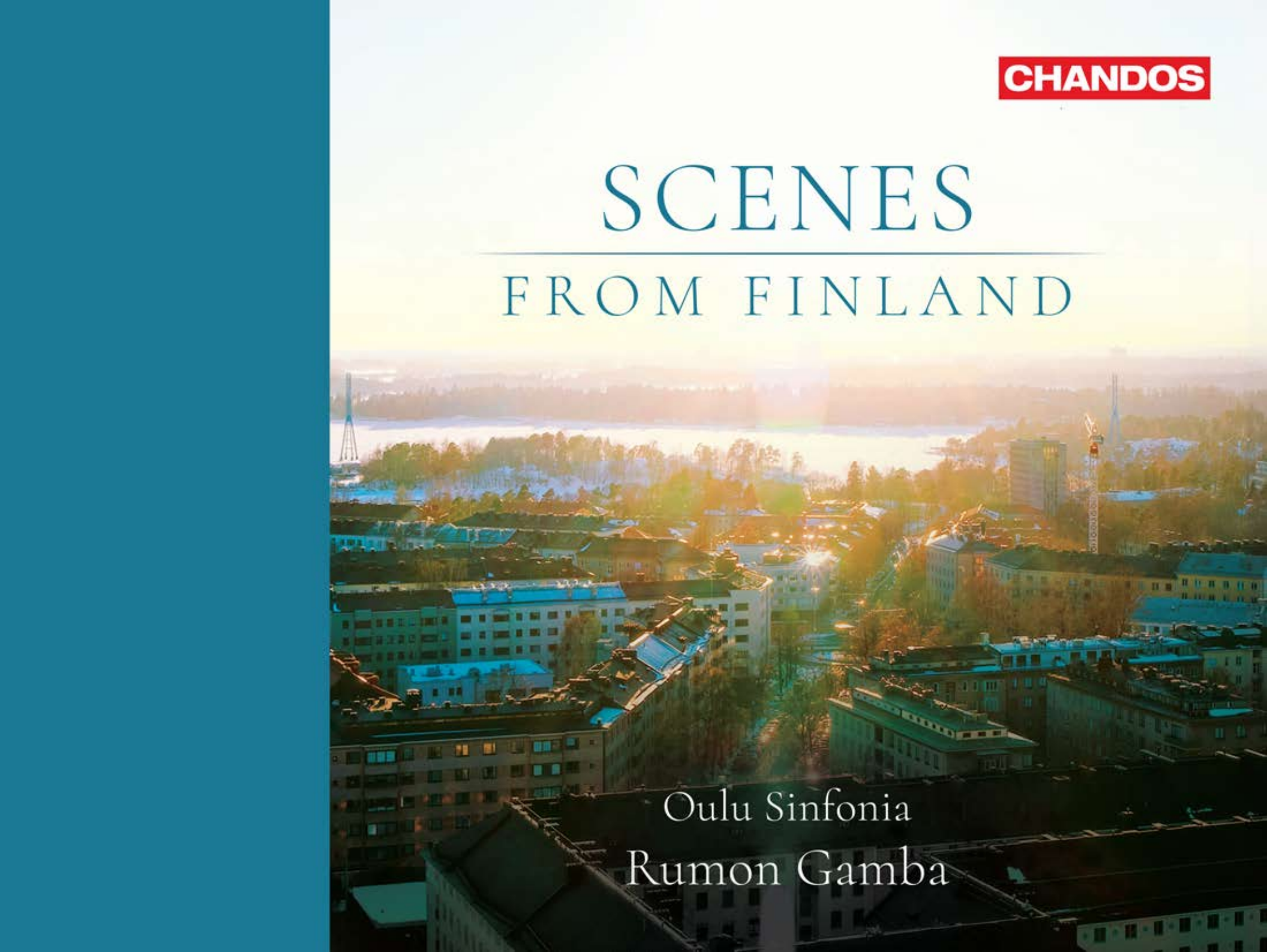


An aerial photograph of Oulu, Finland, taken during the golden hour of sunset. The city's residential and commercial buildings are visible, with many windows glowing with interior light. In the background, a large body of water, likely the Gulf of Bothnia, stretches across the horizon under a hazy, orange-tinted sky. A tall crane is visible on the right side of the city.

