

Press Release

Tianyi Lu joins WNO as first Female Conductor in Residence

Welsh National Opera is delighted to announce Tianyi Lu as the first Female Conductor in Residence. This follows an open call for aspiring conductors to apply for the post and an audition process with WNO Orchestra earlier this year.

Described by WNO Conductor Laureate Carlo Rizzi as having ‘great musicality with a natural charisma on the podium’, Tianyi Lu is the first recipient of this residency, launched by WNO to help re-address the gender balance across the industry. The scheme was developed following WNO’s ‘Where Are All the Women’ symposium in 2018 during which a panel of women and delegates shared experiences on challenges facing women in the classical music industry.

Born in Shanghai and raised in New Zealand, Tianyi Lu studied in Auckland and Melbourne before completing a Master of Music in Orchestral Conducting at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama (RWCMD) with Distinction in 2015. It was at RWCMD that Tianyi first established a connection with WNO when working with the Youth and Community team on WNO Youth Opera’s award-winning production of *Kommilitonen!* in 2016.

Emma Flatley, Director of Partnerships and Engagement at WNO said: “*We are taking positive action to re-address the imbalance of women in conducting posts and this is the first step for us creating a developmental position and opportunity specifically for women geared towards increasing diversity and opportunity. We recognise that there is much work to do to encourage further diversity across the opera sector, but this scheme will specifically enable women who are particularly underrepresented in the classical music sector at the moment; and provide the opportunity for greater diversity across the professional sector in the future.*”

Tianyi Lu is currently the Assistant Conductor of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, and Principal Conductor of the St. Woolos Sinfonia based in Newport, Gwent, and was a Dudamel Fellow with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra in 2017/18. Her recent highlights include concerts with the Gulbenkian Orchestra with Carolin Widmann both in Lisbon and on tour in Portugal, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra, Bucharest Radio Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Symphony, Hallé Orchestra and Auckland Philharmonia.

Tianyi said on her appointment “*I am thrilled to be back in Cardiff, my second home, to work with the many creative and courageous individuals that make up the vibrant organisation that is WNO. The Company has inspired me for many years and I will relish the opportunity to dive into the diverse range of projects during my post over the next 18 months.*”

The WNO Conductor in Residence scheme aims to equip aspiring female conductors with the necessary training and experience to pursue conducting careers. It will involve working closely with WNO Music Director Tomáš Hanus and the WNO Orchestra across a range of repertoire, including main scale opera, as well as youth and

community projects.

The 18 month programme also offers Tianyi the opportunity to be mentored by British conductor Alice Farnham. Alice was curator of WNO's symposium on women in music in 2018, and is artistic director of the Women Conductors programme at the Royal Philharmonic Society.

Alice Farnham said: "I am delighted to be working with Tianyi as she takes up this new role with WNO. This is a constructive and nurturing programme which will allow Tianyi to develop as an artist and give her considerable podium experience. There is a significant need to improve the landscape for women conductors in the music industry, and I applaud WNO for offering this substantial residency which will help in redressing the balance."

Tianyi Lu begins her residency this August, working with Music Director Tomáš Hanus, WNO Associate Conductor Harry Ogg and the WNO music team on a new production of *Carmen* as well as observing preparatory work on *Rigoletto* and *The Cunning Little Vixen*. Tianyi will be Assistant Conductor for the Spring performances of *Carmen*, conducting two performances at the Liverpool Empire on March 26th and 28th and will be involved in the season's Youth and Community Projects.