

Zubin Mehta

Zubin Mehta was born in 1936 in Bombay and received his first musical education under his father's Mehli Mehta's guidance who was a noted concert violinist and the founder of the Bombay Symphony Orchestra. After a short period of pre-medical studies in Bombay, he left for Vienna in 1954 where he eventually entered the conducting programme under Hans Swarowsky at the Akademie für Musik. Zubin Mehta won the Liverpool International Conducting Competition in 1958 and was also a prize-winner of the summer academy at Tanglewood. By 1961 he had already conducted the Vienna, Berlin and Israel Philharmonic Orchestras and has recently celebrated 50 years of musical collaboration with all three ensembles.

Zubin Mehta was Music Director of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra from 1961 to 1967 and also assumed the Music Directorship of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra in 1962, a post he retained until 1978. In 1969 he was appointed Music Adviser to the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra and was made Music Director of that orchestra in 1977. In 1981 the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra awarded him the title of Music Director for life. Zubin Mehta has conducted over three thousand concerts with this extraordinary ensemble including tours spanning five continents. In 1978 he took over the post as Music Director of the New York Philharmonic commencing a tenure lasting 13 years, the longest in the orchestra's history. Since 1985, he has been chief conductor of the Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino in Florence.

Zubin Mehta made his debut as an opera conductor with *Tosca* in Montreal in 1963. Since then he has conducted at the Metropolitan Opera New York, the Vienna State Opera, the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, La Scala Milan, and the opera houses of Chicago and Florence as well as at the Salzburg Festival. Between 1998 and 2006 he was Music Director of the Bavarian State Opera in Munich. In October 2006 he opened the Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia in Valencia and is since then the President of the annual Festival del Mediterrani in Valencia.

Zubin Mehta's list of awards and honours is extensive and includes the "Nikisch-Ring" bequeathed to him by Karl Böhm. He is an honorary citizen of both Florence and Tel Aviv and was made an honorary member of the Vienna State Opera in 1997, of the Bavarian State Opera in 2006 and of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde Wien in 2007. The title of "Honorary Conductor" was bestowed to him by the following orchestras: Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra (2001), Munich Philharmonic Orchestra (2004), Los Angeles Philharmonic (2006), Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino (2006), Bavarian State Orchestra (2006). In October 2008 Zubin Mehta was honoured by the Japanese Imperial Family with the "Praemium Imperiale". In March 2011 Zubin Mehta received a special distinction, in getting a star on the Hollywood Boulevard. The Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany was bestowed to him in July 2012.

Zubin Mehta continues to support the discovery and furtherance of musical talents all over the world. Together with his brother Zarin he is a co-chairman of the Mehli Mehta

Music Foundation in Bombay where more than 200 children are educated in Western Classical Music. The Buchmann-Mehta School of Music in Tel Aviv develops young talent in Israel and is closely related to the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, as is a new project of teaching young Arab Israelis in the cities of Shwaram and Nazareth with local teachers and members of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.

January 2013