

ERICH KUNZEL, CONDUCTOR



Erich Kunzel's distinguished career is personified by his 2006 National Medal of Arts, presented by President and Mrs. Bush in a ceremony in the Oval Office at The White House. The National Medal of Arts, the highest

honor given to artists and arts patrons by the United States Government, is awarded to those who have made outstanding contributions to the excellence, growth, support and availability of the arts in the United States.

In a remarkable 42-year association in Cincinnati, Mr. Kunzel's accomplishments are almost too numerous to list. Beginning with his invitation by Max Rudolf in 1965 to conduct the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra to being named Conductor of the Cincinnati Pops in 1977, Erich Kunzel's credits include an unprecedented catalog of 83 Pops recordings on the Telarc label; four consecutive years as *Billboard Magazine's* Classical Crossover Artist of the Year; eight nationally televised Pops specials on PBS; and national and international appearances with the Pops, including 10 Carnegie Hall concerts, two tours to Taiwan, three tours to Japan and an historic tour to China.

2007-08, the 30th anniversary season of the Cincinnati Pops led by Erich Kunzel, will be marked by two new releases on Telarc: *Masters and Commanders* and *The Nutcracker. Russian Nights*, the 83rd Telarc/Pops CD, was released in February 2007, and in 2006 *The Never-Ending Waltz* and *Christmastime is Here* were released. *Symphonic Music by Howard Hanson*, the 80th Telarc/Pops CD, came out in September 2005 and was hailed in the November 2005 issue of *Gramophone* as an "Editor's Choice." The 79th Telarc/Pops collaboration, *Rózsa: Three Choral Suites*, was released in March 2005 to critical acclaim. Ken Smith wrote in the July 2005 issue of *Gramophone*, "One would have

to think hard to conceive of a more memorable performance of these works."

It was in October 1965 that Max Rudolf, then music director of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, invited Erich Kunzel to conduct an 8 O'Clock Pops concert at Music Hall. That sold-out concert with Dave Brubeck as soloist was the beginning of a relationship with concert audiences that inspired the CSO Board of Trustees to officially establish the Cincinnati Pops Orchestra in 1977 with Erich Kunzel as its conductor. The Cincinnati Pops is firmly established as one of the world's most active classical pops ensembles, maintaining a year-round performing and recording schedule and reaching music lovers worldwide through tour performances, television specials and best-selling Telarc recordings.

The Pops recording, *Copland: Music of America*, earned a Grammy Award as "Best Engineered Album, Classical" in 1997. In addition, Robert Woods, the Telarc President who produces Cincinnati Symphony and Cincinnati Pops albums, was named "Producer of the Year, Classical" for the Pops' *A Celtic Spectacular* and *Scary Music* in 2002. Five other recordings have received Grammy nominations, and *American Jubilee* was awarded France's *Grand Prix du Disque* in 1989.

In September 2006, Erich Kunzel and the Cincinnati Pops were seen nationally in their eighth PBS special titled "Take Me to the River" featuring The Preservation Hall Jazz Band, Marcia Ball and Gregg Baker. Previous Cincinnati Pops PBS specials include "Patriotic Broadway" in 2003 and "Fourth of July From the Heartland," which was televised live nationally on July 4, 2000 from Riverbend Music Center, the summer home of the Cincinnati Symphony and Cincinnati Pops.

Erich Kunzel is a regular guest conductor with orchestras around the world. He made his debut at the Tokyo International Festival in September 2004 conducting two concerts with The Super World Orchestra and returned to conduct a tour with the SWO in 2006. In 2006-07 Mr. Kunzel's Asian engagements

also included concerts with the National Symphony Orchestra of Taiwan, Hong Kong Philharmonic, and the Shenzhen Symphony Orchestra in China. He also returned to lead concerts with the Dallas, Detroit, Indianapolis and Pittsburgh symphony orchestras.

Future guest conducting engagements include return appearances with The Philadelphia Orchestra at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, Ravinia Music Festival including a semi-staged production of Frank Loesser's *Most Happy Fella*, and the symphony orchestras of Detroit, Edmonton, Indianapolis, North Carolina, Sun Valley, Toronto and Vancouver. In addition, he will lead the Symphony Orchestra of the Vienna Volksoper on a tour of Japan, including the New Year's Eve Viennese Celebration at Suntory Hall.

In 2005 Mr. Kunzel made his Viennese debut as part of the 100th anniversary season of the Vienna Volksopera conducting the Viennese premiere of *The Sound of Music*. In 2004 he made his debut with the San Francisco Opera conducting 12 performances of *The Merry Widow*. This production was telecast on BBC Worldwide and PBS as part of the *Great Performances* series.

Dubbed the "Prince of Pops" by the *Chicago Tribune*, Maestro Kunzel has appeared in more than 100 performances with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at the Ravinia Festival, where he holds the record for attendance — 22,000. Since 1991 Maestro Kunzel has led the National Symphony on the lawn of the U.S. Capitol in PBS-TV's nationally televised Memorial Day and Fourth of July concerts. In 1996, the Fourth of July concert drew a record crowd of nearly a million people to the Capitol, as well as the largest viewing audience for a musical event in PBS history.

Educated at Dartmouth, Harvard and Brown Universities, Mr. Kunzel studied with and was personal assistant to the great French conductor Pierre Monteux. July 2007 marks the 50th anniversary of his professional debut in 1957, conducting Pergolesi's *La Serva Padrona* with the Santa Fe Opera Company. By 1970, when Arthur Fiedler invited him to conduct the Boston Pops for the first time, Mr. Kunzel's commitment to "pops" was as-

sured. Since then he has led the Boston Pops in more than 100 performances in Boston's Symphony Hall and on tour in the United States and England.

In addition to receiving the National Medal of Arts in 2006, Mr. Kunzel also was honored with the 2006 Irma Lazarus Award from the Ohio Arts Council. He received the 1994 Presidential Medal for Outstanding Leadership and Achievement from Dartmouth College, his alma mater, and in 2006 he was elected into Phi Beta Kappa, America's oldest honor society. His numerous honors and awards also include the 1987 Post-Corbett Award from the *Cincinnati Post* and the 1989 Sony Tiffany Walkman Award for "visionary recording activities." He was named by the Ohio Arts Council as a special recipient of the 1991 Governor's Awards for the Arts in Ohio. In 1995, Mr. Kunzel received the 1995 Salvation Army "Others" award in recognition of his contributions to the city of Cincinnati, the same year that the Cincinnati MacDowell Society honored his contributions to the arts community by awarding him the MacDowell Medal. In 1996 the Phi Delta Theta International Fraternity presented him with its Distinguished Alumnus Award in recognition of his outstanding achievements in the performing arts.

Mr. Kunzel has served on the faculties of Brown University and the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. He holds honorary degrees from Northern Kentucky University, The College of Mount St. Joseph, University of Cincinnati and Wilmington College. In 2000, the Ohioana Library presented Mr. Kunzel with the coveted Ohioana Pegasus Award in recognition of his extraordinary musical accomplishments and devotion to the musical arts in America.

Mr. Kunzel is Chairman of the Greater Cincinnati Arts and Education Center, an organization with which he plans to fulfill his personal dream of building a new School for the Creative and Performing Arts adjacent to Music Hall.

He and his wife, Brunhilde, live on Swans Island, Maine and in Naples, Florida. They frequently take to the water in their 44-foot Hinckley jet cruiser, "Pops."