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Rautavaara's *Cantus Arcticus*: National Exoticism or International Modernism?

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Einojuhani Rautavaara's international fame rests largely on pieces celebrated for their seemingly non-modernist accessibility. Cantus Arcticus – Concerto for Birds and Orchestra *(1972) is greeted with suspicion on account of its wide appeal. This article re-considers this piece in the context of his complicated and original stylistic development and re-evaluates its relation to Finnish nature and culture. By examining the intersections of nationalism, landscape and modernism in a late-twentieth-century piece, this discussion builds upon established research on early-twentieth-century Nordic repertoire, applying it to this contemporary context. It also finds a new perspective by supplementing that approach to include more recent scholarship on post-war tonality. As a result, new insights into musical form and a post-serial renewal of tonal thinking emerge, and through its unique synthesis of seemingly diverse elements,* Cantus Arcticus *can be seen as a milestone work within Rautavaara's stylistic evolution.*

Keywords: Rautavaara, Nordic, Landscape, Finland, Modernism, Exoticism, Tonality

The stylistic range of one of Finland's most internationally successful composers, Einojuhani Rautavaara (1928-2016) has been well-documented. This compositional diversity has led to the image of a rift between works that appeared to "validate" his position as an *enfant terrible*

of Finnish music that helped introduce international modernist techniques to Finland, and those that are more familiar and accessible that became known internationally. As an example of the latter, *Cantus Arcticus – Concerto for Birds and Orchestra* (1972) is greeted with suspicion because of its wide appeal. Kimmo Korhonen regards it to be 'one of his most popular, although hardly artistically most significant works'.[1] And yet, the issues surrounding Rautavaara's relationship with modernism, tradition, Finnish landscape, and accessibility come together in this piece in a complex and characteristic way. In his autobiography, Rautavaara discusses how his musical output has three threads running through it: modernism, Finnishness, and mysticism.[2] *Cantus*, perhaps more clearly than any of Rautavaara's other orchestral works, synthesizes these elements within one piece and, consequently, achieves a broader balance between them. A re-consideration of the role of this misrepresented work in the context of Rautavaara's complicated and original stylistic development from different angles is much needed. After a contextualisation of the piece in relation to modernism and its cultural reception, this article considers *Cantus* through the lens of exoticism and discusses the ways in which landscape and nature shape the piece from Rautavaara's subjective position. It also examines how this inspiration combines with his stylistic renewal following more international experiences of musical modernism, notably serialism and aleatory techniques.

Cantus Arcticus and modernism

Modernism in Rautavaara's music is, in one sense, clearly identified through his use of international, avant-garde musical techniques that were brought to Finland after the Second Word War, which are indicative of a cosmopolitan perspective in his music that drew inspiration from abroad. Such techniques include neo-classicism, atonality, serialism, and

[1] Kimmo Korhonen, 'New Music of Finland', in *New Music of the Nordic Countries*, ed. John D. White (New York: Pendragon Press, 2002), 200.
[2] Einojuhani Rautavaara, *Omakuva* (Juva: WSOY, 1989), 264.

aleatoricism. Another useful understanding of modernism relevant to Rautavaara is that of "moderate" modernism. A previous study by the present author sets out in detail how this framework applies to Rautavaara's late style,[3] but it is useful to reintroduce Arnold Whittall's notion of the "moderate mainstream" (versus the "modernist mainstream"). Whittall refers to the 'accommodations achieved between conservatism and progressiveness, the former renewing itself through limited contact with the latter.'[4] Such a "moderate" position derives from accommodations between newer, more radical, techniques – such as the rejection of tonality – while acknowledging the 'forms and textures of the tonal past'.[5] Similarly, J.P.E. Harper-Scott advises against reducing artistic production to binaries of radical and conservative and argues for a middleground for "reactive" music, between the 'poles of a "faithful" modernism which confidently asserts the possibility of a new, post-tonal artistic configuration, and an "obscure" response to modernism which utterly rejects the abandonment of tonality and willingly submits to the aesthetic blandishments of the pure commodity'.[6] These frameworks assist in understanding Rautavaara as an individual, negotiating techniques that are old and new, as well as local and international. A working definition of modernism therefore rests, firstly, on the identification of new, international compositional techniques and, secondly, the progressive, individual application of these as part of a larger set of preferences to develop a compositional style.

Arriving at a complete understanding of *Cantus* requires contextualising the piece in relation to Rautavaara's experiences of modernism at a time of stylistic reassessment. Work exploring the complicated interactions between landscape, nationalist elements and musical

[3] Owen Burton, 'Upholding a Modernist Mentality: Experimentalism and Neo-tonality in the Symphonies of Einojuhani Rautavaara' (PhD Thesis, University of York, 2020), especially 23-32.
[4] Arnold Whittall, 'Individualism and accessibility: the moderate mainstream, 1945–75', in *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook and Anthony Pople (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 367.
[5] Whitall, 'Individualism and accessibility', 370.
[6] J.P.E. Harper-Scott, 'Reactive Modernism', in *The Routledge Research Companion to Modernism in Music*, ed. Björn Heile and Charles Wilson (London: Routledge, 2019), 155.

modernism has so far been orientated towards figures around the turn of the twentieth century. Daniel Grimley's examination into the complexities of modernism and landscape form a major part of his study into Carl Nielsen. He contextualizes Nielsen's Third Symphony around ideas of the Funen landscape, which he argues becomes the focal point for a particular kind of modernism articulated by Gunnar Heerup, one that is 'pointedly unbound by the weight of nineteenth-century musical tradition yet still tied to a more ancient notion of community and land'.[7] Further, in assessing Vaughan Williams's Pastoral Symphony in relation to ideas of English pastoralism, Grimley challenges the assumption that the symphony constitutes an exclusively English idiom, stating that it actually 'reveals tensions between inward and outward impulses, between notions of Englishness and a more cosmopolitan Continental European modernism, which in turn reflect a dialogue between abstraction and representation, tradition and innovation, stability and instability'.[8] As *Cantus* brings together national influences alongside internationally-influenced compositional and stylistic techniques, the multifaceted outlook of the piece shows similar negotiations between the modern and the traditional and a consolidation of techniques channelled towards an individual purpose. In searching for this individuality, Rautavaara had to consider which traditional aspects he valued and saw as being capable of renewal, as well as which modernist techniques were to remain within his arsenal.

In response to a question about how he saw his music as being divided into four stages, Rautavaara came back with a characteristic statement: 'In my youth I thought it was my duty to learn all the contemporary techniques and methods of "modernism". The only way to learn them was to compose using them. It took all this to find my own mode of

[7] Daniel M. Grimley, *Carl Nielsen and the Idea of Modernism* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2010), 14.
[8] Grimley, 'Landscape and Distance: Vaughan Williams, Modernism and the Symphonic Pastoral', in *British Music and Modernism*, ed. Matthew Riley (London: Routledge, 2010), 148.

expression.'[9] For Rautavaara, the legacy of modernism manifested over his long career both as an energetic exploration of new "imported" techniques to Finland such as serialism and aleatoricism (his youthful pursuit of the former placed him at the forefront of Finnish modernism), and as an extended consolidation of those experiences, alongside a broadening of his perspectives. Rautavaara's build up to total serialism can be explained by his intention to find a 'reliable technique',[10] and it is within this larger process that *Cantus* is to be situated. The piece is often regarded as an anomaly within his output as a whole, another demonstration of his sudden changes in style.[11] Ultimately, the total serialism in works such as *Arabescata* was to be too constraining and the "non-atonal"[12] dodecaphony of the earlier Second String Quartet and Symphony No. 3 more fruitful in the long term. The search for a reliable technique therefore took a new direction at the end of the 1960s and a shift in style came with *Anadyomene*, the *Piano Concerto*, the two Piano Sonatas, *Garden of Spaces* and *Cantus Arcticus*. Rautavaara also stated that, until the 1980s, he considered himself a student.[13] But the boundary between modernist experimentation and critical, individual mastery is a difficult one to pinpoint. The combination of stylistic and visual elements in *Cantus* makes this work particularly representative of this transition. Written when Rautavaara was in his mid-forties, the piece cannot really be seen as student work, but in arguing that it is more musically significant than has previously been credited, it is also necessary to see it within a larger process of acquiring stylistic maturity. This stylistic change

[9] Tim S. Pack and Einojuhani Rautavaara, 'Seven Questions for Einojuhani Rautavaara', *Nordic Highlights* 22 (2007), 7.
[10] Rautavaara uses this term following his studies in America, when he felt he had not yet found such a technique. For a more detailed discussion of this context, see Anne Sivuoja-Gunaratnam, *Narrating with Twelve Tones: Einojuhani Rautavaara's first serial period (ca. 1957-1965)* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1997), 34.
[11] Kalevi Aho, 'Einojuhani Rautavaara', Introduction to Rautavaara's catalogue of works for Fazer, National Library of Finland, Coll. 586. A35, 3.
[12] Mikko Heiniö, 'Rautavaara, Einojuhani', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edn, ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrell. London: Macmillan, 2001. Version at *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deane L. Root. http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/22955?q=rautavaara&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit (accessed 17 February 2020).
[13] Martin Anderson and Einojuhani Rautavaara, 'Einojuhani Rautavaara, Symphonist', *Toccata*. https://toccataclassics.com/einojuhani-rautavaara-symphonist/ (accessed 30 September 2020).

around the late-1960s and early-1970s is connected to the larger context of Finnish music, where neo-tonality and a renewed interest in Finnish national subject matter emerged. According to Korhonen, the intensity of a 'second wave' of modernism was followed by a 'receding of the tide' from the mid-60s.[14] Within the extremely concentrated timescale of Finnish musical modernism after the Second World War, sudden changes of musical style are not surprising, revealing a complicated picture of late modernism and a reassessment of nationalism and tradition.

During the 1970s, Rautavaara began experimenting with a new kind of musical modernism in aleatory techniques, which formed another addition to his compositional toolkit. Finns had come to discover these techniques through the Polish avant-garde and, in a decade when Rautavaara had moved away from twelve-tone rows, he developed a tightly-controlled use of aleatoric techniques, seen most prominently in *Garden of Spaces*,[15] but also *Cantus* and the *Hommage a Zoltan Kodaly (Bird Gardens)* for String Orchestra. These pieces incorporate aleatoricism in slightly different ways, but all experiment with interacting levels of musical texture – an aspect that was to remain highly important in Rautavaara's orchestral music. They also draw on the influence of spaces, environments and objects. Messiaen's modes of limited transposition (especially Mode 2, or the octatonic scale) also came to the fore in this period and, in combination with a non-diatonic use of triads, helped Rautavaara begin to organize a new pitch vocabulary drawing on the complete cycle of twelve tones. He went on to develop this idea further in the opera *Thomas* by combining multiple tone rows with other pitch collections to form 'genealogical' relations between them.[16] This continuing and dialectic experimentation complicates the "neo-Romantic" label often used for Rautavaara's music around this time, especially as *Garden of Spaces* might be considered a

[14] Korhonen, 'New Music of Finland', 173.
[15] Tim Howell, *After Sibelius: Studies in Finnish Music* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 121.
[16] Einojuhani Rautavaara, 'Thomas – Analysis of the Tone Material (An Experiment in Synthesis)', *Finnish Music Quarterly* 1 (1997), 47-53.

modernist work in its experimental musical format. Looking beyond these labels makes it possible to see the varied ways in which he builds on modernism while aligning them with other preferences, such as triadic harmony, lyricism, musical symmetry, and extra-musical imagery.

Listening to *Cantus* today raises questions of modernity and renewability, especially considering its experimental inclusion of an electronic tape recording of birdsong against a live orchestra. This electronic element comprises a particular kind of modernity in the context of the early 1970s. The technique had been similarly used by Alan Hovhaness in his *And God Created Great Whales* (1970) – an orchestral, aleatoric tone poem that features recorded whale song arranged by the composer. Following the advance of digital recording technology, it is unsurprising that this electronic component could sound dated. One review from a Rautavaara tribute concert in 2017 highlights how the mixture of tape recording and live orchestra was once fashionable but felt dated today, and that at one point 'the caws from the tape came across as unintentionally humorous'.[17] The question of whether this experimentation actually comprises a "gimmick" is one that might damage the integrity of the piece.

