

Aniara review in Keskisuomalainen and Savon Sanomat

<https://www.ksml.fi/kulttuuri/Arvio-Aniara-musiikkiteos-peilaa-meid%C3%A4nkin-aikaamme/1438162?pwbi=3284e6b85df1f64585e5f5360b1ef904>

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Review: Aniara as musical composition also reflects our times

[Picture | Caption]

The staging of Aniara is thoroughly considered and powerful

Jussi Mattila

(production credits)

Aniara is Swedish Nobel laureate **Harry Martinson**'s epic science fiction poem from 1956. The novel is about a spaceship that is thrown off course and becomes a sarcophagus, travelling at a cosmic speed, for all its passengers. In the story humans are being taken to safety to Mars and Venus from an Earth contaminated by nuclear disaster. Unbeknownst to them they are actually being taken to a slavecamp.

Martinson's work resonates astonishingly well with our times and the threats our planet faces. Possibly also with that people don't necessarily always know for sure what is good and what is bad for their futures – someone else controls and decides that.

Klockriketeatern brings American **Robert Maggio**'s composition of Martinson's text to the Almi hall. The libretto is written by artistic director **Dan Henriksson**, who also directed the piece. Maggio's composition is highly skilled. The chamber choir consisting of 16 singers is the focal point of the whole show and it sings with very a high quality, translucent and cohesive timbre. When needed soloists break off from the American The Crossing Choir.

The music is laden with melancholy and its main feature is a minimalism that fits the small and skillful chamber choir well. At times Maggio swings over to jazz, which the choir adapts to well.

As a whole the piece is deeply touching and the staging is thoroughly considered and powerful. Stage- and in particular lighting design by **Joonas Tikkanen** is what makes this show so great – the shape of the stage, the floor and the rhythm, as well as the quality, of lighting is that of a true visionary.

Conductor **Donald Nally** does well in keeping the small band, mostly left with the task of accompanying and providing effects, on track. The choir sings astonishingly well tuned and rhythmically spot on for almost the whole show.

Beijing opera specialist **Antti Silvennoinen** adds a masterful touch of his own through his portrayal of Mima, an artificial intelligence with the task of making the passengers happy, that many onboard worship.

Mima dies as the result of the cruelty of mankind, after which the community is left broken and a descent begins.

The piece is performed mostly in English and Swedish, and there is no captioning into Finnish. If one knows the principles of the story beforehand any contemporary person is able to follow the plot.

Klockriketeatern's production as well as Maggio's music absorb the spectator. That was most likely the aim when staging the action having the audience around it on two sides – we are all on that ship.

End.

(translated C.Alm 09/19)