

The NAXOS logo is a blue square with the word "NAXOS" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. Above the text are several horizontal lines of varying lengths, resembling a stylized musical staff or a barcode.

SIBELIUS

Symphonies Nos.1 and 3

New Zealand Symphony Orchestra
Pietari Inkinen

Jean Sibelius (1865–1957)

Symphony No. 1 in E minor, Op. 39 • Symphony No. 3 in C major, Op. 52

The Finnish composer Jean Sibelius, the son of a doctor, was born in 1865 in a small town in the south of Finland. The language and culture of his family, as with others of their class and background at the time, was Swedish. It was at school that he was to learn Finnish and acquire his first interest in the early legends of a country that had become an autonomous grand-duchy under the Tsar of Russia, after the defeat of Charles XII of Sweden. Throughout the later nineteenth century there were divisions between the Swedish-speaking upper classes and the Finnish-speaking people, the cause of the latter embraced by influential nationalists and accentuated by the repressive measures introduced by Tsar Nicholas II, before the revolution of 1905. In this society Sibelius was deeply influenced by his association with the family of General Järnefelt, whose daughter Aino became his wife. Nevertheless Swedish remained his mother tongue, in which he expressed himself more fluently than he could in Finnish.

The musical abilities of Sibelius were soon realised, although not developed early enough to suggest music as a profession until he had entered university in Helsinki as a law student. His first ambition had been to be a violinist. It later became apparent that any ability he had in this direction was outweighed by his gifts as a composer, developed first by study with Martin Wegelius, then with the pedantic Becker in Berlin and with Goldmark and, more effectively, Robert Fuchs in Vienna.

In Finland once more, Sibelius won almost immediate success in 1892 with a symphonic poem, *Kullervo*, based on an episode from the Finnish epic *Kalevala*. There followed compositions of particular national appeal that further enhanced his reputation in Helsinki, including the incidental music to the patriotic student pageant *Karelia, En Saga* and the *Lemminkäinen Suite*. During this period Sibelius supported himself and his wife by teaching, as well as by composition and the performance of his works, but it proved difficult for him to earn enough, given, as he was, to bouts of extravagance, continuing from his days as a student. In 1896 he was voted the position of professor at the University of Helsinki, but the committee's decision

was overturned in favour of Robert Kajanus, the experienced founder and conductor of the first professional orchestra in Helsinki. As consolation for his disappointment Sibelius was awarded a government stipend for ten years, and this was later changed into a pension for life. The sum involved was never sufficient to meet his gift for providence, inherited, perhaps, from his father, who at his death in 1868 had left his family in some difficulty.

Sibelius continued his active career as a composer until 1926, his fame increasing at home and abroad. The successful *Symphony No. 1* of 1898 was followed by the still more successful *Finlandia*. Busoni had tried to arrange for the publication of his music by Belyayev, patron of the later nineteenth-century Russian nationalist composers, on the excuse that the Finns were, in a sense, Russians, or at least citizens of a Russian grand-duchy. This came to nothing, but subsequent publication by Breitkopf and Härtel ensured abroad a wider public than provincial Finland itself could ever offer. *Symphony No. 2* in 1902 won an unprecedented success in Helsinki. This was followed by the *Violin Concerto, Symphony No. 3* and, after an illness that put an end for the moment to his indulgence in alcohol and tobacco, *Symphony No. 4*, and by travel to the major musical centres of Europe, leading to international honour. *Symphony No. 5* was written during the war, after which Sibelius wrote only four works of any substance, *Symphony No. 6* in 1923 and, in the following year, *Symphony No. 7*, incidental music to Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and, in 1926, the symphonic poem *Tapiola*. An eighth symphony was completed in 1929, but destroyed. The rest was silence. For the last 25 years of his life Sibelius wrote nothing, remaining isolated from and largely antipathetic to contemporary trends in music. His reputation in Britain and America remained high, although there were inevitable reactions to the excessive enthusiasm of his supporters. On the continent of Europe he failed to recapture the earlier position he had enjoyed before the war of 1914 in Germany, France and Vienna. He died in 1957 at the age of 91.

