

JOSEP PONS – PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR

In September 2025, Spanish conductor Josep Pons took up his position as Principal Conductor of the German Radio Philharmonic Orchestra (Deutsche Radio Philharmonie, DRP). Together with the orchestra, he intends to explore and break new ground in the relationship between orchestra and society. He succeeds Pietari Inkinen, who has held the position of Principal Conductor since 2017. Josep Pons has been associated with the DRP and the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Saarbrücken, one of its two predecessor orchestras, as a guest conductor since 2006. Since then, he has appeared with the DRP at the 2017 Ludwig van Beethoven Easter Festival in Warsaw, organised the opening concert of the 2017 Saar Music Festival and performed with violinist Frank Peter Zimmermann in Saarbrücken and Mannheim (2011 and 2018). The list of works that Josep Pons has performed with the orchestra in these years alone shows the enormous range of his repertoire: from Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Bruckner, Debussy and Ravel to Spanish music, Alban Berg's Violin Concerto and contemporary music by Mauricio Sotelo and Benet Casablanca.

Since 2012, Josep Pons has been General Music Director of the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona. He is also Honorary Director of the Orquesta y Coro Nacionales de España, of which he was Artistic Director from 2003 to 2012 – he held the same position at the Orquesta Ciudad de Granada – and founder of the Orquesta de Cambra Teatre Lliure and the Catalan Youth Orchestra JONC. In 1992 he was musical director of the ceremonies at the Olympic Games in Barcelona. His discography includes more than 50 CDs and DVDs and has won numerous awards, including the Echo Klassik Award and the Grammy. For his outstanding contribution to 20th century music, Josep Pons was awarded the National Music Prize. In 2019, he received an honorary doctorate from the Autonomous University of Barcelona and was awarded the Gold Medal for Merit in the Fine Arts by the Spanish Ministry of Culture. He was also awarded Best Music Director by the Premios Ópera XXI in October 2024 for his interpretation of Wagner's 'Parsifal' and is an extraordinary professor at the Royal Catalan Academy of Fine Arts of Sant Jordi.

Throughout his career, Josep Pons has developed close relationships with most of the major European orchestras, including the Orchestre de Paris and the BBC Symphony Orchestra, with whom he has appeared three times at the BBC Proms, the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, the Orchestre du Capitole de Toulouse and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Montecarlo.

Josep Pons began his musical training at the Escolania de Montserrat. The centuries-old tradition of this boys' choir and the intensive study of both polyphony and contemporary music at this institution had a great influence on his further musical and intellectual development. From the age of 12, he also received organ lessons there.