

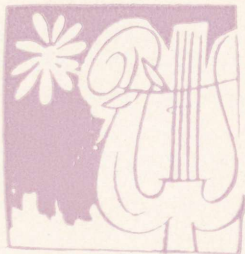
*Normet, &  
Vaher, H*

**SOVIET  
ESTONIAN  
MUSIC**

10

ASPECTS  
OF ESTONIAN LIFE



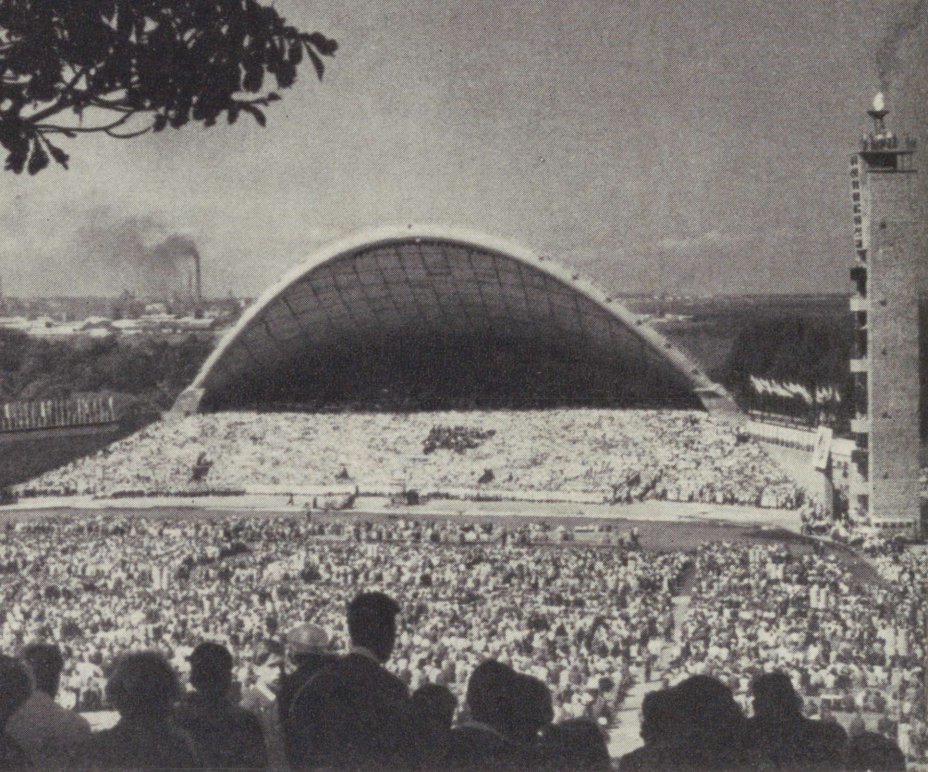




TEN ASPECTS  
OF ESTONIAN  
LIFE







A Song Festival.

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# SOVIET ESTONIAN MUSIC

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Beauty relieves dullness,  
Singing cures sadness...

...says an old Estonian folk song, and in the course of centuries the truth of these words has been proved by our folk singers. More than 30,000 folk tunes are stored in our folkart museums, and their number is still growing.

The last century witnessed the birth of collective singing in choirs. By the second half of the century there were so many choruses all over the country that it was decided to try out a mass performance. So, in the summer of 1869, around Midsummer Day, the first Estonian Song Festival took place. Those years are now romantically referred to as "The Wakening", when the young nation was beginning to "feel its feet". It was the time of the great national epic *Kalevipoeg*, written by Fr. R. Kreutzwald, and of Lydia Koidula's lyrical poems, glowing with patriotic fervour, and of the national song festivals, which best of all reflect the spirit of the period.

The great tradition of song festivals is still strong, unprecedented in the history of nations. Our song festivals have become a mighty and joyful manifestation of the feeling of unity. The Jubilee Song Festival of 1965, the sixteenth in number, brought together more than 30,000 singers in the gigantic Choir Shell, while 200,000 pairs of hands applauded to them. In other words, nearly a quarter of the population of Estonia was assembled on the Song Festival Grounds in Tallinn. A small nation is fully justified in being proud of such an apotheosis of song.

Nearly a thousand choirs were registered for participation in the 16th Song Festival. And if the numerous school choruses are included, we can say that one out of every twenty Estonians sings in a choir, or that one in ten has been a choir singer.

- 5 Although the dimensions of our Choir Shell are enormous, nevertheless it could not hold all the singers at once. So it was inevitable that the lesser choirs had to compete for the right to take part in the national festival. They took great pains to master the

## A NATION AWAKENS

repertoire. Many concerts and district song festivals were organized. And so eventually only the best won the privilege to sing at the Jubilee Song Festival under the leadership of our outstanding choirmasters, such as Gustav Ernesaks, Jüri Variste et al.

Besides the gigantic united choir, all the different types of choruses performed separately at the Festival. Concerts were likewise given by the brass bands and string orchestras.

**YOUNGEST  
AND  
OLDEST IN  
COLOURFUL  
PAGEANT**

The Jubilee Song Festival began with a majestic dress-parade that extended from the centre of Tallinn to the Song Festival Grounds. This colourful pageant in honour of a worthy tradition was a memorable sight to thousands of onlookers who flanked the road, many rows deep. The rainbow-coloured procession of happy faces, bright folk costumes, flags, flowers and music, was many miles long. Among the marchers were the tiny tots of the children's and boys' choruses, and some white-haired veterans who proudly wore the badges of previous song festivals. There were also the brass bands, marching with manly stride, and the sprightly folk dancers who gave the final folkart concert, a most impressive feature, at the close of the festival.

The State Academic Male Choir and the Mixed Choir of the Estonian Radio, both art choirs, have achieved a high artistic level during their twenty-years' existence. Both of them have always taken part in the national song festivals.

To get a ticket for a concert of the Academic Male Choir is never an easy matter in Tallinn, nor anywhere else in the Soviet Union, or abroad. Together with their chief choirmaster Professor Gustav Ernesaks, the men's choir has toured many countries, covering a route of approximately 200,000 kilometres. A Finnish newspaper "Keskisuomalainen" in a review said: "Only with an orchestra or a giant organ can it be compared — so great is the choir's dynamic scale, so many are the variations of harmonious light and shade." When the Estonian Academic Male Choir was in Czechoslovakia, Kadičik, the choirmaster of the Moravian Teachers' Male Choir said: "Your choir has acquired excellent technique, but technique is not everything. An artist must give his heart, and in your songs it was the heart that we heard."

