

## Benjamin Pionnier

Conductor



Born in 1977, Benjamin Pionnier graduated from the Conservatoire National in Nice (France) in piano and chamber music. He also studied double-bass, singing, clarinet, harmony and counterpoint. After graduating, he continued studying with Brigitte Engerer, from the National Conservatory in Paris. He performed a lot as pianist and in chamber music in France and across Europe and the Middle-East.

He studied orchestral conducting in France before entering George Hurst's conducting classes in Great-Britain. He received a first prize in orchestral conducting with distinction. He is also laureate of the conducting competition in Manchester (Royal Northern College of Music). He was then chosen to participate in conducting master-classes across Europe.

Mr. Pionnier has assisted many famous conductors, most recently James Levine, who invited him to the Metropolitan Opera and Carnegie Hall.

He worked as repetiteur, vocal coach and assistant for many theaters, simultaneously to his career as pianist and accompanist. As pianist and conductor, Benjamin Pionnier takes part to many festivals: Pablo Casals Festival, Festival Messiaen, Monte-Carlo Spring Festival, Hong-Kong French May, Ambronay's Festival, Festival Manca, Festival Musiques au coeur, Festival Pierre Cardin, and Macao International Music Festival. He was Artistic Advisor for the Opera de Nice from 2006 to 2010.

He has conducted many operas, mainly in France, Europe and Asia, including works by Gounod, Rossini, Massenet, Offenbach, Mozart, Bizet, Donizetti, Verdi, Puccini, Lehar, and Gluck. His operatic repertoire is varied and naturally includes the main French operas: *Carmen*, *Manon*, *Les Contes d'Hoffman*, *Roméo et Juliette*, *The Pearl Fishers*, *Parisian Life*, *Werther*, *Faust*, and *Lakmé*, as well as the Italian and German repertoire.

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*Benjamin Pionnier, cont'd.*

His wide repertoire also includes symphonic works from baroque to contemporary music. He has recently conducted with many distinctions: *Così fan Tutte* by Mozart and *Parisian Life* by Offenbach in Paris; *Les Contes d'Hoffman* by Offenbach in Singapore; *Orpheus and Eurydice* by Gluck in Nice; *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* by Rossini; and many concerts with French orchestras on a wide repertoire. He has also conducted *Roméo et Juliette* by Gounod at the Tchaikovsky Concert Hall in Moscow for the opening of the French year in Russia.

He has just received a great success for his Bolshoi debuts, conducting there *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* by Ravel, and some R. Strauss *Lieder*. His recent performances of *Faust* by Gounod at the Teatro Argentino have also been unanimously praised.

His future plans include *The Pearl Fishers* by Bizet in Hong Kong, *Pelléas et Mélisande* by Debussy in Teatro Argentino, *Madama Butterfly* by Puccini, *Macbeth* by Verdi, *Lucia di Lammermoor* by Donizetti, *Don Giovanni* by Mozart, ballets and symphonic concerts in France, Europe, Asia and South America.

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## Benjamin Pionnier

### Repertoire

#### Operatic

Bellini	<i>Norma</i>
Bizet	<i>Carmen</i> <i>Les Pêcheurs de Perles</i>
Delibes	<i>Lakmé</i>
Donizetti	<i>Don Pasquale</i> <i>L'Elisir d'Amore</i> <i>Lucia di Lammermoor</i> <i>La Fille du Régiment</i>
Glück	<i>Orphée et Eurydice</i>
Gounod	<i>Faust</i> <i>Roméo et Juliette</i> <i>Mireille</i>
Händel	<i>Giulio Cesare</i> <i>Teseo</i>
Haydn	<i>Il Mondo della Luna</i>
Léhar	<i>Die Lustige Witwe</i> <i>Das Land des Lächelns</i>
Massenet	<i>Don Quichotte</i> <i>Werther</i> <i>Manon</i>
Menotti	<i>The Telephone</i>
Mozart	<i>Bastien und Bastienne</i> <i>Così fan tutte</i> <i>Die Entführung aus dem Serail</i> <i>Die Zauberflöte</i> <i>Don Giovanni</i> <i>Idomeneo</i>

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*Benjamin Pionnier, Repertoire, cont'd.*

Offenbach	<i>La Belle Hélène</i> <i>La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein</i> <i>La Périchole</i> <i>La Vie Parisienne</i> <i>Les Contes d'Hoffmann</i> <i>Orphée aux Enfers</i>
Puccini	<i>La Bohème</i> <i>Gianni Schicchi</i> <i>Il Tabarro</i> <i>Manon Lescaut</i> <i>Suor Angelica</i> <i>Tosca</i>
Rossini	<i>L'Italiana in Algeri</i> <i>Il Barbiere di Siviglia</i>
J. Strauss	<i>Die Fledermaus</i>
Tchaikovsky	<i>Eugene Onegin</i>
Verdi	<i>Aïda</i> <i>Rigoletto</i> <i>La Traviata</i> <i>Macbeth</i>
Weill	<i>Die sieben Todsünden</i>

