

JOHN AXELROD
Principal Conductor, Bucharest Symphony Orchestra
Principal Guest Conductor, City of Kyoto Symphony Orchestra, Japan

SEASON 2023-2023 SHORT BIOGRAPHY

“John Axelrod is a highly imaginative and dynamic musician, whose rich musicological background and historical insights combine with intellectual drive and charismatic enthusiasm for people and for life, to get probing, rigorous and richly characterized interpretations.”

-Remy Franck, Pizzicato

Since 1996, Mr. Axelrod has conducted more than 175 orchestras, 35 operas and 60 world premieres, establishing a profile as one of today's leading conductors and sought after by orchestras and opera houses throughout the world. His extraordinarily diverse repertoire, innovative programming, probing interpretations and charismatic performance style have been praised and recognized by both audiences and critics. In 2020, Maestro Axelrod received the Special Achievement Award from the International Classical Music Awards for his outstanding contributions and interpretations.

In 2022, Maestro Axelrod was unanimously elected as the Principal Conductor of the Bucharest Symphony Orchestra, with a unique open-ended contract. In 2019, Maestro Axelrod became the Principal Guest Conductor of the City of Kyoto Symphony Orchestra. In 2014, Maestro Axelrod was the Artistic and Musical Director of the Real Orquesta Sinfónica de Sevilla (ROSS). Other titled positions included Principal Guest Conductor of Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano (LaVerdi), Music Director of the NHK Jazz at the Metropolitan Theater, Music Director of the l'Orchestre National des Pays de la Loire, Music Director and Chief Conductor of the Lucerne Symphony Orchestra and Theater, Music Director of "Hollywood in Vienna" with the ORF Vienna Radio Orchestra, and as First Conductor of Sinfonietta Cracovia.

Among his long term relationships, invitations and recordings with European orchestras include Berlin's RSB, NDR Symphony Hamburg (ElbePhilharmonie), Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchester, Filarmonica della Scala, Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI Torino, Teatro La Fenice Orchestra in Venice, Orchestre de Paris, Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Mozarteum Orchester Salzburg, and the Mariinsky Orchestra in Russia. In the USA, Mr. Axelrod has conducted the Chicago Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Philadelphia Orchestra among others. Maestro Axelrod recently debuted to great acclaim with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra and the Tokyo Metropolitan Orchestra. Important regular festival engagements include the Enescu, Salzburg, Lucerne, Montreux Jazz and the Schleswig Holstein.

John Axelrod's key opera activity includes Bernstein's *Candide* at Théâtre du Châtelet, Teatro alla Scala and Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, *Eugene Onegin* at Teatro San Carlo in Naples, and Kurt Weill's *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* at the Rome Opera. For the Lucerne Festival, he conducted: *Rigoletto*, *The Rake's Progress*, *Don Giovanni*, the *Three Penny Opera*, *Falstaff* and *Idomeneo*. Maestro Axelrod conducted *Gianni Schicchi* to open the 2020 Puccini Festival and returned in 2021 to conduct a new production of *Turandot*, directed by Daniele Abbado.

Mr. Axelrod has recorded core and contemporary repertoire for Sony Classical, Warner Classics, Ondine, Universal, Naïve and Nimbus, and released a cycle of Brahms Symphonies with the Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano Giuseppe Verdi, entitled *Brahms Beloved* on Telarc, produced by Grammy winner Michael Fine.

Actively committed to working with young professional musicians, Mr. Axelrod was the Principal Conductor of the Pacific Music Festival in Sapporo, and he has toured with the Santander Orchestra, the Schleswig-Holstein Festival Orchestra to the Salzburg Festival, the Orchestra Giovanile Italiana, the Accademia della Scala to Muscat, the NordDeutsche Junge Philharmonie and the Vienna Jeunesse Orchester. In 2020, Maestro Axelrod created CMO. Conductors Masterclass Online, now teaching 26 students worldwide. In 2022, Maestro Axelrod led the Bucharest Music Institute Masterclass and Competition.

Mr. Axelrod graduated in 1988 from Harvard University. Trained personally by Leonard Bernstein in 1982, he also studied at the St. Petersburg Conservatory with Ilya Musin in 1996 and was mentored by Christoph Eschenbach from 1997 until 2000 when he made his professional debut as assistant conductor for *Parisfal* at the Bayreuth Festival.

***2023-2023 version for program booklet - Not to be altered without permission.
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