

# Ari Pelto

## Conductor



" In the pit, the company music director Ari Pelto brought out all of the richness of Puccini's orchestral accompaniment, never permitting his fine ensemble to overpower the singers."

**Opera Magazine, Marc Shulgold, April 2018**

" Under the baton of Ari Pelto, the Kansas City Symphony proved both bold and sensitive, as necessary, the individual voices of the orchestra threading with the singers in a rich cloth, all savoring Tchaikovsky's melodies."

**The Kansas City Star, Libby Hanssen, 1 October 2017**

Music Director at Opera Colorado, conductor Ari Pelto is widely known for performances that have been called "poetic, earthy, vigorous" and "highly individual." He is in demand in opera houses and with symphony orchestras throughout the United States. Appointed in 2015, Pelto has conducted acclaimed performances of *La Traviata*, *Don Giovanni*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Aida*, *La Boheme*, *Falstaff*, *La Fanciulla del West* and *Lucia di Lammermoor*. In contemporary repertoire, the company recently premiered Lori Laitman's long-awaited work, *The Scarlet Letter*, a recording of which was released on the Naxos label, and the world premiere of Gerald Cohen's new opera, *Steal a Pencil for Me*, based on a true love story set in a concentration camp during WWII.

Recent highlights as a guest conductor include *Nutcracker* at Sacramento Ballet, *Eugene Onegin* at Lyric Opera Kansas City, *Salome* and *Lucia Di Lammermoor* at Virginia Opera, a new *Nutcracker* and *Carmina Burana* at Atlanta Ballet, and *L'enfant et les Sortilèges* at Chicago College of Performing Arts.

Past successes include *Aida* at Utah Symphony and Opera, a double bill of *La Voix Humaine*, starring Patricia Racette, and *Gianni Schicchi* at Chicago Opera Theater. He conducted a variety of symphonic programs with orchestras in the US, including Omaha Symphony and the NYU Symphony.

Other engagements include *A Streetcar named Desire* at Virginia Opera, *The Rake's Progress* at Portland Opera, and *Rigoletto*, *Don Pasquale*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and *Don Giovanni* at Opera Memphis, *La Boheme* at Opera Theatre of St. Louis, *The Cunning Little Vixen* at Chautauqua, *Rusalka* and *La Boheme* at Boston Lyric Opera, *Romeo et Juliette* at Minnesota Opera, *The Magic Flute*, *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Hansel and Gretel* at Portland Opera and *Hansel and Gretel* at Utah Opera.

At age of 24 Pelto was appointed Assistant Conductor at the Spoleto Festival and has gone on to conduct on stages worldwide. His international appearances include symphonic performances with the Bochumer Philharmoniker, productions of *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Falstaff* at New National Theatre of Tokyo, and *Faust* at the Teatro Nacional Sucre in Quito, Ecuador.

From 2000-2002 he was Assistant Conductor of the Florida West Coast Symphony. In addition to conducting over 30 concerts in Sarasota, Pelto also was a frequent guest with the Florida Orchestra and the Toledo Symphony and lead tours of the Western Opera Theatre (the touring company of San Francisco Opera) conducting *La Boheme* and *Così fan tutti* in over 20 States.

In 2004 he made his highly-praised debut with New York City Opera conducting *La Traviata*, returning for productions of *Madama Butterfly*, *La Boheme*, and *Carmen*.

Ari regularly works with leading conservatories and young artist programs including The Juilliard School, The Curtis Institute, Manhattan School of Music and Oberlin Conservatory and the Young Artist Programme at Covent Garden's Royal Opera House. With San Francisco Opera's Merola Program, he conducted the 2014 Grand Finale as well as productions of *Così fan tutte* and *The Rape of Lucretia*. At Wolf Trap Opera, he inaugurated a new production of *Le Nozze di Figaro* and led *Don Giovanni*.

A masterful collaborator with dancers, Maestro Pelto has enjoyed a longstanding relationship with the Atlanta Ballet. He led the company in world premieres of Twyla Tharp's first story ballet *The Princess and the Goblin* and Helen Pickett's *Camino Real*. Previously, he conducted Jean-Christophe Maillot's groundbreaking production of *Romeo et Juliette*, as well as the Atlanta Ballet's production of Prokofiev's *Cinderella*.

After earning his Bachelor of Music in violin performance at Oberlin Conservatory, Ari Pelto studied conducting at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, Rubin Academy in Jerusalem, and with Imre Pallo at Indiana University.

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