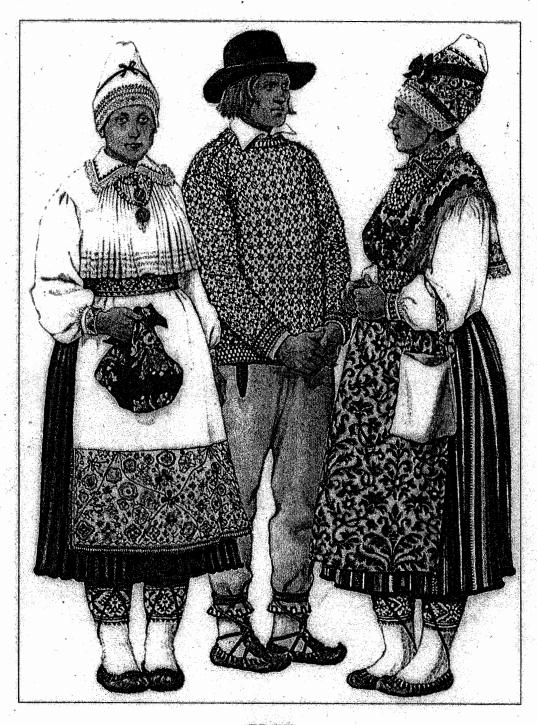
VELIO TORMIS

Kihnu Island Wedding Songs

Mixed choir a cappella



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VELJO TORMIS

Kihnu Island Wedding Songs

Traditional, arranged by Olli Kõiva • Translated by Harri Mürk Mixes choir a cappella

Kihnu pulmalaulud

Rahvaluule, seadnud Olli Kõiva

1

Can't Live Without Luck

(Ei või õnneta elada!)

2.

Mocking The Groom

(Peiu pilkamine)

3.

Beauty Fades From The Yard

(Ilu kaob õue pealt)

4.

Eat Now, Kinfolk!

(Sööge, langud!)

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Kihnu Island Wedding Songs

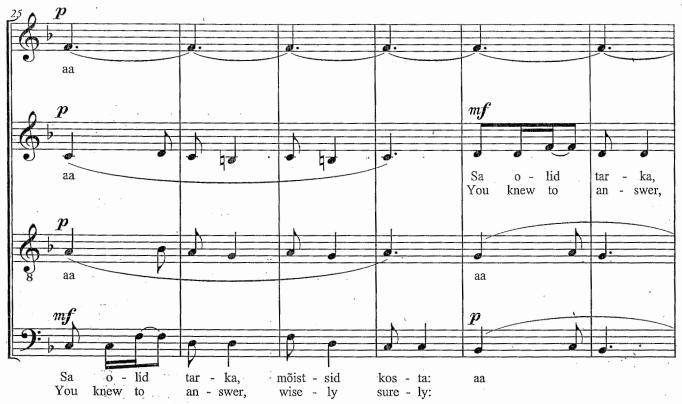
Traditional, arranged by Olli Kõiva • Translated by Harri Mürk