Cantus is caught in a confusing time within Rautavaara's relationship with modernism. The tape recording adds to a wider exploration of the relationship between stasis (recalling landscape) and motion (recalling objects within that landscape) and therefore must also be considered outside of its more obvious novelty value. Furthermore, just as Rautavaara challenges any imposed idea of progressive modernism, *Cantus* also draws attention to the way that nature, with associated ideas of renewability, can challenge the unidirectional view of technological and scientific progress. The reassessed artistic principles behind *Cantus* therefore also invite an ecocritical perspective, as part of its progressiveness and success is

[17] David Larkin, 'Sweetness and light: Rautavaara tribute concert showcases one side of his art in Sydney', *Bachtrack* (2017). https://bachtrack.com/review-rautavaara-northey-sydney-symphony-january-2017 (accessed 9th October 2020).

found in the way it leads audiences towards environmental awareness, potentially across various geographies. Samuli Tiikkaja describes how Rautavaara was originally commissioned to write a cantata for the University of Oulu and that, in failing to find an enduring text to his liking, he made the decision to include the recorded birdsong from the region, thereby giving the work a universal character rather than a local one.[18] The rise of Ecomusicology, which Aaron S. Allen defines broadly as 'the study of music, culture and nature in all the complexities of those terms'[19] makes it more necessary not to overlook the importance of an ecological dimension to the creative aims of this piece, especially in the ways that it explores the overlaps between musical and natural sounds.

Accessibility and wide appeal

In his overview of Rautavaara's orchestral music, Frank J. Oteri describes *Cantus* as 'an instant crowd pleaser reminiscent of Górecki's famous Symphony No. 3 which was written four years later'.[20] These two composers are frequently compared,[21] although little unites them stylistically apart from their considerable international success and their return to a broadly tonal sound world. The popularity and wide appeal of *Cantus* lies in several aspects. Firstly, the outward resemblance to tonal, or modal, music through its consistent use of triads and conjunct melodic motion brings a sense of familiarity. Secondly, as an example of *Musique concrete*, the over-layered sound of recorded birdsong, recorded by Rautavaara in

[18] Samuli Tiikkaja, *Tulisaarna - Einojuhani Rautavaaran elämä ja teokset* (Helsinki: Teos, 2014), 331.
[19] Aaron S. Allen, 'Ecomusicology: Ecocriticism and Musicology', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 64, no. 2 (2011), 392.
[20] Frank J. Oteri, *Einojuhani Rautavaara: Orchestral Works* (Helsinki: Warner/Chappell Music Finland Oy, 1998), 57.
[21] See 'Rautavaara Angel of Light; Annunciations', *Gramophone*. https://www.gramophone.co.uk/review/rautavaara-angel-of-light-annunciations (accessed 14th June 2021); Guy Rickards, 'Einojuhani Rautavaara Obituary', *The Guardian* (2016). https://www.theguardian.com/music/2016/jul/28/einojuhani-rautavaara-obituary (accessed 14th June 2021); 'The Finnish composer Einojuhani Rautavaara has died', *Gramophone* (2016). https://www.gramophone.co.uk/other/article/the-finnish-composer-einojuhani-rautavaara-has-died (accessed 14th June 2021); Joseph McLellan, 'Rautavaara's Modern Tradition', *The Washington Post* (1996). https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/lifestyle/style/1996/06/02/rautavaaras-modern-tradition/28c37628-2dee-4656-8df4-f336cd280474/ (accessed 14th June 2021); and Lauri Otonkoski, 'Cantus Arcticus', *Finnish Music Quarterly* 1 (1994), 18-19.

the arctic regions of Northern Finland, connects music with nature in a concrete way, thereby appealing to a wider audience.[22] Thirdly, this combination of recorded birdsong and live orchestra provides a degree of novelty, even today, making the piece memorable in the context of late-twentieth-century orchestral music.[23] As will be discussed in the following section, the piece is also easily connected to an exotic idea of Finnish wildlife and landscape. Furthermore, each movement of the piece has a clear formal articulation and is monothematic, inviting metaphorical associations of organic growth that aligns with its subject matter. As Lauri Otonoski observes, it avoids internal dissension – musical sections are not presented to be in conflict with each other – or 'hidden structures', and has a straightforward construction of themes.[24] Such transparency in the formal structure, both on the larger and smaller scales, contributes to the accessibility of this piece.

For the reasons outlined above, *Cantus* has been used in wider musical contexts. It has caught the musical imaginations of Jazz musicians including the Michael Wollny Trio,[25] Felix Romer[26] and Aki Rissanen.[27] The harmonic organisation of the piece, transforming constantly by moving through non-diatonic triads that are typically approached by step, provides an effective impetus for improvisation, allowing these musicians to expand on particular harmonic gestures or figurations. The fact that *Cantus* was composed at the piano,[28] meaning these harmonic progressions fit comfortably in the player's hands, has

[22] Samuli Haapasalo, 'Konsertto linnuille ja orkesterille', *Suomen Luonto* (2019), https://suomenluonto.fi/konsertto-linnuille-ja-orkesterille/ (accessed 23rd February 2021).
[23] Rautavaara was not the first composer to include a part for recorded birdsong in an orchestral score. Ottorino Respighi included a nightingale recording in 'I Pini del Gianicolo', the third movement of his *Pini di Roma* (1924). The technique nevertheless remains relatively unusual and forms a far more substantial component in Rautavaara's score which, in addition to the international fame of the piece, enhances its noticeability.
[24] Otonkoski, 'Cantus Arcticus', 24.
[25] *Cantus Arcticus*. On *Oslo*. Michael Wallny, piano, Christian Weber, double bass and Eric Schaefer, drums/ live electronics. Prod. Siggi Loch. Oslo. CD. ACT9863-2, 2018.
[26] 'Moon Sessions - Felix Römer - Cantus Arcticus', *Facebook*. https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=767267150365952 (accessed 6 November 2020).
[27] *Cantus Arcticus, Melancholy*. *On Art in Motion*. Aki Rissanen, piano, Antti Lötjönen, bass, and Teppo Mäkynen, drums. E2 Music. 2019.
[28] In an email to the author, Kalevi Aho states that it was Rautavaara's practice to compose principally at the piano and that, when writing orchestral music, he would write a short score or "particell".

undoubtedly contributed to this dissemination. Furthermore, these connections with Jazz demonstrate how the piece crosses a stylistic middle ground in contemporary music.

The wide appeal of *Cantus* is also reflected in the inclusion of the third movement "Swans Migrating" in the 2012 experimental romantic drama film *To the Wonder*.[29] The film-music associations of *Cantus*, which Otonkoski also observes,[30] can be explained by its tonal-like qualities and the visual connection to landscape. Instead of an arctic, Finnish environment, however, the film features photography of the dry, expansive fields of mid-America, further emphasising the connection between landscape and memory as a form of escapism. Considering the choice of this music for the soundtrack and issues of cultural translation, it is useful to highlight that the period between 1880 and the beginning of the First World War saw mass emigration of Finns to America, settling in areas such as the Mid-West, where they had a pronounced cultural influence[31] and whose presence led to subsequent generations of Finnish-Americans, many of whom adapted to American culture.[32] The musical evocation of landscape in *Cantus* offers transferability for this new setting and may connect with ideological landscape images. The imagery of American geography in the film is suggestive of visual tropes that Annie R. Specht and Tracy Rutherford describe as the idealized 'pastoral fantasy' of agrarian landscapes in America, the symbolism of which, they argue, 'constitutes a typology of visual language related to traditional values', and that the repetition of these tropes 'has, over time cemented them in American cultural memory.'[33] This transference of landscape also draws on the ability for music to evoke wide open spaces that goes above specific locations. In analysing the music of the rock band Big Country, for

[29] *To the Wonder*, directed by Terence Malick (Magnolia Pictures, 2013), film.
[30] Otonkoski, 'Cantus Arcticus', 25.
[31] Auvo Kostiainen, 'Preface', in *Finns in the United States: A History of Settlement, Dissent, and Integration*, edited by Auvo Kostiainen (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2014), viii.
[32] Mika Roinila, 'Adjustment and the Future', in *Finns in the United* States, 319.
[33] Annie R. Specht and Tracy Rutherford, 'The Pastoral Fantasy on the Silver Screen: The Influence of on American Cultural Memory of the Agrarian Landscape', *Journal of Applied Communications* 99, no. 1 (2016), 13-14.

example, Allan F. Moore observes a characteristic experience of wide open space 'in the difference in perceived motion between events in the near and the far distance, the difference between these conveying the sense of space'.[34] Moore's analysis of the juxtaposition of 'intricate surface movement' and 'minimal harmonic movement' as a suggestion of space aligns with the superimposition of levels of musical activity in *Cantus*, the inner workings of which will be discussed later.

Perhaps the principal motivation for the use of Rautavaara's score in *To the Wonder* is found in its broader reputation as accessible contemporary music. The soundtrack draws on a variety of pre-existing classical pieces and the inclusion of music by Rautavaara, Górecki and Pärt illustrates their wider perception as "tonal" composers and reflects a general tendency for these individuals to be grouped together, even though the minimalist associations are inappropriate in Rautavaara's case. Jeremi Szaniawski's description of director Terrence Malick's approach to incorporating existing pieces illustrates the connections made between these composers in public consciousness: 'Malick's cuts come from the more tonal, accessible end of contemporary classical music. Arvo Pärt, Einojuhani Rautavaara, Henryk Górecki and John Tavener all tend toward recognizable harmonies and a pseudo-sacral meditativeness.'[35] Within the film, *Cantus* takes on a particular function, becoming further removed from its original context. A scene between the characters Neil and Jane features the quasi-chromatic, static opening to "Swans Migrating" to emphasize narrative tension, while the following modal, melodic and triadic passage corresponds with a more romantic flashback. The manipulation of these contrasting textures is at odds with the way they blend together as part of one unified movement.

[34] Allan F. Moore, 'In a big country: The portrayal of wide open spaces in the music of big country', *Contemporary Music Review* 17 (1998), 5.
[35] Jeremi Szaniawski, *After Kubrick: A Filmmaker's Legacy* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2020), 173.

Nature, nostalgia and the question of exoticism

A significant aspect of the international success of *Cantus* is its reception as a "Finnish" piece, which leads to the notion of national exoticism, where tropes and images of Finnish culture or geography can become selectively emphasized to create a somewhat idealized vision of reality. In the wider dissemination of this work, these features can also be subsumed under a broader, exoticized "Nordic" label. Philip V. Bohlman's work on Nordic popular music introduces a framework of musical "Borealism" – a way of understanding an exoticized view of the North that builds on Edward Said's theory of Orientalism.[36] Contextualising Borealism within the modernity of eighteenth-century European Enlightenment, Bohlman states: 'It is […] in the rise of Borealism that Europe's foundational mythical pasts were sutured together to draw them from the peripheries and forge a future history that would become as modern as it was European. Borealism became modern through the discovery of the self in the otherness of the North.'[37] The term "Borealism" raises important questions concerning which regions and cultures in the northern parts of the globe are to be included under this label. Hans Weisethaunet also argues that Bohlman's presentation of a dichotomy between the Nordic and Europe 'risks simplifying the region's geopolitical agencies and realities, whereby the North reappears in the light of the "enlightened" Europe; that is, somewhat anachronistically.'[38] But Borealism nevertheless provides a reference point for a consideration of, for example, notions of the arctic "other" in determining the complicated interactions between Rautavaara's cultural, geographical, and musical experiences.

[36] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978).
[37] Philip V. Bohlman, 'Musical Borealism: Nordic Music and European History', in *The Oxford Handbook of Popular Music in the Nordic Countries*, ed. Fabian Holt and Antti-Ville Kärjä (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 40.
[38] Hans Weisethaunet, 'Escaping Nordic Musical Exoticism?', in *The Nature of Nordic Music*, ed. Tim Howell (London: Routledge, 2020), 23.

