

ANDRÉS CÁRDENES, CONDUCTOR

Biography 2012

A consummate musician, powerful presence and master programmer, Andrés Cárdenes has established himself as a conductor possessing all the essentials of a modern maestro. His innovative programming and compelling performances have earned him high praise from audiences, critics and colleagues alike. Currently Music Director of Strings Festival Orchestra (CO), the Pittsburgh Festival Orchestra, and former Music Director and Leader of the Pittsburgh Symphony Chamber Orchestra from 1999-2010, Cárdenes has drawn audiences to the concert hall for a vast array of aural experiences. A champion of living composers and the music of our time, Cárdenes' formula for presenting diverse genres of music has been met with great enthusiasm.

Mr. Cárdenes began formal conducting studies at age 15 with Thor Johnson, former Music Director of Cincinnati Symphony. Entering Indiana University to study with the legendary Josef Gingold, Cárdenes continued his education under the tutelage of Bryan Balkwill, former conductor at Covent Garden. After winning top prizes at numerous international violin competitions, Cárdenes accepted concertmaster positions with the San Diego, Utah and Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestras, remaining in those capacities for 25 years and apprenticing under the great maestros of today. Counted among his mentors are Lorin Maazel, Charles Dutoit, Rafael Fruhbeck de Burgos, Leonard Slatkin, Sir Andrew Davis and David Zinman.

In 1999, the Pittsburgh Symphony Chamber Orchestra was created for Andrés Cárdenes to highlight his multiple talents as conductor, violinist, violist and leader. The Chamber Orchestra enjoyed a remarkable eleven seasons, premiering 15 works and presenting dozens of rarely heard pieces by well-known composers.

In 2006, the Pittsburgh Symphony signed Mr. Cárdenes to a five-year contract to conduct the orchestra in subscription concerts each year. His programming featured works by Poulenc, Hindemith and Debussy that were either Pittsburgh premieres or had not been performed in over 50 years. Stepping in suddenly for an ailing Robert Spano, the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review headlined "Cárdenes conducts with epic mastery".

In addition to his frequent appearances with the Pittsburgh Symphony, Mr. Cárdenes has conducted orchestras across the globe: Munich Radio Orchestra, Dallas Symphony, San Diego Symphony, New West Symphony, Fundación Beethoven Philharmonic (Santiago, Chile), OFUNAM Orchestra of Mexico City, Sinfonica de Venezuela, National Repertory Orchestra, Brevard Philharmonic, Cleveland Institute Philharmonic, Carnegie Mellon Chamber Orchestra and the Neue Philharmonie Westfalen in Germany. He has collaborated with soloists such as Midori, Sarah Chang, Pinchas Zukerman, Elmar Oliveira, Jon Kimura Parker, Gabriela Montero, Chee-Yun and Lars Vogt.

A Cultural Ambassador for UNICEF from 1980-1991 and an indefatigable spokesperson for the arts, Mr. Cárdenes has received numerous awards for his teaching, performances, recordings and humanitarian efforts, most notably from the cities of Los Angeles and Shanghai and the Mexican Red Cross. He was named Pittsburgh Magazine's 1997 Classical Artist of the Year and received the 2001 "Shalom" Award from Kolllell's International Jewish Center for promoting world harmony and peace through music.