



Distinguished Guest

Sakari Oramo's guest conducting engagements in 2025-26, comprising dates in Cologne, Dresden, Hamburg and Leipzig, reinforce his fruitful creative association with Germany's leading orchestras

Finnish conductor marks his 60th-birthday year with Mendelssohn and Elgar with the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in debut performances with the Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra

Season includes six concerts as Artistic Partner of the Gürzenich Orchestra Cologne and a visit to Paris to perform monumental works by Saariaho and Mahler with the Orchestre philharmonique de Radio France



Sakari Oramo is set to deepen his already close relationship with German orchestras and audiences during the 2025-26 season. The conductor's guest engagements, distinguished by their striking range and imaginative permutations of repertoire, include returns to the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra in Hamburg and the Gürzenich Orchestra in Cologne, where he begins his term as Artistic Partner. In addition, he will make his debut with the Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra to greet the New Year with two performances of Beethoven's evergreen 'Choral' Symphony. His schedule also contains a trip to Paris to

conduct the Orchestre philharmonique de Radio France in Kaija Saariaho's Trumpet Concerto *HUSH* and Mahler's Fifth Symphony.

Oramo began his season at the end of September in company with the Gewandhausorchester. His next outing to Germany takes him to the Gürzenich Orchestra Cologne for a compelling programme at the Cologne Philharmonie on Sunday 7, Monday 8 & Tuesday 9 December. He opens with Jonathan Harvey's *Tranquil Abiding*, a work inspired by the Buddhist state of single-point meditation, and Richard Strauss's *Four Last Songs*, with Anu Komi as soloist. The second half launches with Interludes & Arias from George Benjamin's 2017 opera *Lessons in Love and Violence* and concludes with Richard Strauss's tone poem *Tod und Verklärung*.

"I am delighted to be the Gürzenich Orchestra's Artistic Partner," comments Oramo. "Cologne has a rich tradition of exciting programming and is something of a hotbed for contemporary and unknown music. Jonathan Harvey's piece, which is based on a single, slow breathing rhythm, marries very well with the *Four Last Songs*, with its enormous breadth. And, of course, Strauss quotes the Transfiguration theme from *Tod und Verklärung* in 'I'm Abendrot', the final song of the *Four Last Songs*."

Before resuming work in Cologne, travels to Prague for two concerts with the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra at the Rudolfinum on Sunday 16 & Monday 17 November. He is set to replace Zubin Mehta as conductor of the CPO's annual Velvet Revolution Concert, marking the anniversary of the moment in November 1989 when the then Czechoslovakia gained its independence from Soviet rule with performances of Mahler's Symphony No.2 'Resurrection'. "It is a great honour for me to be part of this special event which I know means so much to the Czech people."

Sakari Oramo makes his debut with the Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra on Tuesday 30 & Wednesday 31 December in Beethoven's Symphony No.9 'Choral'. "I look forward to that very much," he says. "I've worked with the Dresden Staatskapelle many times, but this will be my first time with the Philharmonic. They perform in the Philharmonie, a beautiful hall constructed inside the communist-era Culture Palace with excellent acoustics."

The conductor travels to the Philharmonie de Paris for two concerts with the Orchestre philharmonique de Radio France on Friday 13 & Saturday 14 February 2026. He continues his advocacy of Kaija Saariaho's Trumpet Concerto *HUSH*, with Verner Pohjola as soloist. The Finnish composer's last completed work, written for Pohjola during the final stages of the cancer that took her life in 2023, stands here as the deeply moving preface to Mahler's Symphony No.5. "Saariaho's *HUSH* and Mahler's Fifth are very substantial works from opposite ends of the human experience: night and day, death and life."

Oramo returns to the Gürzenich Orchestra for concerts on Sunday 12, Monday 13 & Tuesday 14 April. His programme comprises Thomas Adès's Violin Concerto *Concentric Paths*, with Tami Pohjola as soloist, and Sibelius' *Four Legends from the Kalevala*, better known as the *Lemminkäinen Suite*. "The Sibelius is far less familiar to the Cologne musicians than it is, for instance, to my players in the BBC Symphony Orchestra," the conductor observes. "They played some movements from the *Lemminkäinen Suite* ten years ago, but it's unlikely that they have performed all four in recent times. Yet the sound Sibelius had in mind was the German sound. That's where he heard real orchestras, unlike those in Helsinki, which were a haphazard collection of local players and foreign musicians."

Sakari Oramo's season of German dates draws to a close on Thursday 23 & Friday 24 April in company with the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra. They will perform Richard Strauss's Serenade in E flat major Op.7 for 13 wind instruments, a delightful early work, Sally Beamish's concerto for violin and clarinet *Distans*, and Beethoven's Symphony No.4. "I have a long relationship with what was formerly called the NDR Symphony Orchestra," notes Oramo. "It was among the first orchestras I conducted in Germany, and I feel we're very close. I've always conducted big pieces there but, because their season is heavy with large-scale compositions, they asked me to programme works for a smaller orchestra. That was an ideal opportunity to look at different repertoire. I look forward to exploring Sally Beamish's concerto for the first time and working with the orchestra's fantastic wind players in Strauss's charming Serenade."

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