

A black and white photograph of Olli Mustonen, a middle-aged man with dark hair, sitting at a desk. He is wearing a light-colored striped shirt under a dark, textured jacket. He is looking thoughtfully to his left, with his right hand resting on his chin. His left hand is holding a long, thin strip of paper. On the desk in front of him are several sheets of music, a pair of glasses, a small figurine, and other desk items. In the background, there is a large bookshelf filled with books and a window with curtains. The overall mood is contemplative and intellectual.

LAWO
CLASSICS

MUSTONEN

String Quartet No. 1
Piano Quintet

ENGEGÅRD QUARTET
OLLI MUSTONEN

The pianist, conductor and composer Olli Mustonen was born in 1967 in Helsingin maalaiskunta, now a suburb of Helsinki. Aged five, he studied the harpsichord, then two years later learnt the piano with Ralf Gothóni and subsequently Eero Heinonen. His composition studies with Einojuhani Rautavaara began in 1975. Young Concert Artists organised Mustonen's New York recital debut in 92nd Street Y in 1987, and Mustonen has performed many times in Carnegie Hall since then, including several recitals in their own series.

As this early part of his career continued to attract attention, his debut recording – Shostakovich and Alkan preludes – won both Gramophone and Edison awards. Mustonen has now recorded for several record labels. As a solo pianist Mustonen has performed with many of the world's most distinguished orchestras, while he has enjoyed equal success in chamber music, collaborating with such musicians as Joshua Bell and Steven Isserlis. Landmark appointments in his career development include artistic director of the Turku Music Festival from 1990-1992, co-founder and director of the Helsinki Festival Orchestra, and "artistic partner" of the Tapiola Sinfonietta from 2003 to 2009. Mustonen was appointed as Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Turku Philharmonic in 2021. In 2019 he was awarded the Hindemith Prize of the City of Hanau. As a musician who has been successful in three different roles, Mustonen easily identifies with, and especially admires, Hindemith, who described himself as "a musician who plays the viola, a musician who conducts, a musician who composes." Mustonen remarks: "This kind of all-round musicianship is evocative of an earlier era, when the roles of composers and performers were not so separate."

Mustonen started to compose at the age of five, and very soon afterwards began to study with his compatriot Einojuhani Rautavaara. According to his publishers' website, Mustonen admires "contrapuntally interwoven compositions and works of the 20th century which take up ideas from the 17th and 18th centuries (e.g. the Bach arrangements by Ferruccio Busoni and the cycles of preludes and fugues by Hindemith or Shostakovich), and this admiration is reflected in

his own works." He has always avoided "schools" of composition, trends or fashionable styles – either in Finland or elsewhere. Mustonen's list of compositions, many of them requiring unusual instrumental combinations, includes concertante works for piano – with orchestra, with string orchestra (– his 1985 Fantasia for piano and strings is a significant early work), and with string quartet and double-bass; a symphony for baritone and orchestra, sonatas for cello and piano, solo oboe and solo guitar respectively, two nonets for two string quartets and double-bass, and a concerto for three violins. Olli Mustonen has also written three symphonies and various large scale chamber works. His Sextet was commissioned by the Beethovenhaus in Bonn for their Beethoven Festival in 2020 in connection with Beethoven's anniversary year. Another recent highlight was the Engegård Quartet's invitation to Olli Mustonen to Oslo in the autumn of 2020 for a weekend devoted exclusively to Mustonen and his music.

String Quartet No. 1 (2016)

It is not a coincidence that many composers seem to have written some of their most important and meaningful works for the string quartet. I grew up listening to string quartets, especially those by Beethoven and Bartók, and those works have had a tremendous impact on what I am as a composer, musician and as a human being. In many of my works one can see some sort of journey from darkness toward the light, in various forms. In the case of my String Quartet this journey is exceptionally arduous. There is an element of hope in some sections of the third movement, but the hope it offers is more of an otherworldly variety. In the beginning of the fourth movement the very dramatic elements of the beginning of the quartet return. Just at that point, as the listener thinks that the darker elements will ultimately prevail, the music reaches an important turning-point. Through a heroic, dissonant struggle it reaches the finale, which is full of ecstasy and instrumental joy. I have given the finale, along with the metronome marking, the indication "Con fuoco all'Ungharese" – all this of course as

a homage to the great Hungarian master, one of my greatest musical heroes already since the very early days of my life.

