

Biography - Philharmonia of the Nations

In 1995, Justus Frantz founded a unique orchestra: the Philharmonia of the Nations. He formed a multicultural philharmonic orchestra out of highly talented young musicians from over 40 countries and five continents. Chinese play here with Americans, Irish with English and Syrians with Israelis. Their common language is music. Leonard Bernstein's credo 'Let's make music as friends' is the motto and the inspiration for the activities and existence of the orchestra.

Since its formation, the Orchestra has performed over 1,000 concerts around the world, including a state visit to China with the German Federal President in 1996 and in New York by invitation from UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to celebrate United Nations Day in 1998. That year, it also served as the official orchestra for the Operalia Competition organized by tenor Placido Domingo. Extensive international tours have included the cities of Kiev, Budapest, Moscow, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Kuala Lumpur and Beirut. In July 2001 the Philharmonia had the honor of giving a private concert for Pope John Paul II in his summer residence, Castel Gandolfo. Two days after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the U.S., the Orchestra gave a concert in memoriam of that tragedy's victims in the Church of St. Michael in Hamburg.

In spring 2002 the Philharmonia toured several Mediterranean cities to broad acclaim, including Istanbul, Athens, Naples, and Catania. In winter 2002, its tour of Holland included a concert in the Royal Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, where it was received by critics as an orchestra with "unique precision combined with musical devotion." In January 2003 the Philharmonia had the honor of performing at the official ceremony celebrating the nomination of the original manuscript score of Beethoven's 9th Symphony into UNESCO's "Memory of the World" register. And in June of that same year, the orchestra performed at the White Nights Festival in St. Petersburg in celebration of the 300th anniversary of the Russian city. The concert, conducted by Valéry Gergiev, was held in the Mariinsky Theatre in the presence of the former German Interior minister Otto Schily and his Russian colleague Interior Minister Boris Gрызlov. Highly successful tours of the USA in November 2003 and of Great Britain in spring 2004 followed.

The orchestra's role as international ambassador was further strengthened by its performance in 2004 with the KZN (KwaZulu-Natal) Philharmonic Orchestra, National Choir of South Africa and Durban State Choir in Durban, via special invitation from South African president Thabo Mbeki. As part of the Mont Blanc Friendship Tour in autumn 2004, the orchestra gave concerts in Nanjing, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Beijing, where the concert was broadcast by the TV channel CCTV, reaching an audience of 400 million. In July 2005, the orchestra performed in the Live 8 humanitarian aid Concert in Versailles organized by Bob Geldorf. Two concerts at the festivals of Ephesus and Aspendos followed. The orchestra returned to China in October 2005, performing Mahler's 2nd Symphony with the Chinese National Choir in Shanghai, Lang Fang, Qinghua and Beijing. Return invitations from China were extended immediately.

The Philharmonia of the Nations marked its 10th anniversary in 2005 with a celebratory concert in the Konzerthaus at the Gendarmenmarkt in Berlin, which was nationally broadcast over German television station ZDF. A "New Years Tour" started 2006, with performances of the music of Johann Strauss and a reprise of its rendering of Mahler's 2nd Symphony with the Polyphonic State Choir of Turkey in Berlin and Coburg. The Choir returned to Germany in 2007 to perform Beethoven's 9th Symphony with the orchestra in January 2007.

The Orchestra has recorded extensively, with highly acclaimed discs of the works of Mozart, Brahms, Schumann, Tchaikovsky, Bruckner, and Ravel in its prestigious catalogue.

BIOGRAPHY – JUSTUS FRANTZ

Justus Frantz has enjoyed a highly successful career spanning over thirty years both as an acclaimed pianist and internationally recognized conductor and musical ambassador. He is also a tireless supporter of young musical talent, primarily through conducting worldwide auditions for positions in the orchestra he founded, the Philharmonia of the Nations.

He began his musical career in 1967, winning first prize in the German television station ARD's International Music Competition. Having begun his piano studies at the age of four, he was taught by Professor Eliza Hansen, who recognized and fostered his talent. Conducting studies followed, inspired by participation in a master class held by Wilhelm Kempff. As a 23-year-old, Justus Frantz was one of the youngest artists ever to be granted a scholarship by the Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes (German National Scholarship Foundation). In 1970, he appeared as piano soloist with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Herbert von Karajan. He celebrated his US debut five years later with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Leonard Bernstein, whose musical ideals he continues to foster. It was Bernstein's dream of an international, young professional orchestra that inspired Justus Frantz to found the Philharmonia of the Nations in 1995.

Maestro Frantz also founded the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival in 1986 and remained its director for nine years. Since 1989, he has been Special Ambassador for the UN High Commission for Refugees. Also in 1989, he received the German equivalent to the OBE, the Grosse Bundesverdienstkreuz. He is the recipient of many awards in television broadcasting for his inventive programming. In addition to his role as chief conductor of the Philharmonia of the Nations, he performs on a regular basis with major orchestras worldwide such as the Orchestra of the Mariinsky-Kirov Theatre in St. Petersburg, the China Philharmonic Orchestra, the Great Symphony Orchestra Moscow, the KZN Philharmonic Orchestra Durban, the Georgian Chamber Orchestra, the Sinfonia Varsovia and the Beijing Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, with whom he performed in 2008's New Year's Concert.

BIOGRAPHY - JON NAKAMATSU

One of the most sought-after pianists of his generation, Jon Nakamatsu is a frequent concerto soloist, chamber musician, recording artist and solo recitalist throughout the United States, Europe and Japan. He enjoys a continuously expanding career based on a deeply probing and illuminating musicality as well as a quietly charismatic performing style.

Initially brought to global attention in June 1997 by being named Gold Medalist of the Tenth Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, Jon Nakamatsu subsequently appeared as soloist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl and the Boston Pops at Tanglewood, as well as with many other orchestras both in the US and around the world. In 2005, he toured Spain as soloist with the San Jose Youth Symphony, followed by a 2007 tour with the Peninsula Youth Symphony that included performances in Budapest and Prague. Mr. Nakamatsu has collaborated with many of today's leading conductors. His 1998-99 season was highlighted by a White House performance of Rhapsody in Blue, hosted by President and Mrs. Clinton.

The recipient of the Steven De Groote Memorial Award for his semifinal round chamber music performances at the Cliburn competition, he has subsequently collaborated with various chamber ensembles. Mr. Nakamatsu has also made three United States tours as the guest soloist with the Berlin Philharmonic Woodwind Quintet and has been guest artist at many festivals around the world.

Named Debut Artist of the Year (1998) by NPR's "Performance Today", Jon Nakamatsu has been profiled by "CBS Sunday Morning" and Reader's Digest magazine, and is featured in "Playing with Fire", a documentary on the Tenth Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, aired nationwide on

PBS. Earlier, in 1995, he was named the first Prize winner of Miami's Fifth United States Chopin Piano Competition. He records exclusively for harmonia mundi usa, which has released six CDs. Soon to be released is his first CD with clarinetist Jon Manasse, a recording of the Brahms Clarinet Sonatas.

Jon Nakamatsu has studied privately with Marina Derryberry since the age of six, has worked with Karl Ulrich Schnabel, and studies composition and orchestration with Dr. Leonard Stein of the Schoenberg Institute at the University of Southern California. In addition, he has pursued extensive studies in chamber music and musicology. A former high school German teacher, Mr. Nakamatsu is a graduate of Stanford University with a bachelor's degree in German Studies and a master's degree in Education.

John Nakamatsu and his duo-partner, the renowned clarinetist Jon Manasse, serve as Artistic Directors of the Cape Cod Chamber Music Festival, an appointment announced during summer 2006.