

# Einar ENGLUND

## COMPLETE MUSIC FOR SOLO PIANO

INTRODUZIONE E TOCCATA  
SONATINAS NOS. 1 AND 2  
PAVANE E TOCCATA  
SINUHE: BALLET  
MINIATURES  
SONATA

Laura Mikkola

FIRST COMPLETE RECORDING

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# EINAR ENGLUND Complete Music for Solo Piano

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<b><i>Prelude and Fughetta: Hommage à Bach</i></b> (1986)*	<b>4:18</b>
1 Prelude	2:59
2 Fughetta	1:19
<b><i>Sonatina No. 2, The Parisian</i></b> (1984)*	<b>8:17</b>
3 I <i>allegro con brio</i>	2:43
4 II <i>Andante</i>	3:18
5 III <i>Vivace</i>	2:16
6 <b><i>Preludium</i></b> (1955)*	<b>4:22</b>
<b><i>Pavane e Toccata</i></b> (1983)	<b>7:34</b>
7 Pavane: <i>Adagio</i>	2:44
8 Toccata: <i>allegro marcato</i>	4:50
9 <b><i>Humoresque</i></b> (1936)	<b>0:57</b>
10 <b><i>Little Toccata</i></b> (1966)*	<b>1:22</b>
11 <b><i>Sicilienne</i></b> (1966)*	<b>1:14</b>
<b>From the anthology <i>The Keyboard Tells</i></b> (1955)	
12 <b><i>What the Hens Tell</i></b>	<b>0:26</b>
13 <b><i>The Goblin</i></b>	<b>0:32</b>
14 <b><i>Scherzino</i></b>	<b>0:28</b>
15 <b><i>Prelude I (Notturmo)</i></b> (1966)	<b>2:53</b>
<b><i>Sonatina No. 1 in D minor</i></b> (1966)	<b>5:54</b>
16 I <i>allegro con brio</i>	1:44
17 II <i>Sicilienne</i>	2:06
18 III <i>Scherzo-Finale</i>	2:04

<b><i>Sinuhe</i> (1953)*</b>	<b>9:37</b>
[19] No. 1 Dance of Sinuhe	1:43
[20] No. 2 Dance of Nefer	1:52
[21] No. 3 Sinuhe and Nefer-Nefer	2:02
[22] No. 4 Dance of Kaptah and the Girls	1:50
[23] No. 5 War Dance of Horemheb	2:10
<b><i>Introduzione e Toccata</i> (1950)</b>	<b>4:48</b>
[24] <i>Introduzione</i>	1:33
[25] <i>Toccata</i>	3:15
<b><i>Piano Sonata No. 1</i> (1978)</b>	<b>16:12</b>
[26] I <i>Introduzione ed allegro</i>	5:49
[27] II <i>Notturmo</i>	5:33
[28] III <i>Scherzo-Finale</i>	4:50
[29] <b><i>The Lauttasaari Rotary Club Festive March</i> (1957)*</b>	<b>1:21</b>

**Laura Mikkola**

**TT 71:25**

\*FIRST RECORDINGS

## FINAR ENGLUND: COMPLETE MUSIC FOR SOLO PIANO

by Christian Holmqvist

The Finnish composer Einar Englund (1916–99) was born on Gotland, Sweden's largest island. His mother, Hedvig, was from Sweden and his father, Gösta, from Finland, which in those days was part of the Russian empire. At an early age, on his own, Englund mastered the skill of improvisation on the piano. In the 1930s he visited the composer Erkki Melartin, head of the Helsinki Conservatoire (later renamed the Sibelius Academy of Music). Englund could not read scores and had no real knowledge of music-theory, but Melartin was so impressed by the young man's talents as an improviser that he immediately allowed him to begin studies at the Conservatoire. Englund studied the piano first with Ernst Linko, and later with Martti Paavola. Both were renowned musicians; Linko was also an accomplished pianist-composer. Englund also studied composition at the Conservatoire under the guidance of Bengt Carlson and then wrote some duo and solo works he later described as 'salon pieces.' Some of these pieces have disappeared or are preserved in an incomplete state. It is true that, compared with his mature music, the expression in these early Englund pieces is fairly conventional. Carlson was conservative in his outlook and did not encourage his pupil to write anything that might be considered contemporary in style. Carlson himself had studied under the guidance of Vincent d'Indy and was strongly Francophile in his musical attitudes, though selectively so: he adored the music of Franck and Chausson, but not that of Debussy or Ravel.

