

# **Nordic Connections**

Sebastian Silénin 1. jatkotutkintokonsertti

First doctoral concert of Sebastian Silén

**Sebastian Silén, violin**

**Satu Elijärvi, piano**

**Thursday 29.10.2020 at 7 PM, Sibelius Academy,  
R Building Concert Hall**

## Programme

### **Jean Sibelius (1865–1957): Sonata for Violin and Piano in F Major, JS 178 (1889)**

1. [Allegro]
2. Andante
3. Vivace

### **Christian Sinding (1856–1941): Sonate im alten Stil, Op. 99**

1. Marcato
2. Andante doloroso
3. Menuetto
4. Allegretto
5. Un poco maestoso

## Intermission

### **Jean Sibelius (1865–1957): Sonatine, Op. 80**

1. Lento – Allegro
2. Andantino
3. Lento – Allegretto

### **Wilhelm Stenhammar (1871–1927): Sonata for Violin and Piano in A Minor, op. 19**

1. Allegro con anima
2. Andantino
3. Allegro

Sebastian Silén, violin

Satu Elijärvi, piano

## **Nordic Connections**

Welcome to my first doctoral concert *Nordic Connections*. The concert explores non-programmatic music by three Nordic composers, the Finnish Jean Sibelius (1865–1957), the Norwegian Christian Sinding (1856–1941) and the Swedish Wilhelm Stenhammar (1871–1927).

This concert plays a significant role in my artistic doctoral work which focuses on the Nordic musical context which surrounds Jean Sibelius's works for violin and piano. Tonight's repertoire consists of three sonatas and a sonatina, with the aim of observing how these composers dealt with music which is not guided by a title which provides extramusical associations. This concert stands in contrast to my next two doctoral concerts which will place the focus on music with connections to either song or dance.

The sonata was one of the leading musical forms during the nineteenth century. It usually consists of three to four movements in which at least the first movement tends to be in sonata form. It can be observed that the structure and the organization of the musical content generally plays an important role in a sonata, and while not all sonatas are completely non-programmatic the sonata still represents one of the most important forms of absolute music, i.e. music which is not describing anything extramusical.

One of the strongest advocates of the Sonata during the Romantic era was Ludwig van Beethoven and the sonata came to be strongly associated with the German classical music tradition. Against this backdrop it is fascinating to explore how the three Nordic composers, who's music is performed in this concert, deal with the violin sonata.

## **Sibelius, Sinding and Stenhammar**

Sibelius, Sinding and Stenhammar were all leading composers in their respective countries during the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. All three received part of their education in the German speaking parts of Europe but stylistically all three (in their own ways) came to combine their German education with aspects of the Nordic musical culture. This tension between the Germanic and the Nordic is one of the focal points of this concert.

I have chosen the repertoire for this concert because these three men were personal friends and had some influence on each other's compositional style. I therefore hope it can provide some relevant context for understanding the music. There are two obvious ways in which these composers influenced each other. Sibelius composed his Piano Quintet JS159 in 1890 after hearing Sinding's Piano Quintet Op. 5 which was premiered in 1889. Later Sibelius and Stenhammar became good friends, and Sibelius in turn came to have a considerable influence on Stenhammar's compositional style during the beginning of the twentieth century.

The links between these composer's violin sonatas are, however, less obvious. Instead they raise many questions about "Nordicness" in music. Is there anything identifiably Nordic in the music of these composers? Is there a Nordic sound or character, or can the Nordic "tone" appear in many different guises as Gunnar Bucht has suggested? Providing definite answers to these questions is challenging but certain observations can help us understand the context which surround these works.

So, was for example Sibelius a "Nordic" composers? The answer to this question obviously depends on what we mean by a Nordic composer. An article by Mikko Heiniö, called "Suomalaisen musiikin suomalaisuus" (Engl. The Finnishness of Finnish music) shows the difficulty of such an inquiry. He identifies seven different ways in which music can be said to be considered Finnish. The same criteria can also be applied to Nordic music. He mentions that music can be considered Finnish, when (1) it is composed by a composer who was born or is living in Finland; (2) it relates to Finnish national history; (3) its name or words refers to Finland; (4) it contains Finnish folk music; (5) it is "Sibelian" in character; (6) it is stylistically traditional, undeveloped or limited, or not international; (7) or when it is Finnish in character, for example dark, melancholic or sluggish.

