



Jack Price
Managing Director

Michelle Rubin
Founding Director

5555 N. 7th St., Suite 134
PMB 533
Phoenix, AZ 85014

e-mail:
dt@pricerubin.com

phone:
866 PRI RUBI

fax:
888 334 8054

website:
www.pricerubin.com

Mladen Tarbuk

Conductor



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BIOGRAPHY

Mladen Tarbuk, Croatian conductor and composer acclaimed a wide international recognition conducting *Tristan und Isolde* on the stage of Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb where he was by that time its general director. Leading European opera magazines wrote enthusiastically about his efforts to raise the artistic skill of this ensemble close to the highest international standards and values.

In the same time, after the great success of *Macbeth* at the German Opera at Rhine in Düsseldorf, he was invited to conduct next three titles at this theatre.

His international career brought him to many important opera companies and symphony orchestras all over the world. He conducted The State Opera Prag, Opera Lyra Ottawa, Orquesta Sinfonica del Estado Mexico, Orchestra da Camera Firenze, Orchestra Sinfonica Marchigiana Vincenzo Bellini, Heidelberger Philharmoniker, Orquesta Sinfonica Extremadura, Grazer Sinfonisches Orchester, Zagreb Soloists, Maribor Philharmonics, Belgrade Phylharmony Orchestra, Orchestra ICO Tito Schipa and ICO Venezia-Giulia-Friuli.

Since 2000 he works as the principal conductor of Symphonic Orchestra of Croatian Radio and Television. With this orchestra he recorded hours of Croatian classical and contemporary music. On its concert series he conducted many famous as well as less known works of XX century music, such as *The Rite of Spring*, *Petrouchka* or Weill's 2nd Symphony.

As experienced opera conductor, he worked with famous singers such as Burchuladze, Kern, Zhang, Araiza, Raftery, Neumann, Hadley, van Aken, Pospíš Baldani and Vejzović. At the concert stage his partners were Costa, Padova, Zeltser, Golan, Burato, Pedroni and Slokar.

He was awarded with the Special Award for the best interpretation of *Janaček's Sinfonietta* at the Smetana-Dvořak-Janaček International Conductors Competition in Olomouc, Czech Republic.

At the field of composition his first international success was performance of his *Medida del Tiempo* in Konzerthaus Vienna under baton of Friedrich Cerha. This composition was selected on the First International Composers Competition Vienna 1991 (artistic director Claudio Abbado).

Later on he received numerous international and Croatian Prizes for composition. He wrote over sixty compositions in various forms, compassing from piano pieces to large symphonic and theatre forms. They have been performed at the most important festivals of contemporary music, such as Vienna Modern, Gaudeamus Amsterdam, Musikprotokoll Graz, Moscow Autumn, Europamusicale München, World Music Days 1997 Manchester, Musicora Paris, Trieste Prima and Zagreb Music Biennial. Finally, he drew particular attention of international audience with his ballet *A Streetcar Named Desire*, which opened World Music Days 2005 in Zagreb.

CRITICAL ACCLAIM

Premiere of Tristan und Isolde in Zagreb:

Mrs. Kohlhaas observed in "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung": "Mladen Tarbuk and his HNK orchestra made an effort to the best of their abilities to gain clearly delineated Wagner's sound. This was achieved always clearer, up to the miraculous flourishing of sound in Isolde's Love Death."

"Opernglas" wrote: "Tarbuk led orchestra with verve through the work and convinced with transparent, stringent and vivid sound."

Hans Gärtner in "Der Neue Merker" found that "Mladen Tarbuk is enormous deep musician who gave stimulus with flair for fine gradation and differentiated colouring."

Robert Jungwirth on Bavarian Radio 4 noticed: "Mladen Tarbuk heated his hard working orchestra with progressive drama and yearning fire...musicians and singers gave their best, letting themselves rousing through his musical zeal..."

