

BRAMWELL TOVEY

Principal Guest Conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl

A musician of striking versatility, Bramwell Tovey is acknowledged around the world for his artistic depth and his warm, charismatic personality on the podium. Tovey's career as a conductor is uniquely enhanced by his work as a composer and pianist, lending him a remarkable musical perspective. His tenures as music director with the Vancouver Symphony, Luxembourg Philharmonic and Winnipeg Symphony Orchestras have been characterized by his expertise in operatic, choral, British and contemporary repertoire.

The 2008/09 season holds many highlights for Tovey. In the fall of his ninth season with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, the conductor took the ensemble on tour to China and South Korea with guest artist Hillary Hahn. The first orchestra from Canada to perform in China in 30 years, the tour was capped by a performance at the Beijing Music Festival – another first for a Canadian symphony. Upon returning to Vancouver, Tovey led the orchestra through an in-depth Brahms Festival, featuring all four symphonies, the two piano concertos and the violin concerto. The Brahms Violin concerto was performed with violinist James Ehnes who, along with the VSO, won both a Grammy Award and a Juno Award in 2007 for a CBC recording of violin concertos by Walton, Korngold and Barber. Other special guest artists during the season include violinist Joshua Bell as well as a joint performance by celebrated vocalists Samuel Ramey and Frederica von Stade.

Recently branded the "...the hottest hot-weather conductor in America right now..." by *The Baltimore Sun*, Tovey continues both his second season as Principal Guest Conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl, and his sixth season as founding host and conductor of the New York Philharmonic's *Summertime Classics* series at Avery Fisher Hall in summer 2009. The orchestras recently co-commissioned him to write a piece, the well-received *Urban Runway*, which receives its Canadian premiere this season.

An esteemed guest conductor, Tovey has worked with orchestras in Europe and the UK including the London Philharmonic, London Symphony, Frankfurt Radio Orchestra as well as the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra which he revisits this season. Tovey's other debuts include performances with the Ulster and Helsingborg Orchestras and Opera North. He also made his Australian debut in fall 2008 with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and guest artist Christian Tetzlaff. In North America, along with his work with the New York and Los Angeles Philharmonics, Tovey has made guest appearances with the orchestras

of Baltimore, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Seattle, Montreal as well as ongoing performances with Toronto, where he conducts this season.

Prior to his music directorship in Vancouver, Tovey spent 12 years as music director of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, where he founded its highly regarded New Music Festival. A significant milestone in the ensemble's exploration of new music, the festival premiered more than 250 works by diverse international and Canadian composers under Tovey's leadership, with every performance broadcast on Canada's CBC Radio.

During his four years as the music director of the Luxembourg Philharmonic, from 2002 to 2006, Tovey led three successful tours in Europe, the Far East and the eastern United States, traveling to China, Korea, Germany, Austria, Italy, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Holland and Belgium. In 2004, Tovey and the orchestra were awarded the "Orphée d'Or" of the Academie Lyrique Francaise, for their critically praised recording of Jean Cras' opera, *Polyphème*. The following year, in celebration of the opening of Luxembourg's new Philharmonic Hall, Tovey conducted the Luxembourg Philharmonic Orchestra and the Europa Academie Choir in the world premiere of Penderecki's 8th Symphony, composed especially for the occasion.

Renowned as a choral conductor, Tovey has performed works ranging from Mahler's Symphony No. 8 to Bach's Mass in B Minor. In opera, his repertoire includes works by Puccini, Strauss, Mozart, Menotti, Poulenc, Britten and Stravinsky. In 2004, he premiered a new opera by John Estacio, jointly commissioned by the Banff Centre and the Calgary Opera, which he reprised for the National Arts Centre in Ottawa in 2005.

With a profound commitment to new music, Tovey has established himself as a formidable composer and is the first artist to win a Juno Award in both conducting and composing. He has been commissioned by the Calgary Opera to compose the company's third original full-length opera. Written with librettist John Murrell, this work is based on the extraordinary life of Alexander "Sandy" Keith, a notorious 19th century con artist and criminal from Halifax, Nova Scotia. An immense undertaking, the piece will premiere in Calgary in January of 2011. Tovey's other accomplishments as a composer include receiving the Best Canadian Classical Composition 2003 Juno Award for his *Requiem for a Charred Skull*, performed and recorded by the Amadeus Choir and the Hannaford Band in Toronto.

Tovey has also built a strong reputation as an accomplished jazz pianist with two recordings to his name and has made memorable appearances on television, including two documentaries with the City of

Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and a 1996 CBC TV broadcast of Victor Davies' *Revelation*, a full-length oratorio based on the Book of Revelation, with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra. He has also recorded several DVDs, of works including Holst's *The Planets Suite* with distinguished guests such as percussionist Evelyn Glennie, among many others.

Awarded numerous honorary degrees, Tovey has received a Fellowship from the Royal Academy of Music in London, honorary Doctorates of Law from the University of Winnipeg, the University of Manitoba and Kwantlen University College, as well as a Fellowship from the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. In 1999, he received the M. Joan Chalmers National Award for Artistic Direction, a prestigious Canadian prize awarded to premier artists for outstanding contributions in professional performing arts organizations.

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