As it is easy for images of landscape or "Finnishness" to be selectively emphasized or even distorted, it can become difficult to see *Cantus* as stylistically significant. Korhonen's description of it focuses on the way that 'Neoromantic harmonies are enriched by a bird song from a tape'.[39] Meanwhile, Bjorn Heile observes a 'self-exoticism' behind Rautavaara's international appeal[40] and compares the 'more traditional and nationalist' Rautavaara with his modernist countryman and mentor Erik Bergman.[41] Heile does not refer to *Cantus* in particular, but given its international success, it is likely that he had this piece in mind. It is true that Rautavaara has benefitted from the saleability of *Cantus*, as well as his other internationally popular piece Symphony No. 7 – *Angel of Light* (1994), and other large commissions might not have come to pass without this success. Indeed, the piece made a significant impression on Vladimir Ashkenazy and ultimately led him to commission Rautavaara's Third Piano Concerto – *The Gift of Dreams*.[42] At the same time, Rautavaara is not personally responsible for any over-idealized Nordic elements and, as Otonkoski describes, he was genuinely surprized by the popularity of the piece.[43] Nonetheless, images of Nordic or Finnish nature contribute significantly to its compositional impetus. Not only was *Cantus* composed for the inaugural doctoral degree ceremony at the "Arctic" University of Oulu, which ties the premiere and the locations of the recorded birdsong closely together, Rautavaara observes that there is a 'Nordic atmosphere'.[44] While this concept can be difficult to articulate, it is possible to unpack some of its characteristics, the influence of the natural environment, and associated moods, on the music.

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[39] Kimmo Korhonen, 'New Music of Finland', , 200.
[40] Bjorn Heile, 'Erik Bergman, cosmopolitanism and musical geography', in *Transformations of Musical Modernism*, ed. Erling E. Guldbrandsen and Julian Johnson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 87.
[41] Heile, 'Musical Modernism, Global', in *The Routledge Research Companion to Modernism in Music* (London: Routledge, 2018), 185.
[42] *The Gift of Dreams*. Directed by Aarno Cronvall. RM Arts/ Junifer Films, Helsinki, 1997. Documentary film. 49:51, http://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cvideo_work%7C396807 (accessed 11 Sept 2017).

[43] Otonkoski, 'Cantus Arcticus', 24.
[44] Pack and Rautavaara, 'Seven Questions for Einojuhani Rautavaara', 7.

Finnish nature seems to have become more important after Rautavaara's time spent abroad – his compositional apprenticeships had taken him to New York (1955), as well as Cologne and Ascona (1957-58). In the 1997 documentary *The Gift of Dreams*, he discusses how his perceptions of his home country as 'medium-sized' (referring to woods, lakes, and other roadside landmarks in the Finnish countryside) changed: 'I was much more taken with the Alps in Switzerland, or the Atlantic Ocean. Then, in my later years, the Finnish nature has become more and more important. From Finnish nature I got my birds in the *Cantus Arcticus* composition which is probably the most played work of mine.'[45] It is significant that this renewed interest in the natural environment of his home country came at a period of stylistic change for Rautavaara. Returning home and beginning to synthesize his various experiences abroad also seems to have completed a circle in his development both as a person and as a composer. When asked about how the Finnish landscape had touched his musical senses, he responded: 'I don't think that even a most urbanized person born in Finland can avoid being touched by the Finnish landscape – especially by immense woods and swamps and bogs in the North, where I spent many childhood summers.'[46] Rautavaara also had a personal connection to the Oulu region of Finland, from which his mother came, and was familiar with the nature reserve at Liminka Bay.[47] As *Cantus* depicts these regions of Finland, and Rautavaara himself recorded their soundscapes, it demonstrates an individual and subjective view of Finnish nature. But any musical engagement with nature is also connected with culture. Addressing the issue of Nordic musical exoticism in relation to late-twentieth-century Nordic musical contexts, Hans Weisethaunet resists the notion that the "Nordic" first and foremost derives from nature, arguing that, in the North, there is culture and not nature

[45] *The Gift of Dreams*.
[46] Transcript from Rautavaara's notes for an interview, unpublished personal archives, shared with the author by Sini Rautavaara in Helsinki.
[47] Samuli Tiikkaja, *Tulisaarna*, 331-333.

alone.[48] Such a balance goes to the core of an understanding of the elusive "Nordic atmosphere" in *Cantus*.

The notion of nostalgia also plays a role in the individual and cultural-collective engagements with nature in this piece, and is a concept that exists on both individual and collective levels. According to Svetlana Boym, nostalgia is 'a superimposition of two images – of home and abroad, of past and present, of dream and everyday life. The moment we try to force it into a single image, it breaks the frame or burns the surface'.[49] This duality or "break" is reminiscent of the way *Cantus* at once looks back – to Finland (after study abroad), and to tonality (after his complete rejection of it) – and looks forward to achieve something new. In this way, nostalgia overlaps with exoticism if it involves an appealing or "other" image relating to the past. A collective sense of Finnish nostalgia is evident through the evocation of the marsh regions of Northern Finland and the inclusion of Finnish wildlife. A congratulatory letter from the Finnish president Urho Kekkonen to Rautavaara expresses his admiration for the piece, which brought back his own memories of the Kainuu wilderness.[50] A cultural connection to the heroic symbolism of Finnish nature was also evident when the second movement of *Cantus*, "Melancholy", was performed in 2017 for the National Finland 100 Festival, which marked the centenary of Finnish independence. That Sibelius's *Finlandia* was also played in the same concert reinforces the association between particular Finnish works alongside national symbolism, identity, and nostalgia. As an expression of personal nostalgia, Rautavaara's approach to *Cantus* aligns with Boym's view of this phenomenon as not only retrospective but also prospective, an idea that she combines with the notion of "off-modernism".[51] This "off" adverb, Boym states, 'allows us to take a detour from the

[48] Weisethaunet, 'Escaping Nordic Musical Exoticism?', 20.
[49] Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books 2002), xiii-xiv.
[50] Rautavaara, *Omakuva*, 259.
[51] Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia,* xvi.

deterministic narrative of twentieth-century history'.[52] Such a definition connects to the second understanding of modernism presented at the outset of this essay – as an individual way of thinking, rather than a set of technical or stylistic resources gained from exposure to the central-European avant-garde, which forms a driving element in Heile's account of modernism in Finland.[53]

The sound of the whooper swan – the national bird of Finland – in the third movement ("Swans Migrating") presents a particular aspect of Finnish nature, but also a personal source of inspiration to Rautavaara. To him, swans in flight had a transcendental, mystical quality:

> 'I am fascinated by their mysterious, magic ability to command an element we humans can command only with a great deal of fumes and racket in aeroplanes…The appearance of birds in my works is unintentional, so I suppose they must carry some deeper symbolic meaning for me. Birds are mysterious citizens of two worlds. But swan, like man, is unfortunately bound to an element in which it must suffer, to a being that is dualistic…that is why the fate of birds is reminiscent of the fate of man.'[54]

Rautavaara was evidently drawn to and inspired by this natural vision that he saw as removed from the earth-bound domain of humans, and which aligns with other mystical notions behind his "Angel" series.[55] The quotation above also recalls the symbolic associations of swans, melancholy and death. Through its musical and aesthetic connections to the music of Sibelius, the second movement "Melancholy" evokes a particular idea of a Nordic atmosphere. The audible similarity with *The Swan of Tuonela* has been observed by Reidar

[52] Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*., xvii.
[53] Heile, 'Erik Bergman', 74, and 'Musical Modernism, Global', 184-185.
[54] Quoted in Anne Sivuoja-Gunaratnam, 'Rautavaara's Vincent – Not a Portrait', *Finnish Music Quarterly* 2 (1990), 13.
[55] For a full discussion of the semantic associations of these pieces, see Wojciech Stępień, *The Sound of Finnish Angels: Musical Signification in Five Instrumental Compositions by Einojuhani Rautavaara* (New York: Pendragon Press, 2011), especially 173-244.

Bakke, as well as the shared evocation of a melancholy mood triggered by wildlife,[56] which in Finnish mythology is closely associated with themes of death and transfiguration. Juha Torvinen and Susanna Välimäki in fact analyse *The Swan of Tuonela* in a similar way in relation to the depiction of a dark, Nordic landscape. They point out how pedal points and a lack of rhythmic urgency remove a sense of temporality 'as if there were no linear time but only an eternal, mythical time'.[57] In this sense, "Melancholy" is perhaps an engagement with Finland's own mythological and musical past, but explored through a different compositional vocabulary. However, Tim Howell's point that *The Swan of Tuonela* requires attention to compositional technique as much as pictorial imagery[58] is a reminder that imagery and mythology cannot solely define the music of Sibelius, or indeed any composer.

Another side to this imagery is the life-affirming influence of swans, which was also expressed by Sibelius in relation to his Fifth Symphony: 'Today at ten to eleven I saw 16 swans. One of my greatest experiences! Lord God, that beauty! They circled over me for a long time. Disappeared into the solar haze like a gleaming, silver ribbon.'[59] Such displays captured the musical imagination of both composers[60] and it is significant that they each refer to a sense of mystical awe that informs the musical processes.

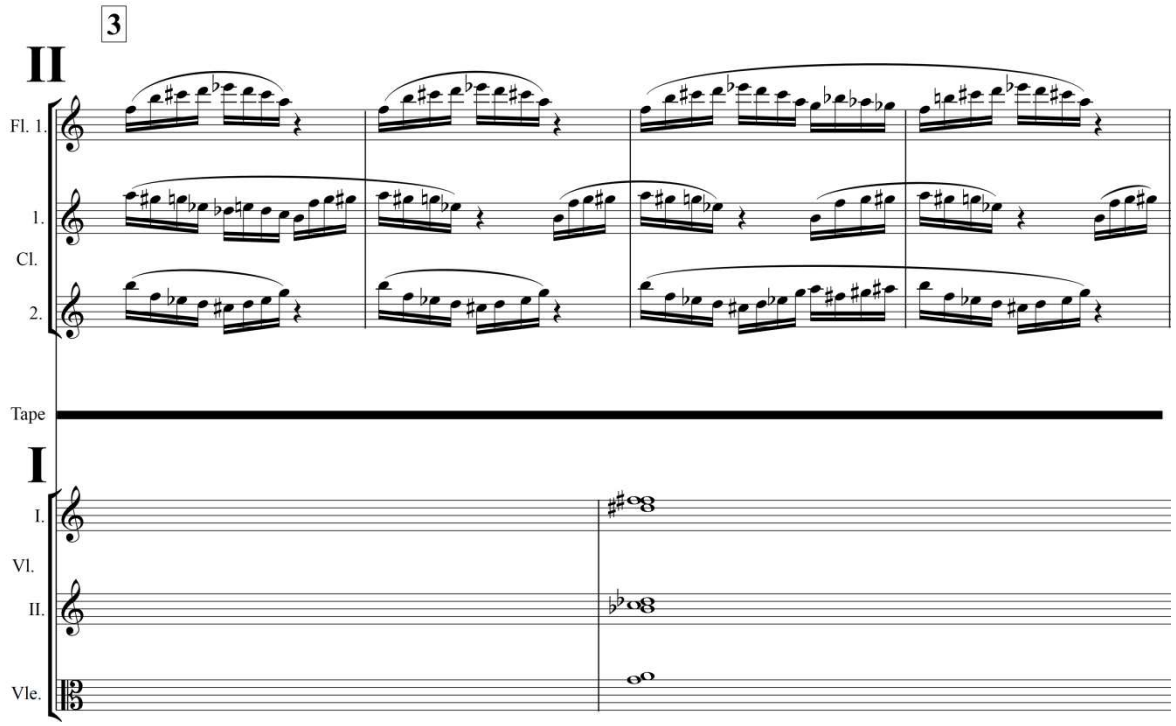
In the context of Rautavaara's entire output, *Cantus* can be viewed alongside other pieces that refer to Finnish nature or culture – two examples would be *Pelimannit* (1952) and *Thomas*, where the clashes of Finnish culture and nature are at the heart of the subject matter.[61] Each of these pieces explore Finnish culture differently, but also reflect the way

[56] Reidar Bakke, 'Naturen i Rautavaaras musikk'. *Studia Musicologica Norvegica* 35/1 (2009), 90.
[57] Juha Torvinen and Susanna Välimäki, 'Nordic drone: Pedal Points and static textures as musical imagery of the northerly environment', in *The Nature of Nordic Music*, ed. Tim Howell, 173-192 (London: Routledge, 2020), 179.
[58] Tim Howell, *Jean Sibelius: Progressive Techniques in the Symphonies and Tone Poems* (New York: Garland Press, 1989), 219-220.
[59] Quoted in James Hepokoski, *Sibelius: Symphony No. 5* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 36.
[60] This particular connection between Rautavaara and Sibelius becomes more likely when considering that Rautavaara was chosen by Sibelius as the recipient of a Koussevitzky scholarship in 1955.
[61] See Sivuoja-Gunaratnam, 'Nature versus Culture in Rautavaara's opera Thomas', *Indianna Theory Review* 13/2 (1992), 89-106.

