



## MARIUS STRAVINSKY

### BIOGRAPHY | MARIUS STRAVINSKY

Marius Stravinsky is Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the Karelia Philharmonic Orchestra (KPO). This State Symphony Orchestra performs more than 40 concerts per season in the home concert hall in Petrozavodsk and visits St Petersburg including the Orchestra's 75th anniversary concert in March 2009. Recently the Orchestra has been resident in the ballet festival at Savonlinna (August 2008), given concerts in Finland and Norway (November 2008, June 2009), a three week tour of France and Switzerland (February 2009) and a seven city tour of Finland in November 2009.

Born in Kazakhstan, Stravinsky started playing the violin when he was four, starting at the Moscow Central Music School (affiliated to the Tchaikovsky Conservatoire) at six. He continued his studies at the Yehudi Menuhin School in England aged ten and three years later became the first former Soviet student to secure a scholarship in music at Eton College. He is a graduate of the Royal Academy of Music in London.

From the age of fourteen, Stravinsky made concert appearances at the Aix-en-Provence Festival, the Spoleto Festival and the Gidon Kremer Lockenhaus Festival. He also made solo appearances playing at St John's, Smith Square and St Martin-in-the-Fields in London, toured Turkey and both performed and gave master classes at the Brussels Festival and the Melbourne Festival. He has twice been one of the featured artists in the Malta International Summer Festival and in 2008 performed the Beethoven Violin Concerto with the Kuban Orchestra in Krasnodar where he was chief guest conductor.

Stravinsky's passion for conducting began through meeting Mariss Jansons and playing the Bruch Concerto for him aged 13 following which he received conducting training from Igor Golovchin, Thomas Sanderling and Geoffrey Boyd. The summer of 1998 was spent assisting Claudio Abbado in rehearsals of the Peter Brook production of Don Giovanni with the Gustav Mahler Jungdenorchester at the Aix-en-Provence Festival. He has attended conducting master classes with Kenneth Kiesler and Eri Klas.

Whilst still an undergraduate student Stravinsky formed and conducted his own ensemble- The Academy Chamber Orchestra- recruited from fellow-students at the Royal Academy of Music. During 2001/2 they gave a series of concerts in Oxford and London.

In September 2002, Stravinsky took up the position of assistant conductor with the Moscow Philharmonic and Moscow Helikon Opera, studying with Vladimir Ponkin, Professor of Conducting at the Tchaikovsky Conservatoire. Since then he has conducted the Kuban Symphony, National Orchestra of Malta, Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra, Belarus State Symphony, Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Tambov Symphony, Nizhny Novgorod Philharmonic, Moscow Philharmonic, St Petersburg Chamber Orchestra, St Petersburg Camerata, Kazakh Chamber Orchestra of Soloists, and members of the Queensland Symphony. Early 2010 engagements include touring with the Kazakh COS, a repeat invitation from the Tambov Philharmonic and debuts with the Khabarovsk State Symphony and the Thessaloniki Symphony Orchestras. >>



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Stravinsky's operatic debut came after preparing the Helikon Opera in their Golden Mask winning productions of Lulu and Lady Macbeth of the Mtensk District (which were subsequently conducted by Stravinsky in the Helikon's home theatre) and was invited to conduct Carmen. This immediately led to a series of repeat invitations to direct the Helikon Opera in their home theatre in Moscow and on tour to the Netherlands. His three year conducting residency also included performance runs of Dialogue des Carmelites (Poulenc), The Tale of a Real Man (Prokofiev), Kaschei the Immortal (Rimsky-Korsakov), Siberia (Giordano) and Mavra (Stravinsky).

Following an extensive search and two year competition involving over 40 candidates, Stravinsky was appointed Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the Karelia Philharmonic Orchestra in June 2007, becoming one of the youngest conductors in Russia ever to hold such a post. He has conducted world premiere recordings of the Brull Violin Concerto and Symphony, Jadassohn Symphony and Pabst Piano Concerto – all on the Cameo Classics label. The KPO and Stravinsky have released premiere recordings of the Thomas Blower Symphony, Lamia by Dorothy Howell and works by Holbrook.

Marius Stravinsky has considerably broadened the repertoire of the KPO including Enescu's 1st Symphony; Walton's 1st Symphony; Mahler's 1st, 4th and 5th Symphonies; Vaughan Williams' London Symphony and other symphonic works currently rarely performed in Russia. This artistic growth has also coincided with an increase in attendance at concerts, as well as a rapid development of the Orchestra personnel.

Marius Stravinsky conducted the orchestra with passion to give the performance (of Brahms Symphony number 4) the right level of tragic sentiment and an almost fatalistic sense of helplessness, combining the subtle, delicate sensitivity of the melancholic, beautiful theme of the second movement with the contagious, uplifting energy in the third's lively C major. The final movement felt perfectly delivered, the full glory of its fantastic 34 variations having stamina, elegant brilliance and technical virtuosity. Roaring recognition from the audience who gave the symphony the greatest and most enthusiastic applause of the night forced Marius Stravinsky and the RPO to deservedly take five curtain calls.

**Seen and Heard, Stravinsky / Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, 9 December 2007**

Stravinsky meanwhile encouraged a sensitive response from the orchestra in the Largo and a rhythmically articulate and compelling response in the outer movements. The balance (of the Beethoven Triple Concerto) throughout was excellent. The main work of the second half was Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony. The brass-led opening was somewhat overpowering for the Cadogan Hall acoustic, but things soon improved and in particular Stravinsky demonstrated great subtlety in his handling of the first movement's tempo changes. The Andantino second movement might have benefited from a greater sense of fantasy, but the pizzicato strings and woodwinds were excellent in the Scherzo. Best of all was the final movement, where Stravinsky encouraged the RPO in a viscerally exciting performance. If this concert was representative of his conducting, Marius Stravinsky looks to be a major talent.

**Music OMH, Stravinsky / Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, 15 December 2008**