Jean Sibelius's Legacy:

Research on his
150th Anniversary

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Edited by

Daniel Grimley, Tim Howell,
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To the memory of Einojuhani Rautavaara (1928–2016)

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PREFACE

The 150th anniversary of Sibelius' birth in 2015 was a momentous occasion, celebrated worldwide through numerous concerts, performances, broadcasts, recordings, and discussions of his music. There were approximately three thousand concerts and events—half of them in Finland, the rest abroad. Cycles of Sibelius' symphonies were played in Berlin, London, Seattle, and several cities and towns in Finland**.** As part of this broad, celebratory atmosphere, a number of Sibelius scholars gathered together in his home town, Hämeenlinna, for a four-day conference leading up to his birthday on December 8: the Sixth International Jean Sibelius Conference. Some 64 participants assembled to listen to 42 presentations by Sibelius experts—young and old—drawn together by their common enthusiasm for the music of one of the world's greatest composers.

The current volume, *Sibelius' Legacy: Research at his 150th Anniversary*, draws directly upon this collective knowledge, and draws together the diverse viewpoints and overwhelming admiration for his music that emerged from this international gathering. But it is more than a simple account of that occasion—this is not a straightforward record of conference proceedings, though it is certainly a reflection of those events. Overall, the 25 chapters in this book represent a selection of the possible contributions on offer, grouped into sections according to topic. With this degree of focus, the opportunity to develop ideas that might only have been outlined within the context of a conference paper has now resulted in broader, chapter-length discussions that are more developed and expansive. Collectively, they offer a snapshot of current thinking within the field of Sibelius research, providing new perspectives and in-depth considerations of a wide range of issues.

Perhaps what is most striking about this book is the sheer diversity of its contents. To help locate a sense of focus within this wealth of material, the individual submissions have been grouped into three larger research areas: history and reception, aesthetics and style, and analysis and instrumental practices. The book therefore moves from general, wide-ranging concerns towards more detailed and focused studies, providing some sense of direction through the collection as a whole.

These studies essentially cover all of the genres in Sibelius' production: symphonies and other orchestral works, incidental music, and piano and chamber music, as well as songs, including both well-known works and rarities, and even some recently discovered findings. In addition to demonstrating the vivid and expanding field of Sibelius research, the chapters in this book are also a welcome reminder of the manifold sources of inspiration—including the music of his contemporaries, nature, literature, and visual art—the versatility of Sibelius' output, and the richness of his creative imagination.

There are still several open questions and challenges in regard to Sibelius' personality and life as well as his extensive oeuvre. On the one hand, Sibelius has for a long time been held, both in Finland and elsewhere, as the foremost Finnish composer, describing its history, myths, and nature, living in the forest and fighting musically for his Fatherland during many critical phases of the early- and mid-twentieth century. Thus, he could easily have been viewed as a conservative national hero. On the other hand, more recent research has tried to respect the urban and cosmopolitan character of Sibelius and the modernity of his music, which was progressive in a way that has only lately been fully recognised. This inner conflict or tension within our current image of Sibelius can still be observed in writings about him and his music. These features, alongside other issues, are discussed in the "Introduction" and the first main section of the book, "History and Reception."

The idea of Sibelius as a versatile composer, writing both *Gebrauchsmusik* and independent art music, has always been a problem—even a stumbling block—for many scholars. Both aspects are covered in this anthology: Sibelius wrote dozens of occasional compositions for friends, colleagues, and institutions, and his music also served as popular music. However, his symphonies and other large orchestral works belong to the central repertoire of the early twentieth century, and putting them into a contemporary context is one of the most important goals of this anthology. The reception of his music in Europe and the United States is a fascinating story of both the ease and difficulty with which it has been accepted and adopted as a model for composing, and also rejected for different reasons. More recently, Sibelius' relationship with the politics of his time and the use of his music for patriotic and military purposes in Finland and elsewhere has become a sensitive and contradictory research field, in which scholarly and intellectual conflicts have arisen. These discussions will likely continue for many years to come.

A deeper perspective emerges in the second section "Aesthetics and Style" and the third section "Analysis and the Instrumental Practices" in

relation to Sibelius' works themselves: the compositions, their background ideas and style, compositional techniques (including orchestration), harmony, and structure (including voice-leading). Sibelius and the styles and "isms" of contemporary music and other arts provide as fruitful a source for discussion as it is inexhaustible. Likewise, his unique way of employing tonal and modal harmony and the highly characteristic sonic design of his music represent an endless and rewarding source for research. Studies of compositional processes and various versions of Sibelius' works have revealed that the qualities in his music that we consider to be highly individual and apparently spontaneous were very probably the result of painstaking reassessment and revision.

The editors of *Jean Sibelius' Legacy* cordially thank The National Library of Finland (Helsinki) and The National Archives of Finland for their help in using archive materials, the Legal Successors of Jean Sibelius, who permitted the use of original manuscript materials, copy-editors June Huuha and Andrew Barnett for their significant contributions, and especially Anna Krohn for her indispensable work during the many challenges of both organising the Conference itself and compiling this anthology. Also, we would like to thank the Sibelius Birth Town Foundation for organising the Sixth International Jean Sibelius Conference, which was one of the major events of the anniversary year in Finland.

As this volume goes to press, we learn the sad news that Einojuhani Rautavaara has died at the age of 87. In 1955, as part of his 90th birthday year, Sibelius was asked to select the most promising young Finnish composer for a grant from the Koussevitzky Foundation to study in America: he nominated Rautavaara. With Rautavaara's music standing as testimony to the enduring nature of Sibelius' legacy, it seems appropriate to dedicate this book to his memory.

The Editors,
August 2016
Oxford, York, Espoo, and Helsinki.