CHANDOS

SCENES

FROM FINLAND

Oulu Sinfonia
Rumon Gamba



Photograph by Ruth Taskman / Yleisradio

Einar Englund, 1958

Scenes from Finland

Jean Sibelius (1865 – 1957)

Suite from 'Scaramouche', Op. 71 (1912 – 13) **19:47**

Ballet-Pantomime in Two Acts by Poul Knudsen (1889 – 1974)

Arranged by Rumon Gamba

1	[Introduction.] Lento assai – Lento assai – Un poco meno lento –	2:58
2	Tempo di Bolero –	2:26
3	Tempo di Valse – Lento –	3:22
4	Adagio – Allegro – Poco tranquillo – Adagio – Allegro – Adagio –	1:38
5	Andantino cantabile – Poco stretto –	2:18
6	Tranquillo assai – Albert Stupak flute	3:04
7	[Allegretto] – Allegro – Poco stretto –	1:41
8	[Coda.] [Lento] – A tempo ma più energico – Risoluto – Grave assai	2:17

Selim Palmgren (1878–1951)

Cinderella Suite (1902–03) 20:15

(Tuhkimo-sarja)

Music to the Play *Cinderella* [lit. *Tuhkimo*] and the Princess

(Tuhkimo ja kuninkaantytär), Op. 21

by Larin-Kyösti (Karl Gusaf Larson) (1873–1948)

- | | | | |
|---------------|---|--|------|
| <div>9</div> | 1 | Alkusoitto (Prelude). Allegro – Con brio | 4:06 |
| <div>10</div> | 2 | Musette. Allegro vivace – Poco tranquillo | 2:46 |
| <div>11</div> | 3 | Välisoitto (Intermezzo). Andante | 2:07 |
| <div>12</div> | 4 | Sinipiikojen tanssi (Dance of the Forest Fairies) (Scherzo).
Presto | 1:47 |
| <div>13</div> | 5 | Valssi (Waltz). Tempo di valse (vivace) – [] – Tempo I | 2:57 |
| <div>14</div> | 6 | Välisoitto (Intermezzo). Grave | 3:36 |
| <div>15</div> | 7 | Tanssi pyövelin vuorella (Dance on the Hangman's Mountain).
Molto allegro – Briosio – [Fine] –
L'istesso tempo – Da capo al Fine senza repetizione | 2:53 |

Einar Englund (1916 – 1999)

The White Reindeer (1954)

12:54

(Valkoinen peura)

Suite from the Music to the Film (1952)

16	1	Alkusoitto (Prelude). Allegro moderato	1:37
17	2	Tunturi (The Fell). Adagio	3:57
18	3	Poroajot (The Reindeer Race). Allegro molto	1:28
19	4	Surumarssi (Funeral March). Marcia funebre (grave)	3:04
20	5	Finaali (Finale). Allegro giocoso	2:47

Kalervo Tuukkanen (1909 – 1979)

Christmas Suite, Op. 41 (1953) 11:11

(*Joulusarja*)

for Small Orchestra

from the Incidental Music to the Play *Die Erzählung des letzten*

Hirten (The Tale of the Last Shepherd) (1950)

by Walter Bauer (1904 – 1976)

- | | | | |
|----|-----|--|-----------------|
| 21 | I | Johdanto. Paimenet kedolla (Introduction. Shepherds in the Field).
Andante | 1:13 |
| 22 | II | Enkelten sanoma (A Message from the Angels). Moderato –
Poco meno mosso | 2:02 |
| 23 | III | Rauhan viesti (A Message of Peace). Andante maestoso | 1:43 |
| 24 | IV | Kehtolaulu seimellä (Lullaby at the Manger). Andantino
con moto | 2:03 |
| 25 | V | Intermezzo. Beethlehemin surmanyönä (Intermezzo. The Night
of Death in Bethlehem). Moderato alla marcia | 1:46 |
| 26 | VI | Paimenten ilo (The Shepherds' Joy). Moderato | 2:22 |
| | | | TT 64:25 |

