



## Conducting a triumphant festival debut

By Jessica Duchen, June 25, 2015

Bethnal Green seems a special location in which to interview an intriguing young Israeli conductor, for this area was once a crucial centre of Jewish life in London. Little remains to point out, though, while Gad Kadosh and I wander in search of lunch out of the studio in which Longborough Festival Opera holds its rehearsals.

Kadosh, 31, is making his British opera debut at Longborough on July 4, wielding the baton for Verdi's *Rigoletto* - but today he is still the new boy on the block, hunting wistfully for hummus in the cafes and a little disappointed by the temperatures of what passes here for summer.

I first encountered Kadosh a few years ago, when he was a student in Bernard Haitink's conducting masterclass at the Lucerne Easter Festival. The course was full of gifted young musicians, but Kadosh - who won the MDR Conducting Competition in Leipzig in 2011 - made a strong impression. Since then, a fine UK manager has signed him up and a debut with the London Philharmonic Orchestra is in the diary for next season. He also has a raft of big operas to conduct as Kapellmeister at the Theater Heidelberg. Germany has been his base since he moved to Berlin for postgraduate studies in conducting, having graduated from Tel Aviv University, where his speciality was the piano.

Yet he is anything but a young man in a hurry. "I'm happy with the speed things are moving," he remarks. "I'm not in a hurry in terms of external events. But often my friends say it is only about once every 15 performances that I say, 'OK, tonight I was happy'. I always think it wasn't good enough." This quiet perfectionist was born in Tel Aviv, the son of a banker father and a university lecturer mother; his two younger siblings are also musicians, his brother a flautist and his sister a violinist who has played in Daniel Barenboim's West-Eastern Divan Orchestra. Family is paramount for him: in his spare time, he says, he prioritises time with them, his friends and his girlfriend. "It's not easy," he says, "because everyone lives so far away. "The family origins are Moroccan," he recounts. "My mother was born in France, so though we're basically Israeli I am also French. Some of my

father's family were born in Israel," he adds, "which I think affects one's sense of identity, because when you live there – and for me it was also like this – your Israeli identity and your Jewish identity in some ways combine. But I also had the other side of my mother's family: most of them were born outside Israel and still live in France, and that changes you and gives you a different point of view. "

His interests outside music are numerous, but science and technology are uppermost; the enquiring, analytical stance he seems to take to life and music could connect with this on many levels. He turned to conducting from the piano, he says, not least because, "I was fascinated by the way the whole group works".

He is looking forward to Longborough, and with good reason: it is an exceptional place to experience country-house opera, winning a special place in its audience's hearts for its cocktail of intimacy, musical excellence and gorgeous Cotswold countryside.

Rigoletto is no small ask for a debuting conductor. A major classic, with a story based on Victor Hugo, it requires enormous dramatic intensity from start to finish.

Kadosh, tackling it for the first time, seems undaunted.

"Whenever you do a piece for the first time you have to learn it and prepare everything - but still it is only when you begin to work with the singers and orchestra that you find out whether or not something you planned works well. But that's part of the excitement of this profession."

Those masterclasses with Bernard Haitink have left a vital impression, from which Kadosh says he is still learning. "He tried to show us how to trust the orchestra, to let them play, let them make the music themselves, so that you guide it and form it together with them. That's something I'm still coming back to and working on today."

'Rigoletto at Longborough Festival Opera opens on July 4. [www.lfo.org.uk](http://www.lfo.org.uk)