

Kenneth Woods, *Conductor*



"playful brilliance"
Austin American Statesman
*"brimming with personality, affection
and freshly imagined drama"*
Washington Post

"A conductor with true vision and purpose"
Peter Oundjian, music director, Toronto Symphony
*"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."*
David Stabler, senior critic, The Oregonian

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Contents

- **Biography**
- **Resumé**
- **Press Notices**
- **References**

~Repertoire list, sample programs and recommendations on request~

Kenneth Woods, *conductor* **Biography**



Hailed by the Washington Post as an “up-and-coming conductor” and a “true star” of the podium, **Kenneth Woods** has built a reputation as a multifaceted musician whose credits range from the Mahler symphonies to collaborations with members of James Brown’s classic band. He is currently conductor of the Oregon East Symphony, Surrey Mozart Players and the Rose City Chamber Orchestra.

Already known in America as one of the most exciting conductors of the new generation, Kenneth Woods is quickly becoming recognized as major talent on the international scene. He has worked with many orchestras of international distinction including the National Symphony Orchestra, the Cincinnati Symphony, the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, the Budapest Festival Orchestra 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.

During the 2006-7 season, Kenneth Woods made his first appearances at the Bridgewater Hall, Menuhin Hall, Albert Hall, Royal Concert Hall of Nottingham and Bute Hall, and was the subject of extensive press coverage in the Gramophone, The Herald and received a major, multi-page feature in The Sunday Oregonian. His new blog, A View from the Podium, became a hit with music lovers in the UK, Canada and the US and received wide acknowledgement from the music critics of the New Yorker, Wall Street Journal, Independent and Gramophone. 2007-8 sees him making more important UK debuts, doing extensive studio and concert work for the BBC and making his debut recording in London for Avie Records.

In the spring of 2001, Kenneth Woods was selected by Leonard Slatkin as one of four participants in the National Conducting Institute. At the completion of the Institute, he led the National Symphony Orchestra in a debut concert, drawing great critical acclaim and a return invitation from the NSO. In the spring of 2000, David Zinman selected Kenneth Woods from a pool of over 200 applicants to be a fellow in the inaugural class of the American Academy of Conducting at Aspen. 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.”

Kenneth Woods has conducted critically praised productions of operas from Britten to Puccini, and ballet scores as diverse as Giselle, the Nutcracker and Firebird. Woods’ work as an active proponent of contemporary music includes collaborations with composers including John Corigliano, Krystopf Penderecki, Peter Lieberson and Oliver Knussen.

As music director of the Oregon East Symphony since 2000, he has transformed a tiny orchestra in a remote, rural area into possibly the most talked-about orchestra in the Pacific Northwest, who have won universal praise for their ongoing Mahler cycle and their innovative youth programs. In 2005 he was invited by the Rose City Chamber Orchestra to start a new international workshop for young conductors.

As a cellist he has been recipient of the Aspen Fellowship (Mr. Woods has received the Aspen Fellowship as both a cellist and conductor), the Dale Gilbert Award (the only musician to win this award in consecutive years), the Strelow Quartet Fellowship, the National Endowment for the Arts Rural Residency Grant and has recorded and toured extensively as soloist and chamber musician. He has played chamber music with members of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Smithsonian Chamber Players, the Cincinnati, Chicago and Toronto symphonies, and the Minnesota, Gewandhaus and Concertgebouw orchestras. He was founding cellist of the NEA recognized Taliesin Trio, and of the Masala Quartet, who have recorded for Vienna Modern Masters and appeared at festivals and concert series’ in the US and Europe

Mr. Woods pursued his advanced conducting studies at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, and also studied at leading summer institutes and workshops around the world. He has studied conducting with Leonard Slatkin, David Zinman, Jorma Panula, and Gerhard Samuel. In his capacity as an assistant, he has collaborated with James Conlon, Jesus Lopez-Cobos, Paavo Jarvi, Richard Hickox, Robert Spano, Tadaaki Otaka, Jiri Belohlavek and Peter Oundjian.