INTRODUCTION

"EITHER/OR?" NO: "BOTH–AND"! CURRENT CHALLENGES OF THE SIBELIUS IMAGE

VEIJO MURTOMÄKI

Introduction

The image of a composer is often in a state of fluctuation and change, and a "new" paradigm of interpretation often breaks through after 30 years or so. This means that every generation has its own ideas and seeks to redefine that image. In the case of Jean Sibelius, there have been at least four or five phases of looking at him as a person and composer and listening to his music.

Initially, the young Finnish nation as an "imagined community"[1] had to establish its right of existence with its own language and culture, which resulted in the creation of a national epos (*Kalevala*) and the support of great national heroes in the fields of literature (Aleksis Kivi, Juhani Brofeldt/Aho, Eino Lönnbohm/Leino), the arts (Albert Edelfelt, Axel Gallén [Gallen-Kallela], Erik/Eero Järnefelt, Pekka Halonen), and in music (foremost Jean Sibelius). Thus, the nationalist movement first linked the *Kalevala*, the alleged Finnish Karelian history, and Finnish nature to form a paradigm for the reception of Sibelius' music. His music also became politicised, whether he wanted it to or not. Next, in the early twentieth century Sibelius turned towards a more "European" or German-Austrian tradition, starting to compose symphonies and creating an important violin concerto. During this time, he and the supporters of his music begun to emphasise the "absolute" essence of his oeuvre, although patriotic interpretations were still maintained.

During the 1930s and 1940s, Sibelius was again heavily politicised as he willingly supported the Finnish-German alliance against the Soviet Union and the "comrade-in-arms" (*Waffenbrüderschaft*) policy. After the war, the writing of Theodor W. Adorno challenged the fame of Sibelius

[1] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London & New York: Verso, 2006).

and influenced the reception of his music, especially in the German-speaking countries. This resulted in another change in Sibelius' image, trying to emphasise and create a paradigm of the "universality" of his music, although its national bases were not entirely rejected. Towards the end of the twentieth century, Sibelius was discovered by some French, English, American, and even German composers, who held his formal and textural inventions to be exemplary and worth following. Sibelius' ecological and postmodern qualities were also discovered.

However, it is interesting that, now and then, something like a "battle" breaks out, as some influential people or scholars are inclined to declare what is a "wrong" or "proper" image of Sibelius or his music. During this "battle" the question is: who has the "right" or the "power" to determine and define the "relevant" or "politically correct" image of Sibelius? This kind of inquiry or argument is of course possible and most welcome, as Sibelius' music easily evokes different and even controversial interpretations, because these kinds of discussion allow us to focus our thinking in ways that otherwise would not have been considered.

Thinking in the mode of either/or is largely a result of the German dialectic tradition based on "binarisms." Consequently, everything in this world has to be presented as exclusive dichotomies. Richard Taruskin has criticised in a provocative way this kind of philosophy of Carl Dahlhaus,[2] who asked, as reformulated by Taruskin: "Is art history the *history* of art, or is it the history of *art*?" Taruskin continues: "What a senseless distinction!" Other examples of Dahlhaus' dichotomies are:

> Does music mirror the reality surrounding a composer, *OR* does it propose an alternative reality? Does it have common roots with political events and philosophical ideas; *OR* is music written simply because music has always been written and not, or only incidentally, because a composer is seeking to respond with music to the world he lives in?[3]

These questions consist "of a veritable salad of empty binarisms" according to Taruskin."[4]

This kind of extending one's mind to choose between extreme alternatives—instead of saying "both and"—does not represent a Western

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[2] Carl Dahlhaus, *Grundlagen der Musikgeschichte* (Köln: Musikverlag Hans Gerig, 1977), 36–7.

[3] Richard Taruskin, "Music from The Earliest Notations to the Sixteenth Century," in *The Oxford History of Western Music* vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), xix; reformulated citations from Carl Dahlhaus, *Foundations of Music History*, trans. J. B. Robinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 19.

[4] Ibid.

culture of argumentation. An absolute claim says more about the attitude and thinking of its proposer than the object of the statement itself, and leads easily to anachronisms, reflecting modern ideas back into history, as has also occurred with the concept of so-called “absolute music.” Jim Samson has written in an elucidating way on this subject, citing Jacques Derrida who has stated that, “contraries, unlike contradictories, do not exhaust the range of possibilities.”[5] Fortunately, Dahlhaus’ later idea is based on the conviction that the reception history of a musical work becomes an essential part of the work itself.[6] Thus, the production of or creating a work is as important a form of cultural activity as its reproduction or performing, and its reception or deciphering when listening. Consequently, it is reasonable to take into account all the phases of the life of a particular musical work: its reception in the context of its creation; its reception during the historical reception process; and its present reception against the background of what has happened during its long reception history.

In order to clarify the current thinking about Sibelius, I have divided its topics into ten dichotomies or “binarisms” that dominate, although mostly unconsciously, the present discussion. These preliminary dichotomies are as follows (more can be found, of course):

(1) Sibelius as European/Finnish composer
(2) Sibelius as political/apolitical composer
(3) Sibelius as urban/nature-oriented composer
(4) Sibelius as “absolute”/expressive or poetic composer
(5) Sibelius as symphonist/miniature composer
(6) Sibelius as earnest/humoristic composer
(7) Sibelius as non-erotic/amorous composer
(8) Sibelius as Christian/pagan composer
(9) Sibelius as composer without a “method”/with his “own path” or “method found”
(10) Sibelius as conservative/progressive composer

[5] Jim Samson, “Either/Or,” in *Rethinking Musical Modernism. Proceedings of the International Conference Held from October 11 to 13, 2007* (Belgrade: Institute of Musicology, 2008), 15–25, the quote is from p. 22. I am indebted to Helena Tyrväinen for informing me about this source.

[6] Carl Dahlhaus, *Die Musik des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Neues Handbuch der Musikwissenschaft, vol. 6, ed. Carl Dahlhaus (Wiesbaden: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Athenaion, 1980).

