

Olli Mustonen



Olli Mustonen has a unique place on today's music scene. As a pianist, he has challenged and fascinated audiences throughout Europe and America with his brilliant technique and startling originality. In his role as conductor, he founded the Helsinki Festival Orchestra and as a composer he forms part of a very special line of musicians whose vision is expressed as vividly in the art of re-creative interpretation as it is in their own compositions.

Born in Helsinki, he began his studies in piano, harpsichord and composition at the age of five. His first piano teacher was Ralf Gothoni. He subsequently studied piano with Eero Heinonen and composition with Einojuhani Rautavaara. As a recitalist he plays in all the world's musical capitals, including Amsterdam, Berlin, London, New York, Tokyo and Vienna and last season gave recitals at the Edinburgh International Festival, Sydney Opera House and Mariinsky Theatre, St. Petersburg. This season, he partners Pekka Kuusisto in recitals featuring the premiere of his violin sonata, jointly commissioned by the Wigmore Hall and Perth Concert Hall, before embarking on a tour of Italy.

At the heart of both his piano playing and conducting is his life as a composer. Mustonen has a

deeply held conviction that each performance must have the freshness of a first performance, so that audience and performer alike encounter the composer as a living contemporary. In this respect he recalls Mahler's famous dictum, that tradition can be laziness, yet he is equally suspicious of the performance that seeks only to be different. This tenacious spirit of discovery leads him to explore many areas of repertoire beyond the established canon.

As soloist, Mustonen has worked with most of the world's leading orchestras, including the Berlin Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Munich Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, Orchestre de Paris and The Royal Concertgebouw, partnering conductors such as Ashkenazy, Barenboim, Blomstedt, Boulez, Chung, Dutoit, Eschenbach, Harnoncourt, Masur, Nagano, Salonen and Saraste. He regularly collaborates with Valery Gergiev, alongside whom he has often appeared in recent years, including concerts with the London Symphony Orchestra, Mariinsky Orchestra at the Moscow Easter Festival and a headline appearance at the St. Petersburg International Piano Festival; this season, they perform Shchedrin's Piano Concerto No. 4 together with the Rotterdam Philharmonic.

Mustonen is also increasingly making his mark as conductor; recent highlights include leading the Netherlands Radio Chamber Philharmonic, Northern Sinfonia, Tchaikovsky Symphony Orchestra and Tampere Philharmonic who commissioned his Symphony No.1 and with whom he gave the world premiere. Last season also saw the conclusion of his complete cycle of Beethoven piano concerti as soloist/director with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

Such is his relationship with the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra that this season he is invited to be their Artist in Residence; the residency features him in all three roles of conductor, composer and soloist. Another major project takes place in Scotland with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and Martyn Brabbins, with whom he performs all three Bartok piano concerti and gives the UK premiere of Hindemith's Piano Concerto for the Left Hand.

Olli Mustonen's recording catalogue is typically broad-ranging and distinctive. His release on Decca of Preludes by Shostakovich and Alkan received the Edison Award and Gramophone Award for the Best Instrumental Recording and in 2002 Mustonen signed a recording contract with Ondine. His most recent releases on Ondine include Respighi's Concerto in modo Misolidio with Sakari Oramo and the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra and a critically acclaimed disc of Scriabin's piano music.

Season 2012/13.-