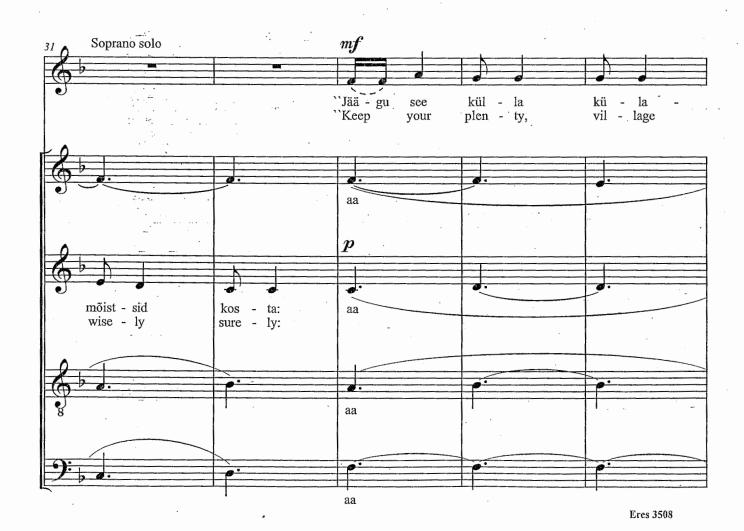
1. Can't Live Without Luck

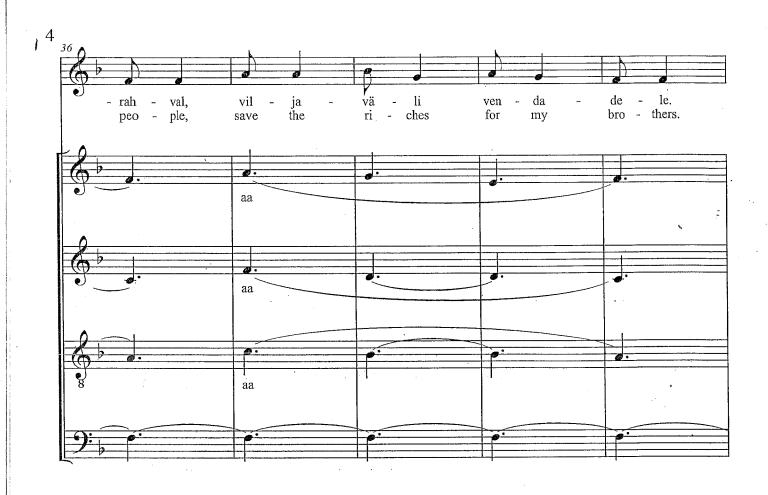
(Ei või õnneta elada!)

