

MARK STEPHENSON | CONDUCTOR BIOGRAPHY

Mark Stephenson was a boy chorister at St John's College, Cambridge, studied at the Royal Academy of Music and was appointed a cellist in the Philharmonia Orchestra at the age of twenty-one by Maestro Riccardo Muti. He played under legendary conductors including Carlo Maria Giulini, Eugene Joachum, Kirill Petrovich Kondrashin, Kurt Sanderling, Yevgeny Svetlanov and Lovro Von Matacic as well as the younger generation Sir Simon Rattle, Esa-Pekka Salonen and Mariss Jansons. In 1989 Maestro Giuseppe Sinopoli invited him to assist conducting at rehearsals in Verona, Tokyo, Brussels, East Berlin, Munich, Zurich and New York.

In 1988 with encouragement from pianist and conductor Vladimir Ashkenazy, Mark Stephenson formed the chamber orchestra London Musici and was immediately offered an exclusive three-year recording contract with Conifer Records (now Sony/BMG). His 1989 début recording of Malcolm Arnold Concertos was 'Record of The Week' in The Sunday Times, his first CD of music by Andrzej Panufnik was CD Review's 'Classical CD of the Month' and his Prokofiev recording in 1991 was 'Record of the Week' in The Sunday Times. His 1989 recording of arias and choruses from Handel's *Messiah* featuring Bryn Terfel and John Mark Ainsley was re-released on the Classic FM label in 2000 and his three Arnold albums were re-released on Decca in September 2006. He has recorded for the Silva Classics, Campion, JVC (Japan) and Classic FM labels.

Since 1992 he has appeared as a guest conductor in the UK and abroad with many leading orchestras including The Philharmonia, Royal Philharmonic, BBC Philharmonic, BBC Concert, Residentie Orkest den Haag, Gelders Orkest, Warsaw Philharmonic, Polish Chamber, San Francisco Ballet, Scottish Chamber, Orquestra Nacional do Porto, Hong Kong Sinfonietta, Mostar Sinfonietta and Kennedy Centre Opera orchestras.

In 1994 choreographer Christopher Bruce appointed Mark Stephenson Music Director of Rambert Dance Company with London Musici as

Associate Orchestra. In 1995 he commissioned three new ballet scores from Julian Anderson, Adam Gorb and Roxanna Panufnik. He conducted the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra for Rambert's performances at the UN Festival of Dance in San Francisco of Christopher Bruce's ballet *Meeting Point* choreographed to Michael Nyman's score *Where The Bee Dances*. He has conducted for world-class choreographers including Jiri Kylián, Paul Taylor, Ohad Naharin, Robert Cohan, Martha Clarke, Per Jonsson, Matthew Hawkins, Didi Veldman and Mark Baldwin. He was Music Director of Rambert Dance Company from 1994-1996. London Musici won a TimeOut Award for *Outstanding Achievement In Dance* in 2004 and has given over 1000 performances with Rambert since 1994. In 2000 he was invited to conduct London Musici to accompany Paul Taylor Dance Company from New York at Sadler's Wells Theatre and conducted for them again in Washington DC and London in April and May 2003. He also conducted Houston Ballet in Washington and was subsequently invited to the Whitehouse with Paul Taylor by the First Lady.

In 2000 he won a £20,000 *Creative Britons Award* (400 nominations nationally) sponsored by Prudential and Arts & Business, in recognition of his contribution to music education and audience development in the UK. He conducted the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in February and April 2006 in works by Beethoven, Elgar, Mendelssohn, Mozart, Schumann and Sibelius. In September 2006 he conducted the world première live orchestra screening, at the Royal Albert Hall, of BAFTA-award-winning director Suzie Templeton's remarkable new animated film of Prokofiev's *Peter and The Wolf* with the Philharmonia Orchestra. This Breakthru Films production was broadcast on Channel Four Television as a Christmas special in 2006 and has been screened by orchestras all over the world. Christmas 2006 saw his debut with Hong Ballet and The Hong Kong Sinfonietta in 16 performances of *The Nutcracker*. Other engagements 2006/07 included invitations from The Philharmonia, Royal Philharmonic and Orquestra Nacional do Porto.

In February 2008 *Peter & The Wolf* won the Oscar for Best Animated Short Film

and Mark Stephenson conducts the next London live orchestra screening at The Royal Festival Hall with The City of London Sinfonia on 8th May 2009 which also features a new animated film *The Lost Town of Switez* with a new orchestral score Irina Bogdanovic. In 2008 He commissioned Howard Goodall to compose *Eternal Light - A Requiem* as a choral orchestral work and a ballet choreographed by Mark Baldwin for Rambert Dance Company. EMI has released the album in the UK which will be released in the USA in 2009. *Eternal Light* is currently touring across the UK with different choirs as part of Rambert Dance Company's Spring Tour 2009 and the work will have received over 80 performances in 2008/09!

In November 2008 Mark Stephenson collaborated on CHAOS POINT: A Performance Art Catwalk Show with Dame Vivienne Westwood. The first time an orchestra and ballet dancers have ever performed live throughout a Fashion show. Two sold out performances at Banqueting House, Whitehall Palace, raised £97,000 profit for the NSPCC, attended by a star studded celebrity crowd.

There are plans for Mark Stephenson to conduct a *Peter & The Wolf* Tour of the USA in 2009 and he is commissioning a 'state of the art' *Performance Shell* from Hamiltons, ARUP and ESS, which will transform the quality of outdoor performances given by leading orchestras worldwide.

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