

A portrait of Toivo Kuula, a middle-aged man with wavy brown hair, wearing a black shirt. He is looking slightly to the left of the camera. The background is a textured, patterned fabric with blue and beige stripes.

Toivo Kuula

**Complete
Piano Music**

Jouni Somero

Piano



World Première Recording

Johtuneeko siitä, että olen kotoisin Pohjanmaalta, että olen aina kokenut Kuulan karun, mutta rehellisen sävelkielen läheiseksi ja minua puhuttelevaksi. Yksi ensimmäisiä levytyksiäni oli Kuulan suuri Pianotrio op.7 (MILS 1993). Oli siis itsestään selvää, että halusin levyttää koko Toivo Kuulan pianotuotannon juhlavuonna 2018. Yhtä itsestään selvää oli, että ottaisın mukaan myös kuusi ennen taltioimatonta teosta: Kolme nuoruuden teosta, kaksi luonnosta sekä säveltäjän pianosovituksen Juhlamarrsista. Luonnostellun pianosovituksen yksinlaulusta Vanha syyslaulu täydensin ”Kuulan hengessä” käyttäen yksinlaulun pianosäestystä.

Ystävänäpäivänä 2018 *Jouni Somero*

Toivo Timoteus Kuula (7 July 1883 - 18 May 1918) was a Finnish conductor and composer. He was born in the city of Vaasa (in those days Nikolainkaupunki), when Finland still was a Grand Duchy under Russian rule. He is known as a colorful and passionate portrayer of Finnish nature and people. A Swedish critic once said that Kuula's music reaches parts of the human spirit where one is forced to deep examination of one's self. Toivo Kuula died in the provincial hospital in Viipuri in 1918 after being mortally wounded 18 days earlier on Walpurgis Night by a bullet fired by a Jäger. The bullet was fired as a result of a quarrel that happened in front of Hotel Seurahuone in conjunction with the first victory celebration of the white victory in the Civil War of Finland. Kuula is buried in Hietaniemi cemetery, Helsinki. Kuula is best-remembered for his large output of melodic choir and vocal works. His instrumental works include two Ostrobothnian Suites for Orchestra, Violin Sonata, Piano Trio and an unfinished Symphony.

More about Toivo Kuula: www.fcrecords.fi

Jouni Somero (b. 1963) is one of the most active Finnish musicians on the scene today. So far he has given over 3,000 concerts all over the world, including Australia, Japan, Ukraine, Spain, France, Germany, Sweden, Estonia, Kosovo, Russia, Brazil, Canada and Finland. He began studying the organ when he was eight years old but switched to the piano at the age of 12, studying the latter in Switzerland and at the Music Academy in Cologne under Professor Herbert Drechsel. Under the legendary Hungarian pianist Georges Cziffra he gained a deeper insight into the music of Liszt. Michael Ponti, the American virtuoso, has also acted as Somero's musical advisor. From 1981 to 1989 Somero lived in Germany, working as an assistant at the Music

Academy of Düsseldorf and in other capacities. Since 1990 he has pursued his career solely as a concert pianist. He was awarded a diploma at the International Music Competition in Rio de Janeiro.

Jouni Somero's recording career began in 1989 (with Liszt's 12 Transcendental Etudes), since when he has made about 100 discs for different labels (Naxos, BMG, MILS, Jubal, FC-Records etc). These include Bach's Das Wohltemperierte Klavier and Die Kunst der Fuge, Liszt's Harmonies Poétiques et Religieuses, Liszt's transcriptions of Beethoven's Symphonies 1 and 5, Rebikov's Piano Works, Henselt's Concert Etudes Op. 2, Schubert's Wanderer Fantasy, Sonata B and Impromptus op.90, Mussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition, Rachmaninov's Piano Works (Vol.1-4), An Anthology of Finnish Piano Music (Vol. 1-5) and the world premiere recording of several piano works by Felix Blumenfeld, Benjamin Godard, Hans Seeling and Hugo Reinhold. He also recorded the complete piano music of Sergei Bortkiewicz (Vol.1-9) Pjotr Tchaikovsky (Vol.1-6) and Erkki Salmenhaara.

Somero's wide repertoire includes all the solo piano works of Rachmaninov, Tchaikovsky , Bortkiewicz, Salmenhaara and Kuula as well as seldom heard music by such composers as Alkan, Godard, Arensky, Godowsky, Henselt, Thalberg, Glinka, Blumenfeld, Rebikov, Reinhold, Seeling, Rubinstein and Gottschalk. He has also made many piano arrangements of orchestral, operatic and pop music.

Scores available: www.editiontilli.fi

Recorded at Kuusaa Hall in Kuusankoski Finland on 27-29.8.2017

Recording engineer: Jouko Ahera.

Producer: Jouni Somero.

Grand Piano: Steinway&Sons D

Piano technician: Vesa Solje

Cover design: Kirmo Lehtonen

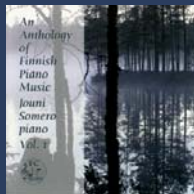
Photo: Raija Kilpeläinen-Somero

Special thanks: TAIKE (Taiteen edistämiskeskus)

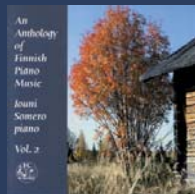
Johann Tilli

© 2018 FC-Records Päivölänkartano 12 73770 Säyneinen Finland Tel.+358 400 428 778
info@finnconcert.fi • www.fcrecords.fi

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