These lines of inquiry are just as valid when exploring the topic of Nordic music. It suggests that the answer we get will depends on exactly what definition we choose to use. From a geographical perspective the music is inarguably Nordic, but this tells us nothing about the music itself. Regarding the second and third definitions, these four works do not play any major role in the history of the three countries and their names do not refer to the Nordic countries.

When it comes to actual musical content of these sonatas the answers get more interesting, but they also increasingly depend on our personal understanding and interpretation of the music. An additional challenge is that while the Nordic countries, especially nowadays, share many cultural and political characteristics the Nordic countries are distinct, with their own (although intertwined) history and mythology.

An interesting angle of approach to the question of "Nordicness", is if the concept of "North" in itself can be seen as a hermeneutic window to music by Nordic composers. The idea has received considerable attention in Canada, but it can also be applied to the question of Nordic music. I am indebted to Professor Markus Mantere who has drawn my attention to this line of inquiry, most notably through his doctoral work about the Canadian pianist Glenn Gould.

I have therefore been asking myself if the ideals and values found in Nordic culture can be found in the four sonatas I perform tonight. In my interpretation, the works themselves show different perspectives of the Nordic culture but in every work I can find aspects which tie them to their local culture.

A general observation which needs to be acknowledged in order to understand Nordic music from the turn of the last century, is that Sweden culturally was in a different position than its neighbours Finland and Norway. I am aware that any general observation is bound to be an oversimplification of the highly complex cultural dynamics, but the highlighting of certain details can shed light on both the music and its context.

Neither Finland nor Norway was independent during the nineteenth century, while Sweden still was a considerable regional power. This difference can be seen in how a considerable effort was made to create a unique cultural identity in both Finland and Norway, while Sweden tried to reconcile its slowly fading geopolitical influence. Another difference appears to be that due to Sweden's long history as an important power in northern Europe it already had a developed cultural identity. This seems to have allowed them to question many central European ideals.

It is for example interesting to note that Martin Tegen's chapter on instrumental music in the third book of the series *Musiken i Sverige* states that: "Nordic music is inherently incompatible with the classical forms of music". Instead he refers to the song form, often called an ABA form, as the core of Nordic musical expression. The composer and music critic Peterson-Berger also said that all instrumental music which aims to sound Nordic in style needs use the sung tradition, which he saw as the most important aspect of Swedish musical culture, as a starting point. He considered Emil Sjögren's (1853–1918) sonatas for violin and piano the most important Swedish works in the genre. They were composed by during the second half of the nineteenth century and were according to Peterson-Berger in essence songs without words. It is therefore possible to identify points of tension between the Nordic and the German musical culture. This tension is especially relevant for the music performed in tonight's concert as all three composers received an important part of their education in the German speaking parts of Europe.



Jean Sibelius, 1891.  
Photo by: D. Nyblin. From  
the Picture Collections of  
the Finnish Heritage  
Agency. (CC BY 4.0)

### **Jean Sibelius: Violin Sonata in F Major, JS178 (1889)**

Jean Sibelius needs little introduction in Finland as he is the most well-known Finnish composer. For understanding the works which we perform tonight it is interesting to note that he already during his youth appears to have had a unique way of seeing the world through music. Tawaststjerna mentions Sibelius's ability to convert experiences and even smells into music. He was also a synesthete, which means that he saw music as colours.

While Sibelius's synaesthesia most commonly is linked to specific key signatures, I want to extend my gratitude to Folke Gräsbeck who drew my attention to an interesting observation. If we assume, that the synaesthesia also applied to individual pitches, the specific keys mentioned by Flodin (and quoted by Tawaststjerna) A – blue, C – red, F – green, and D – yellow, are exactly the pitches which feature most prominently in the beginning of the Violin Sonata in F Major.

The Sonata in F Major is considered one of Sibelius's most important early works. It was one of his most ambitious projects of the 1880s and the first time when Sibelius actively began using Finnish folk music as inspiration for his composing. The sonata shows great similarities to Edvard Grieg's Violin Sonata from 1865 in the same key. The link between the two is so strong that Furuhjelm raises the question if Grieg should be considered as the true "father of Finnish music".<sup>1</sup> Although the two works show many similarities from an analytical perspective, the two works are still distinct. The musical expression is different although both works draw inspiration from their respective country's folk music. I would suggest that many of the most noticeable differences are caused by differences in the underlying idiom, as Sibelius have described a narrative which directly links it to Finnish country life. The two works also differ in their time signatures which obviously causes significant differences in the feel of the music.

