

Juuso Nieminen plays Ponce & Rodrigo



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First album of the young
virtuoso guitar player from Finland

Despite his young age, guitarist Juuso Nieminen (born in 1979) has performed at various events and concert series in Europe and the USA, and won more than ten first and second prizes in international guitar competitions in Portugal, Germany, Spain, Italy, Austria, Finland and Greece since 1998, the last one being Heinsberg, Germany in 2005, 1st prize and the first one Scandinavian Guitar Festival in 1998, shared 1st prize.

Juuso Nieminen started to play guitar at the age of 9 years. He has studied guitar playing under Timo Korhonen and Ismo Eskelinen at the Turku Conservatory of Music during the years 1998-2001, and from 2001 at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki under Jukka Savijoki and Jyrki Myllärinen. He has participated in many master courses taught by David Russell, Marco Socias, Eduardo Fernandez, Zoran Dukic and Alvaro Pierri, among others.

*Concert in Valkeakoski Chamber Music Hall/Ponce, Rodrigo, Bach, Villa-Lobos
"Freshly played guitar classics" ...A truly superb performance by a young artist who is surely one of our greatest promises, even by international standards. - Jarmo Tuominen, critic*

*Concert in Pernaja Church/Manuel de Falla, Bach, Sor, Brouwers, Ponce, Britten
"Brilliant guitar soiree in Pernaja church" ...Having witnessed the "Sibelius-days"-festival, I thought I had heard the very best that the 2004 East Nyland musical scene could offer, but Nieminen's concert was the dot over the i, the cream in my coffee, a cold beer after the sauna. In technical terms, the young chap can only be described with the well-worn word virtuoso, which does seem rather poor after Wednesday's fireworks. The concert program likewise proved Nieminen's ability to smoothly move between different musical styles and periods like a fish in water, remaining true to each style. He makes full use of the guitar's expressive range, e.g. colour, volume and nuances, making the music continuously interesting. - Kimmo Havela, critic*

*Concert in Pirkanmaa Music Institute/Bach, Rodrigo, Ponce, Britten
"Juuso Nieminen - virtuoso" ... The performance was simply natural and easy, genuinely felt and unconstrained by the instrument. The competition piece by Bach made an everlasting impression on me. I have never heard Bach played on a guitar in such a way. It sounded like the entire piece did not contain a single technically difficult passage. The music simply flowed... - Antero Laurila, critic*

Arhanes 2004 (competition)

"The winner was Juuso Nieminen, from Finland. His program in the final consisted of Ponce's Sonata III and Britten's Nocturnal. The Ponce had one or two rattly chords, but the phrases were beautifully shaped and there was a sense of being deeply involved in the music that made it very satisfying to listen to. The Nocturnal's theme was strongly marked throughout; held together by this strong DNA chain, the strength of the structure emerged with unusual clarity, making the various elements – the march, the harmonics, the tremolo, the minor 2nd, the pizzicato – appear as unusually strong components in the general design." - Colin Cooper, Classical Guitar Magazine March 2005

Memories of Heinsberg (competition)

"...From the very beginning, Juuso Nieminen was a cert. This redhaired Finn is a perfect example of a sure bet to win a race...Nieminen played Ponce's Third Sonata splendidly, and gave a first-rate performance of Britten's Nocturnal. Powerful, fruity sound, impeccable technique and easiness of the crafted passages was impressive, and charged the audience with positive energy..." - Krzysztof Pelech

The dawning of a great career

"...One of the most promising talents is 26-year old Juuso Nieminen...On his first album, Nieminen plays Manuel Ponce and Joaquin Rodrigo, delving directly into the very heart of guitar music...From the very first bars, one is hit by Nieminen's extreme confidence. His technique is stunning, and the virtuoso nails have been well sharpened. Juuso Nieminen is not one to pick on his instrument while slumped in a corner; he plays with extrovert expressivity and power. There is no doubt that Juuso Nieminen is an artist with a great career ahead of him." - Risto Nordell, Finnish Broadcasting Company YLE 1, host in the Program "New Albums" (The hosts of the classical music program review and play new albums)

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