	The Forging of the Sampo	7:00
7	**Lemminkäinen's Adventures on the Island of Saari**	*(10:44)*
	Sea Pictures	*(20:35)*
8	A Foggy Morning	2:45
9	Captain Scrapuchinat	2:36
10	The Deserted Three-Master	4:30
11	Nocturne (Song of the Watch)	2:56
12	Scène de Ballet	1:27
13	3 Bf	6:06

Recorded in the Concert Hall, Turku, Finland from 28th November to 4th December, 1996.
Producer: Michael Ponder
Engineer: Matti Heinonen
Music Notes: Kimmo Korhonen, translated by William Moore
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