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## TIMO-JUHANI KYLLÖNEN (b.1955): *Symphony No. 1, Op. 8, Lichtenthal, Op. 43, Accordion Concerto No. 1, Op. 60, Concerto grosso, Op. 65.*



Catalogue Number: 02K104

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**Description:** By studying in Russia from 1976, Kyllönen avoided the tendencies toward serialist modernism that were taking root in his native Finland among composers of his generation, and immersed himself in the more tonally based Soviet post-Shostakovich aesthetic still current there, which was more in accord with his own Romantic, communicative temperament and adherence to rich harmony and eloquent melody. Thus it is that his early symphony has more than a little in common with the previous generation of Finnish symphonists - Sallinen for instance, and to some extent, Aho. The energetic and colorful concerto (the composer's own instrument) recalls Khachaturian, and acknowledges the solo instrument's Latin American background. The first movement is decisive and tough, the second a Sibelian atmospheric nature tone-painting, leading to a high-energy finale. Lichtenthal is a tone-poem related to the location of the Brahms house in Baden-Baden, and opens with a decisive and massive Brahmsian motif which sets the stage for a powerful and impressive orchestral dialogue, intriguingly colored by elements absorbed during the composer's travels in South America, though the overall feeling of the work is a central-European massiveness, the atmosphere more of the Black Forest than the Rain Forest. The Concerto Grosso is a contemporary take on the Baroque form, with orchestral soloists (including percussion) in lively discourse with the orchestral group, as in the other works here in an appealing tonal idiom strongly reminiscent of Shostakovich. Matti Rantanen (accordion), St. Petersburg State Academic Capella Symphony Orchestra; Alexander Chernushenko.

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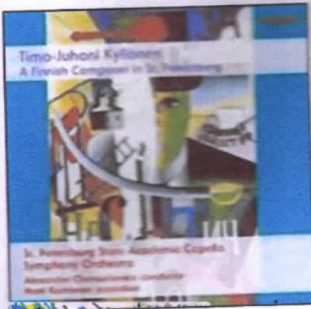
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## Recommended

### Kyllönen: Symphony No 1, Concerto For Accordion



Release Date: 02/10/2009  
 Label: Alba Catalog #: 256 Spars Code: n/a  
 Composer: Timo-Juhani Kyllönen  
 Performer: Matti Rantanen  
 Conductor: Alexander Tchernushenko  
 Orchestra/Ensemble: St. Petersburg State Academic Capella  
 Orchestra

Number of Discs: 1  
 Recorded in: Stereo

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#### Notes & Reviews

KYLLÖNEN Symphony No. 1. Accordion Concerto No. 1. Lichtenthal. Concerto grosso, op. 65 • Alexander Tchernushenko, cond; Matti Rantanen (acc); St. Petersburg St Academic Capella SO • ALBA 256 (80:31)

Timo-Juhani Kyllönen (b. 1955) is not the only composer to have played the accordion, but he is probably the only one to have an academic degree in it. He was certainly the first foreign student ever to have a concert at the Moscow Conservatory devoted entirely to his works, a concert that included his then brand-new First Symphony, written while he was a student there.

That Symphony (1985–86), the oldest work on this recording, is worlds away from the mainline of Finnish music being composed in the period 1970–90, as represented by, say, Joonas Kokkonen or Aulis Sallinen. It has something of the dark, brooding, quality we often associate with Russian music of the post-War period. The three parts of its one movement begin with a declamatory opening section built around a recurrent chordal motif. A shorter, more lyrical, central section leads to the third, which combines material from the first with parts of the second. Depending upon one's starting point, this is a very conservative piece, but it is well built and worth hearing.

The jump of 15 years to the Accordion Concerto (2000–01) is not as great as one might imagine. There is still the wind-dominated orchestration and, in the first movement, the accordion mostly articulates often-angry chords. The second movement gives the accordion several moments of a somewhat Hindemithian lyrical solo and leads directly into a short third movement that ties the first two together. What is refreshing about this piece is that Kyllönen does not reduce the solo instrument to the tangoesque clichés one might expect (although the ear occasionally still half-hears them). Whether you will like this piece or not depends upon whether or not you like the solo instrument. Rantanen gave the first performance of it, and I cannot imagine it being better done.

