

# Kenneth Woods, *Conductor*



*“playful brilliance”* Austin American Statesman  
*“brimming with personality, affection  
and freshly imagined drama”*  
Washington Post  
*“A conductor with true vision and purpose”*  
Peter Oundjian, conductor

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## Kenneth Woods, *conductor*

### Biography



Hailed by the Washington Post as an “up-and-coming conductor” and a “true star” of the podium, **Kenneth Woods** is Music Director and Conductor of the Oregon East Symphony and Chorale, Principal Guest Conductor of the Rose City Chamber Orchestra and Principal Conductor of the Lancashire Chamber Orchestra. Mr. Woods has also been a member of the conducting staff at the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and the Cincinnati Pops.

Already known in America as one of the most exciting conductors of the new generation, Kenneth Woods is quickly becoming recognized as major talent on the international scene. He has worked with many orchestras of international distinction including the National Symphony Orchestra, the Cincinnati Symphony, the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, the Budapest Festival Orchestra and the State of Mexico Symphony Orchestra. He has also appeared on the stages of some of the world’s leading music festivals, including Aspen, Lucerne, Round Top and Scotia. His work on the concert platform and in the recording studio has led to numerous broadcasts on BBC Radio 3, National Public Radio, and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

In the spring of 2001, Kenneth Woods was selected by Leonard Slatkin as one of four participants in the Kennedy Center National Conducting Institute. At the completion of the Institute, he led the National Symphony Orchestra in a debut concert, drawing great critical acclaim and a return invitation from the NSO. In the spring of 2000, David Zinman selected Kenneth Woods from a pool of over 200 applicants to be a fellow in the inaugural class of the American Academy of Conducting at Aspen. Toronto Symphony Music Director Designate Peter Oundjian has praised Woods as “a conductor with true vision and purpose. He has a most fluid and clear style and an excellent command on the podium... a most complete musician.”

Kenneth Woods has conducted critically praised productions of operas from Britten to Puccini, and ballet scores as diverse as Giselle, the Nutcracker, Firebird and Konservatoriet. Woods’ activities as an active proponent of contemporary music include collaborations as a conductor or cellist with such figures as John Corigliano, Krystopf Penderecki, Peter Lieberson, Oliver Knussen and many others.

During his tenure as Music Director of the Grande Ronde Symphony from 1999-2002, and the Oregon East Symphony from 2000-, Mr. Woods led these orchestras through a period of rapid growth in artistic achievement, audience and range of activities. At the OES he has been the founding artistic director of a new training orchestra and training institute, overseen a massive expansion of educational and outreach activities, and brought the orchestra substantial new artistic acclaim. He has led the creation and programming of numerous educational concert series, been active in community outreach and an active collaborator with music educators. In 2005 he was invited by the Rose City Chamber Orchestra to start a new international workshop for young conductors.

As a cellist he has been recipient of the Aspen Fellowship (Mr. Woods has received the Aspen Fellowship as both a cellist and conductor), the Dale Gilbert Award (the only musician to win this award in consecutive years), the Strelow Quartet Fellowship, the National Endowment for the Arts Rural Residency Grant and has recorded and toured extensively as soloist and chamber musician. He has played chamber music with members of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Smithsonian Chamber Players, the Cincinnati, Chicago and Toronto symphonies, and the Minnesota, Gewandhaus and Concertgebouw orchestras. He was founding cellist of the NEA recognized Taliesin Trio, and of the Masala Quartet, who have recorded for Vienna Modern Masters and appeared at festivals and concert series’ in the US and Europe. As a student, he coached with members of many of the world’s leading quartets, including the Tokyo, Vermeer, La Salle, Pro Arte, Borodin, Emerson and Vegh.

Mr. Woods pursued his advanced conducting studies at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, and has also studied at leading summer institutes and workshops around the world. He has studied conducting with Leonard Slatkin, David Zinman, Jorma Panula, Murry Sidlin, Robert Spano, Gerhard Samuel, and Larry Rachleff. In his capacity as an assistant conductor, he has collaborated with James Conlon, Jesus Lopez-Cobos, Paavo Jarvi, Richard Hickox, Erich Kunzel, Alexander Lazarev, Robert Spano, Jiri Belohlavek, Peter Oundjian and many others.

