

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 2007/08 season holds many highlights for Tovey. A recent recording with violinist James Ehnes brought a 2007 Grammy to the soloist, the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra and Tovey. In his eighth season with Vancouver, Tovey collaborates with guest artists Ben Heppner and Evelyn Glennie and leads the orchestra through an in-depth six-concert Beethoven festival, featuring performances by Lang Lang and Anne-Sophie Mutter. He also appears with orchestras across East Asia, in the spring of 2008, in advance of the orchestra's fall 2008 tour of China. Highlights for 2008 in the United States include Tovey's appointment as Principal Guest Conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl. The post, last held by Leonard Slatkin, includes general programming and conducting of Los Angeles Philharmonic concerts in its famed summer venue. Tovey also has been commissioned to write a work for the New York and Los Angeles Philharmonic's respective 2008 summer seasons.

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.

In 2004, he founded the New York Philharmonic's Summertime Classics series at Avery Fisher Hall, and presides annually as its host and conductor. Chief critic of *The New York Times* Anthony Tommasini has written, "The New York Philharmonic values the British conductor Bramwell Tovey as the host of its Summertime Classics series not only because he is a good musician, but also because he brings such a delightfully avuncular sense of humor to the job of introducing the pieces on the program."

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.

An esteemed guest conductor, Tovey has worked with orchestras in the UK and Europe including the London Philharmonic, London Symphony, Bournemouth, the Frankfurt Radio Orchestra and the North Netherlands Symphony, where he will lead the Dutch premiere of Penderecki's 8th Symphony in 2008. In a review of a performance with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra the *Scottish Herald* wrote "....he's a sophisticated entertainer, a refined malt whiskey of a man.....[Tovey] produced polished playing...that is too rare in performances of this music." In North America, along with his work with the New York and Los Angeles Philharmonics, Tovey has made guest appearances with the orchestras of St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Seattle, Toronto and Montreal. A recent review in The *St. Louis Post Dispatch* noted "...the orchestra played brilliantly, responding to Tovey's direction like a well-tuned race car."

With a profound commitment to new music, Tovey has established himself as a formidable composer. 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.

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.

Tovey 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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