



OOPPERA BALETTI

Finnish National Opera and Ballet Appointment of Chief Conductor

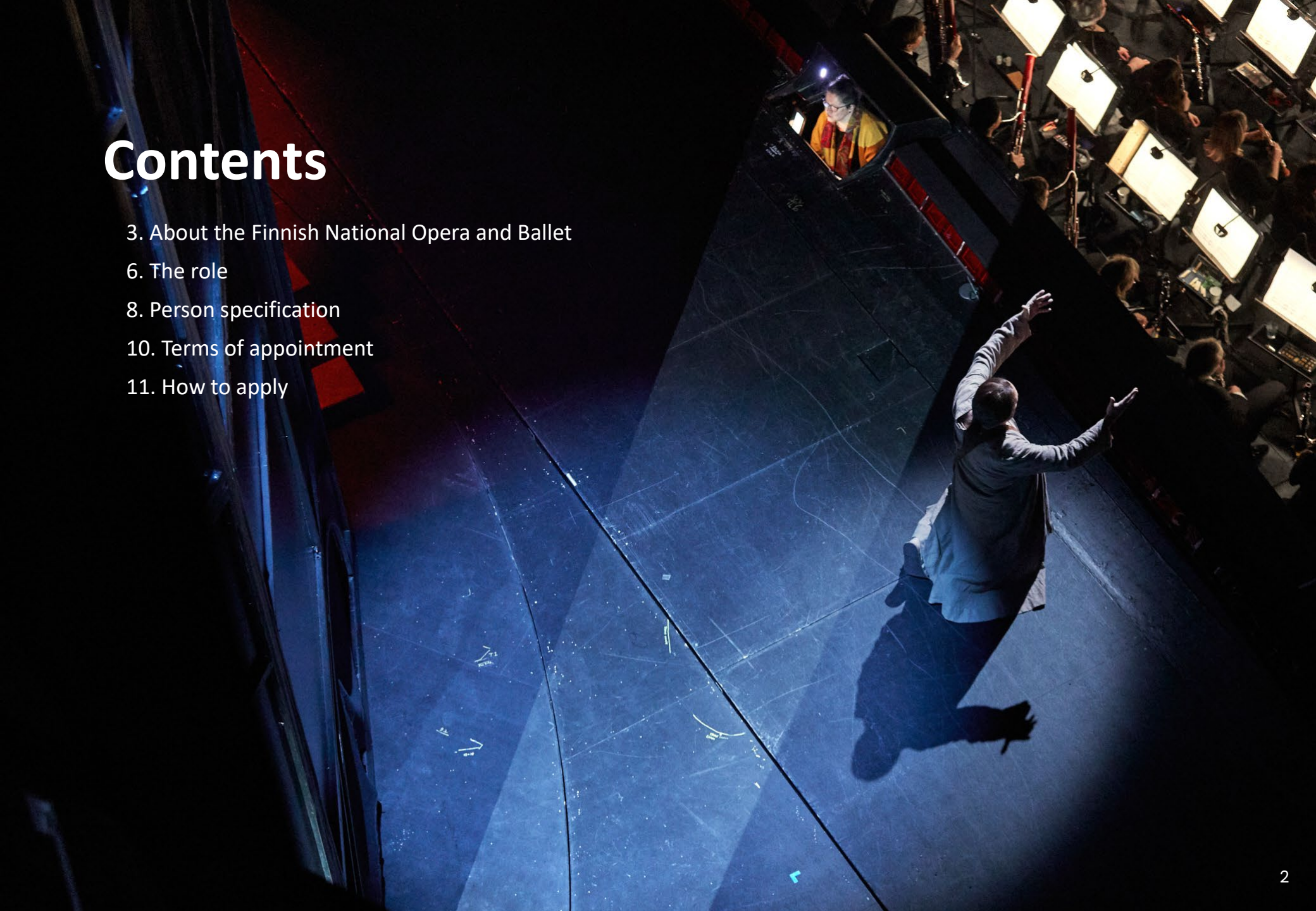
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Saxton Bampfylde



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About the Finnish National Opera & Ballet

The Finnish National Opera and Ballet (FNOB) is a national institution offering world class opera and ballet performances and other events to audiences of all ages. Guest performances, a thriving learning and participation programme including school operas, TV broadcasts and streaming bring the FNOB to everyone all over Finland as well as the across the world.

The FNOB generally stages four new opera productions and three new ballet productions each year. Added to these are revivals of old productions, resulting in a programme that is different every week and may include dozens of productions in the course of the year. The FNOB performs both established classics and contemporary opera and dance works, especially new Finnish works. Each year, three or four premieres and four or five revivals are produced on the main stage. The Main Stage seats more than 1,300, and there is a studio stage too. The foyers are also used for small-scale performances and free public events.

In terms of personnel, the FNOB is a medium-sized company. There are about 530 permanent employees. The Orchestra has 111 members, the Chorus has 50 singers, and the Ballet has 78 dancers. Finnish and foreign guest performers appear alongside the FNOB's own soloists. The FNOB also employs experts from a wide range of crafts specialities, from shoemakers to metalworkers.

As Finland's first and only professional opera company, the Finnish National Opera was established in 1911. The Opera performs a wide range of repertoire, including standard international masterpieces, 20th century works, and contemporary opera. A crucial part of its mission is commissioning and performing Finnish operas, and it has premiered numerous significant works by Finnish composers such as Aulis Sallinen, Einojuhani Rautavaara, Kaija Saariaho, and Olli Kortekangas, playing a vital role in the development and international recognition of Finnish opera. The ensemble of fulltime opera singers at FNOB is unique in that singers are available to sing in the chorus or

solo roles as determined by the needs of the production, meaning that there is a highly skilled and talented group of artists available. The Opera works with up to 1000 Finnish and international guest artists each year in its productions, in addition to the contribution of its full-time ensemble.

The Orchestra of the FNOB is the largest orchestra in Finland. Founded in 1963, the Orchestra's membership was increased significantly with the move to the new Opera House in 1993. While its principal role is to provide the musical foundation for the FNOB's acclaimed opera and ballet productions, the Orchestra also appears regularly in standalone symphonic concerts, showcasing its versatility and contributing to Finland's broader musical life.

The Finnish National Ballet was established in 1922 and is the only full-scale professional ballet company in Finland. It is highly international, with its 76 dancers representing 23 nationalities. The Finnish National Ballet also has a separate Youth Company.

The values of high artistic quality, collaboration, and accountability are at the heart of the FNOB and it is dedicated to maximising efficiency in all its activities. The FNOB's strategy is to broaden its audience base by engaging new visitors from various demographic groups, whether at the Opera House, on tour, or through digital platforms. Its repertoire is contemporary and meaningful, designed to provide enriching experiences and the company is devoted to inclusivity, participation, commitment, and collaborative creation.

[The Finnish National Opera and Ballet | oopperabaletti.fi](https://oopperabaletti.fi)



**The key values of the Finnish
National Opera and Ballet are:
Creativity, Transparency,
Responsibility and Appreciation.**



The role

The Chief Conductor is responsible for providing outstanding musical leadership and ensuring the highest standards of musical performance across designated productions and activities. Working closely with the Artistic Directors of the Opera, Thomas de Mallet Burgess, and the Ballet, Javier Torres, the Chief Conductor plays a pivotal role in shaping the artistic identity and musical quality of the company, inspiring the Orchestra, Chorus, and principal artists to achieve artistic excellence.

Reporting to: Artistic Director of the Opera, Thomas de Mallet Burgess

Key Responsibilities

Musical Leadership & Performance:

- Conduct a significant number of mainstage opera productions per season, including new productions, revivals, and core repertoire performances, as agreed with the artistic leadership.
- Prepare and lead orchestral and stage rehearsals with exceptional musical insight, clarity, and efficiency.
- Maintain and elevate the artistic standards of the Finnish National Opera and Ballet through inspiring leadership and detailed preparation.
- Conduct orchestral concerts, galas, and other special musical events as required.
- Ensure stylistic integrity and musical coherence across all conducted performances.

