



SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

EUN SUN KIM
Conductor

Selected North American Critical Acclaim

San Francisco Opera: *Rusalka* (Jun 2019)

"Presiding over everything, in a company debut of astonishing vibrancy and assurance, was conductor Eun Sun Kim, who drew glorious playing from the Opera Orchestra and paced every scene freely but precisely."

Joshua Kosman, *San Francisco Chronicle*

"Holding it all together was the outstanding musical direction of Eun Sun Kim, who was at home not only with the score's Wagnerian resonances but with Dvorak's folk-inflected rhythmic energy, too. The orchestra's vibrant responsiveness made Kim's debut here a spectacular one for a company currently in search of a music director."

–Thomas May, *Musical America*

"Conductor Eun Sun Kim made a significant company debut. The Korean maestra led an energized account of Dvorak's masterful score, one that effectively integrated the composer's indelible harmonies, folk effusions, poignant yearning and haunting resonance."

–Georgia Rowe, *Opera News*

"In her San Francisco Opera debut, conductor Eun Sun Kim assuredly drew splendid playing from an ensemble that proved its versatility (the instrumentalists spent the prior night playing Baroque). She brought forward the music's visceral quality laying deep under the folkloric connotations. More, she succeeded to balance Wagnerian-like statements with subtle invocations of Mendelssohnian delicacy."

–Edward Sava-Segal, *Bachtrack*

"... a detailed and beautifully paced interpretation of the lovely score...Eun Sun Kim underscored [Dvorak's] unmistakable musical sound with sympathetic support from the orchestra."

–Philip Campbell, *Bay Area Reporter*

"Conductor Eun Sun Kim made a gripping company debut, bringing out the Czech pulse and phrasing under a shiny surface of supple orchestral playing. The Korean-born artist maintained impeccable balances with all the singers and kept the score unfolding with a sense of inevitability. She wrangled the big cast into a cohesive, propulsive engine."

–Harvey Steiman, *Seen and Heard International*

"Korean conductor Eun Sun Kim draws warm incisive playing from the orchestra, adding to the dramatic impact and underpinning the moving final scene..."

–Truman C. Wang, *Classical Voice*

"South Korean conductor Eun Sun Kim made a strong impression with her company debut, leading a performance that was **powerful and passionate**. She **coaxed glorious playing** from the Orchestra...**an auspicious debut** for her, and **the audience responded enthusiastically**."

–Michael Anthonio, *Parterre Box*

"South Korean conductor Maestra Eun Sun Kim presided over the musical performance. Her **shimmering, beautifully contoured performance** of the Dvorak's melody-immersed operatic masterpiece, **elicited a brilliant response** from the San Francisco Opera Orchestra."

–William Burnett, *Opera Warhorses*

"Conductor Eun Sun Kim **drove the emotional flow, pulling the vibrant Dvorak colors** from the triple winds of the opera orchestra, **urging full-throated force** from its strings."

–Michael Milenski, *Opera Today*

"The Korean Eun Sun Kim, known to the Madrid public for being assistant to López Cobos and the first woman to conduct an opera at the Teatro Real, was also successful in her debut. She highlighted, in particular, a **good dramatic pulse** and **led with confidence**, using tempos that were personal but well-chosen and precise. In short, **a triumph for the SF Opera and for the music of Dvorák**."

–David Yllanes Mosquera, *Codalarío*

"The **driving force of it all was the music**, with the excellent Eun Sun Kim, in her company debut, at the helm in the pit. From its **dreamy orchestrations** and **piercing details** to its **lyrical effusions** and **soaring ensembles**, **Rusalka got all it deserved and then some** in this **darkly exhilarating** conclusion of the SFO's season."

–Steven Winn, *Opera Magazine*

"Eun Sun Kim's baton in her fine company debut, registers in a **vividly visceral, emotionally penetrating** way. **Nothing feels or sounds gratuitous**; just about **everything, across three-and-a-half musically and dramatically absorbing hours, seems essential**. The music has a **cumulative force**, culminating in a duet for Rusalka and the Prince of such **excruciating tenderness and bone-deep truth** that the Liebestod of Wagner's Tristan and Isolde can't help but come to mind. **Everything has amplitude and authority**..."

–Steven Winn, *San Francisco Classical Voice*

Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra: Brahms and Beethoven (Sep 2019)

"... the conductor conveyed the autumnal quality of Brahms' Symphony No. 4 in E Minor. From the work's arresting opening notes, which seem to start mid-sentence, she cultivated a rich, relaxed sound in the strings. Each phrase breathed, yet she also led with momentum, knowing just the right moment to push ahead. There was much to admire, from the sonorous beauty of the second movement, with its quietly lyrical clarinet solo (Christopher Pell), to the robust intensity of the third, the closest Brahms came to an orchestral scherzo.... The conductor was a dynamic presence as she led, illuminating details of the score with clarity and expressive power. The finale, a towering passacaglia, unfolded with depth and the musicians responded with polished, refined playing."