Sibelius the European/Finnish Composer

Most recently, the Finnish conductor Atso Almila stated that "according to investigations there is nothing especially Finnish in the music of Sibelius" because he was "a global fellow," and thus "at the global level a reformer of the symphony" who suffered "from being a national icon."[7]

It is true that by the time of his Fourth Symphony Sibelius wanted to be appreciated as a European symphonist, not just a Finnish national composer. In his academic lecture in 1896 he said that:

> A composer immersed in his home country's folk music must naturally … [and sought] his gratification in art in quite different ways than others. Therein lies to a large extent his originality. In his works he must liberate himself from the local as much as possible—especially as far as the means of expression are concerned. He will succeed in this to the extent that he has a distinguished personality.[8]

We know that Sibelius achieved this: his orchestral works have taken their place in the standard repertoire all over the world. However, there is no conflict between his international status as an "absolute" composer and his Finnish origin and use of Finnish themes, topics, and intonations. He once put in his diary the following confession: "How Finnish I am in in the bottom of my heart/my soul!"[9] Why should this be otherwise? Verdi is an Italian composer, Debussy French, Falla Spanish, Grieg Norwegian, and Mussorgsky Russian: are their national characteristics faults, or have they harmed the reception of their music or prevented its performance abroad? Sibelius himself admired the Sicilian essence of Pietro Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana*, the French features of Georges Bizet's *Carmen*, and the Bohemian quality of Bedřich Smetana's *The Bartered Bride*.

There are dozens of examples of the Finnish quality of Sibelius' music, such as the *Kalevala* compositions and the pieces linked to Finnish history and nature. Among those based on the Finnish epic are: *Kullervo*, Op. 7 (1892), *"Karelia"* music, JS 115, Tableau I, *Karelian Home* (1893), *The*

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[7] *Taideyliopiston Sibelius-Akatemia. Tapahtumakevät 2015*. Concert programme booklet of The University of Arts Helsinki, Sibelius Academy, Spring 2015.

[8] Jean Sibelius, "Some Viewpoints Concerning Folk Music and Its Influence on the Musical Arts," trans. Margareta Martin, in *Jean Sibelius and His World*, ed. Daniel M. Grimley (Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011), 315–25, quote from p. 324.

[9] Fabian Dahlström (ed.), *Jean Sibelius Dagbok 1909–1944* (Helsingfors: Svenka litteratursällskapet in Finland, 2005), 275, diary entry June 25, 1918; in orig. Swedish: "Huru finsk är jag ej in i själen!"

Boat Journey, Op. 18 No. 3 (1893), *Rakastava* ["The Lover"], Op. 14 (1894), *Music for the Press Celebration Days* No. 2, *A Song for Väinämöinen*, Op, 31 No. 1 (1899), *Tiera*, JS 200 (1899), *The Origin of Fire*, Op. 32 (1902), *Kyllikki*, Op. 41 (1904), *Luonnotar*, Op. 70 (1913), and *Väinämöinen's Song*, Op. 110 (1926). In addition to these, Sibelius used motifs, figures, and turns derived from *runo* singing and *kantele* melodies, of which the song *The Dream*, Op. 13 No. 5, *"Karelia"* music, JS 115, Tableau I, *Karelian Home*, *Pohjola's Daughter*, Op. 49, the second theme in B minor of the first movement of the Third Symphony, and *Tapiola*, Op. 112 offer good examples. Finnish and Karelian-Russian folk dances can be found in his music, especially in the Six Impromptus for piano, Op. 5, and in the F major Piano Sonata, Op. 12. Sibelius' method of building his musical language, at least partially, on folk modes found in the singing and playing of Karelian musicians, as well as his ways of harmonising the modes, are innovative.[10] All these features form both part of his unequivocally international compositions and the Finnish substance of his music.

There are numerous works in which Sibelius uses modes found in Karelian music; besides, he used these modes to avoid being erroneously identified with the so-called "church modes" in a different way than was customary in nineteenth-century modality, as Sibelius' "neo-modality"[11] was derived from the folk music where there was not necessarily any *finalis* or tonic. In addition to the Aeolian mode or the "Scandinavian mode" (*Lemminkäinen in Tuonela*, the middle section of which is in A Aeolian mode), the Dorian mode or the "Kalevala mode" is very common in Sibelius' music. The entire Sixth Symphony is based on the Dorian mode, although it is too often understood to be in D minor, which is absolutely false, as there are no V–I cadences either in the D-centred first, third, or fourth movements or in the G-centred second movement. Very important modes are also the Aeolian-Ionian mode or the minor-major mode, found for instance in his *Six Finnish Folk Songs Arranged for Piano*, JS 81,[12] and the Ionian-Aeolian mode or major-minor mode used in

[10] See Veijo Murtomäki, "Modal techniques in Sibelius' op. 114," in *Musurgia* XV/1–3 (2008): 71–81.

[11] About "neo-modality" see Juhani Alesaro, *The Apparition from the Forest. A Treatise on* Satz *in the Music of Jean Sibelius*, Studia Musica 66 (Helsinki: University of Arts Helsinki. Sibelius Academy, 2015), 39–40, 52–57, http://ethesis.siba.fi/files/nbnfife2015110516083_copy1.pdf.

[12] Veijo Murtomäki, "The Influence of Karelian *runo* Singing and *kantele* Playing on Sibelius' Music," in *Sibelius in the Old and New World*, eds. Timothy L.

his opera *The Maiden in the Tower*, Scene No. 3 with chorus. Ionian and Mixolydian modes are common besides the major mode or key, the preceding ones deviating from the major keys in their characteristic chord progressions, avoiding the V–I cadences.[13] He invented ways of harmonising the modes without following a mainly functional harmony: the basic harmony was often a ninth-chord, which can be either "consonant" or "dissonant"; parallel seventh-harmonies appear without any need to be resolved, as in the music of Debussy, for instance.

