



# Kenneth Woods - Conductor -

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***“A symphonic conductor of stature”***

Gramophone

***“A conductor with  
true vision and purpose”***

Peter Oundjian

Music Director, Toronto Symphony

***“brimming with personality, affection  
and freshly imagined drama”***

Washington Post

***“Woods proves in this recording to be  
a front rank conductor”***

Audiophile Audition

***“In 20 years of being a music critic, I  
have never written a story like this  
one about Pendleton's symphony  
pulling out all the stops to play  
Mahler's First Symphony after a  
devastating fire ... The OES under  
Kenneth Woods, looking like a  
younger, dark haired William Hurt,  
gives Mahler the ride of his life.”***

The Oregonian

## Kenneth Woods, conductor

### Biography



Hailed by the Washington Post as a “true star” of the podium, conductor, rock guitarist, author and cellist Kenneth Woods has worked with many orchestras of international distinction including the National Symphony Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic, English Chamber Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Budapest Festival Orchestra and State of Mexico Symphony Orchestra. He has also appeared on the stages of some of the world’s leading music festivals such as Aspen and Lucerne. 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 2013, he took

up a new position as Artistic Director and conductor of the English Symphony Orchestra, succeeding Vernon Handley. In 2015 he was made the second Artistic Director of the Colorado MahlerFest, the only American organization other than the New York Philharmonic to receive the Gold Medal of the International Gustav Mahler Society.

Kenneth Woods was appointed Principal Guest Conductor of the Stratford-upon-Avon based Orchestra of the Swan in 2010. He and the orchestra have recorded the first complete cycle of the symphonies of Austrian composer Hans Gál, paired with those of Robert Schumann for Avie Records. This series has been among the most widely praised classical recording projects in recent years, highlighted in National Public Radio’s All Things Considered, Performance Today, BBC Radio3, the Sunday New York Times, the Sunday Telegraph, Washington Post and was an Editor’s Choice in Gramophone. Among his other recordings are Schoenberg’s chamber ensemble versions of *Das Lied von der Erde* and *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* (for Somm) by Gustav Mahler, which won the coveted IRR Outstanding rosette from International Record Review, and *Spring Sounds, Spring Seas* (for MSR), a MusicWeb ‘Record of the Year’. CD releases in 2014 include orchestral music of Philip Sawyers for Nimbus, music of Brahms and Schoenberg for Somm and a disc of new works for violin, cello and narrator for Avie. In October 2014, Avie Records release string trios by Schnittke, Penderecki, Kurtág and Weinberg, and Signum releases a disc of contemporary trumpet concerti by John McCabe, Robert Saxton and Deborah Pritchard with trumpeter Simon Desbruslais.

Woods’ unique gifts were widely acknowledged early on by some of today’s leading conductors. In the spring of 2001, he was selected by Leonard Slatkin to be one of four participants in the National Conducting Institute at the Kennedy Center, where he made his National Symphony debut. Toronto Symphony Music Director Peter Oundjian has praised Woods as “a conductor with true vision and purpose. He has a most fluid and clear style and an excellent command on the podium... a most complete musician.”

In addition to a vast orchestral repertoire spanning from the Classical masters to the present day, Woods has conducted critically praised productions of operas from Puccini to Britten, and ballet scores as diverse as *Giselle*, the *Nutcracker* and *Firebird*. Woods’ work as an active proponent of contemporary music includes collaborations with such composers as John Corigliano, Philip Sawyers, Jennifer Higdon and Peter Lieberson.

As a cello soloist and chamber musician, Woods’ collaborators have included members of the Toronto, Chicago and Cincinnati symphonies, the Minnesota, Gewandhaus and Concertgebouw orchestras and the La Salle, Pro Arte, Tokyo and Audubon quartets. He is currently cellist of the string trio Ensemble Epomeo, with whom he performs regularly in the UK, Europe and the USA. As music director of the Oregon East Symphony from 2000-9, Kenneth 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 “Redneck Mahler” series, progressive programming and innovative youth outreach. In June 2010, he was invited by the Stradivari Trust to conduct their 25th anniversary concert, featuring a string orchestra 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.

