

Jean-Jacques Kantorow

Principal Conductor of the Doai Orchestra

Honorary Conductor of the Tapiola Sinfonietta

Jean-Jacques Kantorow is a noted violinist who has made a transition to conducting, administration, and teaching. Of Russian ancestry, Kantorow was born in Cannes, France, in 1945. He showed talent in childhood and enrolled at the Nice Conservatory and then, at 13, at the Paris Conservatory, where he took home a top prize in 1960. Throughout the 1960s he remained one of Europe's most consistent competition prize-winners, and his performance career became worldwide in scope. He recorded much of the standard concerto repertory, and of his more than 130 recordings, dozens remain available. Kantorow has been primarily associated with the Denon label.

Among the many figures in the musical world who hailed his playing was Glenn Gould, who called Kantorow a staggering talent and the most original violinist he had ever heard. His playing, noted the Grove dictionary, combines the best features of the French and Russian schools.

Kantorow grew into conducting as an orchestra leader, serving in that capacity with the Orchestre de Paris in 1977 and 1978, and with the Netherlands Chamber Orchestra (1978-1984). He became principal conductor of the Auvergne Chamber Orchestra in 1985 and of the Ensemble Orchestral de Paris in 1993. He also held substantial conducting engagements with various ensembles outside France, including the Netherlands Chamber Orchestra, the BBC Chamber Orchestra, and Finland's Tapiola Sinfonietta, Orquesta Ciudad de Granada and Helsinki Chamber Orchestra, serving as artistic director of the Helsinki group. Increasingly, his résumé has included major teaching positions at conservatories in Strasbourg and Rotterdam and at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris.