



JUKKA-PEKKA SARASTE

Conductor

“Saraste and the BBCSO gave superbly concentrated performances of Sibelius’s symphonic thinking at its most distilled [...] in the exuberant momentum of Saraste’s direction.”

Hilary Finch, The Times

Jukka-Pekka Saraste has established himself as one of the outstanding conductors of his generation, demonstrating remarkable musical depth and integrity. Born in Heinola, Finland, he began his career as a violinist before training as a conductor with Jorma Panula at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki.

An artist of exceptional versatility and breadth, Saraste feels a special affinity with the sound and style of late Romantic music. Equally, he maintains a strong connection with the music of our time, such as that of Dutilleux, Lindberg, Salonen and Saariaho, among others. He conducted world premieres of works by Wolfgang Rihm, Friedrich Cerha, Pascal Dusapin and others. Moreover, he is co-founder of the Avanti! Chamber Orchestra, which has a strong emphasis on contemporary music.

Saraste has served as Chief Conductor of the WDR Sinfonieorchester Cologne since 2010 and extended his contract in 2015 until the end of the 2018/2019 season. He was Music Director and Chief Conductor of the Oslo Philharmonic from 2006 to 2013, and at the end of his tenure was appointed Conductor Laureate, the very first such title bestowed by that orchestra. His previous positions include the principal conductorships of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra (1987-1991), Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra (1987-2001), after which he was made Conductor Laureate, Toronto Symphony Orchestra (1994-2001), and he also served as Principal Guest Conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra (2002-2005). He has recently held the position of Artistic Advisor of the Lahti Symphony Orchestra, and founded the Finnish Chamber Orchestra, for which he is still Artistic Advisor. He also founded the orchestra’s annual Tammissaari Festival, for which he is Artistic Director.

His guest engagements have led him to the major orchestras worldwide, including the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, Münchner Philharmoniker, Sächsische Staatskapelle Dresden, Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, Wiener Symphoniker, NHK Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris and the leading Scandinavian orchestras, among others. In North America he has conducted The Cleveland Orchestra, Boston Symphony, Chicago Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic and New York Philharmonic as well as Orchestre symphonique de Montréal.

Jukka-Pekka Saraste’s extensive discography includes the complete symphonies of Sibelius and Nielsen with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra. He has made a number of well-received recordings with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra of works by Bartók, Dutilleux, Mussorgsky and Prokofiev for Warner Finlandia, most notably a recording of Dutilleux’s Second Symphony. His recording of Mahler’s 6th Symphony with the Oslo Philharmonic has received widespread acknowledgement. His CDs with WDR Sinfonieorchester for Hänssler have likewise earned him high critical praise, and include Schönberg’s *Pelleas and Melisande*, Stravinsky’s *The Firebird*, Brahms’ Symphonies No. 1 and 3 as well as Mahler’s 5th and 9th Symphony and, most recently, Bruckner’s Symphony No. 8. For Kairos, he and the WDR Sinfonieorchester recorded Friedrich Cerha’s *Drei Orchesterstücke*, again to great acclaim.

Jukka-Pekka Saraste has received the Pro Finlandia Prize, the Sibelius Medal, and the Finnish State Prize for Music. He was awarded an honorary doctorate from York University, Toronto and an honorary doctorate from the Sibelius Academy, Helsinki.

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