A widely read writer and frequent broadcaster, Woods’ blog, *A View from the Podium*, is one of the 25 most popular classical blogs in the world. He has spoken on Mahler on NPR’s *All Things Considered* and BBC Radio 4’s *Today Programme*. In summer 2013, he was a guest speaker on Mahler at the BBC Proms Literary Festival, and in 2014, he was a featured expert speaking on the music of Hans Gál for the Radio 3 program “Composer of the Week.”

## Kenneth Woods, *conductor* Resumé

### - Music Director, Assistant Conductor -

- 2015—present Artistic Director, Colorado MahlerFest
- 2013—present Artistic Director and Principal Conductor, English Symphony Orchestra
- 2010—present Principal Guest Conductor, Orchestra of the Swan
- 2006—present Music Director, Surrey Mozart Players
- 2000 – 2009 Music Director and Conductor, Oregon East Symphony and Chorale  
Founding Conductor, OES Preparatory Orchestra (2002 – 2009)  
Founding Artistic Director, OES Summer Music Camp (2000 – 2009)
- 2004 – 2008 Principal Conductor, Contemporary Music Ensemble of Wales  
Specializing in “high modernist” repertoire  
Recording for BBC R3 Hear and Now
- 2005 – 2010 Principal Guest Conductor, Rose City (Oregon) Chamber Orchestra  
Director, Rose City International Conducting Workshop
- 1998 – 1999 Conducting Assistant, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and Cincinnati Pops

### - Guest Conducting and Recording -

Aspen Music Festival	BBC Contemporary Music Ensemble of Wales
BBC National Orchestra of Wales	National Symphony Orchestra (USA)
New Queen’s Hall Orchestra	Royal Northern Sinfonia
Royal Philharmonic Orchestra	State of Mexico Symphony Orchestra (OSEM)
English Chamber Orchestra	Texas Festival Orchestra

(complete list of guest conducting appearances available on request)

### - Youth, Educational and Community Outreach -

1999-2002- Director of strings, chamber music and orchestras, Eastern Oregon University

Cambridge University Chamber Orchestra	Dayton (Ohio) Philharmonic Youth Orchestra
Kent County Youth Orchestra	University of Delaware Symphony
University of Miami Symphony	University of Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra
University of Wisconsin Madison Symphony	Valparaiso University Symphony
Wisconsin Youth Symphony Orchestra	

Collaborator with BBC National Orchestra of Wales education department, 2004 – present, including a conducting masterclass with BBC NOW players

Cover conductor during 1998 – 99 season of Cincinnati Symphony Youth Philharmonic, including educational programming



Kenneth Woods, *conductor*  
[www.kennethwoods.net](http://www.kennethwoods.net)

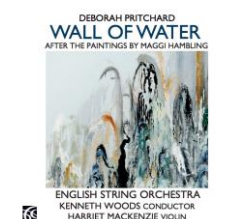
## Kenneth Woods, *conductor*

### Selected Discography



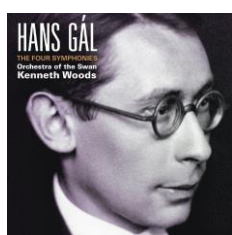
Ernst Krenek- Complete Piano Concertos, vol. 1  
 Piano Concerto no. 1 in F-sharp minor (world premier)  
 Piano Concerto no. 1 (world premiere)  
 Piano Concerto no. 3  
 Mikhail Khorzhev- piano  
 English Symphony Orchestra- Kenneth Woods, Conductor  
 Sunday Times "Essential New Release"

