



**Sakari Oramo**

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BBC Proms 2024 – Prom 46: Royal College of Music & Sibelius Academy Orchestra. Sakari Oramo conducts *The Planets* and *The Wood Nymph*, with Anu Komsu giving the premiere of Lara Poe's *Laulut maaseudulta* (Songs from the Countryside). Live on BBC Radio 3.

Aug 25, 2024 | BBC Proms 2024, Concert Reviews, Holst 150 (born September 21, 1874), Outstanding [category w.e.f. January 2021] | 2 comments



*Lara Poe*

Sunday, August 25, 2024

Royal Albert Hall, London

The students of the Royal College of Music (London) and the Sibelius Academy (Helsinki) came together, Sakari Oramo conducting, and an apt choice of repertoire, opening with Sibelius's *The Wood Nymph*, a rarity (from the 1890s albeit not published until 2006), if distinctively by him.

[https://www.sibelius.info/english/musiikki/ork\\_muita\\_metsanhaltijatar.htm](https://www.sibelius.info/english/musiikki/ork_muita_metsanhaltijatar.htm)

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A brilliant, majestic, expressive and dramatic piece, lasting twenty or so minutes, at times a cousin to Sibelius's *En saga* and his *Karelia* music, *The Wood Nymph* here received a superb performance, something of a revelation.

Lara Poe's *Laulut maaseudulta* (composed to a BBC commission) made a big and rather wonderful first impression with the versatile and virtuoso soprano Anu Komi.

"Lara Poe started working on *Laulut Maaseudulta* in the autumn of 2023, but most of the creative process happened in the spring of 2024. The song cycle is based on her family's history. It reflects her grandmother's upbringing on a farm in Kauklahti, Espoo, Finland in the 1930s-1940s – and how it was affected by the Second World War. *My grandmother Tidi reminisces a lot about her childhood on this farm. I recorded and transcribed my conversations with her, picked a few stories and started transforming them into song texts. Several of the songs talk about the cows and horses she had on the farm and explore our relationship with animals. Some tell stories of Finnish people who passed the farm on their way from Karelia as they were escaping the war.*"

*Laulut maaseudulta* is an inviting score, painterly and involving, and a *tour de force* for the singer. Komi was in fabulous form, making music out of the technical challenges, not least the stratospheric ones, scenery and emotions to the fore as expressed in the composer's grandmother's Finnish language, colourfully scored.

*Postscript:* There have been more than enough new-music duds this Proms season – my lips are sealed though as to what and only two were written about here – so *Laulut maaseudulta* restores faith in what a composer can do today without contriving to be liked. Keen to listen again.

Following the interval, Oramo tore into 'Mars' to open Holst's *The Planets* – "let slip the dogs of war" – and overall led a fresh-faced account full of personality, played impressively, speaking volumes for the students' skills and musicianship, Oramo's leadership and interpretative abilities, and the originality of the music itself, which by the end, via a noble 'Jupiter' hymn, sported ethereal upper voices nicely distanced then fading to nothingness, courtesy of the RCM Chamber Choir. This concert now transfers to the Helsinki Festival.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m00224v9>

**BBC Proms 2024 – Prom 19: BBC Symphony Orchestra.  
Sakari Oramo conducts *Tranquil Abiding* & *The Cloud Messenger*, with Senja Rummukainen playing Elgar's  
*Cello Concerto*. Live on BBC Radio 3.**

**BBC Proms**



Saturday, August 3, 2024 Royal Albert Hall, London It's worth exploring beyond *The Planets* and not just in 'Holst 150' year (the composer born on September 21, 1874). Inspired by a Sanskrit poem, translated by Holst, *The Cloud Messenger* (1913) anticipates patterns and colorations that would come to the fore in the planetary movements, also ... Continue reading

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