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## Timo-Juhani Kyllönen: A Finnish Composer in St. Petersburg

**Album:** [Timo-Juhani Kyllönen: A Finnish Composer in St. Petersburg](#)

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"A Finnish composer in St. Petersburg," reads the subtitle of this recording of four works by Timo-Juhani Kyllönen, born in 1955 and trained in the old Soviet Union. The Russian element in Finnish music is of long standing, and it sets Kyllönen apart from the various schools of contemporary Finnish composition. The large orchestral scope built out of small motives that carry more or less explicit significance is especially reminiscent of the later stages of Shostakovich's symphonic career; the single-movement Symphony No. 1, Op. 8 (1985), carries a sort of rhythmic signature of the composer's name at the beginning. Yet the most distinctive stylistic aspect of these pieces is not Russian or Finnish but Latin American. The composer has visited Cuba and Brazil and has incorporated Latin percussion into his music in a most unusual way, devoid of most folkloristic references. The conga drums of the Concerto for Accordion and Symphony Orchestra, Op. 60 (2000), provide a foil for the accordion, which also avoids reference to Latin popular styles, and Latin percussion also appears in the symphonic poem Lichtental, Op. 43 (1997-98) and even in the Concerto grosso, Op. 65 (2002). Think Shostakovich with the percussion batteries of his symphonies enlivened by congas, marimba, and cuica, and the motivic structure tightened up by engagement with contemporary Finnish trends. An engaging blend, enthusiastically rendered by the turgidly named St. Petersburg State Academic Capella Symphony Orchestra and clearly recorded by a Finnish-Russian team. ~ James Manheim, All Music Guide

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