Toccata  
 Tocc0323



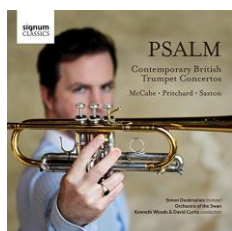
Deborah Pritchard- Violin Concerto "Wall of Water"  
 Written in response to the paintings of Maggi Hambling  
 Harriet Mackenzie- violin  
 English String Orchestra- Kenneth Woods, Conductor  
 Gramophone Magazine Critic's Choice 2015 Shortlist

Nimbus



Hans Gál- The Four Symphonies  
 Orchestra of the Swan- Kenneth Woods, Conductor  
 First complete recording  
 Diapson d'or Discovery Award, 2015

Avie  
 AV2232



Deborah Pritchard- Skyspace for Piccolo Trumpet and Strings  
 Robert Saxton- Psalm for Trumpet and Orchestra  
 John McCabe- "Primavera" Concerto for Trumpet and Chamber Orchestra  
 Robert Saxton- Shakespeare Scenes  
 Simon Desbruslais-trumpet  
 Orchestra of the Swan

Signum Records  
 SIGCD403



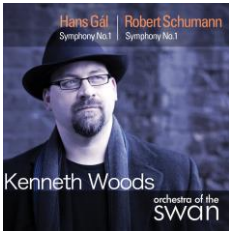
Johannes Brahms- Serenade No. in D major  
 Original Version for Nonet  
 Arnold Schoenberg- Verklarte Nacht  
 Version for Sextet  
 Orchestra of the Swan- Kenneth Woods, Conductor  
 Ensemble Epomeo and Friends  
 Kenneth Woods, cello

Somm Records  
 Somm 0139



Philip Sawyers- Symphony no. 2  
 Cello Concerto  
 Concertante for Violin, Piano and Strings  
 Maja Bogdanovic- cello  
 Steinberg Duo  
 Orchestra of the Swan  
 MusicWeb International Recording of the Year, 2014

Nimbus  
 NI 6281



Hans Gál Symphony no. 1  
Robert Schumann Symphony no. 1 "Spring"  
Orchestra of the Swan

AVIE Records  
AV 2233



Hans Gál Symphony No. 2  
Schumann Symphony No. 4  
Orchestra of the Swan

AVIE Records  
AV 2232



Hans Gál Symphony No. 4 \*  
Schumann Symphony No. 2  
Orchestra of the Swan  
**\* world-premiere recording**  
Gramophone Editor's Choice

AVIE Records  
AV 2231



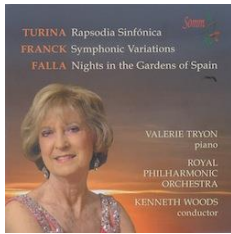
Hans Gál Symphony No. 3 \*  
Schumann Symphony No. 3  
Orchestra of the Swan  
**\* world-premiere recording**

AVIE Records  
AV 2230



Mahler arr. Schönberg  
Das Lied von der Erde  
Lieder eines Fahrenden Gesellen  
Brennan Guillory, tenor  
Emma Curtis, contralto  
David Stout, baritone  
Orchestra of the Swan  
Kenneth Woods, conductor  
IRR OUTSTANDING

Somm Records  
SOMM CD 0109



Falla Nights in the Gardens of Spain  
 Franck Symphonic Variations  
 Turina Rhapsodica Sinfonica  
 Royal Philharmonic Orchestra  
 Valerie Tryon, piano

Somm Recordings  
 SOMM CD 0250



Hans Gál Violin Concerto, Violin Concertino,  
 Triptych for Orchestra  
 Annette-Barbara Vogel, violin  
 Northern Sinfonia  
**world premiere recordings**  
 Classic-FM Magazine CD of the Month

AVIE Records  
 AV 2146



Miyagi/ James Schlefer "Haru no Umi Redux"  
 James Schlefer Shakuhachi Concerto  
 Daron Hagen Koto Concerto "Genji" \*  
 James Schlefer, shakuhachi  
 Yumi Kurosawa, koto  
 Orchestra of the Swan  
 MusicWeb Recording of the Year 2012  
**world premiere recordings**

