



Hugh Wolff

Conductor

Biography

Hugh Wolff is among the leading conductors of his generation. He has appeared with all the major American orchestras including those of Chicago, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Cleveland. Much in demand in Europe, where he has conducted the London Symphony, the Philharmonia, the City of Birmingham Symphony, the Orchestre National de France, Leipzig Gewandhaus, Czech Philharmonic, Israel Philharmonic, Bavarian and Berlin Radio Orchestras, Wolff is a regular guest conductor with orchestras in Canada, Japan, Korea, Scandinavia and Australia. He works frequently at summer music festivals including Aspen, Tanglewood and Ravinia.

Hugh Wolff is the Music Director of the Belgian National Orchestra since September 2017. Between 1997 and 2006 he was principal conductor of the Frankfurt Radio Orchestra with whom he maintains a close relationship. They have toured Europe, Japan and China together and appeared at the Salzburg Festival. Wolff was principal conductor and then music director of the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra (1988-2000), with whom he recorded twenty discs and toured the United States, Europe, Japan and the Far East. Of this partnership, the New York Times wrote: "the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, under the direction of Hugh Wolff, has developed an effortlessly polished sound ... Wolff shapes his interpretations with impeccable taste."

A conductor whose interests span from baroque performance practice to the championing of new works, Wolff was music director of the New Jersey Symphony (1986-1993) and Chicago's Grant Park Music Festival (1994-1997). He began his professional career in 1979 as associate conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra under Mstislav Rostropovich.

Wolff's vast discography includes a complete set of Beethoven symphonies with the Frankfurt Radio Orchestra, music from the baroque to the present with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, and new works of John Corigliano, Brett Dean, John Harbison, Aaron Jay Kernis and Mark-Anthony Turnage. He has collaborated on CD with Mstislav Rostropovich, Yo-Yo Ma, Joshua Bell, Hilary Hahn, Edgar Meyer, Dawn Upshaw, Jennifer Larmore, Jean-Yves Thibaudet and jazz guitarist John Scofield. Three times nominated for a Grammy Award, Wolff won the 2001 Cannes Classical Award.

Born in Paris to American parents, Wolff spent his early years in London and Washington DC. He studied piano with Leon Fleisher and composition with George Crumb. After graduating from Harvard College in 1975, Wolff won a fellowship to study conducting with Charles Bruck and composition with Olivier Messiaen in Paris. He returned to the United States to continue piano studies with Fleisher at the Peabody Institute. Throughout his career, Wolff has performed as a pianist in chamber music with orchestral colleagues and guest soloists. In addition to his performing career, Wolff holds the Stanford and Norma Jean Calderwood Director of Orchestras chair at New England Conservatory where he is in charge of four orchestras and teaches graduate students in orchestral conducting.

Recent and upcoming highlights include return invitations to Tonkünstler-Orchester, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra Washington, Minnesota Orchestra, New Japan Philharmonic, Seoul Philharmonic, Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne and Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra.