

## Lahti Sibelius Hall

These three go together: conductor Osmo Vänskä, Lahti Symphony Orchestra and Sibelius Hall. The success Osmo Vänskä achieved with his orchestra paved the way to building the new congress and concert centre in Lahti.

The construction became a most ambitious and adventurous project since the Lahti Sibelius Hall is the biggest wooden building constructed in Finland for over one hundred years. In the course of history, so many old Finnish towns built of wood burned down – some of them several times over, like Turku – that wood was not considered a safe material for large buildings. Subsequently, it was forbidden for a long period of time. Recently, however, attitudes have changed and wood is again considered a healthy material – strong and safe enough even for large constructions. Sibelius Hall has become a

model example of new technology and modern wood construction.

Due to the newly discovered construction material, the Finnish forest industry had a natural interest in the project and became a sponsor. This was the first time private companies had become involved with a cultural project of this scale – an ambitious venture also involving the city of Lahti and the state. The project was a success and the hall soon turned out to have an excellent acoustic, too.

The designers say that it was the Finnish forest that provided them with the inspiration for this special assignment. The forest has always provided the Finns with their daily bread and it has been their main source of raw material. For that reason, the forest is often connected with mystique and a sense of magic. Its special powers create tranquillity.



Sibelius Hall in Lahti; Architects Hannu Tikka and Kimmo Lintula; Built 2000; Seats 1250

