

## IVAN TÖRZS

Born, raised and educated in the United States, Ivan Törzs has lived and worked in Europe since 1985, and has carved a career as one of the most versatile, cosmopolitan and experienced operatic conductors on the European scene. Fluent in nine languages, he is equally at home in German, French, Italian, Russian, Spanish or American repertoire. Whether conducting Wagner's Ring, a *bel canto* opera of Bellini or a Spanish *zarzuela*, he brings to all his interpretations a deep understanding of the culture, literature, and vocal and musical traditions that shaped the creation of that work.

From 2002 to 2008 Ivan Törzs was Principal Conductor of the Flanders Opera (*de Vlaamse Opera*) in Antwerp, Belgium. Here, in addition to the symphonic concerts, he led performances of numerous operas, including *Pikovaya Dama*, *La Traviata*, *Luisa Miller*, *Il Pirata*, *Carmen*, *Salome*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Arabella*, and *Fidelio*, finally crowning his tenure with a new production of Wagner's Ring which ran from May 2006 to July 2008, to critical and audience acclaim. *Opernglas* described his reading of *Siegfried* as "unusually elegant" while *Opernnetz* called his *Götterdämmerung* "sensational."

Prior to his appointment in Antwerp, Ivan Törzs spent nine years as Music and Artistic Director of the Mecklenburg State Theatre in Schwerin, Germany, where, owing to his experience and deep understanding of the art of singing, some of the most renowned operatic personalities chose to perform new roles under his baton. Renata Scotto sang her first Kundry with him, Helen Donath her first Desdemona, and Cheryl Studer her first Senta. The *Berliner Morgenpost* wrote of Törzs, "Under his direction, the Schwerin Opera is again approaching the great era in which Klaus Tennstedt or Kurt Masur led the orchestra." The Association of German Music Publishers presented him with the award for the best concert programming in Germany for the 1994-95 season; the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* called his opening production of *Fidelio* "a courageous deed", and *Opernwelt* hailed his *Otello* as one of his "many Verdi performances that show courage and set standards." The *Norddeutscher Rundfunk* (NDR) said that his conducting of *Tristan und Isolde* "verged on the miraculous." In Schwerin he led the theatre's first-ever performances of *Wozzeck*, *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*, *Il Prigioniero*, *La Vida Breve*, *Idomeneo*, *Erwartung*, *A Kékszakállú Herceg Vára* (*Bluebeard's Castle*), Messaien's *Turangalila* Symphony, Stravinsky's *Sacre du Printemps*, Ives' 2<sup>nd</sup> Symphony and many other works.

Ivan Törzs made his début at the Vienna State Opera with *L'elisir d'amore*, at the Hamburg State Opera with *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, and at the Stuttgart Opera with *La Bohème*. He has appeared at the opera houses of Düsseldorf, Strasbourg, Nuremberg, Prague, Budapest, Nancy, Miami, Münster, Spoleto and many other cities. In 2004 he conducted the live international telecast concert of the laureates of Belgium's Queen Elisabeth Competition. He conducted *Der fliegende Holländer* with the NDR Orchestra Hannover, led concert programs with the Hamburger Sinfoniker and toured with the Israeli Kibbutz Chamber Orchestra. With the Russian National Orchestra he led the Russian première of Brahms' Piano Quartet in g-minor in Arnold Schoenberg's orchestration. He conducted the concert finales of the Spoleto Festival USA and the Macao Festival, and is a regular guest conductor in Honolulu, where he also conducted the first performance anywhere of *Tristan und Isolde* in the new millennium – an event which Wolfgang Wagner flew to Hawaii to attend. For their Millennium Gala 2000,

the Budapest Opera invited Ivan Törzs to conduct *Bluebeard's Castle*, representing the many ethnically Hungarian conductors living outside of Hungary. In 2005 he conducted the first concert of Wagner's music ever given in Tirana, Albania. He made his Italian début in May 2010 with symphonic works of Brahms and Schönberg, and in the same year his Spanish début with Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*. Ivan Törzs has been the subject of three television portraits and has been featured in numerous radio and TV interviews and even in quiz and game shows.

Highlights of his current season include *Aida* and *Don Pasquale* for Hawai'i Opera Theatre, *The Cunning Little Vixen* in Lausanne, *The Rape of Lucretia* and *Die lustigen Weiber von Windsor* in Detmold and the Christmas Opera Gala with the China National Symphony in Beijing.

In recent years Ivan Törzs has been in increasing demand as an educator, leading master classes and opera workshops for with young singers and conductors. In this capacity he conducted productions of *Don Giovanni* for the combined opera studios of the Suisse Romande, *Le Nozze di Figaro* for Northwestern University, *Così Fan Tutte* for the Netherlands Opera Studio, and *Die Gärtnerin aus Liebe* and *Die Zauberflöte* in Detmold Germany, where he has held a professorship since 2010.

Parallel to the purely professional aspect of his life, Ivan Törzs is a fervent believer in the importance of integrating his music and his orchestra into the social, cultural and political life of the community. During his tenure in Schwerin he was the Honorary Sponsor (*Schirmherr*) of the Mecklenburg School for the Handicapped. In this capacity, he organized concerts for which the students of the school designed costumes, as well as conducting benefit concerts for the school. He initiated a series of youth concerts for local schools and supervised a production of Britten's *Noye's Fludde* involving several schools and churches in the city. He organized a joint John Cage project with the Schwerin State Museum. Ivan Törzs has been invited to perform at numerous state functions, including birthday celebrations for Helmut Kohl and Louis Ferdinand, Prinz von Preussen.

Ivan Törzs comes from a family with a long theatrical tradition. His grandfather was one of the most celebrated Hungarian actors of the pre-war generation; his father was also an actor, his mother a Flamenco dancer. After obtaining a degree in Mathematics from Princeton University, Törzs, by that time already an accomplished pianist, studied orchestral and choral conducting at the Mannes College of Music and at the Juilliard School.

Additional information can be found on the website: **[www.ivantorzs.com](http://www.ivantorzs.com)**

Recordings:

Wagner: "Die Walküre," Act I, w. Edda Moser, Mark Lundberg, Frode Olsen, (Calig Records)

Thomas: "Mignon" Highlights w. soloists, orch. and chorus of Prague State Opera

"Musik der mecklenburgischen Hofkapelle" w. Mecklenburgische Staatskapelle Schwerin: works of Vivaldi, Künzel, Sperger et al.

Mozart, Jörns: Concerti for Wind Quintet and Orch. w. Rossetti Wind Quintet

Mozart, Danzi: Piano and Wind Quintets w. Rossetti Wind Quintet

"Weihnachtsmärchen" Piano works of Bach, Schumann et al. (Lübbe Verlag)

„Der Mond ist aufgegangen“ Piano works of Bach, Beethoven, Chopin (Lübbe Verlag)