

Heikki KLEMETTI

WORKS FOR ORGAN

CANZONA (OSKAR MERIKANTO IN MEMORIAM)

TWO ORGAN PIECES, OP. 23

FOUR ORGAN CHORALES

TOCCATA ROMANTICA

LAETARE JERUSALEM

FESTIVE OVERTURE

MINIATURES

CANTILENA

Jan Lehtola
organ of Tampere Cathedral, Finland

HEIKKI KLEMETTI, MASTER OF THE MINIATURE

by Jan Lehtola

Heikki Klemetti¹ was born to Eva Lovisa (*née* Wettberg) and Herman Klemetti in Kuortane, in central Finland, on 14 February 1876. He grew to become a true polymath who amassed perhaps the broadest range of interests and achievements among all of the prominent Finnish cultural personae of his day, being a pioneer as a choir conductor, composer, music critic and musicologist, besides his active and variegated pursuits as a community organiser, music-journal editor, educator, author and scholar in a variety of disciplines. It was in choral music that he created his most lasting legacy; indeed, it is hardly an exaggeration to say that he single-handedly brought Finnish choral culture up to international standards.

Klemetti sat the matriculation examination at the Finnish-language school in the city of Vaasa in 1894. He took an early interest in public education, establishing a youth society in his native Kuortane and also initiating the first-ever skiing competition there. At university in Helsinki, he studied aesthetics, modern literature, the history of Finland, Russia and the Nordic countries, and Finnish language and literature. He completed his Master of Arts degree in 1899. Alongside his academic studies, he studied music at the Orchestra School with Jean Sibelius (1865–1957) and Ilmari Krohn (1867–1960) and at the Helsinki Music Institute with the celebrated composer and musician Oskar Merikanto (1868–1924). Around the turn of the century, Klemetti turned his attention to collecting and studying folk-tunes in Ostrobothnia, following the example of Ilmari Krohn, who among other things was a prominent folklorist.

¹ The biographical information in this essays draws heavily on Paavo Pitkänen, *Kuortaneen jättiläinen* ('The Giant of Kuortaneen'), Sulasol, Helsinki, 1975.

Klemetti went on several study trips to central Europe, studying the organ with Otto Diel (1839–1905) and Bernhard Irrgang (1869–1916) at the Stern Conservatorium in Berlin in 1903–4 and 1905–6. He also studied organ-building at the Church Music Academy in Berlin, completing an organ inspector's qualification as well as an organist's degree.

In 1906, he was appointed organist and music-teacher in Pori in south-western Finland, and it was here that he was drawn to studying the history of music. He went on to make important discoveries in the history of Finnish music, including long-lost songbooks and church-music documents. His tenure in Pori was short-lived, since he returned to Helsinki the following year to become editor of *Säveletär* ('Composer'), a periodical dedicated to music. He also actively took up choral conducting, working with male-voice choirs in particular.

Klemetti taught history of music at the Helsinki Music Institute from 1906 to 1916. The culmination of this period in his career was the publication of his two-volume history of music, *Musiikin historia*.² Klemetti is considered to have made a major contribution to establishing scholarship in the history of music not only in Finland but in Europe in general. He took a particular interest in such topics as tonality and the natural laws and internal evolution of music. He was a dominant figure in the music journalism of his day, writing on topics that had not only local but general European relevance. His output further includes numerous literary and autobiographical works. In 1930 and 1933–46 he was chief editor of the music periodical *Suomen Musiikkilehti* ('Finnish Music Magazine') and wrote lively concert reviews as well. Klemetti was awarded the honorary title of Professor in 1923. He died in Helsinki at the age of 77 on 26 August 1953.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Finnish folk-music was largely unexplored territory. After becoming familiar with Ilmari Krohn's work in collecting folk-tunes, Klemetti was inspired to study folk-music in Ostrobothnia. He wrote a number of arrangements of folksongs from South Ostrobothnia, where 'the melodies were

² WSOY, Helsinki, 1916 and 1926.

stolid and austere, in the old modes, eschewing abrupt interval patterns,' as he wrote.³ These tunes were not soppy folk 'ditties' by any means, and Klemetti favoured harsh dissonances in his accompaniments. One might consider that the unity of melody and accompaniment suffered somewhat in this treatment, but on the other hand Klemetti followed the cadence of the Finnish language faithfully and achieved a kind of Nordic ruggedness in his piano textures. He was also not afraid to employ improvisation when required.