**AT HOME  
AND ABROAD**

- Such is the appraisal our male choir has received for its superb interpretation of classical and modern music by Estonian musicians, and by composers of other nations. Their program also includes major forms: at the present time they are rehearsing
- 6 Stravinski's *Oidipus Rex*, an opera-oratorio, in preparation for the coming tour of Sweden.

As its name implies, the Mixed Choir of the Estonian Radio, with its conductor Jüri Variste, gives performances, for the most

**FROM BACH  
TO ORFF**

part, to Radio and TV fans. The choir's repertoire is made up of more than 700 musical compositions, ranging from Renaissance madrigals to songs by modern authors. The choir has often given public concerts and their program includes such major forms as Verdi's and Mozart's *Requiems*, Bach's *H-moll Mass*, Händel's *Messias*, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, Orff's *Carmina Burana*, G. Sviridov's *Pathetic Oratorio* . . . It goes without saying that the choir has also rendered musical compositions by Estonian authors, as for example *The Worlds' Stride* by A. Pärt, *The Moonlight Oratorio* by E. Tamberg, *Karl Marx* by J. Rääts, and some others.

So far we have no professional female choir, but when the Edu-

The State Academic Male Choir in Finland.





Boris Körver, Prof. Heino Eller and Arvo Pärt.

**WARBLERS  
FLY NORTH**

ational Workers' Female Amateur Choir was on tour in Finland last year, it received the following recognition from Joukko Kunnanen, an art critic of the newspaper *Suomen Sosialidemokraatti*: "Lembit Verlin, the current chief conductor of the choir, let his "singing birds" warble with such overwhelming lightness and variety that the author of these lines forgot himself entirely."

Further, the Mixed Amateur Choir of the Academy of Sciences, conducted by Arvo Ratassepp, executed such choral parts as **8** C. Orff's *Catulli Carmina* and Stravinski's *Symphony of Psalms*, which shows the mastery and skill our amateur choirs have achieved. The University Graduates' Mixed Choir (conductor Prof. A. Karindi), rendered Haydn's *Creation* together with the Sym-

**AMATEURS  
COMPARE  
WITH PRO-  
FESSIONAL  
CHOIRS**

phony Orchestra of the Estonian Radio. We have heard interesting and well-selected concert programs, excellently rendered by many Tallinn choirs, conducted by Karl Leinus, the oldest of our choirmasters, by Ants Kiilaspea, Arvo Kallikorm, Alma Tamm and other leaders. A worthy rival to the adult choirs is the much-travelled Children's Choir of the Pioneers' Palace (conductor Heino Kaljuste), which has also taken part in rendering major forms, e. g. G. Mahler's *Eighth Symphony* and A. Pärt's cantata *Our Garden*.

The leading Estonian choirmasters do not all reside in Tallinn. The music life of Tartu would be inconceivable without Richard Ritsing and Uno Uiga, while Herbert Pulk and Voldemar Rumesen have done excellent work in Pärnu. Closely associated with Viljandi are the names of Paul Krigul and Raivo Laikre, but to name them all would be impossible.

The core of the song festival programs has always been the choral arrangements by Estonian composers of many generations. There has not been born yet an Estonian composer who has not written choir songs. The same can be said about the younger generation of composers, who are eager to experiment in the field of contemporary musical expression.

Not everything written is meant for song festivals, of course. There are songs that can be performed only by our concert choirs, or by the Chamber Choir of the Union of Composers, which usually tackles the most difficult pieces.

**PREDECESSORS OF  
CONTEMPORARY  
MUSICIANS**

The keenest on choral arrangement are just those composers who themselves conduct choirs. Contemporary composers follow in the footsteps of the prominent musicians of the past: Konstantin Türrpu, Mihkel Lüdig and Miina Härma, our first woman composer. Among the contemporaries, Gustav Ernesaks (born in 1908), should be mentioned first, for chorus songs have remained his chief realm, although he has also written five operas. One of the most popular songs by Ernesaks *Come along, Fellows* dates back to the pre-war years. During the war he composed the Soviet Estonian Anthem and the song *My Native Land is my Love* set to the words of a poem by Lydia Koidula. At the 1960 Song Festival this song was a great success: at the end of the official program the enormous united choir was reluctant to disperse and spontaneously broke into song, without a conductor, and thousands of the audience joined in and sang this song together with the choir.

- 9 Gustav Ernesaks is also the author of a large-scale suite for male voices — *How the Fishermen Live*. The nine songs of this suite, conveying the characteristic traits of fishermen and the various moods of the sea, form quite a musical encyclopedia on maritime themes. The music of the suite exhausts

almost all the possibilities of expression of unaccompanied male choir. Gustav Ernesaks is in his element on the sea; at the same time his inspired musical creation is closely bound with his native forests and fields, finding expression in lyrical melodies, sometimes with a warm touch of quiet contentment. In setting folk songs for choral singing, he is able to imbue them with a feeling of contemporarity, thus connecting the far past with the present day.

The veteran composer Tuudur Vettik achieves full-blooded harmony in his songs, while the choral music of Alfred Karindi bewitches us with its peculiar polyphonic facture. Riho Päts has a true bent for minstrelling folk songs and modelling characters. Aado Velmet's songs are full of fine lyrical moods.

## THE GRAND OLD MAN OF ESTONIAN MUSIC

However, all the composers of choral music have not been choirmasters. This is true for Mart Saar (1882—1963), the Grand Old Man of Estonian music, his country's pride, who passed away a few years ago. Mart Saar and Cyrillus Kreek (1889—1962), another past-master of Estonian choral music, are the founders of our national music. Their scores were not limited to the setting of simple folk songs. Far from it. They stood on the high level of the musical culture of their age and created their own idiom. Although their kinship with folkart can be felt in their choral poems, nevertheless their songs are all original compositions. Mart Saar's songs are mainly odes to the natural scenery of our northland, and Cyrillus Kreek's songs personify the people's humour and vitality.

The late Villem Kapp (1913—1964) created melodies that impart largeness and spaciousness. In his poem *The North Coast* for male voices, he expresses the majesty of our rugged lime-stone cliffs, and his *Fisherman's Song* breathes of muscular strength. Eugen Kapp's songs and festival cantatas fascinate us with the contrasts between a warm lyrical approach and a militant swing.

