

# Pärt UUSBERG

## CHORAL MUSIC, VOLUME ONE

FIVE JUHAN LIIV SETTINGS  
THE LORD'S PRAYER  
IN PARADISUM  
MISSA BREVIS  
AVE MARIA  
PSALM 121  
MISERERE

Collegium Musicale  
Endrik Uksvärav

INCLUDES FIRST RECORDINGS

# PREFACE

by Pärt Uusberg

Sel plaadil kõlavate laulude tekstid jaotuvad kaheks: üks osa lauludest on kirjutatud vaimulikele tekstidele, teiste aluseks on eesti ühe minu meelest omanäolisema luuletaja Juhan Liivi luule. Minu jaoks kulgeb Juhan Liivi looming samuti omal kombel vaimulikus sfääris, tegeledes igaveste küsimustega; olgu selleks siis kas või taoline küsiv tõdemus nagu „Kuskil peab surematus olema, kuskilt alguskokkukõla leitama: kust oleks muidu inimese rinda saanud ta – muusika?” Niiviisi kokku moodustub eesti- ja ladinakeelne tervik, mis suunab oma pilgu mõneti kurblikult küsivalt ülesse, täheringide kaugusesse.

The lyrics of the songs in this album can be divided into two groups: some are based on religious texts, and the others on the poetry of Juhan Liiv, one of my favourite Estonian poets. For me, the poetry of Juhan Liiv moves somewhere in the religious sphere, dealing with eternal questions, such as the hesitant recognition that ‘Somewhere there has to be immortality, Somewhere the original consonance must be found: How else would it have found its way into the human heart – Music?’<sup>1</sup> Thus the Estonian and Latin languages here form a single body, an integral picture that tries to look up with slightly sorrowful eyes to the distance of astral circles.

<sup>1</sup> The closing lines of Juhan Liiv's poem 'Muusika' – cf. p. 8.

# LANDSCAPE AND ETERNITY: THE MUSIC OF PÄRT UUSBERG

by Ivan Moody

Pärt Uusberg's music is quintessentially Estonian. It is characterised by a clarity of structure, a straightforward tonality and, most importantly, a lyrical quality, deeply connected to the sound of the Estonian language and to the evocation of the Estonian landscape and way of life.

Uusberg was born on 16 December 1986, and studied composition and choral conducting in Tallinn. His composition teachers were Tõnu Kõrvits and Toivo Tulev. Although he has written in a number of genres, the larger part of his output is for choir; he has composed a large number of settings of liturgical texts and secular works to words by Estonian poets. He has won several prizes and awards for his work, including a scholarship from the Veljo Tormis Fund in 2011. Uusberg is also known as a film composer, and, most unusually, he is also a highly acclaimed film actor.

This album presents a sequence of choral music, both sacred and secular, in Estonian and Latin. *Psalm 121* (2009–10) may perhaps suggest the work of the earlier Estonian composer Cyrillus Kreek (1889–1962), specifically his Psalm settings, the *Taaveti laulud*. There is certainly a similar sensitivity to the text, but Uusberg's approach is by and large less dramatic and more contemplative, although there is nevertheless an impressive gradual increase in tension over the course of the work that makes it appear to be of rather larger dimensions than the eight-minute duration of the first part [1] would suggest.

That sense of time expanded is also a fundamental element of the *Miserere* [3], the deliberate pace and ritualistic repetitions of which might make one think of a composer such as Górecki, though his mastery of these things functioned on a scale that can fairly be described as vast. Uusberg's brief setting of the Latin psalm is,

nevertheless, built around a tension created from a harmonic ostinato over which the subtlest variations occur, the dramatic effect of the music depending largely on texture and dynamics.

Similar techniques are used in Uusberg's secular music, such as *Ilus ta ei ole* ('It is not beautiful'; 2009) [4], to a text by Juhan Liiv,<sup>1</sup> which won the first prize in the national song contest organised by the Tallinn Central Library in 2009. The text describes, through opposing emotional lenses, the landscape of Estonia, and the composer responds to that landscape with music that is simultaneously rooted in the folk traditions of his native country and also in a kind of 'omniscient' choral writing that, while clearly displaying its acknowledgement of classical choral writing, is also clearly aware of various kinds of modernism and has come to terms with them. With *Muusika* (2008) [2], another Liiv setting, the depths of the textual meditation on music as a cosmic force are almost – but not quite – disguised by the folk-like simplicity of the setting.