Premiere of Madame Butterfly in Ottawa

Richard Todd said in "Ottawa Citizen": "Conductor Mladen Tarbuk...is quite a find. He kept things together and moving musically and saw that, as with so much else in this production, the overall musical profile had a poise and moderation that allowed the story to unfold naturally and convincingly."

Jean Jacques Van Vlasseaer emphasized in "Le Droit": "Finally, one should attribute this fluency and staging efficiency to the function of musical flow and profound interpretation, done by an excellent conductor who comes from Croatia, Mladen Tarbuk...He conducted in articulated and intense manner, yielding without haste, not only lyrical tissue with profound and not lukewarm emotion, but the post-Wagnerian unheard harmonisations that transcend work too. He proved also an important skill for an opera conductor, namely, how to push to the front and support voices...Because of high integration of staging with the musical work and because of the first-rank conducting, this Madame Butterfly is a corner stone of these past twenty years of existence of Opera Lyra.

Opera Concert on Castle Festival in Heidelberg

Rainer Kohl wrote in "Rhein-Neckar": "...one could feel with pleasure how he outstandingly well worked with Heidelberg Philharmonics. Routine is unknown word in Tarbuk's understanding of music. His main idea is to reveal unheard aspects of often played works...With every fingertip of his left hand he formed and created, he filled every phrase with meaning and eloquent expression. Orchestra playing was characterized with transparency, and in it reached inner subtlety as well as striking fire...Singers were accompanied with delightful orchestra rubati... Heidelberg Philharmonics accompanied singers with extreme inspiration. And how they understood to play encouraged was remarkable in charmingly zestful and thrillingly brilliant "Dance of Watches" by Ponchielli, as well as in lyrical inspiration of "Intermezzo" from Pagliacci.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Work in opera and ballet

- 2005 Performances of **Abduction from Serail** and **La Wally** at German Opera at Rhine in Düsseldorf
 Premiere of **Tristan and Isolde** at the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb
 Directed by Jochen Zoerner Erb
 Patrick Raftery and Barbara Schneider
 Hofstetter in the leading roles
- 2004 Performances of **Macbeth** and **Cavalleria Rusticana/Pagliacci** at German Opera at Rhine in Düsseldorf
 Premiere of **Swan Lake** at the Teatro Politeama in Lecce/Italy, with Baletto del Sud and ICO Tito Schipa
 Choreographed by Freddy Franzutti
 Premiere of **Andre Chenier** at the Teatro Pergolesi in Jesi/Italy
 Directed by Eike Gramss
 Ignazio Enchinas in the leading role
 Premiere of **Madame Butterfly** in Ottawa with Opera Lyra
 Directed by Michael Cavanagh
 Liping Zhang and Marc Heller in the leading roles
 Premiere of **Lady Macbeth of Mcensk District** at the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb
 Directed by Thomas Schulte Michels
 Vlatka Oršanić and Frank van Akken in the leading roles
 Performances of **La Valse, Pavane** and **Bolero** at the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb
- 2003 Premiere of **Simone Boccanegra** at the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb
 Directed by Petar Selem
 Igor Morosov and Neven Belamaric in the leading roles
- 2002 Premiere of **Werther** at the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb
 Directed by Zlatica Stepan
 Francisco Araiza and Dunja Vejzović in the leading roles
 Premiere of **Barber of Seville** at the Croatian National Theatre I. Zajc in Rijeka.

Premiere of **Figaro's Marriage** at the Folks Theatre Sarajevo
 Performance of **Carmen** on the **May Opera Festival** at the Macedonian Folks Theatre Skopje

2002-05 **General director** of the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb.

1999 Premiere of Händel's **Julius Caesar** with the Zagreb Soloists.

1994 Premiere of the Croatian national romantic opera **Nikola Šubić Zrinski** at the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb. This opera was then presented in his revised version; in 2000, he made a very successful guest appearance with this opera at **The Hungarian National Opera, Budapest**.

1993 Premiere of Minkus's **Don Quixote** at the Slovene National Theatre in Maribor
 The world premiere of Schwertsik's **Café Museum oder die Erleuchtung** at the Musikprotokoll Graz.
 Performances of **Tannhäuser** and **Così fan tutte** at **The State Opera, Prague**.

