



470 Park Avenue South, 9th Fl North, New York, NY 10016 | T 212 584 7500 | F 646 300 8200
110 South Fairfax Avenue, Ste 375, Los Angeles, CA 90036 | T 323 954 1776 | F 323 549 0155
www.opus3artists.com

JAHJA LING

Conductor

Jahja Ling's distinguished career as an internationally renowned conductor has earned him an exceptional reputation for musical integrity, intensity, and expressivity. Mr. Ling is in his fifth season as Music Director of the San Diego Symphony, where his contract was recently extended until 2012. In response to the community's overwhelming support of the orchestra's new Music Director, the Mayor of San Diego proclaimed October 2, 2004 as Jahja Ling Day in a grand gesture of welcome. Since then, his performances have received the highest praise from the public and critics alike. Under his leadership, the audience attendance has consistently increased and financially, the orchestra has posted its 10th surplus in a row in as many years.

As a guest conductor, Mr. Ling has conducted all of the major symphony orchestras in North America. In the 08/09 season, Mr. Ling returns as guest conductor with the Cleveland Orchestra, Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, Taiwan National Symphony, the China Philharmonic and Guangzhou Symphony, and he makes his debut with the Macao Symphony. In recent seasons, he has appeared with the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia and the symphony orchestras of Baltimore, Cleveland, Honolulu, Phoenix, Houston, Pittsburgh, and Utah. Abroad, he has appeared at the Tivoli Festival with the Copenhagen Philharmonic and with the Bochum Symphony in Germany as well as the Singapore Symphony. In May 2000, his debut performance with the St. Louis Symphony and cellist Yo-Yo Ma was featured on the ABC News program 20/20. He also demonstrates a strong commitment to working with young musicians and has conducted the orchestras of the Juilliard School, the Curtis Institute, and the Aspen Music Festival.

Mr. Ling is acclaimed not only for his interpretation of the standard repertoire, but also for the breadth of contemporary music included in his programs. Among the world premieres he has conducted are works by William Bolcom, George Perle, Bright Sheng, Alvin Singleton, Augusta Read Thomas,

Mark Anthony Turnage, and Ellen Taaffe Zwilich, with orchestras such as The Cleveland Orchestra, the Detroit Symphony, the Florida Orchestra, and the New York Philharmonic, among others.

Mr. Ling made his European debut with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra in 1988 to great acclaim. His other engagements abroad have taken him to the Chamber Orchestra of Lausanne, the China Broadcasting Symphony Orchestra in Beijing, the Hong Kong Philharmonic, the Malaysia Philharmonic, the MDR Symphony Orchestra in Leipzig, the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, the NDR Radio-Philharmonie in Hannover, the NDR Symphony Orchestra in Hamburg, the Orchestre Nationale du Capitole de Toulouse, the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, the Shanghai Symphony, the Singapore Symphony, the Sydney Symphony, the Stockholm Philharmonic, and Tokyo's Yomiuri Nippon Symphony. In May 1997, Mr. Ling led the Scottish Chamber Orchestra on tour to Hong Kong as part of the celebrations marking the return of Hong Kong to China. In 2001, Mr. Ling was also invited to conduct the Super World Orchestra, an orchestra comprised of top principals of 30 of the most prominent orchestras in Europe, America, and Asia for performances in Osaka and Tokyo.

Mr. Ling holds one of the longest continuous relationships with one of the world's greatest orchestras, The Cleveland Orchestra. He first served as Associate Conductor in the 1984-85 season, and then as Resident Conductor for 17 years from 1985-2002 and as Blossom Festival Director for 6 seasons (2000-2005). Since then he has continued to appear as guest conductor of the Orchestra in every season. This season he is returning to both Severance Hall and the Blossom Festival to celebrate his 25th anniversary with that esteemed ensemble. In his tenure with the Orchestra, he has conducted over 450 concerts and 600 works including many world premiere performances. Among his distinguished services as Resident Conductor, Mr. Ling led the orchestra's annual concert in downtown Cleveland, heard by more than a million people since first presented in 1990. His telecast of "A Concert in Tribute and Remembrance" with the Orchestra for 9/11 received an Emmy Award. The U.S. House of Representatives presented a Congressional Record of his outstanding achievements in the U.S. Capitol in September 2006. Prior to his Cleveland appointment, Mr. Ling served as Assistant and Associate Conductor of the San Francisco Symphony. Deeply committed to education, Mr. Ling served as

