

## JOHN HELMER FIORE

### *Biography*

American born conductor JOHN FIORE is Chief Conductor of the Deutsche Oper-am-Rhein (DOR).

This season 2008/2009 Mr. Fiore completes a decade long association with the DOR, a unique opera company having homes in two different cities in heartland Germany, Düsseldorf and Duisburg. Each season, the DOR presents more than 50 different operas in literally hundreds of performances in its two houses.

By his decade-long association with DOR and through enduring relationships with the finest opera houses and institutions in the world, particularly in Germany and the United States, Mr. Fiore commands a vast repertoire and has become well known as a distinctive interpreter of the operas of the late romantic era.

Mr. Fiore is particularly associated with the Italian operas of Verdi and Puccini, and in the German language, with Wagner and Strauss. His interests have carried him forward into the twentieth century into post-romantic masterpieces (Berg's *Lulu* and *Wozzeck*, Debussy's *Pelleas et Melisande*, as examples), and has in recent seasons become especially well regarded for, and a frequent interpreter of, the operas of the iconoclastic Czech composer Leoš Janáček. This season he concludes his tenure in Düsseldorf conducting a cycle of the 5 greatest Janáček operas, *The Cunning Little Vixen*, *From the House of the Dead*, *Kat'a Kabanova*, *The Makropoulos Affair*, and *Jenufa*. In recent years he has developed relationships with living composers, and has participated in the creation of three world premiere operas: *Fashion* by Italian composer Giorgio Battistelli (DOR 2008) the DOR, *Die Vipern* by German composer Christian Jost (DOR 2005) and *Madame Mao* by Chinese composer Bright Sheng (Santa Fe opera 2003).

As conductor Mr. Fiore is not confined solely to opera, and also interprets a large and varied symphonic repertoire. He served as the General Music Director for eight seasons of the Düsseldorfer Symphoniker, simultaneously to his appointment to the DOR, with whom he recorded and toured during his tenure. Together M<sup>o</sup> Fiore and the DuSy toured Asia on three occasions and Salzburg twice. As guest conductor, he has conducted frequently throughout Germany, the United States and Italy, and his resume includes guest engagements with the Dresden Staatskapelle, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Accademia di Santa Cecilia, to name but three well known orchestras where he has been.

As with opera, Mr. Fiore developed an affinity for and identity with romantic repertoire, and in Düsseldorf, he became a frequent interpreter of the core German symphonic tradition from Beethoven through Mahler, with particular emphasis on Schumann, a native son of Düsseldorf, but also on Mendelssohn through to Bruckner, Strauss, Schoenberg and the post romantics. Mr. Fiore has recorded several works including Bruckner's 8<sup>th</sup> Symphony and Schoenberg's "Gurrelieder" for the Tonhalle label. A fine pianist, Mr. Fiore performs chamber music with his orchestral and other colleagues and friends, and is frequently performing as partner and collaborator with singers in recital.

His decade long association with the Metropolitan Opera in New York City began with Verdi's *La Traviata* in 1991. During the next decade and a half he went on to conduct eight more operas in over 100 performances, which included the MET's first production of the Dvořák masterpiece *Rusalka* (featuring Renee Fleming and Ben Heppner). Similarly in Germany he has maintained long and intensive relationships, primarily with the Bayerische Staatsoper (Munich; 1994 debut with *La Traviata*), which relationship continues to this day. He also appeared for over a decade at the Sächsische Staatskapelle Dresden, where he conducted a diverse repertoire including the premieres of new productions of *Aida* and *Nabucco*, and also revivals of *Arabella*, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, and *La Cenerentola*.

Most recently Mr. Fiore has established a strong connection to the Prague National Theater in the Czech Republic. Arising out of Gastspiel by the DOR of the Wagner Ring Cycle (the first complete Ring cycle in Prague since the end of World War II), Mr. Fiore has returned to Prague each season since, for new productions and revivals, this season leading a new production of Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*.

