Oslo Philharmonic

In September 1919, Orchestra of the Philharmonic Company – later to be known as Oslo Philharmonic − took to the stage for its first public concert in the Norwegian capital. The launch of an independent symphony orchestra was a major event attended by the Royal Family and its fame soon started attracting international stars such as Jean Sibelius and Arthur Nikisch, who both conducted the orchestra in 1921. In the century to follow, Oslo Philharmonic successfully established itself as one of the major international orchestras, through tours and recordings under the leadership of eminent Chief Conductors, including Herbert Blomstedt, Mariss Jansons, Jukka-Pekka Saraste and Vasily Petrenko.

The orchestra began its 101st season in August 2020 with new chief conductor Klaus Mäkelä, whose close relationship with the musicians had been immediately apparent on his debut with the orchestra two years earlier. Mäkelä’s first major project with the orchestra was a recording of the complete symphonies of Sibelius, which was released on Decca in Spring 2022 and awarded both the Choc Classica Recording of the Year (France) and an Edison Award (Netherlands). The recording was followed by critically acclaimed Sibelius residencies at the Wiener Konzerthaus and Hamburg Elbphilharmonie and appearances at the Paris Philharmonie and BBC Proms, which received five-star reviews from both The London Times and Guardian.

Now in their fourth season together, Klaus Mäkelä and Oslo Philharmonic continue to tour regularly with concerts this year at both the Salzburg Festival and Musikfest Berlin, and additional guest appearances at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Paris Philharmonie, Hamburg Elbphilharmonie and Wiener Konzerthaus amongst others. Of their performance of Shostakovich Symphony No.5 at the 2023 Edinburgh International Festival, the Scotsman wrote “this was a mind-blowing Oslo Philharmonic performance... as thrilling for its emotional contradictions as for its pulverising unity of purpose.”

Oslo Philharmonic performs more than 130 concerts annually with a full orchestra and smaller chamber groups in Oslo, Europe, and the rest of the world. The orchestra plays music from a wide repertoire, often with internationally renowned soloists and conductors, and regularly tours both domestically and internationally.

In 2021 Oslo Philharmonic was awarded the Norwegian Audience Development Innovation Award for its extraordinary success and digital commitment through the online concert series *Mellomspill (Interlude),* launched in response to the pandemic. In 2022 the orchestra was nominated for Gramophone Orchestra of the Year and, together with Klaus Mäkelä, received the Sibelius Prize for outstanding efforts to promote contact between Finnish and Norwegian musical life.