



## Strategic Thinker

**Sakari Oramo trains his focus on firmly established international guest conducting relationships throughout the 2026-27 season**

**Conductor's carefully constructed schedule includes world premiere of Brett Dean's *Phantoms* and Sibelius with the Berliner Philharmoniker, revival of music by Heidi Sundblad-Halme, Busoni's Piano Concerto in Hamburg, Bacewicz and Nielsen in Stockholm and concert performances of Berg's *Lulu* in Cologne**

'Mahler's richly composed works were performed with an exceptional palette in multiple variations by Oramo. He conducted ... in total command, allowing plenty of room for each cluster of orchestral sound to reach its full range of expression,' *OperaWire*, review of all-Mahler programme with the Berliner Philharmoniker, 16 May 2025

Sakari Oramo's schedule of international guest conducting dates during the 2026-27 season is distinguished by the closeness of his relationships with a select group of world-class orchestras. It also reflects his determination to build compelling programmes and introduce audiences to new or rarely performed repertoire. He is set to give the world premiere of a new work by Brett Dean with the Berliner Philharmoniker, direct Ferruccio Busoni's monumental Piano Concerto with the NDR Elbphilharmonie, return to the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra for its centenary celebrations and continue his fruitful association as the Gürzenich Orchestra's Artistic Partner with concert performances of the two-act version of Alban Berg's *Lulu*.

The Finnish conductor's choice of repertoire and orchestras complements his ongoing work as Chief Conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, consistently praised for its defining qualities of artistic gravitas and excellence. "This season fully implements a strategy that I've been thinking about and working towards for several years," says Sakari Oramo. "It places the emphasis on quality over quantity, so it's about doing better programmes with the orchestras I want to work with and only pieces that I want to do."

His strategy begins with a return to the NDR Elbphilharmonie for two performances of Busoni's Piano Concerto, with Kirill Gerstein as soloist, and Debussy's *Trois Nocturnes* on Thursday 10 & Friday 11 December. "This combination of compositions works very well," says Oramo. "Kirill and I performed the Busoni in Paris, Berlin and London for the centenary of Busoni's death in 2024, and now we will do it again 160 years after he was born." The five-movement Piano Concerto, completed in 1904, oscillates between vivid Romantic expression and austere counterpoint culminating in a transcendent finale complete with a setting for male voices of Adam Oehlschläger's 'Hymn to Allah' from his 1805 play *Alladin, or the Wonderful Lamp*.

Oramo will join the Lahti Symphony Orchestra and soprano Anu Komsu early in the new year to record a song cycle by the little-known Finnish composer, Heidi Sundblad-Halme (1903-73), founder-conductor of the Helsinki Women's Orchestra. "Her works are now being rediscovered. I love her music, most of which dates from the 1930s to the late 1960s and was

written for her own orchestra. It falls into the category of Naïvism and, while it sounds like it could have been written for children, it is very intricate. We will record several of her smaller orchestral pieces to go with her song cycle for soprano, flute and a compact orchestra.”

The new year also sees Oramo’s return to the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra in his role as its Conductor Laureate. Their programme, to be given on Thursday 28 & Saturday 30 January, opens with Grażyna Bacewicz’s Overture, a short work for symphony orchestra that contains a striking breadth of contrasting musical ideas. It will be followed by Beethoven’s Violin Concerto and Nielsen’s Symphony No.5. “These concerts are part of the orchestra’s centenary season,” he notes. “They’ve invited all their surviving former chief conductors back to help them celebrate this important anniversary. I look forward to being with them again after quite a long time away.”

Sakari Oramo has conducted the Berliner Philharmoniker on several occasions since making his debut with the orchestra in 2001. Their next programme together, to be given at the Berlin Philharmonie on Thursday 11, Friday 12 & Saturday 13 February, includes the first performance of Brett Dean’s *Phantoms*, set alongside Britten’s Violin Concerto, with Vilde Frang as soloist, and Sibelius’ Symphony No.5. “I’ve been entrusted with the premiere of this new piece by Brett Dean, who was a violist with the Berlin Phil for many years. It will be good to do more Sibelius with the orchestra, having already performed the *Lemminkäinen* Suite and Second Symphony with them in recent years.”

