Kent Nagano
Conductor

Honorary Conductor: Philharmonisches Staatsorchester Hamburg
Conductor Laureate: Deutsche Symphonie Orchester Berlin
Honorary Conductor: Concerto Köln
Chief Conductor and Artistic Director: Orquesta y Coro Nacionales de España (from September 2026)
Principal Artistic Partner: Filarmonica Toscanini

Kent Nagano is considered one of today’s outstanding conductors for both operatic and orchestral repertoire. He will be the next Chief conductor and Artistic Director of the Orquesta y Coro Nacionales de España (OCNE) in Madrid starting in September 2026 and is the newly appointed Principal Artistic Partner of Filarmonica Toscanini. In addition, he is committed together with Jan Vogler as Artistic Director of the Ring project “The Wagner Cycles” of Dresdner Musikfestspiele with Dresdner Festspielorchester and Concerto Köln alongside Jan Vogler. He has been Honorary Conductor of the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin since 2006, Concerto Köln since 2019, the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal since 2021 and the Philharmonisches Staatsorchester Hamburg since 2023 and is as patron of the Herrenchiemsee Festival.

As a much sought-after guest conductor, Kent Nagano regularly works with leading international orchestras worldwide, 2025/26 season highlights include several projects with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, the Munich Philharmonic Orchestra, Maggio Musicale, the Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich, Opera de Paris, and the Philharmonia Orchestra amongst others.

The 2024/25 season was Kent Nagano’s final season as General Music Director in Hamburg. Highlights of tenure included opera productions such as ‘Boris Godunov’, ‘Salome’, performances of Sciarrino’s ‘Venere e Adone’ and Britten’s ‘Peter Grimes’, ‘Les Troyens’, ‘Lulu’, ‘Lessons in Love and Violence’, and the world premiere of ‘Stilles Meer’, as well as ‘Les Contes d’Hoffmann’ in the new production by Daniele Finzi Pasca (released on DVD by EuroArts, February 2022). Other highlights were the “Philharmonic Academy” at St. Michaelis, open-air concerts at the Rathausmarkt, and the world premiere of Pascal Dusapin’s ‘Waves’ for organ and orchestra at the Elbphilharmonie. Orchestral tours with the Philharmonisches Staatsorchester Hamburg have taken Nagano to Japan, Taiwan, China, Spain, and South America.

Previous operatic highlights include the revival of Ligeti’s ‘Le Grand Macabre’ in a production by Krzysztof Warlikowski at the Bavarian State Opera in Munich last year, Bernstein’s opera ‘A Quiet Place’ at the Paris Opera, the world premiere of Dusapin’s ‘Il Viaggio, Dante’ at the Festival d’Aix-en-Provence, Hindemith’s ‘Cardillac’, Henze’s ‘Die Bassariden’ and the world premiere of Saariaho’s ‘L’amour de loin’ at the Salzburg Festival. Other world premieres conducted by Nagano include Bernstein’s ‘A White House Cantata’ and the operas ‘Alice in Wonderland’ by Unsuk Chin, ‘Three Sisters’ by Peter Eötvös and ‘The Death of Klinghoffer’ and ‘El Niño’ by John Adams.

Under the artistic direction of Kent Nagano and the Intendant of the Dresdner Musikfestspiele Jan Vogler, Wagner's Ring Tetralogy will be performed in the artistic context of the period in which it was composed, based on the latest findings of research into Wagner and performance practice, and integrated into an extensive supporting program as part of the multi-year project The Wagner Cycles of the Dresdner Musikfestspiele from 2023 to 2026. The first performance in 2023 of Das Rheingold took place at the

Dresden Music Festival and the project has toured to Cologne, Ravello, Prague, Amsterdam, Hamburg and and Lucerne. The project continues into 2026 with performances of Gotterdammerung.

Nagano’s recordings with the OSM on Sony Classical/Analekta include Mahler’s Orchestral Songs with Christian Gerhaher in 2013 and a complete recording of all of Beethoven’s symphonies in 2015. Decca released a recording of the North American premiere of L'Aiglon, a rarely performed opera by Honegger

and Ibert in 2016, conducted by Nagano in 2015. Further releases by Decca are Danse Macabre with works by Dukas, Saint-Saens, Ives and others in 2016 as well as a recording of Bernstein's ‘A quiet place’ in 2018 on the occasion of the composer's 100th birthday. John Adams' ‘Common tones’ in simple time & harmony (Decca) was released in 2019, the ‘Lukas Passion’ by Penderecki (BIS) and works by Ginastera, Bernstein and Moussa (Analekta) in 2020.

In October 2019, Kent Nagano and Mari Kodama expanded their joint recordings of Beethoven's works for piano and orchestra with Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 0 E-flat Major WoO 4, a nearly unknown work from the composer’s youth, and his Rondo for Piano and Orchestra WoO 6 with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin. The complete edition of Beethoven’s piano concerti was released on the Berlin Classics label.

Nagano was awarded Grammys for his recordings of Busoni’s Doktor Faust with Opéra National de Lyon, Prokofjew’s Peter and the Wolf with the Russian National Orchestra and Saariaho’s L’amour de Loin with the Deutsches Symphonieorchester Berlin. He has worked with labels such as BIS, Decca, Sony Classical, FARAO Classics and Analekta for many years, and has also recorded CDs with Berlin Classics, Erato, Teldec, Pentatone, Deutsche Grammophon and Harmonia Mundi.

To celebrate Kent Nagano's 70th birthday in 2021, a 3-CD box set of works by Olivier Messiaen was released in October on the BR Klassik label. The release includes live recordings of the works Poèmes pour Mi, Chronochromie and La Transfiguration de Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ from his concerts with the Symphonieorchester und Chor des Bayerischen Rundfunks, demonstrating Nagano's close familiarity with Messiaen's musical language in a special way.

In September 2021, Kent Nagano published his second book with Berlin Verlag. In "10 Lessons of my Life", he recalls ten deeply personal encounters from which he learned important lessons, not only for his career but for his life more broadly. Among those experiences are encounters with the Icelandic pop artist Björk, Frank Zappa, Leonard Bernstein, Pierre Boulez and the Nobel Prize winner in physics Donald Glaser.

In 2015 Kent Nagano published "Erwarten Sie Wunder!" also in Berlin Verlag, a passionate appeal for the relevance of classical music in today's world. In 2019 the book was released in English by the Canadian McGill-Queen's University Press under the title ″Classical Music - Expect the Unexpected" and in 2015 under "Sonnez, merveilles!" in French by Éditions du Boréal.

Kent Nagano was awarded honorary doctorates from McGill University in Montréal in 2005, the Université de Montréal in 2006, and Francisco State University in 2018. Since 2017, Kent Nagano has been a "Compagnon" of the "Ordre des arts et des lettres" of Québec and in the fall of 2023, Kent Nagano was also awarded the title of "Chevalier" in the "Ordre des art et des lettres" of France. In February 2024, Nagano was awarded the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany by the Federal President and in June 2024 he was awarded the Order of Canada, Canada's highest civilian honor. Kent Nagano is the recipient of the 2024 Brahms Prize of the Brahms Society of Schleswig-Holstein.