

Richard Farnes

Conductor

Richard Farnes read Music at King's College, Cambridge, where he was organ scholar, and went on to study at the National Opera Studio, Royal Academy of Music and Guildhall School of Music, where he conducted the first British production of Rossini's *Journey to Reims*. At the Royal Academy he won both the Henry Wood and Philharmonia Chorus conducting scholarships, and was awarded a European Community Youth Orchestra Scholarship in 1988 for his contribution to the orchestra as its keyboard player. On completion of his studies he gained valuable experience working on the music staff of the Glyndebourne Festival, Scottish Opera and Opera Factory and won the 1990 British Reserve Insurance Competition for Young Conductors.

He was Music Director of Opera North from 2004-2016, for whom conducted highly praised productions of *La fanciulla del West*, *Death in Venice*, *Otello*, *La traviata*, *Giovanna d'Arco*, *Falstaff*, *Macbeth*, *Don Carlos*, *Peter Grimes*, *Gloriana*, *The Turn of Screw*, *Albert Herring*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, *The Secret Marriage*, *La boheme*, *Manon*, *La Rondine*, *Werther*, *Eugene Onegin*, *The Queen of Spades*, *Katya Kabanova*, and *From the House of the Dead*, as well as premiere productions of David Sawer's *Skin Deep* and Simon Holt's *The Nightingale's to Blame*. He has also made recordings with Opera North of both *Duke Bluebeard's Castle* and *Don Carlos* for Chandos Records.

In 2011, Richard Farnes and Opera North started an ambitious project to perform Wagner's "Ring" in concert. The performances of *Das Rheingold* (2011) and *Die Walküre* (2012) in Leeds Town Hall, and on tour to The Sage Gateshead, Symphony Hall Birmingham, and the Lowry Theatre in Salford, were enthusiastically received by both public and the press alike. The Ring project continued with *Siegfried* in summer 2013 and culminated with *Götterdämmerung* in June 2014. Complete Ring cycles took place throughout 2016 in Leeds, Salford, Nottingham, Gateshead and London. This project won the 2017 Royal Philharmonic Society Opera and Music Theatre award, and Richard Farnes was named Conductor of the Year. Most recently for Opera North he conducted critically acclaimed concert performances of Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman* in various UK venues.

He has also worked with Scottish Opera, Glyndebourne Festival, the Royal Opera House, English National Opera, New Israeli Opera, English Touring Opera, and Birmingham Opera Company. He returned to the Royal Opera, London, towards the end of 2016 to conduct performances of Verdi's *Il Trovatore*, and he returned to the Glyndebourne Festival in summer 2017 to conduct Verdi's *La Traviata*. The 17/18 season sees him conduct the BBC Symphony, the Adelaide Symphony and Bournemouth Symphony Orchestras, and a return to Opera North for Verdi's *Un ballo in maschera*, whilst summer 2018 will see him conducting Verdi's *Falstaff* at Garsington Opera. He makes his debut at the Metropolitan Opera in New York with Verdi's *Falstaff* in February 2019.

In April 2013 Richard conducted two concert performances of Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* with the London Symphony Orchestra at the Barbican Centre in London, replacing the late Sir Colin Davis. Concert engagements have included the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the BBC Philharmonic the BBC Scottish Symphony, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, the Russian National Orchestra, the BBC Scottish Symphony, the Royal Northern Sinfonia, the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra, and the Cambridge University Music Society.