

BIOGRAPHY

MARIUSZ SMOLIJ is considered one of the most consummate orchestral conductors of his generation. A frequent recording artist for Naxos International, he has been consistently gaining international critical acclaim, including praise from *The New York Times* for “compelling performances.” Maestro Smolij has led over 130 orchestras in 28 countries on five continents, appearing in some of the world’s most prestigious concert halls. In North America, he has conducted, among many others, the Houston Symphony, the New Jersey Symphony, the Orchestra of the Chicago Lyric Opera, the St. Louis Philharmonic, the Rochester Philharmonic, the Indianapolis Symphony, the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra, the New Orleans Philharmonic, the Hartford Symphony and the Symphony Nova Scotia. Internationally, he enjoys a notable reputation, appearing with important symphonic ensembles in Germany, Italy, France, Switzerland, Holland, Israel, China, South Africa, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Bulgaria, Hungary, Serbia, the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic and Poland.

Maestro Smolij has appeared on many of the world’s most prestigious concert stages, including Carnegie Hall, New York’s Lincoln Center, Kimmel Center in Philadelphia, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, *Salle Gaveau* in Paris, *Tonhalle* in Zürich, Bunka Hall in Tokyo, ABC Hall in Johannesburg, the National Art Center in Beijing as well as national concert halls in Poland, Israel, South Korea, Mexico, Serbia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Cyprus, Bolivia and Colombia. He has been invited to conduct at numerous prestigious music festivals including the *Rbeingan Musik Festival* in Germany, the Chorin Festival in Germany, Janáček May in the Czech Republic, *La Folle Journée* Festival in France, and the Autumn Festival at the National Art Center in Beijing, China.

He has collaborated with many prominent artists of the current and past decades, including Luciano Pavarotti, Yo-Yo Ma, Joshua Bell, Jaimie Laredo, Joseph Kalichstein, Stephen Hough, Ilya Kaler, the Cleveland Quartet, Qin Li-Wei and Piotr Paleczny among many others.

Maestro Smolij is currently Music Director of the Acadiana Symphony Orchestra in Lafayette, Louisiana, and serves as Music Director of the Riverside Symphonia in New Jersey. He is also Artistic Director of the Karol Lipiński International Festival and Violin Competition in Poland. Between 2016 and 2019 he served as Artistic Director of the Toruń Symphony Orchestra in Poland. He is also a former Artistic Director of the Lutoslawski Philharmonic in Wrocław (currently the NFM Wrocław Philharmonic), as well as the International Festival *Wratistlavia Cantans* in Poland. His tenures are consistently marked by innovative programming, broad community appeal and various creative

collaborative projects while significantly improving the high artistic level of the orchestras. He has frequently collaborated with the premier Polish orchestra *Sinfonia Varsovia*, leading concert tours on three continents, numerous performances as well as recordings. In the United States, at the invitation of Maestro Christoph Eschenbach, he served as Resident Conductor of the Houston Symphony, where he led the orchestra in over one hundred concerts, presenting an impressively wide spectrum of orchestral repertoire. He was also assistant conductor of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, where he led the ensemble in over one hundred and twenty performances, receiving the highest accolades from critics and public alike.

The conductor has been regularly recording for leading international labels for almost two decades. His first CD for Universal—with music by Copland, Gershwin and Bernstein—was released in July 2002; his premier recording for Naxos International (with music by Andrzej Panufnik) was issued in November 2006. Other recording projects for Naxos include: a CD with music by Polish composer Tadeusz Szeligowski (Poznań Philharmonic, Poland), a CD with music by Ernst Bloch, two discs with music by Miklós Rózsa, and six discs with music by Eugene Zádor (all with the Budapest Symphony Orchestra, Hungary). His recording of music by Polish female composer Grażyna Bacewicz with *Capella Bydgosciensis* in Poland, released in November 2014, received a “Fryderyk Award,” the Polish equivalent of an American Grammy

As a champion of deserving contemporary composers, Maestro Smolij has introduced many American audiences to several unknown works by Eastern European composers, and he regularly performs American orchestral music in Europe. The Hungaroton label issued his recording of music by contemporary American composer Bill Karlins, and for Naxos he recorded music by contemporary Polish composer Romuald Twardowski. He has given the European and Polish premieres of works by American composers such as Samuel Barber, Aaron Copland, Augusta Read-Thomas, Aaron Jay Kernis, Christopher Rouse and many others. As a very effective advocate and promoter of Polish music outside of his native country, Maestro Smolij frequently programs and performs works by Polish composers worldwide.

Maestro Smolij’s reputation as a conducting pedagogue and orchestra builder extends to both sides of the Atlantic. He served on the faculty of the School of Music at Northwestern University in Chicago-Evanston as a professor of conducting and director of the chamber orchestra from 1996 to 2000. At that time, he was the youngest full-time conducting faculty member among the top conservatories and universities in North America. He was a faculty member of the International Workshops for Conductors in the Czech Republic, taught at professional conducting seminars in the

USA and Poland, and was invited to present conducting master classes at the Zürich Conservatory in Switzerland. Since 2011 he has been a guest faculty member and permanent guest conductor at the Tianjin Conservatory of Music in China.

Born near Katowice, Poland, Maestro Smolij is an accomplished violinist. Founder of the internationally recognized Penderecki String Quartet, he performed and recorded with this ensemble in Poland, Germany, France, Italy and the United States. After studies in Europe, he studied conducting in the United States and earned a doctoral degree from the Eastman School of Music.