



Symphonic Adventures

Sakari Oramo's 2018-19 season includes European premiere of Brett Dean's Cello Concerto with Berlin Philharmonic, captivating concerts with BBC Symphony and Stockholm Philharmonic orchestras and guest engagements in Dresden, Hamburg, Helsinki and Rome

'It's official: if you want to be guaranteed an infallible musical adrenalin boost in London, you can always be sure to find it with Finnish conductor Sakari Oramo and his BBC Symphony Orchestra,'
The Arts Desk, March 2017

Daring repertoire and compelling programmes belong to Sakari Oramo's rich blend of work as Chief Conductor of both the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra and to his guest conducting engagements with leading European orchestras throughout 2018-19. The 52-year-old Finnish conductor's schedule reflects the breadth of his interests and the depth of his artistry. He is set to launch his new season with a three-concert tour of Japan with the Stockholm Philharmonic (Sunday 2 – Tuesday 4 September) before returning to work with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra for three concerts this autumn (Thursday 4, Friday 5 & Saturday 6 October). His performances at the Berlin Philharmonie include the European premiere of Brett Dean's Cello Concerto, specially written for Alban Gerhardt and the Berlin Philharmonic. The programme opens with Grieg's *Peer Gynt* Suite No.1 and closes with Sibelius's *Lemminkäinen* Op.22, a suite of four works inspired by legends from the Finnish national epic, the *Kalevala*.

"I am looking forward to working with the Berlin Philharmonic again this autumn," notes Sakari Oramo. "This will be my fifth project with them and it's always exciting to make music with such a great orchestra. Brett's music is incredibly virtuosic. It requires huge concentration and a keen ear for multiple complex details. I know that he will create something very special for Alban and the orchestra. It's also special for me to conduct *Lemminkäinen* with the Berlin Philharmonic, a work they seldom perform."

Sakari Oramo recently extended his contract with the BBC Symphony Orchestra to run until 2022. He opens his Barbican Centre season with the orchestra on Wednesday 17 October, presenting a programme of works from the Soviet Union and United States created in the Second World War's wake. Their concert opens with Shostakovich's Symphony No.9, a work free from triumphalism or bombast, while its second half comprises Prokofiev's Symphony No.6, written as an elegy for the millions of Soviet citizens so recently killed by bombs, bullets or starvation. The composition, although favourably reviewed at the time of its premiere in October 1947, was condemned soon after for not conforming to Soviet values.

While Prokofiev was working on his Sixth Symphony, Aaron Copland was busy sketching a new Clarinet Concerto for the jazz clarinettist Benny Goodman. An early version of the piece was first performed seventy years ago and revised in 1949. One of the work's finest modern interpreters, Martin Fröst, joins the BBC SO and Sakari Oramo at the Barbican and on a four-concert visit to Spain (Tuesday 23 – Friday 26 October). Their tour repertoire comprises the Shostakovich, Copland and Prokofiev works, Sibelius's *Scènes historiques I* and Symphony No.2, Debussy's *Rhapsody* for clarinet and orchestra and Anders Hillborg's *Peacock Tales*.

The conductor's next BBC Symphony Orchestra concert at the Barbican on Thursday 15 November pairs the original version of Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No.1 with Ethel Smyth's Mass in D. Pavel Kolesnikov takes the solo part in the Tchaikovsky, with the BBC Symphony Chorus and soloists Lucy Crowe, Catriona Morrison, Ben Johnson and Duncan Rock joining the orchestra for Smyth's Mass setting.

"Ethel Smyth's Mass in D is a wonderful piece," observes Oramo. "And it's in D for each movement, which gives the work a sense of the eternal. I will also conduct the piece in Stockholm next May. Smyth was a great personality, who was arrested for throwing stones at the homes of opponents of women's suffrage." She studied composition at the Leipzig Conservatory with Brahms's friend and supporter Heinrich von Herzogenberg and wrote her Mass soon after returning to England in the early 1890s.

