

András Vass

Conductor

“András Vass is an excellent young conductor. He has done important work in Pecs and elsewhere. I can warmly recommend him!”

Ivan Fischer – December 29, 2010

Music Director, Budapest Festival Orchestra

The remarkable, young, Hungarian conductor, András Vass, a protégé of Ivan Fischer, has recently emerged on the international scene.

Born in Romania, he completed intensive musical studies in piano, percussion, composition and conducting. Graduating from the High School of the Arts in Tirgu-Mures as “Student of the Year,” he entered the Ferenc Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest with the highest entry score, where he studied conducting with Ervin Lukács, András Ligeti and Tamás Gál. He earned his Master of Music degree in conducting with honors and won the Donáth Ede Memorial Prize.

András Vass made his professional conducting debut with the North Hungarian Orchestra in 2001 on its Town Hall Evening Series after which he appeared in concert cycles with the Tirgu-Mures Philharmonic as a pianist and celesta player and as conductor for Mozart Piano concertos with Dana Borsan and an evening of Verdi's arias with Eszter Sümegi. He has worked with several important Hungarian orchestras including the Budapest Festival Orchestra, Budapest Symphony Orchestra, Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra, the Ferenc Liszt Academy of Music Symphony, the MAV Symphony Orchestra, the Solti Chamber Orchestra of Budapest, the Savaria Symphony Orchestra and the Pannon Philharmonic Orchestra among them. He has worked with renowned Hungarian artists such as pianist Gabor Csalog, violinist Barnabas Kelemen, cellist Laszlo Fenyo and violinist György Lakatos as well as the Romanian violinist, Bálint Székely and the French organist Olivier Latry.

During the 2005-06 season came his lucky break; he was selected from more than 50 aspirants from 17 countries to become assistant conductor to Maestro Ivan Fischer with the Budapest

Festival Orchestra. In summer 2006 the Hungarian edition of Gramophone Magazine carried a feature on this most promising conductor. Since then he has continued to work regularly with the Budapest Festival Orchestra and to be invited as a guest conductor with the Tirgu-Mures Philharmonic Orchestra as well as other orchestras in Hungary and Romania. In 2009 he was named Permanent Conductor of the Pannon Philharmonic Orchestra, where he conducts subscription concerts and opera each season.

In addition to his native Hungarian and Romanian, Maestro Vass speaks English and Italian.

(June 2012 - please discard any previous version)

Press comments:

Verdi's *Falstaff*, Pannon Philharmonic:

“It is Pécs where one should travel to see and hear a great production of Falstaff. The final masterpiece of Verdi generally poses a demanding lesson to conductors. This performance, conducted by András Vass, proved his excellent sense of scale and musical intelligence in a rarely-experienced solid-measured performance of the demanding ensembles of Falstaff.”

Komolyzenei Magazine - April 23

“Marked distinction goes to András Vass, who conducted the Pannon Philharmonic Orchestra's concert on November 24. The performance was much anticipated because this excellent young conductor has repeatedly dazzled Pécs audiences. In addition to being an extremely bright-tempered conductor, Vass has a rich dynamic range, which we observe as not an end to itself, but inventive, or one could say fresh, giving an almost romantic reading to the classic Haydn's scores as a possible role model Leonard Bernstein did. Again, this time with Vass did not disappoint! András Vass and its quite spectacular and freely energetic Pécs band has the merit of his light, but exceptional virtuosity, capturing playfulness and the seriousness Bach's polyphony, while also evoking the drama through great rhythmic and dynamic freshness heard that the best old musical tradition would also praise. It has been a long time since we have heard the full contingent of strings, particularly the violins play at such a high level throughout an entire evening; with technical and intellectual freshness, with excellent woodwind solos (oboe, flute, bassoon). The Mozart had a more than usually well-put-together, strong performances in the gripping hand holding seal "early music" can be classified into one of the best performances.”

