



INTRODUCTION

In the following pages the authors present in an alphabetical arrangement information on a wide variety of Finnish musical topics. The lack of easily available information on this subject in the English language, which would unlock Finnish music for scholars and others in many countries of the world, makes this publication a critical necessity. The reader who would like geographical information about Finland and a chronological overview is referred to the appendices. They contain a physical description of the country and lists of important dates and events in Finnish history and in Finnish music.

A recent scholarly paper, "Can Dictionaries Be Held Responsible for Food Poisoning?" by Krista Varantola (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study, Williamsburg, Virginia, May 1996), illustrates some of the problems of compiling a dictionary. A 1995 series of letters in a Helsinki newspaper recounted the complaint of a Frenchman living in Helsinki and the response of Finns either sympathizing or commenting on the bumbling of foreigners. The man innocently bought a poisonous variety of mushroom, the *korvasieni*, and served it to his guests, causing the whole group to be hospitalized. His letter to the editor stated that the seller failed to provide a warning that the mushrooms needed preprocessing by boiling before eating, and his Finnish-to-French dictionary also gave no warning. A quick survey by Varantola of dictionaries, both those in Finnish and those from Finnish to various other foreign languages, showed that most dictionaries failed to list that variety of mushroom, confused it with some other edible type, or, even when identifying it correctly, neglected to mention its toxicity. The moral of the morel, then, is: a dictionary entry may be inaccurate, incomplete, or irrelevant to the needs of the reader. As scholars surveying the ever increasing available knowledge, we admit that our efforts may be all of the above. However, we enthusiastically share with the readers what we have.

In 1893 Martin Wegelius completed the first music history book in Finland, necessarily in Swedish, for use in his newly established music school, known today as the Sibelius Academy. In the Finnish translation of 1904, the last paragraphs referred to Finnish music, saying that its history could not be written until it had been made. He mentioned only the Turku Musical Society founded in 1790, the arrival of the university instructor Fredrik Pacius in 1835, and a young composer named Jean Sibelius known already in Europe. He closed by quoting William Shakespeare, from *King Henry IV*, Part II, Act III, sc. 1, paraphrased here in contemporary English:

There is a history in all men's lives
That provides a picture of the past.
If you heed it, you can predict things to come
Which are not yet apparent,
But hidden as seedlings unsprouted.

We, the authors, one hundred years later, dedicate this work to Martin Wegelius, showing the seedlings that have sprouted.

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November 1997