

JAMES CONLON
Conductor

Program Biography

One of today's preeminent conductors, James Conlon has cultivated a vast symphonic, operatic and choral repertoire, and developed enduring relationships with many of the world's most prestigious symphony orchestras and opera houses. Since his New York Philharmonic debut in 1974, Mr. Conlon has appeared as guest conductor with virtually every major North American and European orchestra and has been a frequent guest conductor at the Metropolitan Opera for over thirty years. Mr. Conlon is Music Director of Los Angeles Opera, Music Director of the Ravinia Festival, the summer home of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and Music Director of the Cincinnati May Festival, where he celebrated his 30th Anniversary in May 2009. Mr. Conlon served as Principal Conductor of the Paris National Opera (1995-2004); General Music Director of the City of Cologne, Germany (1989-2002); and Music Director of the Rotterdam Philharmonic (1983-1991).

During the 2009-10 season at L.A. Opera, Mr. Conlon continues his first *Ring* cycle in the U.S., which began during the 2008-09 season, with the final two operas in the cycle; Wagner's *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*. He will also conduct Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore* and continue his "Recovered Voices" series, a multi-year project during which he brings the music of composers suppressed by the Nazi regime to the L.A. Opera stage, with the U.S. premiere of Franz Schreker's *The Stigmatized* (*Die Gezeichneten*).

During the 2009-10 season Mr. Conlon returns to the Metropolitan Opera to conduct Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust* and to La Scala to conduct Verdi's *Rigoletto*. His orchestral engagements include performances with the Los Angeles Philharmonic in the U.S., and the Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI, Orchestra del Teatro Comunale Bologna, Orquesta Nacional de Espana and the National Philharmonic of Russia in Moscow in Europe, and a European tour with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. In 2010 he will lead the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at the Ravinia Festival where he is Music Director.

In an effort to raise public consciousness to the significance of works of composers whose lives and compositions were suppressed by the Nazi regime, Mr. Conlon has devoted himself to extensive programming of this music in North America and Europe. At both the Ravinia Festival and L.A. Opera he continues to program works of these composers, including Alexander von Zemlinsky, Viktor Ullmann, Pavel Haas, Kurt Weill, Erich Wolfgang Korngold, Karl-Amadeus Hartmann, Erwin Schulhoff, and Ernest Krenek.

Mr. Conlon has recorded extensively for EMI, SONY Classical, ERATO, CAPRICCIO, and TELARC, for which he has received numerous citations. He has been featured on DVDs for DECCA, and has appeared in several television series on PBS. In 2009 Mr. Conlon won two Grammy Awards; Best Classical Recording and Best Opera Album, for conducting LA Opera's production of Kurt Weill's *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*, released on DVD on the EuroArts label.

Mr. Conlon's recent awards include the Music Institute of Chicago's Dushkin Award, the Medal of the American Liszt Society, and Italy's Premio Galileo 2000 Award. He received the Crystal Globe Award

from the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) for his efforts in championing the works of composers silenced by the Third Reich. He is one of five first recipients of the *Opera News* Award given in recognition for distinguished achievement in opera, and was awarded an honorary Doctor of Music Degree by The Juilliard School, an honorary Doctor of Arts *honoris causa* by Chapman University and an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Brandeis University. He received the Zemlinsky Prize for his efforts in bringing the composer's music to international attention. He was named an Officier de L'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Government in 1996, and in 2004 was promoted to Commander. In 2002, James Conlon received France's highest distinction from the President of the French Republic, Jacques Chirac—the Légion d'Honneur.