

Lorenzo Castriota Skanderbeg, conductor, was born in 1964. He acquired graduate degrees in trumpet (1984), orchestral instrumentation and musical arrangement (1989), composition and conducting (1990) at the Conservatory of Music "Santa Cecilia" of Rome.

His career as conductor began at an early age of 17, when the famous M° *Giuseppe Patané* took him as assistant "under his wings". From 1983 until the premature death of M° Patané, he collaborated constantly with this great maestro and extraordinary tutor, perfecting himself in the Italian operatic repertoire. He also studied with M° Franco Ferrara and M° Leonard Bernstein.

He works as conductor and composer at various opera houses and symphonic institutions in Italy and abroad: Orchestra Sinfonica di San Remo, Orchestra Sinfonica Abruzzese, Orchestra Filarmonica di Salerno, Orchestra Sinfonica di Lecce, Orchestra Sinfonica di Tirana, Teatro dell'Opera di Roma (Cenerentola), Teatro San Carlo di Napoli, Opera di Bonn (Traviata/Carmen), Beethovenhalle Bonn, Opera di Plovdiv (Nabucco/Aida), Teatro Lirico di Cagliari (La Bohème), Filarmonia di Roma, Teatro Lirico di Bari (Rigoletto/Otello/Turandot), Teatro Verdi di Trieste (MacBeth), Teatro Lirico di Grosseto (Otello/Traviata/Trovatore/Rigoletto/Butterfly/Cavalleria Rusticana etc.), Filarmonica Marchigiana, Regionale del Lazio, I Solisti Aquilani, Filarmonici di Roma, Opera of Costanza (Romania) (Aida), Opera of Spalato (Croatia) (Werther/Nabucco), Teatro Cervantes of Malaga (Farewell Concert Galà of Raina Kabajwanska), Slovenian National Opera of Maribor (Slovenia) 6 Opera seasons, Teatro Pergolesi di Jesi (Butterfly/Medium), National Art Center, Daejeon (Korea) Aida, the Symphonic Orchestra RTV Slovenia (guest conductor) and the Philharmonic Orchestra of Oulu (Finland). M° Castriota has been appointed Musical Director of The National Slovene Opera Theatre of Maribor (sng-Maribor) since 2004, after having been given Verdi's Falstaff at very short notice, which became one of the most important successes of sng-Maribor. In 2011 he was appointed General Music Director at the Turkish National Opera (Samsun), conducting various productions, such as Attila, MacBeth, Butterfly, Ali Baba, Tosca, Ballo in Maschera, Merry Widow in Samsun, Ankara and Istanbul. His outstanding conducting skills have opened many doors to him in Turkey and annually he now conducts all major symphony orchestras (Bursa, Adana, Antalya, Izmir, Ankara, Istanbul etc.). He continues to guide the Turkish National Opera Theater in Samsun as its General Music Director, conducting this year Tosca, Ballo in Maschera, Trovatore and Manon Lescaut.

M° Castriota received a special acknowledgement in the 1st International Competition of Conducting "Franco Ferrara"; Teatro dell'Opera di Roma (1995).

Furthermore has he been entrusted with important artistic titles, such as:

Chief conductor of the "Novi Musici" orchestra of Napoli; "Direttore Stabile" of the Orchestra Sinfonica Umberto Giordano della Provincia di Foggia, of the Orchestra Sinfonica della Città di Grosseto, Sinfonica d'Alessandria, the opera season of the festival of Santa Margherita Ligure, the Teatro Lirico di Grosseto and the Lyric Festival del Verismo, Foggia, the Oderzo Opera Festival and the Slovene National Opera and Ballet Maribor. In 1994-95 M° Castriota S. was appointed as Musical Advisor of the Bonner Werkstattsbühne for Contemporary Music.