The *Missa brevis* (2008) brings together, in many senses, these two aspects of Uusberg's music. Whereas the Kyrie [5], for example, is essentially a slow burn, building up tension and relaxing over a descending scale, the Gloria [6] is, though certainly not bereft of melismatic writing, decidedly text-driven. The Sanctus [7] is also essentially a harmonic construction, and the Agnus Dei [8] is at once utterly static and dynamic, a musical flow of lava erupting ever so gradually from apparently almost total immobility over a low pedal note.

Two more settings of Liiv, *Talveõhtul* ('Winter Evening'; 2013) and *Talve öö* ('Winter Night'; 2015), frame, in this programme, an eight-part *Ave Maria* (2013). *Talveõhtul* [9] is for two choirs, a larger one setting the scene wordlessly while the smaller one intones the poem (an effect reminiscent to British ears of Britten's *Hymn to the Virgin*, different though the musical vocabulary is), but these roles are intriguingly reversed in the final section of the work. *Talve öö* [11], an evocation of the spiritual peace brought by a tranquil, moonlit night, adopts a more straightforward procedure, alternating

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<sup>1</sup>Juhan Liiv (1864–1913) is one of Estonia's most famous poets and writers of short stories. His life was blighted by mental illness, but although the melancholy of much of his work reflects this condition clearly, his love for nature also resulted in lyrically beautiful evocations of his native country.

female voices with male, in a simple, homophonic style. The final phrase is repeated an indefinite number of times. The *Ave Maria* [10] is in three sections, the outer two employing soprano and alto soloists who intone arching phrases over a dense choral cushion which works its way harmonically down an octave. The central section uses the same melodic material, but builds it up into a climax, moving into higher harmonic regions, culminating in the sopranos' top B flat on 'Mater Dei'.

*Meie isa* [12] is a setting in Estonian of the Lord's Prayer. It is very simple in style, following the rhythms of the language exactly while exploring a densely rich harmonic register created by the use of constant *divisi* in the altos and basses. In *Paradisum* [13], though it sets a liturgical text, has something in common with *Talveõhtul* in the way that the composer uses one group of singers to create an atmosphere wordlessly before the text is introduced. In addition, *divisi* in altos and basses are used, as in *Meie isa*, to create harmonic richness. *Jumalaga* ('Farewell'; 2008) [14], another setting of Juhan Liiv, is an adieu to nature, and at the same time an evocation of it. The word 'jumalaga' is constantly repeated, an ostinato over a series of descending figures; this is the only music recorded here to suggest in some measure the work of Uusberg's countryman, Arvo Pärt.

This album closes with the second part of *Psalms 121*, 'The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil' (2010) [15]. It continues developing the musical material of the first part, but works inexorably, and very gradually, to a massive cadence onto a chord of D flat major, with basses divided in three, suitably suggesting the eternity of peace of which the Psalm speaks.

*Ivan Moody is a composer, conductor and musicologist. His music has been performed all over the world, by soloists and groups including Paul Barnes, Artur Pizarro, the BBC Singers, The Tallis Scholars, Trio Mediaeval, The Hilliard Ensemble, The King's Singers, Tenebrae, the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir, Cappella Romana, Fretwork, Septura and Orchestrutopica. As a musicologist he has written particularly on music from the Iberian Peninsula, Russia and the Balkans. He is also a priest of the Orthodox Church and chairman of the International Society for Orthodox Church Music.*

**Endrik Üksväärav** (b. 1980) graduated from the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre as a conductor (BA) in 2004; additionally, he studied trumpet and French horn. In 2011 he was awarded an MA in conducting.

Endrik Üksväärav has conducted a number of different chamber choirs and orchestras. The year 2011 was a remarkable one for him: Collegium Musicale won several major choral competitions and was announced as 'Choir of the Year, 2011' in Estonia, and he himself was awarded the prize 'Young Conductor of the Year'.

In 2012 he began studying the singing of early music at the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague, and in subsequent years he has developed singing projects both in Estonia and in the Netherlands.

He has participated in conducting courses given by Eri Klas, Neeme Järvi, Paavo Järvi, Jorma Panula and others. In 2017 he conducted the Netherlands Chamber Choir in a concert in Amsterdam and in 2018 he had four concerts with Cappella Amsterdam.