What is interesting is that Sibelius in this sonata consciously seems to have been going against the wishes of his composition teacher Martin Wegelius (1846–1906). Wegelius had strong opinions about music and primarily valued the cultivation of the great German masters. Sibelius, on the other hand, also showed other interests, including for the music by Tchaikovsky and Grieg. Tawaststjerna writes that

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<sup>1</sup> The informal title is usually used in relation to Fredrik Pacius (1809 – 1891).

Wegelius had discounted Tchaikovsky's *Sérénade mélancolique* as "violinistic nonsense" and did not hold Grieg's "nationalistic realism" in high regard either. For that reason, Sibelius did not show his Grieg-inspired Violin Sonata to Wegelius.

It is interesting that both Tawaststjerna, as well as Furuholm mentions realism when discussing the sonata. While realism was an important stylistic genre in the arts, realism in classical music is rarely discussed. This is understandable since classical music cannot be "realistic" in its portrayal of people or events. Still, considering Sibelius's fascination with Strindberg, and the general interest in realism in Helsinki during the 1880s, it is easy to see a connection to Sibelius's sonata.

Sibelius has described the sonata in the following way in a letter to his uncle Pehr:

The first movement, 2/4 in F major, is fresh and daring as well as gloomy with some brilliant episodes; the second movement, A minor, is Finnish and melancholy; it is an authentic Finnish girl who sings on the A string; then some peasant lads perform a Finnish dance and try to entice her to smile, but it doesn't work; she only sings with greater sadness and melancholy than before. The third movement, 3/8, F major, is fresh and spirited as well as romantic. There are people in a meadow singing and playing on Midsummer Night. Meanwhile, a meteor falls down among them. They are amazed, but even continue playing, but not as readily as before because everyone is more serious. At the end the mood becomes splendid but gloomy [the meteor!] and also playful and happy.

Despite the narrative's simplicity, a number of observations can be made. First of all, the pastoral setting seems to be central to the expression while the "authentic Finnish girl" inspires Sibelius to write a folk-like melody, without upbeat, and which repeats the final note of the phrase in a fashion typical for Finnish folk music. The existence of a narrative in itself is interesting, because sonatas were together with symphonies among the most prominent forms of non-programmatic music. The use of narratives would later come to play a huge role in many of Sibelius's works. While Sibelius later in life was opposed to attaching clear narratives to his symphonies, there is a letter written in 1893 to J. H. Erkko which reads: 'I believe that music by itself, that is, absolute music, cannot satisfy us. It certainly arouses feelings and emotions, but something is always left unsatisfied in our souls; we always ask "For what reason." [...] Tones attain their real power only when guided by poetic meaning.'



Christian Sinding, c. 1910.  
Photo by: L. Szacinski.  
From Byhistorisk samling  
at the Oslo Museum. (CC  
BY-SA 4.0)

### **Christian Sinding: Sonata im alten Stil, Op. 99 (1909)**

Christian Sinding was one of the most important Norwegian composers during the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. He studied and lived much of his life productive life in Germany and was held in high regard all over Europe. From a Finnish perspective it is interesting to observe that Sinding and Robert Kajanus were the same age and became friends while studying in Leipzig. They both studied composition with Karl Reinecke and violin with Henri Schradieck. Sibelius and Sinding became friends while Sibelius was studying in Berlin in 1889–1890. Although Sinding lived in Leipzig, the older and more experienced Sinding was something of an honorary chairman for the group of friends Sibelius had in Berlin.

Considering Sinding's relative obscurity nowadays, it is surprising to realize how important a composer he was during his life. Despite stylistic differences, he was seen as a successor to Edvard Grieg, and his

work *Frühlingsrauschen* (Rustle of Spring) became the prominent publisher Peter's Verlag's greatest single hit. To understand Sinding's style and reputation, it can be mentioned that after a performance of his first Symphony in Berlin in 1895 a critic pointed out Sinding as being able to take up Wagner's heritage. A bit over a decade later, the same year as he composed the *Sonate im alten Stil*, he was alongside Giacomo Puccini and Richard Strauss appointed honorary member of the Königlische Akademie der Künste in Berlin.

