

Vasily Petrenko extends Oslo Philharmonic stay

Russian conductor to remain in Norwegian capital until at least 2020

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Submitted by: [Jeremy Pound](#)



Conductor Vasily Petrenko

In a year of major maestro moves from one orchestra to another, conductor Vasily Petrenko has bucked the trend by extending his contract with the Oslo Philharmonic until at least 2020.

The Russian, 39, has been chief conductor of the orchestra since 2013 and has proved a popular appointment in the Norwegian capital – he himself describes the ensemble as ‘one of Europe’s finest’. Importantly, too, the Oslo Philharmonic also has a couple of major events on the horizon which will now happen during his time at its helm. In 2019, the orchestra will be celebrating its centenary year, and it is hoped that the following year will see it move into a purpose-built new concert hall near the city centre – the poor acoustics of its current home, the Oslo Konserthus, have long been something of a sore subject.

In his time so far with the orchestra, Petrenko has focused on Russian and Norwegian composers, but has also prioritised introducing new works, or re-introducing less familiar repertoire, to audiences in Oslo and beyond. One major project has been recording the complete symphonies of Scriabin, the first disc of which – of Symphony No. 3 and *The Poem of Ecstasy* – was released on the Lawo Classics label last month. ‘After two seasons with me at the reins, I think we have freshened up the orchestra and introduced some great music that hasn’t been heard in Oslo for many years,’ says Petrenko himself. ‘The idea is that we should always embrace the audience and be embraced in return by the audience, to be part of one large family and break down the artificial barrier between musicians on stage and the public in the hall.’

Petrenko is also chief conductor of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, a position he has held since 2006.

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