founding Music Director of the Cleveland Orchestra Youth Orchestra (1986-1993) and the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra (1981-84).

His tenure as Music Director of the Florida Orchestra was a notable artistic success, both in the Tampa Bay region and beyond. The significant contribution he made to the cultural life of the area was recognized by the mayors of Tampa and St. Petersburg, who presented him with keys to the city in April 2002 and further honored him through a declaration of “Jahja Ling Day” in February 1998. With the Florida Orchestra, Jahja Ling was the first conductor ever invited to appear at the Super Bowl (XXV) in 1991 with Whitney Houston performing the National Anthem, and the audio and video of that performance earned platinum records. He was named Music Director Laureate in 2002. Additionally, Mr. Ling served as Artistic Director of the Taiwan National Symphony Orchestra from 1998-2001.

Mr. Ling’s recordings for Telarc include the Dupré Organ Symphony and the Rheinberger Organ Concerto with soloist Michael Murray and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and two albums of baroque works with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra (the first of which, with trumpeter Rolf Smedvig, was nominated for a Grammy award). In 1998, Azica Records released a disc with Mr. Ling and the Florida Orchestra entitled “Symphonic Dances,” featuring Bernstein’s Symphonic Dances from “West Side Story,” Strauss’s “Rosenkavalier Suite,” and Ravel’s Suite No. 2 from “Daphnis and Chloé.” Mr. Ling and the Florida Orchestra have also recorded Stephen Montague’s “From the White Edge of Phrygia” for Continuum. His performance with the New York Philharmonic of the world premiere of Ellen Taaffe Zwilich’s Third Symphony is featured in a recent compact disc collection of philharmonic performances entitled American Celebrations. Also, The Cleveland Orchestra has released a special edition compact disc featuring Mr. Ling and the orchestra performing Saint-Saens’ “Organ” Symphony for the rededication of Severance Hall’s Norton Memorial Organ.

Born in Jakarta, Indonesia, of Chinese descent and now an American citizen, Mr. Ling began to play the piano at age 4 and studied at the Jakarta School of Music. At age 17, he won the Jakarta Piano Competition and, one year later, was awarded a Rockefeller grant to attend The Juilliard School, where he studied piano with Mieczyslaw Munz and conducting with John Nelson. After completing a master’s degree at Juilliard, he studied orchestral conducting at the Yale School of Music under Otto-Werner

Mueller and received a doctor of musical arts degree in 1985. He was also awarded an honorary doctorate by Wooster College in 1993. In the summer of 1980 Mr. Ling was granted the Leonard Bernstein Conducting Fellowship at Tanglewood and, two years later, was selected by Mr. Bernstein, who became one of his most influential mentors, to be a Conducting Fellow at the Los Angeles Philharmonic Institute. In 1988 Mr. Ling was a recipient of the Seaver/National Endowment for the Arts Conductor's Award, a career development grant made to American conductors of extraordinary promise.

As a pianist, Mr. Ling won a bronze medal at the 1977 Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Master Competition in Israel and was awarded a certificate of honor at the following year's Tchaikovsky International Piano Competition in Moscow. He made his Cleveland Orchestra debut as a pianist in 1987 and has appeared as both soloist and conductor with a number of orchestras in the United States and internationally.

Mr. Ling makes his home in San Diego with his wife, Jessie, and their young daughters Priscilla and Stephanie. He also serves as a volunteer as Vice President of the Stephen Tong Evangelistic Ministries International.

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