Veljo Tormis, who belongs to the younger generation of musicians, is following in the footsteps of Mart Saar. He has proved that folkart is a veritable gold-mine for contemporary composers. His choral suite *The Kihnu Wedding Song* is an excellent example of how a composer's personal approach to the variations of folk melodies can be evolved.

Good choral music has also been written by V. Reiman, E. Arro, H. Lepnurm, E. Aarne, B. Kõrver, E. Tamberg, A. Marguste, and others.

10

Besides choral music, our musicians have also furnished art songs for our repertoires. In this field, too, Mart Saar is the first in the list of outstanding composers. Better than any other

composer has he been able to convey the emotional background of the poems that he set to music. In his folk song arrangements he concentrates on the musical development of exceptionally colourful and varied piano parts.

If lyrical and lyrically epical moods dominated in Mart Saar's songs, then Artur Kapp's romances brought greater dramatic character into this field of music. Artur Kapp's *The Forest Path*, written at the end of the 19th century, is one of the most frequently presented Estonian romances up to this day.

## SINCERITY AND BEAUTY

Villem Kapp's songs have won great popularity because of their beautiful melodies and their sincerity. They have, besides, a strong national character. Ester Mägi's songs, on the other hand, are rich in nuances peculiar to chamber music.

During the last two decades many full-sized song cycles have been produced. Eugen Kapp in his cycle *The Native Landscape* has endeavoured to express features typical of the middle of the 19th century. Harri Otsa's cycle of romances *One Summer* has its own firm line of development — it is the story of an attachment, of how love began and how it dwindled and died. Emotional lyricism is also the life-blood of Ants Sõber's cycle *Let me Sing of Love*. Anatoli Garshnek's *Five Setu Songs* and his other cycle set to S. Yessenin's poems, surprise us with their original and fresh harmony.

In depicting a nightingale, an eagle and other birds in his cycle *Five Birds*, Jaan Koha adroitly reveals traits of human character. In Els Aarne's cycle *The Seasons* an intellectual touch is felt. Nevertheless, her interpretation of nature is lyrical. The theme of the changing seasons also inspired Hillar Kareva to compose a cycle which he called *Nocturnal Moments*.

## FARTHER AFIELD

A magnificent musical and dramatical development is disclosed in Eino Tamberg's five romances set to S. Petöff's poems. Besides writing a full-sized cycle *Melancholy Moments*, Veljo Tormis has also introduced the miniature into Estonian vocal lyrical music. In his miniature sets *Four Fragments* and *Three Flowers*, both settings of poems by Juhan Liiv, Veljo Tormis has struck the appropriate mood with a few apt touches. Leo Normet has a tendency to give psychological characterization in his vocal cycles *Songs of a Wedding Jester*, *Pines on the Coast*, *Aquarelles* and *Songs at Day-break*. The last of these is a dodecaphonic cycle *Chamber Music* set to lyrics by James Joyce and John Masefield.

Anti Marguste has an individual approach to folk melodies, as seen in his *Songs of the Frost*. The airy contours of Kuldar Sink's *The Fifth Haikus* for soprano and string quartet are reminiscent of Japan. The Haiku form also appealed to V. Tormis.

The themes as well as the means of musical expression in vocal

## INTEREST IN HAIKUS

compositions have expanded considerably in recent years. The eye has wandered from the landscapes near and dear to us to the shores of distant Africa. The themes now include the complex inner world of contemporary man. Now the piano is not only an accompanying instrument for songs, it is given an equally important part with the singer. While fine festival songs were created, choral music for concert performance has not been neglected: songs with polyphonic development together with colourful instrumental accompaniment have been composed.

Strike the opening chords...

...announced the minstrel when he had narrated how his brother had made the zither from the jaw-bones of a big salmon and the strings from a maiden's hair. Folk music and the zither go far back to the grey dawn of history. Only at the beginning of the last century did "art music" get started, when the first choirs and brass bands were organized. The birth of our symphonic music dates back to the turn of the century. Some of the trail blazers in this field are still alive.

## TWO PROMI- NENT FIGURES

Kapp  
Eller

The two titans, Artur Kapp (1878—1952) and Heino Eller (born in 1887), must be mentioned — both composers and music teachers, who laid the foundation of Estonian symphonic music. In the twenties and thirties of the century the former founded his school in Tallinn, the latter in Tartu. Artur Kapp had a strong dramatic talent that found expression in the major forms of music, such as oratorios, cantata and symphony. He was a prolific composer and wrote four out of his five symphonies in the post-war years. That the last decade of a composer's life should be so fruitful is a rare case. Artur Kapp's *Fourth Symphony*, which was dedicated to youth, has won great popularity. His fifth *The Peace Symphony-Cantata* was nearly finished in 1952, the year of his death, and in this, like the great Beethoven, who was one of his ideals, he found that symphonic means alone were not sufficient to express the noble idea of peace, dear to all mankind.

If we compare Artur Kapp's strong brush strokes with Heino Eller's precise techniques, we could say that the latter has a graphic artist's handwriting. Eller's principle was that there should be nothing superfluous in music. In his scores every detail is minutely elaborated with the greatest love and care, and it bears a heavy inner burden. In Eller's music there is an ideal balance between sensibility and the intellect. In painting the delicate hues of nature Heino Eller unknowingly



Jaan Rääts.

reflected the variations of the human soul. He developed his own strong individuality in music through absorbing and assimilating much of the new brought in by the 20th century. On

reaching his musical maturity, he strived to attain a clarity similar to Mozart's, and found inspiration in folk music. This he also listened to in his own way. All this can be felt when following his symphonic compositions of the last two decades: the symphonic poems *An Eagle's Flight* and *Singing Fields*, or his *Third Symphony*, which reveals a wealth of dramatism hitherto unknown in his works.

In the scores of Artur Kapp's and Heino Eller's pupils, certain traits of the Old Masters can be recognized; still they have taken Estonian symphonic music along different roads of development, which gives a wealth of individuality to our contemporary music.

Among the pupils of Artur Kapp, his son Eugen Kapp (b. 1908) has composed symphonic music, also his nephew Villem Kapp, and the composer Villem Reiman (b. 1906). The programmatic titles of Eugen Kapp's symphonies disclose their idea content: *The Patriotic Symphony*, written during the war, reflects the thoughts and feelings of that dramatic period; the leitmotif of *The Estonian Symphony* is based on a folk tune, through which the author conveys the tension and beauty of the great struggle for peace; and the more recent *Springtime Symphony* which breathes of radiant poetry. His *Pictures of Tallinn* for piano attract us with their picturesque fantasy.