Sakari Oramo's year closes with two guest conducting engagements, starting with the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra and performances of Elgar's *Cockaigne Overture*, Brett Dean's Viola Concerto (with the composer as soloist) and Brahms's Symphony No.3 on Wednesday 21 & Thursday 22 November. He returns to the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra the following month for his debut at Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie (Thursday 6, Friday 7 & Sunday 9 December). Anu Komi takes the solo part in Magnus Lindberg's *Accused: Three Interrogations* for soprano and orchestra, with Sibelius's Symphony No.2 occupying the programme's second half. "Accused reflects three different periods of time," notes Sakari Oramo. "It's an incredibly strong piece, sung in three different languages." Lindberg's score sets extracts from an interrogation of the singer, orator and campaigner for women's rights, Anne-Josèphe

Théroigne de Méricourt, a victim of the French Revolution, the transcript of a Stasi interrogation in East Germany during the 1960s, and the transcript of the trial of Bradley, now Chelsea, Manning.

The conductor returns to the Barbican stage on Wednesday 23 January 2019 to direct the world premiere of *Ik zeg: Nu (I Say: Now)* by Richard Causton, Schumann's Cello Concerto with Steven Isserlis as soloist, and Brahms's Symphony No.3. "The BBC Symphony is a great Brahms orchestra," he comments. "We performed Brahms Symphony No.1 in March during our Japan tour and I look forward to exploring our first Brahms together in London with the Third Symphony next January."

Sakari Oramo's next Barbican date on Friday 22 February spans the gamut from Thomas Larcher's *Nocturne-Insomnia* and Mozart's Symphony No.35 'Haffner' to Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*, the latter with tenor Stuart Skelton and contralto Elisabeth Kulman as soloists. "I believe Thomas Larcher is one of the most interesting composers in Europe today," says the conductor. "He creates fascinating soundworlds, which stem from his creative dialogue with tonality and deeply personal response to Classical and Romantic music."

György Ligeti, who died in 2006, is the subject for the BBC's Total Immersion programme at the Barbican Centre on Saturday 2 March. The day-long event closes with a concert comprising a survey of the Hungarian composer's major orchestral works given by the BBC SO and Sakari Oramo. Their programme includes *Clocks and Clouds* and *San Francisco Polyphony*, haunting pieces from the early 1970s, and *Atmosphères*, the micropolyphonic masterwork used by Stanley Kubrick in *2001: A Space Odyssey*. "Ligeti is a household name but is perhaps best known today for just a couple of pieces," notes Sakari Oramo. "I believe that nearly 15 years after his death, it's time to start the reevaluation process of this amazing master. His music was always considered fascinating while being almost too difficult to perform. There needs to be a sense, beyond the music's hair-raising technical challenges, of intuitive understanding of what it is, of the overwhelming emotion and space around the music, not an obsession with its surface detail."

The conductor's itinerary leads to Rome and three concerts with the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia on Thursday 7, Friday 8 & Saturday 9 March. He will partner Emmanuel Ax in Beethoven's Piano Concerto No.1 before turning to Sibelius's Symphony No.1 in the concert's second half. The programme opens with *Snöfrid*, Sibelius's rarely performed melodrama for narrator, mixed choir and orchestra. "I've never conducted *Snöfrid* before, so this is a special occasion for me," says Oramo. "The orchestra wanted to involve their fantastic choir, so this was an ideal opportunity to programme the piece with them. I love this tremendous organisation and the way they serve their community. And it's always a joy to work with Manny Ax, who's a magical artist."

Before becoming a conductor in the early 1990s Sakari Oramo was leader of the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra. His long association with the Helsinki-based institution continues when he conducts Mahler's Symphony No.7 as part of the orchestra's season-long cycle of the composer's symphonies (Wednesday 27 & Thursday 28 March). "It's my first Mahler Seven," he notes. "To do it with an orchestra I know so well is a tremendous privilege."

