

**Final concert of
Musica nova Helsinki:**

SKIN

Sunday 12.3.2023, 19.00
Temppeliaukio church

Michael Wendeborg, conductor
Juliet Fraser, soprano
Avanti! Chamber Orchestra



Clara Iannotta:

We left her in a sack for fairies to reclaim.

Alexander Schubert:

Point Ones

INTERMISSION

Rebecca Saunders:

Skin

Kirimo Lintinen:

Ballata concertante

CLARA IANNOTTA:

We left her in sack for fairies to reclaim.

Clara Iannotta (b. 1983) studied flute at Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome. She started studying composition at the Milan Conservatory (2006–2010) with Alessandro Solbiati. She finished her master's degree at the Paris Conservatory with Frédéric Durieux.

In 2018, Iannotta completed her Ph.D. at Harvard University with composer Chaya Czernowin. Her honours include the Ernst von Siemens Composers' Prize (2018), the Hindemith Prize (2018), and the prize Una Vita nella Musica Giovanni (2019). Currently, Iannotta resides in Berlin.

The subject of her doctoral dissertation, *Sonic Instability*, concerns Iannotta's interest in unusual sounds and ways of playing music. *"An important feature of this music is a compositional approach in which traditional instruments and everyday objects are brought together in order to create a sonic representation of a spatial environment. I understand space as a metaphor for temporal experience: time unfolds linearly, but it enables you to inhabit a space whose dimensions and properties are revealed in time... As an artist, I am drawn to uneasiness, dirt and imperfection."*

We left her in a sack for fairies to reclaim, from 2021, commissioned by the Norwegian band Cikada, which specializes in new music, is based on a poem by Dorothy Molloy (1942–2004), who became a poet shortly before her death. In the poem "Death by Poisoning," a family suspects their dog was poisoned and hopes in vain for the fairies to revive the animal. The fairies probably killed it originally.

In the piece composed for a large chamber orchestra, Iannotta uses unconventional sound sources like styrofoam, cardboard boxes, and clocks. The result is a surreal and concretely clear soundscape where the titular tragedy and fantasy coexist. Its harsh, dramatic, and complex features are immersed in a fundamentally poetic, beautiful, gentle, and temptingly unpredictable landscape.



ALEXANDER SCHUBERT: *Point Ones*

Alexander Schubert (b. 1978 in Bremen) first studied bioinformatics in Leipzig. After orienting to music and acoustics in Karlsruhe, he completed his Ph.D. in multimedia composition with Georg Hajdu and Manfred Stahnke at the Hamburg University of Music and Theatre (HfMT). Currently, he teaches at HfMT and is the artistic head of an electronic studio in Lübeck.

Schubert's music represents the tradition of the 21st century, combining artistic heritage and elements from different musical styles (e.g., free jazz, techno, and pop). Equally essential to the style is the utilization of modern technology. Multimedia, video, web content, lights, and motion sensors accompany traditional musical instruments. Schubert has developed experimental pop music under the stage name Sinebag.

Point Ones was completed in 2012 for a small ensemble (violin, cello, saxophone/clarinet, electric guitar, drum set, piano, live electronics) and an "augmented" conductor. Schubert explains: "*In "Point Ones" the conductor is equipped with motion sensors and through this is able to conduct both the*

ensemble and the live-electronics. Most of the piece is not realized with traditional conducting but with cue gestures, that mark beginning of new passages - hence the title "Point Ones". The aim is to be able to experience the live-electronics in an embodied way and to create a fully controllable instrument for the conductor. Because of that the piece does not use a click track or other timeline- based fixed approaches.

Above those technical considerations the piece tries to play with the vocabulary of the conductor and the anticipations and traditions connected to those gestures. It is not always predictable what the result of the conductors movement will be. The piece is part of a sequence of sensor-based works like e.g. "Your Fox's, A Dirty Gold" and "Laplace Tiger", in which different interaction concepts with augmented instruments and performance codes are dealt with."