An entertaining story which took place a few years later sheds further light on Sinding's life. A man who presented himself as Christian Sinding checked into one of the best hotels in Rennes, France. Thanks to Sinding's good reputation he quickly gained access to the city's high society. The fact that the man was an impostor was only exposed when a guest, who had been invited to a dinner by the city's archbishop to honour of the distinguished "composer", happened to be an acquaintance of the real Sinding. This suggests that Sinding's reputation proceeded him far outside of Germany and Norway.

There is, however, a sad shadow, cast by events during the very end of Sinding's brilliant career which at least partly explains his relative obscurity today. During the last decade of his life, his health began faltering. His hearing began failing him, and he began showing signs of dementia. Sinding became an easy target for the German propaganda efforts. While Sinding's personal beliefs and actions did not seem to have agreed with the Nazi ideology, his strong connections, and his appreciation and love for the Germany

he used to know made him easy to exploit. At the very end of Sinding's life there were two unfortunate events which sealed his legacy.

Sinding gave a speech which was broadcast by the Norwegian Radio on his 85<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 11<sup>th</sup> of January 1941. Vollestad, who has written the most recent biography about Sinding, argues convincingly that the speech appears to have been written by Eyvind Mehle who was the press manager for *Nasjonal Samling*, the right-wing party in power during the Nazi occupation of Norway. The speech includes incorrect statements about Sinding's life in Germany, and generally shows a strong similarity to an interview Mehle had conducted with Sinding in 1937. Mehle had originally interviewed Sinding after a successful trip to both Berlin and Dresden where Sinding had been lavished with praise, but Sinding's enthusiasm for his experiences found a new darker meaning in the now occupied Norway.

Personal accounts of Sinding's life during his last years suggest that he was not able to grasp the way in which he was being used for German propaganda. About a month before his death, Sinding joined *Nasjonal Samling*. The messy signature on the application document is likely Sinding's, but the rest of the document appears to have been filled out by someone else. It is also telling that the document contains text written in red, which states that the bill for the membership fee should be sent to the German *Generalkonsul* in Norway instead of to Sinding himself.

These events came to have a significant impact on Sinding's legacy. After the war the Norwegian radio (NRK) banned all performances of Sinding's music, and while the country's orchestral societies never formally boycotted Sinding's music the orchestra's repertoire still reflected the same reality. For that reason, Sinding – who still a few years previously had been one of Norway's most popular composers – passed into oblivion.

It can be noted that attempts were made to use Sibelius's fame and reputation in a manner similar to Sinding's, but Sibelius declined most invitations and instead received prizes and awards given by the German government in his home in Finland.

Sinding's *Sonate im alten Stil* is a fascinating work. It highlights a strong interest in older music and older times in Norway. It is striking that many of the Norwegian composers' most famous works have a connection to the past. Edvard Grieg's *Fra Holbergs tid, Suite i gammel stil*, op. 40 was written to celebrate the author and playwright Ludvig Holberg (1684–1754) and consists of a series of baroque dances. One of Johan Halvorsen's most famous works is his *Passacaglia* for violin and viola which is based on a theme by George Friedrich Händel, and Sinding's most performed work for violin is *Suite im alten Stil*, Op. 10.

It is relevant to ask why the *Sonate im alten Stil*, Op. 99 is called a sonata at all, since none of the five movements follow sonata form. Perhaps Sinding simply wanted to avoid confusing the new sonata with the earlier suite, but more likely the name suggests a deeper connection between the movements than what might initially be apparent. Upon inspection, all movements share a strong motivic connection to each other.

The image displays five musical staves, each representing a movement from Sinding's *Sonata im alten Stil*.  
**I. Marcato**: Treble clef, 3/4 time signature. The first measure shows a descending line of notes: D4, A3, G3, F3.  
**II. Andante doloroso**: Bass clef, 3/2 time signature. The first measure shows a descending line of notes: D4, A3, G3, F3.  
**III. Menuetto**: Treble clef, 3/4 time signature. The first measure shows a descending line of notes: D4, A3, G3, F3.  
**IV. Allegretto**: Treble clef, 5/4 time signature. The first measure shows a descending line of notes: D4, A3, G3, F3.  
**V. Un poco maestoso**: Treble clef, common time (C). The first measure shows a descending line of notes: D4, A3, G3, F3.