When listening to some new music in Berlin in 1914, Sibelius made the following diary entry: "It is strange how few composers can create something living based on [church] modes. I am closer to them owing to my 'birth and habit by nature' and thus somehow made for them."[14] Of course, he was a cosmopolitan composer, as his Symphonies, the Violin Concerto, and other orchestral works are "European." Knowing some contemporary music, and being influenced by it, also makes him a European. A number of direct influences on Sibelius are relevant here: Mahler on *In memoriam*, Op. 59 (1910); Debussy on *The Dryad*, Op. 45 No. 1 (1910), and *The Oceanides*, Op. 73, especially the Yale version (1914); and Schoenberg on *The Lizard*, Op. 8 (1909), the Fourth Symphony (1911) and *Everyman*, Op. 83 (1916). Even Stravinsky and Prokofiev lurk in Sibelius' *The Tempest*, Op. 109 (1925), and in his *Kullervo*, Op. 7 (1892) Sibelius used "music on white keys." Scriabin's influence can be felt in Sibelius' *Rêverie*, Op. 58 No.1 (1909) and especially in his last piano and violin pieces, Opp. 114–116.

Sibelius was also inspired by the Swiss symbolist painter Arnold Böcklin (1827–1901), an influence which can be seen, for instance, in the recurring "swan theme" in his orchestral works and songs. He composed two songs, Op. 51 Nos 4–5, based on the Austrian expressionist Richard Dehmel's (1863–1920) poems, and wrote incidental music for the dramas of some leading contemporary writers (and one older one): *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Op. 46 (1905) for the play by Maurice Maeterlinck, *Swanwhite*, Op. 54 (1908) for August Strindberg's theatrical piece, the ballet pantomime *Scaramouche*, Op. 71 (1913) for Poul Knudsen's libretto, *Everyman*, Op. 83 (1916) for Hugo von Hofmannsthal's play, and

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Jackson, Veijo Murtomäki, Colin Davis, and Timo Virtanen (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2010), 199–218.

[13] Alesaro, *The Apparition from the Forest*, 122–9.

[14] Dahlström, *Jean Sibelius Dagbok*, 183, diary entry January 26, 1914 in Swedish: "det är förunderligt huru få nutida tonsättare kunna skapa nå'nting lefvande baseradt på kyrkotonarterna. Jag som står dessa närmare på grund af 'födsel och ohindrad vana' är som skapat för dem."

finally *The Tempest*, Op. 109 (1925), to enhance William Shakespeare's masterpiece.

Sibelius the Political/Apolitical Composer

Recently, one Finnish musicologist wrote that:

> in the Finnish writings on music during the early 20th century the ideals of freedom and independence were undoubtedly expressed in both noble and trivial ways. The last ones can be found in those interpretations according to which the culmination towards the end of the Second Symphony is a symbol of forthcoming independence.[15]

Although such patriotic formulations may seem old fashioned and naive when viewed from current aesthetic and listening practices, the world was a different place then and the task of music and other arts was much more important in society than now. Today, composers can choose to be free from becoming socially engaged, and freedom from social engagement was an exception rather than the norm in music history. War has always had a special impact and often provoked reactions from creative artists. Most recently, for instance, Kaija Saariaho's *Adriana Mater* (2004) deals with the Balkan War, and Sir Peter Maxwell Davies has confessed that his Ninth Symphony (2012) is a protest against the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. In addition to this, the idea that a contemporary audience would have listened in the "wrong" way to the new music they heard for the first time seems somewhat strange, and anyway such an attitude would be historically anachronistic.

Contemporary critics gave patriotic interpretations of Sibelius' music at the outset of the twentieth century, which the composer accepted, at least indirectly, as he did not deny them. Kajanus, who was also active as a critic, wrote in his review after the premiere of Sibelius' Second Symphony how the second movement seemed to be:

> like the most crushing protest against the injustice that in our time threatens to steal us the sunlight and the scent of the flowers … the scherzo is a picture of a hasty preparation … for what is at stake … and it forms an immediate bridge to the finale … This allegro moderato begins with a

[15] Matti Huttunen, "Ideasta ideologiaksi: Kansallisen musiikin käsite ja sen kohtalo 1930-luvun Suomessa," manuscript February 23, 2015; when published later in a revised form, after the editorial process this passage was omitted from the article in *Trio* 1 (2015): 25–45, abstract on p. 113, https://www.uniarts.fi/sites/default/files/Trio_1_2015_fin_web.pdf.

> manly resolution and powerfully speaking motif, rounded off by proud and victorious fanfares. At the same time, the principal motif forms the main content of the movement and leads into a triumphal ending, which evokes in the listener's mind imagines of bright and trustful views of the future.[16]

Additionally, the scherzo of the Second Symphony contains a citation from a well-known song of Hungarian origin which was sung, in Sibelius' early years, with Finnish lyrics and by Finnish students. In the song, a pair of melodic phrases appear twice and are sung in this "Song of Oath" (*Valalaulu*) with the words "Thee will we protect/ With our blood preserve … Thy rock will not waver/ it will repel the attacks." This was one of many messages that Sibelius addressed to the nation.