A more individual voice is discernible in the Piano Quintet, Englund's diploma work, which was premiered in the spring of 1941. The piano part was played on that occasion by Englund's teacher in orchestration, the conductor Leo Funtek,<sup>1</sup> who liked

<sup>1</sup> Funtek (1885–1965), a Slovenian trained in Leipzig, was a major figure in Finnish musical life in the first half of the twentieth century, as conductor, violinist and teacher (his conducting students included Jorma Panula). His orchestration of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* would surely be better known to posterity had it not been published only months before Ravel's; Funtek's orchestration is much more faithful to Mussorgsky's original.

the Quintet so much that he became an enthusiastic supporter of Englund's music. Sibelius heard the Quintet on the radio (Bengt Carlson had rung to alert him to the broadcast); he, too, was very impressed, and brought it up when on a whim Englund visited Sibelius in his home, Ainola, in Järvenpää later that year.<sup>2</sup> Englund never forgot Sibelius' words: 'I see your destiny in your face. You will become a truly great composer'.

During the Finnish Winter War of 1939–40 Englund was in military service. He was not then sent to the front line, but in the Finnish Continuation War of 1941–44 he took an active part in the fight for Finnish independence. The horrifying experiences he went through as a soldier – first, in the Battle of Bengtskär, where the Finnish soldiers fought against a much larger Russian force on a very small, isolated island, and then later on the Karelian isthmus, where the possibility of a violent death was an everyday reality – left a profound imprint on him. As an old man he reflected: 'I did not come back without any scars – the worst damage was invisible: a trauma of the soul that did not concern only me but all of us war veterans throughout our lives'.<sup>3</sup>

When Englund began composing after the war, he realised that he had to find a new musical language with which he properly could tell his listeners what he had seen, heard and felt. He turned to composers such as Stravinsky, Shostakovich and Prokofiev when writing his first two symphonies (1946 and 1947). Both were sensations at their premieres. The bright orchestral colours, the intense, anti-Romantic expression and the spiky rhythms caught the disillusioned but also determinately forward-looking spirit of the post-war years in Finland.

His most popular work of the 1950s was the First Piano Concerto (1955), which received the first prize in a competition arranged by the Finnish Cultural Foundation. Englund performed the work around Europe for many years, thus living out his dream of becoming a concert pianist. The Cello Concerto (1956) and the ballet *Odyssus*

<sup>2</sup> Kommo Korhonen's booklet text with the recording of the Piano Quintet on BIS-CD-1197 (where it is recorded by Peter Lunnqvist and the Sinfonia Lahti Chamber Ensemble) relates Sibelius' gracious response when informed that Englund had come to see him: 'But is it the Einar Englund? How splendid! Please come in!'

<sup>3</sup> *I skuggan av Sibelius: Fragment ur en tonsättarens liv* ('In the Shadow of Sibelius: Fragments from a Composer's Life'), Söderström, Helsinki, p. 85.

(1959) also belong to this period. But in the main Englund wrote music for films, plays and radio plays, and was active in light music as a musician, arranger and composer. He gained some international reputation with his strong score to Erik Blomberg's horror film, *The White Reindeer* (1952).

From the 1950s to 1976 Englund was a music critic for *Hufvudstadsbladet*, the main Swedish-language newspaper in Finland. During the 1960s he wrote a number of highly critical articles on the musical avant-garde, which he felt ridiculed both his own classical training and all the musical values dear to him. Feeling disconnected with the path music was taking, he had a 'quiet period' during which he wrote only smaller works, such as songs for his second wife, the singer Maynie Sirén. At the same time, he began working as a teacher at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, becoming a much-loved pedagogue because of his genuine interest in his students. Over the years he had many students; among them were the composers Kalevi Aho and Magnus Lindberg and the conductor Leif Segerstam.

The Third Symphony, *Barbarossa* (1969–71), marked the start of a new creative period. Works such as the Second Piano Concerto (1974), the Fourth Symphony, *Nostalgic*, for strings and percussion (1976), the Violin Concerto (1981), the *Concerto for Twelve Cellos* (1981) and the Flute Concerto (1985) were given a warm welcome by the critics. Englund also wrote several chamber works, including a violin sonata (1979), cello sonata (1982), piano trio (1982) and string quartet (1985). He was never very interested in writing vocal music but could still produce highly impressive choral works to commission, such as the Chaconne for mixed choir (1969), *Hymnus Sepulcralis* for mixed choir (1975) and the *Kanteletar Suite* for female choir (1986), as well as the Sixth Symphony, *Aphorisms*, for mixed choir and orchestra, to words by Heraclitus (1984).