Picture 1. All the movements in Sinding's *Sonata im alten Stil* build upon the theme which is introduced in the first movement. In the second movement the first interval becomes an accompaniment, while the order of the notes is changed in the third movement.

The first movement begins with the notes D, A, (G), and F. This simply outline of a minor chord serves as a key idea for the whole work. See Picture 1. It is also noteworthy, that as the first theme is developed, the piano introduces a falling line which is the seed out of which the second movement grows. In the second movement this falling line is accompanied by a repetition of the notes D and A. The third movement, a menuetto in D major again builds around the same core idea. The main theme builds around the notes A, D and F sharp, while a remnant of the falling line from the second movement can be found in the bass line. The time signature for the fourth movement is interestingly enough in 5/4 while the melody initially moves back and forth within the interval of a fifth on the by now familiar notes. While the connection most likely is without deeper meaning, I was struck by how the melody's initially narrow ambitus in combination with the time signature shows certain similarities with Finnish folk music. The last movement provides a triumphant ending which is again built on the same notes, but once again in a new character. The introduction, which is played by the violin alone creates a joyful and folk-like character.

### **Jean Sibelius: Sonatine, Op. 80 (1915)**

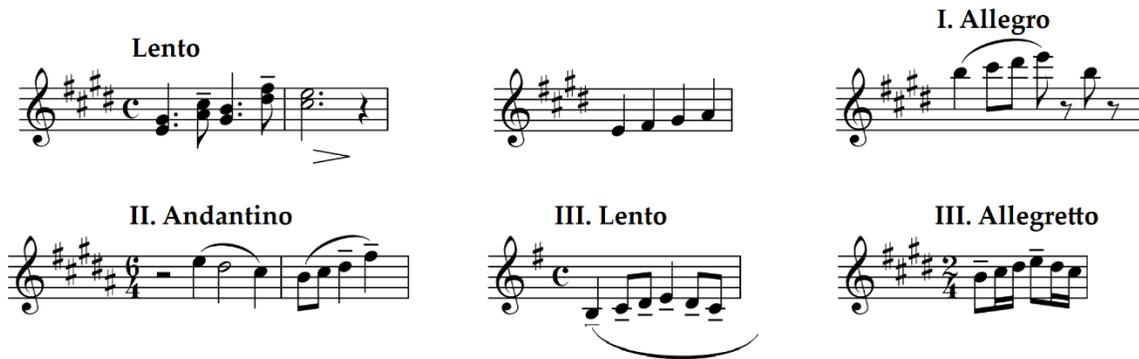
In Jean Sibelius's Sonatine from 1915 we again encounter a completely different approach to the violin sonata. The work was originally planned to be a sonata but Sibelius changed the name to Sonatine during the composition process.

In many ways Sibelius lived a life of contradictions. Reading biographies about his life, there are many tensions or contradictions in his personality. These include his relationship to the rural and the urban; to the national and the international; to his own belief in his worth and abilities, and his crushing self-criticism; to his own mother tongue Swedish and the Finnish language which he increasingly adopted. There are also stylistic differences between his large orchestral works and his smaller chamber music.

Many of these contradictions can be found in Sibelius's Sonatine as well. His own relationship to the work seems to have fluctuated between considering it a skilfully crafted sonata, to brushing it off as virtually worthless. This can be seen in both his diary and in his letters. One comment, which has been helpful in interpreting the work, is found in Sibelius's diary. It reads: "Been dreaming about being twelve years old and a virtuoso. The sky of my childhood and stars – lots of stars." This link to the composer's childhood can in my opinion be heard in the music. There is, however, something distant about the musical expression. It is as if the music portrays the joys of childhood but remembered through the fog of time.

Despite its simple external expression, the sonatina presents substantial challenges, both technical and musical. The simple exterior also hides a surprising adherence to the traditional sonata form and simultaneously shows a strong thematic cohesion between the movements.

