

GRAZIELLA CONTRATTO – curriculum vitae

Since September 2003 Graziella Contratto is the Artistic Director and Chief Conductor of the **Orchestre des Pays de Savoie**. Her programs and communicative concepts have already been praised by the national medias. She works regularly with soloists and singers as Anna Larsson, Stefan Genz, Lothar Odinius, Donald Littaker, Raphael Oleg, Anne Gastinel, Kolja Blacher, Michel Portal, Bruno Ganz....

After a promising career as a pianist and chamber musician she decided to start her studies in music theory and conducting at the Musikakademie of Basle, Switzerland. Her teachers were Ralf Weikert, Horst Stein, Manfred Honeck as well as Kirk Trevor, Tsung Yeh and Norma Panula.

During her studies in Basle she had the opportunity to conduct several orchestras before she was selected among 60 candidates to become Chief Conductor of the Academic Orchestra of the University of Freiburg, Germany. Here, G. Contratto performed and recorded late romantic symphonies like Bruckner's Eighth or Mahler's Third. Moreover the orchestra has been on a very successful USA tour in 1997.

G. Contratto conducted the World Premiere of Hans Werner Henze's Knastgesänge at the Opera of Basle (1996). In the same year she also gave her debut at the Lucerne Festival performing compositions by Pierre Boulez on the occasion of Paul Sacher's 90 th birthday. Several world premières of compositions by e.g. Andrea Scartazzini, Jörg Widmann, Daniel Glet, Suzanne Giraud, Alain Bérlaud etc. have been created under G. Contratto's direction.

She taught music history and composition at the Conservatory of Lucerne from 1992 to 1998 when she got the chance to become Claudio Abbado's assistant conductor at the **Berlin Philharmony**. She assisted for Boris Godunow, Tristan und Isolde and Simone Boccanegra (**Salzburg Easter Festival** 1998/1999), Così fan tutte (with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra, Ferrara 2000) as well as for different recordings and World tours with the Berlin Philharmonic orchestra conducted by C. Abbado.

G. Contratto has conducted at the Berliner Festwochen 1999/2000, at the Young Artists Davos Summer-Festival 1999/2000 and in the recently founded Gustav Mahler Akademie Bolzano. She has been re-invited to the Manhattan School of Music, New York (2001 and 2003) and to the Northern Hungarian Philharmony Miskolc, to the Orchestra sinfonica Giuseppe Verdi Milan and to the International Music Festival Lucerne. During the EXPO Hannover 2000 she conducted the Bamberger Symphoniker; she has been regularly invited to perform with the Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich and the Orchestre des Pays de Savoie. In summer 2000 she replaced Emmanuel Krivine with much success conducting the Orchestre National de Lyon.

In April 2000 the **Orchestre National de Lyon** ONL selected G. Contratto à *l'unanimité* to become their resident conductor under the direction of David Robertson. G. Contratto has been awarded Director of the Academy of the Orchestre National de Lyon in order to found different young professional orchestras in the different counties near Lyon – a pioneer project in France.

In 2002 she produced Piazzolla's **Tango-Operita** "Maria de Buenos Aires" in Switzerland and directed the Opera-Collage "Olympische Gesänge" in Berlin's Pergamon-Museum.

She has conducted the Deutsche Kammerorchester Berlin in the Berlin Philharmonic concert hall, the Deutsche Kammerakademie Neuss, the Basler Kammerorchester, the Berner Symphonie Orchester and will perform during Gidon Kremer's Festival "Les Muséiques" in 2005. Invitations to the Orchestre de Picardie and the Orchestra sinfonica di Bari are previewed for 2005 as well as to the Camerata Schweiz and the Göttinger Sinfoniker.

As a musical consulter Graziella Contratto has cooperated with film director Bettina Ehrhardt in her documentaries "Kielspur im Meer" about Luigi Nono, and "We play", a portrait of Bobby McFerrin's friendship with Chick Corea.

In January 2006 G. Contratto's interpretation of Viktor Ullmann's opera "Der Kaiser von Atlantis" (Theresienstadt, 1944) in France has been exceptionally well received by the critics. At the same time Perrine Robert's film ("Graziella Contratto – entre grâce et maîtrise") was broadcasted on the French culture channel MEZZO.

Graziella Contratto is the new artistic director of the Davos Festival – young artists in concert in Switzerland.

November 2006

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