Oulu Sinfonia

Lasse Joamets concert master

Rumon Gamba



Rumon Gamba and Oulu Sinfonia in concert

Scenes from Finland

Sibelius: Suite from 'Scaramouche', Op. 71

So much of the international reputation of Jean Sibelius (1865–1957) rests on his orchestral music – his symphonies and richly evocative tone poems – that it is easy to overlook his serious and sustained interest in writing for the theatre. This impression stems partly from his lack of a full-length opera: the short one-act ballad *Jungfrun i Tornet* (The Maiden in the Tower), of 1896, is very much the exception that proves the rule. Yet one of his most (over-)familiar and acclaimed works, 'Valse triste', is drawn from his incidental music for Arvid Järnefelt's 1903 drama *Kuolema* (Death), and theatre scores span the whole range of his professional career, from the sparkling *Karelia Music*, of 1893 (written to accompany a series of historical *tableaux vivants* staged by the Viipuri Students' Association), to his atmospheric response to Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1925), which became one of his final large-scale works.

Even if he never felt compelled by composing for the operatic stage, Sibelius was evidently attracted to writing for the theatre because of its ability to evoke a particular mood or emotional state, and

by the creative possibilities offered by narrative and storytelling. These qualities are especially evident in his music for *Scaramouche*, a ballet-pantomime commissioned in 1912 by his Danish publishers, Wilhelm Hansen, to accompany a scenario by the playwright Poul Knudsen (1889–1974), who would later collaborate with Sibelius's pupil Leevi Madetoja on a second ballet-pantomime, set in Japan, entitled *Okon Fuoko*. Knudsen had taken much of the plot outline and detail for *Scaramouche* more or less directly from Arthur Schnitzler's *Der Schleier der Pierrette* (Pierrette's Veil), which had only recently opened at the Königliches Hoftheater in Dresden, directed by Max Reinhardt and with music by Sibelius's Hungarian colleague Ernst von Dohnányi. Knudsen's storyline reflects the immense early twentieth-century interest in clowns and the *commedia dell'arte*, and in erotic desire, death, and the macabre, the same phenomena that produced Stravinsky's *Pétrouchka* and Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* as well as Oscar Wilde's *The Birthday of the Infanta*. Knudsen's plot revolves around a tragic love triangle: Leilon and his wife,

Blondelaine, are hosting an elegant ball. An unexpected guest arrives: the hunchbacked dwarf Scaramouche, who tunes up his viola and begins to play. Blondelaine is bewitched by his performance and begins to dance wildly. After Scaramouche's departure, the ball guests proceed to dinner, but Blondelaine suddenly hears Scaramouche's viola in the distance and is irresistibly pulled away: the guests search for her in vain. In Act II, Leilon laments his loss. Blondelaine reappears, unable to explain her absence. Scaramouche is revealed hiding behind the door of her chamber, and Blondelaine seizes Leilon's dagger and stabs him; Leilon and his wife can now be happily reunited, but just as their love seems complete, Blondelaine hears Scaramouche's viola once again, calling from beyond the grave. Seized with horror, she begins to dance once more, becoming increasingly frenetic until she collapses, dead, on stage.

When he first accepted the commission, Sibelius had casually assumed that he would need to provide no more than a couple of short dance numbers: in reality, the project demanded a complete through-composed score lasting over an hour. Difficulties were further compounded by Knudsen's unauthorised use of Schnitzler's original scenario. In the event, the first performance