*Lichtenthal* (1998) is described as a "symphonic poem," and opens with what one now hears as a typical Kyllönen statement: two chords that describe the harmonic territory to be explored—in this case, a falling minor third. This is brooding music and has the same heavy quality of the previous pieces, within a more widely varied orchestration. In some ways, though it is a conservative piece, it is orchestrally the most fully realized on the disc. Of the pieces here, this is the one I would most like to hear in the concert hall.

The one-movement Concerto grosso (2002) is the youngest piece on this disc. The orchestration here is a bit lighter and, though the notes mention Handel, the composer who comes first to mind is, perhaps unsurprisingly, Bartók. The concerted instruments are the violin, the flute, and the marimba; they get their say singly and together. On the evidence here, Kyllönen's harmonic language was early learned and then simply refined.

In short, this is attractive, earnest music of a kind, perhaps, to have been expected of someone who studied in the Soviet Union in the early 1980s. Kyllönen has been much performed in Finland, partly because he was an independent voice, moving east, one might say, when other Finnish composers moved west. But it is surely also because his music is good, solid work, and I can hardly imagine better performances of this music. I recommend this disc generally, and especially to those who would like to explore a different voice in modern Finnish music.

**FANFARE:** Alan Swanson



PHOTO: SAARA VUORJOKI (FIMIC)

# Kyllönen's music

## covers the entire emotional gamut

*Timo-Juhani Kyllönen's stylistic scale has proved to be both broad and varied. This is clearly demonstrated in his vocal music, which ranges from the religious *Missa Festiva* to the "erotic song cycle" *Amor Vivus* and his recent monologue opera, *Tango solo*.*

"I BELIEVE THAT GOODNESS holds the world together. Through music I seek beauty in chaos; I want to communicate positive energy." It is with these words that **Timo-Juhani Kyllönen** (b. 1955) expounds his mission, his musical credo. But despite having this highly optimistic mission, his music covers the entire emotional gamut. It is steeped in powerful, often dark-hued moods, and his expression ranges from absorbed meditation to lively, fast-beat rhythms.

Kyllönen was something of an unknown quantity when he first arrived on the Finnish music scene with a concert of his works at the 1986 Helsinki Festival. Before that he had studied in Moscow (unusual for a Finn), not only composition but also the accordion and orchestral conducting. Initially, some claimed to detect Russian strains in his melodically rich, atonal idiom, but his stylistic scale has proved to be both broad and varied.

### Music for musicians

Kyllönen has personal experience as an active musician, first as an accordion player and subsequently a choir leader and conductor, and this no doubt explains why musicians have always liked his works. His music has also found its way abroad, so that in addition to Finland he has had profile concerts in such countries as Brazil (Santos, Sao Paulo), Peru (Lima), Germany, Israel, Ireland, Sweden, Russia and the United States (New York and elsewhere).

"Musicians in different parts of the world have shown an interest in my music and made sugges-

tions," he says. The fact that Kyllönen speaks seven languages fluently makes it easy for him to establish international relations. But languages also inspire him as a composer. "I'm fascinated by the way the melodic lines differ from one language to another. Maybe that's one reason why I like vocal music."

Kyllönen's own instrument is the accordion, and among his main works is the *Accordion Concerto* (2001). He wrote it on the initiative of his former accordion teacher, **Matti Rantanen** – one of the most highly-respected Finnish masters of that instrument – and it is strongly marked by vibrant rhythms, sometimes with a hint of Latin-American colour. Other major instrumental works by Kyllönen include two Symphonies (1986, 1997), the symphonic poem *Lichtenthal* (1998), a *Concerto grosso* for violin and orchestra (2002) and a wealth of chamber music.

