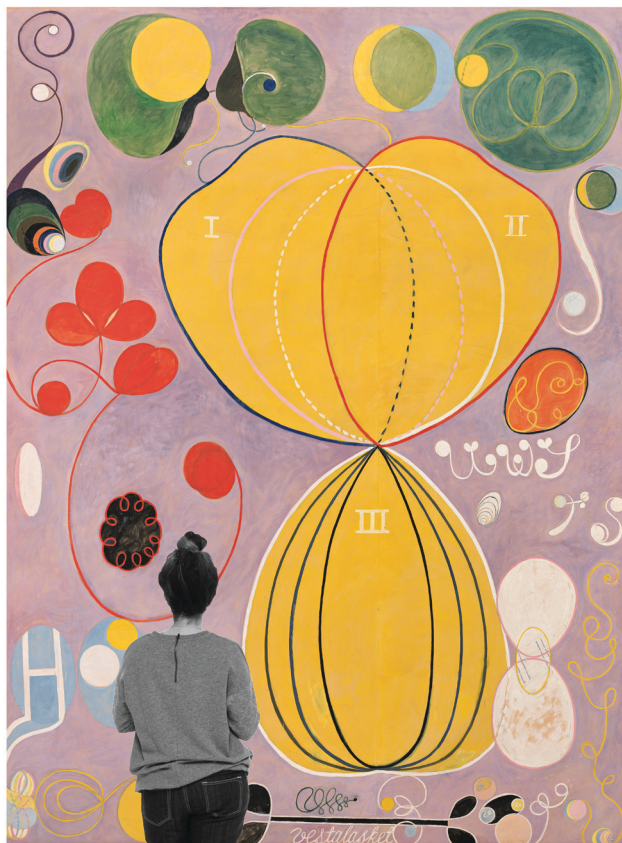


New Zealand Symphony Orchestra *Astral Waves*



The Ten Largest, No. 7, Adulthood, Group IV (907-HAK No. 108). By courtesy of the Hilma af Klint Foundation. Photo: The Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden.

**City
Gallery
Wellington**
Te Whare Toi

**HILMA
AF
KLINT**
THE SECRET PAINTINGS

New Zealand Symphony Orchestra

Hilma af Klint's career was kaleidoscopic. A visionary and a mystic, she was formally trained in figurative art but quickly became immersed in Spiritualism—Spiritualists believed in our ability to communicate with spirits from another realm. An artist of the zeitgeist, she was also interested in new scientific discoveries but her own groundbreaking work was unrecognised in her lifetime. Hilma af Klint believed the world was not ready to receive her 'messages for humanity'. So, she left instructions that her work be kept secret until at least twenty years after her death.

The Secret Paintings is the first and only show of her work in Aotearoa.

Dermot Tutty's 2014 work for solo double bass, *Da Sola*, establishes the space for *Astral Waves* – a contemplative and sonorous work befitting to a first impression of Klint's exuberantly colourful *The Ten Largest*.

Hilma af Klint and her contemporary, composer Rebecca Clarke, were both women artists in a male world. Though Klint is now recognized as one of,

if not *the*, first to create abstract art in the West, her earliest works predate Kandinsky and Mondrian. According to Halina Dyrschka, director of the Hilma af Klint documentary *Beyond the Visible*, Klint "was treated locally as a crazy witch."

Clarke's experience as a composer was also coloured by gender bias. Her anonymously submitted Viola Sonata tied for first place in a prestigious competition; when it was revealed that a woman had written the work, the judging panel was dumbstruck. Reporters alleged her name must be a pseudonym for a male composer – it was unbelievable a woman could have created such excellent, innovative art!

Klint's deep affinity with natural forms and science is clear in her late watercolours. Finnish composer Kaija Saariaho and American minimalist Terry Riley also clearly draw inspiration from the celestial spheres. Saariaho's *Ciel étoile* (Starry Sky) captures the silken dark of night in the bass, while cymbals and crotales provide sparkling pinpricks of starlight.

Astral Waves

Saariaho, Riley, and Arvo Pärt, like af Klint, also represent meaning *without* using traditional forms. Af Klint was drawn towards abstract art through spiritualism, transcending the constraints of traditional representation. The three composers relinquished traditional ideas about tunefulness. For example, Riley's *Sunrise of the Planetary Dream Collector* is made up not of tunes but of units or modules, which the players are free to choose as they wish. This means the shape and structure of the piece changes markedly depending on who plays it. Pärt's *Summa* similarly escapes the usual development that tunes are put through; the same tune hypnotically repeats as the texture rises and falls.

Pärt and J.S. Bach both illuminate a crucial aspect of Klint's creative practice: spirituality. Klint believed higher spirits (which she called spirit guides or the High Masters) communicated spiritual messages to her and commissioned her to create *The Paintings for the Temple* (1906 – 1915). Pärt and Bach were similarly informed and inspired by spirituality.

Bach, the cantor of St Thomas Church, incorporated godliness into his music; Pärt, however, from his position in the twentieth century, reached back in history to Gregorian chant. A beatific golden glow suffuses *Summa*.

Both Debussy and Saint Saëns exemplify the dual approaches to the arts in 1907—the year that Klint painted *The Ten Largest*. Debussy's Impressionist style shows his own move beyond traditional sounds with evocative, boundary-pushing harmonies. Saint-Saëns' lovely *Fantaisie*, however, shows all too well the more conservative artistry that Klint's work leaps well beyond.

SPECIAL THANKS TO



Programme

Tue 07 Dec 2021, 19.00, South Gallery

- **Dermot Tutty** *Da Sola* – 6'
Damien Eckersley, Associate Principal Double Bass
- **Rebecca Clarke** Two Pieces for Violin and Cello, *Lullaby* and *Grotesque* – 6'
Simeon Broom, Violin
Ken Ichinose, Associate Principal Cello
- **Kaija Saariaho** *Ciel étoile* (Starry Sky) – 7'
Damien Eckersley, Associate Principal Double Bass
Leonard Sakofsky, Section Principal Percussion
Samuel Rich, Sub Principal Percussion
- **Terry Riley** *Sunrise of the Planetary Dream Collector* – 8'
Andrew Thomson, Section Principal 2nd Violin – Violin I
Anna van der Zee, Section 1st Violin – Violin II
Victoria Jaenecke, Section Viola
Ken Ichinose, Associate Principal Cello
- **Arvo Pärt** *Summa for String Quartet* – 5'
**ensemble as above*
- **J.S. Bach** Violin Sonata No.2 in A minor, BWV 1003, *Andante* – 6'
Yuka Eguchi, Assistant Concertmaster
- **Debussy** *Clair de Lune* – 5'
**ensemble as above*
- **Saint-Saëns** *Fantasie for Violin and Harp* – 13'
Yuka Eguchi, Assistant Concertmaster
Carolyn Mills, Section Principal Harp

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