# Kenneth Woods, conductor

## Resumé

### **-Music Director, Assistant Conductor-**

2000-date: Music Director and Conductor, Oregon East Symphony and Chorale  
Founding Conductor, OES Preparatory Orchestra (2002-)  
Founding Artistic Director, OES Summer Music Camp (2000-)  
2005- date: Principal Guest Conductor, Rose City Chamber Orchestra  
2005- date: Music Director Designate, Surrey Mozart Players  
2004-date: Principal Conductor, Lancashire Chamber Orchestra  
1999-2002: Music Director, Grande Ronde Symphony and Youth Orchestras  
1998-1999: Acting Music Director, Dayton Philharmonic Youth Orchestra  
1998-1999: Conducting Assistant, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Cincinnati Pops  
1994-1999: Assistant Conductor, Texas Festival Orchestra  
1996-1998: Chief Assistant Conductor Cincinnati Philharmonia  
1996-1998: Assistant Conductor, CCM Opera Theater, CCM Ballet, CCM Contemporary Music Ensemble  
1994-1997: Assistant Conductor, Cover Conductor, Scotia Festival of Music



### **-Guest Conductor-**

National Symphony Orchestra	Aspen Music Festival (Academy Orchestra)
BBC National Orchestra of Wales	Fort Wayne Philharmonic
Rose City Chamber Orchestra	State of Mexico Symphony Orchestra
Lancashire Chamber Orchestra (UK)	Ernest Read Symphony (London)
Royal Orchestra Society (London)	Surrey Mozart Players
Contemporary Music Ensemble of Wales	Grandin Festival Players
Cincinnati American Music Festival Orchestra	UW Summer Clinic Honors Orchestra
Pleven Philharmonic, Bulgaria	Camerata & Chorus of St. Cyrus (Wales)
Eastern Chamber Choir	Grande Ronde Community Chorus
Orchestra Sinfonica di Pescara	Texas Festival Orchestra
Brandon Hill Chamber Orchestra	Consort Columbia
Nottingham Philharmonic	Bardi Orchestra
Kent County Youth Orchestra	Helix Ensemble
Scotia Festival Orchestra	Valparaiso University Symphony
CCM Opera Theatre	CCM Philharmonia
Wisconsin Youth Symphony Orchestra	Wrexham Symphony
CCM Concert Orchestra	CCM Ballet Orchestra
Hermiston A Cappella Choir	CCM Contemporary Music Ensemble
University of Delaware Symphony	Wisconsin Philomusica
University of Miami Symphony	John Day Chorus
University of Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra	Cincinnati Recent Music Ensemble

### **-Other Conducting Experience-**

2001 Participant, National Conducting Institute at the Kennedy Center  
2000 Aspen Fellow at American Academy of Conducting at Aspen (inaugural class)  
Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra (Assistant Conductor semi-finalist)  
Spokane Symphony (Associate Conductor runner-up)  
Budapest Festival Orchestra (Assistant Conductor runner-up)  
Cover conductor (visiting), National Symphony Orchestra, 2001-  
Cover conductor, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, 2003-  
Workshop orchestras include- St. Louis Symphony Youth Symphony (ASOL), San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra (ASOL), Bakersfield Symphony

### **-Young People's and Educational Concerts, Other Educational Projects-**

Dayton Philharmonic Youth Orchestra  
Oregon East Symphony Preparatory Orchestra  
Collaborator with BBC National Orchestra of Wales education department 2004-, including a conducting masterclass with BBC NOW players in Nov. 2004  
Founding director, Rose City Conductor's Workshop, a professional training program for young conductors  
Cover conductor for entire 1998-9 season of Cincinnati Symphony YP and educational programming  
1995 National Endowment for the Arts/Chamber Music America Rural Residency as cellist of Taliesin Trio  
Educational concerts and school residencies throughout northeast Arkansas and southeast Missouri

## Kenneth Woods, conductor



### Critical Praise

***"The true stars of the evening followed intermission. Kenneth Woods was confident on the podium, clear and economical in his gestures and knew when to actively lead and when to allow his players freedom to phrase. He delivered a Strauss "Till Eulenspiegel" brimming with personality, affection and freshly imagined drama. Every moment was alive and engaging, and the riotous complexity of the score was rendered with admirable coherence." An "up-and-coming conductor"***

The Washington Post, July 2 2001

***"Kenneth Woods was conductor of the fine musicians comprising the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. Solo woodwind fragments against bell-like high strings set the scene, depth of orchestral sound quality and refined brass pre-eminent as the performance progressed. These attributes were also evident in Kodaly's Hungarian Dances of Galanta alongside subtle integral changes of tempi and tonality, and solo clarinet episodes. In Copland's Appalachian Spring, idiomatic of the vast expanses of Pennsylvania, sparsely spaced strings gradually developed into a rich combination of exciting harmonies .... Patricia Rozario was the splendid soprano soloist in Canteloube's Chants d'Auvergne. These French songs were sung with immense beauty and given sensitive accompaniments. Brezairola, a lullaby, involved the orchestra's leader in a solo introduction. Rozario also sang several of Berio's interpretations of folk songs from America and Italy."***