Rautavaara's stylistic evolution moves dialectically, reconciling national ideas alongside the influence of compositional techniques from abroad. While the novelty value of *Cantus* for many is found in the recorded birdsong, a more abstract realisation of this natural phenomenon can be seen on other occasions across Rautavaara's output, usually as woodwind figurations, although usually it is placed in a more absolute setting. This technique is used prominently in such works as the Third and the Fifth Symphony – Kalevi Aho even refers to it as 'abstract birdsong' in his analysis of Symphony No. 5.[62] On such occasions, these figurations (such as that shown in Exs. 1.1 and 1.2[63]) present a static quality that is combined with other textures to create a multi-layered orchestral sonority and temporal development. They typically use modes of limited transposition. *Cantus* extends this textural counterpoint through the use of recorded birdsong and, in this sense, cannot be regarded exclusively as a programmatic piece. Ashkenazy was aware of this subtlety. According to him, while the orchestra felt the piece had programmatic qualities – an explicit example being the imitations of a crane in the muted trombone near the beginning of the first movement – 'it has an atmosphere that connects it with absolute music'.[64] This particular technique used by Rautavaara is therefore loosely associated with a bird chorus, but its capacity for textural complexity led to abstract compositional possibilities, even if it also lends itself well to avian depiction, as *Cantus* attests. But this practice differs from the explicit symbolism of birdcalls in, for example, Beethoven's Sixth Symphony, which William Kumbier highlights as one of a number of 'charged pictorial elements'.[65] Neither does Rautavaara emulate Messiaen's meticulous transcriptions of birdsong, although both composers were drawn to the exclusively musical possibilities of figurations that are suggestive of them. As Maria Anna

[62] Kalevi Aho, *Einojuhani Rautavaara as Symphonist* (Helsinki: Edition Pan 131 and Sibelius-Akatemian julkaisusarja 5, 1988), 99.
[63] I am grateful to Fennica Gehrman for allowing me to reproduce excerpts of Rautavaara's music. © Fennica Gehrman Oy, Helsinki Published with permission.
[64] Henna Salmela, 'The Maestro and the Birds', *Highlights*, no. 5 (1998), 7.
[65] William Kumbier, 'Beethoven's Birdstrokes: Figuration, Subjectivity, and the Force of the Score in the Pastoral Symphony and Copying Beethoven', *Literature Compass* 7, no. 8 (2010): 642.

Harley states, the ornithological accuracy in Messiaen's music is 'less important than the development of a new musical style with the birds' irregular phrase structures, rich timbres, complex melodic contours and intricate rhythmic patterns in incessant variation.'[66] Another connection is to be made with Messiaen's 'almost aleatoric'[67] technique in the bird chorus of his *Saint François d'Assise* which, according to Harley, resembles Lutosławski's aleatory techniques.[68] This connection is significant given the influence of both Messiaen and Lutosławski on Rautavaara's music, and that Rautavaara frequently uses "birdsong" figurations within passages of limited aleatoricism.

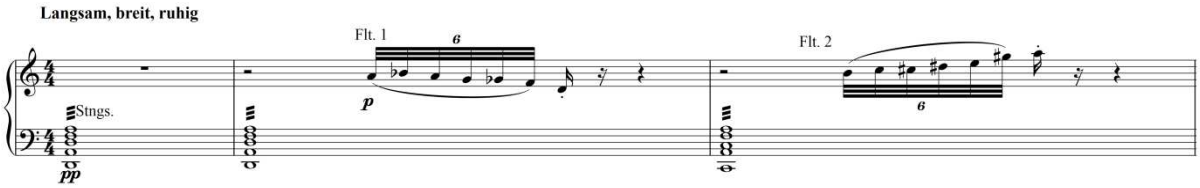


Example 1.1: *Cantus Arcticus*, "Swans Migrating", Fig. 3.

[66] Maria Anna Harley, 'Birdsong', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edn, ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrell. London: Macmillan, 2001. Version at *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deane L. Root. https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.libproxy.york.ac.uk/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000003123?rskey=dVWmGp&result=1 (accessed 12th August 2021).

[67] David Kraft, 'Birdsong in the Music of Olivier Messiaen' (PhD Thesis, Middlesex University, 2000), vi. Kraft describes how such passages are precisely notated, but are 'heralded' by a sign from the conductor – a practice recalling that of Rautavaara in *Garden of Spaces* and *Cantus Arcticus*.

[68] Harley, 'Birdsong'.



Example 1.2: Symphony No. 3, Movement 1, bb. 1-3

Rautavaara's outlook consequently balances the broader development of his musical technique alongside his subjective position on Finnish nature and culture, which have highly relevant roles in this piece. *Cantus* fits with the cultural value Finland places on valuing and making time for nature, balancing this with urban living within each yearly cycle. The possibility of an environmentalist dimension to *Cantus* has not been lost on those who have introduced it to wider audiences,[69] but further distinction should be made between the specific responses to nature outlined above and the connection to problematic ideas of rugged and comparatively unexplored Nordic regions. It is important to remain critical of such images, especially considering the historic marginalization of Sámi history in relation to national narratives.[70] *Cantus* has been included on albums that are packaged with an idealized northerly world in mind, including Ondine's 'Aurora Borealis: Magic of the Mysterious North', a compilation of Finnish orchestral music performances that 'match the unique atmosphere experienced when observing the intriguing celestial displays of Northern Lights'.[71] A re-packaged version of this album adds to a vague sense of exoticism that elides Finnish and Nordic images by observing that the Northern Lights have been 'a dazzling

[69] See, for example, James R. Oestreich, 'Music Review; Hearing Nature's Sounds in a Haunting Landscape', *The New York Times* (2000). https://www.nytimes.com/2000/04/18/arts/music-review-hearing-nature-s-sounds-in-a-haunting-landscape.html (accessed 6 September).
[70] Lars Ivar Hansen and Bjørnar Olsen, *Hunters in Transition: An Outline of Early Sámi History* (Brill: Leiden, 2013), 9-10.
[71] 'Aurora Borealis: Magic of the Mysterious North', *Ondine*. https://www.ondine.net/?lid=en&cid=2.2&oid=2513 (accessed 12 Nov 2020).

natural phenomenon for thousands of years and have contributed to the image of Finland as a fascinating country full of mystery'.[72] This call to the wild is also evident in the piece's inclusion on another compilation album by Deutsche Grammophon: 'Aurora: Music of the Northern Lights'.[73] Apart from the connection with the geographical location, Rautavaara's vision behind the piece has far less to do with the Northern Lights than such packaging would suggest. His references to the springtime setting of the first movement[74] show arctic Finland in a different light (as it were) to that of the shimmering Aurora Borealis draped over dark winter skies. It is this image, however, that came to mind for English/ Australian artist Bruce Munro, who created an exhibition, also called *Cantus Arcticus*, directly inspired by Rautavaara's piece. According to the description of this exhibition: 'For Munro, the sounds of arctic birdsong interwoven with Rautavaara's orchestral score created a visual soundscape: shimmering curtains of light suggesting the Aurora Borealis interspersed with the silhouettes of circling birds.'[75] However, as a visual composer, it is indicative of Rautavaara's approach that his music can inspire these images, be channelled into new directions, and therefore reach a wider group of people. The persistent draw of such Nordic ideas fits well with the promotion of Rautavaara's music, as evidenced by Peter Duncan's description of *Cantus* within a larger, accessible guide to classical music as a 'mysterious and exotic sound-world, with the birdcalls emerging and disappearing in the sombre half-light of Rautavaara's orchestral landscapes'.[76]

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[72] 'Aurora Borealis: The Magic of Northern Lights', *Ondine*. https://www.ondine.net/?lid=en&cid=2.2&oid=3576 (accessed 6 Jun 2020).
[73] 'Aurora: Music of the Northern Lights'. *Decca*. https://www.deccaclassics.com/en/catalogue/products/aurora-music-of-the-northern-lights-5074 (accessed Nov 12 2020).
[74] Einojuhani Rautavaara, 'Cantus Arcticus, Concerto for birds and orchestra 1972)', booklet notes to *Einojuhani Rautavaara: Cantus Arcticus, Piano Concerto No. 1, Symphony No. 3*. CD. HNH International Ltd. 1998. 2-3.
[75] Bruce Munro, 'Cantus Arcticus'. https://www.brucemunro.co.uk/work/cantus-arcticus/ (accessed 29 September 2020).
[76] Duncan Clark, *Classical Music: The Rough Guide*, ed. Joe Staines. 3rd edn (London: Rough Guides, 2001), 397.

A broader Nordic exoticism is not limited to the music of Rautavaara. Daniel Grimley points out the problematic view of a generic "Nordicness" in relation to Sibelius's music:

> 'For many listeners, Sibelius's Finland is still associated with a particular idea of northernness: an exotic realm of icy waters, somnolent lakes, endless spruce forests, and untouched wilderness. This problematic vision of an idealized Nordic landscape has exerted a powerful influence on Sibelius reception, pointing toward what Peter Davison (alluding to Glenn Gould, an enthusiastic fan of Sibelius's music) has called our "idea of north"…'[77]

To avoid an equally problematic vision in relation to Rautavaara, it is necessary to be open to the more multifaceted make up of both his compositional intentions and Finland itself, which is distinguishable from a more general "Nordic" landscape. Grimley's assertion that the music of Edvard Grieg reveals a 'fundamental tension in Norwegian nationalism between cosmopolitan, assimilatory and isolationist trends'[78] aligns closely with the need to examine the inner tensions and complexities of one of Rautavaara's most nationally aware – and internationally successful – pieces.