Endrik Üksväärav is the artistic director of the Pühalepa Music Festival, which takes place every August on the island of Hiiumaa, off the Estonian coast.

The Estonian chamber choir **Collegium Musicale** was founded by Endrik Üksväärav in October 2010, with a repertoire extending from Renaissance to contemporary music. A special place in that repertoire belongs to Estonian composers, among them Arvo Pärt, Veljo Tormis, Erkki-Sven Tüür, Tõnu Kõrvits, Mirjam Tally, Helena Tulve and Pärt Uusberg. The aim is to act as ambassadors for Estonian music at the same time as delivering an intense emotional experience.

Collegium Musicale has co-operated with a range of orchestras and ensembles, including the Raschèr Saxophone Quartet, the Baroque orchestra Barrocade in Israel, the Helsinki Baroque Orchestra, Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, Klaaspärlimäng Sinfonietta, Tallinn Baroque Orchestra and Tallinn Chamber Orchestra, and conductors including Darrel Ang, Simon Carrington, Aapo Häkkinen, Daniel Reuss, Tõnu Kaljuste, Andres Mustonen, Kaspars Putniņš and Jos van Veldhoven. Collegium Musicale has had tours to the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Israel, Italy,



Photo: Kaupo Kikkas

Japan, Lebanon, Malta, Greece, the Netherlands, Poland and Russia. In its concert in Tokyo the choir was delighted to be joined by Arvo Pärt and Erkki-Sven Tüür. In 2017 one of the highlights was the Estonian premiere of Lera Auerbach's *72 Angels* with the Raschèr Saxophone Quartet.

The Estonian Choral Association has three times announced Collegium Musicale as Choir of the Year, in 2011, 2014 and 2017. In 2017 the choir won the Silver Rose Bowl, the Grand Prix of the EBU competition 'Let the Peoples Sing'.



Photo: Kristel Üksväärv

## TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

### [1] Taaveti psalm 121

#### Osa I

Ma tõstan silmad mägede poole,  
kust tuleb minu abi.  
Minu abi tuleb Issanda käest,  
kes on teinud taeva ja maa.

### [2] Muusika

Kuski peab alguskokkukõla olema,  
kuski suures looduses, varjul.  
On tema vägevas laotuses,  
täheringide kauguses,  
on tema päikese sära sees,  
lillekeses, metsakohinas,  
emakõne südamemuusikas  
või silmavees –  
kuski peab surematus olema,  
kuski alguskokkukõla leitama:  
kust oleks muidu inimese rinda  
saanud ta –  
muusika?

### [3] Miserere

Miserere mei Deus secundum magnam  
misericordiam tuam et secundum  
multitudinem miserationum tuarum dele  
iniquitatem meam.

### Psalm 121

#### Part I

*I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills,  
from whence cometh my help.  
My help cometh from the Lord,  
which made heaven and earth.*

#### Music

*Somewhere there has to be an original  
consonance,  
Somewhere in great nature, hidden.  
Be it in its mighty firmament,  
In the distance of astral circles,  
Be it in its radiance of the sun,  
In a lily, in the swash of the woods,  
In the cordial music of a mother's speech  
Or in her tears –  
Somewhere there has to be immortality,  
Somewhere the original consonance must  
be found:  
How else would it have found its way into the  
human heart – Music?*

*Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy  
great mercy. And according to the multitude of  
thy tender mercies blot out my iniquity.*



**[4] *Ilus ta ei ole***

Ilus ta ei ole:  
lage heinamaa,  
heinaküünid, kuhjad,  
harva puudega.

Ilus ta ei ole:  
kõrval karjamaa  
kehvalt üle kaetud  
harva metsaga.

Ilus ta ei ole:  
mäeküljeke,  
mõni vabatomaja,  
mõni saunake.

Järv ei ole ilus  
jääse katte all,  
kuu ta üle valvab  
talvel igaval.

Aga kõik see ilus,  
pühaline ka  
valge siidiriide –  
härmatiseega.

Siis on ta nii ilus,  
ilus lõpmata:  
tõusvad tema üle  
tähed särama.

Talveööne hämar  
miljon tähega –  
siis sa oled ilus,  
minu isamaa.

