

Kenneth Woods, conductor

Hailed by the Washington Post as a “true star” of the podium, conductor, cellist and author Kenneth Woods has worked with many orchestras of international distinction including the National Symphony Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Northern Sinfonia, and the State of Mexico Symphony Orchestra. He has also appeared on the stages of some of the world’s leading music festivals, including Aspen, Lucerne, Round Top and Scotia. His work on the concert platform and in the recording studio has led to numerous broadcasts on BBC Radio 3, National Public Radio, and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. In 2009, Kenneth Woods was appointed Principal Guest Conductor of the internationally renowned chamber orchestra in Shakespeare’s Stratford-upon-Avon, Orchestra of the Swan.

Woods and the Orchestra of the Swan have embarked on a series of recordings pairing the symphonies of 20th century Viennese exile composer Hans Gál and Robert Schumann for the Avie label. Volume 2, combining the world premiere of Gál’s Fourth and Schumann’s Second was released in March, 2012, following on the huge international success of their recording Gál and Schumann’s Third symphonies, released in June, 2011. The world-premiere recording of the Gál Third Symphony coincided with its first professional performance in over 55 years, a concert broadcast nationally by Performance Today in America. Woods made his commercial recording debut as a conductor in sessions for Avie Records with the Northern Sinfonia in 2009. That disc of world-premiere recordings of music by Hans Gál has been hailed by The Strad, Classical Music, Classical CD Reviews and Musical Pointers for its “committed performances”, “first class” and “quick witted” playing, whilst Gramophone underlined Woods’ “highly polished account, with orchestral playing throughout most assured.” In June 2011, Somm Recordings released Woods’ first recording of the music of Gustav Mahler, a composer with whom Woods is closely associated. The disc received a coveted “IRR Outstanding” from International Record Review, and MusicWeb International International called it “something which every lover of Mahler should hear.” In May 2012, he made his first recordings with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and MSR Records have just released Woods’ newest disc, a collection of new works for traditional Japanese instruments and orchestra.

As music director of the Oregon East Symphony from 2000-9, he transformed a tiny orchestra in a remote, rural area into possibly the most talked-about orchestra in the Pacific Northwest, winning universal praise for their nationally celebrated Mahler series, progressive programming and innovative youth programs. Other permanent affiliations include the Contemporary Music Ensemble of Wales (with whom he is often heard on BBC Radio 3), and the Rose City Chamber Orchestra of Portland, Oregon. As both cellist and conductor, Ken has commissioned and premiered countless new works by a diverse range of composers. In June 2010, he was invited by the Stradivari Trust to conduct their 25th anniversary concert, featuring a string orchestra made up of many of the world’s leading soloists and chamber musicians including Natalie Clein, Lawrence Power, Guy Johnston, Matthew Trussler and the Endellion and Fitzwilliam String Quartets. An active cellist, Kenneth is a founding member of the string trio, Ensemble Epomeo, with whom he recently recorded a debut album for Avie. Kenneth’s blog, [A View from the Podium](#), is one of the 25 most popular classical music blogs in the world.