Among Englund's final works are the Seventh Symphony (1989) and the Clarinet Concerto (1991). Illness prevented him from composing and playing the piano during his last years. In 1996 he published his memoirs *I skuggan av Sibelius* ('In the Shadow of Sibelius'). The title was an ironic jab against Finnish music culture, which so routinely continued to promote abroad the musical of Sibelius at expense of almost all the other Finnish composers, Englund himself included.

To the end of his composing career, Englund continued to create music in a basically Neo-Classical style, occasionally peppered with darkly expressive flavours. In some works, he used note-rows, but never in a dogmatic way. His musical heroes were composers such as Bach, Nielsen and Shostakovich. Like them, Englund strived for clarity and balance in melody, harmony, form and orchestration. He had a deep respect for the classical tradition and its values, writing:

I believe in a fundamental music aesthetic that has remained the same throughout the centuries and cannot be changed despite all the different currents and styles during times to come. Shame on the composer who defies the ideal of beauty. Sooner or later he must return to the primary sources.<sup>4</sup>

Englund gained a reputation as a composer of absolute music. That doesn't mean that his music was completely devoid of programmatic content, but he didn't often discuss any extra-musical elements in his music, since he wanted to encourage musicians to create their own interpretations. He also felt that listeners, and especially critics, would have listened too easily for the wrong things if told too much in advance. There was one important exception to this rule. Englund never tired of underlining that his music must be understood in relation to his experiences during the war years: for example, in the scherzo of the Third Symphony one hears gunfire and exploding grenades. But on a subtler level Englund's music constantly tends to invoke sensations of violence and terror, states of panic, outbursts of gallows humour and feelings of sadness and grief. These obviously war-related moods and expressions are clearly discernible in many of the solo-piano works in this album, too.

Given that Englund was such a brilliant pianist, it may seem strange that he didn't write more music for his own instrument. One reason could be that he, as a musician, loved to improvise. To play from a fixed score – even of his own music – was apparently much less enjoyable for him than creating fresh ideas in the heat of the moment.

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<sup>4</sup> From Englund's contribution to 'Uttalanden om musikens framtid' ('Statements about the Future of Music'), in Seppo Nummi, *Finland idag: Modern musik* ('Finland Today: Modern Music'), Sveriges Finlandsföreningars Riksförbund, Stockholm, 1966, p. 98.

Another explanation is certainly his pragmatic approach to composition. From a creative point of view, he was like one of his idols, Bach: a work was not written simply for the fun of it but because there was a need for it. In other words, what stimulated Englund was a commission, and as he gained more and more recognition as a composer, the commissions began to focus on orchestral and chamber music. He would probably have composed more piano sonatas, for instance, if only someone had thought to commission them.

The sole piano piece from Englund's early years that he allowed a place in his list of works is the *Humoresque* [9], dating from 1936. Englund himself premiered it at the Conservatoire in the spring of 1939. He revised this delightfully cheeky piece at least twice; the final version is from the 1970s. Although the output of the younger Englund differs considerably from his later music in expression and technique, the witty mood of the *Humoresque* nonetheless became one of his trademarks.

Several of Englund's solo-piano works date from the 1950s. The first one is the *Introduzione e Toccata*, premiered in Helsinki in November 1951 by Erik Tawaststjerna, who later became known as a musicologist and the biographer of Sibelius. The new piece was enthusiastically received and has remained Englund's most performed and recorded work for solo piano. It is based almost throughout on a motif of five notes which he had already used in his music for the radio play *Luftombyte* ('Change of Air', 1950) and would use again in several later works, among them the Violin Concerto and the Wind Quintet. In 1950 Englund had, as a member of a delegation of the Finland-Soviet Union-Society, visited the Soviet Union, when a visit to Georgia was on the itinerary. Tawaststjerna always thought that *Introduzione e Toccata* was strongly inspired by the folk-music of Georgia, although the rustic, percussive touch also brings to mind Falla and Prokofiev. The *Introduzione* [24] is framed by strong, massive chords and immediately brings into focus the five-note motif. The *Toccata* [25] is a fast and occasionally quite jazzily syncopated piece. There is also a short and pianistically deft fugato which creates a fleeting impression of listening to more than two hands on the keyboard.



