

Olli Mustonen, Pianist / Conductor / Composer

Biography

Olli Mustonen is not only one of the most interesting musicians in Finland, he is also someone who creates surprises, intensities and amazements which are anything but commonplace in the music business. Süddeutsche Zeitung

Olli Mustonen is a pianist, composer and conductor. For him, it's all one thing: he is quite simply a musician. It therefore makes no sense for him to separate these functions - and so he excels in all three disciplines, playing an extraordinary role in today's musical world. With boundless energy and a creative and highly reflective approach to music, he is one of the few pianists whose signature style is instantly recognisable. Known for the expressiveness and intensity of his playing and his crystal-clear, almost percussive touch, his interpretations are characterised by the interplay between explosive outbursts and sensitive restraint.

During an illustrious career, Olli Mustonen has brought his extraordinary musical insight to many of the world's most significant orchestras, including the Berliner Philharmoniker, the New York and Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestras, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Royal Concertgebouw Orkest, the Mariinsky Theatre Orchestra, the Orchestre de Paris, the Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich, and all the London orchestras. He has strong relationships with orchestras across Finland, including the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Helsinki Philharmonic and Sinfonia Lahti, with whom he released an album of Rautavaara and Martinu's Third Piano Concertos conducted by Dalia Stasevska in 2023. At the beginning of 2023, he took over the position of Principal Guest Conductor with the Lapland Chamber Orchestra. As a recitalist, Olli Mustonen has appeared at Carnegie Hall, Symphony Center Chicago, Diaghilev Festival Perm, Dresden Festival, Lockenhaus Festival, New York Zankel Hall and Sydney Opera House. With Steven Isserlis, he has performed as a duo for more than thirty years. 2019 saw the release of their album of Russian works for cello and piano on the Hyperion label.

Olli Mustonen kicked off the 2025/26 season with Kremerata Baltica at Paliesius Manor in Lithuania and at the Helsinki Festival. He can be seen in all three roles - pianist, composer and conductor - in numerous concerts in his native Finland. In his three solo recitals at the Adelaide Festival, he focuses on Beethoven's piano sonatas; he will also perform chamber music at the Konvergencie Festival in Bratislava, the Big Little Music Festival at De Bijloke Gent, the String Quartet Biennale Amsterdam, the Stifffestival in the Netherlands, the Norwegian FESTIVALTA, in Sydney, the Klavier-Festival Ruhr and in Denmark with flutist Janne Thomsen.

Recipient of the 2019 Hindemith Prize of the City of Hanau, Olli Mustonen's life as a composer is at the heart of his piano playing and conducting. Frequently bringing his own works to the chamber music stage, the world premiere of his work Taivaanvalot (Heavenly Lights) for Tenor, Cello and Piano was performed at Het Muziekgebouw, Amsterdam by Olli Mustonen himself, alongside Ian Bostridge and Steven Isserlis. Additional performances took place at London's Wigmore Hall and in Hong Kong. His string sextet, commissioned by the Beethovenfest Bonn, was premiered there in 2020. In 2022, Apotheosis, in memoriam Pablo Casals was premiered at the opening gala of the Casals Forum in Kronberg and the Sinfonia No. 3 Taivaanvalot with the Turku Philharmonic and tenor soloist Ian Bostridge, the latter was published in 2023 by Ondine together with his 2nd Symphony. The flute concerto Sadunkertoja (Storyteller) was premiered by Janne Thomsen and the PKF Prague Philharmonia under Olli Mustonen at the Concentus Moraviae Festival in the Czech Republic; the Finnish premiere will take place with the Jyväskylän Sinfonia in November 2025. His violin concerto was premiered in Finland by Elina Vähälä and the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra under Nicholas Collon on 6 December 2024, Finland's Independence Day.

Born in Helsinki, Olli Mustonen began his studies in piano, harpsichord, and composition at the age of five. Initially learning with Ralf Gothoni, he subsequently studied piano with Eero Heinonen and composition with Einojuhani Rautavaara.

Season 2025/26

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