Artistic Planning & Development:

- Collaborate closely with the Artistic Director of the Opera and artistic planning team on repertoire selection, season planning, and long-term artistic strategy.
- Responsible for the programming of Orchestra concerts.
- Advise on casting principal roles within the framework of priorities established by the Artistic Director and working closely with the Head of Casting.
- Contribute to the ongoing development of the Orchestra and Chorus, potentially including involvement in auditions, training initiatives, and performance feedback.
- Champion a diverse repertoire, including contemporary works and music significant to Finland's heritage.



Collaboration & Communication:

- Work collaboratively and effectively with stage directors, designers, singers, coaches, and technical staff to realise unified and compelling opera productions.
- Foster a positive, respectful, and productive working environment within the music department and across the company.
- Maintain clear communication with relevant departments regarding musical preparation, scheduling, and resources.

Mentorship & Development:

- Potentially mentor assistant conductors or members of the company's young artist programme.
- Serve as a role model for musical excellence and professionalism within the organisation.

Ambassadorial & Advocacy:

- Act as a key artistic ambassador for the Finnish National Opera and Ballet both nationally and internationally.
- Participate in media interviews, audience engagement activities, donor events, and educational initiatives as appropriate, representing the company with passion and authority.
- Build and maintain positive relationships with critics, audiences, patrons, and the wider cultural community.

Administration:

- Work within agreed budgets for musical elements under their direct influence.
- Attend relevant artistic planning, production, and management meetings.



Person specification

The Finnish National Opera and Ballet is looking for a collaborative conductor specialising in opera, who will contribute to developing our art forms and the cultural life and professional skills of our orchestra and ensemble of opera singers.

Experience:

- Extensive and demonstrable experience conducting opera at the highest level, ideally in major international opera houses.
- Proven track record of successful artistic leadership of professional orchestras and opera choruses.
- Experience conducting a broad range of operatic repertoire, encompassing various styles and periods.
- Significant experience working collaboratively with internationally renowned singers, stage directors, and creative teams.

Knowledge & Skills:

- Exceptional musicianship, encompassing deep interpretative insight, stylistic understanding, and impeccable technique.
- Comprehensive knowledge of the operatic repertoire, including standard works and potentially contemporary and national pieces.
- Mastery of orchestral and choral conducting technique, with a clear and expressive gestural language.
- Deep understanding of vocal technique, pedagogy, and the ability to effectively coach and support singers.
- Excellent score-reading ability and detailed score preparation skills.
- Fluency in English and ideally, proficiency/fluency in key operatic languages (particularly Italian, German, French).
- Outstanding communication, interpersonal, and collaborative skills.
- Ability to inspire and motivate musicians and singers to achieve their highest potential.
- Understanding of the practicalities and complexities of opera production processes.

Personal Attributes:

- A compelling artistic vision and a passion for opera.
- Natural authority combined with a collaborative and respectful leadership style.
- High levels of stamina, resilience, and the ability to work effectively under pressure and within demanding schedules.
- Commitment to the highest standards of artistic excellence and professional integrity.
- Diplomacy, tact, and the ability to navigate complex organisational dynamics.
- Commitment to the mission and values of Finnish National Opera and Ballet.



Terms of appointment

Location: The role will be based in Helsinki, Finland, with international travel.

There will be a competitive remuneration and benefits package on offer, subject to Finnish law and the employment status of the contract negotiated.



How to apply

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to Finnish National Opera & Ballet on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role through our website at www.saxbam.com/appointments using code **EBTIA**.

Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter.

The closing date for applications is noon on **Wednesday 28th May 2025**.

Key dates of the process:

- Preliminary interviews with Saxton Bampfylde: w/c 2nd & 9th June 2025
- First round panel interviews with FNOB via video call: Monday 23rd June 2025
- Executive assessments: July/August
- Final round panel interviews with FNOB in person; panel to visit the final candidates in performance; and a practical session with the orchestra and chorus: September/October 2025

GDPR personal data notice

According to GDPR guidelines, we are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.

Due diligence

Due diligence will be carried out as part of the application process, which may include searches carried out via internet search engines and any public social media accounts.



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