Landscape, form and texture

While the recorded birdsong in *Cantus Arcticus* brings the arctic marshes of Finland to the auditory foreground, there are larger questions concerning the role of landscape in this piece, especially how the musical form and interactions of musical texture can articulate the *feeling* of being in a particular environment. A sense of participation with the landscape comes across in Rautavaara's description of the opening movement: 'The first movement, *Suo* ("The Marsh") opens with two solo flutes. They are gradually joined by other wind instruments and the sounds of bog birds in spring. Finally, the strings enter with a broad melody that might be

[77] Grimley, 'Sibelius, Finland and the Idea of Landscape', in *Jean Sibelius and His World*, ed. Daniel M. Grimley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), ix.
[78] Grimley, *Grieg, Landscape and Norwegian National Identity* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2012), 221.

interpreted as the voice and mood of a person walking in the wilds.'[79] Landscape therefore permeates this piece much more deeply than through an electronic soundscape. Rautavaara's response to a question concerning the importance of Finnish nature had an extra comment that he added in pencil: 'These landscapes are symphonic.'[80] Associations between symphonic writing and landscape are also seen in Symphony No. 3 (1961), which Rautavaara said responded to a need to make the music move in 'the rhythm of the land and sea',[81] and in the Fifth Symphony, in which, according to Aho, 'new horizons perpetually open up'.[82] For Rautavaara, "landscape" was a powerful creative impetus in symphonic composition, often expressed through the manipulation of musical textures and motivic development conveying a sense of size and the sensation of moving through vast spaces. The transformation and development of these musical landscapes features heavily in his Eighth Symphony *The Journey* – in the preface for this work, Rautavaara describes the symphonic form generally as 'transformations of light and colour', and the finale of the symphony as 'flowing onto a broad estuary, the everlasting sea'.[83] Whilst it is not a symphony, the individual movements of *Cantus* explore a similar relationship between perceptions of motion and stasis, especially through the manipulation of groups of musical textures. The perception of moving through landscape relies on the combination of static and dynamic textures, a duality in which the recorded birdsong participates. The duality of stasis and motion can be found within the recorded birdsong as a soundscape – a sound environment contained to a region, but within which movement takes place. The interactions between these various states provide the particular dualism for this unusual concerto setting. These metaphorical aspects relate to the

[79] Rautavaara, 'Cantus Arcticus'. 2-3.
[80] Rautavaara, unpublished personal archives, shared with the author by Sini Rautavaara in Helsinki.
[81] Quoted in Aho, *Rautavaara as Symphonist*, 83.
[82] Aho, Rautavaara as Symphonist, 100.
[83] Rautavaara, Preface to Symphony No. 8 – *The Journey* (Helsinki: Warner/ Chappell, 2000), iii.

notion of "journeying"[84] which, as Tim Howell observes,[85] is a persistent one in his output. Like many of Rautavaara's pieces, [86] the opening movement begins with an "atmosphere". The evocative and sensory nature of the melody in "The Marsh" derives from supporting triads played in the lower register of the orchestra which, in combination with birdsong figurations in the woodwind, creates depth and a richness of sound. The ascending melodic line creates a blossoming effect, added to by the cumulative orchestration. By the time the full string section enters, this evocation of an arctic spring reaches a peak of intensity and consecutive cluster chords in homophonic motion add to this richness. Such harmonic parallelism is a highly characteristic technique and is often put to expressive use in Rautavaara's music, adding emphasis to linear melodic motions. This technique is also emblematic of the period following his departure from strict serialism – a particularly extreme example is the *Piano Concerto* (1969) with the use of full-arm, white-note cluster chords. In the Concerto, the rebellious and dissonant nature of these cluster-chords simultaneously bolsters a fresh and sonorous neo-tonal language, demonstrating how Rautavaara tests boundaries of consonance and dissonance. In the same spirit of finding the full potential for compositional techniques, *Cantus* puts this harmonic parallelism to a different, sensory use.

A particular balance between motion and stasis is evident in the second movement ("Melancholy"). As the title of the movement suggests, mood and atmosphere are of great significance. The accompanying recorded soundscape is the call of the shore lark, which has been brought down in pitch by two octaves to make it, in Rautavaara's words, a 'ghost bird'.[87] Stasis is suggested by this self-contained, short movement and, although it is

[84] For a full discussion of this phenomenon in relation to Symphony No. 8 – *The Journey*, see Burton, 'Upholding a Modernist Mentality', 63-92.
[85] Howell, *After Sibelius*, 125.
[86] Keith Potter, 'Finland's Serial Mystic', *The Independent*, 22 July 1999. https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/classical-finland-s-serial-mystic-1108130.html (accessed 14 December 2020).
[87] Rautavaara, 'Cantus Arcticus'. 2-3.

developmental, overall it presents a kaleidoscopic, spatial view. Additionally, extended pedal points incur an overall static quality. Finally, the layout of the movement, which develops thematically and in volume, is symmetrical in structure. Within this image, however, the dynamic musical parameters offer an expressive emphasis, shown through an increased intensity of volume and orchestration.

That "Melancholy" demonstrates a powerful sensitivity to the natural and cultural images of the arctic Finnish environment is also revealed in the musical evocation of coldness, or an open location, that channels into a larger expression of melancholy. The influence of visual or environmental elements (light and dark/ cold and heat) contributes to the broader significance of landscape as a representation of subjective experience, as well as musical responses to elemental size. Coldness can be understood in terms of absence – the absence of heat. In colour, "coldness" can be defined as the absence of those shades that remind us of heat, hence why colours such as blue and green are considered "cool", while brighter colours such as red, orange and yellow are "warm". In temperament, "coldness" is understood as the absence of visible passion or emotion. Musically, the absence of brass and percussion for the majority of "Melancholy" therefore creates a "cold" atmosphere. Additionally, the opposition between low and high registers creates a hollow quality, explained by the relative absence of "warm" middle and lower registers. The associations of low registers as dark and high registers as bright has been observed in relation to Finnish music[88] and this combination presents a cold light source, as the darker string tones contrasts with high, suspended lines in the upper strings. The use of muted strings and the avoidance of expression, both within the score and in recordings of this piece, all add to this atmosphere, alongside the evocation of an isolated and perhaps forbidding location.

[88] Eila Tarasti, 'Music: The Art of Light and Shadow: or, How Clarity Appears in Tone', in *Music and the Arts. Proceedings from ICMS 7*, ed. Eero Tarasti (Helsinki: International Semiotics Institute, 2006), 267.

Cantus therefore points to a Finnish idea of melancholy – one that brings together the Finnish landscape, culture and ecology in a complicated blend. It also demonstrates Rautavaara's re-connection with Finland and he was certainly aware of the significance of Finnish myths and the relationship with landscape.[89] A similarly complex interaction of physical and cultural landscape can be observed in relation to another piece concerned with a cold location – Vaughan Williams' *Sinfonia Antartica*. The tensions between stasis and dynamic motion in this symphonic setting have been observed by Grimley[90] and the description of passages of the symphony by Hugh Ottaway as 'panoramic'[91] further illustrates how music can reflect the dualistic relationship between humans and an open environment. *Cantus* has been compared in reviews to Vaughan Williams' musical style,[92] and their harmonic and melodic similarities will be discussed in the next section, but a tangible comparison would be the extra-musical inclusion of soundscape within an orchestral setting. The use of a wind machine in *Sinfonia Antartica*, like Rautavaara's use of recorded birdsong, with its programmatic effect, points more literally to the relationship between music, landscape and ecology, and connects musical processes and textures to an imagined space. In turn, this fact can help in understanding those less literal structural representations of landscape and human agency in Rautavaara's later orchestral and symphonic works.

The third movement, "Swans Migrating", incorporates aleatory techniques. There are four orchestral groups with exact notation. In combining these groups, Rautavaara makes different textures interact, including those that are static (such as repeating 'birdsong' figurations) and those that are more dynamic (such as a melody in parallel harmonies). The

[89] See, for example, Rautavaara, 'Choirs, Myths and Finnishness', *Finnish Music Quarterly* 1 (1997), 3-6.
[90] Grimley, 'Music, Ice and the "Geometry of Fear": The Landscapes of Vaughan Williams's "Sinfonia Antartica"', *The Musical Quarterly* 91/1/2 (2008), 133.
[91] Hugh Ottaway, *Vaughan Williams Symphonies* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1972), 48 and 51.
[92] See 'Rautavaara's Cantus Arcticus; Piano Concerto; Symphony No. 3', Gramophone. https://www.gramophone.co.uk/review/rautavaara-cantus-articus-piano-concerto-symphony-no (accessed 6 November 2020) and Ben Hogwood, 'Cantus Arcticus…The Whale', *Classical Source*. https://www.classicalsource.com/prom/cantus-arcticus-the-whale/ (accessed 9 November 2020).

overall effect is the fluid motion of one mass which is actually made up of separate parts, resembling birds in flight. A particular effect comes from inserting a small amount of freedom as to exactly when each group enters – a balance that Rautavaara explored on a number of occasions. Consequently, multiple layers of motion operate at different paces and on different levels to create a complex and expansive orchestral sonority. At the beginning of the movement, groups one and two operate asynchronously, incurring the sense of control in apparent randomness. This remains the case when the broad melody of group 3 enters and, likewise, group 4, which uses the harp and celeste. As the melodic material of group 3 develops, the orchestra becomes more synchronized.

As with "Melancholy", "Swans Migrating" is a more programmatic realisation of the various techniques that Rautavaara was experimenting with and attempting to integrate into his larger style. The same organisation takes place, albeit on a larger scale, in *Garden of Spaces*, composed just one year earlier. This technique falls under Rautavaara's 'textural polyphony',[93] where his interest in aleatoric devices opened up new possibilities in the role of textural dialogue and transformation to manipulate the portrayal of static, symmetrical musical landscapes versus dynamic motion and dramatic narrative. The temporal unfolding of spatial musical organisations determines the duality within the musical form between time and space. However, while "Swans Migrating" combines textures and different perceptions of musical time in this way, unlike *Garden of Spaces* it is ultimately a sense of dynamism that wins through. Rautavaara describes this process: 'The texture constantly increases in complexity, and the sounds of the migrating swans are multiplied too, until finally the sound is lost in the distance'.[94] If *Garden of Spaces* engages with architectural spaces – indeed, the title is taken from an architectural exhibition by Reima Pietilä[95] – *Cantus* engages with

[93] 'Einojuhani Rautavaara ohjaa kapellimestareita' *Areena*, *Yle*, 2012. 21:25, 07:49-10:01 2019. https://areena.yle.fi/1-50141455 (accessed 21 January 2021).
[94] Einojuhani Rautavaara, 'Cantus Arcticus'. 2-3.
[95] Howell, *After Sibelius*, 121.

natural space. The two pieces can therefore be viewed as counterparts to each other, echoing the close correspondence between nature and architecture in Finnish culture, as well as the stylistic balance that became increasingly significant in Rautavaara's music.[96]

Tonal renewal

Neo-tonality is a significant element within Rautavaara's individual musical language and is largely responsible for a sound world that is both familiar – which undoubtedly contributes to its wide appeal – and novel. But the tonal-like style of *Cantus* can be a sticking point in the reception of this piece. It is of course true that *Cantus* draws upon a familiar harmonic and melodic language and the use of triads, mediant-related harmonies, and modal-like melodies explains comparisons with film music. In one sense, the piece appears to look backwards in comparison to the pitch organisation methods of such earlier works as *Arabescata*, but a fundamental idea within Rautavaara's complicated relationship with modernism is that looking backwards was a pre-requisite for moving forwards. He had been forced to reject any linear narrative of modernist musical development on the level of technique and musical materials. The work's resemblance to tonal models logically disassociates it from an idea of artistic significance based solely on the rejection of tonal traits. While Rautavaara did not prevent or obscure these resemblances, his particular perspective and subtle renewal of tonality require closer inspection.

The idea that tonality has been marginalized has been challenged in recent investigations into the "flourishing" of post-war tonality. Felix Wörner, Ullrich Scheideler, and Philip Rupprecht observe in the recent edited volume *Tonality Since 1950* how an eclectic group of composers have approached tonality from different angles in the late-twentieth century.[97] Rautavaara is an important case study to bring into this larger attempt to

[96] Howell also highlights the significance of "balance" in Rautavaara's music. See Howell, *After Sibelius*, 141.
[97] Felix Wörner, Ullrich Scheideler and Philip Rupprecht, 'Introduction', in *Tonality Since 1950*, ed. Felix Wörner, Ullrich Scheideler and Philip Rupprecht (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2017), 14.

observe complexity and nuance in recent approaches to tonality. The aim in *Tonality Since 1950* – to observe continuities in late-twentieth century tonal practice, rather than sudden breaks[98] – provides a useful context in which to identify Rautavaara's own adaptations and continuities in this area, without abandoning the idea of compositional continuity and establishing his own style. But his return to tonality was also shaped by experiences of serialism. As such, Rautavaara embodies what Wörner, Scheideler and Rupprecht describe as the 'special historical complexity facing composers working since 1950'.[99] He both departed from the tonal past but re-connected with it, while reflecting critically on what he wanted to continue from his atonal modernist experiences. This convoluted continuity is characterized not by a unidirectional flow of development, but by exploration, re-assessment and periodic decision making. Beneath the outward simplicity of the neo-tonality in *Cantus* is a complex organisation that facilitates this musical language.

