

HANS GRAF

Conductor

"Graf conducts the Zemlinsky {Lyric Symphony} with deep, tangible sensuality, while the playing combines clarity with textures of breathtaking beauty."

The Guardian

The Austrian conductor Hans Graf was appointed Music Director of the Houston Symphony Orchestra in 2001 and concluded his tenure in 2013 with a semi-staged production of Alban Berg's opera *Wozzeck* and a festive performance of Mahler's Second Symphony.

He is the longest serving Music Director in the orchestra's 100 years and holds the title of Conductor Laureate. Prior to his appointment in Houston, he was the Music Director of the Calgary Philharmonic for eight seasons and of the Orchestre National Bordeaux Aquitaine for six years. He also led the Mozarteum Orchester Salzburg from 1984 to 1994 and the Basque National Orchestra from 1994 to 1996.

Hans Graf is a frequent guest with the major North American orchestras. His guest engagements in the US include appearances with the Boston Symphony, the Cleveland and Philadelphia Orchestras, the New York and Los Angeles Philharmonics, the Atlanta, San Francisco, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Detroit, Dallas, Baltimore, Utah, Milwaukee, Colorado and National symphonies, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, and in Canada, the Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver symphonies and the Ottawa National Arts Center Orchestra among others.

Mr. Graf made his Carnegie Hall debut with the Houston Symphony in January 2006. They returned in January 2010 to present the New York premiere of "The Planets - An HD Odyssey", featuring an exclusive Video with high definition images from NASA together with Gustav Holst's "The Planets". Mr Graf and the Houston Symphony appeared again in May 2012 in Carnegie's Spring for Music Festival with an All-Shostakovich program.

In Europe, Mr. Graf has conducted the Philhamonic Orchestras of Vienna and London, the Vienna Symphony, Royal Concertgebouw and Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestras as well as the St. Petersburg and Russian National Philharmonic of Moscow, the Deutsches Symphonie Orchester Berlin, Bavarian and Danish Radio symphonies, the Hilversum Radio Philharmonic (at the Concertgebouw's famous Saturday Matinees), the LSO, RPO, the Birmingham, Hallé, Royal Scottish, the Irish National and the Budapest Festival Orchestra, the Gothenburg Symphony as well as the Oslo and Stockholm Philharmonics, among others. He is also a regular guest with the Sydney, Melbourne and Singapore Symphonies, as well as the Seoul, Hong Kong and Malaysia Philharmonics.

In October 2010, Mr. Graf led the Houston Symphony on a tour to the UK with performances in Birmingham, Manchester, Newcastle, Leeds, Edinburgh and the Barbican in London. In June 2012, the Houston Symphony with Mo. Graf was the first major American orchestra to appear at the Festival of World Symphony Orchestras in Moscow, presenting two programs, including Mozart "Prague" plus Bruckner 9, and the Russian premiere of John Adams' Doctor Atomic Symphony plus the first Russian performance of Shostakovich's Symphony 11 by a foreign orchestra.

During the summer of 2013, Mr. Graf returned with three productions to the Salzburg Festival where his debut was in 1983.

He participated at other prestigious European festivals such as Bregenz, Grafenegg, Orange, Aix en Provence the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino and Savonlinna in Finland.

His recent US festival appearances include the Tanglewood and Blossom Music Festivals, Aspen, Bravo!Vail, the Texas Music Festival and the Grant Park Music Festival in downtown Chicago.

An experienced opera conductor, Mr. Graf first conducted the Vienna State Opera in 1981 and has since led productions in the opera houses of Munich, Berlin, Paris, Rome and many others. Recent opera engagements include Zurich (*Parsifal*) and the

Opera National du Rhin in Strasbourg (*Boris Godunov*).

In 2014, he was awarded the "Österreichischer Musiktheaterpreis" for best musical performance, conducting a concert version of Richard Strauss' opera *Die Feuersnot* at the Volksoper in Vienna.

Hans Graf's extensive discography includes the complete symphonies of Mozart and Schubert, the complete orchestral works of Henri Dutilleux (under the supervision of the composer) with the Orchestre National Bordeaux Aquitaine (BMG Arte Nova/SONY) as well as the world premiere recording of Zemlinsky's opera *Es war einmal* (Danish Radio, Capriccio).

Among his many recordings with the Houston Symphony are Bartok's *Wooden Prince* (Koch), Zemlinsky's *Lyrical Symphony* and Mahler's *Lied von der Erde* (Naxos) and a DVD of *The Planets - An HD Odyssey*. Naxos also released Houston Symphony's *Wozzeck* in January 2017. This recording was awarded the ECHO Klassik prize 2017 for the best opera recording (category 20./ 21. century). Other recent CDs include the complete works for viola and orchestra by Hindemith with Tabea Zimmermann and the DSO Berlin (Myrios) and Orff's *Carmina Burana* with the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

Born near Linz (Austria), Hans Graf first studied piano. After receiving his diplomas in piano and conducting, he studied in Italy with Franco Ferrara (Siena) and Sergiu Celibidache (Bologna) and St Petersburg with Arvid Jansons.

Hans Graf has been nominated Chevalier de l'Ordre de la Légion d'Honneur by the French Government (2002) and was awarded the Grand Decoration of Honour of the Republic of Austria. He is also Professor Emeritus of Orchestral Conducting at the Universität Mozarteum in Salzburg.

"One of the finest Wozzeck's on record, orchestrally speaking"

Gramophone

September 2017