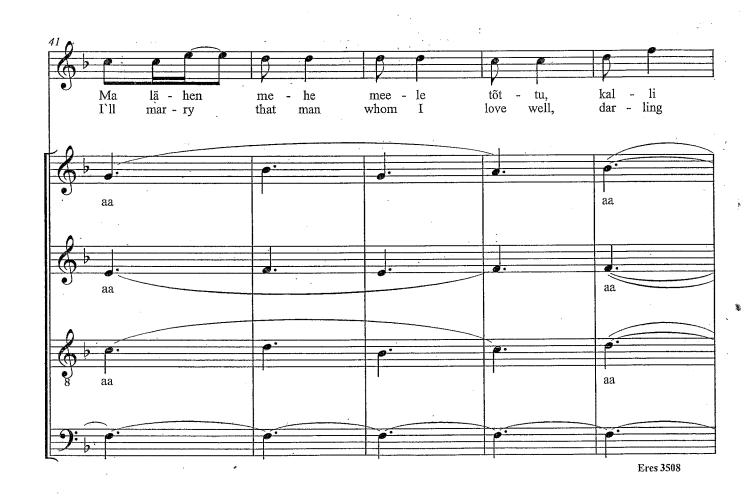


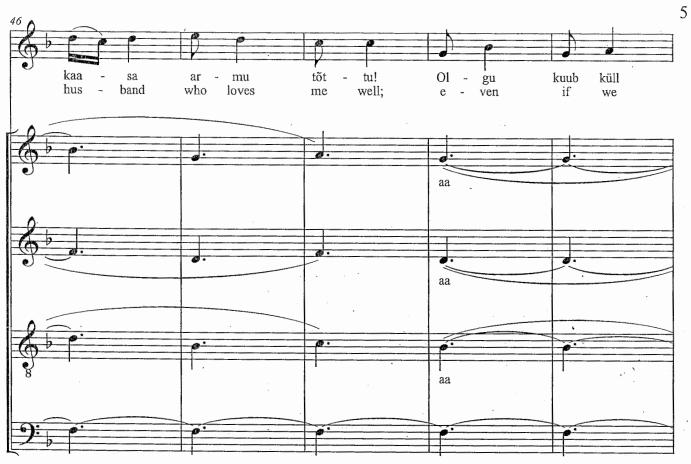


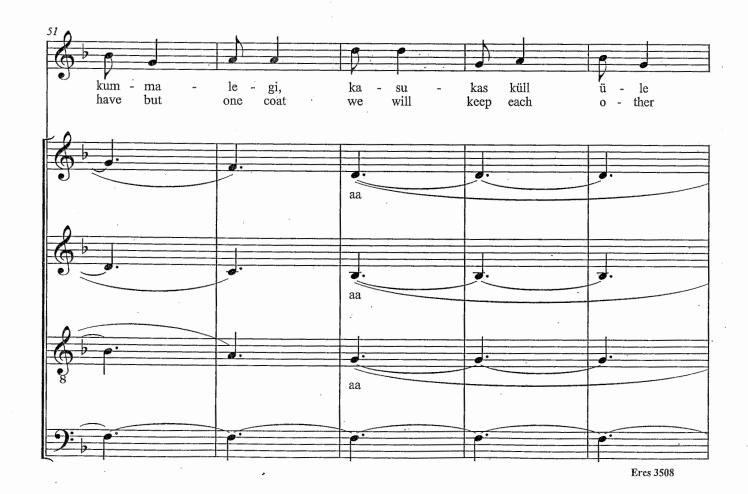


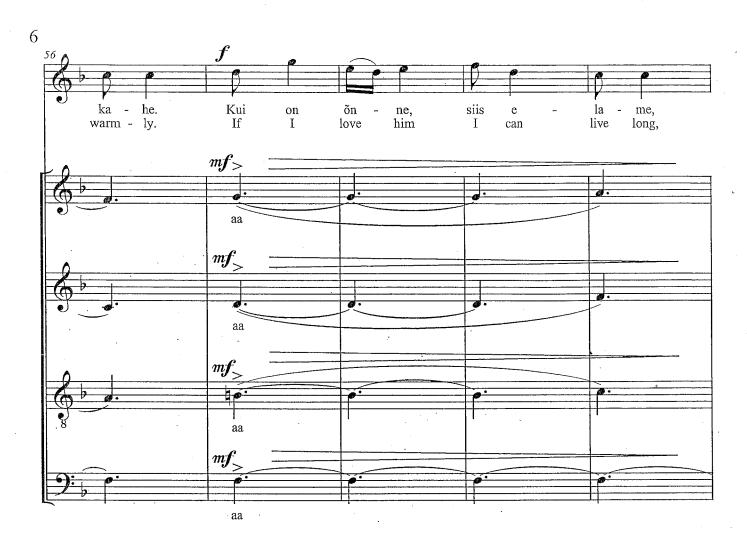


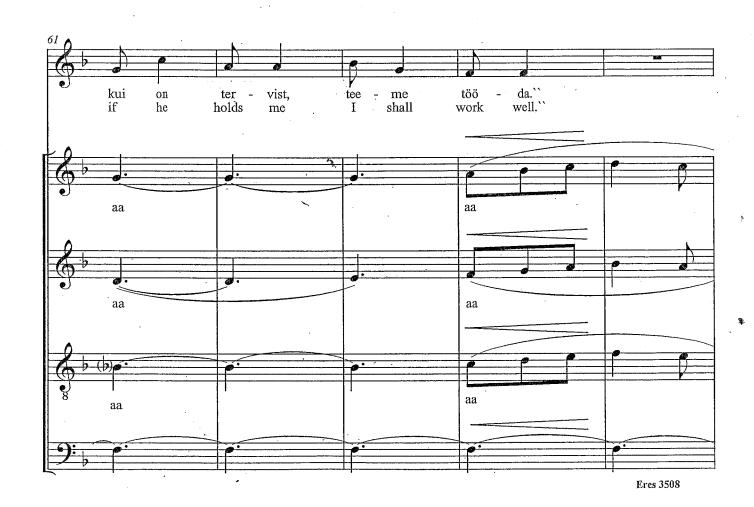


















2. Mocking The Groom



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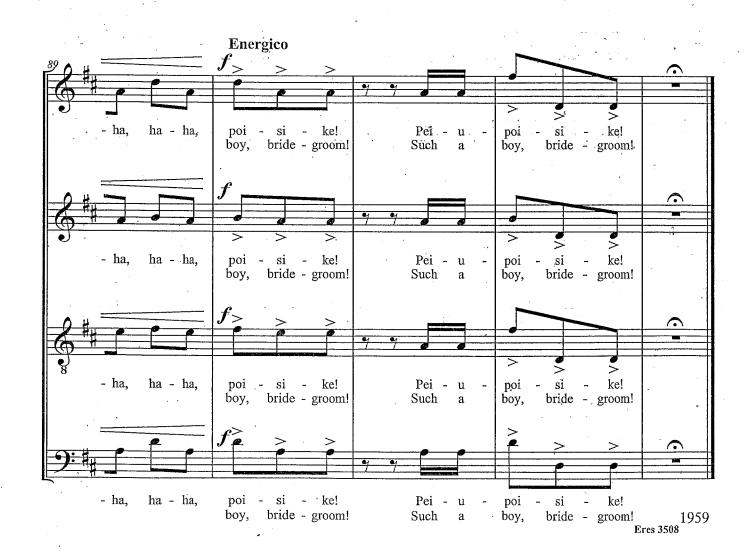
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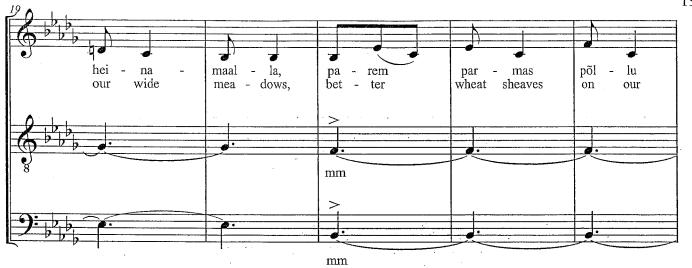