### Vocal music in many moods

Kyllönen's broad scope is clearly evident in his vocal music. He has composed for all kinds of choral line-ups: children's choir (such as *Three Alleluia Songs*), female choir (e.g., the *Sea Suite*), mixed choir (e.g., *Ciclo para coro mixto*) and a few works for male choir. The weightiest example of his religious music is the five-part *Missa Festiva* (2008) for soloists, choir and orchestra. Representing a totally different world is the large-scale "erotic song cycle" *Amor Vivus* (2007) for baritone and orchestra exploring the feelings of sensual love.

Opera is another of Kyllönen's interests. *The Book of Kings*, a family opera, was premiered in 2009 in Cádiz in Spain and has since been performed in Finland, too. His third, most recent work in this genre is a monologue opera, *Tango solo*, first heard in Espoo, Finland in January 2011. Based on a text by the Peruvian writer **Maritza Núñez** now living in Finland, it is set during the military dictatorship in Argentina and tells the fate of a lonely woman, Nicole.

"I was immediately fired by the text," says Kyllönen. "It would be wonderful to get the work performed in South America, but it's not just Latin-American, it's global, too, and topical, because the same thing is happening even today in lots of countries."

Accompanying the soprano is a chamber ensemble that includes an accordion. Setting the beat from time to time are lusty tango rhythms. Kyllönen has not, however, borrowed ideas from, say Piazzolla, and has instead dived straight to the roots of the tango, the milonga. The tango element is not just a colourful veneer but an integral part of the world of the opera and Nicole's fantasies.

"The tango element is in a way woven into the music of *Tango solo*, and it is only one element of the work," Kyllönen stresses.

KIMMO KORHONEN

See *Timo-Juhani Kyllönen's* homepage at [www.timo-juhanikyllonen.com](http://www.timo-juhanikyllonen.com)

# Om att finna barnet inom sig

## KAMMAROPERA El Libro de los Reyes.

Musik: Timo-Juhani Kyllönen. Libretto: Maritza Núñez. Regi: Ossi Koskelainen. Musikalisk ledning: José Luis López Aranda. Scenografi och dräkter: Taina Relander. Ljus: Pietu Pietiäinen. Video: Paco Rodríguez. I rollerna: Juha Kotilainen, Reetta Ristimäki, Janne Sundqvist, Mika Nikander, Juha Hostikka, Jyri Lahtinen, Pedro Miguel Calvo Durán, Yolanda Romalde, Hermann Rask, Wilma Kiviniemi & Viktor Vansen. Hyvinge orkester.

Finländsk premiär i Sellosalen 5.11.

■ Ibland kan det löna sig att tålmodigt bida sin tid och låta saker och ting ha sin gång för att pusselbitarna skall falla på sina platser. Så t.ex. med **Timo-Juhani Kyllönens** och **Maritza Núñez** kammaroperaprojekt *El Libro de los Reyes* ("Konungarnas bok"), som tog form redan i början av 90-talet för att via olika metamorfoser och perioder av stiltje slutligen segla i hamn i Andalusiens vackraste stad, Cádiz.

Som tåtdragare i kulisserna finner vi, förutom alla de märkvärdiga sammanträffanden som kallas livet, bl.a. ett nyinstiftat kulturutbyte mellan Finlands Madridinstitut och staden Cádiz samt det fruktbara samarbetet mellan naggande goda helsingforsiska musikteatergruppen **Kapsäkki**, **Camerata del Gran Teatro Falla** och **Amanda** (Asoci-

ación Musical Andaluza).

Efter den bejublade urpremiären i mars i år var det nu dags för finländsk premiär i Sellosalen med hela den ursprungliga ensemblen, minus orkestern, på plats och visst förstår man att den andalusiska publiken var hänförd.

Det är en färggrann och gestaltningmässigt levande föreställning, där man med minimala medel uppnår avsevärda audiovisuella effekter. Kyllönens huvudsakligen frintonala, inte sällan om **Benjamin Britten** minnande musik är lättillgänglig utan att bli banal, ekonomisk utan att bli torftig, **Ossi Koskelainens** regi är målmedvetet energisk, **Taina Relanders** visualisering lika enkel som slående och **Paco Rodríguez'** videosnuttar i fonden fyndigt kommenterade.

