

James S. Kahane, Conductor



A refined and passionate conductor, James S. Kahane has conducted many first-class orchestras such as the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, the Finnish Radio Orchestra, the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, the Lucerne Festival Strings and the Gstaad Festival Orchestra.

He is a founding member as well as principal conductor of the Helsinki Chamber Orchestra, a Finnish orchestra born in the fall of 2018 and specializing in repertoire for chamber orchestra.

Since this same year he is also conductor of the Finnish Polytechnic Orchestra ; he was also appointed Principal conductor of the Orchestre de chambre de la Drôme in 2023.

This season he will make his debut conducting the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra, the Kirkkonummi Chamber Orchestra and the Pori Sinfonietta.

At the age of 21 he was appointed by Susanna Mälkki as her assistant conductor at the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra - a position he held until fall 2018 - James studied in Sakari Oramo's renowned conducting class at the Sibelius Academy, where he was accepted at the age of 19.

At the same time, James has benefited from the teaching of major conductors such as Paavo Järvi, Hannu Lintu, David Zinman, Peter Eötvös, Matthias Pintscher, Sir Roger Norrington, John Storgårds, Mikko Franck, Leif Segerstam, Johannes Schläefli, Nicolas Pasquet, Yoav Talmi, Colin Metters, Adrian McDonnell and Jorma Panula.

The Finnish broadcasting channel YLE dedicated one of three portraits of promising conductors from the Sibelius Academy to him in a documentary movie released in the Finnish movie theaters in 2020.

Among the orchestras he has subsequently conducted are the Orchestre symphonique de Mulhouse, the Lahti Symphony Orchestra, the Ostrobothnia Chamber Orchestra, the Tapiola Sinfonietta, the Jyväskylä Sinfonia, the St. Michael's String Orchestra, the Triangle Orchestra, the Orchestre de la Francophonie, the Glasperlenspiel Sinfonietta, the Pori Sinfonietta, the Joensuu City Orchestra, the Järvi Academy Symphony Orchestra, the Lithuanian State Orchestra and the Rehovot Symphony Orchestra, the Miroirs Etendus ensemble, the NYKY ensemble, the Hurra Baroque Orchestra, the Sibelius Academy Baroque Orchestra and the Buchmann Mehta Academy of Music Contemporary Ensemble.

In 2017, James was selected from over three hundred and sixty applicants to participate in Bernard Haitink's conducting masterclass at the Lucerne Music Festival, the prestigious Tanglewood Music Festival, and the Deutsche Dirigentenpreis (German Grand Prix for Conductors), where he was one of twelve applicants chosen to conduct the WDR Symphony Orchestra as well as the Gürzenich Orchestra in Cologne. Previously, he was the youngest candidate selected for the Menuhin Festival in Gstaad, where he was chosen by Neeme Järvi to conduct one of the official concerts of the festival.

In 2018, he was asked by Kristjan Järvi to conduct the Baltic Academies Orchestra in Berlin during their first international tour, and the following year he was offered a fellowship to participate in the Atlantic Music Festival in the United States as assistant conductor in residence. In the spring of 2024, he was also invited as Hannu Lintu's assistant conductor at the Bayerische Staatsoper.

Since 2016, James is also the conductor of the Far(away) Ensemble, a modular and multidisciplinary group with which he recorded Jacopo Aliboni's music for the short films "Du Temps Perdu" and "Le Temps Prend Feu", among which the second one was officially selected for the Sarajevo Film Festival, the Cefalù Film Festival, the Guair Festival as well as the seventy-second Cannes Film Festival.

James S. Kahane has been represented by RSB Artists since 2021.

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