

Sonia Ben-Santamaria

Conductor



" Sonia Ben-Santamaria produced an intimacy and lightness with the orchestra that achieved something delightfully like large-scale chamber music at times, whilst still being able to enforce the gravitas and weight of the score's soaring, sterner climaxes"

Youth Opera Review, Alice Williams, 30 June 2019

" The City of London Sinfonia are clearly right behind conductor Sonia Ben-Santamaria and play beautifully. The chorus are as outstanding as ever."

The Arbuturian, A.Selby, 30 June 2019

French conductor Sonia Ben-Santamaria brings energy, intimacy and lightness to the podium with her conducting style. Taking up piano lessons from the age of 6, she studied at the Conservatoire de Toulouse before completing her post-graduate degree at London's Royal Academy of Music, where she received the Power Biggs Award, the Musicians' Benevolent Fund Award for Répétiteurs and the Major Van Someren-Godfrey Memorial Prize for Accompaniment in English Song. Sonia became a trainee at the National Opera Studio in 2010 where she won the Leonard Hancock Memorial Trust Prize, and subsequently joined the English National Opera in Season 2011/12.

An unexpected opportunity arose in 2013 on the day of a performance to conduct *The Magic Flute* with Chelmsford City Opera and Orchestra, and changed the course of her career. Following this first great conducting success, she led the St Paul Sinfonia orchestra in two performances of *Die Fledermaus*, generating further acclaim for her work on the podium.

In Season 2017/18, Sonia Ben-Santamaria was selected to become an associate of the Jette Parker young artists' programme at London's Royal Opera house, the first female conductor to win the opportunity. She spent part of the season shadowing Sir Antonio Pappano on Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* and Tchaikovsky's *The Queen of Spades*. Sonia also assisted David Murphy on the world premiere of his collaboration with Ravi Shankar, Sukanya, coproduced by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, which she also had the opportunity to conduct. Additionally, she led the Youth Opera Company in Barrie Kosky's production of Bizet's *Carmen*.

One of six conductors selected in 2018 from a world-wide pool to attend the renowned Linda and Mitch Hart Institute for Women Conductors at The Dallas Opera, Texas, USA, Sonia was chosen to conduct the Orchestra's Gala, for which she won great critical acclaim. In June 2019, the artist made her conducting debut at Opera Holland Park with *Un Ballo in Maschera* before taking on the role of associate assistant conductor at Opera North, jumping in on her first day to conduct the Opera North Orchestra in John Williams's *Jurassic Park Suite*.

An artist who enjoys diversity in her conducting challenges, Sonia has conducted titles that include *Don Giovanni*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *La Clemenza di Tito*, *La Traviata* and *La Bohème*; contemporary works include *To Himself*, *Alone* by Joseph Cabon produced by Tête à Tête Festival in 2017, and Ruth Chan's *Between Constellations* at Grimeborn Festival in 2018. 

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