### Saga kontra verklighet

Núñez mångfasetterade libretto blandar ogenerat högt och lågt, komiskt och seriöst, vuxet och barnsligt och lyckas i sin stiliserade, stundom smått surrealistiska approach på ett rätt finurligt sätt balansera mellan idealiserad saga och grym och krass verklighet.

Den sagolikt flippade storyn handlar om kungen som skall hålla ett viktigt tal i Bryssel men inte hittar Konungarnas bok, förutan vilken talet är en omöjlighet. Detektivena Holst och Pompei (ett slags Helan & Halvan-figurer) ger sig ut på bokjakt och stöter bl.a. på en ärkebiskop som, i maskopi med försvars- och handelsministern, idkar barnhandel.



Slutet gott, allting gott som i alla riktiga sagor, som i sina stumsceniskt betydelsefulla agerare såväl meta-konkreta barn, återläter diverse förvecklingar men se, kungen den inte mer; han ha

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**FÄRGGRANT.** Timo-Juhani Kyllönens musik och Maritza Núñez libretto gör kammaroperan *El Libro de los Reyes* (Konungarnas bok) till en levande föreställning.

tt dock,  
or. Bar-  
na men  
lla rol-  
ör som  
nnar ef-  
gar bo-  
ehöver  
funnit

barnet inom sig och förmår  
nu tänka fritt och vist.  
Sensmoralen är kanske  
snudd på övertydlig, men det  
må vara en i övrigt så sprud-  
lande framställning förlåtet.  
Kapsäckigänget, samt de två  
spanska kollegerna, är ett  
sällsynt välsammansvetsat

kollektiv som skådespelar och  
sjunger av hjärtans lust, men  
**Juha Kotilainen** måste ändå  
få en speciell eloge för en så-  
väl vokalt som sceniskt extra-  
ordinärt stark insats som den  
ambivalente regenten.

Hyvingeorkestern var före-  
domligt på alerten under **José**

**Luis López Arandas** säkra led-  
ning och det enda egentliga ir-  
ritationsmomentet var Sello-  
salens alltför grunda orkester-  
dike, som ledde till att musi-  
kerna skymde onödigt mycket  
av de sceniska skeendena.

**Mats Liljeroos**  
kultur@hbl.fi

# Expressiv sakral Kyllönen

## SAKRALT

### Timo-Juhani Kyllönen

Sacral Music. Lauri Toivio, flöjt, Pasi Pirinen, piccolotrumpet, trumpet, flygelhorn, Kirsi Tiihonen, sopran, Juha Kotilainen, baryton, Timo-Juhani Kyllönen, dragspel, Kari Jussila, orgel. (Fuga)

■ **Kalevi Aho** finner i vissa av **Timo-Juhani Kyllöns** verk en "syntes av finskfärgad melankoli, slaviskt temperament och latinamerikansk livsglädje".

En träffande beskrivning på en av våra mesta estetiska kameleonter, en utpräglad eklektiker på gott och ont. Kyllöns expressiva musik har å ena sidan något allmängiltigt över sig, men kan

stundtals även kännas aningen operoslig.

Bägge sidorna kommer tydligt fram på den här skivan med sakral musik tillkommen mellan 1986 och 2003, samtidigt som man givetvis kan fråga sig vad det är som gör *De solazione* för oboe och orgel – här i versionen för flöjt och orgel – till ett sakralt verk.

Kyllönen omarbetar gärna sina verk för olika besättningar och bara två av skrivans stycken, *All Beautiful You Are* för baryton och orgel (2003) samt *Christmas Suite* för sopran, trumpet och orgel (1999), görs i originalversion. Så är till exempel *Three Aleluias* (1990/2007) ursprungligen skrivna för barn- eller damkör, men förekommer här i versionen för orgel.



