

Kirk Muspratt

Music Director and Conductor

New Philharmonic

New Philharmonic Opera

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” in classical music by John von Rhein and the staff of the Chicago Tribune. In honoring Muspratt, von Rhein said, “Ask the delighted adults and kids who this year flocked to New Philharmonic ... They will tell you he made concert going 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, Muspratt has garnered international critical acclaim as a “born opera conductor” (Rheinische Post), “a knowledgeable musician who delivers superbly controlled, gorgeously shaped readings” (St. Louis Post-Dispatch), and “friend to local music” (Midwest Beat Magazine). The Los Angeles Times declared, “Watch him!”

In July 2004, Muspratt was named both music director of New Philharmonic and artistic director/music director of New Philharmonic Opera. In his last eight years, productions featured Otello, Madama Butterfly, Le Nozze di Figaro, Il Barbiere di Siviglia, Hansel and Gretel, La Boheme, Faust, Otello, Tosca, The Beggars Opera, Elixir of Love, Turandot and Gianni Schicchi.

In 2009 and then again in 2017 New Philharmonic was awarded Professional Orchestra of the Year by the Illinois Council of Orchestras.

In his first months at New Philharmonic, Muspratt 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.

Muspratt begins his 18th highly-acclaimed season as music director of the Northwest Indiana Symphony Orchestra (NISO). At NISO, he instituted several highly commended programs that include a popular Solo Competition for Children that results in a child performing at every concert of the Northwest Indiana Symphony Orchestra. He has also implemented an Orchestral Fellowship Program with Valparaiso University. One of his most highly praised projects is the innovative collaborations with the Lyric Opera Center for American Artists. Together they have presented La Traviata, Die Fledermaus, Carmen and La Boheme. In 2006 with NISO, he initiated the South Shore Summer Music Festival.

In order to involve the community to the maximum, Muspratt has created “Just Ask Kirk™” cards for audience members’ questions and a “Kirkature™” cartoon to help advocate the credo: “Classical music is for everyone.”

From 1991 through 1996, Muspratt 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, Muspratt 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, Muspratt 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, Thunder Bay, New Orleans, Stamford, Binghamton, Lafayette, South Bend, Puchon, Annapolis, Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra and Baltimore Chamber Symphony. Summer debuts have included the Tanglewood, Chautauqua and Sewanee Music Festivals and the Banff Center for Performing Arts.

In Europe, Muspratt 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* and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* for the Arizona Opera, all to stunning critical acclaim. In addition, he debuted at the Ash Lawn-Highland Summer Opera Festival in Virginia. He returned to Arizona Opera to conduct their production of *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, to the Utah Opera for their new production of *Faust* and *Amahl and the Night Visitors* at Opera Illinois, all to stunning critical acclaim.

In 1983 and 1984, Muspratt 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, Muspratt has taught at the Conductors' Institute of the University of South Carolina, the Conductors' Guild National Workshops, 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. Muspratt recently completed 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 and most recently the IMEA District 9 orchestra. Muspratt has conducted the Boston University Tanglewood Orchestra at the Tanglewood Festival. Muspratt 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 Muspratt for his work and involvement in the Utah Arts Community. In 1987, he was named winner of the prestigious Exxon/ Affiliate Artists Award.

Kirk began his studies as a pianist in New York with Harold Zabrack. He continued his studies at Temple University with Adele Marcus and Alexander Fiorillo. After completing graduate studies, Muspratt was accepted into the conducting program at the Konservatorium in Vienna, Austria.

Muspratt is a native of Crows Nest Pass, Alberta, Canada. Kirk became an American citizen in the summer of 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.