did not take place until 12 May 1922, when it was produced at the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen. The music has never gained a permanent place in the repertoire. Extracts from the complete score were later arranged for concert performance by Sibelius's brother-in-law, the conductor Jussi Jalas, but the selection presented in the current recording was carefully chosen by the conductor, Rumon Gamba. The sequence starts with the delicate minuet that opens the work, depicting the elegant aristocratic surroundings of Leilon and Blondelaine's residence and preparations for the ball. Leilon summons the musicians and they strike up a rhythmically charged bolero, notable for its threateningly erotic overtones: Sibelius had been very moved, like so many composers of his generation, by the compelling intensity of Bizet's *Carmen* and its exotic Spanish setting. The entry of Scaramouche is cleverly dovetailed with further rounds of the bolero, so that he slips into the orchestral texture almost unnoticed. The dramatic and highly articulated instrumental dialogue as he entraps Blondelaine is especially powerful, and it is followed by the physical abandonment of her dance: the strangely dissonant horn writing is a premonition of the violence to follow. Blondelaine's reappearance is accompanied by a beautifully

shaped flute melody, but ominous chromatic shadows appear once more in the bass as Leilon's interrogation gains urgency and the texture becomes gradually ever more fragmentary. The love music of Leilon and Blondelaine after Scaramouche's death has a surging passion, but the elegance of their final waltz grows dark once more as Blondelaine is haunted by the sound of Scaramouche's viola. Her fatal dance reaches a brutally abrupt close, her death marked by three solemn woodwind chords and the dull sounds of the string *pizzicato* as Leilon crushes her to his breast with a 'maniacal laugh'.

Palmgren: Suite from 'Tuhkimo', Op. 21

If Sibelius enjoyed a fame which rested on his orchestral output, his younger contemporary Selim Palmgren (1878 – 1951) was best known largely as a composer of piano works, including five concertos and many suites and miniatures. Palmgren studied in Helsinki and, later, Berlin (where he took lessons with Sibelius's friend the composer-virtuoso Ferruccio Busoni); he was subsequently Professor of Composition at the Eastman School of Music, in Rochester, New York – a post that had originally been offered to Sibelius but which he declined. Like Sibelius's, however, Palmgren's output was varied and included songs, an opera (*Daniel*

Hjort, 1910 / 1938), and vocal music. Palmgren also wrote for the theatre, and his score for the fairy-tale play *Tuhkimo ja kuninkaantytär* (Tuhkimo and the Princess), on a text by the Finnish playwright Larin-Kyösti (Karl Gustaf Larson, 1873 – 1948), dates from 1902 – 03. Larin-Kyösti's play recounts the adventures of a passionate youth, Tuhkimo, and combines features of the familiar Cinderella story with elements drawn from a wide range of folk tales and fables. In Palmgren's concert suite, the Prelude immediately creates a sense of enchantment: shimmering string tremolandos, harp *glissandi*, and glockenspiel preface a characterful clarinet melody which becomes the principal theme and which Palmgren suggested had been inspired by the sound of a visiting Bulgarian folk troupe. The second movement is a rustic Musette, recalling a favourite number from one of Sibelius's incidental scores, the music for Adolf Paul's historical drama *Kung Kristian II* (King Christian II, 1898). A pastoral Intermezzo then follows, which includes prominent writing for the solo cor anglais. The 'Sinipiikojen tanssi' (Dance of the Forest Fairies) has a gossamer lightness that recalls Mendelssohn's inimitable scherzo from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Then follows an elegant Waltz and a further Intermezzo, displaying darker and more foreboding instrumental colours. The final episode is



Hennamaria Rantakeisu

Rumon Gamba and Oulu Sinfonia in pops concert

Tuhkimo's triumphant 'Tanssi pyövelin vuorella' (Dance on the Hangman's Mountain'), which brings the score to a fantastical close.

