

## Obituary Seiji Ozawa



Seiji Ozawa's opera debut, *Così fan tutte*, Salzburg Festival 1969.

The photograph depicts him in rehearsal with the singers Tom Krause and Lajos Kozma. Photo: SF/Timpe

(SF, 9 February 2024) The news of Seiji Ozawa's death has been met with profound sadness in the music world.

“When Seiji Ozawa stepped onto the conductor's podium, there was a special tension in every concert hall in the world. His great respect for the works and his profound love for the musicians were always palpable. In Seiji Ozawa, we have lost one of the most important conductors of our times. His earnestness, his deep sensitivity, his ethical standards and his artistic class gave the music a truthfulness which is rare and precious at once,” said **Artistic Director Markus Hinterhäuser** in a first statement on Seiji Ozawa's death.

Herbert von Karajan was particularly interested in supporting young talents. Artists such as Anne-Sophie Mutter, Agnes Baltsa, Mariss Jansons, Riccardo Muti and Seiji Ozawa received important impulses for their careers from him. On 30 July 1989, Ozawa joined Solti and Levine in conducting the “Memorial Concert for Herbert von Karajan” at the Großes Festspielhaus.

Ozawa, a conductor who united continents and cultures, also enjoyed a partnership with the Vienna Philharmonic which began at the Salzburg Festival in 1966 and would last for decades. After this debut, they performed 48 times together in Salzburg. At the invitation of the Salzburg Festival, he made his opera debut with *Così fan tutte* in 1969. In 1990 and 1991, he took on another Mozart opera at the Salzburg Festival, namely *Idomeneo*. His last appearance at the Salzburg Festival came in 2004, when he led the Vienna Philharmonic in a concert featuring Dvořák, Korngold and Ives.

The son of Japanese parents, Seiji Ozawa was born in Chinese Manchuria in 1935. He was profoundly influenced by Herbert von Karajan and Leonard Bernstein. For more than a quarter-century, from 1973 to 2002, Seiji Ozawa was music director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Tanglewood Festival. In Europe, Ozawa worked mainly with the Vienna and Berlin Philharmonic, the London Symphony Orchestra and the Philharmonia Orchestra in London as well as the Orchestre National de France. From 2002 to 2010, he was music director of the Vienna State Opera.