Conductor

**Kent Nagano**

Kent Nagano is renowned for interpretations of clarity, elegance and deep intelligence. He is equally at home in music of the classical, romantic and contemporary eras, introducing concert and opera audiences throughout the world to new and rediscovered music and offering fresh insights into established repertoire. Currently Artistic Director and Chief Conductor of the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin and Music Director of Los Angeles Opera, in September 2006 he will relinquish these posts to succeed Zubin Mehta as music Director of the Bayerische Staatsoper and become Music Director of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra.  
   
Born in California, he maintains close connections with his home state and has been Music Director of the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra since 1978. His early professional years were spent in Boston, working in the opera house and as assistant conductor to Seiji Ozawa at the Boston Symphony Orchestra. He played a key role in the world premiere of Messiaen’s opera Saint François d’Assise at the request of the composer, who became a mentor and bequeathed his piano to the conductor. Nagano’s success in America led to European appointments: Music Director of the Opéra National de Lyon (1988-1998), Music Director of the Hallé Orchestra (1991-2000) and Associate Principal Guest Conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra. World premieres from these years include Bernstein’s A White House Cantata and operas by Peter Eötvös (Three Sisters), John Adams (The Death of Klinghoffer and El Niño) and Saariaho’s L’amour de loin at the Salzburg Festival.  
   
A new and important phase of Nagano’s career opened when he took over the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin in 2000. He has become a prominent figure in a new wave of artistic thinking in Germany, opening minds to inventive, confrontational programming. With the orchestra, he has performed Schönberg’s Moses und Aron (in collaboration with Los Angeles Opera), and he took them to the Salzburg Festival to perform both Zemlinsky’s Der König Kandaules and Schreker’s Die Gezeichneten. Recent DSO recordings for Harmonia Mundi include repertoire as diverse as Bernstein’s Mass, Bruckner’s Third and Sixth Symphonies, Beethoven’s Christus am Öberge, Mahler’s Eighth Symphony and Schönberg’s Die Jakobsleiter. In June 2006 he was given the title Honorary Conductor by members of the orchestra, only the second recipient of this honour in the orchestra’s 60-year history.  
   
Kent Nagano’s work in the opera house in recent seasons has included Shostakovich’s The Nose and Puccini’s Turandot (Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin), Rimsky Korsakov’s The Golden Cockerel (Châtelet, Paris), Britten’s Billy Budd (Bayerische Staatsoper), Poulenc’s Dialogues des Carmélites and Hindemith’s Cardillac (Opéra National de Paris), Tosca, Le Nozze di Figaro and Wagner’s Parsifal (Los Angeles Opera).  
   
As a much sought-after guest conductor he has worked with most of the world’s finest orchestras including the Vienna, Berlin and New York Philharmonic Orchestras, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Dresden Staatskapelle and Vienna Symphony Orchestra. He has recorded for Erato, Teldec, Pentatone and Deutsche Grammophon as well as Harmonia Mundi, winning Grammy awards for his recordings of Busoni’s Doktor Faust with Opéra National de Lyon, and Peter and the Wolf with the Russian National Orchestra (coupled with Beintus’s Wolf Tracks, and featuring spoken-word contributions from Sophia Loren, Bill Clinton and Mikhail Gorbachev).  
   
Throughout his career, Kent Nagano has been renowned for his willingness to challenge routine and to champion ‘difficult’ works. These include pieces left unfinished by their composers, such as Debussy’s opera Rodrique et Chimène (he has recorded a reconstruction by Edison Denisov and Richard Langham Smith) and Busoni’s Doktor Faust (he has performed both Anthony Beaumont’s and Phillip Jarnach’s completions). He has recorded the original versions of Mahler’s Das Klagende Lied and Strauss’s Ariadne auf Naxos, and introduced the public to rediscovered works by Britten including the Double Concerto.