

Ola Karlsson, cello

Ola Karlsson, born in 1952, started at the age of 10 to play the cello under Bertil Jernbom in Nyköping. In 1969 he became a student of Prof. Erling Blöndal Bengtsson at the Swedish Radio Music School at Edsberg Castle. After receiving his solo diploma he continued his studies at the Royal Danish Conservatory of Music in Copenhagen, where he received the Carl Nielsen Prize. This, plus a scholarship from the Royal Academy of Music in Stockholm made further studies possible with professor Prof. Gregor Piatigorsky in Los Angeles 1975-76.

From 1985 to 2019 Ola Karlsson was principal cellist of the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra where he has been collaborating with famous conductors also as soloist, f. ex. Manfred Honeck, , Esa-Pekka Salonen, Evgenij Svetlanov, Leif Segerstam and Mark Wigglesworth.

Since 2013 he collaborates with the eminent Russian pianist Valeria Resjan in duo recitals and recordings.

Besides his concerts in Sweden and abroad with leading artists, plus radio and TV appearances, Ola Karlsson is also Professor and responsible for the cello education at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm, as well as being the director of the string orchestra. He has also given prominent master classes during Umeå's International Chamber Music Festival, Gotland Baltic Music Academy and has been guest teaching in Hungary, Italy, Canada, USA, Estonia, Finland, Brazil, Russia, Denmark and China.

In 1986 Ola Karlsson began to have an interest in conducting and since then has successfully been a guest conductor of most of the major symphony orchestras in Sweden. He appears often as a soloist and a conductor, sometimes in combination with cello and winds, where he has cultivated a unique repertoire.

Among his recordings on CD and for the radio are Hilding Rosenberg's 2nd Cello Concerto, several Piatigorsky cello transcriptions, concertos by Elgar, Dvorák, Schumann, Walton, Vasks plus numerous chamber works. He has twice been awarded the Swedish recording price, "Grammy".

Ola Karlsson plays often and with great pleasure the so called standard repertoire of the cello literature, for example the Bach's suites for cello solo, Beethoven's sonatas etc, but he also has a very extensive knowledge of the repertoire that is not so often performed, but can be an interesting acquaintance for the new listener.

Since 1998 Ola Karlsson is performing on violoncelli made by the Swedish Master Maker, Peter Westerlund, the present one is from 2020.