1991 Premiere of Udo Zimmermann's **White Rose** at the Slovene National Theatre in Maribor

1989-91 Permanent guest conductor at the Croatian National Theatre, Zagreb. He conducted **Electra**, **Rheingold**, **Così fan tutte**, **Tosca**, **Norma**, **Trovatore**, **Barber of Seville**, and many ballets: e.g. **Giselle**, **Nutcracker**, **Swan Lake** and **The Sleeping Beauty**

Concert activities

2004 concerts with **Orquesta Sinfonica Extremadura**, **Orchestra da Camera Firenze**, **Belgrad Philharmonic Orchestra** and **Heidelberger Philharmoniker**.

2003 concerts with **Orquesta Sinfonica del Estado Mexico**, **ICO Venezia-Giulia-Friuli**, **Zagreb Philharmonic Orchestra** and **ICO Tito Schipa**.

2000 he conducted the world premiere of Villardi's oratorio **Judas** in Theatre Saint Michel in Brussels with the Zagreb Soloists.

Since **1990** he appeared frequently with **Croatian Radio Television Symphony Orchestra**, and since **2000** holds the position of **principal conductor** of this orchestra.

Through this fruitful collaboration he recorded dozen hours of Croatian contemporary and classical music, which is often broadcasted by European **Notturmo Program**.

With this orchestra he recorded his own **A Trip Around Austria**, **Fiddles Are Broken**, **Concerto Grosso**, **Concerto for Flute**, **Concertino for Saxophone** and **Concerto for Four Saxophones**.

At concerts he conducted major works of symphony repertoire, such as Stravinsky's **Fairy's Kiss**,

Petrushka and **The Rite of Spring**, Beethoven's **3rd** and **6th** **Symphony**, Dvorak's **9th** **Symphony**,

Tchaikowsky's **4th** and **6th** **Symphony** as well as **Manfred Symphony**, Respighi's **Vetrata di Chiesa**,

Schubert's **3rd** **Symphony**, Mozart's **Symphony in G minor** as well as **Jupiter Symphony**, Korsakov's **Capriccio Espagnole**, an evening of French music with the great mezzo-soprano **Dunja Vejzović**,

Prokofiev's **Classical Symphony** and **2nd Piano Concerto** with Mark Zeltser. Special event was the performance of **Songs and Dances of Death**, sung by Paata Burchuladze.

Particular attention is drawn to the concerts for **young audience**, which were held regularly since 2000. Through these concert series Tarbuk speaks and conducts teaching youngsters the basic elements of orchestration and musical comprehension, sometimes conducting and narrating even in the same time, as in the example of **Peter and the Wolf**.

1993-2000 he was chief conductor of the **Croatian Symphonic Wind Orchestra**, a prestigious state ensemble. Under his artistic direction, the orchestra has its own concert season in the Vatroslav Lisinski Large Concert Hall, Zagreb, with eminent conductors and soloists such as Lajovic, Bareza, Sutej, Vlatkovic, Slokar and Hilgers. He has carried out many interesting projects with the orchestra, such as recording a CD of **Croatian Masses**, the first Croatian performance of Handel's **Fireworks Music**, Bruckner's **E minor Mass**, Weill's **Concerto for Violin and Wind Instruments**, Mozart's **Gran Partita**, Schubert's **German Mass** and the inaugural concert of the **Dubrovnik Summer Festival**. With this orchestra too he has recorded his own **Zildjian Concerto** for percussion and orchestra for **Honey&Rock**, which was released in 1999.

1993-1996 he has regularly conducted at concerts of the **Graz Symphony Orchestra** (Schumann's **4th Symphony**, Kodaly's **Dances from Galanta**, Haydn symphonies, Rachmaninoff's **4th Piano Concerto** and so on), also assisting their chief conductor, Fabio Luisi.