Malvern Gazette, Ledbury Reader, thisis.co.uk, July 2 2004

***"Conductor Kenneth Woods had the toughest draw. Stravinsky's mercurial "Danses Concertantes" rides on small strokes from individuals in this reduced chamber orchestra... but the piece took on the playful brilliance of this underplayed gem."***

The Austin American Statesman, Wednesday June 23, 1999

***"Scotia Festival's young artists sank their teeth into Arnold Schoenberg's First Chamber Symphony and bit hard. Conductor Ken Woods from the Cincinnati Conservatory marshaled the forces with admirable consistency, securely initiating tempos, shaping the endless flow of melody and instrumental acrobatics and balancing the embarrassment of musical riches to clarify the main line. A brilliant job... played with the kind of ardency that goes with a passionate commitment to a great work."***

The Halifax Mail-Star, June 7, 1997

***"Conductor Kenneth Woods was alert, efficient and confident, and stayed with the singers unflinching. The 13-piece orchestra created a sense of atmosphere between scene changes and punctuated the text colorfully."***

The Cincinnati Enquirer, February 17, 1997 (CCM Opera Theatre's award-winning production of Britten's Albert Herring).

***“Dvorak’s Symphony No.6 is a Woods favorite, and he promised in his introduction that its joy and radiance would come through. It did. The musicians performed all four movements with such energy they must have been exhausted by the final note... People were on their feet to show their appreciation. The Rachmaninoff piano concerto (no. 3) brought international prize-winner William Wolfram to the stage, and with the orchestra keeping perfect pace, the sound couldn’t have been richer with the New York Philharmonic. There was a standing ovation and everyone onstage deserved it.”***

The East Oregonian, October 7, 2003

***“Tchaikovsky, the Oregon East Symphony, Kenneth Woods and guest pianist Dickran Atamian: WOW!”***

The East Oregonian, February 25, 2003

***“Woods’ mastery of the material was evident in his command of the orchestra. Both works were conducted in a way that inspired each member of the orchestra to perform at his or her best. Both works were played to perfection. The string playing was particularly lush, complimenting the clean precision of the winds, brass and percussion... The orchestra accompanied with exceptional grace and fine intonation.”***

The East Oregonian, October 28, 2001

***“...played with intense conviction”***

The Spokane Spokesman Review, August 1994

***“The Oregon East Symphony has a new conductor, Kenneth Woods, a rising star bringing “grade A” talent to Pendleton in his trajectory.”***

The East Oregonian, June 1, 2001

***“Beethoven’s 9<sup>th</sup> Symphony was the Oregon East Symphony’s May 21 concert. Listening to this magnificent concert brought tears to my eyes more than once. At the end, I was exhausted because I was so full of music. I didn’t think I had the capacity to hear one more note, and simultaneously, all I wanted was to continue to listen to more.”***

The East Oregonian, Tuesday May 22, 2001

***“Kenneth Woods led a performance of Elgar’s Enigma Variations with such commitment and passion that one could not help but be stirred by the power of it. He conducts with a fiery passion and a deep respect for the composer’s work.”***

The Elgin Valley News, February 25, 2001

***“Symphony No. 9 "From the New World" by Dvorak... was played with a lush, full sound of great beauty. The Overture to "The Barber of Seville" by Rossini... must be played with great precision and the orchestra did just that. Conductor Kenneth Woods... pushed the orchestra to the next level. The orchestra ...received and deserved standing ovations...Extraordinary concerts!”***

The East Oregonian, November 29, 2001

***“From the first note of the concert, conductor, orchestra and audience seemed to breathe as one.”***

The East Oregonian, January 27, 2004

***“A classic example of Charles Ives - his Symphony No 3 "The Camp Meeting" (1904) - deserved the attention Ken Woods gave to balance and ensemble tuning, allowing all the snippets of melody to come out of the "organized chaos" that Ives was a master of. Ken Woods' interpretation of Barbers Adagio for strings was powerful, almost aggressive. A far cry from the bland "Classic FM" style that this piece so often attracts. The work was underpinned by some perfect intonation in the 'cellos and bass section...”***

Swann Reviews.co.uk, July 5, 2005

## Kenneth Woods, Conductor

### References

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Additional references and letters of recommendation are also available