Sibelius in the form of *Finlandia* is on the bill for Oramo’s next round of concerts as Artistic Partner of Cologne’s Gürzenich Orchestra. The composer’s rousing tone poem will be followed by Dvořák’s Cello Concerto, with Senja Rummukainen as soloist, and Nielsen Fifth Symphony (Sunday 21, Monday 22 & Tuesday 23 February). Their partnership resumes the following month for three concert performances of *Lulu* on Sunday 14, Monday 15 & Tuesday 16 March, to be given at the Cologne Philharmonie in the two-act version that Alban Berg completed between 1929 and 1934 and with Anu Komsa in the title role.

“My relationship with the Gürzenich Orchestra is going really well. I really love this orchestra and it’s always inspiring to be with them. They are an excellent opera orchestra, of course, and very fine in concert. I did a staged production of the two-act *Lulu* for Finnish television with West Coast Kokkola Opera and Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra in Helsinki fifteen years ago, with Anu Komsa as the driving force behind it. I look forward to returning to it again in Cologne next year.”

**The information in this press release was correct at the time of sending. Please check the organisations’ websites and social media for the latest updates.**

**For press enquiries, please contact:**

Imogen Aley at Valerie Barber PR

[imogen@vbpr.co.uk](mailto:imogen@vbpr.co.uk) / +44 (0) 20 7586 8560 / [www.vbpr.co.uk](http://www.vbpr.co.uk)

We at Valerie Barber PR are committed to protecting your personal information and so we are letting you know that we are storing your email address, work telephone numbers and work postal address on our database so that we can keep you up to date with news on our clients. You can ask us to stop using your information at any time by emailing us at [info@vbpr.co.uk](mailto:info@vbpr.co.uk). You may also request access to the personal data we have about you, request that any incorrect personal data we have about you be rectified, or request that we erase your personal data. If you have any questions about how we care for and use your personal information please let us know us at [info@vbpr.co.uk](mailto:info@vbpr.co.uk).

**Thursday 10 and Friday 11 December 2026**  
**Elbphilharmonie, Grand Hall**

**Claude Debussy** Trois Nocturnes / Symphonic Triptych for Orchestra and Women's Choir  
**Ferruccio Busoni** Concerto for Piano and Orchestra with Male Chorus, Op. 39

**Sakari Oramo** conductor | **Kirill Gerstein** piano | **NDR Elbphilharmonie** | **Prague Philharmonic Choir**

**Thursday 14 January 2027**  
**Sibelius Concert Hall, Lahti**

**Heidi Sundblad-Halme** Pan Suite  
**Jean Sibelius** Symphony No. 4

**Sakari Oramo** conductor | **Anu Koms**i soprano | **Niamh McKenna** flute | **Lahti Symphony Orchestra**

**Thursday 28 and Saturday 30 January 2027**  
**Konserthuset Stockholm**

**Grazyna Bacewicz** Overture  
**Ludwig van Beethoven** Violin Concerto  
**Carl Nielsen** Symphony No. 5

**Sakari Oramo** conductor | **Janine Jansen** violin | **Royal Stockholm Philharmonic**

**Thursday 11, Friday 12 and Saturday 13 February 2027**  
**Philharmonie Berlin**

**Brett Dean** Phantoms – Scenes for Orchestras  
**Benjamin Britten** Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, op. 15  
**Jean Sibelius** Symphony No. 5 in E-flat major, op. 82

**Sakari Oramo** conductor | **Vilde Frang** violin | **Berliner Philharmoniker**

**Sunday 21, Monday 22 and Tuesday 23 February 2027**  
**Gürzenich Orchestra**

**Jean Sibelius** *Finlandia*  
**Antonín Dvořák** Concerto for Cello and Orchestra, op. 104  
**Carl Nielsen** Symphony No. 5, op. 50

**Sakari Oramo** conductor | **Senja Rummukainen** cello | **Gürzenich Orchestra**

**Sunday 14, Monday 15 and Tuesday 16 March 2027**  
**Gürzenich Orchestra**

**Alban Berg** *Lulu*, Opera in Three Acts (Unfinished version)

**Sakari Oramo** conductor | **Gürzenich Orchestra**