



### **Symphony No. 4 in E Major Op. 80 by Erkki Melartin**

The five first of the six symphonies by **Erkki Melartin** (1875–1937), dated from 1903 to 1916, represent the National Romantic Finnish musical heritage based on Austro-German symphonic tradition. Back in Melartin's time, their premieres became substantial, patriotic events, as was the case with the type of national symphony concerts introduced by **Jean Sibelius**. Typical for these concerts was the immediate presence of the composer. Accordingly, Melartin conducted all the premieres of his symphonies himself. After the occasions he always was greatly applauded and celebrated with great floral tributes. In addition, the critics of the time gave great acknowledgement to Melartin's symphonies.

Melartin considered himself primarily as a composer, although he also was a professional conductor, a professor of music theory and composition, and from 1911 on he also worked as the director of the Helsinki Conservatory – later the Sibelius Academy – for 25 years. In his large oeuvre, e.g. the symphonies and the opera *Aino* are significant works when considering their artistic importance, but were left in oblivion after the composer's death and during post-war Modernism. Since Melartin's large-scale works were left unpublished during the composer's lifetime – apart from Symphony No. 6 –, there has been an unnecessarily high threshold for bringing up or getting acquainted with them.

In 2006, the Erkki Melartin Society launched an editing and clean-copying project for Melartin's symphonies. The aim was to promote their performing, and help them become a living part of the music culture in Finland. Besides the works of Jean Sibelius, the public of today should be given a possibility of hearing the more lyrical symphonic music of Melartin, which has been more influenced by the Finnish folk songs, the Finnish scenery, and the idyll of summer.

The editing and clean-copying project has also the objective of facilitating the work of symphony orchestras, since the autograph scores and handwritten orchestral parts have mistakes, incoherencies and interpretation problems. Until now, orchestras and conductors have made a remarkable effort in turning the contents of the sometimes unreadable photocopies of Melartin's scores into performable shape. In addition, the works have sometimes been radically shortened in recordings and historical radio broadcasts. Therefore, it has been

considered important to produce the orchestral materials in the forms in which the composer has originally written them.

In 2006 and 2008, the Finnish Cultural Foundation gave the Erkki Melartin Society a considerable grant for the editing and clean-copying work of these symphonies. Because of this grant, Melartin's Symphonies No. 5 (Op. 90 in A Minor from 1916) and No. 3 (Op. 40 in F Major from 1907) have been edited earlier for publication. The scores and the orchestral parts are available from the Finnish publisher Fennica Gehrman. The edited scores of the symphonies can be viewed and scrutinized at the home page <http://erkkimelartin.fi> of the Melartin Society.

Symphony No. 4 was a piece of work that Melartin was particularly focusing on during the end of 1912. The composer himself thought that it was peculiar to compose a work to praise summer and the joy of life during the darkest time of the winter – and end it with the theme of a traditional Finnish summer hymn. "But is it not the same way as in life", he wrote to his mother, "that in the darkest moment you have to cherish the joys of summer in your heart". This hymn, originally Swedish *Den blomstertid du kommer*, is number 571 in the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran hymn book. It has been traditionally sung at the end of the school year and therefore it is much beloved by the Finns.

In his diary, Melartin wrote that he finished his symphony on the 3rd of January 1913. On the last day of that month, the symphony saw its premiere when it was performed by the Helsinki Symphony Orchestra and conducted by the composer himself. In February, this work was immediately performed again. The Andante movement was heard again in Vyborg in 1915, played by the local symphony orchestra. In the autumn of 1916, the symphony was performed in a concert series of the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra. On this occasion, a revised version was performed, since Melartin already had rewritten the Finale in the summer of 1913. In July 1919, Melartin conducted the symphony in a concert at the Copenhagen Tivoli, in 1920 in Helsinki and in 1923 in Berlin. Melartin conducted this *Summer Symphony*, as it was often called, for the last time in the spring of 1929 in Helsinki.

