



Mixed-art association Poike in co-operation with
Pori Opera, Pori Sinfonietta
and Turku International Puppetry Connection

PRESS RELEASE
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MARIA KALLIONPÄÄ AND MARKKU KLAMI TO COMPOSE THE PUPPET OPERA CROAK

The first full-length puppet opera produced in the Nordic Countries will be composed by Maria Kallionpää and Markku Klami. The opera is titled *CROAK or The Unexpected Joys and Perils of Singing* and it will premiere in 2018 at the Promenadi Hall in Pori, Finland.

Composer and pianist Maria Kallionpää (b. 1981 in Ulvila) is best described as a pan-European and interdisciplinary artist and academic. In 2015, she defended her PhD thesis on extended playing techniques in contemporary piano music at the Oxford University. At the moment, she is composing for the Teatro Dell'Opera di Roma and is a visiting researcher at the University of Aalborg, Denmark.

The works of Markku Klami (b. 1979 in Turku) have been performed at various international festivals worldwide. His catalogue consists of chorus and orchestra pieces and chamber opera. Klami graduated from the Turku Arts Academy in 2006 and completed his Master's Degree in Music at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki in 2010.

The libretto of the puppet opera CROAK is written by film director and screenwriter Mikhail Brashinsky (b. 1965 in Leningrad). In the libretto, the emotions of the protagonist Lord Croak are torn between love and death, as his fate is to succumb to the price he must pay for his magical gift of song.

Both Kallionpää and Klami are inspired by "how contemporary puppet theatre, visuals and music are intertwined in CROAK in an unforeseen way and create a resounding, complete work of art. The different vocal attributes

will play a significant role within the music, as tonal variations underline the libretto's timeless message – the desire to be loved.”

CROAK is dedicated to the memory of composer Jouni Kaipainen (1956–2015). The puppet opera project started three years ago with a call for submissions for five Finnish composers, out of whom Jouni Kaipainen was selected to compose the opera. Kallionpää and Klami also participated in the call for submissions. Jouni Kaipainen passed away unexpectedly in November 2015. He was still working on the composition when its initial working title *Halennyn* was changed to CROAK.

Now the new composers are given the chance to start anew and finish their original composition with plenty of time. CROAK will premiere at Promenadi Hall in Pori in 2018.

CROAK will be directed by puppet theatre artist Anna Ivanova-Brashinskaya (b. 1965 in Leningrad). Her assistant director is Roosa Halme (b. 1982 in Littoinen) who initiated the production of the puppet opera when working as a regional artist in the Pori office of the Arts Promotion Centre Finland.

The opera visuals and puppets will be designed by Viktor Antonov (b. 1961 in Leningrad), and the project will be realized in co-operation with the Turku-based puppet theatre association TIP-Connection.

CROAK's score will be played by Pori Sinfonietta conducted by Jan Söderblom (b. 1970 in Helsinki). CROAK is produced in co-operation between Pori Opera and Mixed-Art Association Poike, with Heli Latvala (b. 1950 in Pori) and Tuuli Penttinen-Lampisuo (b. 1969 in Tampere) as executive producers.

The puppet opera CROAK has been sponsored by the Swedish Cultural Foundation in Pori, the Satakunta Regional Fund of the Finnish Cultural Foundation, the Ministry of Education and Culture, and the Arts Promotion Centre Finland.

Attached is press photo of Anna Ivanova-Brashinskaya, Maria Kallionpää and Markku Klami, photographed by Noora Isoeskelä. For more information and interviews, please contact:
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