

# Karel Mark Chichon

## **“A conductor of genius” New York Times**

British conductor **Karel Mark Chichon** continues to thrill international audiences with his temperament, passion and musicianship. In recognition to his services to music, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II of England made Chichon an **Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE)** in June 2012.

He is Chief Conductor of the Deutsche **Radio Philharmonie Saarbrücken Kaiserslautern** (beginning September 2011) with whom he recently renewed his contract until 2017. His previous positions include Chief Conductor & Artistic Director of the **Latvian National Symphony Orchestra** (2009-2012) and Chief Conductor of the **Graz Symphony Orchestra** (2006-2009).

Born in London in 1971, Chichon hails from Gibraltar. He studied at the **Royal Academy of Music** (London) where he attended **master-classes with Sir Colin Davis and Sir Simon Rattle** and won three major prizes. He furthered his studies at the **Hochschule für Musik in Vienna with Leopold Hager** and was **Assistant Conductor to Giuseppe Sinopoli and Valery Gergiev**.

In addition to his posts in Saarbrücken and Riga, Chichon regularly conducts at the **Wiener Staatsoper, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Bayerisches Staatsoper Munich, Teatro dell’Opera di Roma, Teatro Comunale di Bologna, Teatro Real Madrid, Gran Teatre del Liceu** and with orchestras such as the **Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, Wiener Symphoniker, Radio-Symphonieorchester Wien, English Chamber Orchestra, Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI, Russian National Orchestra, Basel Chamber Orchestra** in Vienna, Berlin, Paris, Rome, Turin, Bologna, Munich, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia.

He is a frequent guest conductor with leading orchestras throughout the world at venues such as the Musikverein **Vienna, Konzerthaus Vienna, Berlin Philharmonie, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Royal Festival Hall London, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées Paris, Munich Philharmonie, Laeiszhalle Hamburg, Alter Oper Frankfurt, Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory, Auditorio Nacional and Teatro Monumental of Madrid** (where he conducted the Millennium New Year’s Concert) and **Seoul Arts Center South Korea**.

Future engagements include *Madama Butterfly* at the **Metropolitan Opera New York** and *La Bohème* at **Teatro alla Scala Milan**, both of which will take place in 2015.

In December 2010, he made a thrilling debut with the **Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra** in Amsterdam for a set of four concerts, stepping in for Antonio Pappano at short notice. These concerts were immediately acclaimed by the critics and audience.

Chichon’s recent debuts at the **Vienna State Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin and the Bayerisches Staatsoper** were received to great acclaim by critics and public alike. As a result he has been

invited to return regularly to these three venerable opera houses where he will conduct Tosca, La Bohème, Carmen, Otello, Macbeth and Barbieri di Siviglia from 2010 to 2013.

He made his first recording for **Deutsche Grammophon** in March 2010 conducting the Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI, which was released in September 2010. Over the next five years he will record the complete orchestral works of Dvořák with the Deutsche Radio Philharmonie for the record label **Hänssler Classic**.

He has also worked with some of the greatest names in opera, such as **Carlos Álvarez, Marcelo Álvarez, Grace Bumbry, Montserrat Caballé** (including a recording for BMG/RCA), **José Carreras, José Cura, Juan Diego Flórez, Barbara Frittoli, Edita Gruberova, Jonas Kaufmann, Jerome Hines, Jennifer Larmore and Ramón Vargas**.

The 2009-10 season will see him conduct at the **Deutsche Oper Berlin, Bayerisches Staatsoper Munich, Hamburgische Staatsoper, Teatro dell'Opera di Roma, Teatro Comunale di Bologna, Teatro Real Madrid, Palau de les Arts Valencia** and with orchestras such as the **Wiener Symphoniker, Radio-Symphonieorchester Wien, English Chamber Orchestra, SWR Deutsche Radio Philharmonie, Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI, Russian National Orchestra, Basel Chamber Orchestra, Haydn Orchestra Bolzano in Vienna, Berlin, Paris, Rome, Bologna, Munich, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia**.

The 2008-9 season saw his debuts at the **Wiener Staatsoper, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Bayerisches Staatsoper, Arena di Verona** (16 performances of Carmen and Verdi: Requiem), **Teatro dell'Opera di Roma, Philharmonia Orchestra London, SWR Deutsche Radio Philharmonie, Orchestra of the Teatro Comunale of Bologna, WienerkammerOrchester, Russian National Orchestra, UBS Verbier Festival Orchestra, Basel Chamber Orchestra** in Vienna, Berlin, Paris, Munich, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Moscow, Barcelona, Valencia. He also returns to the **Wiener Symphoniker, Radio-Symphonieorchester Wien, English Chamber Orchestra, Haydn Orchestra Bolzano, Latvian National Symphony and Seoul Philharmonic**.

