



John Kennedy

Resident Conductor and Director of Orchestral Activities

John Kennedy has a long history with Spoleto Festival USA. He first appeared as a member of the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra in 1983. He conducted his first Spoleto opera in 2006 and has served as Director of Orchestral Activities since 2011. In recent seasons, Kennedy has conducted the Festival's world premiere of *Omar*, with music by Rhiannon Giddens and Michael Abels, and the world premiere production of Huang Ruo's *Paradise Interrupted* (2015), as well as the American premieres productions of operas including *Émilie* by Kaija Saariaho (2011), *Kepler* by Philip Glass (2012), *Matsukaze* by Toshio Hosokawa (2013), *Facing Goya* by Michael Nyman (2014), *The Little Match Girl* by Helmut Lachenmann (2016), *Quartett* by Luca Francesconi (2017), and *Tree of Codes* by Liza Lim (2018). Kennedy also auditions and selects each member of the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra through an audition tour in cities through the United States.

Outside of the Festival, Kennedy has led acclaimed performances and premieres worldwide of opera, orchestral, ballet, and new music. He is especially noted for his interpretations of contemporary music and has worked with many of the leading composers of our time in over 300 premieres and numerous recordings. He has designed and led many orchestral concerts integrating classic works with the new. Kennedy has recently guest conducted at West Edge Opera, Daejeon Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestra 21, Singapore International Festival of the Arts, the Crested Butte Music Festival, and with many organizations including the Lincoln Center Festival, Other Minds Festival, sfSound, Talea Ensemble, Santa Fe Opera, and New York City Ballet. Kennedy is the composer of more than 90 works, including opera, orchestral, chamber, and experimental works that have been performed throughout the world.

In addition to his work for Spoleto Festival USA, in 2022, his family opera *The Language of Birds* receives a new production by Canadian Children's Opera Company in Toronto, and he leads West Edge Opera in the US premiere of Mark-Anthony Turnage's opera *Coraline*.