In 1953 Englund wrote a short ballet, *Sinuhe*, for solo piano to a commission from the choreographer Elsa Sylvestersson (1924–96) for her group Baletin solistit (The Soloists of the Ballet). She had written a libretto for a ballet in two acts based on *Sinuhe egyptiläinen* ('Sinuhe the Egyptian'), a novel by the Finnish writer Mika Waltari (1908–79). Set during the reign of the pharaoh Akhenaten, the novel had become a best-seller; it gained attention also abroad, thanks to its many translations.<sup>5</sup> It was also the basis for a very bad Hollywood epic, directed by Michael Curtiz.

As the schedule was too tight, only the first act of the ballet was finished in readiness for the first performances. To save time Englund had borrowed material from earlier scores, reusing some motifs from his First Symphony (1946), the incidental music to *The Great Wall of China* (1949) and the music to the film *The White Reindeer* (1952). Sylvestersson did ask him to write music for the second act, without success: apparently he simply had too many other things to do during these years when he was churning out music for films, plays, radio plays and the like. *Sinuhe* resurfaced in 1965 when The Finnish Broadcast Company commissioned a ballet from Sylvestersson. Englund agreed to score the music to the first act of *Sinuhe* for a chamber ensemble. This version was premiered in Finnish television in September 1965. Sylvestersson continued to beg Englund to compose music to the second act, but he never did and so, as a ballet, *Sinuhe* remains a torso.

Although the circumstances suggest that Englund did not have the opportunity to create something that completely satisfied him, the original piano version of *Sinuhe* is not without its interesting features. There are several attractive touches of sensual exoticism, and the faster dances have a thrilling energy. The scenes in the concert suite for piano bring out the best of the original score while also focusing on the main characters of the ballet: the royal physician Sinuhe; his friend, the politically involved Horemheb; his servant Kaptah; and the beautiful Nefer. Englund himself saw the merit of these scenes, and used the 'Dance of Sinuhe' [19], 'Dance of Nefer' [20], 'Sinuhe and

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<sup>5</sup> An English translation, published as *The Egyptian* in 1949, topped the US best-seller list for foreign fiction until displaced by Umberto Eco's *Name of the Rose* in 1983.

Nefer-Nefer',<sup>6</sup> [21], 'Dance of Kaptah and the Girls' [22] and 'War Dance of Horemheb' [23] as the basis for his orchestral suite *Four Dance-Impressions* (1954).

During the trip to the Soviet Union in 1950, Englund had befriended Torsten Carlander-Reuterfelt (1902–2003), a fellow member of the Finnish delegation, the executive manager of the ironworks in Kellokoski and a passionate music-lover; Englund later gave him some composition lessons. When Carlander-Reuterfelt's daughter Eva Gunilla Carlander was baptised in January 1955 Englund wrote a Prelude [6] for the occasion. The modest title conceals the sophistication and artful craftsmanship of the piece. The prominent motif of E–G–C alludes, of course, to the name Eva Gunilla Carlander. There are also fleeting quotations of a well-known Finnish Christmas song by Martti Turunen, *Me käymme joulun viettohon* ('We start celebrating Christmas'), since the Prelude was written at Christmas time.

In 1955 Englund also wrote three piano miniatures, commissioned for *Koskettimet kertovat* ('The Keyboard Tells'), a collection consisting of easy pieces by both older and contemporary Finnish composers. *Mitä kanat kertovat* ('What the Hens Tell') [12] is an amusing take on Rameau's 'La poule'. *Menninkäinen* ('The Goblin') [13] is a scherzo-study with bitonal clashes. In the witty *Scherzino* [14] the pianist's hands seldom seem to be synchronised in the right way, and the strict  $\frac{3}{8}$  time is constantly challenged.

Two years later, Englund wrote another miniature, this one strongly connected with Lauttasaari, a suburban island-district of Helsinki where he lived for some decades, in a house designed in the 1930s by two of his brothers, the architects Kaj and Dag. Englund's parents and his brothers' families also lived in the house, which still exists. Englund moved to Lallukka, a house for Finnish artists in Töölö in Helsinki, in the 1970s, but while he lived on Lauttasaari he was active in the cultural life of the area in many ways – for example, he was the conductor of The Lauttasaari Orchestra in the 1940s. In the 1950s he was co-founder of the Lauttasaari Rotary Club and was active for a while as its chairman. In 1957 he wrote *The Lauttasaari Rotary Club Festive*

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<sup>6</sup> The change in Nefer's name comes directly from Waltari's novel: the word means 'beautiful', and she is so vain that she changes her name to 'Nefer-Nefer': 'really beautiful'.