Sibelius completed his *Symphony No. 1 in E minor, Op. 39*, in 1898 and it received its first performance in April

the following year under the direction of the composer in a concert that also included his new *Atenarnes sång* (Song of the Athenians), a work that used a text by Viktor Rydberg and was seen as an immediate response to the Russianising policies of the Governor-General Bobrikov, who was later assassinated by a Finnish patriot. The choral work and the symphony were welcomed with equal warmth, although critics at once sought a possible programme for the second of these, seeing it as a sequel to earlier orchestral works of overt national programmatic content.

The symphony is scored for pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbals and triangle, harp and strings. The first movement starts with a long-drawn clarinet melody, over the sound of the timpani. The tempo changes to *Allegro energico* and the strings enter, suggesting first the tonality of G major rather than E minor. The introduction contains the seed of what follows in the tripartite *Allegro*, with its two subjects, the gentler second related to the first. There is a central development and recapitulation, although the great sweep of the music may conceal the underlying structure. The poetic and strongly felt *Andante* is again closely interwoven in its material, with a central contrapuntal episode for bassoons for which Sibelius claimed a strongly Finnish character, and a return of its intensely romantic first theme. The *Scherzo* bursts upon the listener, its opening rhythm repeated with vehemence by the timpani. To this the central trio offers a tranquil contrast. Influenced, perhaps, by the *Symphonic pathétique* of Tchaikovsky that he had heard in Helsinki two years before, Sibelius uses the clarinet melody of the opening of the symphony to start the last movement, now entrusted to the violins that impart to it a greater degree of poignant yearning, a feeling that finally prevails, before the resignation of the last chords.

In 1905 Sibelius visited England for the first time, at the invitation of Granville Bantock, through whose agency, and that of Henry Wood and others, his music had begun to create a very favourable impression both in the provinces and in London. The composer was, in turn, favourably impressed by the English and the practical result of his brief stay was a commission from the Royal Philharmonic Society for a new symphony, his third, to be performed

under his direction early in 1907. In the event the work was delayed and was performed for the first time in Helsinki in September in a programme that included the symphonic fantasia *Pohjola's Daughter*, music of more obvious contemporary appeal. It was introduced to the St Petersburg public in November, when its first two movements, at least, pleased Rimsky-Korsakov, who commented on its difference from Russian music, although he added that the apparent originality might be simply superficial. Glazunov had taken exception to the closing material, the sinister hushed and relatively discordant scale in contrary motion, of the first-movement exposition, but the performance of the work in St Petersburg is an indication of the international attention that Sibelius was now receiving. The composer conducted the new symphony, dedicated to Granville Bantock, in London in 1908.

Symphony No. 3 in C major, Op. 52, is scored for pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani and strings. It is classical in its proportions and in general lacks the overtly national characteristics of the earlier and later symphonies of Sibelius. The first movement opens with material that, as it is developed, is bound to suggest, if only fleetingly, Mahler in his favourite countryside. An unusual and harmonically remote minor key is chosen for the second subject and the exposition ends with a curious scale in discordant contrary motion, followed by a closely argued central development, before the return of the first theme in recapitulation, with its second subject in a key to correspond to its earlier appearance. The unusual key of G sharp minor is chosen for the slow movement, giving it an immediate feeling of remoteness, with its gentle woodwind melody accompanied by plucked strings, growing in intensity and leading to a deeply felt passage for strings, joined by the woodwind. Closely integrated material, analysed either as a form of rondo or even, if the relationship of the episodic material is thought close enough, as variations, leads to a final movement that starts as a *scherzo*. There are references to something of what has passed and a fragmented thematic texture, before the emergence of a hymn-like theme, which is used to lead to a conclusion of ultimate triumph.



