

Sakari Oramo



"The attention to detail was often heart-stopping.....At the end of a stunning final part, Oramo was quick to hail his musicians, but the feeling was mutual."

- *The Guardian*, April 2008

Sakari Oramo is Chief Conductor of the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra and Principal Conductor of Kokkola Opera. At the beginning of the 2008/09 season, he took up the post of Chief Conductor and

Artistic Advisor of the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, following his highly successful tenure as Music Director of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra from 1999-2008.

Having already held the post of Associate Principal Conductor, Sakari Oramo's position as Chief Conductor at the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra began in September 2003. An accomplished violinist, Oramo was originally concertmaster of the orchestra, during which time he enrolled in Jorma Panula's conducting class at the Sibelius Academy. In 1993, one year after completing the course, Oramo replaced an ailing conductor at a very short notice, and the resulting concert was an unprecedented success, leading to the announcement of his appointment as Associate Principal Conductor.

After a highly successful year as Principal Conductor and Artistic Adviser of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Sakari Oramo was subsequently appointed its Music Director in September 1999. During his ten seasons with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Sakari Oramo toured extensively with the orchestra, including in 2001 a visit to Romania, where he gained the prize for an "outstanding performance of Enescu's work" at the George Enescu International Festival in Bucharest, from the Romanian music magazine *Actualitatea Scala*.

His programmes reflect his Finnish origins, as well as explore the English tradition through composers such as Bax, Bridge, Britten, Elgar, Vaughan Williams, Walton and Constant Lambert. In May 2003, Oramo was Artistic Director of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra's highly-acclaimed new music festival, 'Floop'. In June 2004, Sakari Oramo received an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Central England, Birmingham, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the musical life of the city, and in 2008 he was awarded the Elgar Medal for furthering the reputation of Elgar and his music.

Oramo appears regularly as guest conductor with the most prestigious orchestras, including the New York and Oslo Philharmonics, NDR Sinfonieorchester, Berliner Philharmoniker and the Concertgebouw Orchestra to name but a few. Future highlights include engagements with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Göteborgs Symfoniker, Staatskapelle Dresden, Orchestre de Paris and a European tour with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe in April 2010.

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Sakari Oramo has a number of recordings to his credit. With the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, he has recorded on the Ondine label, including music by early 20th century Finnish composers, Klami and Pingoud, as well as more contemporary composers, Kaipainen and Lindberg. Three of the recordings on Ondine feature Oramo as violinist, where he performs Kurtag's Kafka-Fragments with the soprano Anu Komsu as well as the works by Magnus Lindberg with the Avanti! String Quartet and with the Avanti! Chamber Orchestra. He also recently released a disc of works by Bartok on the Warner Classics label with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra.

Oramo's highly-acclaimed discs with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra include a live recording of Mahler's Symphony No. 5, a complete Sibelius Symphony Cycle, Grieg and Sibelius songs with soprano Karita Mattila, a recording of Shostakovich's Violin Concerto No.1 with Leila Josefowicz and the four Rachmaninov Piano Concertos with Nikolai Lugansky, all for Warner Classics. His complete set of Saint-Saëns Piano Concertos with Stephen Hough for Hyperion has earned several awards, including the Gramophone 'Gold Disc' Award in 2008 for the best recording of the past 30 years.

In 2009, Sakari Oramo received an Honorary OBE from HM the Queen, in recognition of his services to music from his time with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

2009/10 season only. Please contact HarrisonParrott if you wish to edit this biography.