Englund: Suite from 'Valkoinen peura'

The remainder of this compilation presents music by two twentieth-century Finnish composers from the generation after Sibelius and Palmgren. Einar Englund was born in Ljugarn, on the Swedish island of Gotland, on 17 June 1916 and attended a Swedish-speaking school in Helsinki before enrolling at the Helsinki Conservatory (since renamed the Sibelius Academy) as a sixteen-year-old, where he studied with Palmgren, among others. He sustained a serious hand injury on active duty in the Second World War, which curtailed his professional ambitions as a concert pianist, and subsequently, after the end of the conflict, spent time in the United States where he studied composition with Aaron Copland. He completed seven symphonies: the same number as Sibelius, whose lingering creative 'shadow' became the title of the autobiography which Englund published two years before his death in 1999. Among his other works were a series of scores for the burgeoning Finnish film industry. His soundtrack for Erik Blomberg's 1952 film *Valkoinen peura* (The White Reindeer) was particularly acclaimed and won best

prize for original music in the Jussi Awards (the Finnish Oscars) in the year of its release. *Valkoinen peura* is set in Lappi (Lapland), in the far north of Finland, and is a folk-horror tale that revolves around the shape-shifting character of a young woman, Pirita, who seeks the help of a local shaman, Tsalkku Niila, while her husband, Aslak, is away reindeer herding. The spell cast by Tsalkku Niila goes wrong and every full moon Pirita assumes the form of a murderous white reindeer, terrorising the local area. A hunt for the reindeer ensues, and it is Aslak who finally kills the animal, only to watch Pirita regaining her human form as she dies in her husband's arms. Englund prepared a five-movement suite from his score in 1954. The Prelude evokes a ritualistic, pagan atmosphere, in which we hear the sound of ancient chants and an insistent pulsating drumbeat. The second movement, 'Tunturi' (The Fell), generates a feeling of open space and wide horizons, a series of echoing herding calls seeming to summon a shift in the weather and a rising breeze filled with nature spirits. 'Poroajot' (The Reindeer Race) is an athletic *tour de force* of sleigh bells and unstoppable energy. The fourth movement, 'Surumarssi' (Funeral March), is a sombre elegy with occasional outbursts of barely contained emotion. The final movement has an irresistible folk-like verve and momentum

that finally dissipates, like the last glimpse of light upon the distant fells.

Tuukkanen: Joulusarja, Op. 41

Kalervo Tuukkanen took *Joulusarja* (Christmas Suite) from his 1953 score for a production of the play *Die Erzählung des letzten Hirten* (The Tale of the Last Shepherd) by the German author Walter Bauer (1904 – 1976) and was premièred, in Turku, on 18 December 1955. Tuukkanen was born in Mikkeli, in eastern Finland, on 14 October 1909 and died, in Helsinki, on 12 July 1979. He taught for three years at Viipuri University before serving as Kapellmeister in Pori, on Finland's Baltic coast, in 1942 – 44. At the end of the Second World War he was one of the founding members of Suomen Säveltäjät (the Finnish Composer's Association), and his output eventually comprised orchestral works (including six symphonies), film scores, and vocal works: his composition *Karhunpyynti* (Bear Hunting) was awarded a silver medal in the 1948 Cultural Olympics in London (where Finland impressively topped the medal table). *Joulusarja* retells the story of the nativity and opens with an evocation of the shepherds waiting in the fields on Christmas eve. The second movement, 'Enkelten sanoma' (A Message from the Angels), represents the annunciation and brings a sense of excited

anticipation, whereas the third number, 'Rauhan viesti' (A Message of Peace), expresses a steadfast faith in the promise of redemption. The fourth movement is a gentle berceuse, 'Kehtolaulu seimellä' (Lullaby at the Manger), for harp and strings, whereas the contrasting fifth, 'Beethlehemissä surmanyöinä' (The Night of Death in Bethlehem), depicts Herod's brutal massacre of the first-born. The final movement brings the drama back to its starting point and expresses the shepherds' rejoicing at the divine new birth.

