

Rei Hotoda, conductor

Conductor Rei Hotoda has been hailed as an inexhaustible dynamo with a deep commitment to reimagining the 21st century concert experience. Her vision can be seen through her thought-provoking programming, passionate allyship to marginalized artists, advocacy for arts education, and an unwavering commitment to presenting many of today's leading American composers.

Rei has appeared as a guest conductor with several prestigious orchestras, including the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, and the symphony orchestras of Toronto, Winnipeg, St. Louis, Detroit, Hawaii and Utah as well as the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, among others. Her interpretations of epic centerpieces of the classical canon such as Shostakovich's Symphony No. 8 and Britten's War Requiem, make her one of the most sought-after conductors in the industry. She is a tireless advocate for the music of our time, and most recently conducted premieres by Derek Bermel, Juan Pablo Contreras, Kevin Day, Dinuk Wijeratne, John Wineglass, and Cynthia Lee Wong.

As a champion of today's living composers and an artist that is dedicated to amplifying marginalized voices, Rei's innovative programming and interdisciplinary collaborations continue to position her as a leader in the industry. Across nearly every concert in 22/23, Rei has programmed works by black, indigenous, Hispanic, and women composers, including, Grażyna Bacewicz, Juan Pablo Contreras, Gabriela Lena Frank, Damien Geter, Adolphus Hailstork, Jennifer Higdon, Hannah Kendall, Arturo Márquez, Jessie Montgomery, Paola Prestini, Jerod Impichchaachaaha 'Tate, and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor.

One of Rei's central programs for the 22/23 season is the paring of the Westcoast premiere of Damien Geter's Justice Symphony with Beethoven's Symphony No. 9—with Damien as soloist—with the Fresno Philharmonic, where she serves as Music Director. Rei will also lead the FPO in the Westcoast premiere of Juan Pablo Contreras's MeChicano, a Fresno Philharmonic co-commission with New Music USA's Amplifying Voices. She and the Fresno Philharmonic continue their critically-acclaimed series Mahler Here and Now with Mahler's Symphony No. 5 juxtaposed against Jessie Montgomery's Rounds for Piano and String Orchestra featuring pianist Awadagin Pratt as soloist.

Rei makes several exciting conducting debuts with evocative programming that specifically focuses on important women composers. Two of her many 22/23 season highlights, include: the Louisiana Philharmonic leading Bacewicz's Concerto for String Orchestra and the Wichita Symphony with Higdon's All Things Majestic. Rei will also lead the Santa Barbara Symphony in a tribute to film composer and American-music icon, John Williams for her debut. She returns to the Louisville Orchestra to kick off their season with a concert featuring Prestini's Hindsight: Let Me See the Sun with pianist Lara Downes as well as works by Hailstork, Coleridge-Taylor, and Márquez.

Her success as the Music Director of the Fresno Philharmonic since 2017 has resulted in the extension of her tenure through the 2025 season. She has worked tirelessly to build first-time and unique connections with the Fresno community with an eye toward reaching different audiences with a new music concert series, Proxima, and special concerts at Bitwise South Stadium. She has reimagined the pre- and post-concert experience by creating the ever-popular Green Room and Stay Tuned series. Her programming continues to push through the preconceived notions of the classical concert going experience. Through her tireless efforts, she has successfully broken down the barriers that often exist between artist and listener and repositioned the Fresno Philharmonic as a leader in the community it serves.

Rei is also an active and critically-acclaimed keyboardist and embraces her time conducting from the piano and harpsichord. One of her many recent highlights was leading the Fresno Philharmonic from the piano in Beethoven's monumental Triple Concerto as part of the orchestra's Beethoven@250 and from the harpsichord in Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 as part of their Digital Masterworks series. Last season she conducted both the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra and the Fresno Philharmonic from the keyboard in Mozart's Concerto for Two Pianos in E-flat major.

Rei's deep knowledge and remarkable versatility on and off the podium have led to several collaborations and special projects. She has worked with such ensembles and artists as tabla master Sandeep Das; pipa player Wu Man; violinists Jennifer Koh and Chee Yun; pianists Laura Downes, Awadagin Pratt, Orion Weiss, and Joyce Yang; guitarist Pablo Villegas; ensembles such as Time for Three, Indigo Girls, Steep Canyon Rangers and Pink Martini; singers Damien Geter, Jessica Rivera, Idina Menzel, Michael Feinstein and Ben Folds, among many others.

As a recording artist, Rei's credits are wide-ranging and feature her as both conductor and piano soloist. She recorded the music of Nicole Lizée with members of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra on an album released in 2008 on the Centrediscs label entitled, This Will Not be Televised. Also, in 2008, Apparitions, her first recording as a solo pianist, was released by Signpost Records and featured works by Noriko Hisada, Vincent Ho, and Toru Takemitsu. Symphony Sessions was released in 2007 (Signpost Records), and featured Rei conducting the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra in works by Juno award winner, Steve Bell.

Rei is the proud recipient of several prestigious awards, including the 2006 Taki-Alsop Conducting Fellowship, created by Marin Alsop to mentor women conductors. Additionally, she has received a Peabody Career Development Grant, the Women's Philharmonic Scholarship, and an Illinois Arts Council International Arts Exchange Grant. Her teachers and mentors include Gustav Meier, Marin Alsop, Jaap van Zweden and Thierry Fischer.

Rei's bio was most recently updated in August of 2022 and must be used in its entirety unless express permission is received from her representatives.