

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. 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. These formative partnerships built on foundations inherited from his mentor Wolfgang Sawallisch in the German tradition (he has conducted almost all the Wagner repertoire) and in bel canto from his studies with Giuseppe Patané, as well as his experience of Slavic and Latin cultures, shaping a profound musical understanding.

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 Matalon and Tōru Takemitsu. In opera, he has conducted the world premieres of Hosokawa's *Hanjo* and *Natasha*, 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 Bernard Foccroulle's *Cassandra* at La Monnaie.

Ono is equally at home with classic operatic repertoire, conducting new productions of Ravel's *L'heure espagnole* and *L'Enfant et les sortilèges* (directed by Laurent Pelly) at Glyndebourne, Strauss' *Elektra* (directed by Johannes Erat) and Berg's *Wozzeck* at New National Theatre Tokyo and Honegger's *Jeanne d'Arc au Bûcher* (directed by Romeo Castellucci) at Opéra de Lyon. Other ambitious collaborations with boundary-breaking directors include Dmitri Tcherniakov (*Lady*

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MAESTRO_{ARTS}

Macbeth of Mtsensk), Pierre Audi (*Simon Boccanegra*) and Mariusz Treliński (*Boris Godunov*). Recent revivals include Wagner's *Der fliegende Holländer* at Hamburg Opera, and *Rusalka* at Paris Opera. This season he conducts New National Theatre, Tokyo's new production of Britten's *Peter Grimes*, directed by Robert Carson.

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.