In December 2000 he made his debut in Japan conducting Lyric Gala Recitals with Renato Bruson and the Filarmonici di Roma (I solisti di St.a Cecilia) and also conducted the Solisti Aquilani in a two week tournée in Great Britain. Again with I Solisti Aquilani, he conducted an important concert series, sponsored by the association "Baratelli", consisting of works by the famous Estonian composer Arvo Pärt. In writing M° Pärt has stated that "he was very impressed especially with the "conducting artistry" of M° Castriota" and has expressed great desire to work together internationally in future projects". This opinion was shared by his publisher, Eric Marinitsch of the Universal Edition, with whom M° Castriota has already begun an active collaboration. October 2002, M° Castriota conducted I Solisti Aquilani in a tournée in Spain (Festival of Segovia, Madrid and oth.). In December 2004 he was invited with his orchestra "Orchestra Città di Grosseto" to conduct at the 150 anniversary celebration of the Symphony Hall in Craiova (Romania), with a program of Beethoven, Brahms and Wagner (Wesendonk Lieder). Castriota substituted M° Zubin Mehta in the 2010 Toyota Classic Asian Tournée with the world-famous orchestra "Maggio Fiorentino", conducting various programs in the principle opera and concert halls of Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), Hanoi (Vietnam), Bangkok (Thailand), Brunei (Sultanat of Brunei), Mumbai (India), Manila (Philippines), Seoul (Korea), Taipei (Taiwan).

His activity as composer is equally important, totalling at present some 30 works, all publicly performed.

He collaborates with the recording company "Pentaphon" Italia. With Saturn Live Recordings he has produced "Il Trittico" (with Giuseppe Taddei), "La Traviata", "Il Rigoletto", "La Notte di un Nevrastronico" and "Compositions of the Great Symphonic Repertoire of the 1800". In 2002 a CD with EMI has been produced, containing symphonic works by Mussorgsky and Respighi, recorded live with the Orchestra Sinfonica Umberto Giordano della Provincia di Foggia. With the famous actor Aldo Busanca he recorded together with the orchestra "La Classica di Alessandria) Prokofiev's composition "Peter and the Wolf" in Italian.

Not just a few of the great operatic singers who have sang under his baton, have praised him for his solid and profound conductorship and the sensibility of his interpretations, such as R. Kabajwanska, G. Taddei, R. Panerai, R. Bruson, N. Martinucci, L. Carroli, G. Cebrian, M. Devia, C. Gasdia, K. Riccarelli, M.-P. Jonata, L. Bartolini, N. Rossi-Giorndano, S. Secco, G. Giuliacci, A. Rezza, E. Fiorillo, Mario Malagnini and many others.

He was engaged for the first time this year at the 62nd Festival Pucciniano of Torre del Lago to conduct Tosca with an extraordinary cast. Tenor: Jorge de Leon, Soprano: Hui He and Baritone: Lucio Gallo. His success was of acclaimed importance, because M° Castriota replaced in the Season's inauguration performance of Tosca (his performance should have been the second performance of Tosca) M° Veronesi after the opera's first act, without having had any rehearsals with the cast and orchestra. This amazing success was based on the great appreciation from the audience, the national and international critics and the cast in regards to his musical and interpretative conducting. "Maestro, you make us dream" was the evening's remark of one of the most respected critics at the festival. The granddaughter of the composer, Mme Simonetta Puccini, having attended the performance, wished to congratulate the M° in person and mention the outstanding technical and interpretational conducting talent of M° Castriota, "always more difficult to be found in nowadays Italian opera traditions".

Together with Spalato Opera he was awarded the National Culture Prize 2003, conducting a very well received Nabucco in the Spalato Summer Festival. In September 2002 he was given together with Sen. Susanna Agnielli and On. R. Buttiglione, the Culture-Prize "Premio Europe Leader "Rocca d'Oro" for his international achievements as conductor in the music field. In 2008, Castriota was awarded the prestigious culture price "Sebetia-Ter" for the career (former winners: M° Riccardo Muti, M° Claudio Abbado, M° Aldo Ciccolini). He was entrusted with the Presidency of the well received International Competition "Cappuccilli-Patané-Respighi" in Voice, Conducting and Composition organized by the national Chamber of Commerce of Italy, Confartigianato ANAP presented in different cities (Shangai, Chicago, Zurich, Alessandria, Grosseto).

M° Castriota is tenured professor of conducting and orchestral tutorial and holds the university chair of conducting/orchestral tutorial at the "Istituto di alta cultura Lorenzo Perosi" Camposbasso, Italy.