



Symphony No. 3 in F Major Op. 40 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 orchestral 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 Since Melartin's large-scale works were left unpublished during the composer's lifetime – apart from Symphony No. 6 –, there has been an unnecessarily high threshold for bringing up or getting acquainted with them.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 considerable effort in turning the contents of 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 Symphony No. 5 (op. 90 in A Minor from 1916) has been edited for publication already in 2008. 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 of the Melartin Society <http://erkkimelartin.fi>.

The composing of Symphony no. 3 in F major already started in 1905, but the intensive work was done in the turn of 1906 and 1907. The work was premiered on the 5th of April 1907 in Helsinki. During Melartin's lifetime, the symphony was relatively often performed; altogether ten times between 1907 and 1924, and apart from Helsinki in cities like Turku, Vyborg, Riga, Moscow and Stockholm. Melartin himself thought of Symphony No. 3 as his "testament" and a "description of a battle towards enjoying life", since the time of its birth was a period when Melartin's own life nearly ended. He had fallen ill of tuberculosis, and partly had to give up his work as a composer and teacher of music theory in order to recover from the – at the time often fatal – disease in a local sanatorium. At the premiere the symphony had an impact on its audience, as it indeed seemed to describe the joys and sufferings and the final peace of mind of the composer.

The exceptional feature of this symphony – which saw daylight in the same year as Sibelius' Symphony No. 3 – was the width and depth of the third movement, the Scherzo, especially in relation to the Largo finale. In addition, the same thematic material is shared in the first, third and last movements of the work. In the Trio to the Scherzo, for example, Melartin uses the Brucknerian, signal-like main theme of the symphony. The same opening theme also closes the whole symphony in the finale.

The basis for this edition has been the autograph score of the symphony, located in the Sibelius Academy Library. The autograph score has been clearer and more readable compared to some of Melartin's other autographs of symphonies, which has made the editing and clean copying process rather uncomplicated. Additionally, the editing work has been made easy by the fact that there have been very little missing performing instructions or incoherent markings. The digitized autograph score can be found at the following website <https://oa.doria.fi/handle/10024/42511>. The orchestral parts for the symphony are located in the Orchestral Library of the Sibelius Academy.

There are also only few amendments or deletions by the composer in the score. Additionally, there is an earlier version of the second movement of the symphony, which the composer has entirely deleted from the manuscript and replaced with a new one. The revised version, composed in September 1907, was more condensed and clear in form. However, the earlier version can also be found in the web address that was mentioned earlier. The editing work has been supported by the increased knowledge of the genesis and performing history of Melartin's works.

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

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 editing and clean-copying of the symphonies has been made by editor and engraver **Jani Kyllönen**. The chair of the 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 the chair 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 editing and clean-copying Melartin's symphonies.

August 4, 2010 in Helsinki

Tuire Ranta-Meyer

Jani Kyllönen