It was perhaps the influence of folk-music that made Klemetti's organ works such an exciting and original collection of mood pieces. They are all small in scale, being hymns, marches, preludes, fugues and toccatas. There is every indication that he simply did not have time to immerse himself in large-scale composition but rather wrote music that was impulsive and improvisatory by nature. He never planned ahead when composing, because 'planning is a distraction for the free-flying muse.'⁴

Klemetti's organ works have remained largely obscure to this day. Only a few (fifteen in all) were published in his lifetime, but this state of affairs was rectified in 2022 when Sulasol, collaborating with Markku Lepistö and the Heikki Klemetti Society, edited and published Klemetti's complete organ works in a single collection. Ten of these works bear opus numbers; 63 do not. This recording includes all the numbered pieces and eleven unnumbered ones.

Overall, the impression that comes across of Klemetti as a composer for organ does not differ from the impression that one has of him as a composer in general. Most of the works resemble improvisations, appearing to have been jotted down as an *aide-memoire* for performance. They sometimes lack structure and polish, and they inhabit a harmonically grey area, devoid of any splashes of colour to brighten the uniformly modal landscape.

The pieces selected for this recording, however, are among the most carefully crafted and polished in Klemetti's output. His writing for the instrument and his use of its resources are at their best here. Some of the pieces were published with registrations,

³ Pitkänen, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

although they tend to be sparse and are sometimes inconsistent. The stops specified betray an unfamiliarity with organs – perhaps his tuition in Berlin now lay too far behind him. The compositional style owes much to choral music, as Klemetti makes use of homophonic textures and imitation. He steers almost completely clear of virtuoso elements, preferring the archaic sound of modes. Many of his organ pieces sound like chorales, even when not labelled as such.

The Prelude that forms the first of Klemetti's Two Organ Pieces, Op. 23 (1918–19) [1], is his best-known and most frequently performed organ work. It is also the most logical in structure. In G major, it opens with a four-bar homophonic introduction in duple time, followed by the main theme, a melodic figure running in a flurry of semiquavers (sixteenth notes) in triple time, at times in a canon at the octave. This element is repeated at the end of the work, bringing the work to a grand culmination with powerful registration and dramatic chords. These two sections bookend a chorale-like section marked *Andante adagio*. This section begins in E major but soon shifts to D major and then further to C major. The music then makes a brief detour to G major, E minor and A minor, settling on B major before the recapitulation.

The second piece in Op. 23, a Canzona [2], is an introverted fantasy in triple time. It begins in F minor and never strays far from its home key. The texture is polyphonic, and Klemetti's registration notes indicate a grand culmination and a gradual return to a quieter dynamic. The lingering end is a testament to Klemetti's romantic character and his ability to conjure forth powerful drama when so inclined.

The three pieces in Klemetti's Op. 44 (1934) do not bear a collective title. The first of them, a *Canzona (Oskar Merikanto in memoriam)* [3], one of Klemetti's most extensive works, was written ten years after the passing of his mentor, Oskar Merikanto. It is built up of several elements, beginning with the melody in the pedals at the beginning, with a tritone or augmented fourth as its principal feature. This motif is contrasted with a figure in a dactylic rhythm that undergoes a number of variations. The key is Phrygian C minor, which gives the music a rugged and peremptory feel. The structure is improvisatory. There are plenty of instructions for the performer, calling for a variety of expressive

devices such as *rubato* and tempo shifts. Here, too, Klemetti's ability for transporting the listener from one mood to another is at its finest.

