

# David William Spiro

## Conductor

Critics have called the performances of **David W. Spiro** thrilling, vibrant, extraordinary, dramatic, noble, incisive, and energetic. Maestro Spiro recently returned to the *Stara Zagora State Opera* in Bulgaria to conduct *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Un Ballo in Maschera* and *Turandot*. The previous season, he led highly acclaimed performances of *Madama Butterfly*, *Don Pasquale* and *Otello*. At the *Ruse State Opera*, he conducted an electrifying concert production of **Wagner's** *Der Fliegende Holländer*, as well as staged performances of *Aida*, *Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Don Giovanni*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Rigoletto*, *Tosca* and *La Traviata*.

In Orvieto Italy, he is known for thrilling accounts of *Falstaff*, *Un Ballo in Maschera* and *La Traviata*. For three consecutive seasons, Spiro was at *Opera di Verona* for the **Mozart/da Ponte** operas – *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan Tutte* and *Le Nozze di Figaro*. He also conducted *La Bohème* at the *North Czech Opera* and made his Romanian debut in Bucharest with his signature piece, *La Traviata*. His first French opera, *Carmen*, took place in Saint Petersburg, Russia.



The Albanian-American conductor made his mark by leading members of the *Boston Symphony Orchestra* in a tribute to his mentor, **Leonard Bernstein**. **Rossini's** *Stabat Mater* featured **Edda Moser**, **D'anna Fortunato**, **Gregory Kunde** and **Jerome Hines** and was hailed as "a tribute worthy of Bernstein". Maestro Spiro's interpretation was singled out as "the closest thing to heaven." (*The Boston Globe*)

A dynamic performance of **Cherubini's** *Medea* for the *Boston Festival Opera* featured **Sylvia Sass**, **Rita Gorr**, **Franco Bonanome** and **John Macurdy**. Calling Spiro "a talent which seems to be seasoned well beyond his years", his musicality and dramatic flair were compared to **Tullio Serafin** and **Victor de Sabata**. (*Review/Preview*)

A native of Boston, Spiro began piano studies at age four. His prodigious skills led him to the famed *Longy School of Music* where he refined his technique and strengthened his musical background. His performances were acclaimed around New England, including winning first prize in the *Northeastern Concerto Competition*.

He studied with **Piero Bellugi** at the *New England Conservatory of Music*, where he was instilled with the unique Italian style, passed generation to generation. At the same time, Spiro assisted **Sarah Caldwell** at the *Opera Company of Boston*, becoming versed in the responsibilities of an operatic conductor and artistic director. He was called upon to do a variety of tasks - from rehearsal pianist and vocal coach to performer and off-stage conductor.

He served in a similar capacity for two seasons with the legendary **Nicola Rescigno** at the *Dallas Opera*. Maestro Rescigno, who was the preferred conductor of virtually every great operatic singer in the 20th century, stressed the importance of a conductor providing a framework in which the soloist and the composer's intent would shine.

Early in his career, Maestro Spiro founded the *Albanian Choral Society of Boston*, which was featured in a historic performance at the *United Nations*. This elicited an unprecedented invitation from the Albanian government for Spiro to serve as United States representative to the *National Congress* and to interact with the musicians and singers of the *Teatri Kombetar i Operas dhe Baletit* and the *Orkestra Simfonike e RTSH*. This was the first time the Albanian government had officially reached out to the United States in any capacity in over 50 years. Spiro's visit was a landmark in normalizing relations between the two nations.

Media coverage from this event led to an invitation for Spiro to work with Leonard Bernstein, who said Spiro was a "unique talent and will be a great conductor" (*The Boston Herald*). Their fellowship included performances and recordings with the *New York Philharmonic*, the *St. Luke's Chamber Orchestra*, the *Accademia di Santa Cecilia*, and the *Boston Symphony Orchestra*. *Opera Monthly* noted the parallel: "Spiro, an athletic young maestro in the Bernstein mold, led the orchestra with care and great vitality". Their affiliation lasted until Bernstein's death.

In addition to the standard operatic repertoire, Maestro Spiro is a specialist in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Italian opera tradition spanning the *bel canto* and *verismo* periods and encompassing the Verdi *oeuvre*. He has prepared most of these works under the guidance of acknowledged experts – specifically **Magda Olivero**, **Francesco Siciliani**, and **Virginia Zeani** – all of whom can trace their lineage back to the composers.