Lilli Paasikivi

Mezzo-soprano

Lilli Paasikivi is known as a true multi-tasker of culture - active as an opera and concert singer, artistic director, lecturer, performance coach and specialist in cultural issues. She was a member of the ensemble of Finnish National Opera from 1998 to 2013 where opera roles included Carmen, Amneris, Eboli and Fricka and during which time she carved out a high profile international career taking her to the world’s leading concert stages with the New York Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra, Wiener Philharmoniker and Los Angeles Philharmonic and working with conductors including Sir Simon Rattle, Michael Tilson Thomas, Ricardo Chailly, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Paavo Järvi and Esa-Pekka Salonen.

Celebrated for her performances of the Mahler song-cycles and symphonies, Lilli Paasikivi also champions the music of her homeland with a concert repertoire including Sibelius’ epic *Kullervo*, his incidental music *The Tempest* and *The Maiden in the Tower*, and *Migrations* by Olli Kortekangas which she premiered with the Minnesota Orchestra under the baton of Osmo Vänskä. She sang the role of Alexandra Fyodorovna in the world-premiere of Einojuhani Rautavaara’s *Rasputin* at Finnish National Opera Orchestra conducted by Mikko Franck, appeared as Cordelia in Aulis Sallinen’s *King Lear* also at Finnish National Opera, sang the role of the Pilgrim in the French-premiere of Kaija Saariaho’s *L’amour de loin*at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées under Kent Nagano and most recently, appeared as the title in Eeva Kontu’s new work *Armi Ratia* – an operatic portrait of the legendary founder of the Finnish design house Marimekko.

An extensive discography includes *The Dream of Gerontius*with the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia (Ashkenzay); Beethoven's Symphony No.9 with Gewandhausorchester Leipzig (Chailly); Mahler’s Symphony No.2 with Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra (Paavo Järvi); Mahler’s Symphony No.3 with Philharmonia Orchestra (Zander); Mahler’s Symphony No.8 with Berliner Philharmoniker (Abbado); *Kullervo* with Lahti Symphony Orchestra (Vänskä); and Alma Mahler’s *Complete Songs* arranged and conducted by Jorma Panula.

Performances in the 2023/24 season include Berio Folk Songs with Finnish National Opera Chamber Ensemble, *Les nuits d’été* with both the Vaasa City Orchestra conducted by Tomas Djupsjobacka and the Kuopio City Orchestra under Eugene Tzigane and Mahler’s Symphony No.8 with Helsinki Philharmonic under Jukka Pekka Saraste.

Lilli Paasikivi held the position of Artistic Director of Opera at the Finnish National Opera from 2013-2023 and will take up the position of Artist Director of the Bregenzer Festspiele from October 2024. She was awarded the Pro Finlandia Medal in 2008 in recognition of her artistic achievements and in 2017 she received the Commander’s Badge by the Order of the Lion of Finland.