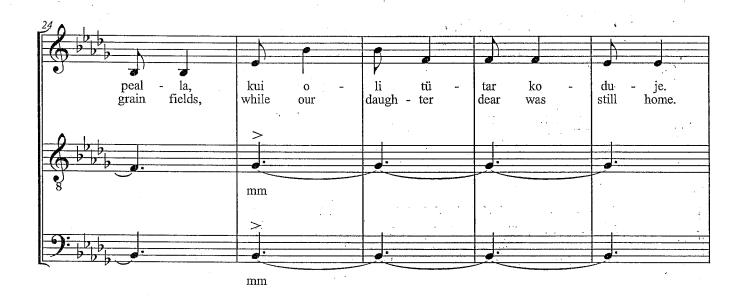
3. Beauty Fades From The Yard

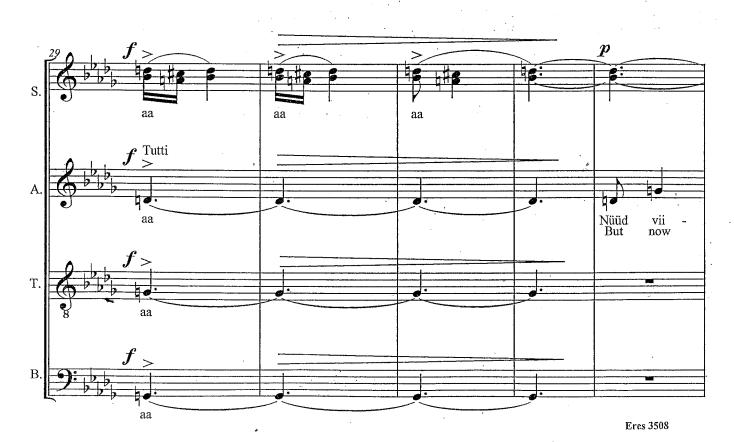
(Ilu kaob õue pealt)



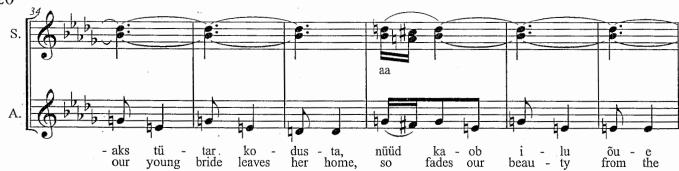
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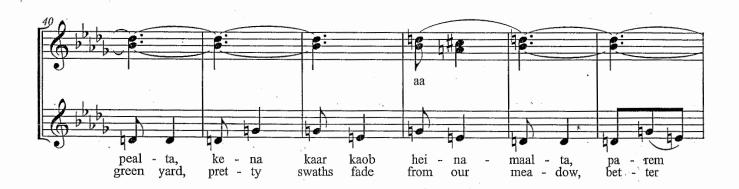