Born in New York City into a musical family, Mr. Fiore received his earliest musical training from his father, a pianist, organist and choral director, and his mother, a singer. The family moved to Seattle Washington where he studied piano, cello and other string instruments. From an early age Mr. Fiore was

recognized as an extraordinary talent having at the tender age of 14 been a pianist, assistant and coach for the Seattle Opera's annual Wagner Ring Cycle. At the time, the Seattle Opera was one of the very few companies outside of Germany which could undertake such a massive endeavor.

After leaving conservatory, he joined the staff of the Santa Fe Opera, developing an affinity for the operas of Richard Strauss, and was recognized early on amongst musicians as a prodigious and extraordinary musician. Within a short time, he became a prized assistant and was sought out by North America's top companies (San Francisco, Chicago Lyric Opera, the Metropolitan Opera), to assist the most famous maestros of the day. In this way, he came to the attention of and worked with Leonard Bernstein, Zubin Mehta, Sir Georg Solti, James Levine and James Conlon, to name but a few. In 1986 he was engaged by the Bayreuth Festival Germany and spent 3 summers (other assistants overlapping with him included Antonio Pappano, Donald Runnicles, Christian Thielemann), where he assisted Daniel Barenboim for *Tristan und Isolde*, James Levine for *Parsifal*, in 1987, returning in 1988 at Mr. Barenboim's request for the new Harry Kupfer production of Wagner's complete *Ring des Nibelungen*.

Simultaneous to these events, Mr. Fiore made his own conducting debut at the San Francisco Opera in 1986, with Gounod's *Faust*. By 1990 he had embarked on his own international career making debuts that year in Japan and Europe, and in the two decades since, has conducted in many of cultural capitals throughout Europe and North America.

As of March 2009  
*Dated Material*

**John Helmer Fiore**  
*Career Highlights*

**Positions**

*1999 – 2009*    **Chefdirigent, Deutsche Oper am Rhein**    **(DOR)**

57 Different Operas: from Aida to Zauberflöte (complete list attached)

402 performances (to date)

30 New Productions

2 World Premieres:

Christian Jost's *Vipern*,

Giorgio Battistelli's *The Fashion*

Foreign Touring:

2005 - Prague, Czech Republic: *Der Ring des Nibelungen*

2004 - Savonlinna, Finland: *Der Rosenkavalier* and *Die Meistersinger*

*Wagner Ring* Cycles: 5 complete (2 in 2003, 2 in 2005, 1 in 2009)

Janacek Cycle: 5 Janacek Operas in 5 Days (*From the House of the Dead, Jenufa, The Makropoulos Affair, Cunning Little Vixen, Kat'a Kabanova*)

Special Highlights: Berlioz's *Les Troyans*, conducted on same day in two cities (Düsseldorf and Duisberg)

Initiated "The John Fiore Show", a public lecture series in advance of his new DOR productions, also sold in a CD format.

*2000 – 2008*    **General Music Director, Düsseldorfer Symphoniker**    **(DuSy)**

In 8 seasons as GMD:

Conducted more than 60 programs (189 concerts), including 6 World Premieres; Lera Auerbach's "*Symphony Nr. 1*", 2006; Thomas Blomenkamp, "*Fünf Orchesterstücke*", 2008; Rudi Martinus van Dijk, "*Kreiten's Passion*", 2003; Thomas Larcher, "*Heute*" for Soprano and Orchester, 2006; Peter Ruzicka, "*Maelstrom*", 2008; Manfred Trojahn, Prolog to "*Merlin*" for Soli, Chor, Orchester, 2006

DuSy Tours: to China (2001) , Japan (2006) , Salzburg (2005 & 2008) , and Montreux (2008);

Launched Introductory Lecture Series

Initiated and frequently participated in DuSy Chamber Music Series, as pianist, with members of the DuSy, in chamber music settings and repertoire.