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Finland's northernmost symphony orchestra, numbering sixty-one professional musicians, **Oulu Sinfonia** was founded in 1937, municipalised in 1961, and adopted its present name in 2005. The orchestra presents a series of classical subscription concerts, completing its schedule with a diverse range of offerings, such as opera, cinematic concerts, world music performances, and jazz concerts, as well as concerts for families and children. It also steps out of its home base, Madetoja Concert Hall, in various formations, taking its music to locations around town. Its Chief Conductor since January 2022 has been Rumon Gamba who took up the post after



Rumon Gamba and Oulu Sinfonia in pops concert

the long tenure of Johannes Gustavsson (2013 – 21). During recent decades, the post of Artistic Director has been held by Urpo Pesonen, Paavo Rautio, Onni Kelo, Rauno Rännäli, Ari Angervo, Peeter Lilje, Arvo Volmer, Dmitri Slobodeniouk, and Anna-Maria Helsing. Principal Guest Conductors have been John Storgårds, Susanna Mälkki, and Jaakko Kuusisto. The discography of Oulu Sinfonia includes recordings of the opera *Messenius and Lucia* by Olli Kortekangas, its composer-in-residence from 1997 to 2009, as well as the complete orchestral works by Leevi Madetoja, violin concertos by Uuno Klami and Einar Englund, opera arias by Mozart, a symphony and overtures by Ludvig Norman, guitar concertos by Kimmo Hakola and Toshio Hosokawa, overtures and other orchestral works by Finnish composers of the national romantic era, pieces by the rock artist Ismo Alanko and jazz singer Aili Ikonen arranged for symphony orchestra, and *Sininen Pallo*, an album for children, among others. www.oulusinfonia.fi

Chief Conductor of the Oulu Sinfonia since January 2022, the British maestro **Rumon Gamba** has previously served as Principal Conductor and Music Director of NorrlandsOperan (2008 – 15), Chief Conductor of Aalborg Symfoniorkester (2011 – 15), and

Chief Conductor and Music Director of the Iceland Symphony Orchestra (2002 – 10). He regularly leads the BBC orchestras and has appeared at the BBC Proms on a number of occasions. A champion of new music, he has conducted several high profile premières, including the world premières of Nico Muhly's *Two Boys*, at English National Opera, and Brett Dean's Viola Concerto, with the composer as soloist and the BBC Symphony Orchestra; the national premières of Poul Ruders's *Dancer in the Dark* and Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Blood on the Floor* and *Scherzoid*, with NorrlandsOperan; and the Australian première of the original version of Sibelius's Symphony No. 5, with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra. To celebrate the status of Umeå as European Capital of Culture, he conducted NorrlandsOperan in a critically acclaimed epic outdoor production of *Elektra*, with the Spanish theatrical group La Fura dels Baus. In 2016 he conducted Mats Larsson Gothe's *The African Prophetess* with the orchestra of NorrlandsOperan and Cape Town Opera Chorus as part of the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra's Composer Week.

Rumon Gamba is a sought-after guest conductor by orchestras such as the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, Rotterdams Philharmonisch Orkest, Brussels Philharmonic, Helsingborgs Symfoniorkester, Romanian

Radio National Orchestra, Göteborgs Symfoniker, Kristiansand Symfoniorkester, Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, Lahti Symphony Orchestra, Warsaw Philharmonic, WDR Funkhausorchester Köln, and Münchner Rundfunkorchester. He has conducted a successful Stravinsky ballet double bill for Finnish National Opera and Ballet and a production of *Die Zauberflöte* at Oulu City Theatre where, celebrating the European Year of Culture in Oulu, he recently conducted a new commission of a Sámi opera entitled *Ovllá*. During the 2025 – 26 season he also conducted the first performances in Finland of Bernstein's *Mass*, in Oulu.

He has recorded exclusively for Chandos Records for over twenty years, his projects including a series devoted to

orchestral works by d'Indy with the Iceland Symphony Orchestra, the first of which was nominated for a Grammy Award. His Chandos discography also includes, as well as more than a dozen albums with the BBC Philharmonic, recordings of works by the Swedish composer Dag Wirén, British overtures and tone poems with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Finnish overtures and other orchestral works with the Oulu Sinfonia, and works by Malcolm Williamson, Sir Malcolm Arnold, Miklós Rózsa, and Ruth Gipps. He is about to launch a new recording project with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra. The Royal Academy of Music recognised his contribution to music by making Rumon Gamba an Associate, in 2002, and a Fellow, in 2017.

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Oulu Sinfonia

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