

ONDINE

TÕNU KÕRVITS
MOORLAND ELEGIES

ESTONIAN PHILHARMONIC CHAMBER CHOIR
TALLINN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
RISTO JOOST

TÕNU KÕRVITS (1969)

Moorland Elegies

for mixed choir and string orchestra (2015)

Texts: Poems by Emily Brontë

1	<i>Come, Walk With Me</i>	5:52
2	<i>Silent is the House</i>	5:58
3	<i>The Night is Darkening Round Me</i>	5:57
4	<i>Fall, Leaves, Fall</i>	5:06
5	<i>She Dried Her Tears</i>	7:21
6	<i>Moonlight, Summer Moonlight</i>	3:45
7	<i>The Sun Has Set</i>	5:39
8	<i>The Starry Night Shall Tidings Bring</i>	6:03
9	<i>Month After Month</i>	8:35
		54:16

Soloists: Marianne Pärna, alto (3, 6) & Jaanika Kilgi, soprano (9)

Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir

Tallinn Chamber Orchestra

Risto Joost, conductor

Moorland Elegies (2015), a nine-part cycle for mixed choir and string orchestra, is a crowning achievement of its composer Tõnu Kõrvits's magical impressionism. The work was premiered by the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir and the Tallinn Chamber Orchestra at Tallinn's St. John's Church on 31 October 2015, conducted by Risto Joost. The cycle is shaped and animated by its texts: a selection of poems by the English author Emily Brontë (1818–1848). These poems were chosen and arranged by the Estonian poet Doris Kareva, after which the individual pieces were composed. “Emily Brontë is perhaps the most well-known, but also the most mysterious of English literature's three Brontë sisters. Her only novel, *Wuthering Heights*, has been translated into several languages and adapted for both theater and film. Emily Brontë's succinct, intensely inward-looking poetry, which is often seen as mystical or metaphysical, sprung up from these same landscapes: the moors of Yorkshire. *Moorland Elegies* is a work of rough, wild, dark windswept blues; a kind of ecstatic sanctification of the early-departed writer's passion and sadness,” said Kareva. “I was immersed in the texts for nearly a year, and there is a unique kind of magic to their proper arrangement,” the composer has said, hailing of the selection.

“*Moorland Elegies* is a journey into the darkest, most mysterious corners of loneliness: to where one doesn't dare to peek twice,” Kõrvits has commented. A recurring topic in Kõrvits's works is the enigmatic, introverted feminine loneliness that is simultaneously passionate and mild, yet marked by wild creativity. The female soul – mystifying and otherworldly – also lies at the poetic heart of Kõrvits's two chamber operas: *My Swans, My Thoughts* (2005), which was inspired by the works and tragic fate of the Estonian poet Marie Heiberg, and *Firegarden* (2006). It is also a core element of his opera *Butterfly* (2013) and the music he composed for Carl Theodor Dreyer's silent film *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* (2009), which first premiered in 1928.

The selection of poetry in *Moorland Elegies* contains bright, sorrowful, dramatic, and divine scenes that form no coherent plot. There are only spiritual conditions characterized by a certain poetical abstraction, which develop through natural imagery and spatial impressions.

Blossoming and withering, darkness and light, moon and stars, wind and sea, snow and roses, journeying and stopping, tears and smiles, night and day: these are the simple signs and the cold, impenetrable beauty of a mundane existence stamped by transience. The poetic text's musicality and overabundance (i.e. repetitions and accents) also create a hypnotic atmosphere in the music.

Brontë's poetry is like a bottomless well where the depth of loneliness is barely perceptible, and is enchantingly powerful as such. Interwoven in its imagery are melancholy and rays of light, the angst of death and a thirst for life, innocence and sensuality. Leaning upon Freud and Jung, literary analyses have found sublimations of close personal relationships in Brontë's works. Even so, not one burst of emotion rises to the surface too obviously in her verses, but instead tends to flicker in the half-light.