The second piece in Op. 44, *Juhla-alkusoitto* ('Festive Overture') [4], was written for the inauguration of the organ at Kulosaari Church in Helsinki, which was Klemetti's home parish at the time. The piece has an ABA structure and a polyphonic texture but is conceived as a rather free fantasy, with no particularly distinctive formal or melodic features. It is in E major but explores a number of other keys through its rich chromatic and modal harmonies and archaic general character – reminiscent of following the progress of a ceremonial procession.

Opus 44 concludes with the solemn *Laetare Jerusalem* [5], which is based on a reading for Laetare Sunday, the fourth Sunday in Lent: 'Rejoice, O Jerusalem: and come together all you that love her: rejoice with joy, you that have been in sorrow: that you may exult, and be filled from the breasts of your consolation. Psalm: I rejoiced when they said to me, we shall go into God's House!'. There is also a subtitle, 'Gaudete tristitiae' ('Rejoice in sadness'). This work is something of an exception in Klemetti's output, being akin to a paraphrase of Gregorian chant, which Klemetti accompanies with boldly superimposed triads in the left and right hands. The opening features combinations such as A minor with C major, F major with D minor and A minor with F major. The overall diatonic feel is punctuated by chromatic additions that inject a hint of acidity into the mix. Parallel fourths, unisons and dramatic chords lend a solemn and ceremonial feel to the music.

Klemetti's untitled Op. 45 has a *Cantilena* [6] as its only surviving element; one must assume that he subsequently withdrew the first two (and any other) pieces in the collection. With a subtitle of 'Luonnos uruille' ('Sketch for Organ'), it is cast in a leisurely $\frac{6}{8}$ metre and is basically in G minor, but it never stays in that key for very long. Sprinkled with a variety of instructions for the performers and many dynamic markings, it is a delicious and expressive mood-piece.

Klemetti's Op. 51, again with no collective title, brings together four pieces that begin with a *Toccata* from 1936 [7], by which time, he was increasingly turning towards Neo-Classicism. The *Toccata* is played on the manuals and has an imitative and chromatic texture. As is usual for Klemetti, the structure of the work is not particularly rigorous

apart from a few thematic cross-references; it resembles an improvised free-form fantasy. Opening in C minor, the music touches on G minor but concludes in a solid E flat major. Op. 51, No. 2, is an Impromptu, also composed in 1936 [8]. A slow and quite chromatic piece in C minor, it is less imposing than the preceding toccata. False relations and brief monophonic comments lend the mystical aura often found in Klemetti's music. The third piece in Op. 51 is another Cantilena, likewise dating from 1936, which begins and ends with a chorale in G major [9]. The form is symmetrical, as the chorale is followed at the beginning and preceded at the end by a section in G minor, and in the middle there is a brief, playfully accented *Andantino* section that shifts between $\frac{5}{4}$ and $\frac{7}{4}$. Op. 51 closes with an *Elegia*, composed a year later than the other three pieces [10]. It alternates monophonic and homophonic passages, reminiscent of a call-and-response chant in a church service. Klemetti's hallmarks – false relations and unexpected key-changes – are once again present.

Ad perennis vitae fontem ('Towards the source of eternal life'; undated) [11] is a chorale only 40 bars long, occupying a single page and cast as a freeform fantasy. The piece is headed 'Responsory for Announcements', indicating that it is intended to be played at the point in a church service where the names of recently deceased parishioners are read out.

Alkusoitto virteen 177 'O kuinka ihanat' ('Prelude to Hymn No. 177, "O how lovely"'); 1942) [12] is a fantasia on a hymn tune that appears in the bass at the beginning and is taken over by the top melody line in the last phrase. A dactylic countersubject highlights the character of the hymn.

