

= Huw Edwards ( conductor ) =

Huw Edwards is a Welsh conductor currently serving as music director of Olympia , Washington 's Olympia Symphony Orchestra and orchestra conductor at the University of Puget Sound . Edwards ' conducting career began at age seventeen when he became music director of the Maidstone Opera Company in England . He later attended the University of Surrey , where he conducted the college orchestra along with an ensemble that he formed himself . At age twenty @-@ three , he won a conducting competition which sent him to Southern Methodist University in Dallas , Texas . He then held a lecturer position at Northwestern University in Chicago , where he was also a doctoral candidate . Edwards was conductor and music director of the Portland Youth Philharmonic from 1995 to 2002 followed by the Seattle Youth Symphony from 2002 to 2005 . He served as music director of the Portland Columbia Symphony Orchestra from 2000 to 2012 and has been with the Olympia Symphony Orchestra since 2002 . In May 2012 Edwards accepted a position as orchestra conductor at the University of Puget Sound .

= = Early life and education = =

Born in South Wales , Edwards moved with his parents to England and sang in choirs as a child . He witnessed his first opera ( Giuseppe Verdi 's Un ballo in maschera ) at eleven years old when his parents took him to the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden . Seven years later , he was conducting Gilbert and Sullivan 's operetta H.M.S. Pinafore on that same podium . Edwards played violin and trumpet through grammar school and high school but abandoned performance for conducting .

Edwards has been conducting since age seventeen when he became music director of the Maidstone Opera Company in England , a position he held for six years . Edwards attended the University of Surrey , where he conducted the college orchestra along with an ensemble that he formed himself . He won a conducting competition in 1988 which sent him to Southern Methodist University in Dallas , Texas at twenty @-@ three years old . There he experienced " culture shock " , being " accustomed to the rolling hills of England and the cosmopolitan buzz of London " . He held a lecturer position at Northwestern University in Chicago , where he was also a doctoral candidate . Four years later he moved to the Pacific Northwest . Throughout his lifetime , Edwards has received instruction from Anshel Brusilow ( Dallas ) , chorus leader Simon Johnson ( London ) , Eduardo Mata , Barry Wordsworth , and Victor Yampolsky ( Northwestern University ) .

= = Career = =

Prior to joining the Portland Youth Philharmonic , Edwards had written extensively about music . He contributed to Stagebill in Chicago , Dallas , London and Washington , D.C. and wrote program notes for Daniel Barenboim , Yo @-@ Yo Ma and the Guarneri Quartet . He had also conducted opera and orchestras throughout Australia , Canada , Hong Kong , Japan , New Zealand , the United Kingdom , and the United States . Edwards has performed with the Annas Bay Opera , Dallas Symphony Orchestra , Eugene Symphony , Memphis Symphony Orchestra , Oregon Symphony , Rose City Chamber Orchestra , Vancouver Symphony Orchestra , Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra , and Yakima Symphony . He has been invited to speak at the American Symphony Orchestra League convention in Boston and assisted with the organisation 's " Meet for the Millennium " project .

= = Portland Youth Philharmonic = =

Edwards became conductor and music director of the Portland Youth Philharmonic ( PYP ) in 1995 , following Jacob Avshalomov 's forty @-@ year tenure to become the orchestra 's third conductor . He was selected unanimously by a twelve @-@ person committee from a field of more than one hundred candidates , and was officially handed the baton by Avshalomov at the season opening

Riverside Classics concert on 30 August . After Avshalomov conducted the first half of the concert , Edwards completed PYP 's set with performances of works by Ludwig van Beethoven , Johannes Brahms , Franz Schubert , and Nikolai Rimsky @-@ Korsakov . The program for the first subscription series concert , which received positive reception , included : Giuseppe Verdi 's Nabucco Overture , Ralph Vaughan Williams 's Serenade to Music , and Paul Hindemith 's Symphonic Metamorphosis on Themes of Carl Maria von Weber . In addition to the four season subscription concerts performed at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall , the 1995 ? 1996 season included performances at the Newport Performing Arts Center in Newport and The Resort at the Mountain near Mount Hood , as well as in Eugene , Salem , and Newberg . In 1996 the first interactive Children 's Concert was broadcast live via satellite across Oregon . The collaboration between PYP and Multnomah Community TV continued beyond 1996 ; in 1998 concerts were streamed as far away as Tucson , Arizona , and a 1999 recording became a finalist in the national Hometown Video Festival .