Eozin Magazine – November 30, 2011

Music of Kurtág Pannon Philharmonic:

“The Pannon Philharmonic's musicians, precisely led by (and obviously thank to the accurate preparation with) András Vass, played very-very concentrated. “Self-portrait with fellow musicians from Budapest” – described Ligeti the piece, notably its first movement, dedicated to

Zoltán Kocsis and Péter Eötvös. This time, in Csalog's meaningful piano playing, the gestures of remembering, parting, and farewell seemed the most dominant. Although my seat's position was certainly ideal for the Kurtág-work, it cannot be said this for the other two pieces of the concert. Listening to Haydn- and Mahler-symphonies from such a close distance is at least as a unique experience as closely exploring the archaeological layers of a make-up on faces that seem to be smooth from far away. In these terms, the Pannon Philharmonic beseeemed the trial really well. Listening to the concert opening "Miracle" Symphony No.96, I gladly explored the orchestra's string sections' unified and healthy sound and nice tone and the wind players' reliable presence. András Vass's conducting made the ensemble not only play precisely and keep rhythm exactly; it also kept the balance of the harmony and the transparency of the inner voices until the end. Nevertheless, for the 32-year-old conductor, born in Targu Mures and graduated in Budapest, the main point of the concert must have been the Symphony No.1 by Mahler, performed after the break. (Note, referring again to the program flyer, that it should not be "titanic": the final four-movement-version of the symphony, played at the concert, has never worn the title "Titan", especially not "The Titan"). We could hear a conscientiously prepared, accurately thank-through, and with steady hand conducted production; some shadows of minor difficulties disturbed only a few moments of the first movement. The finale was striking and effective; and I might have not misunderstand the situation when I saw so that the orchestra followed the young conductor, making music together, not just with responsibility but wit enthusiasm as well. (20 May – Béla Bartók National Concert Hall. Organiser: Pannon Philharmonic)

Muzsika Magazine – July 2011

"Works by Haydn, György Kurtág and Mahler were performed by the the Pannon Philharmonic at the Béla Bartók National Concert Hall on 20 May. The conductor on this occasion was András Vass, who first conducted the ensemble in Budapest; as a soloist, Gabor Csalog, the most accomplished interpreter of Kurtág's oeuvre, has produced several recordings of the composer's pieces, and is an intrinsic performer of Hungarian contemporary music. I liked the slow introduction's beautiful mixtures and elaborate string sound in the interpretation of the Haydn symphony. The fast part could be lighter, but the clear display of Sturm und Drang, so characteristic in earlier works of Haydn and found even in the later ones, was nice. The slow movement was impressive with its solos; in the Minuet, the ensemble let one feel the once rustic, once gentle dance character with the right accents. I liked the oboe solo's ascending scale in the Trio. György Kurtág wrote his "...quasi una fantasia..." at the end of the 1980. The piece's very interesting title indicates a fantasy-like work; the instrumentation is exciting using mouth harps and the use of three-dimensional space effect also shows by the artist's sensitivity. This evening we got a great performance; the audience listened to the wonderful moments with bated breath. To his Symphony No.1, Mahler wrote a program, but later he withdrew it. He also removed one of the movements, thus the symphony, built up of four major parts, became more unified. The musicians of Pécs – under the leadership of András Vass – interpreted the symphony well; some parts stood out beautifully, like the filtered sound of the 3rd movement before the return or the closing part after the bassoon solo. The klezmer and the beginning of the second movement sounded affectionately, we heard nice solos throughout the course of the piece. I liked the larger units together. As the symphony progressed, the orchestra's playing became increasingly more

and more expressive, so the work unfolded completely.”

Papiruszportal.hu – May 27, 2011

“The Music Days’ final concert’s program contained one of Mozart's youth’s Violin Concerto (in D major, KV 218) and his last, unfinished masterpiece, the Requiem, performed by the Tirgu Mures Philharmonic, featuring Bálint Székely and András Vass. The idea of this double choice deserves a praise because these famous young artists emigrated from Tirgu Mures; both are perfectionists, and both are really proud of the school where they started. They are not just performer-craftsmen but artist in the true sense. András Vass is an intelligent and reliable musician. He has a solid command over the musical material, and avoiding any unnecessary movement, conducts simply and clearly. He cares about shaping the character of each motive; a concert builds in dynamic in a unified, formal framework. This performance of the Requiem, Mozart’s masterpiece, perfect even in its smallest detail, was clearly great. The extremely effective choral parts, the almost instrument-like development of the choral fugues, the prophetic vision of the *Dies irae*, and the beautiful vocal solos, with many shocking, mysterious and immersive moments, could cause a real catharsis. However, it is essential to note that what we heard was not accidental, it was meant to sound so. András Vass was able to give attention to everything at the same time - to the sound, the arches of forms, and the authenticity. The audience welcomed these guest artists returning home with a well-deserved ovation.”

Nepujsag.ro – May 30