Three dates with the BBC Symphony Orchestra occupy Oramo's attention when he returns to London next spring. Their concert on Friday 26 April features Elgar's Violin Concerto, with Nicola Benedetti as soloist, and Dvořák's Symphony No.7. They present an all-Russian bill on Friday 3 May, interleaving Stravinsky's *Funeral Song* and *The Rite of Spring* with Shostakovich's Violin Concerto No.1, with soloist Igor Yuzefovich, the BBC SO's new leader. "Having conducted it many times elsewhere, this will be my first *Rite* with the BBC Symphony." The conductor closes the orchestra's Barbican season on Friday 24 May with the UK premiere of Thomas Larcher's *Chiasma* and Mahler's Symphony No.7.

Sakari Oramo's 2018-19 season concludes on Wednesday 19 June in partnership with the Staatskapelle Dresden at the Saxon city's recently refurbished Kulturpalast. Their programme comprises Mozart's Piano Concerto No.20 in D minor K466, with Kirill Gerstein as soloist, and Shostakovich's Symphony No.11, written to mark the 50th anniversary of the short-lived Russian Revolution of 1905. "The orchestra has had a long relationship with Shostakovich's music," Oramo explains. "He had a summer place near Dresden and was often seen in the city. His Eleventh Symphony is an extraordinary piece, which can be heard as a criticism of Soviet tyranny as well as the work through which Shostakovich was rehabilitated a decade after his music had been condemned as 'formalist'. It's still underestimated because people put too much weight on its association with the events of 1905 and too little weight on its special musical substance. I want to show all facets of this remarkable symphony."

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Sunday 2, Monday 3, Tuesday 4 September 2018
Suntory Hall, Tokyo, 7pm

Sakari Oramo conductor | **Nobuyuki Tsujii** piano | **Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra**

MunkteLL *Bränningar*, Op.19
Beethoven Concerto for Piano No.5 in E flat major, Op.73 *Emperor*
Tchaikovsky Symphony No.5 in E minor, Op.64

Thursday 4 October 2018, 8pm

Friday 5 October 2018, 8pm

Saturday 6 October 2018, 7pm

Berliner Philharmonie

Sakari Oramo conductor | **Alban Gerhardt** cello | **Berliner Philharmoniker**

Grieg *Peer Gynt* Suite No.1, Op.23
Brett Dean Cello Concerto
Sibelius *Lemminkäinen* Suite, Op.22

Wednesday 17 October 2018

Barbican Centre, 7.30pm

Sakari Oramo conductor | **Martin Fröst** clarinet | **BBC Symphony Orchestra**

Shostakovich Symphony No.9 in E flat major, Op.70
Copland Concerto for clarinet
Prokofiev Symphony No.6 in E flat minor, Op.111

Tuesday 23 October 2018

Palau de la Música de València, 7.30pm

Sakari Oramo conductor | **Martin Fröst** clarinet | **BBC Symphony Orchestra**

Shostakovich Symphony No.9 in E flat major, Op.70
Copland Concerto for clarinet
Prokofiev Symphony No.6 in E flat minor, Op.111

Wednesday 24 October 2018

Auditorio de Zaragoza, 8pm

Sakari Oramo conductor | **Martin Fröst** clarinet | **BBC Symphony Orchestra**

Sibelius *Scènes historiques I*
Anders Hillborg *Peacock Tales*
Debussy First Rhapsody for Clarinet and Orchestra
Sibelius Symphony No.2 in D major, Op.43

Thursday 25 October 2018

Palacio de Festivales de Cantabria, Santander, 8.30pm

Sakari Oramo conductor | **Martin Fröst** clarinet | **BBC Symphony Orchestra**

Shostakovich Symphony No.9 in E-flat major, Op.70
Copland Concerto for clarinet
Sibelius Symphony No.2 in D major, Op.43

Friday 26 October 2018
Auditorio Kursaal, San Sebastian

Sakari Oramo conductor | **Martin Fröst** clarinet | **BBC Symphony Orchestra**

Sibelius *Scènes historiques I*
Anders Hillborg *Peacock Tales*
Debussy Rhapsody for Clarinet and Orchestra
Prokofiev Symphony No.6 in E-flat minor, Op.111

