

Alexander Prior

GENERAL MANAGEMENT

Alexander Prior (b. 1992) can already look back at a critically acclaimed, international career spanning over 18 years. In that time he has worked with orchestras including the San Francisco, Detroit, Dallas, Toledo, Seattle, Queensland, Düsseldorf, and Houston Symphony Orchestras.

Further collaborations include performances with the Brevard Festival Orchestra, the New World Symphony, Gewandhaus Orchestra in Leipzig, Orquesta Sinfónica de Madrid/Orchestra of Teatro Real, the Swedish Chamber Orchestra, the Spanish Radio Orchestra, the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra, the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, the Badische Staatskapelle Karlsruhe, the Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Saarbrücken, Camerata Salzburg, the Estonian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Polish National Orchestra, the Vienna Chamber Orchestra, the Norwegian Radio Orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Royal Northern Sinfonia, the Copenhagen and Calgary Philharmonic orchestras, and the Kristiansand, Helsingborg, and Aarhus Symphony Orchestras.

Appointed as Chief Conductor of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra at just 22 years of age, Prior invested greatly in the artistic output and community outreach of the orchestra - championing new music, with a focus on programming which reflects the rich diversity and cultural history of the region. By his third season every masters' series concert featured music by female composers. Mark Morris, for the Edmonton Journal, wrote: *"He leaves behind a considerable legacy. First and foremost, he has brought the orchestra to a new level of playing, whether eliciting a true pianissimo from the strings, new shadings of expression and phrasing, or greater depth of emotional feeling... ... Prior knows that the best classical music is not just about entertainment, not just about him or the orchestra or the soloists, but about us all experiencing something profound about the human condition itself. And that's the legacy of great conductors."*

Acknowledging his privilege, and amplified by his difficult personal journey as an autistic queer kid growing up in Russia, where he firsthand experienced the effects of often very violent bigotry, Alex felt he had a particularly strong responsibility to make sure that the orchestra he lead made all audiences truly feel safe and welcome, and that the full beautiful diversity of Edmonton's community be represented on-stage.

His relationship with the Edmonton Symphony is now in its' 9th year, and Alex frequently returns to conduct concerts in Edmonton. His legacy in Edmonton also includes the orchestra's first recordings in over 50 years, which have now had many millions of views and listens; the orchestra's first commissions; a huge expansion of the audience's size, diversity, and particularly the presence of young patrons; and numerous Canadian premiers - including of such composers as Sibelius, Bruckner, Ustvolskaya, John Adams, and Rimsky-Korsakov.

Alexander made his professional conducting debut conducting Rimsky-Korsakov's "The Tsar's Bride", and at the age of 17 was appointed as an Assistant Conductor with the Seattle Symphony.

Operatic engagements include *MIRANDOLINA* at the Bayerische Staatsoper, *LA TRAVIATA* with Leipzig Opera, *CARMEN* at the Royal Danish Opera, *RUSALKA* at the Tiroler Festspiele in Erl, *HÄNSEL UND GRETEL* at Vancouver Opera, and two productions of *ELEKTRA* one with Edmonton Opera and the other with Theater Erfurt, where he also led a critically acclaimed production of Weingartner's epic opera "Orestes" - the first performance of this opera in well over 100 years, as well as a completely sold out production of *DER FLIEGENDE HOLLÄNDER*. At Frankfurt Opera, where he has a long-lasting and loving, ongoing relationship with the orchestra and the company, he has conducted *RIGOLETTO*, *JULIETTA* and in their symphonic series Holst's *THE PLANETS*. He is scheduled to return to Open Frankfurt in the 25/26 season. A planned production of *Holländer* in 2021 was sadly cancelled due to the COVID19 pandemic. Following his debut with *THE MAGIC FLUTE* at Staatstheater Braunschweig he was invited back to conduct a new production of *RIGOLETTO*, after which the orchestra awarded him their prestigious and rare 'Louis-Spohr-Medal'.

Prior has also gained international recognition for his compositions. His ballet, *MOWGLI*, commissioned by the Russian State Ballet, was performed for the first time in 2008 and it has been continuously running and touring since then, with most recent performances in Amsterdam. His music has also been performed by the Royal Philharmonic, the Royal Northern Sinfonia, the Edmonton Symphony, Calgary Philharmonic, Dallas Symphony, City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong, and the BBC Singers.

Alex's orchestration of Schubert's *WINTERREISE* has been critically acclaimed (excerpts can be found on his YouTube channel) and will receive a world-premier recording in season 24/25; and he has received exclusive permission from the Sibelius family and estate to orchestrate Sibelius' quartet "Voces Intimae".

At 13 Prior had enrolled at the renowned St. Petersburg Conservatory to study conducting with Alexander Alexeev and composition with Boris Tishchenko. He graduated with top honors at just 17, a feat only previously achieved once before - by Sergei Prokofiev. Alex was immediately appointed as an assistant conductor with the Seattle Symphony Orchestra, and since then the Seattle area has remained his home-base.

As a conductor Prior has a broad repertoire, but with a special focus on and passion for American music, especially the music of Samuel Barber, Aaron Copland, Howard Hanson, Gabriella Smith, and John Adams; as well as the music of Wagner, Bruckner, Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Mussorgsky, Prokofiev, Sibelius, Gubaidulina, Ustvolskaya, Saariaho, Schnittke, Janáček, Dvořák, Carl Nielsen, Rued Langgaard, Vaughan Williams, and Richard Strauss. Alex has also been a champion of music by younger living composers - especially the music of Nicole Lizée, Gabriella Smith, Harry Stafylakis, Tanya Tanya Tagaq, Vivian Fung, Missy Mazzoli, and Alissa Cheung.

Alex passionately believes in the power of music to bring people of all backgrounds together, and to build compassion and ultimately a better understanding of our mutual humanity.