Villem Kapp has perpetuated his name in the history of Estonian symphonic music with his *Second Symphony*. This is a captivating synthesis of romantic emotion and the dynamics of contemporary life. Great melodiousness, always characteristic of the composer, carries the musical thought in this work.

The list of Villem Reiman's symphonic compositions so far consists of only three works. After his *Vilsandi Suite*, written some thirty years ago and conceived as film music, Villem Reiman wrote chamber music for many years: sonatinas for piano, string quartets and others. Some years ago he finished his *Dramatic Suite* for string orchestra and then as a pleasant surprise his *First Symphony* appeared, and it was first performed at the jubilee concert in honour of his 60th birthday. It was a work almost theatrically rich in colours and characters, where Reiman's typically melodious expressiveness develops hand in hand with the application of new technical means.

From among Heino Eller's pupils one became Estonia's greatest symphonist: Eduard Tubin (b. 1906). At the time these lines are written, Tubin is working at his *Eighth Symphony*. His fifth and sixth symphonies are his masterpieces, both monumental works, carried by breath-taking dramatic tension, they are excellent examples of contemporary orchestration. The magnificent dynamics of development of these symphonies has increased the

## IN THE FOOT- STEPS OF THE OLD MASTER

## SYMPHONIES REFLECT LIFE

## THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE

significance of rhythm which, time and again, forms an independent contrasting line of development, reflecting life itself and human experiences in all their tragic contradictions. Tubin's works have been performed in many countries. At the present time Eduard Tubin resides in Stockholm.

Anatoli Garshnek has added fine lines of colour to the general picture of Estonian symphonic music. He has found a rich source of inspiration in Setu folklore. (The Setus are a small ethnic group who live in the south-eastern corner of Estonia.) Their folklore is an interesting crossing of Estonian and Slavic elements. Garshnek has made lively, merry music in his symphonic program music, in his symphonette, two symphonies, and especially his richly fantastic *Piano Quintet*.

Symphonies have been written by a number of composers: Alfred Karindi (1 symphony), Els Aarne (1), Heimar Ilves (2), Boris Parasadanjan (3), Helmuth Rosenvald (3), and some more names will be listed below.

The works of Bartók, Stravinski, Prokofjev, Shostakovitch and Tubin became the "starting off" place of the youngest generation of Estonian symphony composers: Eino Tamberg, Jaan Koha, Heino Jürisalu, Veljo Tormis, Jaan Rääts, Arvo Pärt, Anti Marguste, Hillar Kareva, Kuldar Sink... The common denominator of their music is a keen awareness of the pulse of our age and its great problems. When an Italian reviewer, G. Manzoni, wrote the following about the performance of Arvo Pärt's *Perpetuum Mobile* at the Venice Festival in 1964: "The composer has avoided the influence of fashionable trends and has proved that he has assimilated and absorbed the most important experience of recent years," he gave an apt definition of the prevailing tendencies of development of all our young composers. Their works have been appreciated by the concert-goers of Tallinn and listeners abroad. Rääts' *Concerto for Chamber Orchestra* received a stormy applause over-seas, in the United States, in Paris and in Budapest; Pärt's *Obituary* was favourably received in Geneva and in Zagreb, his symphony was a great success in Turku; while Tormis' *Overture No 2* got applause in Warsaw, Tamberg's *Concerto Grosso* in Helsinki and his *Ballet Symphony* in Schwerin...

The trumpet sounds of the toccata in Tamberg's *Concerto Grosso* were like a signal to the onrush of the younger generation of composers. The musical "new barocco" style became the foundation for Jaan Rääts' works, though his manner of writing is different, but for whom music is the incarnation of an irresistible urge towards movement. Motor rhythmic seems to pulsate in his composition, but above all it is active and dynamic, onward rushing. It is combined with scanty, contrasting thematic lines,

**NEW  
BAROCCO  
AND MOTOR  
RHYTHMICS**

which leap over wide intervals, emphasizing the seething energy in the music. This is true for his *Concerto for Chamber Orchestra*, but his *Third* and *Fifth Symphonies* convey the dashing rhythm of an industrial city, while his *Fourth* reflects the excitement of conquering outer space.

Opposite to Rääts' rush and sharp contrasts is Eino Tamberg's love of profound symphonic meditation and psychological absorption. This makes itself felt both in his *Ballet Symphony* and in his *Symphonic Dances*. His rhythm is very flexible and he finds interesting sound shades in polyphonic layers. Crisp, bracing notes in the style of Bartók are felt in Jaan Koha's first symphony. The young composer has subjected the form and musi-

A scene from the opera "Flames of Vengeance" by E. Kapp.

A scene from the ballet "Tiina" by L. Auster with Helmi Puur in the title-role.



cal thought of his composition to the so-called principle of total variation. Expressive and temperamental, though written in quite a different manner, are the two overtures by Veljo Tormis. Jazz colours and rhythms have given an individual and original façade to Anti Marguste's *Second Symphony*.

Although Arvo Pärt's works are generally characterized by an earnest striving for clarity and transparency of sound by exiguous means, he sets up for himself in each new work ever higher goals in regard to both content and techniques. Thus, in his *Obituary* he has freely used dodecaphonic techniques; the tremendous crescendo of his *Perpetuum Mobile* has been achieved by clever "mathematical calculations" — as each instrument starts playing, it keeps one sound in a certain duration, whereas the duration gets shorter with the entrance of every new instrument; in his *Collage on the theme of BACH*, extracts from Bach's music are contrasted with the means of expression in the style

**TONE  
CLUSTERS,  
ALEATORIC  
TECHNIQUE**



FROM  
POPULAR  
NOVELS

of modern tone-clusters; his *Syllabic Music* develops the trends started by A. Webern. In Pärt's *Symphony* contemporary polyphonic techniques have been used, and in his *Diagrams* he leaves the pianist to find the musical thought out of the fixed pitches of sounds. The composer Kuldar Sink, still very young, is also experimenting on new combinations of sounds. In his *Contrasts* for chamber orchestra and piano the young composer applies the aleatoric technique. However, an essential feature of all these searchings is that they do not throw the idea content into the shade.

