

## After two years of searching, the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra signs hot Brazilian conductor Roberto Minczuk to lead its future

**BOB CLARK CALGARY HERALD**

After a two-year search, the Calgary Philharmonic has a new music director.

Roberto Minczuk, the recently appointed music director of the Orquestra Sinfonica Brasileira in Rio de Janeiro, signed a three-year contract (with a one-year extension) with the CPO on Friday.

The 37-year-old conductor is regarded as one of the hottest prospects among the fast-tracking musical talents of his generation.

"It's been a very deliberate — some would even say, prolonged — process," says Calgary Philharmonic president and CEO Mike Bregazzi. "This has certainly entailed quite a bit of wheeling and dealing. We looked the market over very closely, because it was vitally important that whoever we picked was going to match up well with Calgary.

"And I think that's happened. The musicians feel very good about him. They hold his musicianship in high regard."

Bregazzi, who has met him, describes Minczuk as urbane and charming.

The CPO, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary season this fall, has been without a music director since 2003 when Hans Graf ended his eight-year tenure with the ensemble to become music director of the Houston Symphony.

Minczuk, who until last May was principal guest conductor of the Sao Paulo State Symphony, recently completed a nine-year tenure as co-artistic director with the same orchestra as well as a two-year term as associate conductor of the New York Philharmonic.

Calgary Philharmonic patrons may recall that Minczuk conducted the CPO at Jack Singer Concert Hall in mid-January in a program of music by Mozart, Respighi and Richard Strauss.

In his very favourable review of the Respighi and Strauss portions of the concert, Herald music critic Kenneth DeLong praised the conductor for his "clear-minded leadership, precise yet flexible — just the ticket for this program of late-Romantic music."

Grandson of Russian immigrants, Minczuk was born in Sao Paulo, where he began his musical career as a prodigy of the French horn. In 1981, he began studies at New York's Juilliard School and made his Carnegie Hall debut two years later, at the age of 13, as soloist with the New York Philharmonic.

Upon graduation from Juilliard in 1987, Minczuk became a member of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra under his mentor, Maestro Kurt Masur.

Returning to Brazil in 1989, he took up conducting studies with Eleazar de Carvalho and John Neschling, eventually making his New York Philharmonic debut in 1998. Since then, Minczuk has led such major North American orchestras as the Philadelphia, Atlanta Symphony and National Arts Centre Orchestras.

Internationally, Minczuk has conducted such leading ensembles as the London Philharmonic and Halle Orchestras, as well as the Orchestre National de Lyon, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and the Israel Philharmonic.

He recently also completed a major recording project on the BIS label of the complete Bachianas Brasileiras of Hector Villa-Lobos with the Sao Paulo State Symphony.

An earlier recording — of the complete symphonic works of Antonio Carlos Jobim — earned him a Latin Grammy in 2004.

Although prior commitments preclude the CPO's new music director designate from taking up his official duties until July 1, 2006, it has been confirmed that Minczuk will conduct a pair of Classics series concerts on Feb. 10 and 11 (2006) at Jack Singer Concert Hall.

Further details of Minczuk's appointment will be formally announced by the orchestra on Sept. 9.

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# MEET THE NEW BOSS

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