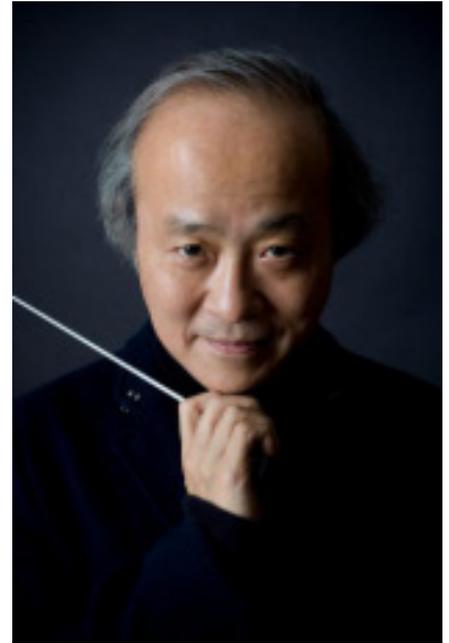


TADAAKI OTAKA

David C F Wright, DMus

Tadaaki Otaka is a first class conductor and a most gracious man. His conducting is so clear and easy to follow and orchestras admire him and deservedly so. When he was the conductor of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales he gave outstanding performances of standard and modern repertoire. His Beethoven symphonies were as fine as any of the best performances. His recording of Rachmaninov Symphonies and the works for piano and orchestra, with the excellent John Lill as soloist, should be in everybody's collection.

In the BBC Proms of 2012, he conducted an all British programme of Vaughan Williams, Ireland, Delius and Walton, (and thankfully no Elgar) and the performances were superb and to watch him conduct was a joy for it was so clear. We had in previous weeks, watched Barenboim conduct Beethoven with his baton pointing to the ground and therefore not visible to the orchestra and then we admired Donald Runnicles conducting Wagner and Bruckner Eight and his conducting was clear and sensible.



We have to ask the question, Why did the BBC constantly praise Barenboim and neither Runnicles nor Otaka who were both eminently superior?

Otaka was born in Japan on 8 November 1947 and studied music at the Toho Gakuen School of Music majoring in composition and theory.

Later, he studied composition with Hideo Saito, who was born in 1902, and who probably introduced European music to Japan.

Otaka was the conductor of the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra and became their conductor laureate in 1991.

From 1981 to 1986, he was the conductor of the Sapporo Symphony Orchestra and, in 1998, became their music adviser. The years 1992 to 1998 saw him as the Principal conductor of the Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra and he founded the Kioi Sinfonietta of Tokyo in 1995 and was also their music adviser and became their honorary conductor laureate.

He was greatly admired in the UK as the conductor of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales (referred to as BBCNOW) from 1987 to 1996. Between 1987 and 2000 he conducted the Britten-Pears Orchestra.

He was the principal guest conductor of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra from 2009.

Otaka has received many awards and was made a CBE in 1997. He was also awarded the Elgar Medal in 1999. It seems that to be accepted as a conductor in the UK you have to perform Elgar!

He is a first class musician and a conductor to be numbered with the greats.

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