*March* [29], a short and entertaining piece which serves as a prime example of the kind of musical expression Englund used in his light music.

In 1966 *Koskettimet kertovat II*, a sequel to the first anthology of that name, was published. For it Englund wrote a short, fast etude which he called *Little Toccata* [10] – but the piece was omitted from the collection, for reasons unknown. One possible explanation is that the publisher, Fazer Music, felt that it was too difficult for amateur pianists, and so it remained in the publisher's archive, forgotten – until the preparations for this recording began. Englund was represented in *Koskettimet kertovat II* by a *Sicilienne* [11], a sketch for the middle movement of the *Sonatina in d* (Sonatina No. 1 in D minor). This sketch consists of the first 26 bars of the Sonatina movement, and the tonality here is E flat minor instead of the later D minor.

The Sonatina in D minor, finished in February 1966, was first performed by Englund himself on Finnish television in December of that year. The work has remained a favourite in Finnish piano education as it is both gratifying to play and instructive as a musical composition. It is, throughout, based on a motif in which two intervals – a major third and a minor third – are in a tritonal relation to each other. Englund emphasised that the Sonatina should be performed with a light touch, as if it were a sonata by Scarlatti. A Neo-Baroque approach is reflected also in the clear-cut musical structure of the first movement, a flamboyant *Allegro con brio* [16] that follows an easily recognisable sonata form. The second movement is a calmly dancing *Sicilienne* [17], in which the motivic nucleus appears in several clever disguises. Typically for Englund, there is a brief, agitated middle section that for some seconds disrupts the introvert atmosphere. The last movement, a *Scherzo-Finale* [18], is fast and determined in character, but there is also a fleeting moment of more serious thought.

In 1966 Englund also finished a *Prelude (Notturmo)* [15], to a commission from The Finnish Broadcasting Company; it was premiered the following year by Meri Louhos. One of Englund's most austere and laconic musical works, it is based on two main motifs: the first is meandering and strongly chromatic; the second, which dominates the

middle section and ends the piece, takes the form of a kind of weird lullaby. A few years later, Englund used it in the trio in the scherzo of his Third Symphony.

In the summer of 1978 Englund wrote his only piano sonata, to a commission from the Nordic House in Reykjavík, and it was there that he himself premiered the work, on 21 October 1978. At some early point the Sonata bore the name *Islandica*, which Englund later removed. It is Englund's biggest and most impressive solo-piano work. All his trademarks as a composer are there: the elegantly shaped textures, the spiky rhythms, the vacillation between *joie de vivre*, lyrical moods and deeply hidden anguish. The first movement, an *Introduzione ed allegro* [26], opens with a passage marked to be played *Recitando e molto rubato*. The *allegro* follows a classical sonata form: the exposition features a capricious main theme, a second theme accompanied by heavy pulsation, and a concluding section; the development section leads to a short reprise of the introduction; and the recapitulation ends with a coda which prepares the way for the next movement. The second-movement *Notturmo* [27] follows an ABA structure. In the B section the dreamy atmosphere is interrupted by a quiet chorale and then by an increasingly agitated section that leads to a big climax. Englund explained that this passage was inspired by a summer storm over the sea at Gotland. When A returns, the music is varied and strangely subdued in character. The Sonata ends with a *Scherzo-Finale* [28], constructed basically as a series of conflicts: material from the previous movements repeatedly disrupt the energetic flow, finally causing a complete standstill. But the finale manages to end with a fast, almost demonic *stretto*.

Englund's next two piano works are as impressive as the Sonata. Englund loved cats, and there were several of them in his household over the years. His favourite cat was called Bianca Regina, or just Bianca. In the spring of 1983 she became so ill that Englund had to do the inevitable and end her suffering. Afterwards, the depressed composer wrote a piano piece, *Pavane e Toccata*, and dedicated it to Bianca's memory. The *Pavane e Toccata* was first performed in Helsinki in November that year by Sirpa Äikää. The *Pavane* [7] is a slow, agonised meditation; the *Toccata* [8] is harsh and angry. The fast tempo is twice interrupted by a strange, slow interlude. Englund explained that these interludes reflected a terrible memory from the war. He had passed a town in which

soldiers destroyed and burned houses. Pianos were thrown out through the windows. When the instruments smashed to the ground, their strings vibrated madly and loudly for a long time. At the very end of the *Toccata* the music suddenly collapses and returns to the desolate mood of the *Pavane*.