As with *Ad perennis vitae fontem*, *Kehtolaulu sanomasoitoksi* ('Lullaby for a Responsory to Announcements'; also undated) [13] is intended to be played at the point in a church service where the names of recently deceased parishioners are read out; the fact that it is a lullaby may indicate the death of a child. The mournful character of this brief improvisation is emphasised by its chromatic texture.

The undated *Kleines Präludium* [14] is an exciting little piece, exceptionally rigorous in form and harmony. It increases in intensity up to the *fermata* in bar 15, which is followed by a vibrant seven-bar coda. The home key of B flat major is constantly disrupted by

chromatic tangents, and only the opening extended B flat pedal point anchors the key before the harmony goes completely wild.

The 1907 *Kuvitelma* ('Fantasy') [15] is a fine example of Klemetti's imagination and his way of writing music for practical requirements. The melodic material here is modest, but he extends the arc of the work through harmonic means.

The brevity of the 1902 *Praeludium* [16] belies its quality, since it encompasses a wide range of expression – Klemetti had a knack of creating impressive music out of limited melodic material. He was anything but modest in his performance indications: even a brief piece like this one may include *accelerandos* and *ritardandos* and a wealth of dynamics.

4 *Urkukoraalia* ('4 Organ Chorales') are chorale fantasies inspired by hymn texts, rhapsodic and improvisatory in nature. The set begins with 'Ilmestyi paimenille' ('Appeared to the Shepherds') [17], evoking the miracle of Christmas. 'Jo päivä ehtii ehtoolleen' ('Day turned to Evening') [18] is a far shorter evening hymn but packs in a lot of emotion in its comments, chromaticism and bold harmonies. 'Jumala omi turvamme' ('God is our Refuge') [19] is the most extensive piece in the set and also the boldest in terms of structure and technical demands. 'O tuota hääsaalia' ('O Wondrous Wedding Hall') [20] is a fragmentary piece that seems to be focusing in turn on various perspectives on a narrative.

Klemetti's *Toccata Romantica* (1927) [21] begins with a four-bar homophonic introduction (*Moderato*) much like the Prelude, Op. 23, No. 1, and then goes into a cascade of quavers (eighth notes) that begins on the pedals and continues with imitation and sequences on the manuals (*Allegro non troppo*). A chorale-like *Andante* intervenes to calm down the toccata until the *Allegro* that follows the introduction returns and culminates the piece. The inclusion of the word 'Romantic' in the title raises the question of whether Klemetti was specifically encouraging himself to write in a florid and explicitly Romantic style.

International organ virtuoso Dr **Jan Lehtola** is one of the most successful and progressive Finnish organists of his generation. He has appeared with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Tapiola Sinfonietta, Lahti Symphony, Tampere Philharmonic and Ostrobothnian Chamber Orchestra, and the St Michel Strings. He has performed at many international festivals and worked with conductors such as Juha Kangas, Ludovic Morlot, Kent Nagano, Sakari Oramo, Leif Segerstam, Muhai Tang and Osmo Vänskä. He has also given recitals in leading European concert-halls, among them the Gewandhaus in Leipzig and the Mariinsky Theatre in St Petersburg, and in cathedrals and churches around the world, such as Sainte-Trinité in Paris, the Berlin, Riga and Tallinn Cathedrals, St Thomas Church in Leipzig and St Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey in London.

Jan Lehtola collaborates regularly with composers and has given more than 160 world and regional premieres. He was the Artistic Director of the Organo Novo Festival in Helsinki from 2007 to 2016 and Chairman of the Finnish Organum Society from 2009 to 2014. He has recorded for the Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE) and can be heard on more than 50 commercial recordings, many of them with Toccata Classics.