REBECCA SAUNDERS: *Skin*

Rebecca Saunders (b. 1967) is among the most awarded (Siemens Award, 2019) and praised contemporary composers. Born in London, Saunders studied composition in Edinburgh with Nigel Osborne (Ph.D., 1997) and in Karlsruhe with Wolfgang Rihm. Currently, she resides in Berlin. Saunders' music is an art of concentration, attentiveness, and sensitivity: *"For me, what's really important is enabling the listener to feel the magical physicality of sound, the timbre, the colour, the mass, the weight, of sound. That's what I feel I'm working with, almost like a sculptor works with different materials."*

Skin is one of Saunders' major works, composed in 2016 for soprano Juliet Fraser and an instrumental ensemble. The main text is Saunders' own but contains quotations from various sources. Stand-out lyrics only occasionally surface from the artfully sculpted texture that ranges from intimate fragility to explosive outbursts. The vocal part is a virtuosic cross-section of the human voice, which the instruments follow, sometimes accompanying and sometimes preying. As Paul Griffiths states, *"The voice is this music's skin."* Saunders herself introduces the piece with a dictionary-like description of the title:

"skin/Skin/n.

a taut flexible continuous outer covering or layering of the body or thing; a film like a skin on the surface of a liquid or solid; the skin of a flayed animal with or without the hair.

n. - the delicate membrane separating the body and its environment— implies the phenomenon of touch, one of the five external senses, and through which the subsidiary sensory modalities of temperature, pain and vibration are partly perceived.

Touch, somatosensory, tactition or mechanoreception: a neural perception generally in the skin, but also in the tongue, throat, and mucosa. Receptors respond to variations in speed and pressure (firm, brushing, sustained, etc.). adj. somatic, tactile.

skin /Skin/ v.

to skin, to peel back the surface of; to shed an animal of its skin. Under one's skin: so deeply penetrative as to irritate, stimulate, provoke thought, or otherwise excite.

Under the skin: beneath apparent or surface differences: at heart.

Skin as a metaphor for transience – the continuous process of shedding dead skin and the growing of new. Struck by a recording of an early production of Samuel Beckett's television play *Ghost Trio* (written 1975 and first broadcast in 1977), this text, spoken by the narrator in Act 1, was the catalyst for this piece:

... this is the room's essence not being now look closer mere dust dust is the skin of a room history is a skin the older it gets the more impressions are left on its surface look again ...

The main text in *Skin* is my own which gradually materialized during the long compositional process, and was partly inspired by the extensive collaborative sessions with Juliet Fraser. A section from James Joyce's *Ulysses*, from the final passage of Molly Bloom's Monologue, is quoted towards the end."

RS, Berlin 1 June 2016

KIRMO LINTINEN: *Ballata concertante*

Kirmo Lintinen (b. 1967 in Saarijärvi) completed his master's degree in music at the Sibelius Academy (jazz department) in 1997, majoring in composition and arrangement. At the academy, Lintinen was taught by Jukka Linkola and Eero Hämeenniemi, and additional composition studies were taught by Jukka Tiensuu, Helmut Lachenmann, and Peter Eötvös, among others.

Lintinen has worked prominently as a musician, performing as a soloist, ensemble musician, and conductor in Finnish jazz, symphony, and chamber orchestras. Lintinen has worked as a pianist, conductor, and artistic director for UMO Helsinki Jazz Orchestra; he has conducted numerous concerts, tours, and recordings in UMO's 48-year history. Lintinen has also collaborated with many other Finnish orchestras. He has a long and prolific history with Avanti.

Since the turn of the millennium, Lintinen has worked mainly as a composer and has proven to be one of our country's most skilled and versatile. His extensive repertoire covers various pieces, from children's songs to opera, smaller pedagogic songs

to film scores, dance music to modernism, and jazz to neo-baroque.

Lintinen combines classical clarity and vivid imagination, which gallops through his orchestral pieces. His composership flourishes in his concertos, also audible in *Ballata Concertante*, completed in 2016. The piece is scored for the same instruments as Schubert's *Octet*, with which *Ballata Concertante* pairs well.

Lintinen has ventured through different eras in his works, not so much through repeating or borrowing from styles but as a Zelig-like time-traveller. In *Ballata Concertante*, a window opens to 14th-century Florence and the worldly breezes of the dawning Renaissance. The concerto style of the piece also refers to the first steps of independent instrumental music.

The 14th century, the "trecento," was the boom of sensual culture. Years of the Black Death, the problems of the Catholic Church and its several popes, Dante's poems, and Boccaccio's *The Decameron* reflected the secularization of society. *Ballata* was a new poetic and musical form of the era, composed by, for example, the blind Florentine master Francesco Landini. They can also be found

in The Decameron, where a ballata is sung at the end of each day.