Early the next year, 1984, Englund was in Paris, working on his Sixth Symphony. He also found time to write a Second Sonatina as a gift to Eero Heinonen (b. 1950), who had performed several of his works and also recorded his piano music.<sup>7</sup> Heinonen premiered the new work, which was dedicated to him, in Helsinki on 11 October 1987. There are many similarities to be found between Englund's two sonatinas. They both have three movements, and both are very strongly anchored in the key of D minor. The title of the Second Sonatina, *The Parisian*, of course refers to where the work was written: Englund was very fond of Paris and often spent time there. There are some unmistakably French touches, such as whole-tone scales in the manner of Debussy.

The first movement [3] is a lively *Allegro con brio* written in a palindromic sonata form: in the recapitulation the first and second themes change places. The second movement [4] is a calm, melodic *Andante* which proceeds as a kind of slow march in  $\frac{3}{4}$ ; the middle section is occasionally coloured by bitonality. The finale [5] is a lighthearted *Vivace*. In the coda the music seems to disappear up into the clear, blue sky.

In the 1980s Ellen Urho, the then principal of the Sibelius Academy, asked Englund if he might like to write 24 preludes and fugues in the manner of *Das Wohltemperierte Clavier*. Englund admired Bach's music, and a bust of the composer was on display in his summer house on Gotland. But Englund felt that the genre was too closely associated with Bach's style, and he did not want to write pastiche Baroque. He also saw no point in trying to compete with another well-known series of piano preludes and fugues, Shostakovich's Op. 87. The proposal did lead to a composition, though: the *Prelude and Fughetta* from 1986, and the subtitle, *Hommage à Bach*, suggests how one should approach this last Englund work for solo piano. It was first performed by Folke Gräsbeck at Englund's 80th-birthday celebration concert in Helsinki in 1996. In the *Prelude* [1]

<sup>7</sup> On BIS-CD-277, released in 1985.

the main focus is on flowing triplets and a melancholy melody. The short *Fughetta* [2] has three voices. With its Classical profile the *Prelude and Fughetta* forms a fitting and worthy conclusion to Englund's output as a piano composer.

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## DRINKING WITH EINAR ENGLUND: A PERSONAL REMINISCENCE

by Martin Anderson

I got to know Einar Englund and his second wife, Maynie, in 1981 or 1982, when I found myself acting as their guide on a visit to London; they had come to hear the Endymion Ensemble perform his *Concerto for Twelve Cellos*, which he had only recently completed, at the Royal Academy of Music. It was, if I recall correctly, their first visit to London, and so I offered to take a day off work and show them around – the Tower of London was high on the list of things they wanted to see. But it was in later 1980s and the '90s especially that our paths crossed more frequently: I was often in Finland, mostly to review major musical events; and soon after I moved to Paris (I lived there from 1987 to 1997), the Englunds made one of their occasional jaunts to the city, spending a few months at the Cité des Arts, and they came back on return visits every now and then. For one of those sorties, to attend a concert of Einar's

chamber music, they drove all the way from Helsinki to Paris, although Einar was then in his late seventies and Maynie in her late sixties.

My visits to see the Englands in Helsinki would bring me up-to-date with his composing activities, of course, but they also provided Einar camouflage for sly tipples (and I don't doubt that other visitors were put to the same use). In his last years he suffered a stroke and a series of heart-attacks, and so Maynie, naturally keeping an eye on his health, strictly limited his intake of alcohol and tobacco – and she was an imposing woman: you wouldn't argue with her for the fun of it. But Einar, as a Finn, loved a good drink and I, as a Scot, do, too. And so I sometimes found myself acting as a smoke-screen when I visited him in Helsinki in those last years: if our timetables didn't allow them to invite me to dinner, it would mean a daytime visit, when there would be a bottle of Johnny Walker and two glasses on the table. Einar's explanation to Maynie (he told me after she left us to chat) was that he had to offer his guest a drink and couldn't let said guest drink alone. It might be 11 in the morning and I hate drinking during the day (at night is another matter), and so I'd just have a sip to keep him company – but Einar, aware that he might not be allowed another drink for weeks, would whack several large ones down, knowing he could later blame the much-reduced level in the bottle on me.

