

## **CHOIR PROJECT RACHMANINOV - TORMIS**

The "Vespers" (or All-Night Vigil) by Sergej Rachmaninov (1873 - 1943) composed in 1915 and the song cycle "Ingerimaa Õhtud" (Ingrian Evenings) by Veljo Tormis (1930 -) composed 1979 have two things in common: Both are based on ancient melodies, deeply rooted in the tradition of the people from which they emerged and the composers tried, by creating these works, to give the dying traditions a monumental memorial.

In the case of Rachmaninov it is the Russian Orthodox tradition that he saw passing away with the coming of the communist revolution. Tormis was concerned about the musical heritage of the Baltic people whose ethnic identity was denied by the Soviet State and whose habits were swept away by modern society. Both compositions find their power in the profound stream of sentiments they carry, deeply moving also the modern listener.

At the same time they form a contrast. Rachmaninov is dealing with religious feelings that carry away the listener in a mostly slow movement, while Tormis composed a series of dances that playfully sing about earthly love and the deriving relations in stimulating rhythms. The music of Rachmaninov has complex, well thought structures, in the compositions of Tormis though, everything is of almost minimalist simplicity. In common, again, they have a symphonic sound that demands an intense commitment of the singers. Maybe that's what makes it so rewarding to perform them!

Both works are nicely recorded by the Estonian conductor Tõnu Kaljuste:

Vespers: Virgin Classics 5 45124 2 (Swedish Radio Choir)

Ingerimaa Õhtud (Ingrian Evenings): in "Forgotten Peoples" ECM 434 275-2 (Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir).