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MARIUSZ SMOLIJ

CONDUCTOR



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www.mariuszsmolij.com

BIOGRAPHY

MARIUSZ SMOLIJ is considered one of the most exciting conductors of his generation. The American Symphony Orchestra League in New York included his name on the prestigious list of the most promising young conductors in America and featured him during its special Conductors Preview.

For over a decade, Mariusz Smolij has collaborated with some of the most acclaimed orchestras and musical institutions in the United States and Europe. He served as the conductor of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra 1994-97, and led the ensemble to receive the highest accolades from critics and public alike in over a hundred and twenty performances. He also 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 and 2000. At that time he was the youngest full-time conducting faculty member among the top conservatories and universities in America. Most recently he served as the Resident Conductor of the Houston Symphony. He was invited to join this world class orchestra by Maestro Christoph Eschenbach after winning international auditions that attracted over 200 conductors. He led this orchestra in over one hundred thirty concerts presenting an impressive and wide gamut of orchestral repertoire.

In the year 2003, he became Music Director of the Acadiana Symphony in Lafayette, Louisiana. Since 1996, Maestro Smolij has also held the position of Music Director and Conductor of the Riverside Symphonia, a highly recognized professional chamber orchestra based in Lambertville, New Jersey.

Beginning with the 2002-2003 season, Maestro Smolij is closely associated with one of Eastern Europe's most renowned orchestras, the Wroclaw (Breslau) Philharmonic in Poland. He has not only conducted this orchestra in Poland, but successfully led it during foreign tours in Germany (Rheingau Music Festival) and Czech Republic (Janacek Festival). A tour of the United States is planned for April 2005. He has been credited with restructuring the orchestra operations and its artistic season and with introducing innovative artistic concepts as well as new repertoire. Between 2002 and 2004 he presided over the International Festival Wratistavia Cantans as only the fourth Artistic Director in the 38 year history of this eminent institution.

Maestro Smolij has appeared as guest conductor with more than 50 orchestras around the world. In the United States, among others, he has conducted the Houston Symphony, New Jersey Symphony, Detroit Symphony, Atlanta Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony, Rochester Philharmonic, Symphony II (Orchestra of the Lyric Opera in Chicago), St. Louis Philharmonic, Omaha Symphony, Erie Philharmonic, Missouri Symphony and Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra. In Europe, he led orchestras in Germany, France, Holland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic and Poland. In 2004 he appeared in the famous Concertgebouw in Amsterdam with the Rotterdam Chamber Orchestra, in 2002, he made his Paris conducting debut with the Orchestre des Concerts Lamoureux in the prestigious Salle Gaveau and in 2001, he made his

highly acclaimed debut at New York's Carnegie Hall with the Sinfonia Varsovia. His frequent collaboration with this premier Polish orchestra led to concerts on three continents; Europe, North America and Asia, and a series of recording projects featuring masterworks of Polish and American symphonic music. The first CD with music by Copland, Gershwin and Bernstein was released in July 2002.

Maestro Smolij has introduced many American audiences to several unknown works by Eastern European composers and regularly performs American orchestral music in Europe. In January 1996, he led the Polish Radio Orchestra in Krakow, Poland in an all-American program, which was broadcasted to several Eastern European countries. In 2001, he led a special gala performance of American symphonic music in the Hall of National Theater in Warsaw, Poland that was recorded and broadcasted by both Polish and American radio stations. His recording of music by American composer Bill Karlins was issued by the Hungaroton label in 2000. With the Wroclaw Philharmonic he gave European and Polish premiers of works by American composers such as Barber, Copland, Kernis, Rouse, Ellington and others. As an extremely effective advocate and promoter of Polish music outside of his native country, Maestro Smolij frequently performs and programs works of Polish composers and organized the Polish Music Festival in Chicago in 1998, which was the single largest presentation of Polish music abroad in the last quarter of century.

Maestro Smolij's reputation as a conducting pedagogue reaches both sides of the Atlantic. He is a faculty member of the International Workshops for Conductors in the Czech Republic, teaches at professional conducting seminars in the USA and Poland and was invited to present conducting master classes at the Zurich Conservatory in Switzerland.

Born near Katowice, Poland, Maestro Smolij is also an accomplished violinist and was the founder and violinist of the internationally recognized Penderecki String Quartet, performing and recording with this ensemble in Poland, Germany, France, Italy and the United States. After studies in Europe he studied conducting in the United States, and holds a doctorate degree from the Eastman School of Music.

Critical Acclaim

“Those in attendance of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra concert, Mariusz Smolij, conductor, were treated to a marvelous sonic experience heavily commented upon during intermission. Even veteran listeners admitted to sitting up and saying “Wow” as the group performed with elan, panache, elegance, and vivacity. Mozart’s Divertimento in D, K.251, was conducted and played exquisitely with admirable balance, pacing and refinement.”

Robert W. Butts, Classical New Jersey

“ASO’s Maestro is spellbinding in first concert. The orchestra presented a haunting exchange of motifs that created a musical trilogy, passed between the different sections. At the selection’s conclusion, one passionate audience member substituted a shouted, “What a beginning!” in lieu of the showers of “Bravo!” offered by his less affected audience mates. I couldn’t agree with the gentleman more.”

Ray Blum, Acadiana Daily Advertiser

“(At the Rheingau Music Festival) the Wroclaw Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra performed Prokofiev’s Classical Symphony in a spectacular way. Clarity and dynamic elegance were well captured. The ensemble was responding with spontaneity and charming sense of humor. The suite from El Amor Brujo by Manuel de Falla was played under the inspiring direction of Mariusz Smolij with great energy and temperament earning great ovations. However, it was the conductor who was in the central role here, bringing to life variety of subtle nuances and effects.”

Ingrid Hermann, Wiesbadener Kurier, Germany

“At the Wratistavia Cantans Festival, the rarely heard Missa Solenelle by Hector Berlioz was given a top-class performance. Mariusz Smolij led the Wroclaw Philharmonic Orchestra, the Silesian Philharmonic Chorus and soloists in the large St. Mary Magdalene Cathedral filling it with full sound.”

Dr. Marion Diederichs-Lafite, Österreichische Musikzeitschrift,
Vienna, Austria

“What pleased was the work of Smolij, his handling of the Beethoven’s Egmont Overture was excellent. Pacing was accurate and the orchestra was responsive and exciting. (...) The Lutoslawski’s Little Suite was a delight in conductor Mariusz Smolij’s very bright and lively version.”

Albert Cohen, Asbery Park Press, New Jersey

“Smolij led a performance notable for clarity and shape. Rimski-Korsakov’s Sheherazade was no doubt an audience favorite. The conductor pulled every ounce of drama out of the score.”

Star Ledger, Newark, New Jersey

"An enchanting concert performed by the Riverside Symphonia and conducted by Mariusz Smolij, someone who knows and loves music deeply and enriches an audience with his unpontificating insider's view born of years of thoughtful experience."

Ralph Collier, Classical Network, Philadelphia

“Beethoven’s Symphony No. 7 was played very well, technique and style were at a peak not often encountered so soon after the summer vacation break. Smolij’s interpretations were crisp and straightforward.”

Charles Ward, Houston Chronicle

“Smolij, with his economical, natural and effective baton technique admirable managed the work’s (Holst’s Planets) sheer magnitude, bringing a sense of integrity to the whole while giving shape to the distinctive identities of each section—from the brutal powers and urgency of Mars to the otherworldly mysticism of Neptune.”

Kyle Mac Millan, Omaha World-Herald

“He is a consummate artist and leader as well as one of the best accompanists I have ever seen or heard.”

Philip Setzer, Emerson String Quartet

Lutoslawski’s Little Suite opened the program in colorfully splashy fashion. Next, Joshua Bell, one of the most impressive violinist on the scene, technically flawless ... Conductor Mariusz Smolij seemed to be the perfect partner, for he pulled long, shapely lines from the orchestra to match Bell’s.”

Paul Sommers, Star Ledger, Newark, New Jersey

“In the Rochester’s premiere of Bohuslav Martinu’s Concerto for String Quartet and Orchestra (...) the Cleveland Quartet’s accurate ensemble and intonation were certainly what the piece required, and Smolij did an impressive job of keeping the thick orchestration balanced and bouncy. In Mahler’s Sixth Symphony Smolij showed a very impressive command of a complicated score. From the opening Allegro the performance was purposeful, efficient and at times almost brutal-not inappropriate in this music. The Eastman Philharmonia’s playing was excellent...”

City Newspaper, Rochester, New York

“This beautiful, Romantic piece (Schumann’s Spring Symphony) was led by the conductor with a great taste, expressiveness and understanding of the Romantic style. Especially charming was the rendition of the Larghetto. The final Allegro wonderfully shaped and contrasted, brought the conductor a fully deserved applause.”

Illustrated Polish Daily, Bydgoszcz, Poland

“The concert opened with a tensely somber, tender reading of Beethoven Coriolan Overture. It ended on an up-beat note with a rhythmically driving yet graceful performance of the Eight Symphony. Never too fast, the trills and tremolos and juxtaposed pianissimo and fortissimo realized the work’s playfulness. The prolonged applause that followed its end was fully deserved.”

Jerry Ben-Asher, Sun Bulletin, New Jersey

“Maestro Mariusz Smolij conducted a superb evening of movie music at the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra’s performance in Waterloo.”

Keith Pierson, News Leader, New Jersey

“Tchaikovsky’s Capriccio Italian was a grand display and unquestionably the highlight of the evening. From the opening fanfare to the frolicsome string melody punctuated by an insistent brass rhythm, Smolij’s interpretation was vibrant and stirring.”

Bridgeton Evening News, New Jersey

“The Northwestern Orchestra under Mariusz Smolij was superb in every department, they brought both passion and delicacy to the beautiful orchestration.” (M. Ptaszynska’s Sonnets of Orpheus)

R. Kaczemura, Chicago Culture Magazine

“In Ravel’s Tzigane Mr. Smolij provided a perfect accompaniment, unselfishly giving the soloist the center stage. In Beethoven’s Eroica was dignified, focused and played with intense emotions.”

M. Miller, Classical New Jersey

“With Gershwin’s music (Porgy and Bess) Smolij feels at home. He unmistakably brings out its colors, pulse and rhythm. He breaths it the same perfect way as the black singers performing the solo parts.”

O. Pisarenko, Ruch Muzyczny, Warsaw, Poland

“The concert opened in a great form with Mariusz Smolij leading the orchestra in a dreamy and exciting performance of Gershwin’s Cuban Overture. It had all the rhythmic

flavor and was perfect for the summer evening. The Hammerstein's King and I was superb from start to finish."

B. Bentley, The Houston Courier

CURRICULUM VITAE

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EDUCATION

Eastman School of Music, Rochester, NY. Doctor of Musical Arts (Conducting)

University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Master of Music (Violin and Conducting)

Institute of Chamber Music, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. (Chamber Music)

Academy of Music, Katowice, Poland. Master of Arts (Violin and Chamber Music)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Northwestern University School of Music, Evanston, IL, 1996 – 2000.
Assistant Professor, Assistant Director of Orchestras, Director of Northwestern University Chamber Orchestra, teacher of Graduate Conducting, Chamber Music Coordinator.

Northwestern University Summer School, Evanston, IL, 1996 – 2000.
Founder and teacher of Orchestral Conducting Workshops for advanced students and young professionals from the U.S. and abroad.

International Workshops for Conductors, Czech Republic, 1998 – present.
Teacher at one of the largest and most successful summer conducting programs in the world, attracting advanced students and professionals from all continents.

Zurich Conservatoire, Zurich, Switzerland, 2001 – present.
Conducting workshops and conducting master classes.

Eastman School of Music, Rochester, NY, 1991 - 1994.
Graduate teaching assistant for undergraduate conducting courses.

Chamber Music Institute at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, 1986 – 1987.
Graduate teaching assistant for violin and chamber music.

Greater Newark Youth Orchestra, Newark, NJ, 1994 - 1996.
Music Director and Conductor.

CONDUCTING POSITIONS

Acadiana Symphony Orchestra, Lafayette, LA. Music Director, 2003 - present.

Leading symphony orchestra of Louisiana, organization with 20 years history, also in charge of its

own Conservatoire of Music (200 students).

Riverside Symphonia, New Jersey. Music Director and Conductor, 1996 - present.

Prominent East Coast Chamber Orchestra with members associated with Philadelphia Orchestra, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Metropolitan Opera and other distinguished groups.

Wroclaw (Breslau) Philharmonic, Wroclaw, Poland. Artistic Director, 2002 – 2004,
Conductor, 2004 – present

One of the oldest Eastern European orchestras led in the past by G. Mahler, B. Walter, M. Bruch among many others. Performances and concert tours include Poland, Germany, Czech Republic and France. The orchestra's first United States tour, including performances at Lincoln Center in New York, Kimmel Center of Philadelphia and other prominent concert stages is scheduled for April 2005.

International Festival *Wratislavia Cantans*, Poland. Artistic Director, 2002-2004.

One of the most prominent European music festivals with 40 years history. Symphony, choral, chamber concerts each September. Website: www.wratislavia.art.pl

Houston Symphony, Houston, TX. Resident Conductor, 2000- 2003.

Conducted over 130 performances. Selected by committee and Maestro Christoph Eschenbach after winning auditions that attracted almost 200 international candidates.

New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, Newark, NJ. Assistant Conductor, 1994-1997.

Conducted over 120 performances including subscription symphonic series, subscription chamber orchestra series, conducted and narrated family, pops and educational concerts.

Polish Music Festival, Chicago-Evanston, 1998.

Founder, artistic director and conductor of the largest Polish musical event in America, involving over 400 performers, three orchestras, choruses, several chamber music groups and soloists.

Morpheus, Contemporary Chamber Ensemble, Rochester, NY. Conductor, 1993-94.

Programming and performing avant-garde works of contemporary American composers, including numerous premiers.

Eastman Philharmonia, Eastman Opera Theater, Rochester, NY. Associate Conductor, 1991-1994.

GUEST CONDUCTING

Guest conducted **over 70 orchestras on four continents**, *partial* list includes:

North America:

- Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Atlanta, GA
- Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Detroit, MI
- Houston Symphony, Houston, TX
- Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, Indianapolis, IN
- Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra, Indianapolis, IN
- Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, Rochester, NY
- New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, Newark, NJ
- St. Louis Philharmonic, St. Louis, MS
- Symphony II (Orchestra of the Lyric Opera), Chicago, IL
- Omaha Symphony Orchestra, Omaha, NE
- Nova Scotia Music Festival Orchestra, Halifax, Canada
- Nova Scotia Symphony, Halifax, Canada
- Erie Philharmonic, Erie, PA
- Fort Collins Symphony, Fort Collins, CO
- Huntsville Symphony Orchestra, Huntsville, AL
- Kankakee Symphony, Kankakee, IL
- Missouri Symphony Orchestra, Columbus, MS
- North Suburban Symphony, Lake Forest, IL
- Elkhart Symphony Orchestra, Elkhart, IN
- Bridgeton Symphony, Bridgeton, NJ
- Peoria Symphony Orchestra, Peoria, IL

Europe, Asia and Africa:

- Orchestre de Lameoroux, Paris, France
- Rotterdam Chamber Orchestra, Rotterdam, Netherlands
- Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, Jerusalem, Israel
- Musica Nova, Tel Aviv, Israel
- Basel Symphony Orchestra, Basel, Switzerland
- Branderburgische Staatsorchester, Frankfurt, Germany
- Bergische Symphoniker, Remscheid, Germany
- Thuringen Philharmonie, Germany
- Jena Philharmonie, Jena, Germany
- Jeunesse Musicale Orchestra, Germany
- Vogtland Philharmonie, Germany
- Kiel Philharmonic, Kiel, Germany
- National Philharmonic of Bulgaria, Sofia, Bulgaria
- Bohuslav Martinu Philharmonic, Zlin, Czech Republic
- Slovak State Philharmonic, Kosice, Slovak Republic
- Florence Chamber Orchestra, Florence, Italy
- Lecce Symphony Orchestra, Lecce, Italy
- Orchestra Olimpica Vicenza, Italy
- Szombately Symphony Orchestra, Hungary
- Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra, Cracow, Poland
- National Philharmonic, Warsaw, Poland

- Polish Chamber Orchestra, Warsaw, Poland
- Sinfonia Varsovia, Warsaw, Poland
- Lutoslawski State Philharmonic, Wroclaw (Breslau), Poland
- Silesian State Philharmonic, Katowice, Poland.
- Pomeranian Philharmonic Orchestra, Bydgoszcz, Poland.
- Sudety State Philharmonic, Walbrzych, Poland.
- Torun Chamber Orchestra, Torun, Poland.
- Opole State Philharmonic, Opole, Poland.
- Jelenia Gora Philharmonic, Jelenia Gora, Poland.
- Zabrze State Philharmonic Orchestra, Zabrze, Poland.
- Hiroshima Ensemble, Hiroshima, Japan
- Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra, Johannesburg, South Africa

CONCERT REPERTOIRE

Concert repertoire of actual orchestral works conducted in public performances, includes total list of **over 600 different scores**, conducted during over **510 concerts**. It contains repertoire from early Baroque to most recent works, including a long list world premiers. Detailed list with names of all the orchestras and dates of all the performances provided upon request.

MUSIC FESTIVALS

- Rome Festival, Rome, Italy
- International Festival *Wratislavia Cantans*, Poland
- Rheingau International Music Festival, Frankfurt & Wiesbaden, Germany
- Chorin Music Festival, Germany
- *Fetes Musicales en Touarine*, Tours, France
- Janacek May, International Festival, Czech Republic
- The City of Warsaw - Sinfonia Varsovia Festival, Poland
- New Year Festival, Wroclaw, Poland
- Nova Scotia Festival, Halifax Canada
- New Yorkers Festival (organized in Europe by the U.S. State Department, in the summer 2004)

RECORDINGS

- **Sinfonia Varsovia, Poland, "Masterworks of American Symphonic Music"**
2002, (distributed by CD Accord/Universal)
- **Northwestern Chamber Ensemble; "Music of Bill Karlins"**,
2000, (distributed by Hungaroton, Hungary)
- **Polish Chamber Orchestra, Poland, "Works by Andrzej Panufnik"**
(to be released in 2005 by CD Accord/Universal)
- **Wrocław Philharmonic, Poland, "G. Mahler: Symphony No. 1"**
(to be released in September 2004 by Dux, Poland)
- **Wrocław Philharmonic, Poland, "M. Ravel: Bolero"**
2004, DVD of open-air concert performed for *200,000 listeners*
- **Basel Symphony Orchestra, Basel, Switzerland**
(Children Legends/Frolich, due late 2005)

MUSICAL AWARDS

- “Cultural Diamond” (Critics and Media Award), Wroclaw, Poland, 2003
- “Letter of Excellence” from New Jersey Arts Council for programming and operations of the Riverside Symphonia, 2005
- American Symphony Orchestra League's National Preview: featured conductor, 1997.
- International Conductor's Competition, Budapest, Hungary: finalist, 1995.
- Affiliate Artists National Conducting Auditions: finalist, 1991.
- Hilton Smith Fellowship for Conducting Studies, 1990, 1991.
- National Chamber Music Competition, Poland: first prizewinner, 1987.

VIOLIN PERFORMANCE

- **The Penderecki String Quartet**, 1981-1987.
Founder and violinist of internationally recognized premiere Polish chamber ensemble, concerts in most European countries and North America, recordings for American National Public Radio, Hessische Rundfunk in Germany, Polish National Radio and others.
- **Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra**, violinist, 1981-1984
- **Jeunesse Musicale International Chamber Orchestra, Germany**,
Asst. Concertmaster, 1984-85.
- **Rome Festival Orchestra**, Asst. Concertmaster, 1985.
- **American Sinfonietta**, Asst. Concertmaster, 1992.

Personal data:

Born: May 1, 1962

Married to Kamila Wuwer-Smolij

Two children: Benjamin b. 1987, Matilda b. 2001

REFERENCES

1. **Maestro Christoph Eschenbach**, Conductor Laureate, Houston Symphony, Music Director, Philadelphia Orchestra, Music Director, Orchestra de Paris, 260 S. Broad St. Philadelphia. PA 19102, tel. 215/893 1900
2. **Mrs. Aurelie Desmarais**, Senior Director of Artistic Planning, Houston Symphony, 615 Louisiana St, Suite 102, Houston, TX 77002, tel. 713/238 1454
3. **Ms. Karen Swanson**, Vice President and General Manager, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, 1212 Cathedral St. Baltimore, MD 21201, tel. 410/783 8057
4. **Mr. Larry Tamburri**, Executive Director, Pittsburgh Symphony, 600 Penn Ave. Pittsburgh, PA 15222, tel. 412/392 4866
5. **Mrs. Benita Ryan**, Former Executive Director, Riverside Symphonia, New Jersey, tel. 215/598 1598
6. **Ms. Suzanne Maccia**, Current Executive Director, Riverside Symphonia, New Jersey, tel. 609/397 7300 or 609/397 2762
7. **Mrs. Elizabeth Griffin**, President, Board of Directors, Riverside Symphonia, New Jersey, tel. 609/397 2782
8. **Mr. Walter Dobbie**, President, Board of Directors, Acadiana Symphony Orchestra, Lafayette, LA, tel. 337/237 0647, or 337/984 3370
9. **Mr. Ilya Kaler**, international concert violinist (first prize winner of the Tchaikovsky, Paganini, Sibelius violin competitions), Professor De Paul Univ. School of Music, Chicago, IL, tel. 773/325 4374
10. **Mr. Jose Feghali**, international concert pianist (first prize winner of the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition), Professor at the School of Music, TCU, Fort Worth, TX, tel. 817/257 5763