

Press release
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Musica nova examines musical dialogues across the Atlantic

Finland's largest contemporary music festival, Musica nova Helsinki, has published its upcoming programme. The festival will be held during 1–10 February 2019.

"This year's festival explores many examples of cross-Atlantic musical and cultural dialogues – at a time when North America and Europe may be drifting apart politically. But on the contrary, a new generation of composers and performers form a community across those borders, collaborating, sharing ideas and influences, bringing us closer together", says **André de Ridder**, the artistic director of Musica nova Helsinki.

The festival programme includes an abundance of music from today's most intriguing composers from both sides of the Atlantic: Americans **Tyondai Braxton** and **Bryce Dessner** perform their own pieces as soloists, and Iceland, a rising phenomenon in art music, will be represented by **Anna Thorvaldsdottir** and **Daníel Bjarnason**. Additionally, the festival will feature the premiere of the long-awaited opera *FLASH FLASH – the two deaths of andy warhol* by **Juhani Nuorvala**.

At the opening concert on 1 February, the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra will present Finland's premiere of Thorvaldsdottir's piece *Metacosmos* as well as a piano concerto for two pianos composed by Dessner, who is also known as the guitarist for the group The National. The soloists for the concerto will be the world renowned piano duo **Katia** and **Marielle Labèque**. Dessner himself will appear at the Tapiola Sinfonietta concert on Thursday, 7 February, when he will perform as the soloist for his piece entitled *Wires*.

After the opening concert, the public is welcomed to the Main Foyer of Helsinki Music Centre, where the composers of the Korvat Auki society and musicians from the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra will honour a legend of Finnish electronic music, **Mika Vainio** (1963–2017) and the group Pan Sonic. In this same spirit, ensemble playing and electronic music are also combined by defunensemble, **Tapani Rinne** and **Tuomas Norvio**, in *Ko(o)dit*, performed at G Livelab during the festival's opening weekend.

The festival programme of the Finnish National Opera will feature two different works: the contemporary opera *Ice*, composed by **Jaakko Kuusisto** and based on the Finlandia award-winning novel by **Ulla-Lena Lundberg**, as well as the jolting premiere of *Violences*. This music theatre piece based on the compositions of **Juha T. Koskinen** and **Hans Werner Henze** questions how violence begins and where it can lead.

The festival's many free concerts include **Olli Virtaperko's** viola da gamba pieces, compositions by young students in the 6th–9th grades and a tribute to legendary composers **John Cage** and **Pierre Boulez** at the NYKY Ensemble concert. Boulez's spirit is also strongly present when his Ensemble

intercontemporain returns to Helsinki after a decade to perform under the leadership of the German contemporary music star **Enno Poppe**.

Old meets new, Europe meets America

The Helsinki Chamber Choir's concert features contemporary music that engages in dialogue with Baroque classics. In his work *the little match girl passion*, post-minimalist **David Lang** presents his interpretation of **H. C. Andersen's** classic tale, while also drawing on the *St Matthew Passion* by **Bach**. Contemporary and classic music also come together in the concert by the Finnish Baroque Orchestra, which features, among others, **Max Richter's** *Four Seasons Recomposed*, an interpretation of **Vivaldi's** *Four Seasons* that has gained a cult following.

Ireland's foremost contemporary music ensemble, Crash Ensemble, arrives at the ideal time to perform for Musica nova. This highly popular group will play two concerts, which incorporate contemporary music from both Ireland and North America. Along with the concerts, the programme will also feature the *CrashLands* video art project. A new generation of American composers will also be showcased in **Pekka Kuusisto's** concert for an all-new, all-star trio of strings. Along with Kuusisto, the audience is treated to the stylings of **Nadia Sirota** on the viola and **Markus Hohti** on the cello.

Kuusisto will also perform as a soloist in the concert by the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra. **Dániel Bjarnason's** violin concerto was specifically composed for Kuusisto, and the concert will also feature the Finnish premiere of the massive electronic work *TELEKINESIS* by Tyondai Braxton, who is known for his progressive background. The concert will be conducted by André de Ridder, Artistic Director of Musica nova Helsinki.

Demarcation between reality and the arts

The Estonian group Ensemble U: brings a new concert experience to Musica nova. Its work takes advantage of virtual reality and enables the audience to explore far beyond the walls of the concert hall, out in the breathtakingly beautiful nature of Estonia.

A major event at the festival will be a work that has already grown to mythical proportions, namely *FLASH FLASH* by composer **Juhani Nuorvala** and librettist **Juha Siltanen**. It was completed more than ten years ago, but is just now being premiered. This completely exceptional operatic work paints a portrait of **Andy Warhol**, a lonely man surrounded by crowds of people. Another American legend, **Frank Zappa**, combined rock, jazz and contemporary music without prejudice, and is remembered in the UMO concert held at G Livelab.

Boundaries will also be pushed at the *In C (Off Sea)* concert held at Ääniwalli. **Terry Riley's** piece will be performed and the entire process examined by a unique trio consisting of composer, electro artist Tyondai Braxton, the German electronic music powerhouse duo **Mouse on Mars**, and media artist, sound alchemist and "robotic musician" **Sonic Robots**.

The festival closes with the Zagros Ensemble playing a blend of American and Estonian music in Olaus Petri Church, and with Avanti!'s Canadian programme in the Sonore room of Helsinki Music Centre. Avanti!'s concert includes, among others, **Nicole Lizée's** "musical science fiction piece" *Black Midi*, which uses multiartistic expression to examine the relationship between humankind and technology. The concert will be conducted by **Clement Power**, a conductor known for his contemporary musical interpretations and a familiar guest performer at Musica nova.

Musica nova tickets are sold separately for each event. Further sales information is available at musicanova.fi

For more information, interview requests and media tickets:

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Press photos are available at musicanova.fi/media

Musica nova Helsinki is one of the leading contemporary music events in Europe. Held biannually, the festival showcases interesting new domestic and international music. Musica nova was launched in 1981 under the name Helsinki Biennale. The Artistic Director of Musica nova Helsinki is the conductor André de Ridder. The chief organisers are the Helsinki Festival, the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, the Finnish National Opera, the Tapiola Sinfonietta and the Finnish Broadcasting Company (Yle).