(Olli Mustonen)

The quartet's "journey from darkness toward the light", which Mustonen describes as "exceptionally arduous", begins with a movement marked "Impetuoso, con passione e molto rubato (quasi senza tempo)". The fierce opening is overpowering in its sustained, harsh intensity, giving way to a scarcely less anguished chromatic passage for the viola. Above a stubborn, oft-repeated cello note, gently swirling figuration takes over, creating an atmosphere of unease. The initial intensity returns – now more quickly subdued – but the combination of restless figuration and repeated notes prevails at the end of the movement. The brief second movement is vigorous and muscular. The lyrical slow movement, prayerful and often hymn-like, inhabits a different world, inviting the hope to which Mustonen refers. However, this mood, sustained and unified by a persistent rhythmic shape, is subsequently undermined by the obvious return of material from the first movement. This recall of the tortured music continues at the outset of the final movement but gives way to an exuberant concluding section.

The Engegård Quartet commissioned Mustonen's String Quartet, and gave the world premiere as part of the Lofoten International Chamber Music Festival, in Buksnes Church, Gravdal, Norway on 12th July 2017.

Piano Quintet (2014)

My Piano Quintet consists of three movements. The first movement is filled with drama and passion. Its atmosphere can be seen to be related to my Second Symphony "Johannes Angelos" – a work that has been inspired by a historical novel taking place in the middle of the turbulent times during the last months of the Byzantine Empire in Constantinople. The second movement is a set of polyphonic variations in a form reminiscent of a passacaglia. The music seems

to be hypnotized by a theme consisting of a chromatic cluster of ten notes. Finally, the passacaglia winds down to a long, single low G sharp played by the first violin. At the beginning of the last movement, material from the previous movements starts to reappear, but this time in a mysterious, almost non-coherent way. It seems as if the music is searching for a way forward, but in vain. Finally, only bell-like chords in the piano part remain. The strings, one at a time, find a new kind of music that resembles fragments of a hymn – at first hesitantly, but soon gaining in strength and confidence. Fast-moving triplets start to appear, and the music reaches a joyful and ecstatic conclusion.

(Olli Mustonen)

The musical language of the quintet is consistently tonal and often strongly rhythmic. After the declamatory opening, two contrasting elements are presented – a taut staccato idea and a lyrical melody in longer notes. Both musical "characters" are developed, intensified and subsequently combined, before a forceful version of the lyrical material has the last word.

Marked "quasi una passacaglia", the Andantino central movement is based on a chromatic but clearly defined theme introduced by the second violin. This is subjected to wide-ranging variations, diverse character-studies variously mysterious, hyper-actively scurrying, peaceful and resolute.

Based on previous material, as the composer has remarked, the opening section of the finale (Misterioso) gives way to a directionless passage, then, after three "false starts", much more purposeful and energetic triplet-based figuration, leading to a joyous conclusion.

Mustonen's Piano Quintet was premiered at Heimbach on 12th June 2015 as part of the RWE-Kraftwerk Festival "Spannungen". The composer was joined by Christian Tetzlaff and Florian Donderer (violins), Hartmut Rohde (viola) and Gustav Rivinius (cello).

– Philip Borg-Wheeler



Olli Mustonen

Currently Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Turku Philharmonic Orchestra, Olli Mustonen has a unique place on today's music scene. Following the tradition of great masters such as Rachmaninov, Busoni and Enescu, Mustonen combines the roles of his musicianship as composer, pianist and conductor in an equal balance that is quite exceptional, often bringing them together in one fascinating triple role performance.

During an illustrious career, Mustonen has brought his extraordinary musical insight to many of world's most significant orchestras, including the Berlin Philharmonic, New York and Los Angeles Philharmonic orchestras, Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Royal Concertgebouw Orkest, Mariinsky Theatre Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris and all the London orchestras.

Recipient of the 2019 Hindemith Prize of the City of Hanau, Mustonen's life as a composer is at the heart of his piano playing and conducting. Frequently bringing his own works to the chamber music stage, recent seasons have seen the World Premiere of his work *Taivaanvalot* (Heavenly Lights) for Tenor, Cello and Piano at Het Muziekgebouw, Amsterdam, performed by Mustonen himself, alongside Ian Bostridge and Steven Isserlis. Further performances took place at London's Wigmore Hall and in Hong Kong. A further World Premiere was his new string sextet, commissioned by the Beethoven Festival Bonn and first performed in February 2020.

As a recitalist, Mustonen has appeared in recent seasons at the Diaghilev Festival Perm, Dresden Festival, Cal Performances Berkeley, Symphony Center Chicago, New York Zankel Hall and Sydney Opera House. With Steven Isserlis, Mustonen has performed as a duo for more than thirty years. 2019 saw the release of their disc of Russian works for cello and piano on the Hyperion label.