### **Operatic (under preparation)**

Beethoven	<i>Fidelio</i>
Bizet	<i>La Jolie Fille de Perth</i>
Britten	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>
Debussy	<i>Pelléas et Mélisande</i>
Dukas	<i>Ariane et Barbe-Bleue</i>
Massenet	<i>Thaïs</i>
Poulenc	<i>Dialogues des Carmélites</i>
Verdi	<i>Un Ballo in maschera</i> <i>Falstaff</i>

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### Press Reviews

#### ***Fairy Tales for Adults at Bolshoi Theater***

"The main hero of the evening was the Bolshoi Orchestra under the baton of the young French conductor Benjamin Pionnier, already known in the Russian capital for having conducted there Gounod's "Romeo & Juliet" last season (Tchaikovsky Concert Hall). A very beautiful sound, softness, a very sensitive accompaniment of the singers and when necessary - power and density (especially in the Wagnerian-like spirit of the Overture from Humperdinck's "Hansel und Gretel") or when necessary also: softness, transparency, very subtle dynamics and combination of sounds (in Richard Strauss' Lieder and Ravel's "L'Enfant et les Sortilèges"). Everything was very well conducted and well performed with coherence and precision in the dynamics and colors. Each piece has been then performed with such a very well balanced interpretation that the most complicated pieces (this applies especially to Ravel's opera) seemed almost simple."

- Alexander Matusovitch, *Opera News* (Russia), Oct 12, 2010

"French conductor Benjamin Pionnier brought the kaleidoscopic musical score to life, and an excellent cast of Russian and foreign singers performed. Although this premiere was a concert performance, the audience was so enchanted by the magical music that many left hoping to see a fully staged version soon."

- *Bolshoi Progress*

#### ***Faust at Teatro Argentino***

"The conductor Benjamin Pionnier (France, 1977) obtained a very high performance from the orchestra. The strings especially were impressive from the remarkable refinement of the Overture... Great interpretation in the ensembles as well as the solos..."

- *El Clarin*, 11/23/2010

"The Teatro Argentino has presented a formidable version of the work, counting for it as fundamental pillar the Orchestra directed by the young French conductor Benjamin Pionnier..."

- *El Dia*, 11/26/2010

"A new production of Faust moves to praise the programming of the Teatro Argentino, by the eclecticism of the chosen titles and the judicious choices of the castings. In this case, the conductor Benjamin Pionnier who let us hear from the very first moments a great wisdom in

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*Benjamin Pionnier, press reviews, etc.*

the choices of the orchestral colours, staying always below the voices, so that no singer had to have recourse to unnecessary efforts."

- *La Nacion*, 11/28/2010

"The French maestro Benjamin Pionnier has offered a version in perfect style, well balanced with a remarkable response from the orchestra."

- *Mundoclasico*, 11/28/2010

"The maestro Benjamin Pionnier has conducted in great form the stable Orchestra, who answered him at every time. Absolutely in style with a great load of dramatic tension and always taking of the balance between the pit and the singers. Great merit, thinking that it was a last minute replacement."

- *Operaintheworld.com*

### ***Les Contes d'Hoffman***

"The Singapore Opera Orchestra, led in its pit debut by Benjamin Pionnier, was truly excellent in its sparkling, responsive account of the score."

- *The Business Times*, March 2009

### ***Orphée et Eurydice***

"Dirigé par Benjamin Pionnier, l'Orchestre philharmonique de Nice est d'une lisibilité totale, bien au point, au frémissement rare, d'une vérité stylistique entière."

- *Arts-spectacle.com*, April 2009

*(Conducted by Benjamin Pionnier, the Philharmonic Orchestra of Nice has total clarity, well developed, with a rare thrill and a complete stylistic truth.)*

### ***Così fan tutte***

"Il faut reconnaître par-dessus tout le grand mérite de Benjamin Pionnier, qui, malgré sa jeunesse, créa la surprise avec l'Orchestre de Cannes."

- *classiqueinfo.com*, June 2009

*(We must recognize above all the great merit of Benjamin Pionnier, who, despite his youth, created a surprise with the Orchestra of Cannes.)*

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*Benjamin Pionnier, Press Kit, cont'd.*

"L'Orchestre Régional de Cannes PACA, dans un très bon jour, est placé sous la baguette de Benjamin Pionnier. Direction attentive et musicienne, dans une optique plutôt chambriste, de mise avec l'esprit du plateau."

- *Opéra Magazine*, June 2009

*(The regional orchestra of Cannes, in a very good light, was conducted by Benjamin Pionnier. Careful and musical conducting, gives a quite intimate point of view, totally appropriate with the spirit of the stage.)*

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