

## JOSÉ CURA - Composer

José Cura debuted age 15 as a choral director and at 16 he began studies in composition with Carlos Castro and piano with Zulma Cabrera. Born in Rosario, Santa Fe, Argentina, on 5 December 1962, Cura's musical talent matured quickly: at 12 he was playing guitar under Juan di Lorenzo's guidance and in 1982, he entered the Escuela Superior de Arte de la Universidad Nacional de Rosario to continue his musical education in the specialties of composing and conducting. The following year he became assistant conductor for the university choir. At 21, he won a grant for a one year course at the Instituto Superior de Arte del Teatro Colón, where he continued to sing, operas and oratorios in the school choir until 1988, while focusing on enriching his composition and conducting aspirations through the first-hand experience granted by being part of the great Argentinean Coliseum activities. It was during those years that, as an example of his precocity, he first conducted Bach's 'St. Matthews Passion.'



In 1991 he moved to Europe and, putting temporarily aside his composer and conductor activity, he concentrated in developing the career as a top tenor for which he became worldwide known.

The progression from innate understanding to sculpting original interpretations has been steady over the decades, even as Cura's career as an international tenor sensation tended to overshadow his work on the podium. Whether breathing with the singers in opera or concert, providing sensitive readings of delicate compositions or leading an orchestra in soaring symphonic grandeur, Cura never plays it safe. He inhabits the soundscape and claims it as his own.

Conducting has been an intrinsic part of Cura's performing platform; from the start of his international career he has mixed podium work with vocalism in an informal way, as when he performed at the Festival Ljubljana in 2000. Formal recognition of his exceptional conducting abilities came in 2001, when Sinfonia Varsovia offered him a three-year assignment as principal guest conductor, a position previously held by the late Lord Yehudi Menuhin. Cura inaugurated his partnership with a spectacular concert in Warsaw in November 2001.

In 2015, José Cura was honored by the Argentinean Senate, with the Domingo Faustino Sarmiento Prize for his achievements in education and culture and in 2017 he was entitled Professor Honoris Causa of the National University of Rosario, Argentina, the University in which he started his academic studies in 1984.

José Cura, the Prague Symphony Orchestra FOK artist in residence, empowered the orchestra to paint vast impressionistic canvases. He began with the gigantic "La cathédrale engoutie", arranged for orchestra, followed by Debussy's cycle "Images pour orchestre". He completed the well-conceived concert programming with another cycle, Pictures from an Exhibition, by Modest Mussorgsky. The Prague Symphony Orchestra and José Cura created robust musical pictures with a full colour palette; their sound was mighty, broad and in places romantic. The tempo was sensible; there was no rush, but an unusual impressionistic depicting of the detail. This was conducive to the breadth and magnitude of the sound. It was truly energetic and mighty music. Operaplus, March 2018

Approaching Easter, when the theme of the Passion of Christ is again being musically illustrated with famous works from the past, Ecce Homo by José Cura will certainly take a place of honor among them. Cura focuses on the last moments before the crucifixion of Christ and his death, but instead of the traditional glorification he uses these moments to reveal the human side of Jesus Christ. The composer himself masterfully assumed the role of Christ. Overall, Cura musical language was traditional and understandable, using a knowledge of Gregorian chant, a lot of percussion instruments, some of which were placed in the balcony, so that the idea of crying and pain was perfect. Cura succeeded to musically realize Ecce Homo within the short time allotted [for rehearsal] and all the participants worked on it as best they could. The audience response was tremendous and especially for Cura who, as the composer, earned a double standing ovation. Novinsky, March 2017

José Cura interpretation of the great and powerful "Resurrection" Symphony did not leave anyone indifferent. With inspiring dimensions, Cura extracted the hidden melodic lines and dynamics from the rich orchestration. In this presentation, everything was as it should be: from the massive forte to a grand piano, from shattering drama to the lightness, fun and even a smile. At the end, his last gesture was to lift up the score: yes, that no one in the audience doubt that the applause belong primarily to Mahler. However, these theatrics would not be enough to obtain a positive answer, if they wouldn't be coming from the great feeling and musical knowledge of a very efficient conductor. A very touching interpretation. Informator, May 2015