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Resumé

-Music Director, Assistant Conductor-

2006- date: Music Director, Surrey Mozart Players
2005- date: Principal Guest Conductor, Rose City Chamber Orchestra
2000-date: Music Director and Conductor, Oregon East Symphony and Chorale
 Founding Conductor, OES Preparatory Orchestra (2002-)
 Founding Artistic Director, OES Summer Music Camp (2000-)
2004-date Conductor, Contemporary Music Ensemble of Wales
2004-date: Principal Conductor, Lancashire Chamber Orchestra
1999-2002: Music Director, Grande Ronde Symphony and Youth Orchestras
1998-1999: Acting Music Director, Dayton Philharmonic Youth Orchestra
1998-1999: Conducting Assistant, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Cincinnati Pops
1994-1999: Assistant Conductor, Texas Festival Orchestra
1996-1998: Chief Assistant Conductor Cincinnati Philharmonia
1996-1998: Senior Assistant Conductor, CCM Opera Theater, Ballet and Contemporary Music Ensemble
1994-1997: Assistant Conductor, Cover Conductor, Scotia Festival of Music



-Guest Conductor-

National Symphony Orchestra	Aspen Music Festival
BBC National Orchestra of Wales	Fort Wayne Philharmonic
Bath Philharmonia	London Mozart Players (08)
Chamber Orchestra of Wales	Royal Welsh College of Music Symphony
Rose City Chamber Orchestra	State of Mexico Symphony Orchestra
Lancashire Chamber Orchestra	Ernest Read Symphony
Royal Orchestra Society	Surrey Mozart Players
Contemporary Music Ensemble of Wales	Grandin Festival Players
Kelvin Ensemble	Cardiff Polyphonic Choir
Cincinnati American Music Festival Orchestra	UW Summer Clinic Honors Orchestra
Pleven Philharmonic, Bulgaria	Camerata & Chorus of St. Cyrus (Wales)
Eastern Chamber Choir	Grande Ronde Community Chorus
Orchestra Sinfonica di Pescara	Texas Festival Orchestra
Brandon Hill Chamber Orchestra	Consort Columbia
Nottingham Philharmonic	CCM Friends Orchestra
Kent County Youth Orchestra	Helix Ensemble
Scotia Festival Orchestra	Valparaiso University Symphony
CCM Opera Theatre	CCM Philharmonia
Wisconsin Youth Symphony Orchestra	Wrexham Symphony
Wilmslow Symphony	Hereford Symphony Orchestra
CCM Concert Orchestra	CCM Ballet Orchestra
Hermiston A Cappella Choir	CCM Contemporary Music Ensemble
University of Delaware Symphony	Wisconsin Philomusica
University of Miami Symphony	John Day Chorus
University of Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra	Cincinnati Recent Music Ensemble
Hereford Symphony Orchestra	Cheltenham Symphony Orchestra

-Other Conducting Experience-

2001 Participant, National Conducting Institute at the Kennedy Center
2000 Aspen Fellow at American Academy of Conducting at Aspen (inaugural class)
Residency with Budapest Festival Orchestra (Assistant Conductor runner-up)
Cover conductor (visiting), National Symphony Orchestra, 2001-
Cover conductor, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, 2003-

-Young People's and Educational Concerts, Other Educational Projects-

Dayton Philharmonic Youth Orchestra Oregon East Symphony
Oregon East Symphony Preparatory Orchestra Grande Ronde Symphony, Youth Orchestras
Collaborator with BBC National Orchestra of Wales education department 2004-, including a conducting masterclass with BBC NOW players in Nov. 2004
Founding Director, Rose City International Conductor's Workshop
Cover conductor for entire 1998-9 season of Cincinnati Symphony YP and educational programming

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Critical Praise

"The true stars of the evening followed intermission. Kenneth 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." An "up-and-coming conductor"

The Washington Post, July 2 2001

"Kenneth Woods was conductor of the fine musicians comprising the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. Solo woodwind fragments against bell-like high strings set the scene, depth of orchestral sound quality and refined brass pre-eminent as the performance progressed. These attributes were also evident in Kodaly's Hungarian Dances of Galanta, alongside subtle integral changes of tempi and tonality, and solo clarinet episodes. In Copland's Appalachian Spring, sparsely spaced strings gradually developed into a rich combination of exciting harmonies Patricia Rozario was the splendid soloist in Canteloube's Chants d'Auvergne, sung with immense beauty and given sensitive accompaniments."

Malvern Gazette, Ledbury Reader, thisis.co.uk, July 2 2004

A "miraculous performance of Mahler's Symphony no. 1... The Oregon East Symphony gives Mahler the ride of his life"

David Stabler/The Oregonian, May 18, 2007

"American conductor Kenneth Woods certainly knows his way around the orchestra, in terms of cueing, balance and structure, as was evident throughout the culminating performance of Dvorak's Eighth Symphony... a full-bodied, rich performance of a high standard... "

The Herald, Glasgow, December 4, 2006

"Conductor Kenneth Woods had the toughest draw. Stravinsky's mercurial "Danses Concertantes" rides on small strokes from individuals in this reduced chamber orchestra... but the piece took on the playful brilliance of this underplayed gem."