His first concert appearances were with the Zagreb Philharmonic Orchestra (Brahms's **3rd** and **4th Symphony**, Schumann's **4th Symphony**, Mozart's **G minor** and **Jupiter Symphony** and other works). He has also conducted **The Slovene Philharmonic Orchestra**, **The Moravian Philharmonic**, **Olomouc** and **The State Philharmonic, Halle**.

Education

School

After graduating from the Mathematics High School in Zagreb, he went on to read physics at Zagreb University.

Musical Studies

1987	He graduated from the conducting course at the Music Academy, Zagreb (Master Class of Igor Gjadrov).
1988	Graduated from the conducting course at the Music Academy in Graz, Austria (Master Class of Milan Horvat).
1991-92	Studied conducting at the Music Academy, Vienna (Master Class of Uroš Lajovic) and composition, privately with Friedrich Cerha.
1989-93	A Lovro von Matacic Fund scholar
1995	Graduated from the composition course at the Music Academy, Zagreb, Master Class of Stanko Horvat.

Prizes and Awards

2002	Croatian Slavenski Prize for Dreamers
2001	Porin Prize for the best composition in the previous year, Concerto Grosso
1998	Croatian Porin Prize for the best production of the previous year, the Pizzicato CD by the Zagreb Soloists

1993	First Prize, Dr Ernst Vogel International Chamber Composition Competition , Stockerau, Austria First Prize at the International Competition for Choral Competition , Tolosa, Spain First Prize at the Croatian Stjepan Šulek Composers Competition
1992	Special Award for the best interpretation of Janaček's Simfionietta at the Smetana-Dvořak-Janaček International Conductors Competition , Olomouc,
Czech Republic	
1991	Commendation for performance at the st 1st International Vienna Composers Competition (artistic director Claudio Abbado)
1990	Zagreb University Prize for composition
1989	Second Prize at the Yugoslav Young Conductors Competition
1988	Croatian Music Institute Prize for conducting
1987	Zagreb University Prize for conducting

Compositions

He wrote sixty compositions in various forms, compassing from piano pieces to large symphonic and theatre forms. They have been performed at the most important festivals of contemporary music, such as **Vienna Modern, Gaudeamus Amsterdam, Musikprotokoll Graz, Moscow Autumn, Europamusicale München, Musicora Paris, Trieste Prima and Zagreb Music Biennial**. They have been recorded for Austrian, German, Dutch, Italian and Croatian radios. His **Zildjian Concerto** was selected by the international jury and performed at the **World Music Days, Manchester**, 1998. His ballet **A Streetcar Named Desire** opened the **World Music Days Zagreb 2005**. He has written the incidental music for a number of ballets and plays, as well as for the movie **Chase for a Lottery Ticket**.

Teaching

His teaching activities are mainly concentrated at the Music Academy in Zagreb, where since 1990 he has taught music theory. 1998 he was promoted to **Assistant Professor**, and 2005 to **Associate Professor**.

REPERTOIRE

Music Theatre:

Händel: Giulio Cesare Mozart: Entführung aus dem Serail, Le nozze di Figaro, Don Giovanni, Così fan tutte, Zauberflöte Bellini: Norma Rossini: Barbiere di Siviglia Adame: Giselle Minkus: Don Quixote Verdi: La Traviata, Trovatore, Macbeth, Aida, Simone Boccanegra Wagner: Tannhäuser, Das Rheingold, Tristan und Isolde Bizet: Carmen Massenet: Werther, Therese Leoncavallo: I Pagliacci Mascagni: Cavalleria Rusticana Giordano: Andre Chenier Ravel: La Valse, Bolero, Daphnis et Chloe Tchaikovsky: Swan Lake, Nutcracker, Sleeping Beauty Strauss: Elektra Puccini: La Boheme, Tosca, Madame Butterfly Catalani: La Wally Stravinsky: Petrouchka, Le Sacre du Printemps, Le Baiser du Fee Shostakovitch: Lady Macbeth of Mcensk Zimmermann: Die Weisse Rose Schwertsik: Die Erleuchtung Many Croatian operas and ballets