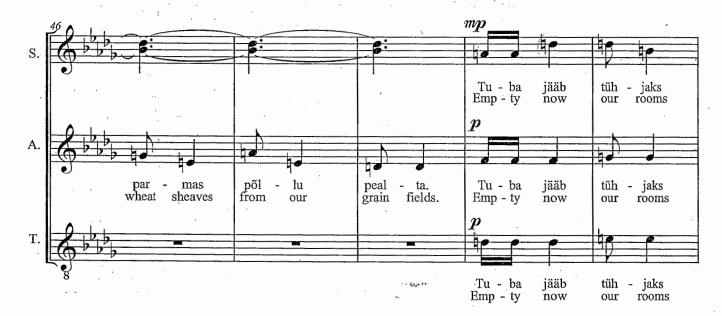


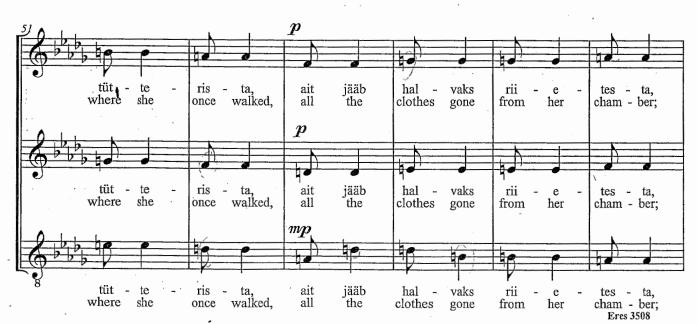
















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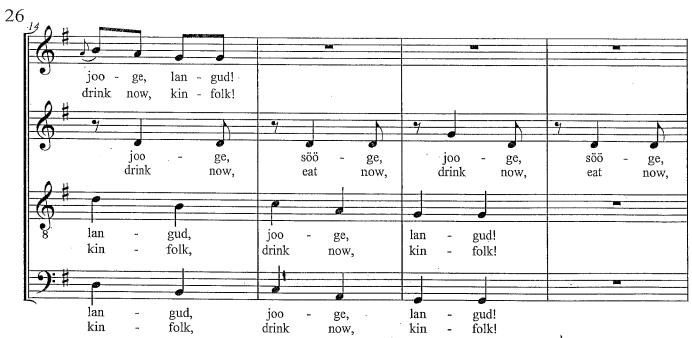


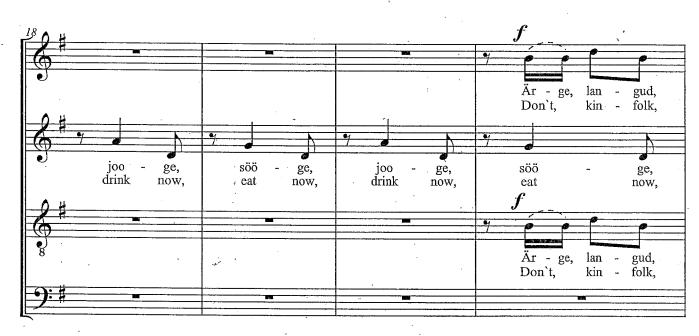
4. Eat Now, Kinfolk!

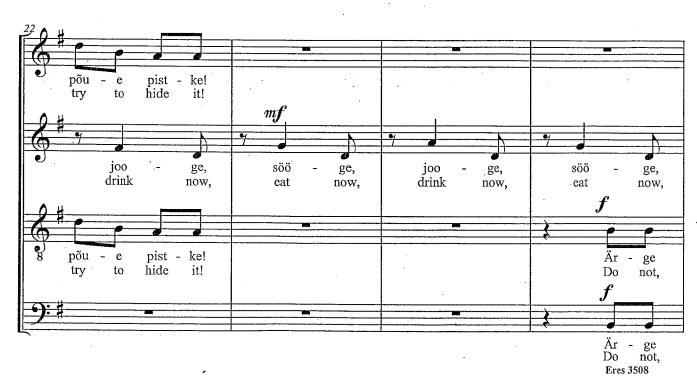
(Sööge, langud!)