The growing importance of intellectual elements, of witty ingenuity in music has paved the road to musical humour. Formerly humour was an intrinsic part of comical songs, but now it has also found its way into symphonic scores. One of the most comical novels of Estonian literature is *Spring* by the humourist Oskar Luts. It is a juvenile classic depicting the tricks and pranks of some school-boys in the village of Paunvere at the turn of the century. The extremely popular characters of the book, especially the mischief-maker Toots and the tattler and mollycoddle Kiir, inspired Ülo Vinter to write the suite *Paunvere*. The comical side of the characters in his music is so convincing that theatres have requested the author to write a ballet on the same theme. Witty jokes and grotesque are to be found in Heino Jürisalu's *Three Serenades* for chamber orchestra and in his *Concerto for Orchestra*, the scores of which are moderately seasoned with merry, unexpected turns.

Nor have the creators of symphonic music forgotten about instrumental music. One of the outstanding works in this field is Heino Eller's *Concerto for Violin*, the bracing poetry of which offers the violin-virtuoso manifold expression possibilities. There is a wealth of idea content in Eduard Tubin's two concertos for the violin. Tubin has written concertos even for such "extraordinary" instruments as the double-bass and the balalaika. Uno Naissoo's concertos for the accordion and clarinet may also be rated as unusual.

Our instrumental concertos are also rich in contrasts as regards the authors and the character of their compositions. Boris Kõrver's concerto for violin, a lyrical piece dedicated to nordic landscapes, is in sharp contrast to the swing and bold outlines of Jaan Rääts' concerto for violin, also to the echoes of romanticism in Artur Lemba's concertos for piano, and to the homely key of folk music in the concertos for piano by Ester Mägi and Lydia Auster, or to the youthful play of colours in Jaan Koha's concerto for the piano. Hugo Lepnurm's concerto for the organ in national neo-classicist mode is a fine example of high-class polyphonic skill.

## INSPIRED BY FOLK TUNES

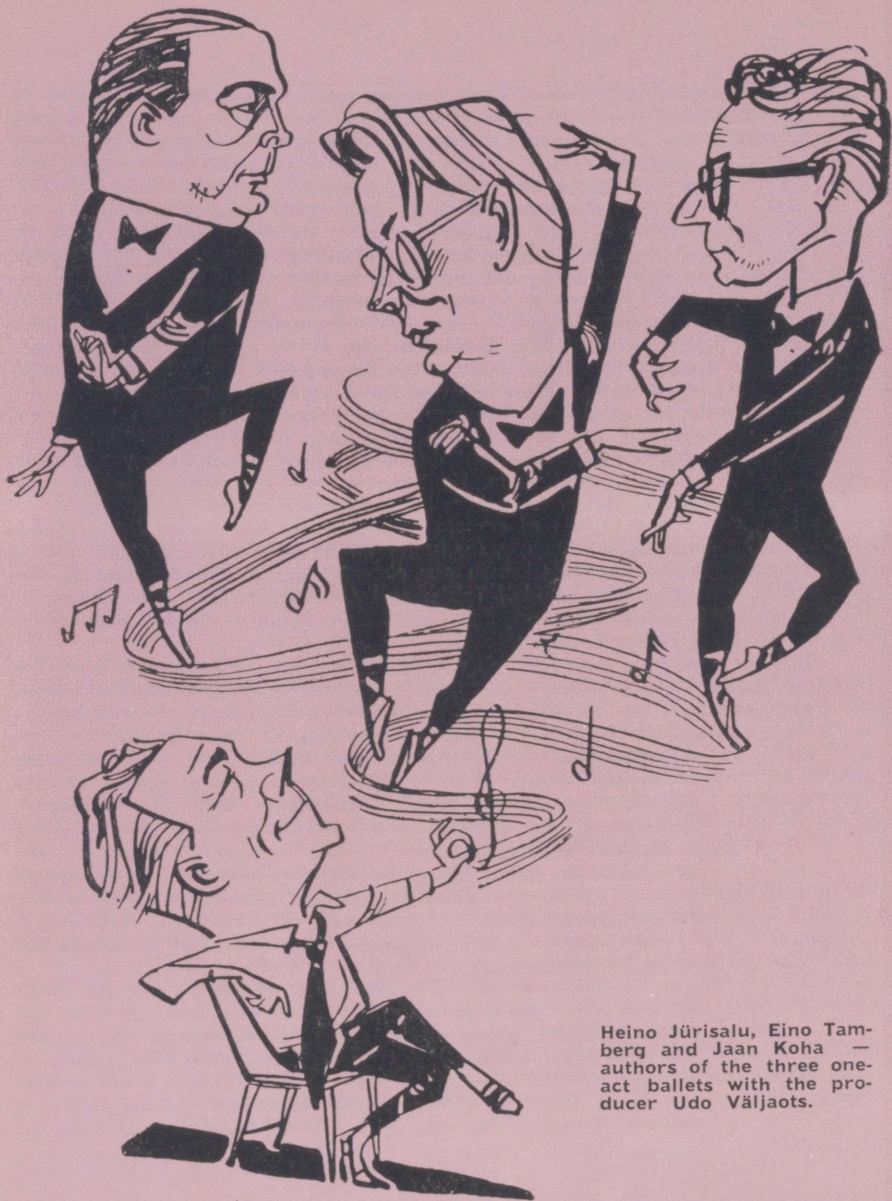
And our instrumental chamber music is extremely versatile: to find a common denominator would be next to impossible. Among the numerous composers of string quartets, Heino Eller should again be mentioned first. The quartet seems to be the ideal form of expression for his artistic nature. His third, fourth and fifth quartets charm us with their beauty and the logic of their polyphonic thought development. His *Thirteen Pieces for Piano on Estonian Folk Tunes*, written at the beginning of the forties, were a novelty in the contemporary treatment of Estonian folk music. Quartets have also been composed by Eugen Kapp, Villem Reiman, Ester Mägi, Heimar Ilves, Helmuth Rosenthal, Eino Tamberg, Jaan Rääts, Arvo Pärt and Kuldar Sink; trios for various instruments have been written by Alfred Karindi, Hugo Lepnurm, Jaan Rääts. Many of the composers have created music for solo instruments. The most interesting pieces for the violin are Eduard Tubin's solo sonata, Lepnurm's *Variations for Violin and Organ*, and a violin suite *The Four Winds* by a young composer Hillar Kareva. Next to Lepnurm and Karindi, Edgar Arro should be mentioned for his noteworthy works for the organ.

