

Robert Ryker

Biography

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Robert R yker has conducted in Baltimore, Bombay, Boston, Bucharest, Calcutta, Cleveland, Helsinki, Jena, Kiev, Lima, Montreal, Pittsburgh, Prague, Saint Louis, Saint Petersburg, Shanghai, Singapore, Tokyo, Vilnius, Windsor, Washington and elsewhere. His recent appearances have taken him to China, Germany, India, Japan, Lithuania, Peru, Russia, Taiwan, Ukraine and Vietnam. He has been based for many years in the musical city of Tokyo, where he has appeared with such world class orchestras as the Japan Philharmonic, New Japan Philharmonic, Tokyo Philharmonic and Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony. He serves as Music Director of the National Philharmonic of India, Principal Guest Conductor of the Hanoi Philharmonic Orchestra, and Music Director of the Tokyo Sinfonia.

Born in Indianapolis, USA, he commenced his professional career at the age of 17 as principal tuba of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic. Upon graduation from Indiana University, he joined the Montreal Symphony under Zubin Mehta, where he performed some 2,000 concerts under such luminaries as Abbado, Ancerl, Baudo, Bm, Decker, Davis, Dohnanyi, Fiedler, Fournier, Frbeck, Giulini, Goosens, Jansons, Kondrashin, Krips, Martinon, Mehta, Mch, Oistrakh, Ozawa, Prre, Rudolf, Sargent, Schippers, Schuller, Shostakovich, Skrowaczewski and Swarowsky. He credits his long association with Zubin Mehta to have been the most seminal influence upon his own later formation as an orchestra conductor and interpretive musician.

He left the Montreal Symphony in 1973 to pursue professional studies in conducting in Europe with Igor Markevich, Herbert Blomstedt and Helmuth Rilling, and doctoral studies in America at the Peabody Conservatory of Music. He won first prizes in the 1974 Baltimore Symphony Conducting Competition and the 1975 National Symphonic Conducting Competition, and was selected for advanced conducting programs with the Cleveland Orchestra and Saint Louis Symphony. He was personally sponsored for American management representation in New York by Leonard Slatkin.

A pioneer and an innovator, he has founded orchestras on three continents - the Tokyo Sinfonia, North Bay Symphony, and National Philharmonic of India. He lectured on Style in Conducting for the Chicago Midwest Orchestra Conference. He developed an international reputation as a discerning writer on music and an accomplished public

speaker, serving for a decade as senior music critic of the Japan Times. He created an audience development program for symphony orchestras known as Mini-concerts, employed in Canada, India, Japan, Taiwan, Vietnam and the United States. He has written over 250 musical arrangements, compositions, orchestrations and performing editions to fill the need for repertoire to build sustaining audiences.

His recordings of works by Bach, Barber, Beethoven, Gershwin, Lalo, Mendelssohn and Schubert have earned high praise for their balanced sonorities, sensitive pacing, and profound expression. For services to music, he was recognized with awards, citations and grants from the Canada Council, Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Department of Defence and Secretary of State, and knighted an Officer of the Knights Templar of Jerusalem.

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