–Janelle Gelfand, *Cincinnati Business Courier*

Calgary Philharmonic: Mendelssohn, Liszt, Bach, and Dvorák (May 2019)

"Lithe and graceful in her movements, she is always in full command of the music, her communication with the orchestra clear and precise, and with due attention to the shaping of the music. In general, her tempos, especially the concluding Dvorak Symphony No. 8, were on the fast side. This point alone forced the

musicians to extra concentration to make sure they could deliver the notes. However, given the precision and ease in following her, the orchestra was able to respond as asked and played as a unified ensemble to a remarkable degree. Overall, this was an impressively cleanly-played concert...Kim's fleet approach to the music served the middle movements of the symphony (and also the opening Hebrides Overture by Mendelssohn) the best, underscoring its rhythmic urgency and forward movement. A special moment came during the delicious third movement of the Dvorak symphony, which with its melodic sweetness and charm held the audience suspended as if in a trance."

–Kenneth Delong, *Calgary Herald*

Milwaukee Symphony: Brahms' Ein Deutsches Requiem (Mar 2019)

"The Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, led by guest conductor Eun Sun Kim and joined by baritone Stephen Powell and soprano Tara Erraught, gave a deeply stirring performance of Johannes Brahms' "Ein deutsches Requiem" ("A German Requiem")... Kim and the ensemble, which also included a pipe organ, brought gravitas and emotional power to the piece's biggest moments, making them absolutely soar. But this was not a performance in which all energy was focused on the piece's fullest sounds. Kim, along with the instrumentalists and singers, gave clear focus and meaning to the exquisitely warm, sighing viola, cello and bass blend and hushed choral sounds that open the piece, and to the rest of its many achingly introspective sections. Kim and the orchestra brought a seamlessly blended sound and lovely interpretive details to a musically sensitive rendering of Reinecke's score."

–Elaine Schmidt, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*

"The Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra and Chorus performed this great work with enormous gravitas and precision under the skillful baton of guest conductor Eun Sun Kim. Kim is making a mark worldwide as an opera conductor (she was recently named Houston Grand Opera's principal guest conductor—the first person to occupy such a position in 25 years). Her opera-conducting credentials certainly worked for the powerful German Requiem. The Chorus sang with great meticulousness, thrillingly so in work's louder, more charged moments and tenderly so in its many serene ones."

–John Jahn, *Shepherd Express*

Cincinnati Symphony: Verdi Requiem (May 2018)

"Making her festival debut, guest conductor Eun Sun Kim, 37, expertly balanced the forces of the 120-voice May Festival Chorus, a quartet of superb soloists, trumpeters in the gallery and the full Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra in a sweeping and incandescent performance of Verdi's Requiem... Kim offered a fresh approach that also illuminated the deep spirituality of the work. She allowed the music to breathe, and the effect was riveting. Seated behind the orchestra, the chorus has never sounded so refined. The atmosphere of the opening bars was other-worldly, yet diction was clear and precise. The Sanctus, a brilliant double fugue for chorus, was brightly executed. The 'Dies Irae,' with its spectacular pounding of the bass drum, was electrifying for its power and rage. Here, the choral sound was robust, with clipped enunciation, and the conductor led with driving tempos. Kim accompanied the soloists with complete flexibility, taking care to never overpower them... Kim was an inspiring leader with a commanding presence. Every gesture was clear and musical, and she propelled tempos to maximum dramatic effect. The orchestra performed magnificently, from the pianissimo (doubly soft) string tremolos in the 'Offertorio' to the heaven-rending 'Dies Irae'."

–Janelle Gelfand, *Cincinnati Business Courier*

Houston Grand Opera: La Traviata (Oct 2017)

"The orchestra had to be shunted behind the stage, with the conductor facing away from the singers. Under these circumstances, a major star of *La Traviata* was Eun Sun Kim, a young Korean conductor making her North American debut, who led the performance with great sensitivity and flexibility as another conductor,

Peter Pasztor, relayed her beat in front of the stage for crowd scenes. This notion of leading with your back to the stage 'goes totally against everything you're trying to do,' said [conductor Patrick] Summers... For all that, Ms. Kim did the job beautifully."

–James R. Oestreich, *The New York Times*

"HGO's *La Traviata* represents the American debut of Korean conductor Eun Sun Kim. Conducting the HGO Orchestra, located at the rear of the stage behind the singers and chorus, had its particular challenges, because conductors and opera singers expect to be facing each other in a normal performance. Yet, the outcome was a smoothly flowing performance, appropriately fast-paced, while showing sensitivity for Verdi's melodic lines."

–William Burnett, *Opera Warhorses*

"The orchestra resides happily in plain sight behind a raised oval stage. And while this means that their sound, too, is often too muted, it offered the opportunity to see conductor Eun Sun Kim deftly preside over Verdi's time-honored score. Though a few tempi lagged, Kim struck gold in the sentiment of it."

–Sydney Boyd, *Houstonia*

"I was impressed that Eun Sun Kim's orchestra, projected forward by way of a curved plastic tarp, never dragged and was never buried by the vocalists in front. The chorus behind her knew to stay with, if slightly behind, the orchestra in terms of timing, so that the instruments' sound could catch up."

–Wei-Huan Chen, *Houston Chronicle*

"Eun Sun Kim... kept the score taut without slighting expressive expansion."

–William Albright, *Opera*