

L2 ARTISTS

BEN MAKINO
CONDUCTOR



GENERAL MANAGEMENT

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BEN MAKINO

Conductor and Pianist Benjamin Makino is the current Music Director at Opera Memphis. Previously he was Assistant Conductor at the Long Beach Opera where he conducted that company's highly praised productions of David Lang's *The Difficulty of Crossing a Field*, Michael Nyman's *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* and Michael Gordon's *Van Gogh* as well as the U.S. premieres of Gavin Bryars' *The Paper Nautilus* and Stewart Copeland's *Tell Tale Heart*. He also led the U.S. professional premiere of Ernest Bloch's *Macbeth* at the Los Angeles harbor. In the current season, he leads Opera Memphis' production of *Le nozze di Figaro* while playing continuo, and joins Memphis' New Ballet Ensemble for their *Nut ReMix*, an adaptation of Tchaikovsky's famous *Nutcracker*. Additionally, he acts as Music Director for Opera Memphis' ground-breaking *30 Days of Opera* festival and makes his debut at Skylight Music Theatre leading a production of Sondheim's epic *Sweeney Todd*, directed by Matthew Ozawa.

He has previously been a director of the New York based Orchestra INSONICA, and is the founder of the Blackbird Music Project, which presents rarely performed works of vocal chamber music in Orange County, California. Under his leadership the Blackbird Music Project collaborated in a multimedia performance of *Pierrot Lunaire* with photographer and artist Jeff LeFever, and produced performances of vocal works by Luciano Berio, Marc-André Dalbavie, Tōru Takemitsu and Dmitri Shostakovich.

During the fall of 2012, Ben was the Music Director for Opera Memphis' *30 Days of Opera*, an innovative program of 30 days of free concerts around the greater Memphis metropolitan area, including performances at several local library branches, the Cooper Young Festival, Trolley Night and at various points along the route of The Color Run, in which he ran the 5km course, stopping to perform arias on a portable keyboard that he carried with him during the race.

Ben is a graduate of the Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program of the Washington National Opera where he was hand selected by Director Plácido Domingo. He made his main stage debut with that company conducting *Hansel and Gretel* at the historic Lincoln Theater. Other appearances with the WNO included a sold out run of performances of *Così fan Tutte* at the Washington National Opera Studio, and concerts at the Opera House of John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and the

Music Center at Strathmore. He was the only U.S. citizen selected to participate in the 50th Besançon International Competition for Young Conductors.

Ben completed studies at Chapman University and the University of California, Los Angeles and pursued advanced studies at the Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Siena, Italy. In 2014 he was identified by Opera America as a future leader in the field of Opera in the United States.