I praktiken är originalversionerna tre. Den för sopran, dragspel och orgel skrivna *Lux aeterna* (1995/2001) borde enligt konvoluttexten göras i instrumentalversionen för flöjt, dragspel och orgel, men ändå är det **Kirsi Tiihonen**s uttrycksfulla sopran vi hör. Samtliga medverkande – inte minst **Kari Jussila** vid orgeln – står för gedigna insatser och den relativt lättillgängliga men aldrig banala musiken rör sig över en känslomässigt bred skala, som sål- lan lämnar en oberörd.

**Mats Liljeroos**

kultur@hbl.fi

**KAMELEONT. Timo-Juhani Kyllöns** expressiva musik har något allmängiltigt över sig. SAARA VUORJOKI

# Argentiinan sotilasdiktatuurin traumat viiltävät kipeästi tango-opperassa

Timo-Juhani Kyllönen taitaa tango nuevon tyylikeinot.

**SELLOSALIN** lavalla on sopraano Riikka Hakolan Nicole, yksinäinen, ahdistunut nainen rikkinaisissa sukissaan, veriruhjeiden tahrimana, seuralaisenaan leikkikoira Dodi. Taapahtumapaikka on öinen Buenos Aires 7. helmikuuta 1986.

Nicole odottaa Nicole-nimisen komeetan ilmestymistä, ja hänen mieltään riivaavat vuonna 1983 päättyneen sotilasdiktatuurin väkivaltainen painajainen ja siihen liittyvät oman perheen kohtalot.



**TUNNELMA** on öisen autio ja epätodellinen, joskin Nicolen hahmo on hyvin fyysinen. Ohjaaja **Vilppu Kijjunen** on saanut Hakolan käyttämään tehokkaasti ruumiinkieltä, joka on Hakolan vahvan ja viiltävän epätoivoisen laulun rinnalla tärkeä tekijä tunnin mittaisen mono-oopperan jäsentämisessä.

**Nils Schwieckendiekin** johtama Uusinta-yhtye soittaa harmonikkavetoista tango-käänteiden ja nykäysten rytmittämää argentiinalaissykeistä musiikkia, johon myös huilu, pianoa ja jousikvartetti heittäytyvät kiihkeästi.

**SÄVELTÄJÄ Timo-Juhani Kyllösen** hallitsee Astor Piazzolon tango nuevo -tyyppisen tyytilajin keinot taitavasti. Poljentojaan joustavasti vaihtelevassa musiikissa on paitsi tuskaa ja intohimoa myös värikkästä raikkautta.

**Maritza Núñezin** runollinen espanjankielinen teksti

Riikka Hakola esittää vereslihalla olevaa Nicolea Argentiinan lähinhistoriaa käsittelevässä Tango Solo -oopperassa.

## OOPPERA

**Timo-Juhani Kyllösen** mono-ooppera **Tango Solo** Sellosalissa. Libretto **Maritza Núñez**. Kapellimestari **Nils Schwieckendiek**, ohjaus **Vilppu Kijjunen**, visualisointi **Tarja Ervasti**. Roolissa **Riikka Hakola**. Uusinta-yhtye. Suomalaisen Kamarioopperan tuotanto.

Esityksessä sai sen käsityksen, että Nicole kuolee sotilasdiktatuuriin pyövelin pistimen lävistykseen.

Kun tekstiä tutkii, tulee siihen johtopäätökseen, että traumatisoitunut Nicole saastuu diktatuuriin aikana tapetun naisen kohtaloon ja kokee tarinan lopussa symbolisen kuoleman.

Se voi olla myös uuden elämänvaiheen alku.

**TANGO SOLON** ilmeinen esikuva on Piazzollan tango-ooppera *Maria de Buenos Aires*, joka kertoo kaupungin arkkihuoran Marian myyttisen, uskonnolliseen kirkastumiseen johtavan tarinan. Siinä tangon ja bandoneónin erotiikan vietelemä Maria kuolee katu-ojaan, mutta jää elämään haamuna ja varjona.

Hakolan tueksi tarinaa kuvittamaan olisi voinut ottaa vaikkapa kaksi tangotanssijaa. Kyllösen musiikki tarjoaisi hyvän pohjan rajullekin koreografiselle ohjaukselle.

**Hannu-Ilari Lampila**

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