The 2007-2008 season saw concerts with the **Graz Symphony at the Golden Hall of the Musikverein in Vienna**, a new production of Barbieri di Siviglia at the **Vienna Volksoper**, a new production of Carmen (with **Elina Garanca** in the title role) at the **Latvian National Opera and Bolshoi Theater of Moscow** and his debut with the **Philharmonia Orchestra, the Russian National Orchestra, the UBS Verbier Festival Chamber Orchestra and the Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra**. He will also return to the **Vienna Symphony, Vienna Radio Symphony (with José Cura), English Chamber Orchestra, Tiroler/Innsbruck Symphony, Seoul Philharmonic (for ten concerts throughout South Korea) and Latvian National Symphony**.

In the 2006-2007 season Karel Mark Chichon made his debuts with the **Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra** (with Grace Bumbry, Juan Diego Flórez and the Vienna Boys Choir), **Helsinki Philharmonic, Lübeck Philharmonic (Germany), Tiroler/Innsbruck Symphony (Austria), Erfurt Symphony (Germany), Niederrheinische Symphony (Germany), Prague Symphony (with Joseph Calleja), Haydn Orchestra of Bolzano & Trento (Italy), Shanghai Symphony, Taipei Symphony, Singapore Symphony, Guandong Philharmonic (China)**, as well

as return visits to the **English Chamber Orchestra** (with Nicola Benedetti and Julian Lloyd Webber), **Seoul Philharmonic, Oviedo Symphony and Latvian National Symphony**.

In the 2005-2006 season, Karel Mark Chichon continued to make his mark on the international scene. He made his Vienna debut with the **Vienna Symphony** as well as at the **Schubertiade Festival in Schwarzenberg** (Austria), **St Gallen Opera House** (Switzerland), **China National Symphony and Taiwan National Symphony**. He returned to the **Vienna Philharmonic/IOIA** for the summer of 2006, sharing the podium with Valery Gergiev. He also returned to the English Chamber Orchestra for several tours of Spain and the Seoul Philharmonic for a tour of ten concerts of South Korea. Other return engagements this season included the **New York Chamber Orchestra, Oviedo Symphony (Spain), Latvian National Symphony and Latvian National Opera Orchestra**.

In 2004 he was invited by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra to conduct concerts at their **International Orchestra Institute in Salzburg** and made highly successful return visits in 2005 and 2006.

In the 2004/2005 season, Karel Mark Chichon made an impressive debut at **Graz Opera** conducting *Zauberflöte* and was immediately re-invited to conduct a new production of *Der Wildschütz* and performances of *Tosca*. He was also invited by the Vienna Philharmonic to conduct concerts at their International Orchestra Institute in Salzburg and made a return visit in 2005. He made a highly successful UK debut with the **English Chamber Orchestra** conducting Handel's *Messiah* at London's Cadogan Hall as well as with the **Seoul Philharmonic** in a Gala concert with mezzo-soprano Jennifer Larmore and tenor Joseph Calleja. In December 2004 he co nducted a very successful concert with the **Oviedo Symphony** and was immediately invited to work with several other Spanish orchestras.

Chichon undertook a highly successful tour of Spain with the English Chamber Orchestra in 2003. Since then he has become a frequent guest conductor with the acclaimed British orchestra, performing concerts in London and further tours of Spain.

At the age of 24, Chichon was elected Chief Conductor of the Craiova **State Philharmonic Orchestra of Romania**, where he remained from 1995 to 1998. During this time he conducted over 60 symphonic and operatic works that formed his core repertoire.

In 1999 he also became Artistic **Director & Principal Conductor of the London-based orchestra The European Sinfonietta**, with whom he toured throughout Spain to great critical acclaim.

In 1998 he was appointed **Artistic Director of the Gibraltar Philharmonic Society**, a position he still holds. During this time the Gibraltar Philharmonic Society has become one of the most important cultural institutions in the South of the Iberian peninsula, attracting artists such as the English Chamber Orchestra, José Carreras, Elina Garanca, Diana Damrau, Adrian Eröd, Isabel Rey, Angela Brown, Sergei Kyrlov, Guy Braunstein, Franz Bartolomey and Peter Schmidl. Many of the concerts are held in St Michael's Cave, a unique and historic natural cave with superb acoustics, located high up on the Rock.

Chichon's extrovert style and eclectic musical tastes make him a natural on stage. **The New York Times** described him as **"a youthful conductor of genius.... the outstanding musical event of the weekend was Chichon's reading of Beethoven's monumental Seventh Symphony.....The grandeur of his way with Beethoven was astonishing.....There was nothing external in Chichon's Beethoven – everything from piano to forte, to thrilling crescendi came from within..... He conducted La Traviata with love and dedicated support for his singers.....brought out the full poignancy of Verdi's masterpiece"**

Karel Mark Chichon was Resident Conductor of the 2001 and 2002 **"Summer Music Festival on the Greene"** held in **New York**, in which he conducted operatic productions of La Traviata, I Capuleti e i Montecchi and Il Barbiere di Siviglia. During this time he also conducted Zauberflöte at **Lucerne Opera in Switzerland**.