

KARL-HEINZ STEFFENS

Conductor

Music Director: Prague State Opera
Principal Conductor & Artistic Advisor: Norrköping Symphony Orchestra



Music Director of Prague State Opera and Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor at the Norrköping Symphony Orchestra, German conductor Karl-Heinz Steffens is recognised as a conductor of great distinction in both the operatic and symphonic worlds.

In 2019 he took up his appointment at Prague State Opera, his first production there being *Fidelio* in the newly refurbished house; preparations for Szymanowski's *King Roger* were under way when Covid-19 led to its cancellation. During the present season he conducts productions of *Der fliegende Holländer* and Schreker's *Der ferne Klang*, amongst others, as well as continuing the four-year *Musica non Grata* series he initiated, dedicated to "unwelcome music" written by composers who fell victim to the despotism of the 20th-century totalitarian regimes.

Last season he embarked upon his relationship with the Norrköping Symphony Orchestra, having been introduced to the ensemble in the context of a Brahms symphony cycle. Elsewhere in great demand as a guest conductor, recent seasons have seen him work with ensembles such as the Bavarian Radio Symphony, Berlin Philharmonic, Israel Philharmonic, Munich Philharmonic, Orchestre National de Lyon, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic and Zurich Tonhalle Orchestras and with the Radio Symphony Orchestras of Berlin, Cologne, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Hannover, Leipzig and Stuttgart. He is also a frequent visitor to the UK, making multiple appearances with the Philharmonia with whom he conducted a Brahms cycle as well as the BBC Scottish, Bournemouth, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestras and the Hallé Orchestra.

During his time as Music Director of the Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz, the orchestra was 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 prizewinners 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 designated Concert Recording of the Year by the Opus Klassik awards.

In the opera house, Steffens has appeared several times at the Teatro alla Scala leading performances of *Così fan Tutte*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Götterdämmerung*, and is regularly invited to the Berlin Staatsoper Unter den Linden. He led the Norwegian premiere of *Pelléas et Mélisande* at the Norwegian National Opera where he has also conducted *Così fan tutte*, *Fidelio* and Calixto Bieito's production of *Tosca*.

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. Steffens has recently been awarded the Bundesverdienstkreuz in Germany for his services to music.

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