

Critical Acclaim

Osmo Vänskä and Minnesota Orchestra performances

“The Finnish conductor and his brilliant American orchestra punched, teased, charmed and thrilled their way through Beethoven’s *Eroica* symphony. . . .Rarely does a full-sized symphony orchestra manage to thin itself down to a glowingly hushed pianissimo without losing its grip; with this band, it seems like second nature.”

Neil Fisher, The Times (London), February 26, 2009

“And what a marvelous sound the orchestra makes!...What made the performance outstanding was the finale. Vänskä and the Minnesotans built a cumulative tension through every twist and turn, right up to the final explosion of joy at the end.”

Ivan Hewett, The Daily Telegraph (London), February 26, 2009

“The great string section was convincing with extraordinarily flexible dynamics, and the woodwinds with the kind of individually exquisite colors that one is surprised to find in an American orchestra.”

Martin Wilkening, Berliner Zeitung, February 27, 2009

“It [the Minnesota Orchestra] sounded more brightly polished and supercharged than ever when it played under Mr. Vanska’s baton.... The music making was extraordinary.”

Allan Kozinn, The New York Times, April 15, 2008

“Osmo Vänskä is at the head of this fine assemblage now, and he led one of the best local live versions of this symphony in many years. Isn’t this the way Mahler’s First is always supposed to sound?”

Fred Kirshnit, The New York Sun, April 15, 2008

“Those amazing pianissimos recalled nothing so much as the Berlin Philharmonic’s patented whisper at the end of Mahler’s Ninth Symphony. And furiously intense string tremolos in Beethoven’s Fifth evoked the Vienna Philharmonic strings in, say, a Bruckner symphony. Mr. Vanska seems well along on his project of turning the orchestra into one of the greats.”

James Oestreich, The New York Times, February 17, 2007

“The performances were emblematic of Vänskä’s style—exceptional care over details of articulation on the one hand, exceptional intensity on the other. The Fifth confirmed what an ongoing series of recordings on the BIS label has suggested—that Vänskä is that very rare conductor who can make Beethoven’s symphonies sound absolutely fresh.”

Alex Ross, TheRestisNoise.com, articles and a blog by the music critic of The New Yorker, February 2007

“On one night in early December the Minnesota [Orchestra] seemed, if not the best American orchestra (whatever that may mean), at least the most important. In a striking concert on that Friday night, Mr. Vanska, 53, conducted short works by nine young American composers.... And, oh yes, the orchestra sounded great, just as it had the day before in remarkably assured first rehearsals of those teeming, difficult and innovative pieces.”

James Oestreich, The New York Times, December 17, 2006

“Thursday night’s first offering of [Beethoven’s Ninth] proved perhaps the most exciting take on the symphony local audiences may ever have the fortune to experience.”

Rob Hubbard, Pioneer Press, January 13, 2006

“They played the [Mahler] *Adagietto* as pure as a dream without sweetness and in a moderate tempo. Only in the final measures was it spun out, if possible, even more than Haitink ever realized with the Berlin Philharmonic....What fantastic musicians!”

Eddie Vetter, De Telegraaf, Amsterdam, August 25, 2006

“They are a great virtuoso band....”

Ivan Hewett, The Daily Telegraph, London, August 25, 2006

“Out of nowhere, it seems, the world has acquired a new superstar band with a maestro to match.”

Richard Morrison, The Times (London), August 18, 2006

“The Orchestra played with the kind of furious finesse that every composer prays for. The audience responded with a yelling ovation.”

Alex Ross, The New Yorker, [on Kalevi Aho’s Seventh Symphony], February 14, 2005

“And it’s clear that the Orchestra, under Vänskä, soars to new peaks night after night.”

Michael Anthony, Star Tribune, April 23, 2004

“Minnesota Orchestra fits Osmo Vänskä like a glove.”

Hannu-Ilari Lampila, Helsingin Sanomat, February 28, 2004

“Vänskä is an exemplary Beethoven conductor; it’s hard to think of anyone better....”

Andrew Clements, London Guardian, February 25, 2004

“A fantastic orchestra, an unforgettable concert.”

Wolfram Goertz, Rheinische Post, February 19, 2004

“Osmo Vänskä is an extremely disciplined leader; his orchestra played that way... America is blessed in its orchestras. The Big Five, really, are more like 10.”

Jay Nordlinger, The New York Sun, February 11, 2004

“The Minnesota Orchestra and its new music director, Osmo Vänskä, really do deserve each other....Here was Vänskä really pushing his orchestra to its limits...to an entirely compelling performance.”

Hilary Finch, The Times (London), February 2004

September 2009