

## **Fort Worth Symphony O Names New Principal Guest Conductor**

By Susan Elliott, *Musical America*

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As Robert Spano moves from principal guest conductor to music director of the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra (FWSO) next August, he is to be succeeded in the former post by German conductor Kevin John Edusei, current music director of the Munich Symphony and a seasoned opera conductor among European houses. Edusei, 45, first led the FWSO last September in a program featuring Brian Raphael Nabors's *Pulse* for Orchestra and the Sibelius Violin Concerto.

Edusei takes the title of principal guest conductor designate as of January 1 and moves fully into the position in August, obligated to a three-year term. The current season marks his last in Munich; he also served as chief conductor of the Bern Opera House from 2015-19.

Asked what attracted him to the FWSO, his first permanent position with an American ensemble, Edusei cited "musical excellence...a great curiosity, openness and a special collaborative spirit among the musicians. But we musicians on stage can only be as good as the administrative team that works 'in the wings.' Over the years of working for different orchestras and opera houses I have developed a sort of sixth sense [and] I recognize good management whenever I see it." He noted the team under FWSO President and CEO Keith Cerny, who, he added he was "instrumental" in signing Spano as music director.

In addition to a return to Fort Worth, Edusei's Stateside appearances in 2022-23 are to include the Minnesota Orchestra, Dallas Symphony, Juilliard Orchestra, and the Indianapolis and Baltimore symphonies. He made his Stateside conducting debut in 2017 with the Colorado Symphony and first appeared at the Aspen Music Festival in 2004, which is where Spano, the Festival and School's music director, first heard him.

In his comments, Spano said he was looking forward to the collaboration and to "incorporating [Edusei's] innovative programming and musicianship into our long-term programming strategy."

Spano is succeeding Miguel Harth-Bedoya, now music director laureate.

Edusei, who is of mixed Ghanaian and German ancestry, has conducted widely in Europe, including London Symphony Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Symphony, BBC Scottish Symphony, Deutsche Symphony Orchestra Berlin, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, and the Chineke! Orchestra at the BBC Proms and Royal Festival Hall.

On the opera circuit, aside from Bern, he has conducted at Semperoper Dresden, Hamburg State Opera, Hannover State Opera, Volksoper Wien, and Komische Oper Berlin. Most recently he made his debut at the English National Opera with *The Marriage of Figaro*; the Royal Opera House is on a future schedule.