Released on 27 March 1998 , Fountain of Youth became the orchestra 's sixth commercial recording on Compact Disc ( previous recordings were vinyl or cassette ) . The compilation album included works recorded at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall during seasons seventy @-@ three and seventy @-@ four . In January 1999 , Portland Parent published an article by Edwards titled " The Role of Classical Music in the Lives of Young People " , which discussed the benefits of classical music to child learning development . The 1998 ? 1999 season included performances in Salem , Newberg , Welches , St. Helens , and Milwaukie and Longview , Washington in addition to the regular subscription series . On 10 February 1999 the orchestra opened a Portland Trail Blazers game at the Rose Garden performing The Star @-@ Spangled Banner .

During Edwards ' seven years with the orchestra , he and other PYP representatives established a peer mentor program which partnered orchestra musicians with low @-@ income students with little access to music education , and earned the ensemble its second ASCAP award for " Adventurous Programming and Commitment to Contemporary Music " . He made five recordings and led the orchestra on two tours : in April 1998 the Philharmonic represented the United States at the Banff International Festival of Youth Orchestras in Canada , and the orchestra toured Australia and New Zealand in 2000 . The tour included performances in Auckland , Brisbane , Canberra , Armidale , Newcastle , Sydney , and Melbourne . Edwards also recorded Gabriel Fauré 's Requiem at St. Mary 's Cathedral as a collaboration with Cantores in Ecclesia . Edwards left PYP in 2002 and was succeeded by Mei @-@ Ann Chen . Guest conductors during PYP 's 2007 ? 2008 season included Ken Selden , director of orchestral studies at Portland State University , former Seattle Symphony conductor Alastair Willis , along with former PYP conductors Edwards and Chen .

= = = Seattle Youth Symphony Orchestra = = =

He became music director of the Seattle Youth Symphony at the start of its sixtieth season ( 2002 ? 2003 ) , putting him in charge of 1 @, @ 000 young musicians participating in the symphony and its four preparatory orchestras as well as the organisation 's outreach programs and the Marrowstone Music Festival program . Edwards increased the Seattle orchestra 's repertoire by performing works by British composers of the 20th century and by premiering works by American composers such as John Mackey . One Seattle Post @-@ Intelligencer contributor wrote that Edwards made a " fine choice " for the ensemble , noting that he " nurture [ d ] , coache [ d ] and encourage [ d ] his musicians " . Furthermore , she claimed that his program notes were a " model of clarity and fascinating detail " . Edwards remained music director of the Seattle Youth Symphony Orchestra until 2005 . He has stated the following about working with young musicians :

[ With young musicians ] You have to teach and explain more . You have to fire their imagination . With professionals , you look for clarity and consistency . With students , you have to motivate and explain , using different approaches . Their attention span can come and go . It is unpredictable . From first rehearsal to performance , they will come a long way . I am very big on team work , and I tell them they are part of a team and individual egos are less important .

= = = Portland Columbia Symphony Orchestra , Olympia Symphony Orchestra = = =

Edwards began serving as music director of the Portland Columbia Symphony Orchestra in 2000 . His year @-@ long audition process for the music director position with the Olympia Symphony Orchestra began during the 2002 ? 2003 season . The season also marked his fifth with the Marrowstone Summer Music program , where he remained until 2005 . In 2010 , Edwards was one of four finalists for the conductor position with the Yakima Symphony Orchestra .

In April 2012 Edwards announced his resignation at the end of his twelfth season with the Portland Columbia Symphony Orchestra , citing exhaustion from the commutes between Olympia and Portland as the reason . He has been named Conductor Emeritus and Principal Guest Conductor and returned for the 2012 ? 2013 season finale concert .

During the final performance of the Olympia Symphony Orchestra 's 2014 ? 15 season it was announced that Edwards had signed a ten @-@ year contract extension as its conductor .

= = = University of Puget Sound = = =

In May 2012 , Edwards accepted the orchestra conductor position at the University of Puget Sound , a private liberal arts college located in Tacoma , Washington .

= = Interests = =

Dedicated to music education , Edwards enjoys conducting Beethoven for youth orchestras . He has admitted that he did not envision a career conducting youth orchestras but also that he " did not rule them out " . His favourite composition is Parsifal by Richard Wagner ; other favourites include unaccompanied choral music , cello suites by Bach , quartets by Beethoven and jazz , including Nat King Cole . Apart from music , Edwards likes the Chicago Bears , CrossFit , golf , kayaking , Masterpiece Theater , poetry , and Rhône wine along with the winemaking process . Edwards is an avid sports fan and fitness advocate ; he is a former rugby player , enjoys running and playing squash , and believes there are similarities between how music and sports affect the community . He was sometimes referred to as " coach " by musicians of the Portland Youth Philharmonic . Edwards has shared that he would want to work at a vineyard or winery , or be a sports radio host or travel correspondent for a publication if he were not a conductor .