There are dozens of pieces by Sibelius that are closely linked to the Finnish independence fight: *The Maiden in the Tower*, JS 101 (1896); *The Broken Voice*, Op. 18 No. 1 (1898); *Finlandia*, Op. 26 (1899) originally *Finland Awakes*, No. 7 from the *Press Celebrations Music*; *The Breaking of Ice on the Oulu River*, Op. 30 (1899); *Song of the Athenians*, Op. 31 No. 3 (1899); Symphony No. 1, Op. 39 (1899); *To the Fatherland*, JS 98a (1900); *March of the Björneborgers*, JS 152 (1900); *Snöfrid*, Op. 29 (1900); *Hail O Moon!* Op. 18 No. 2 (1901); Symphony No. 2, Op. 43 (1902); Overture in A minor, JS 144 (1902); Impromptu, Op. 19 (1902/10); *The Origin of Fire*, Op. 22 (1902/10); *Have You Courage?* Op. 31 No. 2 (1904/11); *My Brothers Abroad*, JS 217 (1904); *The Captive Queen*, Op. 48 (1906); *Pohjola's Daughter*, Op. 49 (1906); *Night Ride and Sunrise*, Op. 55 (1908); *In memoriam*, Op. 59 (1909/10); *March of the Finnish Jäger Battalion*, Op. 91a (1917); *My Own Land*, Op. 92 (1918); *Skyddskår's March*, JS 173 (1925); and *Patriotic March/Karelia's Fate*, JS 108 (1930).[17]

Of course, when Finland had censorship imposed by Russian officials, all messages to the nation to awaken the resistance of the Finnish people had to be concealed. Sibelius carried out these hidden political messages in pieces mostly with an allegorical content and refined allusions: the themes included issues like captivity, slavery, hunger, mist, coldness, frost, ice, winter, storms, darkness, and night either in the titles of the compositions or in the texts of the vocal works. The positive expectations of the nation

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[16] Robert Kajanus, "Jean Sibelius' andra sinfonia," *Hufvudstadsbladet*, March 13, 1902.

[17] See Veijo Murtomäki, "Sibelius: Composer and Patriot," in *Sibelius Forum II. Proceedings from the Third International Sibelius Conference Helsinki December 7–10, 2000*, eds. Matti Huttunen, Kari Kilpeläinen and Veijo Murtomäki (Helsinki: Sibelius Academy, Department of Composition and Music Theory, 2003), 328–37.

were expressed by the longing for and return of the spring, the breaking of ice, sunrise, the origin of fire, and the dawn.

Sibelius also made statements and diary entries in which he acknowledged his important role for Finland. For instance:

> If I could give up composing and if I were rich, I would choose to be a patriot, among the leaders of our own army.[18]
>
> Will do anything for our country.[19]
>
> Maybe my life and that of Gallén have been devoted to our native country.[20]
>
> I envy their battle [= of the German comrades-in-arms] for freedom, and I would like also to fight, if I were not too old.[21]

Sibelius sometimes regretted not having composed more patriotic works.[22] He often cooperated with the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For instance, we know that, "Sibelius was ready to do PR work for his homeland when war was at the door."[23] The most important of his international statements for Finland comes from 1941, when newspapers in the United States published the following text:

> In 1939 my fatherland was attacked by the Bolsheviks. Enlightened American people then realized we were fighting not only for our freedom but also for all the Western civilization and they gave us valuable assistance. Now that the barbaric hordes of the East are again attacking us in their attempt to Bolshevize Europe, I am convinced that freedom-loving, intelligent American people will rightly understand and appreciate the

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[18] Dahlström, *Jean Sibelius Dagbok*, 272; diary entry May 13, 1918.

[19] Sibelius' telegram, October 19, 1919, to Sigurd Wettenhovi-Aspa to support Finland's (rather than Sweden's) right to own the Åland islands; see Erik Tawaststjerna, *Sibelius Volume III: 1914–1957*, trans. Robert Layton (London: Faber and Faber, 1997), 173; in Swedish: "Redo till allt för fosterlandet," in *Jean Sibelius. Åren 1920–1957*, ed. Erik Tawaststjerna (Keuru: Söderström & C:O Förlags AB, 1997), 24.

[20] Dahlström, *Jean Sibelius Dagbok*, 326; diary entry September 10, 1926.

[21] Sibelius' statement to composer Einar Englund as given in the latter's memoires *I skuggan av Sibelius. Fragment ur en tonsättares liv* (Jyväskylä: Söderström & C:o Förlags Ab, 1996), 51.

[22] Sibelius' statement to his son-in-law, see Jussi Jalas, *Elämäni teemat* (Helsinki: Tammi, 1981), 70.

[23] Interview with Sibelius in autumn 1939, see Vesa Sirén, *Aina poltti sikaria. Jean Sibelius aikalaisten silmin* (Helsinki: Otava, 2000), 521.

> present situation, realizing that the Bolshevization of Europe would annihilate freedom and civilization in this continent.[24]

During the war, Sibelius gave several interviews to the German press in which he supported the "comrades-in-arms" policy, saying, for instance:

> I am happy to live at precisely the time that will bring justice to the world, especially as I know so well Germany and the Germans. I wish you from the bottom of my heart a prompt victory. I do not doubt that you will accomplish it!

After the war, on February 9, 1945 Sibelius did at first prevent some Communists, including the composer Dmitri Kabalevsky, from coming to Ainola for a visit! It was only after some obvious pressure from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that he had to open his door to the Soviet visitors, who finally arrived on February 15, 1945.[25] However, a little later he said willingly, after listening to broadcasts of Soviet music, of which he especially appreciated the Seventh Symphony of Shostakovich: "There is a great deal of fertility coming from Russia."[26]

Sibelius the Urban/Nature-oriented Composer

According to the Finnish-German musicologist Tomi Mäkelä, "the nature associations make the core/essence of the composer almost incomprehensible," and "his interest in the migratory birds has been exaggerated."[27] It is easy to understand the reason for this kind of a reaction: earlier, in the reception of his music in the United Kingdom, North America, and especially Nazi Germany, Sibelius was regarded as a composer of a thousand lakes and forests of Finland, and consequently references to nature were regularly found in his music. Theodor W. Adorno was highly allergic to this kind of reception of music. Of course, it is often all too easy to understand Sibelius' works in terms of nature—and it is thus as easy to misunderstand the specific content of some piece(s). To some extent, we have to rid ourselves of the notion of the omnipotence of nature in his music. And of course, there are many central pieces in his