After the creative crisis centred on serialism, the reintroduction of triadic harmony and modes of limited transposition (especially the octatonic scale and Mode 6, alternating pairs of whole tones and semitones) was a reaction against the constraints of overly-methodical prior structures that led Rautavaara to conclude that he 'had to keep harmony'.[100] This music from the late-1960s has been described as the 'free tonal' period,[101] a term that needs unpacking further as he did not simply abandon theoretical pitch structures during these years. What 'free tonality' really means is the non-conformity to the expectations of diatonic, functional tonality or modality, and a search for a new set of guidelines or organizing system that affords greater flexibility. Symmetry, as expressed holistically through the twelve tones as a democratic resource, featured heavily in this critical reappraisal of both tonality and serialism. While this approach does not continue the prior theoretical

[98] Wörner, Scheideler and Rupprecht, 'Introduction', 14.
[99] Wörner, Scheideler and Rupprecht, 'Introduction', 13.
[100] Robert R. Reilly and Einojuhani Rautavaara, 'Music: The Composer of Angels', *Crisis* (1998). https://www.crisismagazine.com/1998/music-the-composer-of-the-angels (accessed 9 October 2018).
[101] Korhonen, *Inventing Finnish Music* (Jyväskylä: Finnish Music Information Centre, 2007), 147.

organisations of serial music, it maintains the principle of having a larger pitch system in the background, while offering considerable flexibility.[102] *Cantus* is one of the orchestral works that goes a long way in synthesising pitch sub-collections, achieving great harmonic and melodic variety within one organized, neo-tonal network. This wide-reaching perspective on pitch differs slightly, therefore, to the concentrated use of the octatonic scale in *Garden of Spaces*.

The period between the late-1960s and early-1980s consequently provided a productive middle ground for his tonal renewal. In the 1990s, Rautavaara stated that the twelve tempered tones were the vocabulary of the twentieth century, and that it was a question of *organising* it,[103] and he further remarked that he sought to seek a synthesis between the modern and the more or less tonal harmony.[104] He also compared pitch organisation to the Jungian notion of "Mandala" as an 'antidote against chaos'.[105] Rautavaara expressed these ideas during the 1990s, after he began to use twelve-tone rows again, blending them with symmetrical modes and tonal-sounding harmonies and melodies. This particular synthesis of pitch systems began in the opera *Thomas*.[106] However, *Cantus* demonstrates that, during the period from the late-60s until the mid-80s, he was exploring the same idea of drawing on the twelve-tone vocabulary, but using slightly less pre-determined organisational methods.

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[102] Other Nordic composers during this period were making similar explorations in response to serialism and a rejection of overly constructivist composition methods. A significant example would be Per Nørgård's harmonic derivations from the natural overtone series, as well as his development of geometrical solutions such as the "Infinity Series" – a technique described by Julian Anderson as containing 'a number of replicas of itself, both in original and inverted forms' – which came to fruition during the 1970s. See Julian Anderson 'Nørgård, Per', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edn, ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrell. London: Macmillan, 2001. Version at Grove Music Online, ed. Deane L. Root. https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000020066?rskey=aVXEA2 (accessed 25 August 2021).

[103] Bruce Duffy and Einojuhani Rautavaara, 'Composer Einojuhani Rautavaara: An Interview with Bruce Duffy'. http://www.bruceduffie.com/rautavaara.html (accessed Oct 9th 2019).

[104] Reilly and Rautavaara, 'Music: The Composer of Angels'.

[105] *The Gift of Dreams*.

[106] Sivuoja-Gunaratnam, *Narrating with Twelve Tones*, 16.

While the twentieth-century compositional developments made it clear for Rautavaara that the broader universe of the twelve-tone set still had a part to play, the triad, with its natural resonances, also had a place in contemporary music. In *Cantus*, tertian harmony also helps express the depth, space and resonance of a natural environment. It is also significant that Rautavaara composed at the piano, as stated earlier, and the physical spacing of the keyboard links with the constantly evolving harmonic landscapes in the piece between non-diatonic triads within a focused region of the keyboard. The physical layout of the piano also makes it possible to see the structure behind these harmonic progressions, as freer (in comparison to functional diatonicism) stepwise motion in the melody that "resolves" into new triads, utilising a broader tertian system. While harmonic and melodic motions are able to occupy or suggest harmonic centricity, it is in no way limited by it. If *Cantus* has a "centre", it is to be found in the cyclical symmetries within its musical materials.

Rautavaara's critical re-assertion of those enduring aspects of tonality aligns him with a broader issue that runs throughout the twentieth century, one that has been indicative of a larger critical relationship with serialism. Broadly, this is what George Perle and other writers have referred to as twelve-tone tonality[107] and interval cycles. These organisations, which have been identified in the music of such composers as Bartók, Stravinsky, Debussy, Messiaen, and Perle himself allow, firstly, an organisation of pitch that operates outside of functional, diatonic tonality and, secondly, a foregrounded sense of equality and symmetry in harmonic and melodic organisation.[108] Rautavaara's orchestral music incorporates various cyclical arrangements of notes, combining them and evolving them to provide harmonic diversity and dynamism, making the horizontal and vertical dimensions of music work in a

[107] This alternative understanding of dodecaphony is identified by Paulo Susanni and Elliott Antokoletz, who discuss the 'unserialized twelve-tone languages of Debussy or Stravinsky', where the chromatic continuum as an 'all-encompassing source' can be divided into interval cycles. See Susanni and Antokoletz, *Music and Twentieth-Century Tonality: Harmonic Progression Based on Modality and Interval Cycles* (London: Routledge, 2012), 4-5.
[108] Elliott Antokoletz, *Twentieth-Century Music* (Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 1998), 428.

different way. Samuli Tiikkaja also observes symmetry and circularity in Rautavaara's music and applies a theoretical model, the "Harmonic Circle" – a triadic cycle of alternating major and minor thirds – to Rautavaara's music.[109] Despite appearing to be one of his most tonally traditional pieces, *Cantus* develops different kaleidoscopic organisations and superimpositions of cyclical intervallic structures in a way that looks to later pieces, notably Symphony No. 5, but which also helps give this work its own character. Such combinations of pitch cycles work in tandem with the textual and formal processes discussed earlier.

The first movement, "The Marsh", reveals a panoramic organisation of harmony and melody. The opening uses a focused theme that repeats but continually opens out into new harmonic vistas and this process is driven by a larger, governing system. The linear orientation of tonality – moving from and towards keys – is replaced by a continually transforming harmonic and melodic process. However, certain tonal aspects, such as modal shifting, are renewed. A sense of complexity and circularity comes from the simultaneous use of different interval cycles, including synthetic modes and tertian harmony. The influence of landscape is significant at this level of melodic and harmonic processes – the repeating thematic material, which brings unity, is harmonized slightly differently each time, creating the sense that this musical environment is viewed from different angles as new horizons open up.

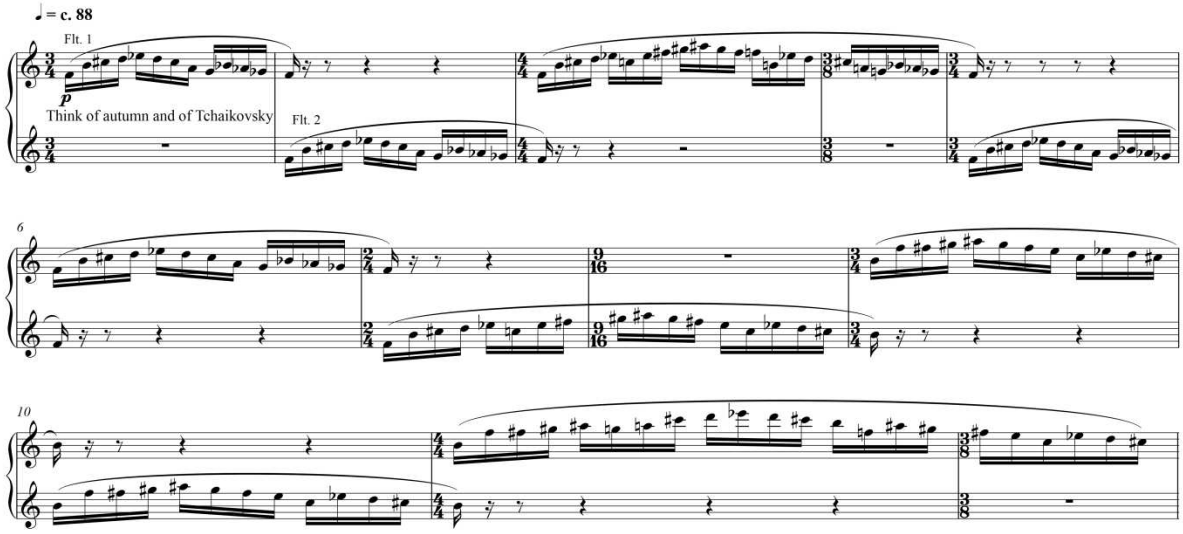
The opening dialogue between the two flutes in "The Marsh" (see Ex. 2.1) uses a varied combination of whole tones and semitones, suggestive of Mode 6, as well as the whole tone, the chromatic, and diatonic scales. The score includes the inscription 'Think of autumn and of Tchaikovsky' – a nod, Bakke says, to notions of seasonal melancholy expressed in music.[110] Bakke observes that Rautavaara may have had Tchaikovsky's piano piece 'October'

[109] Tiikkaja, 'Paired Opposites: The Development of Einojuhani Rautavaara's Harmonic Practices' (PhD Thesis, University of Helsinki, 2019), 21-45.
[110] Bakke, 'Naturen i Rautavaaras musikk', 87.

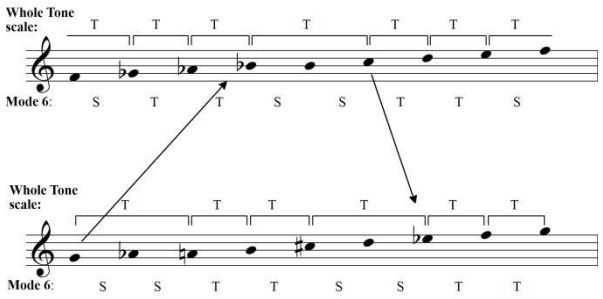
in mind.[111] The tonally neutral quality of the opening melody serves to emphasize this atmosphere. These lines orientate around the notes F and B, which form polarized centre points for flurrying, bird-like melodic lines. As these centre points are a tritone apart, they present a symmetrical and static backdrop, as the melodic lines always return to these two notes.

As Ex. 2.2 shows, this opening passage is loosely structured around two transpositions of Mode 6. Contained within each of these collections is also a version of the whole tone scale. This pair of transpositions organizes the twelve tones symmetrically – consequently, every note from the chromatic set is heard by the end of bar 3 in Ex. 2.1. The arrows in Ex. 2.2 demonstrate how Rautavaara shifts between these modes through the interval of a minor third. Such symmetry allows the focused pitch region (less than an octave over bars 1 and 2) to be reconfigured when ascending and descending with these modal shifts – a process that is suggestive of the inversional symmetry between landscape and water. These modes also have four notes in common that outline a diminished chord (A♯, B, D and F), further demonstrating the structural symmetry of tritones and interval cycles. These opening bars therefore set up a synthesis that occurs throughout the piece, where Rautavaara combines his modernist fascination with symmetrical pitch organisation on multiple levels alongside a new perspective on tonality and the evocation of Finnish landscape and nature.

[111] Bakke, 'Naturen i Rautavaaras musikk', 88.



