

Saxtronauts

Friday 28 November, 1pm
St Paul's Hall

Saxtronauts:

Anna-Sofia Anttonen soprano / baritone saxophone

Nanna Ikonen baritone saxophone

Nanako Lammi alto / tenor saxophone

Sikri Lehko tenor saxophone

Meriheini Luoto (Finland, 1989)

Talven uneen vaipuen (2024) for Saxophone Quartet 20' **UK Premiere**

Parts: Kätköt, Talviunia, Kevät kuohuu ja kohisee

Talven uneen vaipuen is a 10-part composition and album created for four acclaimed Finnish ensembles with roots in jazz, folk, and contemporary music: Awake Percussion, Luoto luonnos, Saxtronauts, and Signe. The work unfolds as a journey through the northern winter, where shifting

perspectives allow inner landscapes to intertwine with the wintry outdoors – a passage from autumn to spring.

The movements composed for Saxtronauts begin with a portrayal of preparing for winter – the restless rush before settling into stillness. From there, the music drifts into the depths of midwinter, where time slows into a dreamlike hibernation. Then, with unstoppable force, spring bursts forth in a powerful surge. The cycle closes in wonder at the quiet miracles of growth, emerging almost unnoticed: tree buds opening and birds breaking into their springtime song.

Osmo Tapio Räihälä (Finland, 1964)

Oil Today Water Tomorrow (2024) for Saxophone and Electronics 14' **UK Premiere**

Climate change, species loss, environmental degradation, pollution of the seas... The human footprint on this planet is horrifying. We treat Earth as if we were its sole inhabitants and rightful owners. Our boundless selfishness blinds us to the need for change. Like the proverbial frog in a pot, we fail to leap away as the water around us steadily heats toward boiling.

Oil Today Water Tomorrow is the third piece in my “Extinction Trilogy.” The first, the string octet *Swarm*, addresses species extinction, while the second, *Biodegradable Kiss* for flutes and percussion, focuses on environmental pollution. This work is a stark reminder of how rapidly we are hurtling towards disaster. Today, wars are fought over oil; as the planet warms, tomorrow’s wars will be waged over water. And by the time we are fighting for drinking water, everything will already be lost. Such a war has no victors. © **Osmo Tapio Räihälä**

Arvo Pärt (Estonia, 1935)

Summa for Saxophone Quartet (1977) 5'

Pärt describes *tintinnabuli*:

"Here I am alone with silence. I have realized that it is enough if a single tone sounds beautifully. This one tone, or a quiet beat, or a moment of silence, comforts me. A triad is like the ringing of bells. And that is why I call it *tintinnabulation*. I have developed a very formalized compositional system, which I have been using to write my music for twenty years. Summa is the strictest and most enigmatic work of this series," said Arvo Pärt in 1994.

The neutral title itself reflects the content of the work, as it is based on the Latin text of the Credo. The great simplicity of the piece conceals its complexity. The underlying rules ensure that on the surface there arises a cycle of constant change, while deeper within the structure prevails the peace of order. Originally, Pärt composed *Summa* for choir, but later created several different arrangements of it.

Justė Janulytė (Lithuania, 1982)

Endings for Saxophone Quartet (2005) 10'

"Sometimes, at nights, an hour occurs, when the plain seems about to tell you something. But it never does, though perhaps it repeats this continuously, but we never understand it; maybe we do, but it is untranslatable like music..."

Fictions by Jorge Luis Borges

L'abstraction est sans doute plutôt la fin que le début de la musique
(François-Bernard Mâche)

Mioko Yokoyama (Japan/Finland, 1989)

Tetra-Alloy for Saxophone Quartet (2024) 10' UK Premiere

This piece has been commissioned by Saxtronauts. *Tetra-Alloy* is a word I created. The piece is a fusion (alloy) of four different genres (tetra), drawing inspiration from Indian rhythms, rock/pop music, choral music, and saxophone sounds. In this case, the boundaries of 'genres' are not strictly defined. The four genres mentioned above were not classified through research; rather, their characteristics were extracted and interpreted through the filter of my perspective.

In my composing process, I prioritise elements such as innovation, clarity, and surprise. In order to create "innovation", I decided to blend existing genres. Additionally, I have a personal interest in the percussive sounds provided by non-percussion instruments. In this work, I attempted not only to utilise the traditional sound of the saxophone but also to imitate the sounds of drums and vocal music through it. © **Mioko Yokoyama**

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