Pietari Inkinen

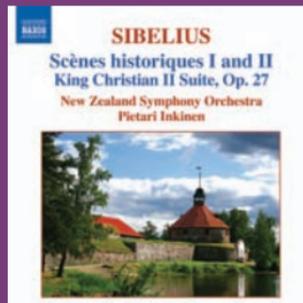
Pietari Inkinen, now working internationally at the highest level, was appointed Music Director of the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra in 2008. He has won unanimous praise from audiences and critics both for his performances on tour in New Zealand and for his recordings with the orchestra on Naxos. He was also invited in 2009 to become Principal Guest Conductor of the Japan Philharmonic Orchestra. As guest conductor, he has already worked with major orchestras throughout Europe, including the Leipzig Gewandhaus, La Scala Philharmonic, BBC Symphony Orchestra and Dresden Staatskapelle and opera-houses including the Bayerische Staatsoper, and enjoys successful collaborations with leading soloists. In the studio his recordings for Naxos with the New Zealand and Bournemouth Symphony Orchestras, including Rautavaara's *Manhattan Trilogy* and the Brahms *Violin Concerto*, have been greeted with particular critical acclaim.

New Zealand Symphony Orchestra

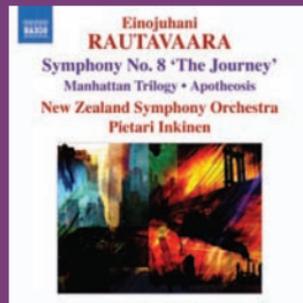
The New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, founded in 1946, is the country's leading professional orchestra. It has an establishment of ninety players and performs over a hundred concerts annually, touring within New Zealand and offering its main symphonic programmes in Auckland and Wellington. Tours abroad have included concerts for the Beijing Olympic Cultural Festival, and earlier appearances at the BBC Proms, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, and the Snape Maltings in England, and at the World Expo at Aichi in Japan. Pietari Inkinen was appointed Music Director from January 2008, succeeding James Judd, who held the position from 1999 to 2007 and is now Music Director Emeritus. Other conductors who have worked with the NZSO include Xian Zhang, Alexander Lazarev, Dmitry Sitkovetsky, David Atherton, Yan Pascal Tortelier and Edo de Waart. Soloists who have appeared with the orchestra recently include Lang Lang, Sa Chen, Lynn Harrell, Cho Liang Lin, Hilary Hahn, Vadim Repin, Yefim Bronfman, Simon O'Neill, Steven Isserlis, Jonathan Lemalu and Dame Kiri Te Kanawa. The NZSO has an extensive catalogue of CD recordings, mostly on the Naxos label. Over one million of these CDs have been sold internationally in the last decade and they have received critical acclaim. www.nzso.co.nz Photo: Robert Catto



Also available:



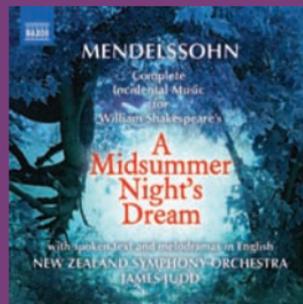
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Following the success of their recordings of Sibelius's *Night Ride and Sunrise*, *Belshazzar's Feast Suite* and *Kuolema* (8.570763) – 'top-notch performances' (*Fanfare*) – and *Scènes historiques I & II* and *King Christian II Suite* (8.570068) – 'polished and involving ... handsomely true and atmospheric sound' (*Gramophone*) – talented young Finnish-born Pietari Inkinen conducts the internationally acclaimed New Zealand Symphony Orchestra in poetic and sweeping performances of his compatriot's *Symphonies Nos. 1 and 3*. This is the first volume in a new Naxos series.

Jean
SIBELIUS
(1865–1957)

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| Symphony No. 1 in E minor, Op. 39 | 40:18 |
| 1 I. Andante, ma non troppo – Allegro energico | 11:37 |
| 2 II. Andante (ma non troppo lento) | 9:43 |
| 3 III. Scherzo: Allegro | 5:43 |
| 4 IV. Finale (quasi una Fantasia): Andante – Allegro molto | 13:00 |
| Symphony No. 3 in C major, Op. 52 | 29:36 |
| 5 I. Allegro moderato | 10:40 |
| 6 II. Andantino con moto, quasi allegretto | 9:50 |
| 7 III. Moderato – Allegro (ma non tanto) | 8:57 |



New Zealand Symphony Orchestra
Pietari Inkinen

Recorded at the Michael Fowler Centre, Wellington, New Zealand, 3–5 March 2009

Producer & Engineer: Tim Handley

Editions: Luck's (Symphony No. 1); Kalmus (Symphony No. 3) • Booklet notes: Keith Anderson

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Playing Time
70:04



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