

Myself/Myself/ Myself

Sunday 22 November, 7.30pm
Bates Mill Blending Shed

Performers:

Annika Fuhrmann singer (Didi)
Pauliina Palo actress (Mother)

Heinz-Juhani Hofmann composition / libretto / sound design
Johanna Freundlich direction / set design
Kalle Paasonen light design
Ninja Pasanen costume design
Tuisku Hillilä sound technician
Leila Mäkynen make-up consultancy

Heinz-Juhani Hofmann (Finland, 1973)
Myself/Myself/Myself (2024) 60´ **UK Premiere**

Myself/Myself/Myself is a powerful contemporary opera for singer, actress, and electronics. The piece follows a young woman, Afrodite, who goes by the nickname Didi, as she is caught in a whirlwind of mental bombardment – fueled by social media – and pushes herself against the world, reflecting herself in her mother and in the destitute woman sitting on the street. From her unstoppable stream of consciousness unfolds a dialogue in which self-discipline, beauty ideals, the pursuit of perfection, and cross-generational forces draw her into an ever-accelerating vortex. The public gaze becomes an altar upon which the most intimate core of the individual is offered.

The work is the opening part of *The Public Life and Death of Afrodite "Didi" Hakkarainen*, a trilogy by Finnish composer and librettist Heinz-Juhani Hofmann. Since its premiere at Aleksanteri Theatre during the Helsinki Opera Summer festival 2024, the work has attracted critical acclaim from both audiences and the media and has sparked discussion thanks to its bold, socially sensitive, and timely themes.

After the premiere, Didi began regularly publishing content on her social-media channels (@didihakkarainen). Each of Didi's posts is like a micro-opera. Amid her personal outpourings appear current, burning themes and news headlines. Spilling over into social media allows Didi to react

quickly to topical issues and to engage in dialogue with followers, offering a way to explore new expressive possibilities for experimental, socially engaged music theatre and to reach people who might not otherwise encounter contemporary opera. The videos also form an arc that leads organically into the next parts of the series. It is worth following and liking on Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Facebook.

Didi has also released two singles and music videos (*Ihmiskunta, lopu jo / Humanity, end already* and *Kaikki on hyvin / Everything is well*).

The trilogy's second part, Didi vs the World, had its premiere at a shopping centre in a Helsinki suburb, and has since been performed both in public spaces and on theatre stages, including at the Helsinki Opera Summer festival 2025 and the Time of Music Festival 2026.

This autumn Didi applied to compete in UMK (Uuden Musiikin Kilpailu), Finland's national selection for the Eurovision Song Contest, but unfortunately wasn't selected. Then again, that's not too bad, since the competition would have overlapped with the premiere of the final part of the opera trilogy, which takes place in February 2027 as part of the Musica Nova Helsinki festival.

https://www.didihakkarainen.com/english/

Johanna Freundlich is a theatre and opera director and festival leader based in Helsinki, Finland. Freundlich serves as the Artistic Director of the Helsinki Festival, which is the largest multi-arts festival in the Nordic countries.

Freundlich's theatre directing work includes *My Cat Yugoslavia* at the Finnish National Theatre, based on the novel by Pajtim Statovci, which played to sold-out audiences for a year and a half. Freundlich's production of Tony Kushner's six-hour play *Angels in America* won the Ester Award for Theatre Production of the Year. Many of her directing works credit large audiences: For example, the main-stage drama production *Katrina* sold over 17000 tickets and *Hotel New Hampshire* over 20000 tickets. Opera directing works include *Suor Angelica* on the main stage of the Finnish National Opera and Philip Venables' *Denis & Katya* in the Almi Hall at the National Opera as well as a sold-out mainstage 2200 audience capacity Finnish children's opera at the Savonlinna Opera Festival.

As a playwright, Freundlich was nominated for the national 2023 Best Play of the Year with her play "*A Thousand Paper* Cranes". Freundlich has served on the leadership team of the Tampere Theatre Festival, Finland's largest theatre festival and has worked as a visiting lecturer at, among others, the Sibelius Academy and the Finnish Theatre Academy.

Annika Fuhrmann is a Helsinki (FI) based "vocal artist who

expands the boundaries of singing” and “pins the audience to their seats with her intense stage presence” (Rondo, 2024 & 2018).

Fuhrmann works across the fields of experimental music theatre, sound art, improvisation, and contemporary music, moving fluidly between the roles of performer and composer in a variety of contexts. Her practice is known for its expressive vocal and bodily approach, driven by an endless curiosity and a seriously playful approach to the human voice. Annika has premiered several works composed specifically for her voice and collaborated in interdisciplinary projects with artists from various fields. Additionally, she has composed and recorded several audio works for the Finnish Broadcasting Company YLE.

Fuhrmann has performed at festivals such as Tokyo Wonder Site Experimental, London's Grimeborn Festival of New Opera, Musica Nova Helsinki, Tampere Biennale, Helsinki Contemporary Opera Festival, and Time of Music. At the moment, Annika's artistic work is supported by the Alfred Kordelin Foundation.

https://annikafuhrmann.com/

Heinz-Juhani Hofmann is a Finnish opera composer known for his vocal works that address difficult and provocative subjects such as violence, oppression, murder, incest, and uprising. Hofmann frequently employs sharp contrasts and

extreme expressions as central artistic devices in his work.

Pauliina Palo is a Finnish actress who graduated from The Theatre Academy of Helsinki in 2008. Alongside her work on stage productions, she also works in numerous independent and experimental productions specializing on immersive performances. She also has extensive experience in musical theatre and dance. Palo is a member of the 00100ENSEMBLE collective developing innovative theatre concepts.

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