The Austin American Statesman, Wednesday June 23, 1999

"Scotia Festival's young artists sank their teeth into Arnold Schoenberg's First Chamber Symphony and bit hard. Conductor Ken Woods from the Cincinnati Conservatory marshaled the forces with admirable consistency, securely initiating tempos, shaping the endless flow of melody and instrumental acrobatics and balancing the embarrassment of musical riches to clarify the main line. A brilliant job... played with the kind of ardency that goes with a passionate commitment to a great work."

The Halifax Mail-Star, June 7, 1997

"Conductor Kenneth Woods was alert, efficient and confident, and stayed with the singers unflinchingly. The 13-piece orchestra created a sense of atmosphere between scene changes and punctuated the text colorfully."

The Cincinnati Enquirer, February 17, 1997 (CCM Opera Theatre's award-winning production of Britten's Albert Herring).

"A remarkable finale to the evening: Shostakovich's Chamber Symphony op73a. The Surrey Mozart Players produced a very moving performance of this very difficult work. The cataclysmic nature of the third movement certainly produced an effect I think not experienced by the Electric Theatre ever before. This performance was a triumph. Citizens of Guildford, applaud this orchestra, it is a most treasured possession, with its inspiring Kenneth Woods, leading them on a daring and exciting journey."

Surrey Advertiser, July 3, 2007

"The Rachmaninoff concerto (no. 3) brought international prize-winner William Wolfram to the stage, and with the orchestra keeping perfect pace, the sound couldn't have been richer with the New York Philharmonic. There was a standing ovation and everyone onstage deserved it."

The East Oregonian, October 7, 2003

"The Nottingham Philharmonic have long been an orchestra to be reckoned with, but on Saturday there were signs that American guest conductor Kenneth Woods could give a new dimension to their playing. His combination of vital detail with the broad view was impressive. Sibelius's masterpiece got a worthy performance. A concert to stir and delight."

Nottingham Evening Post, October 29, 2006

"Woods' mastery of the material was evident in his command of the orchestra. Both works were conducted in a way that inspired each member of the orchestra to perform at his or her best. Both works were played to perfection. The string playing was particularly lush, complimenting the clean precision of the winds, brass and percussion... The orchestra accompanied with exceptional grace and fine intonation."

The East Oregonian, October 28, 2001

"...played with intense conviction"

The Spokane Spokesman Review, August 1994

"In the Shostakovich, each instrument enters pianissimo, trembling like a new crack on a frozen pond. The intensity builds by wonderful increments, marching to terrible peaks of passion before falling again under a growing weight of discordant tones... a sensitive and impassioned performance with Kenneth Woods"

Durango Herald, July 4, 2006

"Beethoven's 9th Symphony was the Oregon East Symphony's May 21 concert. Listening to this magnificent concert brought tears to my eyes more than once. At the end, I was exhausted... I didn't think I had the capacity to hear one more note, and simultaneously, all I wanted was to listen to more."

The East Oregonian, Tuesday May 22, 2001

"Kenneth Woods led a performance of Elgar's Enigma Variations with such commitment and passion that one could not help but be stirred by the power of it. He conducts with a fiery passion and a deep respect for the composer's work."

The Elgin Valley News, February 25, 2001

"Symphony No. 9 "From the New World" by Dvorak... was played with a lush, full sound of great beauty. The Overture to "The Barber of Seville" by Rossini... must be played with great precision and the orchestra did just that. Conductor Kenneth Woods... pushed the orchestra to the next level. The orchestra ...received and deserved standing ovations...Extraordinary concerts!"

The East Oregonian, November 29, 2001

"From the first note of the concert, conductor, orchestra and audience seemed to breathe as one."

The East Oregonian, January 27, 2004

"A classic example of Charles Ives - his Symphony No 3 "The Camp Meeting" (1904) - deserved the attention Ken Woods gave to balance and ensemble tuning, allowing all the snippets of melody to come out of the "organized chaos" that Ives was a master of. Woods' interpretation of Barbers Adagio was powerful, almost aggressive. A far cry from the bland "Classic FM" style that this piece so often attracts, underpinned by some perfect intonation"

Swann Reviews.co.uk, July 5, 2005

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References

Available on request, including from

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Additional references and letters of recommendation are also available from
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Principal Guest Conductor-
Colorado Symphony

Leonard Slatkin
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National Symphony Orchestra
Principal Guest Conductor-
Royal Philharmonic Orchestra