Thursday 15 November 2018
Barbican Centre, 7.30pm

Sakari Oramo conductor | **Pavel Kolesnikov** piano | **Lucy Crowe** soprano | **Catriona Morison** mezzo-soprano | **Ben Johnson** tenor | **Duncan Rock** bass-baritone | **BBC Symphony Chorus** | **BBC Symphony Orchestra**

Tchaikovsky Concerto for piano No.1 in B flat minor, Op.23
Dame Ethel Smyth Mass in D major

Wednesday 21 & Thursday 22 November 2018
Musiikkitalo, Helsinki, 7pm

Sakari Oramo conductor | **Brett Dean** viola | **Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra**

Elgar *Cockaigne Overture*
Brett Dean Concerto for viola
Brahms Symphony No.3 in F major, Op.90

Thursday 6, Sunday 9 December 2018, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, 8pm
Friday 7 December 2018, Kieler Schloss, Hamburg, 8pm

Sakari Oramo conductor | **Anu Komsu** soprano | **NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester**

Magnus Lindberg *Accused: Three Interrogations for soprano and orchestra*
Sibelius Symphony No.2 in D major, Op.43

Wednesday 23 January 2019
Barbican Centre, 7.30pm

Sakari Oramo conductor | **Steven Isserlis** cello | **BBC Symphony Orchestra**

Richard Causton *Ik zeg: Nu* (World premiere)
Schumann Cello Concerto in A minor
Brahms Symphony No.3 in F major

Friday 22 February 2019
Barbican Centre, 7.30pm

Sakari Oramo conductor | **Elisabeth Kulman** mezzo-soprano | **Stuart Skelton** tenor | **BBC Symphony Orchestra**

Thomas Larcher Nocturne - *Insomnia*
Mozart Symphony No.35 in D major, K385 *Haffner*
Mahler *Das Lied von der Erde*

Saturday 2 March 2019
Barbican Centre, 7.30pm
BBC TOTAL IMMERSION: LIGETI

Sakari Oramo conductor | **Augustin Hadelich** violin | **Nicolas Hodges** piano | **BBC Singers** | **BBC Symphony Orchestra**

Ligeti
Clocks and Clouds
Violin Concerto
Piano Concerto
Atmosphères
San Francisco Polyphony

Thursday 7 March 2019, 7.30pm
Friday 8 March 2019, 8.30pm
Saturday 9 March 2019, 6pm
Santa Cecilia Hall, Rome

Sakari Oramo conductor | **Emanuel Ax** piano | **Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia**

Sibelius *Snöfrid*
Beethoven Concerto for Piano No.1 in C major, Op.15
Sibelius Symphony No.1 in E minor, Op.39

Wednesday 27, Thursday 28 March 2019
Musiikkitalo, Helsinki, 7pm

Sakari Oramo conductor | **Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra**

Mahler Symphony No.7

Friday 26 April 2019
Barbican Centre, 7.30pm

Sakari Oramo conductor | **Nicola Benedetti** violin | **BBC Symphony Orchestra**

Elgar Concerto for Violin in B minor, Op.61
Dvořák Symphony No.7 in D minor, Op.70

Friday 3 May 2019
Barbican Centre, 7.30pm

Sakari Oramo conductor | **Nicola Benedetti** violin | **Igor Yuzefovich** violin | **BBC Symphony Orchestra**

Stravinsky *Funeral Song*, Op.5
Shostakovich Concerto for Violin No.1 in A minor, Op.77 (99)
Stravinsky *The Rite of Spring*

Friday 24 May 2018
Barbican Centre, 7.30pm

Sakari Oramo conductor | **BBC Symphony Orchestra**

Thomas Larcher *Chiasma* (UK premiere)
Mahler Symphony No.7 in E minor

Wednesday 19 June 2019
Kulturpalast, Dresden, 8pm

Sakari Oramo conductor | **Kirill Gerstein** piano | **Sächsische Staatsoper Dresden**

Mozart Concerto for Piano No.20 in D minor, K466

Shostakovich Symphony No.11 in G minor, Op.103