Richard Farnes

Conductor

English conductor Richard Farnes is as persuasive in his interpretations of the operas of Britten, Mozart, Verdi and Janáček, as he is when he takes Wagner's Ring Cycle on the road around the UK.

His connection with Britten runs deep, having performed at Snape Maltings for the elderly composer as a choirboy at King's College, Cambridge. As Music Director of Opera North from 2004 to 2016, he conducted several of the composer's operas, including Death in Venice, The Turn of the Screw, Gloriana and an award-winning production of Peter Grimes. His repertoire ranges far and wide, though. He made his Royal Opera debut in 2002 conducting Simon Boccanegra and has since conducted Il trovatore and Death in Venice there, and was due to return to conduct Don Carlos.

In recent years Farnes' international profile has flourished. He made his debut at the Metropolitan Opera in February 2019 with Verdi's Falstaff and was due to return in 2020 to conduct Manon Lescaut, before the Coronavirus crisis. In 2020 he conducted La Traviata with Royal Danish Opera, and during summer 2021 conducted semi-staged performances of Tosca for English National Opera at the Crystal Palace Bowl.

During his time at Opera North, he developed a close affinity with Wagner, touring concert performances of the operas across the UK. His project to perform the entire Ring Cycle six times in 2016 won public and critical acclaim, including the 2017 Royal Philharmonic Society Opera and Music Theatre award, with Farnes named Conductor of the Year.

As well as specialising in opera he guest conducts symphonic orchestras across the UK, including London Symphony Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic and Royal Liverpool Philharmonic. He opens the 22/23 season conducting the Symphony Orchestra of India in Mumbai.

In his educational work he conducted for and served on the jury of the 2019 and 2020 Gold Medal competitions at Guildhall School of Music & Drama, where he was a student himself.

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