The traditions of cantata and oratorio music date back to the turn of the century, for hasn't the vocal symphonic genre always been connected with our choral singing? The founders of this genre were Rudolf Tobias and Artur Kapp, who were joined by Cyrillus Kreek in the twenties when he wrote his well-known *Estonian Requiem*.

## CHAMBER MUSIC AND CANTATAS

Among works of this genre we now have on the one hand, the present-day song festival cantatas performed by thousands of voices, and on the other hand, Kuldar Sink's cantata for chamber chorus called *The Seasons*, which is a setting of poems by Estonian and Japanese poets. Brilliant examples of how our contemporaries understand and hear our national epic is Ester Mägi's cantata *Kalevipoeg's Journey to Finland*, likewise Veljo Tormis' cantata *Kalevipoeg*. The thoughts of a contemporary man are reflected in Lembit Veevo's *The Voice of Blood*, and Heino Lemmik's cantata for male choirs *When the Heather Weeps*. Our composers have also written cantatas for children's choirs: Arvo Pärt's *Our Garden*, Jaan Koha's *Our Days* and Ants Sõber's *A Pioneers' Summer*. The late Villem Kapp's cantata *To Spring* turned out to be his swan song.

The first post-war oratorios were Eino Tamberg's *For the Freedom of the People* and Anatoli Garshnek's *Elder Meelis and Prince Vyachko*, which depict our people's historic struggles in the past ages, while three new oratorios have firmly stepped into the present. Arvo Pärt's oratorio *The World's Stride* embraces in its orbit the whole world, which "slowly but firmly is moving towards the light". Its poetry of labour is sung in



Heino Jürisalu, Eino Tamberg and Jaan Koha — authors of the three one-act ballets with the producer Udo Väljaots.

laboratories and at the building-sites of Siberia, with scenes from Europe's metropolises, from Japan and Africa also incorporated. Tamberg's *Moonlight Oratorio* radiates the author's excitement over the fact that the silvery lantern of our nocturnal sky can't hide its secrets from man any longer. Jaan Rääts' *Karl Marx* is written in a declamatory style, expressing the triumphant march of his ideas artistically transformed into the emotional and convincing language of musical images.

Of no small importance in these oratorios are the poems of our gifted poets Jaan Kross and Enn Vetemaa, to which they have been set. This new synthesis of words and music enables the authors to convey their world of ideas from many angles.

Consequently, Estonian instrumental music with and without singing is barely as old as our twentieth century. All the stages of development that took the older civilized nations hundreds of years to traverse, we have double-timed in half a century.

Open the door and let us in...

...merrily sang the mummers on St. Martin's Eve. When they were let in, they sang and danced, wishing the host and hostess a good crop and much happiness. Such was the "musical theatre" of our forefathers.

**FROM  
MUMMERS  
AND  
MASKERS  
TO OPERA**

Verdi and Wagner were both dead and gone when the first bungling attempts to create stage plays with music were made in our country. The first success in the field of opera appeared at the end of the twenties when Evald Aav's *Vikings*, Adolf Vedro's *Kaupo* and three operas by Artur Lemba were staged, mainly psychological dramas on a historical background.

The first people's drama was Johannes Hiiob's opera *The Price of Victory* written in 1939, an after-glow of the 1905 revolution (so far it has not yet been staged). Eugen Kapp's *Flames of Vengeance* became the first people's drama of the Soviet period. The time of the writing of the opera coincided with the sixth centenary of the tragic uprising on St. George's Night, 1343, when the Estonians took up arms against the Knights of the Order. The climax of the opera is the *Avengers March*, the heroic music of which has grown out of a simple old folk song. In Eugen Kapp's second opera *The Bard of Freedom*, our contemporaries appeared on the Estonian opera stage for the first time. The hero of the opera, Juhan Raju, a poet, is imprisoned by the Nazis, but he goes on writing militant poems. Thanks to the exceptional expressiveness of the solo parts in these operas, they are often performed at concerts. Eugen Kapp has written a children's opera *A Winter Fairy-Tale* and an opera about partisans *Elusive Martha* in a more chamber-like style.

## NO LESS THAN FIVE

Gustav Ernesaks is the author of no less than five operas. Ernesaks is at his best when composing choral parts and colourful scenes of rural life and customs. The arias are very tuneful. His operas on historical themes are *Pühajärv* (Holy Lake) and the very popular *Stormy Coast*. The latter is the story of how the people on the small island of Hiiumaa defied the piratical Count Ungern-Sternbergs whose false lighthouse brought destruction to passing ships. The most dramatic of Ernesaks' operas is *Baptism with Fire*. It revives the revolutionary events of 1905. Ernesaks' mild humour and his love of summer-night rural scenes comes to life in his two comic operas *Hand-in-Hand* (new title *Mari and Mihkel*) and *Suitors from Mulgimaa*.

The war against the swampland and its poisonous vapours in the human soul is the subject of Leo Normet's opera *Light in Koordi*, which takes us to a contemporary Estonian village. Villem Kapp's opera *Lembitu* is dedicated to the legendary 13th century Elder of the Estonians, who was killed in the battle with the Knights of the Cross. Villem Reiman's opera *Distant Shores* takes us to the coast of the Pacific Ocean. In this opera the orchestra has a significant role. The well-known composer of children's music, Riho Päts, has created a children's opera *Cunning Ants and the Old Heathen*, the setting of a popular folktale.

That there also is a trend towards modern means of expression in the province of the opera is clearly seen in Eino Tamberg's work *The Iron Home*. The action of this tense musical drama takes place in the thirties. The heroes are a group of seamen who actively oppose the shipowners, smugglers of arms to anti-democratic powers. Its expressive melodious recitative and good orchestral treatment, the clear-cut characters, and an impressive libretto by the poet Uno Laht, have aroused a deep interest in this opera.

The Estonian ballet is much younger than the opera. Less than a quarter of a century has passed since the first Estonian ballet *The Goblin* by E. Tubin was staged. The legend of how a goblin gathers riches for his greedy master was set to music by the skilful symphonist. The realm of fantasy is splendidly contrasted with the world of reality.