Like Brontë's poetry, Kórvits's music does not possess any overly personalised, overly psychologised, or overly dramatic message. A gradual, intuitive world develops, shaped by repetition based on variation and the interplay of colours. The cycle offers moods, factures, and contrasts between light and darkness. Its aural landscape is finely-woven and shifting, with rhythms that contain delicate shades of meaning: hypnotic repetitions, elements of blues, and devices of journey and ticking time that recall the Romantics. These elements are brought together by melody-centric hetero- and polyphony. Clustered or tertian-harmony verticals wrap the melodies and their meshing into either brighter or more pastel tones. Starkly metallic and glass-like threads also flash through the primarily soft-toned musical fabric.

The first part of the cycle, *Come, Walk with Me* (choir, orchestra), stands out for its bluesy feel that brims with heavy sadness and is broken by fits of passion in seventh intervals. In the second part, *Silent is the House* (choir, orchestra), bleak orchestral tones contrast with the choir's crystal-clear polyphony. Time ticks in pizzicatos while resignation speaks in its melodies. The third part, *The Night is Darkening Round Me* (choir, orchestra, mezzo-soprano solo), was preceded by a choral piece of same name in 2005. This is the music of hopelessness, where

bitter and melancholic interval groupings resonate anew. In the fourth part, *Fall, Leaves, Fall* (orchestra, female voices), ecstatic flares of emotion intertwine with a delicate interaction of colours. The fifth part, *She Dried Her Tears* (orchestra, male voices), is music of sadness that emerges from the deepest depths of the heart. A 2014 piece for voice and strings composed by Kõrvits anteceded the sixth part, *Moonlight, Summer Moonlight* (orchestra, mezzo-soprano solo): the piece is an intricate watercolour landscape that hides a fateful omen. The passionate, expansive seventh part, *The Sun Has Set* (orchestra, choir), contains a dialogue between the elements of wind, sea, and landscape. Yet, the most dramatic part of the cycle is the eighth, *The Starry Night Shall Tidings Bring* (orchestra, choir): here, a dangerous sword-winged bird and God's grace confront each other, and once again, fateful time ticks away in the music. The ninth and final part, *Month After Month* (orchestra, choir, soloist), speaks the language of torpor and woe. Only at its conclusion does a faint glimmer enter the sad song. "Soul" is the last word sung, like an ultimate sigh of hope...

Unfolding in the dark, windswept melancholy of *Moorland Elegies* is the same kind of fathomless loneliness that is encountered by every human soul, who delves into the murky depths of his or her own existence, mortality, and the seclusion of fatality. The meaning of life – as a hopeless, intense rush towards light from the shadows; as a fleeting flash of lust for living, exquisite and holy in its essence – is revealed to be ephemeral.

Evi Arujärv
Translated by Adam Cullen

Tõnu Kõrvits (1969) is a shining star of Estonian contemporary music. Beside Veljo Tormis's shamanistic spells, Erkki-Sven Tüür's energetic explosions and Arvo Pärt's religious contemplations, Kõrvits's sound world stands out as highly poetic, full of visionary fantasies. His music carries the listener along on hypnotic journeys through the landscapes of nature and folk tradition, human soul and subconscious. His oeuvre includes all traditional genres from orchestral and instrumental music to choral music and operas. Currently, the list of his compositions contains 210 opuses. Figurative titles of his works often reflect romantic or mythological allegories. Breathing, song-like expression is the core of his personal idiom, reflecting delicate breeze from jazz and popular music. By its nature, Kõrvits's idiom can be called as "magic impressionism".

Tõnu Kõrvits started composing in 1990s in neo-romantic style. In 2000nds, orchestral works with more elaborated sound canvas were composed, searching for synthesis of archaic and exotic melodies, such as *The Sign of Love* (2002), *Eldorado* (2002), *Safra* (2005) for piano and string orchestra, *Tsirgutii (Milky Way)* (2005) for flute and string orchestra, and others. In 2000nds, Kõrvits has also composed a series of works reflecting the imagery of the mythical Northern land Thule, an archaic prototype of Estonia – such as *Sung into the Wind* (2006) for symphony orchestra and *Elegies of Thule* (2007) for string orchestra. Kõrvits's poetic idiom has achieved extreme power of expression in chamber operas *My Swans, My Thoughts* (2005) and *Firegarden* (2006). In 2013, also the two-act opera "Butterfly" was composed after Andrus Kivirähk's novel. Kõrvits's excellent melodic gift is evident in his numerous works for solo instruments. He is also known as an accomplished arranger of popular music and author of soundtracks for documentaries and animation films.

