

Mario Venzago | Biography

Conductor



"Venzago shapes each phrase into a narrative of its own. Precise conducting holds it all together. The development of melodic lines, the wide dynamic range, and the perfectly articulated motivic details create tension within the larger whole."

Conducting is the greatest fulfillment of Mario Venzago's life - he has wanted to do it from an early age on. Imagination and a willingness to take risks characterize his very own style and have allowed him to conduct concerts, recordings, operas and increasingly so, his own compositions around the world for some years now.

Mario Venzago was, until summer 2021 and for 11 years, the Principal Conductor and Artistic Director of the Bern Symphony Orchestra. Before that, he was Principal Conductor or General Music Director of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, the Basque National Orchestra in San Sebastian, the Basel Symphony Orchestra, the Graz Opera und Graz Philharmonic Orchestra, the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Frankfurt (now Bremen), the Theatre and Philharmonic Orchestra of the City of Heidelberg and the Musikkollegium Winterthur. From 2010 to 2014 he was Principal Conductor of the Royal Northern Sinfonia, from 2010 to 2019 Artist in Association of the Finnish Tapiola Sinfonietta and from 2000 to 2003 Artistic Director of the Baltimore Summer Fest, as successor to Pinchas Zukermann and David Zinman.

The season 2026/27 takes him, among other orchestras, back to the Taiwan Philharmonic (National Symphony Orchestra), Edmonton and Oregon Symphony Orchestras, the Tampere Philharmonic Orchestra, Frankfurt Museum and Opera Orchestra as well as German Radio Philharmonic Orchestra Saarbrücken and Kaiserslautern and the Estonian National Symphonic Orchestra.

Mario Venzago has conducted the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, the orchestras in Philadelphia and Boston, the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, the Filarmonica della Scala and the NHK Symphony Orchestra. He is a regular guest conductor with internationally renowned orchestras such as the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra and the Konzerthausorchester Berlin. He has given concerts with the world's most famous soloists, and collaborated for opera productions with directors such as Ruth Berghaus, Peter Konwitschny and Hans Neuenfels.

Several of his CDs won international prizes such as the *Grand Prix du Disque*, the *Diapason d'Or de l'Année* and the *Edison Award*. His recordings of the operas *Venus* as well as *Penthesilea* and of all the choral works by Othmar Schoeck received great international recognition and prestigious awards, as did the film, *My Brother the Conductor* by Alberto Venzago, which was shown in cinemas across Europe and released on DVD. The project *The other Bruckner* with the recording of all ten symphonies, whose individual releases were acclaimed by international critics, was released by cpo. A collaboration with Sony Classical led to the spectacular recording of Franz Schubert's *Finished Unfinished Symphony* with the Kammerorchester Basel, completed and conducted by Mario Venzago, as well as the recording of all serenades and symphonies by Johannes Brahms. Further CD projects include recordings of Othmar Schoeck's opera *Schloss Dürande* in a new version with the Bern Symphony Orchestra and the cantata *Vom Fischer un syner Fru* with the Musikkollegium Winterthur (both Claves). Most recently a recording of the reconstructed 7th Symphony by Schubert with the Bern Symphony Orchestra as released by Prospero in 2022, a suite from Bernard Herrmann's *Wuthering Heights* with the Singapore Symphony Orchestra was released on Chandos Records, and also Paganini's 1st Violin Concerto with 15-year-old Chloe Chua again with the Singapore Symphony Orchestra on Pentatone/Naxos.

In addition to his activity as a conductor, Mario Venzago has increasingly devoted himself to his passion for composition in the last few years. In 2021 he premiered his violin concerto with Soyoung Yoon and the Bern Symphony Orchestra. In 2026 his cello concerto with Christian Poltéra and the Philharmonic Orchestra Heidelberg has been premiered. His three orchestral works also premiered last season and can be heard several times this season. His compositions include other works such as two operas (published by Universal Edition) as well as a piano concerto, a trumpet concerto and a ballade for flute.