Once I even drank Einar's whisky without his being present. Somewhen in the mid-1990s I was in Helsinki in the summer, which he and Maynie usually spent at their house on the island of Gotland, off the Swedish coast (they were primarily Swedish-speakers), and so they detailed Robin Sirén, Maynie's son from her first marriage, to look after me while I was in town. Robin took me out to dinner, after which he said: 'Let's go and drink Einar's whisky', and so we adjourned to the Englands' flat in the artists' complex on Apolloninkatu and helped ourselves to a few glasses. I was delighted to see some sketches for a second string quartet on his writing desk (his only previous string quartet dated from 1985) and stuck a post-it on the sketches with the message: 'About bloody time! PS: Kiitos for the whisky'. Soon afterwards, unfortunately, increasing illness put an end to Einar's composing, and he seems not to have finished the work. (Soon, too, Robin himself also dropped dead of a heart-attack, on a business trip to Russia, only in his mid-thirties.) Another work that was never finished was an adaptation of the *Concerto*

for *Twelve Cellos* for string orchestra, but not because Einar ran out of time: Maynie told me after his death that he found the musical material so closely associated with the sonorities of the cello ensemble that he found it impossible to transcribe.

On another occasion, during one of the Englund's visits to Paris, I took them to dinner at the house of the conductor Gary Brain, a neighbour and close friend of mine: I wanted them to meet, first because I knew they would enjoy each other's company but also because I hoped that Gary might take Einar's orchestral music under his wing. (It wasn't to be, sadly: illness derailed Gary's blossoming career, and he himself died in March 2015 after several years of infirmity.) Gary's partner, Claude, prepared a magnificent meal and the wine flowed freely, swung on its way by gales of laughter – and towards midnight, Maynie decided that enough was enough: Einar was enjoying himself far too much for the good of his health, and she whisked him off home.

I made my first trip to Finland in 1991, ostensibly for a wedding of some friends but I naturally used my time there for all sorts of musical purposes. One was a visit to Einar and Maynie, of course, and I also went to see the poet Lassi Nummi (1928–2012), to talk to him about his brother, the composer Seppo Nummi (1932–1981), whose 250 or so songs are grievously neglected.<sup>8</sup> As soon as Lassi heard that I was a friend of Englund's and had just been to see him, his voice took on an urgent tone as he began to insist on his importance as a national figure. It wasn't only non-Finns who were unaware of the stature of Englund's music: younger Finns born long since the Second World War, he continued, did not realise how much it had meant to the Finns emerging from the war in which this little country had taken on, and beaten, the might of the Soviet army to have had a symphonist of Englund's ability at work in their midst; it was nothing less than a source of national pride.

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<sup>8</sup> The only recording entirely devoted to Nummi's songs as yet is *Five Song-Cycles*, released on BIS-CD-279 in 1985. It ends with the cycle *Syyspäiviä* ('Autumn Days'), sung by Margarita Haverinen, accompanied by Ralf Gothóni. The second of its three songs, 'Metsässä' ('In the Wood'), a setting of a Lassi Nummi poem, is one of the most sheerly beautiful songs I know. That 1991 trip to Finland also included a meeting with Margarita Haverinen, and since Einar Englund's whisky was a topic in the conversation, we soon discovered a mutual taste for Laphroaig.



At the recording sessions for the Ondine recording of Einar's First and Second Piano Concertos and *Epinikia* in Tampere in February 2002 (with Matti Raekallio as soloist and the Tampere Philharmonic conducted by Eri Klas),<sup>9</sup> Maynie told me Einar's last words – he had died three years before, but this was the first time our paths had crossed since then. Apparently, he was having a series of heart-attacks, and one hit him which he knew was going to take him out. Maynie said that his eyes filled with wonder, and he said, in a voice that was all childlike curiosity: 'Is it me, now?' – curiosity as to what it was going to be like to die. A terrific way to go. (Maynie gave me this report in English, and I didn't have the wit at the time to ask her what his actual words were, almost certainly in Swedish – and it was only another year before Maynie herself was felled by a heart-attack. We may never know what he actually said.)

Englund's music is a fair reflection of the person I knew. The dry, crisp sense of irony that can be heard in this piano music was a central part of his personality: he looked on the world sympathetically, but with a sceptical grin. Of course, that's only part of the picture: the joy he found in life (doubtless a response to his wartime hardships) had an outlet in the boundless energy of his orchestral music in particular; his personal warmth can be perceived in the glow of his harmony; and the clarity of its textures points to his essential honesty – he was a man who was true to himself.