Symphonic works

Bach: All Brandenburg concerts, Concerto in E major for violin, Double concerto in d minor, Double Concerto for violin and oboe in d minor, orchestral suites in h minor and D major Händel: Music for the Royal Fireworks Haydn: over 20 symphonies Mozart: 10 last symphonies, all wind serenades, many piano concerts, violin concerts in G, D and A major, Bassoon concerto Beethoven: all symphonies, all piano concerts, violin concerto, Koriolan, Egmont, Leonore 2nd and 3rd Schubert: all symphonies Berlioz: Symphonie fantastique, Symphonie funebre et trioumphale Gounod: Petite Symphonie Schumann: all symphonies, piano and cello concerto Brahms: all symphonies, 1st piano concerto, violin concerto, double concerto Dvořak: 7th-9th symphony, In the Nature, Cello and Violin concerto Tchaikovsky: 4th-6th symphony, Manfred, Romeo and Juliet Korsakov: Capriccio espagnole, Scheherazade Mussorgsky: The Night on the Bare Mountain, original version, Songs and Dances of Death, Pictures on the exhibition Bruckner: 3rd-5th, 7th-9th symphony Mahler: all symphonies, all song cycles R. Strauss: Till Eulenspiegel, Don Juan, Don Quixote, Tod und Verklärung, Ein Heldenleben Debussy: Prelude pour Apres le midi d'un faune, La Mer, Suite from Pelleas et Melisande Ravel: Pavane pour une infante defunte, Piano concerto in G major, Ma mere l'oye Respighi: Pini di Roma, Vetrare di chiesa, Huntingtower Rachmaninov: 2nd-4th Piano concerto Stravinsky: Soldier's tale, Symphonies for winds, Piano concerto, Violin concerto Hindemith: Konzertante Musik für Bläser, Schwanendreher, Suite from Mathis der Mahler Gershwin: Rhapsody in Blue, An American in Paris Copeland: Music for Theatre, Fanfares for Common Man Prokofiev: 1st symphony, 2nd piano concerto, Peter and the Wolf Shostakovich: 1st and 9th symphony Martinu: Oboe concerto Schönberg: Kammersinfonie II, Survivor from Warsaw variations op. 43 Berg: Suite from Lulu Weill: Violin concerto, 2nd symphony Kodaly: Dances from Galantha Bartok: Concerto for Orchestra, Rumanian Dances A hundred of various Croatian orchestral pieces

Oratorios and Masses:

Bach: St. John Passion, St. Mathew Passion, many church and secular cantatas Pergolesi: Stabat mater Mozart: Exsultate, jubilate, Requiem Schubert: Deutsche Messe Brahms: Ein deutsches Requiem Bruckner: Mass in E minor Mascagni: Messa Faure: Requiem Orff: Carmina Burana, Triumph of Aphrodite

REFERENCES

Professor Tobias Richter, stage director, general director of German Opera at Rhine Opernhaus Düsseldorf Heinrich-Heine-Allee 16a, 40213 Düsseldorf

Professor Klaus Arp, conductor Schillerstr. 60 67071 Ludwigshafen Tel: +49 621 / 675556 Fax: +49 621 / 678313 e-mail: klarpus@t-online.de

Professor Dr. Daniel Lipton, conductor Behlerstr. 26 14469 Potsdam Germany Tel: +49 33156520025 Fax: +49 33156520026 Mobile: +491723417301 e-mail: daniellipton@hotmail.com

Andrea Padova, pianist P.tta Duca d'Atene 4 Lecce 73100 Italy ph/fax +39-0832-246790 andreapadova@alice.it www.andreapadova.com

Thomas Schulte Michels, stage director Mittlere Strasse 43 CH-4056 Basel Tel/Fax +41-61-2616425 e-mail: tsmtsmt@tiscali.ch

Eike Gramss, stage director, general director of Stadttheater Bern Nägeligasse 1 CH-3000 Bern 7 Tel. ++41 (0) 31 329 51 11 Fax ++41 (0) 31 329 51 66