[24] Jean Sibelius, "Sibelius Appeals to U. S. To Understand Finn Case," *New York Times*, July 13, 1941.
[25] Sirén, *Aina poltti sikaria*, 584.
[26] Santeri Levas, *Jean Sibelius: A Personal Portrait* 2nd ed., trans. Percy M Young (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1972), 78.
[27] Tomi Mäkelä, *"Poesie in der Luft." Jean Sibelius. Studien zu Leben und Werk* (Wiesbaden etc.: Breitkopf & Härtel, 2007), 71, 105.

output that don't have any relationship with nature: e.g. the Seventh Symphony, most of his incidental music, and numerous piano and violin pieces. Sibelius spent a good part of his life in the metropolises of Europe and travelled abroad some 41 times, composing as easily during his travels as when he was at Ainola. He composed the Second Symphony and *Tapiola* in Italy, started composing *Kullervo* in Vienna, *Voces intimae* was finished in London, the principal ideas for the Third Symphony were born in Paris, and the first sketches for the *Night Ride and Sunrise* were written when he was looking at the Colosseum in Rome at night.

However, although it is not scientific proof, all the living members of the Sibelius family say that it is not possible to overestimate the role of nature in Sibelius' life and his composing.[28] After all, he was living in the countryside from 1904. Walking daily and observing birds and other phenomena around him were stimulating creative impulses, as the following diary entries show:

> A wonderful day. Walked around and enjoyed the voices of the flying cranes—these sounds that are the most kindred spirits of my soul.[29]

> Saw today before eleven o'clock 16 swans. One of the greatest impressions in my life! O God this beauty! The voice is about the same type as that of the cranes, but without tremolo. The singing/voice of the swans comes closer to trumpet, although the sound of the sarrusophone is apparent. Having a low refrain that resembles a small baby's cry. Nature mysticism and life's suffering! The Finale theme of the V Symphony, tromba, legato in trumpets!! Good Lord! Nature mysticism + romanticism and God knows what.[30]

> The swans are always in my thoughts and give splendour to life. Nothing in this world, in the arts, in literature, nor in music can have such an effect on me like these swans + cranes + bean geese. Their voices and appearance.[31]

Still later, probably in the 1940s or 1950s, he confessed to his private secretary Santeri Levas that he was "crazy about the swans"[32] and that he

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[28] For instance, the granddaughters of Sibelius, the violinist Satu Jalas and the oboist Aino Porra, made this kind of statement in their public presentations in 2015.

[29] Dahlström, *Jean Sibelius Dagbok*, 97; diary entry October 8, 1911.

[30] Ibid., 225; diary entry April 21, 1915 includes a sketch for "the Swan theme," the Finale of the Fifth Symphony.

[31] Ibid., 226; diary entry April 24, 1915.

[32] Santeri Levas, *Järvenpään mestari* (Porvoo–Helsinki: WSOY, 1986), 340–1.

described "the call of the crane as the *Leitmotiv* of my life … Nobody has any idea what the flight of the migrant birds in the spring and autumn means to me."[33] In addition to the swans, cranes, and bean geese, Sibelius mentions other birds in his diary: nightingales, cuckoos, skylarks, starlings, eagles, wild ducks, thrushes, and kestrels.[34]

Whom should we believe more: a musicologist or the composer himself? The famous conductor Eliahu Inbal of the Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra (1974–90) said in an interview that:

> Sibelius' works are ecological music: man is in harmony with nature, forests and lakes. It is music of dreams and hope. It addresses young people, who seek solutions to the problems of the world and a new sense of community.[35]

It is easy to agree with this point of view. What could be wrong in this, except in the opinion of Adorno and many of his followers, who always linked nature in music with primitivism—and even Nazism?

Sibelius the "Absolute"/*Ausdruck* Composer

Sibelius' late statements seem to give support to the "absolute" essence of his symphonies. "Sibelius always particularly wished to emphasize that all his seven symphonies were pure, absolute music, and exclusively fashioned from his own musical ideas. They had no programme element at all."[36] However, in 1894, in the midst of his Wagner phase and crisis, he said, obviously paraphrasing Wagner's *Musik und Drama* (1850), "I believe that music alone, that is to say absolute music, is in itself not enough … Music is like a woman, it is only through man that she can give birth and that man is poetry."[37] "Also: really I am a tone painter and poet."[38]

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[33] Levas, *Jean Sibelius*, 49–50.

[34] I am indebted to Timo Virtanen for giving me his unpublished manuscript "Sibelius ja linnut."

[35] Hannu-Ilari Lampila, "'Sibelius on ekologinen säveltäjä.' Kapellimestari Eliahu Inbal uskoo Sibeliuksen puhuttelevan nuorta yleisöä," *Helsingin Sanomat*, October 20, 1994.

[36] Levas, *Jean Sibelius*, 84.

[37] Sibelius' letter to the poet and librettist J. H. Erkko, July 8, 1893, see Erik Tawaststjerna, *Sibelius Volume I 1865–1905*, trans. Robert Layton (London: Faber and Faber, 1976), 141.

[38] Ibid., 158; letter to Aino Sibelius, August 19, 1894.

Of course, the thinking of an artist can undergo remarkable changes over time. However, there is not necessary any conflict in either the young or the old Sibelius' ideas about the essence of his music in general and symphonies especially, although the last statement sounds a little strange from a composer who had written many pieces based on the *Kalevala* and semi-programmatic symphonic poems. He was probably referring to his symphonies after *Kullervo* and the *Lemminkäinen* Legends.