Both critics and the public received Symphony No. 4 with great enthusiasm. Even other Finnish composers thought of this symphony – a description of a delicate scenery and the quiet devotion of a summer dim – as one of the composer's masterpieces. In the series of symphonies by Melartin, this symphony in E major can be considered as the most national romantic, since it has a distinctively pastoral nature and associates to nature through its picturesqueness. The distinctive features of this symphony are the use of the thematics of the "summer hymn" throughout the symphony, as well as the instrumental use of female voices. In the third movement, Melartin uses vocalises sung by three soloists in order to widen the "tonal picture" of the orchestra. This is exceptional for symphonies of the time, although it is a distinctive feature that has been used in Nordic symphonic works to some extent (e.g. *Sinfonia Espansiva* by **Carl Nielsen**, 1911, or Symphony No. 4 by **Hugo Alfvén**, 1919). In addition, Melartin's symphonic compositions typically come with contrapuntal processing, which in this work occurs much less than in his other symphonies.

This edition of Symphony No. 4 draws on the autograph score, which is preserved in the Sibelius Academy Library (SibA Mel 3:10). The autograph score can be found digitized at

<http://www.doria.fi/handle/10024/39663>. The original orchestral parts of the symphony can be found in the Orchestral Library of the Sibelius Academy.

The editing and clean-copying of this symphony has been somewhat problematic, particularly in comparison with Symphony No. 3, due to a number of temporal layers of the score. There have also been significant differences between the preserved original orchestral parts and the autograph score.

Of the score written by Melartin himself, finished in the beginning of 1913, only the movements 1, 2, and 4 have been preserved. A part of the third movement in Melartin's handwriting has also been preserved; however its timing has remained unclear. The score of the third movement has only remained as a copy made in January 1921 by **Albert Harzer**, a flutist from the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. During Melartin's time as a conductor, Harzer was an orchestral musician in Vyborg, and as a friend of Melartin, he had influence on the fact that Symphony No. 4 was performed in Berlin in 1923.

The serene ending of the first movement of this edition (from measure 298 onwards) complies with Melartin's own new shortened version, which was composed after the premiere. It is written in ink onto the first version and virtually replaces the original long and perhaps a little pompous recapitulation section. The last movement of the symphony is, by exception, an extensive rondo. The ending of the finale (from measure 380 onwards), which Melartin revised in the summer of 1913, is reconstructed on the basis of orchestral parts copied by Harzer, because it has not been possible to trace the autograph score of the new coda. Since the trumpet and trombone parts have not been preserved, they have been supplemented by editor and engraver **Jani Kyllönen**.

Both the original ending in the autograph score and the revised version from the summer of 1913, are of the same length, but the orchestration and summer hymn in the new version differ significantly from the previous. There is reason to assume that Melartin in his new version wanted to clarify the position of the summer hymn as the culmination of the symphony. Also, musically and technically, the new ending is more controlled. In this clean-copying project, our objective has been to provide versions that respect Melartin's own views. For this reason, we have regarded the revised coda to represent Melartin's final view of the ending of Symphony No. 4.

All in all, the purpose of the Melartin Society is to offer performing materials that serve both conductors and musicians. The objective has therefore not been to present new editions based on critical research, but rather to produce usable material for the performing of these symphonies.

The conductor **Ralf Kircher** has reviewed the editorial work. He has given his comments on the edition and has also suggested amendments to the German terminology used by Melartin.

The editing and clean-copying of the symphony has been made by editor and engraver **Jani Kyllönen**. The chair of the Melartin Society, Dr. **Tuire Ranta-Meyer**, has led the edition project of the symphonies. Other members of the working group have been the vice chair of the

society, **Ari Nieminen** and his colleague **Henna Salmela** from the publisher Fennica Gehrman, and Jani Kyllönen. More information on this project is available by e-mailing [tuire.ranta-meyer@metropolia.fi](mailto:tuire.ranta-meyer@metropolia.fi).

The Melartin Society would like to give its warm thanks to the Finnish Cultural Foundation for making this project possible, and to professor **Ulf Söderblom** for giving his support to the idea of clean-copying Melartin's symphonies.

June 27, 2012 in Helsinki

Tuire Ranta-Meyer

Jani Kyllönen