Lintinen's Ballata Concertante grounds its historical roots in the archaic opening but recalls its contemporary point of view moments later in the cello section. Lintinen compares the impression to today's tourists travelling to Florence and immersing themselves in the arts of the Renaissance. The perspective on the past is similar to what the "neoclassicism" of the 1920s had to 18th-century music.

Fourteenth-century polyphony has also influenced his use of instruments, which, in the beginning, can be heard as alternating strings and winds. *"The presence of three wind players gave the idea of a vocal trio for which to write three-part harmonies,"* Lintinen describes. Besides polyphonic melodic lines, the "trecento" ballata included a rhythmic richness stemming from the meters, linking the different sections in Lintinen's work.

Juliet Fraser, soprano

Soprano Juliet Fraser specialises in the gnarly edges of contemporary classical music. Internationally recognised as a committed interpreter of new music, Juliet regularly appears as a guest soloist with ensembles such as Musikfabrik, Klangforum Wien, Ensemble Modern, Remix, Talea and Quatuor Bozzini, and as a duo with pianist Mark Knoop. She also remains a core member of EXAUDI vocal ensemble, which she co-founded with composer/conductor James Weeks in 2002. Juliet is an active commissioner of new repertoire and has worked particularly closely with composers Laurence Crane, Pascale Criton, Bernhard Lang, Cassandra Miller and Rebecca Saunders. She is equally recognised for breathing new life into existing works such as Milton Babbitt's *Philomel*, Morton Feldman's *Three Voices* and Gérard Grisey's *Quatre chants pour franchir le seuil*. Highlights this season include performances at Wigmore Hall (London), Melos-Ethos (Bratislava), Rainy Days (Luxembourg), Borealis (Bergen), MaerzMusik (Berlin), Acht Brücken (Köln) and Aldeburgh Festival. Juliet's discography reflects the full breadth of her repertoire, from Gesualdo madrigals with EXAUDI, Renaissance polyphony with Collegium Vocale Gent and several

solo albums of contemporary repertoire released on NEOS, Kairos, HCR, Hat Hut and Another Timbre. Juliet is the founder and artistic director of the eaves-dropping festival in London and co-director of all that dust, a little independent label for new music.



Michael Wendeborg, conductor

Michael Wendeborg's interpretation was gripping, with sharp and accurate dotted notes and impactful climaxes, yet also with room for rest and contemplation.

Mitteldeutsche Zeitung, 19/02/2020

Classical repertoire – from Bach to Schoenberg – comes to conductor and pianist Michael Wendeborg with just as much ease as his dedicated work with new music. In 2020/21 and 2021/22 he acted as Chief Conductor Opera at the Bühnen Halle (Saale), where he holds the position of “Erster Kapellmeister” since 2016. Most recently he conducted first performances of Britten’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde*, and Paderewski’s *Manru* among others.

Michael Wendeborg has conducted renowned orchestras and ensembles including the Staatskapelle Berlin, WDR Symphony Orchestra, SWR Symphony Orchestra, Radio Symphony Orchestra Berlin, Junge Deutsche Philharmonie, Mahler Chamber Orchestra, Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra Ljubljana, Klangforum Wien, Ensemble Modern, Remix Ensemble Porto,

Ensemble Intercontemporain, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group and the Basel Sinfonietta. He has made guest appearances at the Lucerne Festival, Munich Biennale, Beethovenfest Bonn, Bregenz Festival, Venice Biennale, ECLAT Festival Stuttgart, Ultraschall Berlin Festival, Acht Brücken Festival Cologne and Klangspuren Schwaz as well as at Wien Modern. He served as Music Director of the Ensemble Contrechamps in Geneva from 2011 to 2018.

In the 2022/23 season, Michael Wendeborg will give his debut with the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra with Debussy's *Jeux* and the world premiere of Isabel Mundry's Viola Concerto with Nils Mönkemeyer, his house debut at the Frankfurt Opera with the world premiere of Vito Zuraj's *Blühen* as well as conduct a portrait of the composer with the Ensemble Modern. He will also return to the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra in Tallin to conduct works by Chaya Czernowin, Jüri Reinverse and Malin Bang as part of the AFEKT Festival. Further he will lead concerts in Ankara, Bursa and Helsinki.