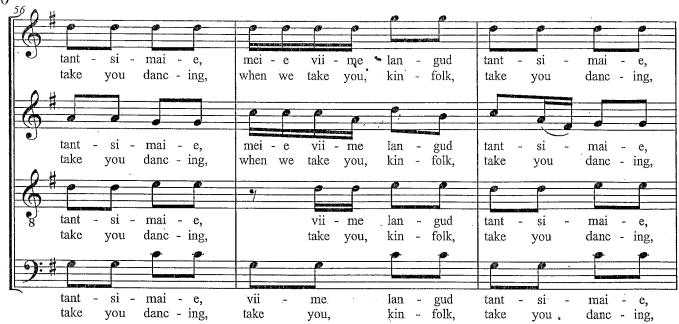


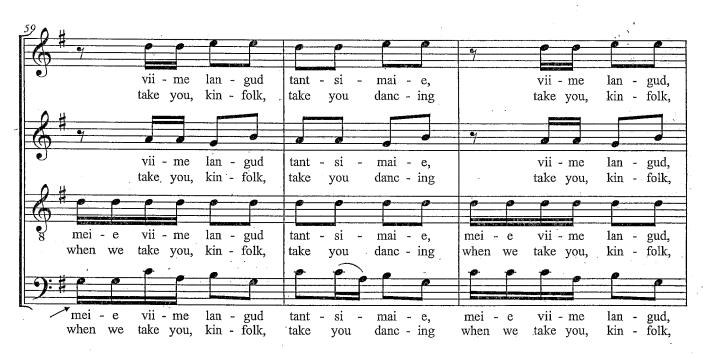
















will go tumb-ling, see how these bits of pies will go fall-ing,

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See how these bits of cakes



Veljo TORMIS, (b. August 7, 1930, Kuusalu), composer, member of the Estonian Composers' Union since 1956. Tormis began his studies of music as an organ student of Prof. August Topman at Tallinn Conservatory in 1942-44. In 1947 he graduated as an organist from Tallinn Music School. In 1949-50 he studied choral conducting at the same school and in 1950-51 composition in Villem Kapp's class at Tallinn State Conservatory. In 1956 Tormis graduated from the composition class of Vissarion Shebalin at Moscow Conservatory. In 1955-60 he worked as a teacher of music theory and composition at Tallinn Music School (Kuldar Sink and Arvo Pärt were two of his students) and in 1962-68 in the same capacity at Tallinn Music High School (Lepo Sumera, Tarmo Lepik et al. were his students there). In 1956-69 he was an advisor of the ECU. Since 1969 Tormis has been a freelancer, since 2000 calling himself composer emeritus.

Veljo Tormis began his musical career in the middle of the 1950s - i.e. in the period when the Soviet occupation was strongly felt in Estonia. The existence of the Estonians and other ethnic minorities was threatened, yet the danger could not be expressed verbally. The poetic musical message of Tormis became a powerful manifesto crossing over the boundaries of language. His music is a monument for the collective memory of a nation, a reflection of the survivors' state of mind. In Tormis's music aesthetical and ethical content is associated in a precise and artistically enjoyable way. His highly ethical nature is expressed in the titles of his works: e.g. The Song of Keeping Together, Bridges of Song, and especially his cycle Forgotten Peoples (1970-89). For inspiration Tormis turned to Estonian folk music (as it is visible in the cycle Estonian Calendar Songs), as well as to the larger Finno-Ugric heritage (cycle Livonian Heritage, the Livonians are a nation that has become practically extinct by now). Yet he did not limit himself to Finno-Ugric peoples only, but tried to familiarize himself also with other nations (examples of that are his Northern Russian Bylina, Bulgarian Triptych and Latvian Bourdon Songs). 'I do not use folk song,' Tormis has said. 'It is folk music that uses me. To me, folk music is not the means of self-expression; on the contrary, I feel a need to express the essence of folk music, its spirit, meaning and form.'

By his nature Tormis is a creator of vocal music, yet his choral works surpass the boundaries of choral music and might rather be described as suggestive symphonies for voices. All in all, he has written about 60 song cycles or series, about 40 extended choral works and about 80 a cappella choral songs. His choral songs have won numerous awards at various contests, incl. the 1st prize at a competition of songs for mixed choirs (1950) and the 1st prize at the Jubileum Contest of the ENMC (1969, 1974, 1979). Many of his works would not have been born without those numerous choirs who were his sources of inspiration orcommissioners of his music, the ENMC with its conductors Olev Oja, Kuno Areng and Ants Soots in particular. It could be claimed with high certainty that Tormis's songs have been performed by almost all Estonian choirs. The major performers, however, beside the ENMC, are the Estonian Radio Mixed Choir (under Ants Üleoja) and the Tallinn Chamber Choir (under Arvo Ratassepp). His music played also an important role in taking the EPCC and its conductor Tönu Kaljuste into renowned concert halls around the world - for many years the choir and the composer developed together. Tormis's new works were born in collaboration with the choir who then introduced them at their concerts throughout the world and later recorded them for several companies. The EPCC and Tönu Kaljuste took part in two film productions about Veljo Tormis: Veljo Tormis: Forgotten Peoples - The Old Songs of My Kindred Folk (ETF, 1990) and The Tormis Circle (RM Associatesl ETV, 2002).

In other genres, Overture No. 2 for symph. orch., opera Swan's Flight and cantata ballet Estonion Ballads have gained wide critical acclaim. The premiere of Estonian Ballads took place at the Estonian National Opera under Tönu Kaljuste as a part of the cultural program of the 1980 Olympic Games.

