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## Music: Finnish Tribute

By BERNARD HOLLAND

**T**HE Columbia University Orchestra's "Concert for Finland" Thursday night was an elegantly conceived American tribute to that country. At its root was the "Kalevala," a collection of poems published 150 years ago that has come to represent Finland's mythic past and its sense of self today. The Kalevala was served by two composers in this concert at St. Peter's Church (at Lexington Ave. and 54th St.): by Jean Sibelius, Finland's resident creative hero during his long life, and by one of the country's musical wanderers, Charles Wuorinen, the American composer of Finnish descent.

The Sibelius piece was his tone poem "Kullervo" — written at the age of 26 and celebrating with large orchestra, chorus and soloists the exploits of one of the Kalevala's central figures. The program notes explain to us that in "Kullervo," Sibelius had already found his voice as a composer, but listening to its five movements one could not help wishing that he had been a little less fond of it.

The composer's dark, broadly written signature indeed flows across this music, but missing is the economy

and reticence that make his later music so interesting. The work's length, in other words, outruns its musical means by far. The vocal lines, with their chanting simplicity, do not have the rhythmic variety to sustain our imaginations, and Sibelius uses climaxes of brass and timpani so often that their effect — and our hearing — is dulled into incomprehension.

Mr. Wuorinen's "Prelude to Kullervo" — commissioned for the occasion — is almost an admonishment to such prolixity. Its tuba solos and its rich yet wonderfully clear orchestration have terseness and restraint, and they achieve by doing less just the baritone melancholy that the Sibelius's great weight and length cannot sustain.

Marni Nixon's thin, contained soprano was out of place next to Sibelius's big orchestra. Theodor Uppman's baritone had a struggling quality but competed better. David O. Braynard did well as Mr. Wuorinen's tubist.

Mr. Shanet conducted his students vigorously, and their response was earnest and often successful. The wind players, however, might work some more on listening to one another. Intonation was a big problem all night.

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