

KARL-HEINZ STEFFENS

Conductor

Principal Conductor & Artistic Advisor: Norrköping Symphony Orchestra

Now in his sixth season as Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor of the Norrköping Symphony Orchestra, German conductor Karl-Heinz Steffens is recognised as a conductor of great distinction in both the symphonic and operatic worlds. Recent highlights include leading the Norrköping Symphony in its debut performances at Amsterdam's Concertgebouw (August 2024) and the Berlin Philharmonie (September 2025), as well as his Southern Hemisphere debut with the Auckland Philharmonia in May 2024, leading to further invitations in 2025 and 2026.

In great demand as a guest conductor, recent and forthcoming appearances include ensembles such as the Bavarian Radio Symphony, Berlin Philharmonic, Helsinki Philharmonic, Antwerp Symphony Orchestra, Essener Philharmoniker, Poznań Philharmonic, Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia, Israel Philharmonic, Munich Philharmonic, Orchestre National de Lyon, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, Toronto Symphony, and Zurich Tonhalle Orchestras, as well as the Radio Symphony Orchestras of Berlin, Cologne, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Hannover, Leipzig and Stuttgart. In the UK, he is a frequent guest with the Philharmonia, with whom he conducted a complete Brahms cycle at the Royal Festival Hall, and has also worked with the BBC Scottish Symphony, Bournemouth Symphony, City of Birmingham Symphony, and Hallé Orchestras.

He recently concluded his tenure as Music Director at the Prague State Opera, where he conducted productions including *Der fliegende Holländer* and Schreker's *Der ferne Klang*, amongst others. There he also launched the four-year Musica non Grata project, dedicated to works by composers suppressed by 20th-century totalitarian regimes, which included a major festival marking the 150th anniversary of Alexander Zemlinsky.

Elsewhere, Steffens has led performances at Teatro alla Scala (*Così fan tutte*, *Don Giovanni*, *Götterdämmerung*) and is a regular guest at the Berlin Staatsoper Unter den Linden. At the Norwegian National Opera, he conducted the Norwegian premiere of *Pelléas et Mélisande* alongside productions of *Così fan tutte*, *Fidelio*, and Calixto Bieito's *Tosca*. In September 2025, he leads the Norrköping Symphony Orchestra at Musikfest Berlin in the world premiere of Marc Blitzstein's rediscovered opera *Parabola and Circula*.

In his previous position as Music Director of the Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz, Steffens and the orchestra were honoured with many accolades; they received the ECHO award for Best Orchestra in 2015 for their recording of works by B.A. Zimmermann and in 2016/17 were nominated prize-winners of the Best Concert Programme of the Season by the Deutsche Musikverlegerverband, the German Music Publishers' Association. Their recording

of works by George Antheil, an addition to their extensive Modern Times series featuring an array of 20th century composers, was named Concert Recording of the Year by the Opus Klassik awards.

Prior to his conducting career, Steffens was a highly respected solo clarinetist who also held several orchestral positions culminating in the successive posts of Principal Clarinet with the Bavarian Radio and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestras. He was recently awarded the Bundesverdienstkreuz, Germany's Federal Cross of Merit, in recognition of his outstanding services to music.

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