*Martin Anderson founded Toccata Classics and publishes books as Toccata Press; he is also active as a critic, writing over the years for a wide range of publications. Before devoting himself to music full-time (and after a degree in mediaeval French and German from the University of St Andrews), he worked in economics, editing the magazine Economic Affairs for the Institute of Economic Affairs in London and The OECD Observer for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in Paris.*

<sup>9</sup> Ondine ODE 1015-2.

The Finnish pianist **Laura Mikkola** studied at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia and the School of Music in Bloomington, Indiana, her teachers including Gary Graffman, Murray Perahia, Menahem Pressler, Ferenc Rados and Tapani Valsta. She has been the recipient of many awards, among them second prize in the Queen Elisabeth International Piano Competition in Brussels and the public prize (1995), first prize in the International Unisa Transnet Piano Competition in Pretoria (1994), first prize in the Maj Lind Competition in Helsinki (1992), and first prize in the Maurice Ravel Piano Competition in France (1988). She was awarded the Finland Prize for Young Artists in 1995.

Laura Mikkola has performed as soloist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Mariinsky Orchestra, Münchner Symphoniker, Royal Philharmonic of Flanders, Orchestre National de Belgique, Czech Philharmonic, Helsinki Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, Nagoya Philharmonic Orchestra, the Staatsoper Orchester in Stuttgart, the Wiener Kammerorchester, the Essen Philharmonic, Cairo Symphony Orchestra and many others. The conductors with whom she has worked include Vladimir Ashkenazy, Philippe Entremont, Mikko Franck, Valery Gergiev, Hannu Lintu, Esa-Pekka Salonen and Leif Segerstam. She has performed all over Europe, Japan, China, South Africa, Australia, the USA and South America and also plays frequently in Egypt. Among the prestigious concert-halls in which she has been invited to play are the Herkulesaal in Munich, the Suntory Hall in Tokyo, the Hollywood Bowl, the Tonhalle in Zurich and Carnegie Hall in New York.

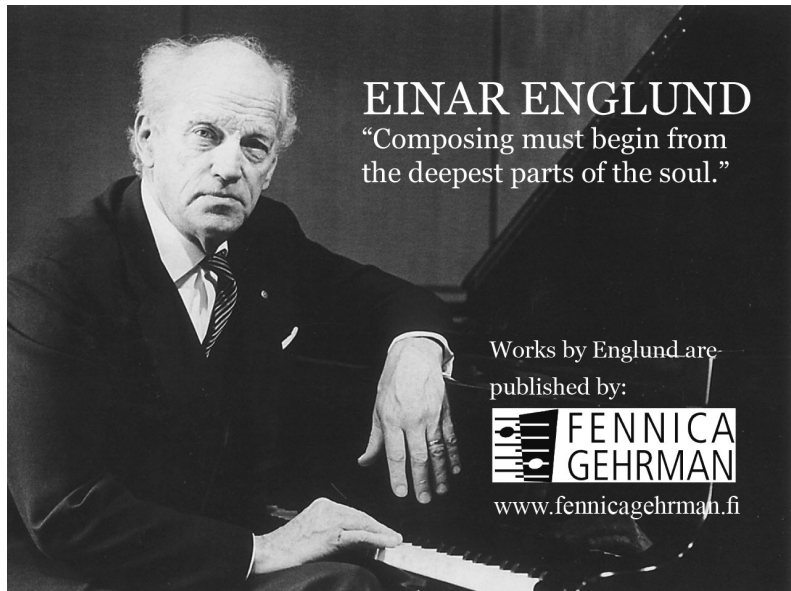
Her repertoire includes no fewer than 64 concertos, including Bartók No. 2, Prokofiev No. 2, von Sauer No. 2, Lindberg No. 1, Rachmaninov No. 3 and the Beethoven Triple Concerto. In 2017, in Helsinki, she gave the Finnish premiere of Thomas Adès' concerto *In Seven Days*, with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by Nicholas Collon.

Since 2003 she has been the artistic director of the Iitti Music Festival in Finland.




Photo: Elina Brothertus

For Toccata Classics she recorded David Matthews' Piano Concerto and a number of solo-piano works, released on TOCC 0166. The other labels for which she has recorded include Naxos, BIS, René Gally, Aeon and Cascavelle, with her recordings of the three piano concertos of Einojuhani Rautavaara for Naxos attracting especial attention. Some of her many other recordings have featured music by Brahms, Rachmaninov, Saint-Saëns and Tüür.



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