

Kirk Muspratt

Music Director/Conductor

Northwest Indiana Symphony Orchestra

Kirk Muspratt, Music Director/Conductor, Kirk Muspratt (Music Director and Conductor) was named 2018 Conductor of the Year (Professional Orchestra) by the Illinois Council of Orchestras.

Muspratt has previously been honored as a “Chicagoan of the Year” by music critic John von Rhein and the writing staff of the Chicago Tribune. In honoring Kirk, von Rhein said, “Ask the delighted adults and kids who flocked to his concerts...with the Northwest Indiana Symphony Orchestra...They will tell you he made concertgoing an interactive experience that was both enlightening and - are you ready?—fun.”

Recognized as one of the outstanding figures in the new generation of conductors, Kirk Muspratt has garnered international critical acclaim and was hailed as a “born opera conductor” (Rheinische Post) and “a knowledgeable musician who delivers superbly controlled, gorgeously shaped readings” (St. Louis Post-Dispatch), and the Los Angeles Times declared “Watch him!”

Kirk begins his 19th highly-acclaimed season as Music Director of the Northwest Indiana Symphony Orchestra. He has instituted several highly commended programs that include a popular Solo Competition for Children that results in a child performing at almost every Northwest Indiana Symphony concert. He has also implemented an Orchestral Fellowship Program with Valparaiso University and his vision was instrumental in founding the South Shore Summer Music Festival.

One of his most highly-praised new projects at NISO has been the innovative collaborations with the Lyric Opera Center for American Artists. Together they have presented *La Traviata*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Carmen* and *La Boheme*.

In order to involve the community to the maximum, Kirk has created “Just Ask Kirk™” cards for audience members’ questions, “Interactive Intermissions” and “Cookies with Kirk” for patrons and musicians of the orchestra, chorus and youth orchestra to meet, and a “Kirkature™” cartoon to help advocate the credo: “Symphonic music is for everyone.” Kirk also writes a monthly column in *The Times*.

In July 2004, Kirk was named both Music Director of New Philharmonic and Artistic Director/Music Director of New Philharmonic Opera. In 2017, New Philharmonic was awarded its second “Professional Orchestra of the Year” by the Illinois Council of Orchestras. His productions at the DuPage Opera Theater featured repertoire including *Faust*, *Otello*, *Tosca*, *Turandot*, *Carmen*, *La Boheme*, *Barber of Seville*, *Marriage of Figaro*, *Così fan Tutti* and *La Traviata*.

In his first months at the New Philharmonic, Kirk instituted a Side-by-Side program for local high school students and an Interactive Intermission Project involving both the musicians of the orchestra, opera and the patrons.

From 1991 through 1996, Kirk served as Resident Conductor to Lorin Maazel at the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. Prior to this, he was appointed as Associate Conductor to Joseph Silverstein at the Utah Symphony Orchestra (1990-1992). From 1987 through 1990, Kirk served both as Assistant Conductor to Leonard Slatkin at the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra as well as Music Director of the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra. He was Music Director of the Alberta Ballet from 1997 through 1999. At the New York Philharmonic, Muspratt has served as a Cover Conductor.

In addition to his work in Pittsburgh, Utah and St. Louis, Kirk has guest conducted the orchestras of Los Angeles, Montreal, London, Korean Broadcast Symphony, Detroit, Rochester, National Arts Center, Vancouver, Knoxville, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton, Hamilton, Victoria, New Orleans, Stamford, Binghamton, South Bend, Lafayette, Puchon, Annapolis, Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra and Baltimore Chamber Symphony.

Summer debuts have included the Tanglewood, Chautauqua and Sewanee Music Festivals. He has also conducted at the Banff Center for Performing Arts.

In Europe, Kirk was Assistant Conductor in the opera houses of Monchengladbach/Krefeld, Germany, from 1985 to 1987. His American opera conducting debut came with the Utah Opera in 1991. He returned there to premiere Mascagni's *L'Amico Fritz*. Maestro Muspratt has conducted *Die Fledermaus* for the Calgary Opera, *Faust* and *Merry Widow* for the Utah Opera, *Of Mice and Men*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* for the Arizona Opera and *Amahl and The Night Visitors* at the Opera Illinois all to stunning critical acclaim.

In 1983 and 1984, Kirk was invited to be a scholarship student at the Chautauqua Institute and in 1986 was selected as a Conducting Fellow at the Aspen Music Festival. A year later, he was invited into the Conducting Program at the Tanglewood Festival. In 1988, he was chosen to be one of three Conducting Fellows for the Los Angeles Philharmonic Institute at the Hollywood Bowl.

As a teacher, Kirk has taught at the Conductors' Institute of the University of South Carolina, the Conductors' Guild National Workshops, the Association of Canadian Orchestras' National Conference in Toronto, the Conductors' Studio at Illinois State University, and at Westminster Choir College in Princeton. During the summer, he has often taught a graduate conducting class at VanderCook College of Music and for the last three summers has been teaching at the Northwestern University Summer Opera Seminar.

He recently completed a six-year tenure on the Board of Directors of the Conductors' Guild. Having always enjoyed working with young people, he has conducted the Pennsylvania Regional Orchestra and the Pennsylvania All-State Orchestra. He has conducted the Boston University Tanglewood Orchestra at the Tanglewood Festival.

Kirk has been the recipient of numerous awards, among them grants from the Canada Council and the Presser Foundation. In 1983 and again in 1984, he was winner of the Strauss Conducting Prize while a conducting student at the Vienna Conservatory. During his tenure in Utah, he received the first Utah Up'n Comers Award ever given to a classical musician. This honor was awarded to Kirk for his work and involvement in the Utah Arts Community. In 1987, he was named winner of the prestigious Exxon/Affiliate Artists Award.

In 2006, Kirk was initiated as a National Arts Associate with the Lake County Alumnae Chapter of Sigma Alpha Iota International Music Fraternity. He is the first such Distinguished Member in Northwest Indiana. A National Arts Associate is a man or woman who is nationally recognized for distinguished contribution to the arts. He joins the likes of other SAI National Arts Associates such as Van Cliburn, Keith Lockhart, Henry Mancini, and Wynton Marsalis.

He is a native of Crows Nest Pass, Alberta, Canada. His early training was as a pianist. After leaving Alberta, he studied in St. Louis and New York with Harold Zabrack. Kirk continued in both a bachelor's and master's performance program at Temple University with Adele Marcus and Alexander Fiorillo. Subsequent to this he went on to study conducting at the Vienna Conservatory of Music. Kirk became a citizen of the United States in November, 2010.

In 2017, Kirk was honored to become a Paul Harris Fellow, an award named for the Rotary International Founder, Paul Harris. In 2017, Kirk also made his debut with the Joffrey Ballet of Chicago.