When composing his Fourth Symphony, Sibelius said: "A 'symphony' is not just a composition in the ordinary sense of the word; it is more of an inner confession at a given stage of one's life."[39] Thus, the symphonies contain expressions of his thoughts, experiences and feelings of life connected to music. Although it is true that the symphonies don't have any literary sources behind them, neither do they exclude his personal thoughts about life. Therefore, when listening to his symphonies, we—at least some of us—cannot escape the external images or associations that are embedded in the music. We know that the Third Symphony was built upon the foundations of the unfinished "Marjatta" oratorio, about the life, funeral, and resurrection of Christ, based on the last Canto of the *Kalevala*. There are chorales in the two first movements, sacral characteristics appear now and then, and the finale is based on the gradual crystallisation of a theme called "Bönen till Gud" ("Prayer to God") by the composer.[40]

According to the composer, in the background of the Fourth Symphony lurks the Koli mountain: "*At Koli*! One of the greatest impressions in my life. Plans for 'La montagne'!"[41] In the first and third movements we can find traces of Wagner's *Parsifal*: the *Abendmahl* and *Wunde* motifs, and the finale has swallowed Sibelius' sketches for an orchestral song on Edgar Allan Poe's *The Raven*, to mention just some of its most distinctive associative features.

The swan associations of the Fifth Symphony are common knowledge.[42] Less well known is the fact that the slow movement was based on early thoughts on Viktor Rydberg's poem "The Song of the Goths."[43] The influences of both Renaissance music and the Finnish essence of the Sixth Symphony with its Dorian basis have been discussed

[39] Dahlström, *Jean Sibelius Dagbok*, 59; diary entry November 5, 1910.
[40] Timo Virtanen, *Jean Sibelius, Symphony No. 3. Manuscript Study and Analysis*, Studia musica 26 (Helsinki: Sibelius Academy, 2005), 125–40.
[41] Dahlström, *Jean Sibelius Dagbok*, 36; diary entry October 3, 1909.
[42] See footnote 30.
[43] Tawaststjerna, *Sibelius Volume I 1865–1905*, 5.

by many writers.[44] The Seventh Symphony can be seen as a "Symphony of Life" with its slow "birth," the long "Palestrina" section, the sacral or ancient trombone theme, the "Hellenic Rondo," and the *Valse triste* citation in the end. Thus, in the same way as, for example, the symphonies of Brahms (with "Clara" motifs, FAF, AEF motifs, and Wagner associations), those by Sibelius can be read and understood as being at the same time both "absolute" and "poetic" expressions, as there are plenty of links, beyond the so-called "pure" or "absolute" music, with real life. After all, the idea of "absolute music" is very problematic when adopted as an interpretative model for the work of most composers, and it is itself a historical product of a certain situation: a result of the German idealistic philosophy and hegemony.

Sibelius the Symphonist/Miniaturist

The status of Sibelius as one of the most significant symphonists of the twentieth century has generally been accepted. His Violin Concerto in D minor is one of the most recorded violin concertos of the century. However, there is no shortage of writers on music according to whom Sibelius' greatness must be seriously challenged because he wrote so many, even too many, smaller pieces that are just "salon music" or otherwise trivial and without any real value, only "bread and butter" pieces, as he himself used to call them. For instance, Guy Rickards describes Sibelius as, "an abstract symphonist of imposing classical severity yet the perpetrator of light music pot-boilers of embarrassing vacuity," with the apparent result that, "an embarrassing emptiness of a large section of his output is often held to have diluted the value of the whole of it."[45] Elsewhere, I have tried to investigate this aspect of aesthetic

[44] Simon Parmet, *The Symphonies of Sibelius: A Study in Musical Appreciation*, trans. Kingsley A. Hart (Cassel: London, 1959), 92–4; Lionel Pike, "Sibelius' Debt to Renaissance Polyphony," *Music & Letters* 55 (1974): 317–26; John Amis, "Sibelius via Legge," *Gramophone* 77 (794) (July 1989): 152; Veijo Murtomäki, "Symphonic Unity: The Development of Formal Thinking in the Symphonies of Sibelius," trans. Henry Bacon, *Studia musicologica universitatis helsingiensis* 5 (Helsinki: University of Helsinki, Department of Musicology, 1993), 193–241; Tim Howell, "Restricting the Flow: Elements of Timescale in Sibelius' Sixth Symphony," *Dutch Journal of Music Theory* 5 (2) (2000): 89–100; James Hepokoski, "Rotations, Sketches, and the Sixth Symphony," in *Sibelius Studies*, eds. Timothy L. Jackson and Veijo Murtomäki (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 322–51.

[45] Guy Rickards, *Jean Sibelius* (London: Phaidon, 1997), 12, 204.

misevaluation of small-scale music.[46] The underestimation of miniatures is difficult to understand, and is the result of the nineteenth-century German aesthetics and its particular reverence for large-scale forms. However, in the oeuvre of most nineteenth-century composers, miniatures have an important role, and Sibelius said: "One must be able to combine large and small. This means symphonies and songs … See things on a grand scale. Style in everything."[47]

Of course we can ask whether a pine is "better" than a rose, or a tiger "better" than a mouse, but these are unnecessary questions as "Auch kleine Dinge können uns entzücken."[48] I think that most of us wouldn't like to be without the impromptus of Schubert, intermezzi of Brahms, or lyric pieces of Grieg. The same is true also with Sibelius: in his total output, the major part of which consists of smaller pieces, there are examples which, by their very existence, make our life more comfortable: *Caprice*, Op. 24 No. 3; *Valse*, Op. 24 No. 5; *Romance* in D flat major, Op. 24 No. 9; *Polonaise*, Op. 40 No. 9; *The Spruce*, Op. 75 No. 5; *Étude*, Op.76/2 for piano; *Romance* in F major, Op. 78/2; *Mazurka*, Op. 81/1, and *Rondino*, Op. 81/2 for violin and piano. In addition to these favourite pieces, there are others that contain lasting challenges for performers, listeners, and scholars as well. Just take his last Opuses 114 to 116, or Op. 58 for piano: they also give us intelligent pleasures.