Particularly close to Mustonen's heart are the piano concertos of Beethoven, Prokofiev, and Bartók, all of which he has performed with leading orchestras. His repertoire also includes Respighi's *Concerto in modo misolidio*, which he has recorded with the Finnish Radio Symphony and Sakari Oramo on the Ondine label. A recently completed recording project has been all of Bartók's and Prokofiev's piano concertos, also for the Ondine label.

Engegård Quartet

Arvid Engegård — Violin

Alex Robson — Violin

Juliet Jopling — Viola

Jan Clemens Carlsen — Cello

Formed under the midnight sun in Lofoten in 2006, the Engegård Quartet has rapidly become one of Norway's most sought-after ensembles. Their bold, fresh interpretations of the classical repertoire combined with a deep attachment to their Scandinavian roots has attracted international acclaim and inspired some innovative partnerships and pro-gramming.

The quartet's debut CD was praised as 'breathtaking' in *The Strad*, while their second release won *Pizzicato* magazine's 'Supersonic Award'. Their CD of works by Grieg, Sibelius, and Olav Anton Thommessen was praised by Tully Potter in *Music Web International* as 'what Grieg lovers have been waiting for'.

The Engegård Quartet has a busy concert schedule throughout Scandinavia and further afield. They have performed in some of Europe's finest venues including the Mozarteum in Salzburg and Prague's Rudolfinum, as well as performing in South America with concerts in Medellín, Bogotá and São Paulo. Festival performances include the Delft Chamber Music Festival, SoNoRo Festival in Bucharest, and Heidelberg's Streichquartettfest.

Deeply committed to today's composers and to keeping the string quartet repertoire alive and developing, the Engegård Quartet has commissioned several works throughout their career. They have focused first and foremost on Norwegian composers including Maja Solveig Kjølstrøm Ratkje, Olav Anton Thommessen, Therese Birkelund Ulvo and Cecilie Ore, but also on the Finnish pianist and composer Olli Mustonen. The Engegård Quartet's acclaimed collaborations with the jazz violinist Ola Kvernberg and hardanger fiddler Nils Økland have led to commissions including the *Telemark Quintet* from Nils An-

ders Mortensen, and *Hypnagogia* and *Flukt* from Ola Kvernberg. Several of these commissions have been recorded by the Engegård Quartet.

On the classical front, the Engegård Quartet has had the honour to work with (among others) Sir András Schiff, Leif Ove Andsnes, Christian Ihle Hadland, Paul Lewis, Dènes Várion, Nabuko Imai, Kim Kashkashian and Emma Johnson MBE.

The Engegård Quartet's concert and recording programmes reflect their passion for the core quartet repertoire and their desire to discover and share new musical worlds. They have, or are in the process of, recording the complete string quartets by Robert Schumann, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and also the Norwegian composer Johan Kvandal. You will find the Engegård Quartet's recordings on 2L, BIS, Simax and LAWO Classics.

Members of the quartet are deeply involved in bringing superb chamber music to Norway – Arvid Engegård as founder of the Lofoten International Chamber Music Festival, and Juliet Jopling as founder and on the artist board of the Oslo Quartet Series.

The Engegård Quartet's own '1-2-3 Festival' focuses on one composer over a long weekend and has proved immensely popular ever since its inaugural year of 2016. Every November, in "Nynorskens hus" right in the centre of Oslo, this classical minifestival provides a feast of chamber music, song, piano works, and lectures.

Instruments:

Engegård plays a Giovanni Battista Rogeri violin (Brescia, 1690), Robson plays a Jean Baptiste Vuillaume violin (1858), and Carlsen plays a Giacomo Zanoli cello (1737), all kindly lent by Dextra Musica. Jopling plays her own Giuseppe Guarneri viola (1770).

The Engegård Quartet is supported by Arts Council Norway.



OLLI MUSTONEN (*1967)

String Quartet No. 1 (2016)

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|----|---|-------|
| 1. | I. Impetuoso, con passione e molto rubato
(quasi senza tempo) | 06:04 |
| 2. | II. Furioso e pesante | 02:33 |
| 3. | III. Grave – Estatico e misterioso | 08:28 |
| 4. | IV. Impetuoso, con passione e molto rubato
(quasi senza tempo) – Con fuoco all'Ungharese | 04:45 |

Piano Quintet (2014)

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|----|----------------------------|-------|
| 5. | I. Drammatico e passionato | 07:19 |
| 6. | II. Quasi una passacaglia | 07:22 |
| 7. | III. Finale | 07:12 |
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