The brief introduction in *Lento* presents all the Sonatine's main musical ideas. The first motive which consists of an ascending fourth followed by a descending second is played in thirds and already shows a surprising ambiguity about the importance of the different elements. By filling in the missing notes of the ascending fourth in a scalewise manner we get the four first notes of the main theme of all three movements, although the motive is inverted in the second movement. The same four note motive is also played by the violin in the introduction of the first movement. The interval of a fourth and the fifth which we find in the very first bar, also becomes the accompaniment of the theme in the first movement. See Picture 2.



Picture 2. The Sonatine's first interval outlines the ambitus of the motive which is found in different guises in all the three movements.

Another important interval in the first movement is the ascending sixth, in combination with a dotted rhythm. This is exactly the rhythm, which is introduced in the beginning of the piece, albeit at a slower tempo, and while it is not immediately obvious, the ascending sixth is also present in the opening bar between the lower third of the first note and the upper third of the second note. We can also find the scalewise motion hidden in the thirds if we explore the line which uses the upper third of the first note, the lower third of the second, and again the upper note for the third. If we add one more note we find material which is found in the second movement.

I would normally question the importance of motivic similarities which are based on so common musical gestures, but in this case these motives can be found all throughout the work. The extensive use of this musical seed is likely what causes the coolness and even detachment which Barnett mentions while discussing the work. This can be contrasted with Furuhjelm's description, which in 1916 called the work possibly the most idyllically sanguine that Sibelius ever had composed.

While I can agree with both descriptions, they are in many ways contradictory. The work can feel cool and detached while simultaneously youthfully innocent and energetic; it often feels naively simple while adhering to a mature composer's strong inner logic; and to my understanding the music should ideally sound effortless while momentarily presenting substantial challenges.

The very end of the Sonatine is a prime example of these inner contradictions. After skilfully building towards a brilliant ending, the last chords are thrown away inconclusively as if to assure that no-one would take the work too seriously.



Wilhelm Stenhammar,  
1905. From the Swedish  
Performing Arts Agency.

### **Wilhelm Stenhammar: Violin Sonata, Op. 19 (1899–1900)**

Wilhelm Stenhammar was one of Sweden's best pianists, conductors, and most respected composers during the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. Similarly to both Sinding and Sibelius, Stenhammar also studied in Germany, but in his case only briefly. After studies with Richard Andersson in Sweden, Stenhammar moved to Berlin where he studied with Heinrich Barth for seven months. Heinrich Barth was the primary accompanist of the famous violinist Joseph Joachim and was therefore part of Johannes Brahms's circle. For this reason, Stenhammar's education was strongly influenced by the more conservative and classically rooted views on German romantic music.

Stenhammar gained a reputation as an excellent conductor and performer of music by Beethoven although an interpretation of Beetho-

ven's Spring Sonata together violinist Tor Aulin in 1902 was criticized by Peterson-Berger for being too classical. Stenhammar's understanding of the classical repertoire also seeped into his own music. Although the musical expression is late-Romantic, the formal discipline brings to mind music from an earlier era.

Regarding Stenhammar's Violin Sonata in A Minor, a few observations can help understand the musical expression and highlight some of the differences between Stenhammar's sonata and the other works which are performed tonight. As a performer it immediately becomes clear that Stenhammar was a pianist and composer while Sibelius and Sinding were first and foremost composers whose first instrument was the violin. The differences in writing for both instruments is noticeable. Stenhammar's Sonata includes almost no double stops, whereas they play an important role in both Sibelius's and Sinding's sonatas. Instead issues concerning sound and volume become challenging for the violinist as he or she often needs to soar above the lush and brilliant piano part.

The wonderful lyricism of Stenhammar's Violin Sonata follows in Emil Sjögren's musical footsteps, who's violin sonatas at the time were considered the most important Swedish works of the genre. Wallner, who has written the most extensive biography about Stenhammar, sums up his thorough investigation of the sonata by discussing the challenges of performing the work. He considers a challenge arising from the sonata's "double essence" which combines classicism with sensitive poetry. As a performer I also

sense a form of duality in the sonata's musical expression. It combines a strong Romantic idiom, which includes a sense of longing, with a feeling of acceptance and contentment. The music is never aggressive, never ugly, and never forced and it retains a nobility and beauty throughout the work despite not lacking in musical drama.

The first movement begins with the violin alone, playing an ascending minor sixth. This expansive interval clearly plays a key role in the sonata as it keeps reappearing at key moments. One interesting detail about the first movement is that while the piece is called Sonata in A Minor, the key of A minor is only firmly established at the end of the first movement.

