

The early compositions of the internationally renowned Finnish composer, Einojuhani Rautavaara, draw on the Nordic classicism of Sibelius and Nielsen, as well as the influences of Bartók, Shostakovich and folk music. Although, during the 1960s, Rautavaara experimented with avant-garde compositional techniques, the *First Piano Concerto*, written in 1969 (Naxos 8.554147), marked another significant turning point as the composer sought, in his own words, to evoke "the entire rich grandeur of the instrument". In the *Second Piano Concerto* of 1989, Rautavaara finds an intriguing accommodation between traditional and more radical elements. His *Third Piano Concerto*, written in 1998 for Vladimir Ashkenazy, is reminiscent of Bartók's *Piano Concerto No. 3* in its austere beauty, while the orchestral fantasia *Isle of Bliss* was inspired by a poem by the Finnish national poet Aleksis Kivi, depicting the mythical concept of the island paradise.

Einojuhani RAUTAVAARA (b. 1928)

Piano Concertos Nos. 2 and 3

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| 1 | Isle of Bliss | 11:47 |
| | Piano Concerto No. 3 ('Gift of Dreams') | 26:39 |
| 2 | Tranquillo | 9:28 |
| 3 | Adagio assai | 11:39 |
| 4 | Energico | 5:32 |
| | Piano Concerto No. 2 | 23:39 |
| 5 | In Viaggio | 5:50 |
| 6 | Sognando e libero | 12:09 |
| 7 | Uccelli sulle passioni | 5:40 |

Laura Mikkola, Piano
Netherlands Radio Symphony Orchestra • Eri Klas

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