

INHOKISTA IKONIKSI



The Sibelius Monument 50 Years



Finland's best known public work of art, the Sibelius Monument, will be 50 in September 2017. It has come a long way from a pet peeve into a national icon. A Photo Exhibition at the Helsinki Music Centre on September 7- October 21, 2017 recreates the six-year long, in many ways challenging birth story of this work of art through images, words and objects. The exhibition is arranged by the Finnish Sibelius Society, whose first major undertaking the realisation of the Monument indeed was.

The first Monument competition in 1961 drew 50 entries, mostly traditional figurative art. The jury led by Professor L.A. Puntilla was pained to reach a decision. A winner was declared, yet none of the prized entries were deemed good enough to be realised. A successive competition was organised the following year among the top six contenders of the first round. Eila Hiltunen won it with her pipe construction *Passio Musicae*. Its predecessor, *Credo*, had barely made it among the top six in the first round as an extra entry. Eila Hiltunen was 39 at the time, a pioneer of modern sculpture and the first in Finland to assume the welding technique.

Victory did not mean commissioning the monument yet. While the expert members of the Jury were unanimous in their support of Hiltunen's

The top six proposals of the first phase. Bottom right Eila Hiltunen's "Credo", which was purchased as an extra entry.





proposal, the leaders of the Sibelius Society were divided in this question. The public at large saw an abstract monument to the national composer as sacrilege, requesting yet another contest, commissioning the work directly from the Academician Wäinö Aaltonen or aborting the entire project. The final contract was not signed until June 1963, after the sculptress had complemented the work with Sibelius' portrait, a new requirement.

The Sibelius monument was completed during the next coming years in a high, austere barrack. Eila Hiltunen hired the 21-year old welder Emil Kukkonen as her assistant. Besides being a skilled craftsman he also proved to be capable of solving complex technical problems. The sculpture, consisting of nearly 600 pipes and weighing over 20 tonnes, came together slowly as the result of hard physical work of these two individuals.





The Monument consist of 14 elements, which were welded together in the summer of 1967 on site at the Sibelius Park in Helsinki's Upper Töölö district. The entire summer was spent on landscaping, foundations, erecting the structure and finishing the work. The landscaping plan by the architect Juhani Kivikoski forms an important part of the whole, even if it could be realised in part only, due to cost concerns and the fractured bedrock around the site.





The Sibelius Monument was solemnly inaugurated on September 7, 1967, when the Sibelius Society handed it over to the City of Helsinki. President and Mrs. Urho Kekkonen were in attendance, together with hundreds of other invitees. For Eila Hiltunen the instance signalled the end of many years' toiling, and a great artistic victory. Yet, she burst into tears like a mother who had just lost a child.

All criticism died. The Sibelius Monument had started its journey from a pet peeve to a nation's beloved icon.

THE SIBELIUS MONUMENT 50th ANNIVERSARY EXHIBITION

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Photoengagements and printing
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Hiltunen-Pietinen Estate, National Gallery of
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THE SIBELIUS SOCIETY

The Sibelius Society was founded in 1957 with the following mission: to foster interest in Jean Sibelius and his music, to promote its public performances and to advance research and publishing activity pertaining to his compositions. For its major projects, the Society receives support from the State, private foundations as well as its contributing partners. In its ordinary business, the Society relies on the active input of its membership and the voluntary work of its elected officers.

The first major project was **The Competition for the Sibelius Monument**, won in 1962 by sculptress Eila Hiltunen's proposal *Passio Musicae*. The Society was responsible for the realisation of the project and the requisite, extensive fund-raising campaign.

Every five years, the Society organizes **The International Jean Sibelius Violin Competition**. One of the world's most esteemed violin competitions, it was held for the first time in 1965, to herald the Jubilee years of Sibelius.

On the initiative of the the Sibelius Society, the Ainola Foundation was incorporated in 1972 by the Society, the Ministry of Education and the Sibelius family, in order to look after the upkeep of Ainola, the home of Jean and Aino Sibelius, and its functioning as a museum on its transition to State ownership. The Society fulfills this task in collaboration with the National Board of Antiquities.

One of the Society's most far-reaching projects is the publishing of the critical edition of **The collected works of Jean Sibelius**, in collaboration with the National Library and the publisher Breitkopf & Härtel. This major undertaking on a national scale was launched in 1996 and will still require years of work.

The Society maintains close contact with other **Sibelius Societies** in Finland and abroad. For the time being, there are some ten Sibelius Societies outside Finland, with those in China and Italy as the latest entries.



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Jean ja Aino Sibeliuksen oikeudenomistajat
Janne-Olli Järvenpää

