



THE OLD VICARADE

One of the major projects of my life has been The Old Vicarage in Huittinen which I purchased in early 2001. The log manor was built in 1826 on a river bank, and is surrounded by a park that is over 200 years old.

With an extensive renovation of the main house and additional buildings, the abandoned place was turned into a cultural center for art exhibitions, concerts, cafe and catered events. I designed and was involved in every aspect of the renovation, and learnt a lot in the process.

The renovation was carried out with care and spirit, bringing back the magic Chekhovian charm. Historical wallpapers and furniture, crystal chandeliers especially designed by me for the house, and the twelve wonderful tile stoves create a unique setting. The main house has a livingroom with a 14-foot high paneled ceiling and wonderful acoustics, ideal for music. The Vicarage also became my home for over 11 years, I learnt to know it intimately and took pride in taking great care of it.

In the 2011 careful exterior renovation, the original colors were brought back while the windows were replaced by modern energy saving ones made exactly according to the original look and scale.

The once famous garden was restored after more than forty years of neglect.

The recital series for the active years of function, 2001–2005 (with a few concerts after it, too), is a real Who's Who of the Finnish classical music scene, with recitals of Karita Mattila with Martin Katz, Soile Isokoski with Marita Viitasalo, Gabriel Suovanen with Gustav Djupsjöbacka, Jorma Hynninen and Helena Juntunen with Ilkka Paananen, Lilli Paasikivi and Petteri Falck with Tuija Hakkila and Mikael Helasvuo, Tommi Hakala with Kristian Attila, Jaakko Kortekangas with Tuija Hakkila, Petteri Salomaa with Ilmo Ranta, Riikka Rantanen and the Cantores Minores choir with Ilkka Paananen, Pia Freund with Päivi Viitanen. In 2002, Gabriela Bone and Oliver Ringelhahn brought the sound of genuine operetta from Vienna and performed with

Kristian Attila at the piano. Instrumental concerts have included Pekka Kuusisto (violin) with Laura Hynninen (harp), Ismo Eskelinen (guitar) and Jukka Perko (sax, with band), the trio Seppo Kimanen, Yoshiko Arai and Vjatseslav Novikov and many others.

The Old Vicarage vocal concerts series with master classes was immediately accepted in the Finnish Festivals chain.

Most acclaimed Finnish visual artists were featured in the summer exhibitions, including Osmo Rauhala, Pauno Pohjolainen, Kirsi Neuvonen, Johannes Rantanen and Tuomo Saali.

In the spring of 2012 I sold the Old Vicarage. The new owner continues the activities.













THE GARDEN

The Old Vicarage was built on the place of a previous vicarage that was destroyed by fire. Many trees have survived from this period. In many ways, the vicarages were the channels for culture, new ideas and new seeds to spread in Finland. New varieties of crops, perennials, fruit trees, berries were tested and grown. The garden of the Old Vicarage was at its most famous at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. After World War II it was much neglected, and by the time I found the place in the summer of 2000, the garden -along with the house- was abandoned, nearly lost.

Great effort was made to bring back the garden into blossom in its original shape. Detailed notes and drawings from the 1940's existed, along with some photos. The old bushes and perennials had spread randomly on the lot, peeking in the midst of a jungle of thistle and mugwort, but could be replanted and cultivated. New fruit trees were planted, along with perennials that were typical at the vicarages in the 19th century.

A wonderful variety of trees can be found in the garden: oak, linden, ash, maple, elm, mountain-ash, willow, chestnut, lilac, birch, Siberian fir. The fruit trees have enjoyed the favorable micro climate by the river and bear fruit in abundance: pears, apples, plums, cherries and damson; different varieties of currants: black, red, green and white, raspberries and rhubarb, red and green gooseberries and an ancient variety found on the lot.







