

BOB BERNHARDT BIO

Conductor

In the 2021-22 season, Principal Pops Conductor Bob Bernhardt celebrates a remarkable milestone with his 40th anniversary with the Louisville Orchestra. He is concurrently Principal Pops Conductor of the Grand Rapids Symphony (his 7th year) and Music Director Emeritus and Principal Pops Conductor of the Chattanooga Symphony and Opera (his 29th year).

Formerly, he was Principal Conductor/Artistic Director of the Rochester Philharmonic, Music Director and Conductor of the Tucson Symphony, Music Director and Conductor of the Chattanooga Symphony and Opera, Principal Guest Conductor of Kentucky Opera, Music Director and Conductor of the Amarillo Symphony, and Artistic Director of the Lake Placid Sinfonietta.

Since 2006, he's been the conductor of the Symphony Under the Sky Festival with the Edmonton Symphony, and a frequent guest conductor annually on several of their subscription series. He debuted with the Boston Pops in 1992 at John Williams' invitation and has returned there often.

He's appeared frequently as a guest conductor with the Baltimore Symphony, the Detroit Symphony, the Cincinnati Pops, the Pittsburgh Symphony, the Dallas Symphony, the Seattle Symphony, the St. Louis Symphony, the Pacific Symphony, the Florida Orchestra, the Las Vegas Philharmonic, the Fort Worth Symphony, the Santa Barbara Symphony and many others.

In the world of pops, he has worked with scores of stars from Broadway, Rock & Roll, and the American Songbook: from Brian Stokes Mitchell and Kelli O'Hara, to the Beach Boys and Wynonna, to Jason Alexander and Ben Folds. And because of his extensive experience and lucky upbringing, he has rarely met music he doesn't love.

And on that subject, a lover of opera, he conducted productions with Kentucky Opera for 18 consecutive seasons, and for 19 seasons with his own company in Chattanooga, as well as many guest conducting engagements with the Nashville Opera.

He received his Masters degree with Honors from the University of Southern California's School of Music, studying primarily with Daniel Lewis. He received his BA-Fine Arts degree from Union College in Schenectady, NY, where he graduated Phi Beta Kappa, Summa cum laude, and an Academic All-American Baseball Player. He lives with his wife, Nora, in Signal Mountain, Tennessee.

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