In last decade, Kõrvits has composed remarkable works being still inspired by Estonian and Northern traditional culture, religious and pantheistic subtexts – *Kreek's Notebook* (2007) for mixed choir and string orchestra, based on Estonian sacred folk tunes (collected by Estonian composer Cyrillus Kreek), *Hymns from the Western Coast* (2009) for mixed choir and saxophone quartet, *Seven Dreams of Seven Birds* (2009/2012) for cello, mixed choir and string orchestra

(text by Maarja Kangro and Tõnu Kõrvits), *Canticle of the Sun* (2014, text by Saint Francis of Assisi) and *Stabat Mater* (2014) for mixed choir.

Music of Tõnu Kõrvits has been performed at several festivals in European countries, USA, Australia, Canada and Russia. His works belong to the repertoire of the most important Estonian orchestras, choirs and artists, and has been performed by noted foreign collectives, like BBC Symphony Orchestra, Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra, Britten Sinfonia, Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, Swedish Radio Choir, The Sixteen Choir, and many others.

As a talented and prolific creator, Tõnu Kõrvits has gained recognition from the Estonian state and cultural institutions a number of times, among them the Annual Prize of the Endowment for Music of the Cultural Endowment of Estonia in 2004 and 2014, the Annual Music Prize of the Estonian Music Council in 2007, and the Cultural Prize of the Republic of Estonia in 2011 and 2016. Estonian Public Broadcasting chose Kõrvits as the Musician of the Year 2015.

Evi Arujärv

The Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir (EPCC) has established itself as one of the world's leading choral ensembles. The EPCC was founded in 1981 by Tõnu Kaljuste, who was the artistic director and chief conductor for twenty years. He was succeeded by Paul Hillier (2001–07) and Daniel Reuss (2008–13). Kaspars Putniņš has been the artistic director and chief conductor since 2014.

The choir's repertoire extends from Gregorian chant and the Baroque to music of the 21st century, with a special focus on the work of Estonian composers, such as Arvo Pärt, Veljo Tormis, Erkki-Sven Tüür, Galina Grigorjeva and Tõnu Kõrvits. Each season, the choir gives about 60–70 concerts both in Estonia and abroad.

The EPCC has cooperated with a number of outstanding conductors, including Claudio Abbado, Helmuth Rilling, Neeme Järvi, Paavo Järvi, Olari Elts, Andrew Lawrence-King, Roland Böer, Frieder Bernius, Stephen Layton, Marc Minkowski, Sir Colin Davis, Paul McCreesh, Andrés Orozco-Estrada and Gustavo Dudamel. The EPCC has also worked with many leading orchestras, including the London Symphony Orchestra, the Mahler Chamber Orchestra, the Salzburg Camerata, Les Musiciens du Louvre-Grenoble, the Philip Glass Ensemble, the Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra and the Los Angeles Philharmonic. The choir has been a welcome guest at numerous music festivals and venues all over the world, including the BBC Proms, the Mozartwoche, the Festival Aix-en-Provence, the International Cervantino Festival, the Sydney Opera House, Wiener Konzerthaus, the Royal Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Lincoln Centre and Carnegie Hall in New York and the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles.

Another important aspect in the choir's life is recording (for ECM, Virgin Classics, Carus, Harmonia Mundi and Ondine), resulting in various award-winning CDs. EPCC recordings have twice won a Grammy for Best Choral Performance: for Arvo Pärt's *Da Pacem* (Harmonia Mundi) with conductor Paul Hillier and for Arvo Pärt's *Adam's Lament* (ECM) with conductor Tõnu Kaljuste. All in all, the choir has received 15 Grammy nominations, and some of the choir's recordings have won awards such as the Diapason d'or, Preis der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik, Danish Music Award and de Choc de l'Année Classica 2014

www.epcc.ee

ESTONIAN PHILHARMONIC CHAMBER CHOIR
TALLINN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
RISTO JOOST



The Tallinn Chamber Orchestra was founded by conductor Tõnu Kaljuste in 1993. In two decades, it has become one of Estonia's signature orchestras and a welcome guest performer on numerous stages in Europe and all over the world. The TCO has gained regard for its artistically coherent programming, stylistic sensibility and mastery of interpretation. Its members are distinguished string players who also regularly perform as soloists and chamber musicians.

