

KAZUSHI ONO

CONDUCTOR

‘Ono drew fine-etched playing at the right febrile pace here, and riveted our attention’

The Arts Desk

Kazushi Ono’s musical personality was formed by the cultures of Japan, where he was born, and Europe, where he studied. His work reflects both influences, and crosses styles and forms, from Baroque to new commissions and from orchestral to opera. His passion, musical intellect and ability to communicate meaning across languages and cultures have led to longstanding relationships around the world. He is Music Director of Brussels Philharmonic and Artistic Advisor at Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra (and will then take up the role of Conductor Laureate from April 2028). Appointed as Artistic Director of Opera at New National Theatre Tokyo in 2018, he recently renewed until 2029–30, making his tenure the longest in the theatre’s history.

A favourite of orchestral players, Ono has held positions as Music Director continuously for more than 30 years, leaving lasting musical legacies with orchestras including Zagreb Philharmonic Orchestra, Tokyo Philharmonic, Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe, La Monnaie, Opéra National de Lyon, Arturo Toscanini Philharmonic and Barcelona Symphony Orchestra. He has forged lasting friendships around the world and regularly guest conducts orchestras such as Metropolitan Opera, La Scala, Opéra de Paris, London Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and Orchestre de la Suisse Romande. Ono’s wide-ranging experience of Slavic, Latin and Germanic cultures has shaped a profound musical understanding. He inherited the German tradition from his mentor Wolfgang Sawallisch and has conducted almost all the Wagner repertoire and developed his insight into bel canto from his studies with Giuseppe Patané.

Ono is also passionate about searching for new audiences. Together with Brussels Philharmonic, he is exploring innovative concert experiences, recently presenting an all-Strauss programme enhanced with lighting, soundscapes, poems and haikus. Ono is currently undertaking a Scriabin Symphonic project with Brussels Philharmonic, recording all of Scriabin’s symphonies. *De Standaard* praised Ono’s leadership, noting his ‘meticulous attention to detail, inspiring the orchestra to elevate Scriabin’s music into a tempestuous whirl.’

He often commissions composers and has collaborated several times with Mark-Anthony Turnage, including on *Silent Cities* and *Hibiki* (which won a Royal Philharmonic Society award). He has also conducted works by contemporary composers including Toshio Hosokawa, George Benjamin, Martin

Continued...

MAESTRO ARTS

Matalon and Tōru Takemitsu. In opera, he has conducted the world premieres of Hosokawa's *Hanjo* in Aix-en-Provence and *Natasha* in New National Theatre, Tokyo, Arnulf Hermann's *Der Mieter* at Oper Frankfurt, Kaija Saariaho's *Emilie* at Opéra de Lyon, Salvatore Sciarrino's *Il suono e il tacere* with RAI in Turin and La Monnaie's premiere of Bernard Foccroulle's *Cassandra*.

He is equally at home with classic operatic repertoire, conducting new productions of Ravel's *L'heure espagnole* and *L'Enfant et les sortilèges* at Glyndebourne and Honegger's *Jeanne d'Arc au Bûcher* at Opéra de Lyon. He has worked on ambitious collaborations with boundary-breaking directors such as Dmitri Tcherniakov, Romeo Castellucci, Pierre Audi, William Kentridge and Mariusz Treliński. This season he conducts New National Theatre Tokyo's premiere of Berg's *Wozzeck*. Other upcoming highlights include performances Wagner's *Der fliegende Holländer* at Hamburg Opera, and *Rusalka* at Paris Opera.

As a vocal advocate for the role of culture in our lives, Ono takes an active part in the social and educational programmes of his organisations and often performs in hospitals and care homes alongside young musicians. He launched the inclusive SaLaD Music Festival in Tokyo to encourage people of all ages into the concert hall. In 2017, he was awarded 'Officier de l'ordre des Arts et des Lettres' by French cultural minister Françoise Nyssen, adding to the prestigious Asahi Prize in January 2015, for his contribution to the development and progress of Japanese society.