It has later been performed also during the Estonian National Opera's guest performances in Moscow (1981, 1985), Latvia (1984) and Stockholm (1985). At the same time his Overture No. 2 is one of the most performed symphonic works of all Estonian music. It was performed at the festival Warsaw Autumn already in 1961. It has been a part of the regular repertory of the ENSO and has been performed by it under various conductors in Estonia as well as during guest performances in other countries. Eri Klas alone has conducted it with tens of orchestras (incl. the Symphony Orchestra of Kiel, the orchestra of the Danish Royal Opera, the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, the Argentina Philharmonic Orchestra, the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra). It has also been performed in Russia under Yevgeny Svetlanov and Valery Gergiev, in the U.S. by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra under Neeme Järvi and lately in Estonia by the Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks (Munich), under Thomas Dausgaard,

Since the beginning of the 1960s Tormis's music gains more and more ground also outside the Estonian borders. For a considerable time his music has received acknowledgement at several international festivals and contests. His songs quickly reached the repertories of choirs from other countries, primarily those in geographical proximity, e.g. a personal night of Tormis's music was held by the State Choir Latvija and female choir Dzintars in Riga already in 1982, by the Moscow State Conservatory Students Choir in 1988 and by the Kodály Choir in Debrecen in 1991. His choral works have been performed by numerous choirs around the world, incl. the Swedish Radio Choir, the Netherlands Chamber Choir, the Moscow Chamber Choir, male choir Orphei Drängar, the Choir of the Central Philharmonic Society of China in Beijing, a French chamber choir Mikrokosmos, the Chamber Choir of the University of Portland (the U.S.) et al. Several choirs from various countries and even such internationally renowned ensembles as The King's Singers and The Hilliard Ensemble have commissioned songs from him. Ardent admirers of Tormis's music can be found in different parts of the world: in America, Austria, Bulgaria, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Japan, Norway and Sweden, as well as in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Veljo Tormis's creation has been released on tens of compilation records by various companies, such as Alba Records, BIS Records, ECM Records, Eesti Raadio, Finlandia Records, Forte Records, Guild Music, Gutingi Records, Harmonia Mundi, Melodiya (LPs) et al, 12 personal collections of his music have been issued over the years, those indude Vision of Estonio I-III (Alba 2001, 2004), Heaps of Songs (Carus, 2000), Litany To Thunder (ECM, 1999), Casting a Spell (Virgin Classics, 1996), People of Kalevalo (Finlandia, 1996), Epic Fields (Forte, 1995), Bridge of Song (Finlandia, 1995), Forgotten Peoples (ECM, 1992). The major publisher of Tormis's scores is Fennica Gehrman, some of his works have been published by Carus-Verlag, Eres Edition and Estonian publishing houses Muusika and SP Muusikaprojekt. In the 1970s and 1980s his works were published also by Muzyka and Sovetskii Kompozitor, in Moscow and Leningrad respectively.

Kihnu Island Wedding Songs

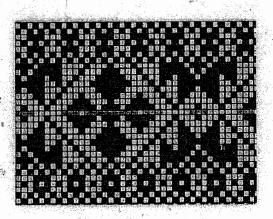
Kihnu is in the Gulf of Riga (Gulf of Livonia) near the Estonian coast. The inhabitants of Kihnu still sing alliterative wedding songs that have their origin in pre-Christian culture. The wedding songs now represent the last living remnant of the *Runo* or *Kalevala* song typical of the Finns of the East Baltic, to whom the Estonians belong. The trophaic metrical feet of the wedding songs are clothed in the peculiar syncopated cradle-song rhythm sung in the Bevaeend area. The *Runo* songs are characterized by a melody that is as long as one line verse and is repeated endlessly as the text continues. In the course of time the typical Kihnu melody has been written down in hundreds of variants.

This choral suite combine some of the variants into a melody that moves towards a climax, whereby different motifs are used for various songs. All of the melody variations used here stem from genuine traditional folksongs, to which the composer has added transitional passages. The form of this compositions assigns in to the culture of Europe. Hence it is not an imitation of the music of the earliest Kihnu culture.

This title is available on the CD

BRIDGE OF SONGS

Works from Veljo Tormis
ESTONIAN RADIO CHOIR. Conduktor: Toomas Kapten
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