***It is not beautiful***

*It is not beautiful:  
A bare meadow,  
Hay barns, haystacks  
With sparse trees.*

*It is not beautiful:  
A pasture beside it  
Poorly covered  
With a sparse wood.*

*It is not beautiful  
A poor slope,  
An occasional freehold,  
An occasional cottage.*

*The lake is not beautiful  
Under a glacial cover,  
The moon keeping its watch  
During dreary winter.*

*Yet all this seemly,  
And so holy  
In a silken fabric –  
With a hoarfrost.*

*Then it is so lovely,  
Lovely without end:  
Rising up above it  
Stars to shine.*

*Twilight of the winter night  
With a million stars –  
Then you are so beautiful,  
My native land.*

*Missa brevis*

**5 I Kyrie**

Kyrie eleison.  
Christe eleison.  
Kyrie eleison.

*Lord, have mercy.  
Christ, have mercy.  
Lord, have mercy.*

**6 II Gloria**

Gloria in excelsis Deo  
Et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis.  
Laudamus te,  
benedicimus te,  
adoramus te,  
glorificamus te,  
gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam  
tuam,  
Domine Deus, Rex cælestis,  
Deus Pater omnipotens.  
Domine Fili unigenite,  
Jesu Christe, Domine Deus,

*Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to men of good will.  
We praise you,  
We bless you,  
We adore you,  
We glorify you,  
We give you thanks for Your great glory,  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
O God, Almighty Father.  
Lord Jesus Christ,  
Only-begotten Son, Lord God,*

**7 III Sanctus**

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus  
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.  
Pleni sunt cæli et terra gloria tua.  
Hosanna in excelsis.  
Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.  
Hosanna in excelsis.

*Holy, holy, holy,  
Lord God of hosts;  
heaven and earth are full of thy glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord  
Hosanna in the highest.*

#### **[8] IV Agnus Dei**

Agnus Dei, Filius Patris,  
qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis;  
qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem  
nostram.

Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis.

Quoniam tu solus Sanctus,  
tu solus Dominus,  
tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe,  
cum Sancto Spiritu: in gloria Dei Patris.  
Amen.

*Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
Who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy  
on us;*

*Who takes away the sins of the world,  
hear our prayer.*

*You Who sit at the right hand of the Father, have  
mercy on us.*

*For You alone are the Holy One,  
you alone the Lord,  
you alone the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit in the glory of God the  
Father.*

*Amen.*

#### **[9] Talveõhtul**

Mets mustab, ööne hämar  
on laotand üle maa,  
nad võtnud üksteist hõlma  
siin talveõhtuga.

Jäänd vaiki org ja võsa,  
mets, lumi, heinamaa:  
nad võtnud üksteist hõlma  
siin talveõhtuga.

Üks täheke veel udu  
kord vaatab ... kaob ka,  
nad võtnud üksteist hõlma  
on talveõhtuga.

#### **Winter Evening**

*Woods blacken, nocturnal murk  
Has covered the land  
They have embraced one another  
Here with the winter eve.*

*The vale and brush have quieted down,  
Woods, snow, the meadow:  
They have embraced one another  
Here with the winter eve.*

*A lonely star through a haze  
Now looking ... fades away,  
They have embraced one another  
Here with the winter eve.*

Ma vaatan aknast välja:  
kui rahul heinamaa;  
kui pühaline vaikus  
on üle kauge maa...

Ei ole rõõm, ei valu,  
mis minu rinnassa:  
nad võtnud üksteist hõlma  
siin talveõhtuga.

#### **[10] Ave Maria**

Dominus tecum,  
benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus  
fructus ventris tuis Iesus.  
Sancta. Maria, Mater Dei, ora pro nobis  
peccatoribus,  
nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.

#### **[11] Talve õö**

Päike juba looja läind,  
ehavalge kustub ka,  
üks ja teine tähekene  
tõuseb üles hiilgama.

Tähehiilgus üle nõmme,  
üle üksik' karjamaa,  
tähehiilgus üle laane,  
tähehiilgus metsala.

Puud on nagu mõrsjasiidis,  
härmatisel kaetud aas,  
siin on vaimud valgeis riidis,  
tuhat tähte hiilgamas.