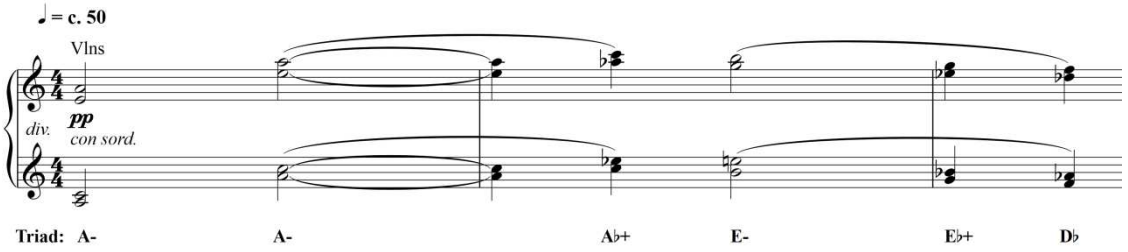
Example 2.1: "The Marsh", bb. 1-12



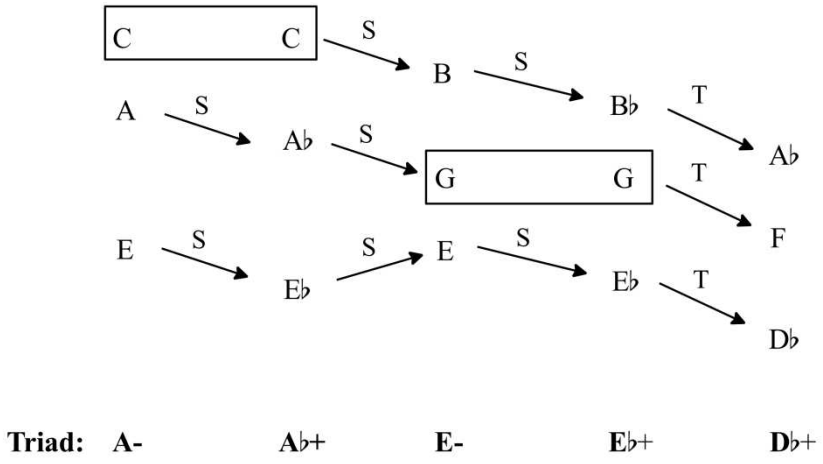
Example 2.2: Two transpositions of Mode 6 as a melodic foundation for bars 1-12

Another highly characteristic part of Rautavaara's technique is the use of slowly-evolving, non-diatonic triadic progression. This technique forms the basis of the second movement, "Melancholy" (see Ex. 3.1). As Ex. 3.2 demonstrates, consecutive triads are often chromatically-related (see the transformation[112] between A minor and A♭ major in Exs. 3.1 and 3.2), while others are approached by whole tones or via chromatic mediant relations. This approach centres on transformations between triads, enabling shifts between chords using notes from opposite sides of the circle of fifths. This harmonic language might also explain the comparisons with the music of Vaughan Williams,[113] although these two composers approach this technique via their own paths. Chromatic mediant relations are a hallmark of Vaughan Williams' style, and both composers used the octatonic scale and other symmetrical pitch collections to achieve continuity over non-diatonic harmonic shifts.[114] Rautavaara's practice here could also be related broadly to Schoenberg's term "floating tonality",[115] where key boundaries are tested to create a suspended tonal effect. However, his starting point in the late-twentieth century was to approach tonality from outside, rather than pushing outwards from within, and the grammar of his neo-tonality is based outside of seven-note diatonic or modal collections.

[112] In neo-Riemannian terms, this harmonic relation is the "SLIDE" transformation, as defined by David Lewin in *Generalized Musical Intervals and Transformations* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 178.
[113] See, for example, 'Rautavaara Cantus Arcticus; Piano Concerto; Symphony No. 3', *Gramophone*. https://www.gramophone.co.uk/review/rautavaara-cantus-articus-piano-concerto-symphony-no (accessed 9 Oct 2020).
[114] Hugh Ottaway (rev. Alain Frogley), 'Vaughan Williams, Ralph: 8. 'Musical language', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edn, ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrell. London: Macmillan, 200. Version at *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deane L. Root. https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.libproxy.york.ac.uk/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000042507?rskey=z662BN (accessed 14 October 2021) and Anthony Pople, 'Vaughan Williams, Tallis and the Phantasy Principle', in *Vaughan Williams Studies*, ed. Alain Frogley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 65-69. Daniel M. Grimley also observes the use of set class 5-22 (using Forte's notation) in Vaughan Williams' *Sinfonia Antartica*, which he states is used to generate larger diatonic and non-diatonic pitch collections, including the octatonic scale, from which this set class is derived. See Grimley, 'Music, Ice and the "Geometry of Fear"', 129-132.
[115] Pople, *Berg; Violin Concerto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 70.



Example 3.1: "Melancholy", bb. 1-3



Example 3.2: Triadic progression, "Melancholy", bb. 1-3

The third movement, "Swans Migrating" is an effective case study in Rautavaara's tonal renewal. As in "The Marsh", a single melody repeats, transposed each time and altered through different orchestration and development through countermelodies. Mikko Heiniö observes the use of modal melodies in *Cantus*,[116] and "Swans Migrating" certainly has a Lydian flavour, although it is uncontained to this mode and moves efficiently between different harmonic areas to achieve non-diatonic harmonic contrast. The interval set of three

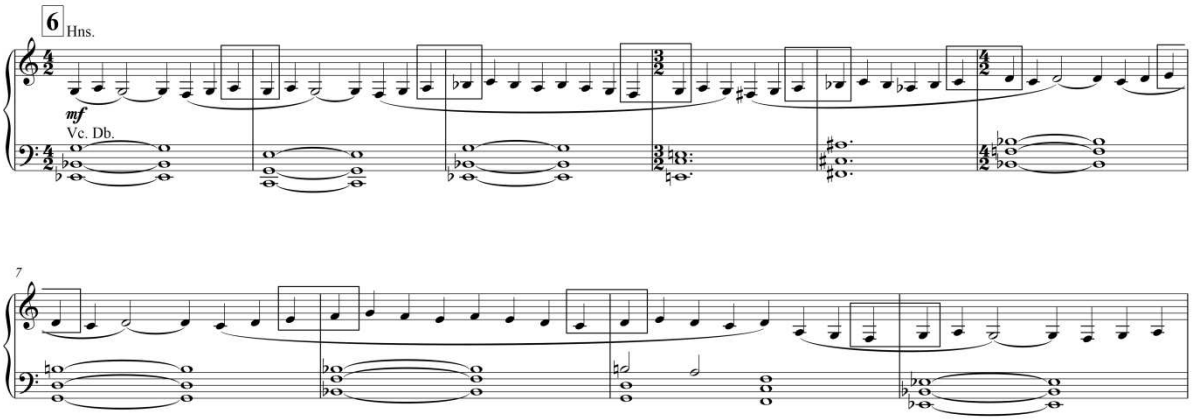
[116] Mikko Heiniö, 'Rautavaara, Einojuhani'.

tones and one semitone (T-T-T-S) occurs consistently in this movement, especially as a melodic-motivic impulse, and plays a significant part in the shifting between quasi-diatonic, modal-sounding areas that nevertheless operates beyond any mode. This intervallic configuration outlines the first five notes of the Lydian mode and Ex. 4.2 maps out a cyclical pitch network based on repetitions of it. This large cycle thus forms a melodic expansion of the circle of fifths (this arrangement will be called the "Lydian Cycle"). Like the circle of fifths, any seven-note segment of consecutive notes outlines a diatonic set.

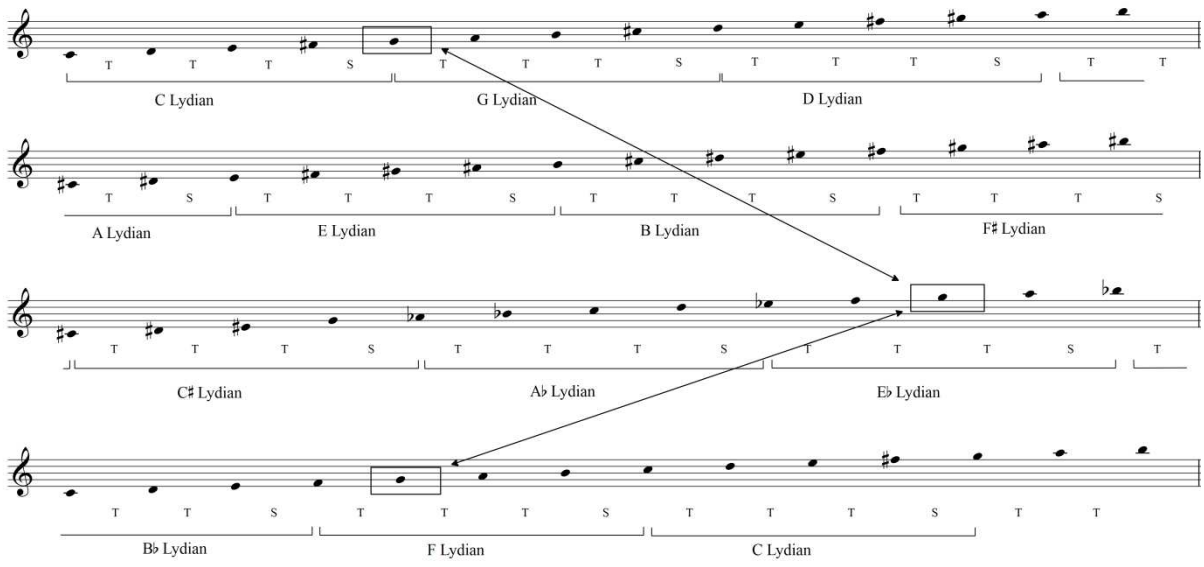
Ex. 4.1 shows how the horizontal and the vertical work together, working beyond harmony alone. When the melody first enters at Fig. 3, the renewal of such tonal elements as "function", "voice leading" and "common tones" becomes clear. These qualities take on a new role within a restructured neo-tonal system. At Figure 6, the harmony moves between E♭ major and C major triads. As shown in Ex. 4.2, the "function" of the note G in the passage from Fig. 6 (Ex. 4.1) switches from the third scale degree of E♭ Lydian to the fifth scale degree of the C major chord in C major/ F Lydian. This transition is achieved through renewed means of voice leading. As highlighted through the boxed notes in Ex 4.1, a stepwise melodic motion from the note A to a G brings directional energy to this harmonic shift. Meanwhile, the use of pivot notes facilitates these modal shifts and provides the logical basis for harmonic change. This harmonic motion between C major and E♭ major could be described in neo-Riemannian terms as a 'Relative-Parallel' transformation, but the integral role of melody aligns with Richard Cohn's observation that such harmonic operations align naturally with principles of 'parsimonious' voice leading.[117] Throughout this movement, however, Rautavaara expands the notion of efficient voice leading beyond "extended" tonality to find smooth connections between pitch organisation that share common tones.

[117] Richard Cohn, 'Introduction to Neo-Riemannian Theory: A Survey and a Historical Perspective', *Journal of Music Theory* 42/ 2 (1998), 174.

This is not a modulation, but a method of harmonic progression – a subtle but important distinction that reveals the theoretical premise of one twelve-note network.

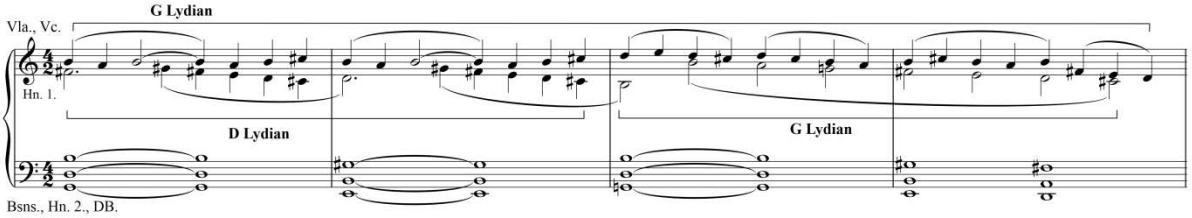


Example 4.1: Harmonic shifts and voice leading in "Swans Migrating", Fig. 6

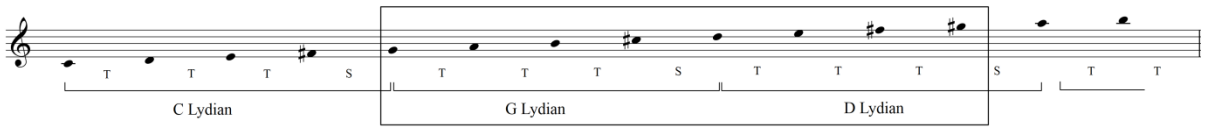


Example 4.2: Shifting function of the note G on the "Lydian Cycle", "Swans Migrating", Fig. 6

As "Swans Migrating" develops, Rautavaara uses more extended eight- or nine-note regions, shown in Exs. 5.1 and 5.2. He therefore combines transpositions of the Lydian T-T-T-S interval pattern based on G and D – see the upper stave in Ex. 5.1.[118] The resultant non-diatonic clash between G and G♯ in this example creates a particular sound quality, one that is generated from the systematic intervallic organisation that creates a kind of super-modality. Although a highly detailed feature, it illustrates how Rautavaara's starting point for harmonic and melodic organisation is to organize the twelve tones into quasi-modal, and quasi-diatonic, segments that can overlap. Recognising this distinction, where Rautavaara operates outside of tonality, without denying it, helps determine why this musical language is both familiar and novel. Evidence of this larger perspective on pitch can be traced throughout the piece, even in the most diatonic-sounding moments.