MSR Classics  
 MS1429



Hans Gál Serenade for String Trio \*  
 Hans Gál String Trio in F sharp minor \*  
 Hans Krása Tanec for String Trio  
 Hans Krása Passacaglia and Fuga for String Trio  
 Ensemble Epomeo (Caroline Chin- violin, David Yang- viola, Kenneth Woods-  
 cello)  
 Gramophone Editor's Chocie **world premiere recordings**

AVIE RECORDS  
 AV2259

## Kenneth Woods, *conductor*

### Critical Praise

#### PERFORMANCE

"Woods was confident on the podium, clear and economical in his gestures and knew when to actively lead and when to allow his players freedom to phrase. He delivered a Strauss "Till Eulenspiegel" brimming with personality, affection and freshly imagined drama. Every moment was alive and engaging, and the riotous complexity of the score was rendered with admirable coherence." – *The Washington Post*

"Woods brought out every facet of this virtuoso score...an evening of transcendently beautiful playing by Orchestra of the Swan under the inspired direction of Kenneth Woods." *Classical Source*

"Woods was alert, efficient and confident, and stayed with the singers unflaggingly." – *The Cincinnati Enquirer*

#### RECORDINGS

##### **Hans Gál Violin Concerto, Violin Concertino, Triptych for Orchestra (AVIE Records AV 2146)**

"superb ... Woods directs a highly polished account ... the orchestral playing throughout is most assured ... Strongly recommended." – *Gramophone*

"RECORDING OF THE FORTNIGHT" – *Classical Music Magazine*

"A real treat....perceptively fluid.... warm and supportive sound... committed performances" – *The Strad*

"Kenneth Woods phrases with distinction and aims for clarity in Gál's contrapuntal textures." – *Fanfare*

##### **Hans Gál Symphony No. 3, Schumann Symphony No. 3 (AVIE Records AV 2230)**

"hats off to conductor Kenneth Woods and his Orchestra of the Swan who have been making a case for Gal's elegantly built orchestral pieces which look back fondly to the German romantic era of Schumann, Brahms and Richard Strauss. Here's hoping this is the beginning of a substantial Gal revival." – *National Public Radio, All Things Considered*

"obviously excellent and considerate account ... Woods [is] a master of Schumann's small print ... As for alternative recordings of the 'Rhenish', Woods holds his own against such wonders as Sawallisch (Dresden rather than Philadelphia), Celibidache (Munich), Giulini (Chicago) and immediately becomes a favourite for this delectable work." – *Classical Source*

"a committed performance ... Woods provides a strong reading and the disc as a whole, with splendid sound, is warmly recommended." – *Gramophone*

"Woods' recording project for Avie has intrigued and delighted me and I'm only left wanting more."  
– *Classic FM Magazine*

##### **Hans Gál Symphony no. 4, Schumann Symphony no. 2 (AVIE Records AV 2231)**

"a quietly compelling account....Strongly recommended"—Gramophone **Editor's Choice July 2012**

"Woods and the orchestra do a fine job of revealing the qualities of this peculiar master"—New York Times

"a first-rate performance.. with a wonderful sense of expansiveness and profound and delicate feeling in the slow movement"—International Record Review

"Woods conducts it with profound romantic feeling, the repeated statements never repetitive, the conscious striving never self-conscious. It may yet prove to be a landmark..."—Words and Music

##### **Mahler (arr. Schönberg) Das Lied von der Erde, Lieder eines fahrenden gesellen (Somm Recordings SOMMCD 0109)**

"an absolutely astonishing recording in many respects ... This is a most important issue, and all Mahlerians should make its acquisition an urgent necessity." – *International Record Review "Outstanding"*

"This is a really distinguished Wayfarer cycle; the performance is beautifully played and sung ...[In] Der abschied... Woods' control of the ebbs and flows of the pulse is unerring....a finale that was magical in its tenderness...something that every lover of Mahler should hear." MusicWeb International

Kenneth Woods, Conductor  
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