The Tallinn Chamber Orchestra has collaborated extensively with the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir. Their joint performances and recordings have gained international fame and recognition. In 1993, conducted by Tõnu Kaljuste, they recorded Arvo Pärt's *Te Deum* (ECM). The recording earned high ratings from leading music critics and in Estonia remained in the Top 10 of record sales for months.

Tõnu Kaljuste was the chief conductor in 1993–95 and 1996–2001. Juha Kangas was conductor in 1995–96 and artistic director in 2001–03. The following decade was curated by the artistic director of the Tallinn Philharmonic Society, Eri Klas. Risto Joost has been chief conductor since autumn 2013. The orchestra's guest conductors have included John Storgårds, Pietari Inkinen, Okko Kamu, Jaakko Kuusisto, Richard Tognetti, Terje Tonnesen, Alexander Rudin, Florian Donderer and Dmitri Sitkovetsky, and also distinguished Estonian conductors such as Olari Elts, Arvo Volmer, Kristjan Järvi and others.

The TCO has performed at many music festivals, including “MITO SettembreMusica” (Turin, 2004), the Budapest Autumn Festival (2005), the Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli festival (Italy, 2007), Festival Cervantino (Mexico, 2012) and the Vale of Glamorgan Festival (Wales, 2015). Concert tours have taken the orchestra to the USA, Canada, Japan, China, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Tunisia and most European countries.

In 2013, the Tallinn Chamber Orchestra received the Performance Prize of the Estonia Music Council. The TCO played on the recording of Arvo Pärt's *Adam's Lament*, which won conductor Tõnu Kaljuste a Grammy in 2014.

www.filharmonia.ee/tko

Prizewinner of the Malko Conducting Competition in 2015 and the Jorma Panula Conducting Competition in 2012, **Risto Joost** has gained widespread recognition for his work both in opera and in concert. His repertoire ranges from the Baroque to challenging contemporary repertoire. He has been Conductor in Residence at the Estonian National Opera since 2009 and Chief Conductor of the Tallinn Chamber Orchestra since 2013, and also Artistic Director of the MDR Leipzig Radio Choir since the 2015–16 season and Artistic Director of the Tallinn Philharmonic Society and the Birgitta Festival since spring 2016.

Within a short period of time, Risto Joost has conducted many internationally acclaimed orchestras, such as the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, the MDR Leipzig Symphony, the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra, the Danish National Symphony Orchestra, the Swedish Chamber Orchestra, the Helsingborg Symphony, the NorrlandsOperan Orchestra, the Gävle Symphony, the Noord Nederlands Orkest, the Netherlands Chamber Orchestra, the Real Orquesta Sinfonica de Sevilla, Sinfonia Finlandia Jyväskylä, the Vaasa City Orchestra, the Ostrobothnian Chamber Orchestra, the Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra, the Latvian National Symphony, the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra, the Tallinn Youth Orchestra, the Tallinn Baroque Orchestra and the Macao Orchestra. He has also been working with a number of esteemed vocal ensembles, such as the RIAS Kammerchor, the Rundfunkchor Berlin, the SWR Vokalensemble, the Netherlands Chamber Choir, the Swedish Radio Choir, Ars Nova Copenhagen and the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir.

In 2016, Risto Joost received the Music Prize of the Cultural Endowment of Estonia for artistic performance at home and abroad. He was awarded the Young Cultural Figure award of the Estonian Republic in 2011.

LYRICS

Moorland Elegies (2015)

Selected poems by Emily Brontë (1818–1848)

1

Come, walk with me, There's only thee To
bless my spirit now –
We used to love on winter nights
To wander through the snow;
Can we not woo back old delights?
The clouds rush dark and wild
They fleck with shade our mountain heights
The same as long ago
And on the horizon rest at last

In looming masses piled;
While moonbeams flash and fly so fast
We scarce can say they smiled –

Come walk with me, come walk with me;
And we are left the only two;
So closer would my feelings twine
Because they have no stay but thine...

