

# biography



## STANISLAW SKROWACZEWSKI

Stanislaw Skrowaczewski commands a rare position in the international musical scene being both a major conducting figure and a highly regarded composer.

Born in Lwow, Poland, Skrowaczewski began piano and violin studies at the age of four, composed his first symphonic work at seven, gave his first public piano recital at 11 and two years later played and conducted Beethoven's 3rd Piano Concerto. A hand injury during the war terminated his keyboard career, after which he concentrated on composing and conducting. In 1946 he became conductor of the Wroclaw (Breslau) Philharmonic, and he later served as Music Director of the Katowice Philharmonic (1949-54), Krakow Philharmonic (1954-56) and Warsaw National Orchestra (1956-59).

Skrowaczewski spent the immediate post-war years in Paris, studying with Nadia Boulanger and co-founding the avant-garde group "Zodiaque". After winning the 1956 International Competition for Conductors in Rome he was invited by George Szell to make his American debut conducting the Cleveland Orchestra in 1958. This led to engagements with the New York Philharmonic, Pittsburgh and Cincinnati Symphonies and, in 1960, to his appointment as Music Director of the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra (now the Minnesota Orchestra). Skrowaczewski has regularly conducted the major orchestras of the world as well as the Vienna State Opera and the Metropolitan Opera. He has made international tours with the Concertgebouw, French National, Warsaw and Hamburg orchestras, and twice toured the Philadelphia Orchestra to South America and the Cleveland Orchestra to Australia.

From 1984-91, following 19 years as Music Director of the Minneapolis Symphony, he was appointed Principal Conductor of the Hallé Orchestra. With the Hallé he gave concerts throughout England, led tours to the United States, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Scandinavia, Spain and Poland and recorded for RCA, Chandos and Pickwick/Carlton.

Beginning with his *Overture 1947*, which won the Szymanowski Competition in Poland, many of Skrowaczewski's works have received major international awards. Among his most recent compositions are his *Symphony*, premiered in 2003 by the Minnesota Orchestra, the *Concerto for Orchestra*, short listed for a Pulitzer Prize in 1999 and his *Violin Concerto*, commissioned and premiered by the Philadelphia Orchestra. Earlier works performed by major European and American orchestras are the *Concerto for Clarinet*, *Concerto for English Horn* and "*Ricercari Notturmi*", recipient of a Kennedy Center Friedheim Award in 1976.

Skrowaczewski's interpretations of the Bruckner symphonies have earned him the Gold Medal of the Mahler-Bruckner Society, whilst his programming of contemporary music at the Minnesota Orchestra has been acknowledged by five ASCAP awards. An extensive discography includes recordings for RCA, Philips, CBS, Denon, EMI/Angel, Mercury, Vox, Erato, Muza, Arte Nova and Oehms Classics. Many celebrated earlier recordings have been re-released on CD and his digital recordings of Shostakovich, Brahms and particularly Bruckner have received highest praise. Skrowaczewski's recent recordings of Bruckner's 11 symphonies and Beethoven's 9 symphonies with the Saarländischer Rundfunk Orchestra for Arte Nova have received enormous critical acclaim, with the Bruckner receiving the Cannes 2002 Award for Best Orchestral Recording of 18th/19th Century Orchestral Work and last year the Halle Orchestra released Skrowaczewski's recordings of Shostakovich's First and Sixth Symphonies on their own label.

Guest engagements now take Skrowaczewski across North and South America, to Europe, Scandinavia and Japan. Skrowaczewski is currently the Conductor Laureate of the Minnesota Orchestra, Principal Guest Conductor of the Deutsche Radio Philharmonie (formerly Saarbrücken Radio Symphony Orchestra) and Principal Conductor of the Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra in Tokyo.

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