

JURAJ VALČUHA



Houston Symphony Music Director Juraj Valčuha is recognized for his effortless expressiveness and depth of musicianship. With sharp baton technique and natural stage presence, the impressive ease of his interpretations translates even the most complex scores into immersive experiences.

Before joining the Houston Symphony in June 2022, Juraj was Music Director of the Teatro di San Carlo, Naples, from 2016 to 2022 and first guest conductor of the Konzerthausorchester Berlin. He was Chief Conductor of the Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della Rai from 2009 to 2016.

The 2005–06 Season marked the start of his international career on the podium of the Orchestre National de France followed by remarkable debuts in the United Kingdom with the Philharmonia London, in Germany with the Munich Philharmonic, in the United States with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, and in Italy with Puccini's *La bohème* in Bologna.

He has since led the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Dresden Staatskapelle, Munich Philharmonic, Berlin Philharmonic, Swedish Radio Symphony, Amsterdam Royal Concertgebouw, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Orchestre de Paris, Maggio Musicale in Florence, Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia Rome, Milan's Filarmonica della Scala, Montréal Symphony, and the NHK and Yomiuri orchestras in Tokyo. He enjoys regular collaborations with the Minnesota Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, and San Francisco Symphony. International touring with the Orchestra Sinfonica della Rai took them to the Musikverein in Vienna and Philharmonie in Berlin, Cologne, Düsseldorf, Zurich, Munich, to the Enesco Festival in Bucharest, and the Abu Dhabi Classics. With the Konzerthausorchester Berlin, he visited Riga, Vilnius, and Tallinn to mark the 100th anniversary of the Baltic nations.

In Europe, he is acclaimed on the podium of the Munich Philharmonic, the NDR Hamburg and Frankfurt Radio orchestras, as well as the Vienna Symphony, Czech Philharmonic, Orchestre National de France, Orchestre de Paris, BBC Symphony and Philharmonia London, and the Swedish Radio Orchestra.

Juraj champions the compositions of living composers and aims to program contemporary pieces in most of his concerts. He has conducted world premieres, including Christopher Rouse's *Supplica* with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Steven Mackey's violin concerto with Leila Josefowicz and the BBC Symphony in Manchester, and Nico Muhly's *Bright Idea* with the Houston Symphony. In 2005, he conducted, in the presence of the composer, Steve Reich's *Four Seasons* at the Melos-Ethos Festival in Bratislava. Other composers he has supported and continues to follow with interest are Bryce Dessner, Steven Stucky, Andrew Norman, James MacMillan, Luca Francesconi, Anna Thorvaldsdottir, Anna Clyne, Julia Wolfe and Jessie Montgomery, among others.

Including his engagements in Houston, the 2023–24 Season took him to the Pittsburgh and Chicago Symphony Orchestras, San Francisco Symphony, and Minnesota Orchestra as well as to the Yomiuri Nippon Orchestra in Tokyo. On the European stage, he performed *Fanciulla del West* and *Tristan and Isolde* at the Bavarian State Opera and at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, *Jenufa* at the Opera di Roma. He led concerts with the RAI Orchestra, the Orchestra dell'Accademia di Santa Cecilia, the Orchestre National de France, the NDR, SWR, and the Bamberg Symphony, among others.

In the 2024–2025 Season Juraj will join the Semperoper in Dresden with Strauss' *Salomé* as well as the Paris Opéra Bastille with Janacek's *The Cunning Little Vixen* and the Deutsche Oper Berlin with Tchaikovsky's *Pique Dame*. In the coming months, in addition to his concerts with the Houston Symphony, he will return to the Munich Philharmonic, the Orchestre National de France, the London Philharmonic, the Berlin Konzerthaus Orchester, the San Francisco Symphony, the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, and the Yomiuri Nippon Orchestra in Tokyo.

Born in Bratislava, Slovakia, Juraj studied composition and conducting in his birthplace, then at the conservatory in St. Petersburg (with Ilya Musin), and finally, at the Conservatoire Supérieur de la Musique in Paris.