One of my favourite moments of the sonata happens in the middle of the second movement, where the music suddenly takes an unexpected turn and suddenly gives a glimpse of what the musical salons of the late nineteenth century must have been like. Although the section flirts with some old-fashioned sentimentality, Stenhammar does it with such grace and charm that it only enriches the whole sonata.

We should not forget that Stenhammar had personal experience of the intimacy and the atmosphere of the musical salons which soon would go out of style. Even though salon concerts, and especially salon-style pieces, nowadays often are viewed with some contempt, the increase in popularity which necessitated moving chamber music concert to concert halls was not seen entirely as a positive development. The directness of the communication between the musicians and the audience could not be reproduced in the larger venues where the audience was formally seated in neat lines at some distance from the performers.

The last movement is built around a dactyl rhythm (long, short, short). While the rhythm is so common in classical music that its relevance is unclear, it's worth noting that Tawaststjerna associates it with folk music in his discussion of Sibelius's Violin Sonata in F Major. The same rhythm can be found in all the works performed tonight. The ascending sixth which has served as a key interval in the previous movements does not have the same prominence in the finale, but when it finally is reached, it brings the music back home in brilliant fashion.

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Violinist **Sebastian Silén** has since 2017 undertaken doctoral studies at the University of the Arts, Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, Finland. Silén performs actively as soloist, chamber- and orchestral musician. He has completed two master's degrees at the Zürcher Hochschule der Künste in Switzerland as a student of Professor Rudolf Koelman and he has also studied at the Academy of Music and Drama – Gothenburg University in Sweden as a student of Anton Sokolov. He has also participated in numerous masterclasses.

Silén has won prizes in national and international competitions and played as soloist with orchestras in Finland, Switzerland, and Italy. As soloist and chamber musician he has given concerts and taken part in festivals in Europe and the USA.

As a result of his doctoral studies Silén is currently collaborating with the publisher Fennica Gehrman in order to publish works for violin and piano by Fredrik Pacius and Robert Kajanus. He has also recently published his first peer-reviewed article.

Silén has worked in many orchestras in Finland and Switzerland, including substituting as 3rd Concert Master in the Tampere Philharmonic Orchestra and as 1st Concert Master at Norrlandsoperans Symphony Orchestra in Umeå, Sweden. He has played the role as Jean Sibelius in the documentary *The Forgotten Music of Sibelius* from 2015 which was produced in cooperation with the Finnish Broadcasting Company, Svenska Yle, and the Swedish and Danish television / SVT and DR. He plays on a violin “anon. Sanctus Seraphin Utinensis 1741” which has been borrowed by the Finnish Cultural Foundation.

Silén has been supported by the Swedish Cultural Foundation in Finland, the Finnish Cultural Foundation, the Arts Promotion Centre in Finland, the Jenny and Antti Wihuri Foundation, the Society of Swedish Literature in Finland – Fredrik Pacius Memorial Fund, Héléne och Walter Grönqvists Stiftelse, and the Sibelius Academy Foundation.



Pianist **Satu Eljärvi's** debut concert in Sibelius Academy (1989) introduced “an unusually original artist possessing technique as strong as steel, someone who also has courage to play according to her will” (HS/Olavi Kauko). Eljärvi studied with leading Finnish professors such as Liisa Pohjola, Ralf Gothóni, Erik T. Tawaststjerna and Sirkka Harjunmaa. Her pianism is also strongly influenced by the tradition of the Russian piano school through her professors Dmitri Bashkirov, Vitali Berzon and Vjatsheslav Novikov.

Eljärvi is a laureate of numerous national competitions, including four Helmi Vesa Competitions, and she received two special prizes in the Maj Lind Competition in 1988. Alongside performing as a soloist with many Finnish orchestras and enjoying a role of an active chamber musician, Eljärvi had a long cooperation with Finnish National Opera (FNOB) performing as both a piano soloist and orchestral keyboard player in more than 120 ballet, concert and opera productions and also working as the FNOB ballet pianist (1999–2007).

Satu Eljärvi received the Pro Musica scholarship in 2013. Her artistic work has during the last years been supported by The Finnish Cultural Foundation, the Arts Promotion Centre in Finland (Taike), and the Sibelius Academy Foundation.