Sibelius the Earnest/Humoristic Composer

The image of Sibelius as an earnest composer "who never smiled" is connected with the busts and statues, foremost those by the Finnish sculptor Wäinö Aaltonen in the late 1930s, or photographs taken especially by Yousuf Karsh in 1949 of the elderly man from his later years at Ainola. According to the Finnish composer Einojuhani Rautavaara, who on Sibelius' recommendation won the Koussevitzky Prize in 1955 to study in the United States, in his old age, "Sibelius was afraid, subconsciously even horrified of becoming fossilized into a monument, which had already happened … this man was not even a living being anymore."[49] We know

[46] Veijo Murtomäki, "Sibelius and the Miniature," in *The Cambridge Companion to Sibelius*, ed. Daniel M. Grimley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 137–53, 253–4.
[47] Dahlström, *Jean Sibelius Dagbok*, 44; diary entry May 16, 1910.
[48] "Also small things can attract us," poem by the German writer Paul Heyse (1830–1914).
[49] Einojuhani Rautavaara, *Omakuva* (Porvoo–Helsinki–Juva: WSOY, 1998), 117–18.

that Sibelius normally stiffened before the photographers, which is, after all, not exactly uncommon. At that time, taking a photo was not yet like a Hollywood shoot, in which people not only smile but even laugh. The moment of taking a picture was a serious business as you had to adopt a particular pose, though we have some pictures where Sibelius is either very humorous or even laughing. There are many accounts of Sibelius, in small social groups, being an amazing storyteller and generating humorous reactions in others.[50]

Certainly, Sibelius, as a symphonist, was a great aesthete and humanist in the spirit of ancient Greece and Rome. But this cannot characterise all his output. For instance, he wrote some 18 Humoresques, six of them being the important Humoresques for violin and orchestra. Humorous moments can be found also in his piano pieces, choral music, and the incidental music for *The Tempest.* Of course, the humorous quality of music has rarely been the criterion to define the greatness of a composer: just think of the music of Liszt, Bruckner, or Wagner (*The Mastersingers* perhaps being the exception).

Levas cites some really interesting anecdotes about Sibelius as host; this is one of them:

> I was in Ainola with a young Brazilian journalist (whose field was culture) who had come to interview Sibelius. In the course of the conversation the journalist told how a single tribe of man-eaters still lived in a primeval forest in Brazil. The government allowed them to live in peace, although all missionaries were eaten up by the cannibals …
>
> Sibelius had been listening attentively, and suddenly his face took on a roguish expression. He laughed and said: "I have had need of man-eaters in recent times. The romance of the last century more and more disappears. Much was lost when the Turkish harems were closed, and the cannibals certainly belong to the good old days."
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> Later Sibelius still added in the best of moods: "How splendid that there are still cannibals."[51]

[50] See, for instance, Olof Mustelin, *Euterpe. Tidskriften och kretsen kring den. En kulturhistorisk* skildring (Helsingfors: Svenska Litteratursällskapet i Finland, 1963), 113: "It was a joy without comparison to see him in a cheerful mood and to listen to his freely running conversation, full of his ingenious thoughts. His is an admirable, charming, considerate and understanding personality."

[51] Levas, *Jean Sibelius*, 34–5.

Sibelius the Non-erotic/Amorous Composer

In the 1920s and 1930s Sibelius' fame, both in Britain and North America, was based not only on the music itself but also to a large extent on his image as "a striking and characteristic example of a man from the North—a Viking type" with "ice-blue eyes,"[52] and thus "a hero" who was "clean" and whose "music was of intense masculinity, from which the erotic element … is entirely absent."[53] As Byron Adams puts it:

> For these critics [i.e. Rosa Newmarch, Cecil Gray, Ernest Newman, Constant Lambert, David Cherniavsky, and Donald Francis Tovey], the influence of the Finnish composer's masculine "rootedness" offered a way of purging from English music the lingering perfume of post-Wagnerian decadence.[54]

Sibelius' music was thought to be able to purify and integrate those young men in Britain who had pacifist, socialist, and homosexual inclinations, instead of being faithful and military-minded soldiers of the Empire. Later, this alleged aspect of Sibelius and his music was adopted by the Nazi government. Instead of apparent sensual or erotic characteristics, it is possible to find austere and ascetic features in his music which would strengthen the military capacity of the German army. According to Petra Garberding, Nordic music was of such remarkable importance for the Germans because it was thought to be a source to purify the Germanic race, and it is due to this attribute that the music of Nordic composers (including Sibelius) was regularly exploited for the purposes of Nazi propaganda.[55]

However, the possible erotic or non-erotic content of Sibelius' music depends on the genre and the age of the composer. A symphony, for instance, has not very often been evaluated on the basis of its possible erotic dimensions. And Sibelius' sensual or erotic music can be mostly found in his works from the 1890s: *Balettscen*, *Kullervo and His Sister*, *Lemminkäinen and the Maidens of the Island*, *The Wood Nymph*, and the

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[52] Rosa Newmarch, *Jean Sibelius. A Short Story of a Long Friendship* (Boston MA: C.C. Birchard Co., 1939), 16.

[53] Glenda Dawn Goss, *Jean Sibelius and Olin Downes: Music, Friendship, Criticism* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1995), 26–7.

[54] Byron Adams, "'Thors Hammer:' Sibelius and British Music Critics, 1905–1957," in *Jean Sibelius and His World*, ed. Daniel M. Grimley (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011), 135.

[55] Petra Garberding, *Musik och politik i skuggan av nazismen. Kurt Atterberg och svensk-tyska musikrelationerna* (Lund: Sekel Bokförlag, 2007), 37 and 58.