HELSINKI PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

The Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, the first professional symphony orchestra to be founded in the Nordic countries (1882), has been operating without a break for nearly 140 years. It has grown from a band of 36 players to an orchestra of 102 regular members giving concerts attended by a total audience of a good 110,000 a year at the Helsinki Music Centre and abroad.

Between 1892 and 1923 the HPO gave the first performances of almost all the symphonic works by Jean Sibelius with the composer himself conducting. HPO continues its commitment to contemporary music with Helsinki Variations series where 12 composers deliver works between 2019 – 2025, forging a link between the music of today and Helsinki-themed works composed before 1945.

The HPO’s founder and first Chief Conductor Robert Kajanus was succeeded by e.g. Paavo Berglund, Leif Segerstam, John Storgårds and Susanna Mälkki with whom the Orchestra has been going from strength to strength since 2016.

Works by Sibelius and Rautavaara have featured on the highly acclaimed discs made by the HPO. The disc of songs by Sibelius, featuring soprano Soile Isokoski and Leif Segerstam, was awarded the MIDEM Classical Award in Cannes in 2007, and Towards the Horizon, disc containing music by Einojuhani Rautavaara under the baton of John Storgårds, the Gramophone Award in 2012.