

James Levine

Now in his sixth season as Music Director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, James Levine is the BSO's 14th music director since the orchestra's founding in 1881 and the first American-born conductor to hold that position. Highlights of Maestro Levine's 2009-10 Boston Symphony programs, four of which travel to Carnegie Hall, include an Opening Night program (also performed by the BSO as Carnegie Hall's season-opener) featuring Evgeny Kissin in Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 2 and longtime BSO harpist Ann Hobson Pilot in John Williams's new *On Willows and Birches* (composed as a gift for Ms. Pilot, who retired from the orchestra at the end of the 2009 Tanglewood season); a complete Beethoven symphony cycle (the orchestra's first on subscription concerts in seventy-five years); the premieres of commissioned works from Peter Lieberon (*Farewell Songs* for baritone and orchestra, in its world premiere), Elliott Carter (Flute Concerto, in its American premiere), and John Harbison (Double Concerto for violin and cello, in its world premiere); Mendelssohn's *Elijah* (the BSO's first performances since 1980); a Pension Fund Concert featuring all four Strausses (to include Richard Strauss's *Don Quixote* plus waltzes, marches, and polkas by Johann Strauss, Johann Strauss II, and Josef Strauss); and music of Berg, Berlioz, Brahms, Debussy, Mahler, Mozart, Ravel, Schubert, and Stravinsky. Highlights of Maestro Levine's 2009 Tanglewood season included, among other things, an Opening Night all-Tchaikovsky program with the BSO; a concert performance of *Die Meistersinger*, Act III, with the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra; and a fully staged TMC production of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. At Tanglewood each summer he also leads TMC classes devoted to orchestral repertoire, Lieder, and opera.

James Levine made his BSO debut in April 1972 and became music director in the fall of 2004, having been named music director designate in October 2001. His wide-ranging programs balance orchestral, operatic, and choral classics with significant music of the 20th and 21st centuries, including newly commissioned works from such leading American composers as Milton Babbitt, Elliott Carter, John Harbison, Leon Kirchner, Peter Lieberon, Gunther Schuller, and Charles Wuorinen. Mr. Levine and the Boston Symphony Orchestra made their first European tour together following the 2007 Tanglewood season, performing in the Lucerne Festival, the Schleswig-Holstein Festival (in Hamburg), Essen, Düsseldorf, the Berlin Festival, Paris, and the BBC Proms in London. At Tanglewood in 2008 he was Festival Director for the Elliott Carter Centenary Celebration marking the composer's 100th-birthday year. In February 2009, Mr. Levine and the Boston Symphony Orchestra released their first recordings together on the BSO Classics label, all taken from live performances—Ravel's complete *Daphnis et Chloé* (which recently won the Grammy Award for Best Orchestral Recording of 2009), Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem*, Mahler's Symphony No. 6, and William Bolcom's Eighth Symphony and *Lyric Concerto*.

James Levine is also Music Director of the Metropolitan Opera, where, in the thirty-eight years since his debut there, he has developed a relationship with that company unparalleled in its history and unique in the musical world today. All told at the Met he has led nearly 2,500 performances—more than any other conductor in the company's history—of 85 different operas, including fifteen company premieres. In 2009-10 at the Met he conducts new productions of *Tosca* (introduced on Opening Night) and *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* and revivals of *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Simon Boccanegra*, and *Lulu*, as well as concerts at Carnegie Hall with the MET Orchestra and MET Chamber Ensemble. Also in New York this season, in January at Zankel Hall, he gives a master class for the Marilyn Horne Foundation. In March 2010, in Berlin, he conducts Mahler's Symphony No. 3 in his debut with the Staatskapelle Berlin and, as pianist, joins Daniel Barenboim for Schubert's *Grand Duo* and the Brahms *Lieblieder-Waltzes* (with Dorothea Röschmann, Waltraud Meier, Matthew Polenzani, and René Pape) in a gala fundraiser for the imminent renovation of the historic Deutsche Staatsoper. In June 2010 the Cincinnati native conducts a new Cincinnati Opera production of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* for that company's 90th Anniversary Season.

James Levine has conducted every major orchestra in the United States and Europe. Outside the United States, his activities have been characterized by his intensive and enduring relationships with Europe's most distinguished musical organizations, especially the Berlin Philharmonic, the Vienna Philharmonic, and the summer festivals in Salzburg (1975-1993) and Bayreuth (1982-98). He was music director of the UBS Verbier Festival Orchestra from its founding in 2000 and, before coming to Boston, was chief conductor of the Munich Philharmonic from 1999 to 2004. In the United States he led the Chicago Symphony Orchestra for twenty summers as music director of the Ravinia Festival (1973-1993) and, concurrently, was music director of the Cincinnati May Festival (1973-1978). Besides his many recordings with the Metropolitan Opera and the MET Orchestra, he has amassed a substantial discography with such leading ensembles as the Berlin Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, London Symphony, Philharmonia Orchestra, Munich Philharmonic, Dresden Staatskapelle, Philadelphia Orchestra, and Vienna Philharmonic. Over the last thirty years he has made more than 200 recordings of works ranging from Bach to Babbitt. Also a distinguished pianist, Maestro Levine is an active chamber music and recital collaborator, especially in Lieder and song repertoire with the world's great singers.

Born in Cincinnati, Ohio, on June 23, 1943, James Levine studied piano from age four and made his debut with the Cincinnati Symphony at ten, as soloist in Mendelssohn's D minor piano concerto. He was a participant at the Marlboro Festival in 1956 (including piano study with Rudolf Serkin) and at the Aspen Music Festival and

School (where he would later teach and conduct) from 1957. In 1961 he entered the Juilliard School, where he studied conducting with Jean Morel and piano with Rosina Lhévinne (continuing on his work with her at Aspen). In 1964 he took part in the Ford Foundation-sponsored “American Conductors Project” with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and Alfred Wallenstein, Max Rudolf, and Fausto Cleva. As a direct result of his work there, he was invited by George Szell, who was on the jury, to become an assistant conductor (1964-1970) at the Cleveland Orchestra—at twenty-one, the youngest assistant conductor in that orchestra’s history. During his Cleveland years, he also founded and was music director of the University Circle Orchestra at the Cleveland Institute of Music (1966-72).

James Levine was the first recipient (in 1980) of the annual Manhattan Cultural Award and in 1986 was presented with the Smetana Medal by the Czechoslovak government, following performances of the composer’s *Má Vlast* in Vienna. He was the subject of a *Time* cover story in 1983, was named “Musician of the Year” by *Musical America* in 1984, and has been featured in a documentary in PBS’s “American Masters” series. He has received numerous honorary doctorates and international awards, among them the Award for Distinguished Achievement in the Arts from New York’s Third Street Music School Settlement; the Gold Medal for Service to Humanity from the National Institute of Social Sciences; the Lotus Award (“for inspiration to young musicians”) from Young Concert Artists; the Anton Seidl Award from the Wagner Society of New York; the Wilhelm Furtwängler Prize from Baden-Baden’s Committee for Cultural Advancement; the George Jelinek Award from WQXR in New York; the Goldenes Ehrenzeichen from the cities of Vienna and Salzburg; the Crystal Award from the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland; America’s National Medal of Arts and Kennedy Center Honors; the 2005 Award for Distinguished Service to the Arts from the American Academy of Arts and Letters; a 2006 *Opera News* Award, the NEA Opera Award from the National Academy of the Arts, and, most recently, in December 2009, the first Bard Award in Vocal Arts from the Bard College Conservatory of Music.

February 2010