

## VALERY GERGIEV

Artistic and General Director of the Mariinsky Theatre, Valery Gergiev is one of the finest conductors in the world and has received numerous awards and prizes. At the Mariinsky Theatre, Gergiev has created a plethora of international star singers, and he developed the initiative to establish the Mariinsky Academy of Young Singers, the Mariinsky Theatre Youth Orchestra and several instrumental ensembles. 2006 saw the maestro's efforts rewarded with the construction of the Concert Hall of the Mariinsky Theatre, which significantly increased the performing capabilities of the Opera Company and the Orchestra.

Under Gergiev's direction, the Theatre's repertoire has become amazingly diverse. Today, it includes an incredibly broad range of works from operas by Musorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Tchaikovsky, Mozart, Verdi and Puccini to the 20<sup>th</sup> century classics, such as operas by Janáček, Strauss, Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Britten and Shchedrin. For the first time in the history of Russian opera, the Theatre staged a production of Wagner's tetralogy *Der Ring des Nibelungen* in German on the initiative and under the direction of Valery Gergiev (2003). This production has received tremendous critical acclaim not just in Russia, but also abroad in Germany, Japan, South Korea, Spain, the United Kingdom (the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden) and the USA (the Metropolitan Opera).

The ballet repertoire of the Theatre, justifiably known as "the house of Petipa" and which has conserved unique 19<sup>th</sup> century ballets, has, over the past ten years, expanded to include works by the great 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century choreographers.

The maestro focuses a great deal of attention on programmes for children and young people. The Mariinsky Theatre has revived the practice of subscription performances for such audiences, as well as staging gratis concerts for students in Moscow, St Petersburg and other cities in Russia.

Over the past twenty years, thanks to Gergiev's efforts, the Mariinsky Theatre has become one of the world's greatest musical hotspots, and in 2008 the Mariinsky Theatre Symphony Orchestra was included in the list of the world's top twenty ensembles.

Valery Gergiev is the initiator and Artistic Director of such international festivals as *The Rotterdam Philharmonic – Gergiev Festival* (Netherlands), the *Stars of the White Nights* (St Petersburg) and the *Moscow Easter Festival*.

From 2007 Gergiev has been Principal Conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra, and he also collaborates with the Wiener Philharmoniker, the Orchestra of the Teatro alla Scala and the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra.

May 2009 saw the establishment of the *Mariinsky* recording label on Gergiev's initiative. The label's first recording projects were Shostakovich's opera *The Nose* and the First and Fifteenth Symphonies, as well as Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture*.

One of the maestro's most recent accolades has been that of the British Royal Philharmonic Society as "Conductor of the Year" (2009).