

KAZUSHI ONO
Conductor

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Manon Lescaut, Opera de Lyon - January 2010

'Its conductor, Kazushi Ono, did make brilliant music. And this Manon Lescaut disproved the notion that Puccini's first masterpiece is a fragile one. (...) Conductor Kazushi Ono enriched and enlivened the orchestration by emphasizing its coloristic details, revelling in them and then catching up with Puccini's punch by effecting dizzying *accelerandi* for the final moments of each act.'

Opera Today 07 Feb 2010

King Roger, Opera de Paris - July 2009

'Overseeing the proceedings from the podium, conductor Kazushi Ono paced his cast and orchestra with fine results. Maestro Ono seemed to revel in each and every orchestral detail and effect, and he drew as fine a performance from his instrumentalists as I have heard from the Paris pit.'

Opera Today 02 Aug 2009

Lulu, Opera de Lyon - April 2009

'Kazushi Ono shapes Berg's music with an irresistible mix of analytical insight and emotional indulgence, stressing post-Mahlerian yearnings, drawing out burnished string tone and achieving some quite remarkable hushed effects. A first-rate reading, beautifully played and cogently argued.'

Financial Times 21 April 2009

The Gambler, Opera de Lyon - January 2009

'And then, miraculously, Prokofiev's motor revs into action, bringing the characters and story to life with music of dramatic purpose. This is when Kazushi Ono, in his first outing as music director, seamlessly ties together passages of relentless grind and cushioned lyricism and shows why he was such a catch.'

Financial Times 26 January 2009

'The conductor, Kazushi Ono, is a phenomenon: he has understood everything of the theatre and Prokofiev's music and let the orchestra of Opera de Lyon sound with a "drive" and a cutting edge, which are simply irresistible.'

Le Figaro 29 January 2009

BBC National Orchestra of Wales - November 2008

'The strength of this performance by Kazushi Ono and the BBC National Orchestra of Wales was in underlining the music's implicit premonitions of fate, ostensibly personal yet also global, making its harmonic instability carry a disquieting contemporary resonance. For even in the nachtmusik of the two slow movements - Mahler's starting points for the work - the sounds of nature and the darkness of night, however beautiful, offer little solace. And with "shadowy" the description given to the central scherzo, Ono emphasized its nightmarish atmosphere. He was careful, too, to balance Mahler's highly individual perceptions of timbre, from the tenor horn's opening melody to the serenading guitar and mandolin in the fourth movement, and the frequent clamor of cowbells and tubular bells. (...) Meanwhile, Ono's twin affiliations to opera and to the orchestral repertoire - he has just ended a successful period in Brussels and embarked on one at Lyon - may have heightened his sense of obligation to Mahler. He certainly conducted with passionate commitment, yet kept a tight rein on the febrile intensity so that the effect of the very last chords was all the more explosive.'

The Guardians 18 November 2008

Hansel and Gretel, Glyndebourne – July and August 2008

'The evening had several stars, but pride of place must go to the orchestra, which played superbly for Kazushi Ono, making his Glyndebourne debut. From the horn chorale that starts the overture, beautifully balanced and tightly focused, we knew that top-class playing awaited us. Ono, whose

experience in a wide variety of repertoire at la Monnaie is now beginning to pay off, let the music breathe throughout and guided everything with very sure hand. The sound of his Haensel and Gretel-delicate woodwind, hushed strings, unforced brass-was wonderful. And he made those vital distinctions throughout: from mezzo piano to piano to pianissimo-nothing was approximate, it was all rehearsed and flawlessly executed.'

Musical Criticism 1 August 2008

'The evening's real merit lies in the lustrous playing of Humperdinck's lush, Wagner-lite score by the LPO under the lyrical baton of Kazushi Ono.'

The Observer 27 July 2008

'Firstly there is an outstanding performance by the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Kazushi Ono, warm, committed, and majestically played.'

Classical Source 23 July 2008

'Best of all, the conductor Kazushi Ono sees Humperdinck's glorious score with clear-headed simplicity and draws first-class playing from the London Philharmonic Orchestra.'

Financial Times 22 July 2008

'What lifts the evening are the beautifully romantic, lovingly nuanced playing of the London Philharmonic under Kazushi Ono's lyrical direction, and the spirited performances of the two main characters.'

The Times 22 July 2008

'Musically, there is something to admire, especially Kazushi Ono's conducting, which encompasses all the breadth, warmth and charm of Humperdinck's score.'

The Guardian 22 July 2008

'Kazushi Ono conducts the score with affection, leaning towards a sentimental rather than muscular view of the work.'

Evening Standard 21 July 2008

La Forza del Destino, Theatre de la Monnaie - June 2008

'Most of the appropriate style and Latin flair came from the pit, where versatile Kazushi Ono alternated sheer excitement with breadth of vision and exquisite timing. *Forza* is often labelled a conductor's opera and Ono showed convincingly why it continues to draw us in.'

Financial Times 10 June 2008

Aida, Metropolitan Opera - November 2007

'Making an unheralded debut, Kazushi Ono enforces flexible tempos, reasonable precision and urgent accents. He knows how to lead and how to follow. A routine *Aida* on the stage, perhaps, but not in the pit.'

Financial Times October 2007

'Conductor Kazushi Ono made a sweetly calculated debut, and the admittedly somewhat statuesque cast proved excellent.'

New York Post November 2007

'People on both sides of the footlights seemed impressed by Kazushi Ono's conducting. Filled with a musical energy narrowed and pinpointed by elegant technique, Mr. Ono had the mob scene that is the Met's *Aida* firmly in his hand; the chorus and orchestra followed him to fine effect.'

The New York Times November 2007

Other Reviews

'...(the London Philharmonic Orchestra) was lucky to find in Kazushi Ono a rare conductor able to keep intact the original programme's unusual juxtaposition of Fauré and Ravel with Sibelius. As someone now based in Brussels, where he is music director of the Monnaie Royal Opera, Ono seemed particularly at ease in the Francophone first half.

The players of the LPO responded warmly to Ono's direction, with the strings, even in the reduced numbers necessitated by the QEH's stage, finding plenty of full-bodied tone to match the power of the brass in the climaxes.'

The Daily Telegraph February 2007

BBC NOW Proms in Royal Albert Hall, London - August 2006

'Ono, music director at La Monnaie in Brussels, is an impressively attentive conductor. As well as steering the BBCNOW expertly through the tickets of Hosokawa's score, he ensured carefully detailed support for baritone Christopher Maltmans's graphically charted journey to despair in Mahler's *Lieder eines Fahrenden Gesellen*, and then gave a measured account of the most enigmatic of all 20th-century symphonies, Shostakovich's 15th, which with every performance seems to raise more questions than it will ever answer.'

The Guardian 5 August 2006