After *The Goblin*, comes Eugen Kapp's ballet *Kalevipoeg* based on the national epic. This is another masterpiece of Estonian ballet. Without directly citing folk music, the author has penetrated to the heart of the epic and made it sparkle with bright colours. Eugen Kapp's other ballet *The Gold Spinners* takes us also into the fairyland of folktales.

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The first dramatic Estonian Ballet is Lydia Auster's *Tiina*, based on *The Werewolf*, a classical drama by August Kitzberg. The musical presentation of the characters and the expressive

## THE GOBLIN AND THE WEREWOLF



Edgar Arro and Leo Normet.

orchestral utterance have made this ballet a significant item in our ballet repertoire. Our first children's ballet *A Northland Dream* was also composed by Lydia Auster.

**MODERN  
BALLET**

Eino Tamberg's *Ballet Symphony* is meant for both the concert hall and the theatre stage. It has no plot in the usual sense. The impressions and emotions experienced by a young girl in the course of one day constitute the subject matter. Eino Tamberg's miniature ballet *The Boy and the Butterfly* owes its plot to a philosophical miniature by the greatest classic of Estonian literature, A. H. Tammsaare. It is about a boy who tramples all the lovely flowers while running after a many-coloured butterfly. Heino Jürisalu has composed a miniature ballet *The Street* with a most versatile orchestra part. In this work the unsullied love of two young people is contrasted with the brutality of some street loafers. Jaan Koha's *Department Store* is a miniature comic ballet with some merry scenes of the noisy bustle of a big department store. The script for all these ballets was written by Udo Väljaots, the chief producer of the Estonia Theatre.

Prof. Vladimir Alumäe.



Uno Naissoo on the sleeve of a record issued in Finland.



Happy day  
Meditation  
Reverby  
Morning in the

**GOLDEN  
ERA OF  
POPULAR  
SONG**

And now a few parting words about the younger brother of the opera and the ballet — the lively operetta and the Lighter Muse; for haven't entertainment and dance music, and the operetta much in common?

At the beginning Estonian light music had two branches: the so-called popular songs, often very close to the melodies and rhythms of folk music, and jazz music together with light music influenced by jazz. Popular songs flourished at the end of the forties and the beginning of the fifties. That was the period when a number of songs by Edgar Arro, Boris Kõrver and Raimond Valgre became especially popular. Such songs as Edgar Arro's *Swing Song* and *Tallinn, My Native Town*, were sung everywhere, also Boris Kõrver's *The Sea Will Make a Man of You*, *On a Summer Night*, and some of his songs for films; and Raimond Valgre's *Saaremaa Waltz* and his songs dedicated to Estonian towns. Of the popular songs of that period, Valter Ojakäär's *This Boat is not a Nutshell Craft* has won international recognition. A number of other composers have also produced popular songs with a greater or lesser bias towards jazz, e. g. Leo Tauts, Aarne Oit, Harri Kõrvits, Vello Lipand, Gennadi

25 Podelski, Ülo Raudmäe, and others. It should be mentioned here that light songs are also written by professional musicians, which guarantees for our light music freshness of sound and a wide scope for experimenting. Some of our composers of serious

## IMPRO- VISATION CONTESTS

music have also tried their hand at writing light music, as for example Ülo Vinter, Leo Normet, Eino Tamberg, Jaan Koha, Heino Jürisalu, Hillar Kareva and Anti Marguste.

As for jazz music as such, we have many jazz bands and combos. Improvisation contests are often organized with entrants from many Soviet cities and from abroad. Our jazz bands and combos have made tours to other countries. The music composed by Uno Naissoo, Evald Vain and Valter Ojakäär, in which jazz and popular music elements have been combined, is infused with a new quality: these two genres are seemingly complementary. The Estonian Radio Jazz Orchestra conducted by Rostislav Merkulov and Peeter Saul, as well as the combo conducted by Emil Laansoo, have greatly helped to popularize our original light music.

In our original operettas there is also a tendency to blend popular national music with contemporary jazz, especially in operettas on modern themes, which are now in the majority. Another characteristic feature is evident, namely the wide use of the dynamization of action typical of contemporary musicals, and at the same time a close adherence to the exigent vocal art of classical operettas.

## MERRY TUNES ON MUSICAL STAGE

The first attempts to create an original operetta date back to the twenties, moreover the musical play written by Juhan Simm in 1915 is still evergreen. The operetta of the Soviet period found itself only in the mid-fifties. The opening accord was given by Edgar Arro and Leo Normet with their *Jüri Rumm*, which has been in the limelight for over ten years now. The hero is a clever prankster who played practical jokes on the landlords at the end of the last century. The operetta is full of humour and includes many colourful folk scenes. Edgar Arro in partnership with Leo Normet wrote an operetta about modern Tallinn *Native Harbour Lights*.

Leo Normet's *Stella Polaris* is a grand operetta with impressive musical revue scenes. In the libretto written by the poet Ralf Parve, the scene of action is laid in one of the countries of northern Europe, where a group of tourists from Tallinn is visiting.

Boris Kõrver has so far been a most prolific author of operettas. In his first operetta *Only a Dream* he proved that he was a competent master of melody and well capable of creating extensive musical scenes. The action takes place in the thirties: the characters include young workers and such people as

- 26 organize "golden heart" charity balls and beauty contests. Kõrver's second operetta *The Forest Flower* is really a fragment of the history of the Estonian theatre, in which the birth of the Estonian operetta is revived. His third operetta *What Can I Do*

for You? takes us to the Tallinn Department Store: in this colourful work the composer's optimistic dynamic dance music is revealed to advantage. The vividness of Kõrver's operettas is indebted to the lively librettos by the young dramatist Ardi Liives.

**ALL GENRES  
REPRESENTED**

Ants Sõber's operetta *Roads that Cross* follows the traditions laid by Juhan Simm and Eduard Oja in their operettas on rural themes. The latter is the author of the once popular *Tailor Õhk*. Aarne Oit's musical comedy *The Curious Adventures of Some Islanders from Muhu* is based on Juhan Smuul's humorous book of the same title. Depicting the adventures of this merry group, who is in Tallinn during a Song Festival, Aarne Oit made good use of his previous experience in writing popular songs. The latest original operettas up-to-date are Boris Kõrver's *Thousand Metres of Love* and Ülo Raudmäe's *Poste Restante*.

Now there is no musical genre left in which Estonian composers have not got a firm footing. In the course of the last few years they have experimented in all the existing musical modes and forms. Nevertheless the feeling of restlessness lives in them — the distance that lends enchantment.

