

# Jüri Reinvere

## The Empire of May

2010

Composing **“The Empire of May”**, Jüri Reinvere was inspired – like many a Romantic back in their day (Schumann, Keats) – by the first month of summer that in Europe’s south, for the most part, is tender and ripe.

“Frost at Midnight” (2007), “Norilsk, the Daffodils” (2012) and “The Empire of May” (2010) all belong in the cycle of compositions that set to music the composer’s own verses which, in an indirect way, also refer to a certain English Romantic writer – “Frost at Midnight” to Coleridge, “Norilsk, the Daffodils” to Wordsworth. And in the case of „The Empire of May“, that writer is John Keats.

Keats’s Early-Romantic odes are renowned for the author’s perfect mastery of the English language and the pronounced grandness of images. It is in a similar way that Reinvere handles English in his own texts, creating a polyphony of images entwined with musical inter-textuality.

The main themes of “The Empire of May” are contrasting and, seemingly, incompatible: the state, deceit, guilt, Russia, and a May landscape on the island of Saaremaa, complete with a nightingale. For many years in the spring, Reinvere was wont to spend a few weeks in May on Saaremaa – alone, amidst the awakening nature. The poem is a discussion about the state and its members as well as a portrayal of the eternal return of spring.

“The Empire of May” is also one of those compositions wherein space, the nature of specific spaces and the polyphony of spaces play an exceptional role. Every instrument was positioned in a separate room: kantele and the soloists are placed right at the listener’s ear, the cello is in the adjacent room, and the flute much farther away.

The present live-recording was made at the 10 April 2012 studio concert at Klassikaraadio.

Ensemble **Resonabilis**: **Iris Oja** (voice), **Tarmo Johannes** (flute), **Kristi Mühling** (kannel), **Aare Tammesalu** (violoncello).



**Jüri Reinvere** (\*1971) graduated with Master’s degree from Helsinki’s Sibelius Academy in 2004. Prior to that, he studied at the Tallinn Music High School, the Chopin Academy in Warsaw and Helsinki University. He has lived in six European countries; he speaks freely the languages of each of them and feels at home in their cultures. Since 2005, Reinvere resides in Berlin, Germany. He considers himself an Estonian composer who belongs to the Finnish school and relies on the old Mid-European tradition.

Reinvere is both a composer and, for the past ten years, a poet. He often incorporates texts into his compositions. He has composed music in several styles simultaneously, making use of Experimental Modernism and High Modernism as well as Neue Schönheit and Neo-Expressionism. Each of these styles exists independently and manifests its own development within Reinvere’s oeuvre.

The main themes of Reinvere’s philosophical verse are memory, deities, time and the state. From 2007 on, he writes his original texts in English. “The Empire of May” was born in the same way.

Reinvere sees himself as an expander and shifter of genre boundaries in music, at the same time admitting that he remains also a worshipper of same. He always looks for a synthesis, searching for music in poetry and for verbal poetry in music. His music and poetry are both coloured by a purely Berlinesque combination of something quintessentially Renaissancian and something utterly modern.

Reinvere’s grandest opus thus far, the opera “Puhastus” (“Purge”), was premiered in April 2012 at the Finnish National Opera in Helsinki. Based on Sofi Oksanen’s highly popular novel of the same name, Reinvere’s opera received a very warm welcome.

[www.reinvere.de](http://www.reinvere.de)

## THE EMPIRE OF MAY

The exultancy of quiet, quiet rain  
lit the lights upright,  
and with a sudden qualm – the fair-haired trees  
foaming down the precipice of May  
heaved up, stirring still:  
only a sheer, barely discernible drop  
sliding in their shroud of shimmer  
summoned the will to live.

*ebbbb-hcc-eh-ck-ck-ck-*  
*ebbbb-hcc-eh-ck-*  
*eh-ck*

Later, the loathing of lutes:  
starry-eyed birds with the night in their mind  
resound the murk, eat the light and in their deceit  
their bewailing exists not, yet  
the misery is sweet:  
Guilt is the Death.  
The white downfall - a silt of torture which treasures the truth,  
- its freight, like the nightgown of Catherine the Great  
capricious and elephantine -  
- lightweight and heavyweight  
and in its dispersion into the birth of the sun  
reverbs the black, beats the dark and in its retreat  
the eternal will never be outright:  
a glittering triad of forays into the repose,  
a funeral flock of morays, abating the featless age  
“look deeper”, she says, “look deeper into me...!” -  
The state is a dream  
made of hopes, blood and desire.  
When she sways in her bed - side to side,  
this whirlpool of spring, devouring each gaseous rag,  
abyss, magma of her fire; the mirror and the attire,  
the bitterness of chimes, redness of wines and ahead of midnight -

*ebbbb-hcc-eh-ck-ck-ck-*  
*eh-ck*

attest to the empire – of May:  
the commonwealth of perils, wet, wet from wiles  
and the wilted black, wrapping every moment into infinity  
the first time  
a resented, contrailed acquiescence  
elegantly tickling the snow's tone  
with a cry by a contrite nightingale.

*ebbbb-hcc-eh-grrr-ck-ck-ck-*  
*ehb-hcc-eh-ck-ck-ck-*  
*eh-ck*

*i am the aspergillum of the sky*  
*i am the aspergillum of the sky*  
*i am*  
*the aspergillum of the sky.*