We heard Weinberg Rhapsody on Moldavian Themes, Rachmaninov's piano concerto number 2, and Karłowicz "Rebirth" Symphony. José

Cura led the concert with his characteristic precision. This time he captured the audience, not only in demonstrating the mastery of his profession but also with his directness and sense of humor. A great artist and modest, normal person—in Cura's case, these qualities always go hand in hand. Małopolskie Centrum Kultury SOKÓŁ. December 2015

I cannot remember when in Krakow the Symphony "Revival" by Mieczyslaw Karłowicz has been presented. José Cura "played" on the orchestra, doling out themes and threads, emphasizing the climaxes, in a word, he created a beautiful story of love, sadness, despair and hope. Beethoven Academy Orchestra rose to the heights of artistry under his hand. Stowarzyszenie Muzyki Polskiej, December 2015

This was a veritable jewel of balance and subtlety, under José Cura's spell. Resmusica, November 2012

José Cura, as a conductor, has a great future in front of him. To begin with, the care with which he wraps, protects the soloists is the reason for the sustained singing. He was attentive to the rich colors that Puccini spread freely throughout La Rondine that are many times underestimated. La Recensione, April 2009

Something else of great importance: José Cura and the orchestra. The conductor offered up a first-rate reading of Madam Butterfly; the members of the Vienna Philharmonic were totally committed, and accepted him without reservation, following him willingly. After his singing career, the doors of a conducting career are going to be wide open for him; that much was proven. Der Neue Merker, 2006

Cura knows how to lead with the baton. His very physical version of Dvorak's Symphony from the New World leaves no room for dillydallying. It was a shower of music from which the listeners left entirely reinvigorated, and capsized. Tribune de Genève, December 2004

Cura's grasp and focus are impressive... If you are averse to Previn's classic version on EMI with its smeared and haloed romantic aura then this Rachmaninov Second Symphony by José Cura is for you. I have heard several recordings of this work recently. Janssons with the St Petersburg sounds more natural but lacks the same rush as Cura. Kurt Sanderling and the Philharmonia are so much broader, but are nowhere near so excitingly presented. Svetlanov's battered and cut 1960s recording is perhaps the closest in urgency to Cura's. I really enjoyed this version. It is closest to the full-blooded Russian approach. You may well find yourself wanting more Rachmaninov from Cura, who certainly rediscovers the furies in Rachmaninov's music. A performance you imagined but never dreamed you would experience. Classical Music Editor, February 2003

The orchestra of the Hamburg Opera hadn't played with such precision and motivation in a long time. Opernglas, April 2003

This is a superb Rachmaninov Second Symphony, in fact, it's one of the better versions available. If you love this symphony, you will certainly have to hear this surprising performance from a very unexpected source. Classics Today May 2002

José Cura's concert is no doubt going to go down in as one of the most important musical events in this region, in this season. Wyborcza Gazeta, January 2002

The Philharmonia plays beautifully for him, and one hears gradations of color, texture, and dynamics that one would be happy to have from any number of well-known but seemingly less attuned conductors on the international circuit. Andante, August 2002

He had the orchestra eating out of his hand. It was a joy to see José Cura conducting. DD, Boel Fern, July 2002

At the Great Hall of the Vienna Konzerthaus Cura proved his first class innate abilities as conductor with a breathtaking interpretation of Rachmaninov's II Symphony. A highly talented conductor who also sings opera for his own pleasure... Die Press, December 2002

With immense feel for drama and musical nuances, Cura conducted a meticulous interpretation of Rachmaninov's Second Symphony.

Without airs and graces, with sweeping gestures and precise entries he sketched an electrifying body of sound. Kronen Zeitung, December 2002

PROSCENIUM Artist's Management GmbH

AT-1010 Vienna, Rudolfsplatz 12

+43 1 968 44 22 - +43 1 968 44 22 22

Contact office@proscenium.at



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