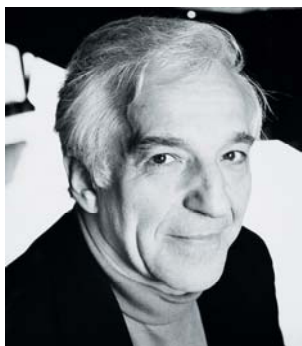


## Vladimir Ashkenazy



In the years since Vladimir Ashkenazy first came to prominence on the world stage in the 1955 Chopin Competition in Warsaw he has built an extraordinary career, not only as one of the most renowned and revered pianists of our times, but as an artist whose creative life encompasses a vast range of activities and continues to offer inspiration to music-lovers across the world.

Conducting has formed the largest part of his activities for the past 20 years. Formerly Chief Conductor of the Czech Philharmonic (1998 to 2003), and Music Director of NHK Symphony Orchestra in Tokyo (2004 to 2007), in January 2009 he took up the new position of Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor to the Sydney Symphony

Orchestra. A regular visitor to Sydney over many years, he already shares a warm relationship with the Orchestra. They will collaborate on a number of exciting projects including composer festivals, major recording projects and international touring activities.

Alongside these positions, Ashkenazy continues his longstanding relationship with the Philharmonia Orchestra of which he was appointed Conductor Laureate in 2000. In addition to his performances with the orchestra in London and around the UK each season, he tours with them worldwide, and has developed landmark projects such as 'Prokofiev and Shostakovich Under Stalin' in 2003 (a project which he also took to Cologne, New York, Vienna and Moscow) and 'Rachmaninoff Revisited' in 2002 at the Lincoln Center, New York.

Ashkenazy also holds the positions of Music Director of the European Union Youth Orchestra, with whom he tours each year, and Conductor Laureate of the Iceland Symphony Orchestra. He maintains strong links with a number of other major orchestras with whom he has built special relationships over the years, including the Cleveland Orchestra (of whom he was formerly Principal Guest Conductor), San Francisco Symphony and Deutsches Symphonie Orchester Berlin (Chief Conductor and Music Director 1988-96), as well as making guest appearances with many other major orchestras around the world. He returned to conduct the Berlin Philharmonic in October 2007.

While conducting takes up a significant portion of his time each season, Ashkenazy continues to devote himself to the piano, these days mostly in the recording studio where he continues to build his extraordinarily comprehensive recording catalogue with releases such as the 1999 Grammy award-winning Shostakovich *Preludes and Fugues*, Rautavaara's Piano Concerto No.3 (a work which he commissioned) and Rachmaninov Transcriptions. Most recently released are his recordings of that most challenging and enriching of works, Bach's *Wohltemperierte Klavier* and released in June 2007, Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations*.

Beyond his hectic and fulfilling performing schedule, Ashkenazy continues to be involved in some fascinating TV projects, often inspired by his passionate drive to ensure that serious music continues to have a platform in the mainstream media and is made available to as broad an audience as possible. Many will remember his programmes with the outstanding director Christopher Nupen, including in 1979 *Music After Mao*, filmed in Shanghai, and the extraordinary *Ashkenazy in Moscow* programmes which marked his first visit in 1989 to the country of his birth since leaving the USSR in the 1960s. More recently he has developed educational programmes with NHK TV including the 1999 *Superteachers* working with inner-city London school children, and in 2003-4 a documentary based around his 'Prokofiev and Shostakovich Under Stalin' project.

2008/09 season only. Please contact HarrisonParrott if you wish to edit this biography.