Initiated a day-time Student Concert series

### **Major Opera Company Relationships**

#### **United States of America**

##### **Lyric Opera of Chicago:**

*Aida*, 1994

*Die Fledermaus*, 1990

*Così fan tutte*, 1988

*La Traviata*, 1988

##### **Metropolitan Opera:**

*Tosca*, 2004,

*Madame Butterfly*, 1997

*Rusalka*, 1997, 1993 (Met Premiere)

*Carmen*, 1996, 1995

*La Bohème*, 1995, 1993, 1992

*Aida*, 1994, 1993

*Un Ballo in Maschera*, 1993, 1992

*La Traviata*, 1995, 1992, 1991 (Met debut)

##### **San Francisco Opera:**

*La Bohème*, 1998

*Madame Butterfly*, 1989

*La Traviata*, 1987

*Faust* (Gounod), 1986 (Professional Conducting Debut)

##### **Santa Fe Opera:**

*Salome*, 2006, 1995

*Madame Mao*, 2003 (world premiere)

*La Fanciulla del West*, 1995

*Così fan tutte*, 1990

*La Traviata*, 1991, 1989

Other US Companies:

Houston Grand Opera (*Tannhäuser*, 2001),

San Diego Opera (*Kat'a Kabanova*, 2004, *Die Zauberflöte*, 2001)

Seattle Opera, *Bohème* 1991, *Tosca* 1993

Europe and other:

Australia

**Sydney Opera:**

*Pelléas et Mélisande*, First ever staged version in Australia, 1998

*Cunning Little Vixen*, 1997

*Les Troyens*, 1994

*Salome*, 1993

*Turandot*, 1991

Czech Republic

**National Theatre of Prague:**

*Eugene Onegin*, 2009

*La Fanciulla del West*, 2007

*Der Ring des Nibelungen*, 2005

France

**Opera de Bordeaux:**

*Don Giovanni*, 1997

*Falstaff*, 1993

*Otello*, 1992

*Rigoletto*, 1992

Germany

**Bayerischer Staatsoper:**

*Carmen*, 2007

*Madama Butterfly*, 2007

*Un Ballo in Maschera*, 2005

*Otello*, 2004

*Aida*, 2000

*Nabucco*, 1998

*La Boheme*, 1998

*Der fliegende Holländer*, 1994

*La Traviata*, 94 (debut)

**Oper der Staat Köln**

*Eugene Onegin*, 1996, 1995

*Der fliegende Holländer*, 1996, 1995, 1992

*Ariadne auf Naxos*, 1994

*Kat'a Kabanova*, 1993

*Der Rosenkavalier*, 1992, 1993

*Carmen*, 1992

*Manon Lescaut*, 1990 (debut)

**Sächsische Opera Dresden (Semper Oper):**

*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, 2002, 2000

*Aida*, 1996 (New Production)

*Arabella*, 1996

*Nabucco*, 1996

*La Traviata*, 1992

*La Cenerentola*,

Norway

**Den Norske Opera**

*Götterdämmerung Concertante*, 23 February 2008 (Company Debut)

Other European Companies:

Italy (Opera Roma (*La Traviata*), Teatro Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Genoa Opera (*La Gioconda*),  
Deutsche Oper Berlin (*La Forza del Destino*))

**Symphonic Highlights**

US Orchestras:

**Boston Symphony**

**Los Angeles Philharmonic**

**Minnesota Orchestra**

**New York Chamber Orchestra**

**Seattle Symphony**

**Toronto Symphony**

Germany

**Bamberger Symphoniker**

**Berlin Konzerthaus Orchester**

**Dresden Staatskapelle**

**Gürzenich Orchester Köln**

**Münchner Rundfunkorchester**

**Musikalischen Akademie des Nationaltheater-Orchesters Mannheim**

**RSO Berlin**

**Stuttgart Rundfunk**

Other Countries:

**Sydney Symphony**

**Tokyo Symphony**

**Osaka Philharmonic**

**Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia**  
*Orchestre National de Lyon*

**Education & Training**

Assistant Conductor, Bayreuth Festival, 1986-1988 (Barenboim *Tristan, Parsifal*, and Ring cycle)

Assistant Conductor, Lyric Opera Chicago, 1983-1988

Assistant Conductor, San Francisco Opera, 1983-1987

Assisted Leonard Bernstein, *La Boheme* CD recording, 1987 (Deutsche Grammophon)

Assisted Zubin Mehta, *Die Meistersinger*, Maggio Musicale Fiorentino 1985

84 – 89 Assistant Conductor, Metropolitan Opera, and Assistant to James Levine

1982 Graduated Eastman School of Music (Rochester, NY)

Born, Brooklyn, NY, 1960