Beauty is mine to make...

...says the folk singer. We have already discussed some of the makers of beauty: the mighty choirs and their conductors. Now we shall discourse on the big instrumental collectives — our three professional symphony orchestras: the Tallinn Estonia and the Tartu Vanemuine opera theatre orchestras, and the Symphony Orchestra of the Estonian Radio. Under the leadership of their current conductors, Neeme Järvi and Roman Matsov, and prominent conductors from other places, the Radio Orchestra has performed nearly all the Estonian symphonic works, as well as the bulk of international music, both classical and modern. Touring conductors have been lavish in their praise of the skill of this orchestra. And the orchestra has proved its worth by their excellent performance of the most difficult modern repertoire, such as *Concerto for Orchestra* by Bartók, *The Rite of Spring* by Stravinski, and some modern pieces with a more experimental bias. The orchestra is always willing and eager to perform the more extensive works of great symphonists. In celebration of the centenary of the great Finnish composer Sibelius, all his most important scores for orchestra were executed in the period between autumn 1965 and spring 1966.

**IN HONOUR  
OF THE  
GREAT  
SIBELIUS**

Under the leadership of Neeme Järvi, the chamber orchestra has become a great favourite with the public. At concerts given



by this orchestra, we can hear compositions by old masters, as well as the works of modern composers. Not only works by Stravinski, Webern and modern American and French composers are rendered, but also the latest compositions of young Estonians, some of which are written specially for this orchestra. Mention should be made of the String Quartet, which consists of young instrumentalists, and the Wood-wind Quintet. The latter has made a number of successful concert tours.

## OUR VIRTUOSI

Many of our instrumentalists have won recognition at home and abroad, as for instance the violinist Vladimir Alumäe, who is keen on performing both classical and modern music. Among his greatest achievements are his interpretation of the concertos for violin by Eller and Sibelius and the solo sonatas by Tubin and Bartók. The Swedish newspaper "NST" calls V. Alumäe "a virtuoso in the true sense of the word" and alludes to his excellent technique and the superb sounds of his violin.

The most prominent Estonian violincellist, who is also a teacher of music, is August Karjus, whose performances charm us with the beauty of tone and a mature technique. Anna Klas' and Bruno Lukk's pianoforte duos are always great musical events with their fresh and interesting repertoire and superb execution.

Heljo Sepp is a pianist who, at the age of fifteen, came first at an international competition of young pianists sponsored by the British Music Council. The playing of original Estonian compositions lies nearest her heart. Many concerts have been given by such pianists as Laine Mets, Lilian Semper, Eugen Kelder and Valdur Roots, while Elsa Avesson, Tarsina Alango and Helju Tauk are always desired partners in ensembles. Helju Tauk's performances together with the talented violinist Ines Rannap, for example, always make a deep impression on the audience.

Hugo Lepnurm's place is among the best contemporary organists. He has given performances of all the world's best organ compositions from Sweelinck to Messiaen. Hugo Lepnurm has been a member of international juries at organ competitions, and besides a teacher to Rolf Uusväli, a promising young organist who has won recognition as an interpreter of Bach. Speaking of instrumental music, mention should be made of the young flutist Samuel Saulus, whose recitals have always been warmly received.

**TEACHER AND  
PUPIL WIN  
INTERNATIO-  
NAL FAME**

All the organizational work connected with concerts is carried on by the State Philharmony, whose field of activities is not limited to the capital: this institution organizes concerts for local and foreign artists in all the towns of the Republic.

All our vocal soloists are engaged on the musical stage. The State Academic Theatre "Estonia" in Tallinn is the only true musical theatre in the Republic, for at the Tartu theatre "Vanemuine" operas, operettas, ballets and dramas are also staged.

The most prominent singers of international fame at the "Estonia" are the baritones Tiit Kuusik and Georg Ots. Tiit Kuusik began his career as a singer in 1938, when he won the first prize at a vocalists' competition in Vienna. Writing about Tiit Kuusik, a Norwegian art critic E. Westher said, "Rarely do we hear a voice that possesses all the best qualities", to which we can add that Tiit Kuusik's voice is as captivating on the concert stage and as in opera. Besides receiving many favourable reviews in the European press, Tiit Kuusik has also won recognition and admiration in distant countries such as China and Mexico.

Georg Ots is Tiit Kuusik's pupil and a versatile artist. He has sung in 16 different languages and performed in various genres — he has sung in operas and operettas, at chamber concerts and variety shows. In addition to his pleasant baritone, he possesses an unquestionable talent as an actor. We have also enjoyed his singing and acting in films. The radio has carried his songs all over the world, and he has given recitals in many European countries, also in Egypt and Mongolia.

The names of many genuine artists are perpetuated in the history of Estonian vocal art. There are Martin Taras, Elsa Maasik, Meta Kodanipork, Jenny Siimon, Olga Lund, Viktor Gurjev, and the late Ott Raukas and Aleksander Arder. And in recent years new names have appeared: Ellen Laidre, a keen interpreter of Mart Saar's compositions and a lover of folk songs; the tenor Henrik Krumm, who has studied in Italy; mezzosopranos Alice Roolaid and Urve Tauts; sopranos Lehte Mark, Aino Kylvand, Paula Padrik; tenors Aleksander Püvi, Endel Ani and Kalju Karask; baritone Jüri Pärj and basses Theo Maiste, Uno Kreen and Evald Tordik. We can listen to them not only at musical performances and recitals, but also on radio and television programs.

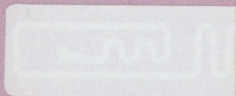
This is a brief survey of our "makers of beauty". And there are others worthy of mention. Nevertheless we still have an insufficient number of artists, and every spring we expectantly search for new talents among the fresh graduates from the Conservatory.

**MUCH IS  
LEFT  
UNSAID**

Much is left unsaid. First of all space lacks for even a micro-characterization of all our fifty active composers; nor can we discuss the numerous compositions for children, which range from miniature forms to cantatas and symphonic works; nor is it possible to mention all the interpreters, opera conductors, producers of musical performances, and our ballet artists. And we have passed over the art reviewers, theatre critics, and musicologists, whose articles have been printed at home and abroad. In truth it seems to be easier to create valued works of art in the course of twenty-five years, than to make a brief and satisfactory survey of it all.



TEN ASPECTS  
OF ESTONIAN  
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