His opera repertoire ranges from Handel's *Orlando* to Mozart, Beethoven, Donizetti, Verdi, Bizet, Puccini,

Strauss, and Britten, and includes numerous world premieres. In 2017 he returned to the Staatsoper Berlin for performances of *Die Zauberflöte* and for a new production of Aribert Reimann's *Gespensersonate*. In Halle, he conducted Beethoven's *Fidelio*, Verdi's *Aida*, Puccini's *Tosca*, as well as the premieres of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos*, followed by a new production of an adapted version of Mozart's *Der Schauspieldirektor* in the current season.

As a pianist, Michael Wendeborg has won several national and international piano competitions and performed as a soloist at renowned festivals and with prestigious orchestras under conductors such as Jonathan Nott, Marek Janowski, and Daniel Barenboim. From 2000 to 2005 he was a member of the Ensemble intercontemporain and worked closely with György Kurtág and Pierre Boulez. In 2015 he appeared with Boulez's complete works for piano as part of celebrations at the Staatsoper Berlin and in 2018 at the Boulez Saal, in 2021 a CD production of the complete sonatas was released on the label *bastille musique*.

Michael Wendeborg studied piano with Markus Stange, Bernd Glemser, and Benedetto Lupo,

and conducting in Toshiyuki Kamioka's master-class in Saarbrücken. During this time, he worked as Toshiyuki Kamioka's assistant at the Wuppertaler Bühnen. After graduating, Michael Wendeborg held positions at the Nationaltheater Mannheim, Lucerne Theatre, and the Staatsoper Berlin, where he assisted Daniel Barenboim and guest conductors such as Pierre Boulez and Sir Simon Rattle.



Avanti! Chamber Orchestra

Founded by musicians, the Avanti! Chamber Orchestra celebrates its 40th anniversary in 2023. Since its early days, Avanti! has been a pioneer as a shapeshifting, art-prioritizing, and flexible ensemble. Its basis is always the music itself, not the institution. Whether it's new music, old classics, multimedia artwork, or popular music gems, Avanti! can adapt to its demands, taking a stand on current topics through art.

Clarinetist Kari Kriikku, Avanti!'s artistic director, collaborates with the best in the field. The section principals work as the foundation of the orchestra both by playing in it and assembling the necessary musicians for each concert. In this way, the principals are partly responsible for maintaining Avanti!'s high level. About 200 musicians play in the orchestra each year.

Avanti! has worked with numerous internationally recognized conductors, including Esa-Pekka Salonen, Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Sakari Oramo, John Storgårds, Susanna Mälkki, Hannu Lintu, Dima Slobodeniouk, Tuomas Hannikainen, and Anna-Maria Helsing. The orchestra ensures its

continuity by offering opportunities to new generations of musicians, conductors, and composers while nurturing future artists.

Avanti! continuously monitors musical developments. The orchestra tries to react to all phenomena, even unknown ones. By observing new music trends and highlighting interesting international composers, Avanti! innovates and inspires new art. The orchestra commissions and premieres the works of established partners and new young composers.

Besides working on its own productions, Avanti! collaborates in an interdisciplinary manner with several art organizations and projects, performs at various events, plays commissioned concerts, and organizes Porvoo's annual Summer Sounds festival.

www.avantimusic.fi

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Sopraano / Sopran
Juliet Fraser

Huilu / Flöjt / Flute
Heljä Rätty

Klarinetti / Klarinett /
Clarinet
Heikki Nikula

Käyrätorvi / Valthorn /
French Horn
Ville Hiilivirta

Trumpetti / Trumpet
Touko Lundell

Pasuuna / Basun /
Trombone
Sakari Mäkimattila

Fagotti / Fagott / Bassoon
Jussi Särkkä

Piano
Mirka Viitala

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Slaginstrument /
Percussion
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Kalle Hakosalo

Viulu / Violin
Eriikka Maalismaa
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Alttoviulu / Altviola / Viola
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Double bass
Eero Ignatius

Haitari / Dragspel /
Accordion
Veli Kujala

Sähkökitara / Elgitarr /
Electric guitar
Raoul Björkenheim

Tekniikka / Teknik / Technic
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