

BOB BERNHARDT BIO

Conductor

With 31 years experience as a Music Director, 35 years as a conductor of Pops, and 33 years in the opera pit, Bob Bernhardt brings a unique perspective and ability each time he is on the podium, and in every genre.

In 2015, Bob Bernhardt was named Principal Pops Conductor of the Grand Rapids Symphony and this season is celebrating his 20th year as Principal Pops Conductor of the Louisville Orchestra, as well as his 35th consecutive year with the company. It's also his 5th season as Music Director Emeritus and Principal Pops Conductor of the Chattanooga Symphony and Opera (where he was Music Director for 19 seasons). He is also Artist-in-Residence at Lee University since 2011.

Formerly, he was Principal Conductor/Artistic Director of the Rochester Philharmonic, Music Director and Conductor of the Tucson Symphony, Principal Guest Conductor of Kentucky Opera, Music Director and Conductor of the Amarillo Symphony, and Artistic Director of the Lake Placid Sinfonietta.

This season marks his 24th as a frequent guest of the Boston Pops, which he first conducted at John Williams' invitation in 1992. Along with Boston, he has been a frequent guest conductor of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra (in his 11th season as conductor of their Symphony Under the Sky Festival), the Baltimore Symphony, the Detroit Symphony, the Cincinnati Pops, the Pittsburgh Symphony, the Dallas Symphony, the Houston Symphony, the Seattle Symphony, the Pacific Symphony, the Florida Orchestra, the Grand Rapids Symphony, the Las Vegas Philharmonic, and the Santa Barbara Symphony. He has been a guest with the St. Louis Symphony, Virginia Symphony, Phoenix Symphony, and many others.

In the world of pops, he has worked with scores of stars from Broadway, Rock & Roll, and the American Songbook, from Brian Stokes Mitchell and Kelli O'Hara, to the Beach Boys and Wynonna, to Jason Alexander and Megan Hilty. And because of his extensive experience and lucky upbringing, he has rarely met music he doesn't love.

A lover of opera, he conducted productions with Kentucky Opera for 18 consecutive seasons, and for 19 seasons with his own company in Chattanooga, as well as many guest conducting engagements with the Nashville Opera.

He received his Masters degree with Honors from the University of Southern California's School of Music, studying primarily with Daniel Lewis. He received his BA-Fine Arts degree from Union College in Schenectady, NY, where he graduated Phi Beta Kappa, Summa cum laude, and an Academic All-American Baseball Player. He lives with his wife, Nora, in Signal Mountain, Tennessee.

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