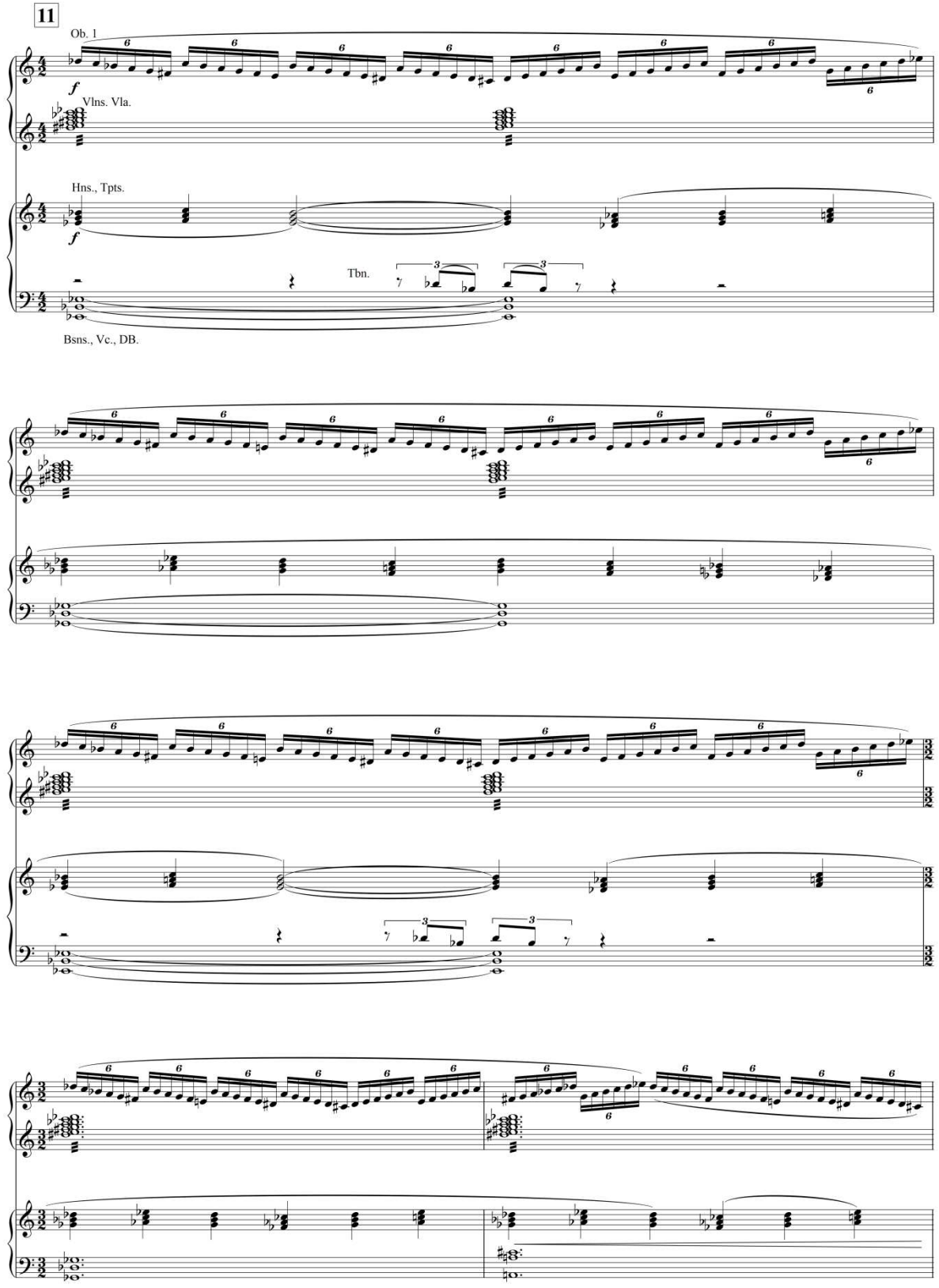
Example. 5.1: Overlapping Lydian segments between upper and lower lines in "Swans Migrating", 6 bars after Fig. 7



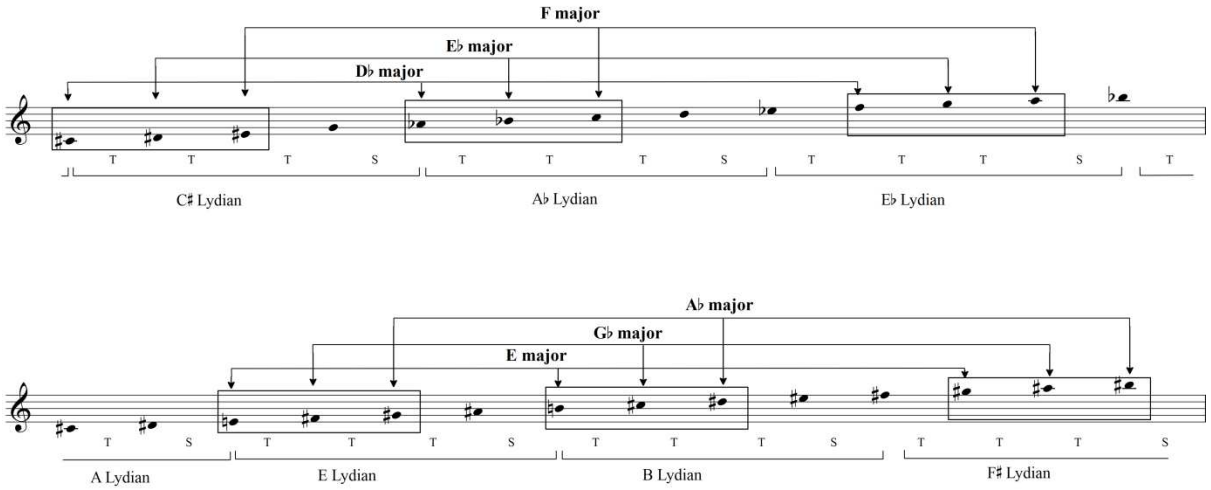
Example 5.2: Consecutive Lydian segments shown on the "Lydian Cycle"

[118] The same process happens after Fig. 8, based on the notes E and B.

At the end of the piece (Ex. 6.1), this motif expands into a much broader pitch organisation, befitting the extra-musical associations of swans in flight. The melody now moves in parallel triadic harmonies (see horns and trumpets in the first bar of Ex. 6.1) centred on the chord E♭ in the first bar, before this pattern transposes down a minor third in the next bar, centred on G♭. These two sets of parallel chords are shown on two segments of the Lydian Cycle in Ex. 6.2 (here, notes belonging to triads are shown with arrows, while boxes show stepwise motion). The octatonic figuration in the oboe in Ex. 6.1 forms a connecting bridge between these two sides of the cycle, further reinforcing the larger sense of symmetry.



Example 6.1: "Swans Migrating", Fig. 11



Example 6.2: Whole-tone motions between triads on the "Lydian Cycle", "Swans Migrating", Fig. 11

Between exoticism and modernism

Cantus Arcticus is a complicated piece that is simultaneously widely accessible and popular, an evocative depiction of Finnish nature, and forms part of a progressive musical style that builds on a personal relationship with modernism. While the work has formative qualities in the context of Rautavaara's stylistic evolution, it transcends boundaries of musical modernism, place and accessibility and requires multi-layered examination. To consider only one of these outcomes is to risk overemphasising, or even distorting, it and thereby undervaluing another. This danger has been encountered in relation to Rautavaara's music – his return to tonality in the late-twentieth century was highlighted by his former pupil Esa-Pekka Salonen as something that, in Salonen's student years as a young modernist, could feel like a "sellout" – a view that he now reflects on differently, recognising Rautavaara's advocacy for a nuanced position in relation to imposed modernist-stylistic ideals.[119] Of course, the argument for such a balanced perspective works both ways: the advances in

[119] Corinna da Fonseca-Wollheim, 'Einojuhani Rautavaara, Composer, Dies at 87; His Lush Music Found Wide Appeal', *The New York Times* (2016). https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/04/arts/music/einojuhani-rautavaara-finnish-composer-dies-at-87.html (accessed 28 March, 2021).

musical technique alone find more subtlety in later works like *Thomas* and those symphonies that are suggestive of landscape, such as the Fifth and Eighth, and the earlier Third. But, in its synthesis, integration of forces, unity, and breadth of expression, *Cantus* foreshadows his mature works. This fact makes it more necessary to re-consider the, by now, settled periodisation of this composer's output. Rather than highlighting the ways in which *Cantus* is different or 'postmodern', as Heiniö believes it to be,[120] it is productive to observe the interactions and connections between this and other orchestral works in Rautavaara's extensive output. Its more explicit explorations of the relationship between music, nature and landscape furthermore indicate a highly significant step in the continued development of Rautavaara's musical personality – the searching for which remained consistent during a time of technical reassessment and experimentation. Combinations of local, international, and spiritual dimensions take this music beyond the parochial, without abandoning it. Consequently, the role of the piece in his stylistic development, especially in negotiating the difficult, personal, and progressive road beyond modernism, is greater than previously thought.

The musical language of the work is also highly representative of Rautavaara's lasting voice, resulting in a renewed tonal solution that raises larger questions concerning how tonality will continue to adapt and change in contemporary music today, what the relationship between theory and practice is, and how pitch relates to musical form, texture, and visual extra-musical depiction. Therefore, this piece cannot be considered artistically insignificant. This 'crowd pleaser' represents the completion of one of a number of dialectic cycles in Rautavaara's output and is a meeting ground for aspects that work in tandem – national versus international elements, musical versus extra-musical, modern versus traditional, and

[120] Heiniö, 'A Portrait of the Artist at a Certain Moment', *Finnish Music Quarterly* 2 (1988): 8-9.

the exotic versus the authentic. The wide success of certain of Rautavaara's works nevertheless gave him pause for reflection:

> 'I have found in my own case and in the work of others that a composition on which great expectations are pinned – that this one is absolutely bound to find its mark and so on – may turn out to be a non-starter, however it is packaged. And the more effort you make, the less likely you are to get the desired response. Then again, a piece that you didn't really take so seriously – it might be a commissioned work or a 'potboiler' done on the side – suddenly turns heads around the world, all by itself. And the composer stands there with his eyebrows in a knot and wonders what on earth it is they all see in it.'[121]

While musical economy and neo-tonality certainly play a part in the international success of *Cantus*, the wider, extra-musical references make them exist in the background for many listeners. But the evocation of these external factors challenges the composer to utilize a controlled and individually-tailored set of musical techniques. A quieter, but no less relevant, novelty is therefore found. The importance of craft seems to be an extension of Rautavaara's advice never to 'force your music, because music is very wise and has its own will,'[122] and the fact that he considered himself the 'midwife', rather than the mother, that helped his music come into being.[123]

Characteristically, *Cantus* asks for these perspectives that might be regarded as mutually exclusive. It does not deny exoticist interpretations that enable wide popularity and dissemination, but delving deeper into the musical, historical, and ecological contexts around this piece proves a highly rewarding, and sometimes surprising, process.

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[121] Quoted in Otonkoski, 'Cantus Arcticus', 24.
[122] Duffy and Rautavaara, 'Composer Einojuhani Rautavaara'.
[123] Aho, 'Rautavaara's death leaves a huge void in Finnish contemporary music', *Finnish Music Quarterly* (2016). https://fmq.fi/articles/rautavaaras-death-leaves-a-huge-void-in-finnish-contemporary-music (accessed Nov 30 2018).

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NB: For musical scores, the first date given is the date of composition; the second date is the publication year.

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