2

Come, the wind may never again
Blow as now it blows for us;
And the stars may never again shine as now
they shine;
Long before October returns,

Seas of blood will have parted us;
And you must crush the love in your heart,
And I the love in mine!

3

The night is darkening round me,
The wild winds coldly blow;
But a tyrant spell has bound me,
And I cannot, cannot go.

The giant trees are bending
Their bare boughs weighed with snow;

The storm is fast descending,
And yet I cannot go.

Clouds beyond clouds above me, Wastes
beyond wastes below; But nothing drear can
move me; I will not, cannot go.

4

Fall, leaves, fall; die, flowers, away;
Lengthen night and shorten day;
Every leaf speaks bliss to me Fluttering from
the autumn tree.
I shall smile when wreaths of snow

Blossom where the rose should grow;
I shall sing when night's decay
ushers in a drearier day.

5

She dried her tears and they did smile
To see her cheeks' returning glow
How little dreaming all the while
That full heart throbbed to overflow

With that sweet look and lively tone
And bright eye shining all the day
They could not guess at midnight lone
How she would weep the time away.

6

'Tis moonlight, summer moonlight,
All soft and still and fair;
The solemn hour of midnight
Breathes sweet thoughts everywhere

But most where trees are sending Their
breezy boughs on high,

Or stooping low are lending
A shelter from the sky.

And there in those wild bowers
A lovely form is laid;
Green grass and dew-steeped flowers
Wave gently round her head.

7

The sun has set, and the long grass now
Waves dreamily in the evening wind;
And the wild bird has flown from that old
gray stone
In some warm nook a couch to find.

In all the lonely landscape round
I see no light and hear no sound,
Except the wind that far away
Come sighing o'er the healthy sea.

8

The starry night shall tidings bring;
Go out upon the breezy moor,
Watch for a bird with sable wing,
And beak and talons dropping gore.
Look not around, look not beneath, But
mutely trace its airy way, Mark where it
lights upon the heath;

Then, wanderer, kneel thee down, and pray.
What fortune may await thee there,
I will not, and I dare not tell;
But Heaven is moved by fervent prayer,
And God is mercy fare thee well!

9

Month after month, year after year
My harp has poured a dreary strain –
At length a livelier note shall cheer
And pleasure tune its chords again

What thought the stars and fair moonlight
Are quenched in morning dull and grey
They were but tokens of the night
And this my soul is day.

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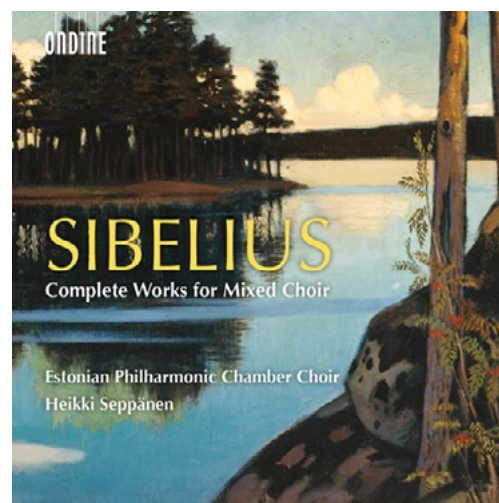
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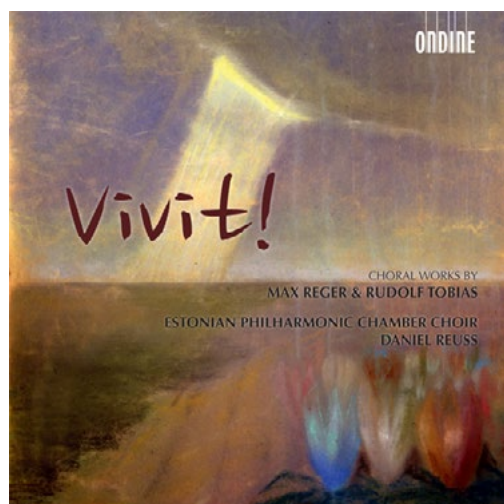
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1–9 Moorland Elegies
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54:02

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[54:02] • English notes and lyrics enclosed

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