Jan Lehtola studied the organ with Olli Porthan and Kari Jussila in Helsinki, with Jacques van Oortmerssen and Jean Boyer in Amsterdam, with Ludger Lohmann in Stuttgart, with Louis Robilliard in Lyon and with Najji Hakim in Paris. He graduated from the Department of Church Music at the Sibelius Academy, gaining his diploma with distinction in 1998. In 2000 he gave his Sibelius Academy debut recital at Kallio Church in Helsinki, and in 2005 he completed a Doctorate with his dissertation on Oskar Merikanto as a transmitter of European influences to Finland. He is a university lecturer at the Sibelius Academy of the University of the Arts Helsinki. He is also active as a lecturer and a teacher of master-classes.

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Photograph: Thomas Tenkanen

THE MAIN ORGAN OF TAMPERE CATHEDRAL

Tampere Cathedral is one of the most important National Romantic cultural monuments in Finland. Designed by Lars Sonck, it was built between 1902 and 1907. The interior decorations were created by two of the most distinguished painters of the period, Magnus Enckell and Hugo Simberg. The first organ installed at the Cathedral was built by the Lahti Organ Factory and completed in 1907. This instrument, however, was found to be so deficient that it was rebuilt by the Kangasala Organ Factory under Aarne Wegelius in 1929. A complete restoration of the organ was undertaken under the supervision of Jan Lehtola in spring 2021. This is one of Finland's most important and largest Romantic organs to be preserved in its original guise.

I, C-a³

Principale 16'

Principale 8'

Principale minore 8'

Ottava 4'

Ottava 2'

Mixtura 2²/₄ + 2 + 1¹/₃ + 1

Corno camoscio 8'

Flauto 8'

Bordone 8'

Flauto doppio 4'

Cornetto 8+4+2²/₃ + 2+1³/₅

Tuba 8'

Corno 8'

Clarino 4'

II (swell), C-a³

Principale 8'

Flauto armonico 8'

Quintaten 8'

Unda maris 8' (2 ranks)

Bordone 8'

Dulce 8'

Bordone 16'

Dulciana 4'

Flauto traverso 4'

Corno camoscio 4'

Quinta 2²/₃

Piccolo 2'

Terza 1³/₅

Settima 1¹/₇

Cimbalo 2+1+1¹/₂

Corno di bassetto 16'

Tromba 8'

Clarinetto 8'

Vox humana 8'

Corno armonico 4'

Tremolo

III (in swell), C-a³

Principale 8'

Ottava minore 4'

Flauto traverso 8'

Flauto camino 8'

Gamba 8'

Gamba vibrato 8'

Salicionale 8'

Voce celeste 8' (2 ranks)

Corno notte 4'

Violino 4'



Photograph: Tampere Biennale

Flauto ottavante 4'
 Quinta $2\frac{2}{3}$
 Flautino 2'
 Flageoletta 1'
 Armonia eterea $2\frac{2}{3}+2+1\frac{3}{5}+1$
 Cornetto $8+4+2\frac{2}{3}+2+1\frac{3}{5}$
 Bordone amabile 16'
 Fugara 16'
 Fagotto 16'
 Tromba armonica 8'
 Oboe 8'
 Corno inglese 8'
 Clarino armonico 4'
 Corno 4'
 Tremolo
 Celesta 8'

Pedal, C-f
 Principale 16'
 Subbasso 16'
 Violone 16'
 Ottava 8'
 Violoncello 8'
 Flauto 4'
 Cornetto $5\frac{1}{3}+4+3\frac{1}{5}+2\frac{2}{7}+2$
 Bombarda 32'
 Trombone 16'
 Baritono 8'
 Bordone Grande 32' (octave transmission)
 Fugara 16' (transmission from 3rd manual)

Bordone amabile 16'
 (transmission from 3rd manual)
 Fagotto 16' (transmission from 3rd manual)
 Clarino armonico 4'
 (transmission from 3rd manual)

Tubular pneumatic action
 Four free combinations,
 operated with pistons and/
 or pedals
 Standard couplers plus octave couplers
 General crescendo



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Producer: Jan Lehtola

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