*I look outside the window:  
How peaceful is the meadow;  
What holy quiet  
There is over distant land...*

*It is neither joy nor sorrow,  
That I have in me:  
They have embraced one another  
Here with the winter eve.*

*Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.  
Blessed art thou among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
pray for us sinners,  
now and in the hour of our death. Amen.*

#### **Winter Night**

*The sun has already set,  
The twilight fades away,  
A star here and there  
Rises up to shine.*

*Starry splendour over the moor,  
Over lonely pasture,  
Starry splendour over woods,  
Starry splendour over the forest.*

*The trees are as if in bridal silk,  
Hoarfrost covered lea,  
Here be spirits clothed in white,  
A thousand stars shining.*

Kurbus kaob, mure kaob,  
rahu tunned hinges sa,  
kurbus vaob, mure vaob,  
pilgu heidad taeva sa...

**[12] Meie isa**

Meie isa, kes Sa oled taevas!  
Pühitsetud olgu Sinu nimi.  
Sinu riik tulgu.  
Sinu tahtmine sündigu nagu taevas, nõnda ka  
maa peal.  
Meie igapäevast leiba anna meile täna päev.  
Ja anna meile andeks meie võlad, nagu meiegi  
andeks anname oma võlglastele.  
Ja ära saada meid kiusatusse, vaid päästa meid  
ära kurjast.  
Sest Sinu päralt on riik ja vägi ja au igavesti.  
Aamen.

**[13] In Paradisum**

In paradisum deducant te Angeli in tuo  
adventu suscipiant te martyres, et perducant  
te in civitatem sanctam Ierusalem. Choru  
angelorum te suscipiat, et cum Lazaro  
quondam paupere æternam habeas requiem.

*Sorrow fades, trouble fades,  
Peace is in your heart,  
Sorrow sinks, trouble sinks,  
Your gaze is on the stars...*

***The Lord's Prayer***

*Our Father which art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come,  
Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those  
who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us  
from evil:  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the  
glory, for ever.  
Amen.*

*May the angels lead you into paradise; may the  
martyrs receive you at your arrival and lead  
you to the holy city Jerusalem. May choirs of  
angels receive you and with Lazarus, once  
poor, may you have eternal rest.*

**[14] Jumalaga**

Jumalaga!  
hüüdsid pilved, vaosid metsa taga!  
Linnuparved üle metsade  
tõtvad sügisega üle mere.  
Jumalaga! Hüüdis linnupere. –  
Kadus juba üle metsa, maa.  
Vana tamm, jää jumalaga ka!  
Raputab tamm sügislehed maha,  
metsas kuuldub sügav puude kaha,  
metsas kajab leinaline müha.  
Jumalaga!  
Jumalaga, tuuled, pilved, maa!

Tuhat aastat saanud vanaks ma!  
Tuhat kevadet ma olen näind,  
tuhat tormi on must üle käind! –  
Tuhat korda olen nooreks saand,  
tuhat lainehiilgust imestand.  
Kevade, oh enam sind ei näe,  
jumalaga, hall on ju mu pää!  
Jumalaga, tuuled, pilved, maa,  
viige lõuna poole tervist ka:  
vana tamm teid laseb tervita'.

**[15] Taaveti psalm 121**

**II osa**

Issand hoiab sind kõige kurja eest,  
hoiab su elu.  
Issand hoiab su minemist ja tulemist  
nüüd ja igavesti.

**Farewell**

*Farewell!  
Cried the clouds, sinking behind the woods!  
Flocks of birds over the woods  
Hurry with the autumn across the sea.  
Farewell! Cried the birds. –  
Disappearing over the wood, the land.  
Old oak, fare thee well, as well!  
The oak shakes off the autumn leaves,  
In the woods you can hear a deep swish,  
And the woods echo a sorrowful whisper.  
Farewell!  
Farewell, ye winds, clouds, the land!*

*A thousand years I have become old!  
A thousand springs I have seen,  
A thousand storms I have weathered! –  
A thousand times I have become young,  
A thousand splendour of waves I have awed.  
Oh Spring, I will never see you again,  
Fare thee well, you see, my head is grey!  
Farewell, ye winds, clouds, the land,  
Bring greetings to the southern climes:  
An old oak sends his regards.*

**Psalm 121**

**Part II**

*The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil:  
he shall preserve thy soul.  
The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy  
coming in  
from this time forth, and even for evermore.*

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