Sauli Zinovjev
Composer

Sauli Zinovjev is a Finnish composer of contemporary classical music whose work is defined by its emotional depth and immersive orchestral soundscapes. At the heart of Zinovjev’s music lies a commitment to expressivity - he writes the kind of music that first drew him to composition, rich in feeling and resonance. His compositions, described as “brisk, exciting and unpredictable” by The Wall Street Journal, have captivated audiences and performers alike. This artistic vision has led him to collaborate with leading orchestras such as the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Munich Philharmonic Orchestra, Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, the Finnish and Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestras, Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne, and Tapiola Sinfonietta. He has also worked closely with renowned musicians including Klaus Mäkelä, Hannu Lintu, Víkingur Ólafsson, Tuuli Lindeberg, Pekka Kuusisto, Sakari Oramo, André de Ridder, Eivind Gulberg Jenssen, and Hugo Ticciati.

The 2025–26 season marks a significant milestone in Zinovjev’s career, with five major orchestral premieres, as well as a Composer-in-Residence position with the Lahti Symphony Orchestra, where he opens their season with the world premiere of his work *Fade Out*, conducted by Hannu Lintu. Several other world premieres are also underway, including *Tarpeeton Pyyhitään Yli* (*Erasure*), an orchestral song cycle set to the poetry of Mirkka Rekola, performed by soprano Helena Juntunen and the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra under Jukka-Pekka Saraste; *World Bearer*, his second violin concerto written for Nikita Boriso-Glebsky, which premieres with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra and conductor Elim Chan; *Taste of Metal*, his first symphony, which is unveiled by the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Hannu Lintu, and subsequently performed by the Oslo Philharmonic and Orchestre de Paris, conducted by Osmo Vänskä and Klaus Mäkelä respectively; and a clarinet concerto written for Nicolas Baldeyrou, which premieres with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France under François Leleux.

The 2024–25 season saw the premiere of *A Savage Beat*, a percussion concerto written for Vivi Vassileva, first performed by Beethoven Orchester Bonn conducted by Dirk Kaftan, with further performances by the Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg conducted by Gustavo Gimeno. The season also included *Trial & Error*, a work for cello and piano commissioned by BBC Radio 3 and The Henry Barber Trust for Santiago Cañón-Valencia, which was broadcast in February 2025.

The 2023–24 season included the U.S. premiere of Zinovjev’s *Batteria* with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Klaus Mäkelä, which was described as “engaging and well-wrought” (Chicago Tribune) and “an astonishingly assured debut” (Chicago Classical Review). In October 2023, Bamberger Symphoniker and Jukka-Pekka Saraste premiered Zinovjev’s *Hit & Run* (2021), a work commissioned following his year-long scholarship in 2021 at the Internationales Künstlerhaus Villa Concordia in Bamberg. A trio entitled *a love song* for Boriso-Glebsky, Narek Hakhnazaryan, and George Tchaidze premiered in February 2024 at the Wiener Konzerthaus.

Other orchestral highlights from recent seasons included Zinovjev’s *Double Concerto* (2022), which premiered with Tapiola Sinfonietta, Simon Crawford-Phillips, and Hugo Ticciati; *an adagio* (2022) with the Lahti Symphony Orchestra and Anna-Maria Helsing; *Wiegenlied* (2020) for the Oslo Philharmonic, conducted by Klaus Mäkelä and co-commissioned by the Gothenburg Symphony and Helsinki Philharmonic; and *Piano Concerto* (2019), commissioned by the Finnish and Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestras and premiered with Mäkelä, Ólafsson, and the FRSO in January 2021.

Zinovjev attended the Sibelius Academy and currently lives in Helsinki, Finland.

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