



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 and the United States, including the Leipzig Gewandhaus, La Scala Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, BBC Symphony Orchestra and Dresden Staatskapelle, and enjoys successful collaborations with leading soloists. He also appears regularly in the operatic pit and has been invited to make his debut conducting productions at the Bayerische Staatsoper, Munich, the Berlin Staatskapelle and a complete Ring Cycle at Teatro Massimo, Palermo.

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. An acclaimed international tour in 2010 included appearances at Vienna's Musikverein, Lucerne's KKL, Geneva's Victoria Hall and the 2010 Shanghai World Expo. Earlier tours have featured concerts at the Beijing Olympic Cultural Festival, the BBC Proms, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, the Snape Maltings in England and the Aichi World Expo in Japan. Music Director Pietari Inkinen succeeded James Judd in January 2008. Other conductors who have worked with the NZSO during his tenure include Vladimir Ashkenazy, Alexander Lazarev, Yan Pascal Tortelier and Edo de Waart. Soloists who have worked with the orchestra include Pinchas Zukerman, Hilary Hahn, Vadim Repin, Yefim Bronfman, Simon O'Neill, Steven Isserlis, Freddy Kempf 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

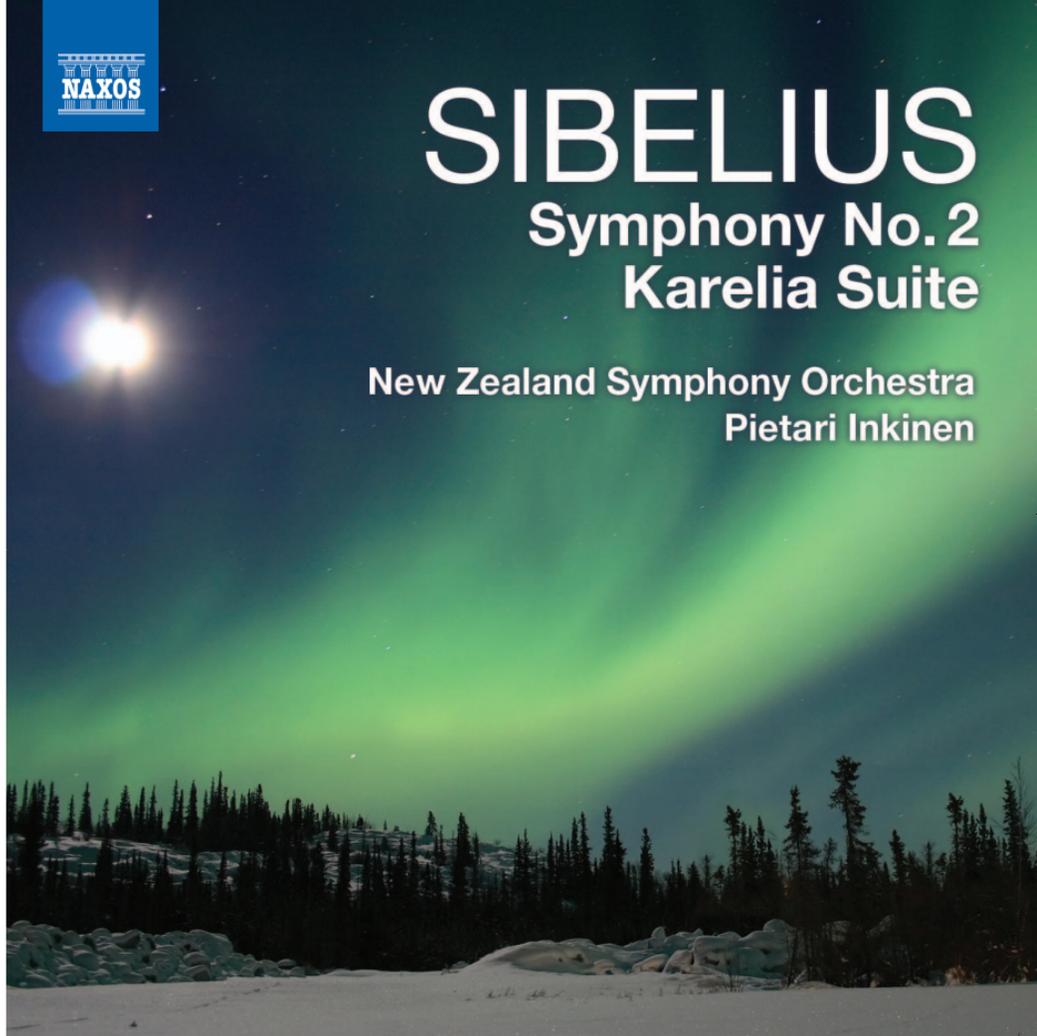


SIBELIUS

Symphony No. 2

Karelia Suite

New Zealand Symphony Orchestra
Pietari Inkinen



Jean Sibelius (1865–1957) Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 43 • Karelia Suite, Op. 11

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 improvidence, 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.

The year 1900 brought Sibelius an opportunity for wider contact with the world outside Finland, with a tour by the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, ending with concerts at the Paris Exhibition. In the same year he found a patron in the dilettante Axel Carpelan, a man who, while lacking extensive resources himself, was able to persuade money from others and was liberal in his advice. Carpelan recommended a visit to Italy and provided enough money to make this a possibility for Sibelius, his patient wife and his children. Time was spent in Berlin on the way south, but it was in Italy that the first sketches were made of *Symphony No. 2*, including the principal theme of the second movement, which occurred to him in connection with the story of Don Juan and the idea suggested by the garden of the villa in Rapallo. In Florence he sketched the second idea for the *Andante* of the new symphony, writing above it the word *Christus*, and his thoughts now turned to a work based on Dante's *Divina Commedia*.

In Finland once more Sibelius was able to work seriously on his new symphony, which he completed early in 1902 and conducted at a series of concerts in Helsinki in March. Audiences in Finland, where feelings of nationalism now ran high, were eager to find a patriotic statement of protest in the work, a programme that later writers have sometimes chosen to impose on the music. The first movement seems to move from the northern mists of Finland to a sunnier world, and critics have noted the

pastoral atmosphere apparent here and in the trio of the third movement, with their pattern of repeated notes. The *Andante*, in origin at least, suggests Don Juan's mysterious guest, Death, and his defeat by Christ, and the scherzo adds a movement of busy turbulence, with a repetition of the trio, with its pastoral oboe melody. This leads directly into the grandiose principal theme of the heroic finale, darkened by the Finnish second theme and its sinister accompanying figure.

The *Karelia Suite*, among the most popular of the compositions of Sibelius, was derived from music written in 1893 to accompany a series of patriotic tableaux dealing with the history of the Karelia region from the year 1293 to 1811. The first of the three pieces included in the *Karelia Suite*, *Intermezzo*, was written to accompany the second tableau, in which Karelian hunters bring their tribute to the Lithuanian prince. The second movement, *Ballade*, accompanied the fourth tableau, in which Karl Knutsson, fifteenth-century King of Sweden and Finland and twice deposed, takes refuge at Viipuri Castle and listens to a ballad, the original singer replaced in the suite by a cor anglais. The third movement, *Alla marcia*, accompanied the scene of a battle at Käkisalme (Kexholm) Castle in the sixteenth century, besieged by the French mercenary Pontus de la Gardie.

Keith Anderson