

## Richard Farnes

### Conductor

Richard Farnes is one of the most sought after conductors of his generation. He was Music Director of Opera North from 2004-2016, for whom he has 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 bohème*, *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. He won the award for 'Achievement in Opera' at the 2014 UK Theatre Awards, run by industry body UK Theatre.

In 2011, after highly successful concert performances of *Elektra*, *Salome*, *Hansel and Gretel*, and *Duke Bluebeard's Castle*, 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. Most recently for Opera North he conducted critically acclaimed concert performances of Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman* in various UK venues.

Outside his commitments for Opera North he has also had a close association with Scottish Opera, conducting *La bohème*, *Tosca*, *The Magic Flute*, *L'elisir d'amore*, David Horne's *Friend of the People*, and a double bill of works by Param Vir. For Glyndebourne he has conducted *The Makropoulos Case*, Peter Hall's production of *Otello*, Jonathan Dove's *Flight* at the summer festival, and *Albert Herring*, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, *La bohème* and *Le Nozze di Figaro* on tour. Other opera engagements have included *Simone Boccanegra* at the Royal Opera House, *The Cunning Little Vixen* For English National Opera, *Nabucco* for New Israeli Opera, Tel Aviv, *Falstaff*, *La Bohème* and *The Barber of Seville* for English Touring Opera, Pergolesi's *La Serva Padrona* and Verdi's *Macbeth* for Graham Vick's Birmingham Opera Company, *The Cunning Little Vixen* and *The Rake's Progress* for Opera Theatre Company in Dublin, and Mozart's *Bastien und Bastienne* for European Chamber Opera.

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 BBC Philharmonic the BBC Scottish Symphony, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, the Russian National Orchestra, the BBC Scottish Symphony, and the Royal Northern Sinfonia. Future plans include concerts with the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra and the Cambridge University Music Society.

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.

The 16-17 season sees Richard Farnes return to the Royal Opera, London to conduct performances of Verdi's *Il Trovatore*, and to the Glyndebourne Festival to conduct Verdi's *La Traviata*. He will also conduct both the RTE Symphony and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.