

A composition at its best has everything. The entire life in a single moment. This is how composer Sauli Zinovjev (1988) sees it.

Zinovjev has quickly become one of the interesting names in classical music and one of the most played composers of his generation in Finland.

He was placed third at the International Uuno Klami Composition Competition with Gryf, his breakthrough work. Zinovjev's music has been performed by the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, the symphony orchestras of Lahti and Oulu as well as the Kymi Sinfonietta, to mention just a few.

Zinovjev composes music that conveys vast emotions. The kind of music which also made him a composer.

Until the age of sixteen, he played in a rock band. Practised the guitar and skateboarded. Then he saw a clip online with György Cziffra performing Liszt.

“It was as if wallpaper had been torn off the wall revealing a window to an open landscape. The euphoria and the virtuoso performance left a fanatic impression on me. To have the ability to inject so much art into a single moment. The entire spectrum of life.”

Zinovjev quit the band stuff then and there, and began practising the piano from morning till night. Not once did it occur to him to think that he could not be something great, that he could not compose a symphony. He just went and did it.

He applied to study composition in the Sibelius Academy - and got accepted. The breakthrough composition, Gryf, was created while studying in HfM-Karlsruhe. Every night he would sit in the grand piano room, pace back and forth and improvise.

Zinovjev entered the International Uuno Klami Composition with Gryf. There were 265 entries submitted to the competition. Zinovjev was the youngest of the finalists.

It was Bateria (2016), commissioned by the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, that established Zinovjev among the prominent Finnish names in classical music. Bateria represents what is typical for Zinovjev. Combination of styles and composition using his vision.

“I could compose if I was deaf but not if I was blind.”

Zinovjev recently finished a violin concerto commissioned by the Oulu Symphony Orchestra for Pekka Kuusisto and is in the midst of composing a cello concerto.

Zinovjev's works are part of the continuum created by the master composers. He uses classical music to make his view of the world intelligible. To convey it - life - to others.

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