

Nicholas Kok

Conductor



“ Stravinsky's score, conducted by Nicholas Kok, shimmered with beauty”
Debra Craine, The Times

Nicholas Kok is an extremely versatile conductor and musician. In the concert hall, the opera house and on radio he has conducted numerous world and British premieres, including works by Birtwistle, Holt, Maxwell Davies, Reich, Turnage and Xenakis. He has also recorded and toured extensively with the leading contemporary music ensemble Psappha. From 1996 to 2006 he was Principal Conductor and Artistic Director of Sinfonia Viva, with which he performed a large and varied repertoire and is now the orchestra's Principal Guest Conductor.

For English National Opera he has conducted *Orfeo, Il Ritorno d'Ulisse, The Fairy Queen, The Marriage of Figaro, Così fan tutte, King Priam*, the world premieres Turnage *The Country of the Blind* and *Twice through the Heart* in a joint production with South Bank Centre and Aldeburgh Festival, and the world premiere of *Arion and the Dolphin*. He made his Opera North debut conducting the world premiere of Simon Holt's *The Nightingale's to Blame* at the Huddersfield Festival, where he also conducted the British premiere of *Hindenburg*, part one of a major work by Steve Reich. He returned to Opera North for new productions of Gluck *Orfeo*, Stravinsky *Les Noces*, Purcell *Dido and Aeneas*, and Mark Simpson's *Pleasure*. Festivals at which he has appeared include Edinburgh, BBC Proms, Orkney, Cheltenham, Montepulciano and "Sound Around" in Copenhagen/Malmö.

Nicholas Kok made his debut at the Stuttgart Staatsoper conducting Purcell *King Arthur*, and returned for new productions of *L'incoronazione di Poppea* and Gluck *Orfeo* along with revivals of *Hänsel und Gretel, L'italiana in Algieri, Iphigenie in Aulide* and *Cabaret*. For Cologne Opera he directed *Le Nozze di Figaro* and a new production of *Semele*, also directed in Graz. For Oper Leipzig he has conducted *Alceste* and *Iphigenie en Aulide*. In Lisbon he conducted Handel *Agrippina* at the Teatro Sao Carlos and in Klagenfurt productions of Handel *Teseo* and Cavalli *Il Giasone*, and, in Porto, a new production of *L'Elisir d'Amore*.

He played a large part in setting up Almeida Opera for which he conducted *Mario the Magician* by Stephen Oliver. For Opera Factory London he conducted numerous productions including works by Xenakis and Osborne alongside *Poppea, Dido and Aeneas, Così fan tutte, The Magic Flute* and *Curlew River*. For Opera Factory Zürich he conducted *La Calisto* and Marschner *Der Vampyr*. For McKinsey/WDR/Arte he conducted the world premieres of Alexander Krampé's reworkings of Rousseau *Pygmalion* and Bizet *Carmen*.

Orchestras and ensembles he has worked with include the Philharmonia, London Philharmonic, BBC Symphony, City of Birmingham Symphony, Royal Scottish National, Radio Sinfonie Orchester Berlin, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, BBC Scottish Symphony, BBC Concert Orchestra, RTE National Symphony Ireland, Ulster Orchestra, Halle, Het Gelders Orkest, Symphony Orchestra Aachen, Munich Chamber Orchestra, London Sinfonietta, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, Jenaer Philharmonie, Orchestra of St John's Smith Square, Orquesta de Valencia and Orquesta Nacional do Porto.

Nicholas Kok works and records frequently with the BBC Singers and celebrated his 25th anniversary with the ensemble in 2023. Projects include a recording of Birtwistle's *Moth Requiem* and works by Robert Saxton, and the UK premiere of Nico Muhly's *Spiral Mass* with organist James McVinnie. He has recorded for radio and television, and has written and arranged music for both mediums, as well as working as assistant/band conductor on numerous recordings for Opera Rara and Chandos. He conducted several works on Errollyn Wallen's recently released and well-received 2016 CD *Photography*.

He has also worked closely with many choreographers (as conductor and arranger) and has conducted for Birmingham Royal Ballet including *Le Baiser de la Fee, Petrushka* and *The Firebird*; Scottish Ballet *Cinderella, Romeo and Juliet* and *Sleeping Beauty* as well as three programmes at the Edinburgh Festival; and Stockholm Royal Ballet. He played the premiere of his own music for Scottish Dance Theatre's "Out of the House" performances, and the world premiere of his 7th Degree which was performed by Julian Bliss and Viva, conducted by the composer.

Highlights from recent seasons include *Semele* in Hong Kong and Péter Eötvös's *The Golden Dragon* in South Korea with Music Theatre Wales, *Xerxes* with Theater Magdeburg and *Silent Night* with Opera North, and new productions of *Idomeneo* at Buxton International Festival, *L'incoronazione di Poppea* at Opera Theatre St Louis, Simon Steen Andersen's *Trio* with the Danish Radio Choir, as well as studio recordings with the BBC Singers and *Mansfield Park* and *Cunning Little Vixen* at the Royal Northern College of Music.

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