

PATRICK MARIE AUBERT

CHORAL AND ORCHESTRAL DIRECTOR

Patrick Marie Aubert was born in the town of Aix-en-Provence, at the foot of its famous mountain, Sainte-Victoire, during the Fourth Republic.

At the age of 7, after unsuccessfully trying his hand at drawing with Pablo Picasso, Patrick Marie Aubert discovered opera at a performance of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* at the town's music festival organized in its heyday by **Gabriel Dussurget**, the Wizard of Aix.

He sang in choir at the Jas de Bouffan middle school, and in **1971** joined "*La Lyre aixoise*", the city's marching band, playing trumpet. At the same time, he began his studies at the **Darius Milhaud** Conservatory. It was under Milhaud's baton that he made his debut in 1972 as a professional orchestral musician.

In **1976**, he created and directed the Jas de Bouffan alumni choir with **Irma Boghossian**. One of his many concerts with the choir was broadcast on the radio station *France Inter*. At the call of duty, he served as trumpeter in the French Air Force.

In **1977**, he became Director of the *Lyre aixoise*. **Pierre Villette**, winner of the *grand prix de Rome*, Director of the conservatory and composer of a number of choral works, noticed his talents and accepted him into his Orchestral Conducting class.

Two years later, he was awarded First Prize in Orchestral Conducting. He was then appointed Director of the Conservatory's symphonic orchestra, a position which he held until 1981. *France Musique* often aired the orchestra's concerts and recordings.

In **1981**, he won the competition for the position of Assistant Music Director of the French Armed Forces, and as a result directed the musical groups of the 4th Aerial Region in Aix, and later those of the 54th Army Division in Béziers.

In **June 1982**, he became one of the first officers accepted by competition into the **French Army Choir**. He was actively involved in its implementation and directed the first rehearsal on October 6. At the same time, he took voice lessons at the Issy-les-Moulineaux Conservatory with **Raymond Steffner** from the Paris Opera.

On July 14, 1983, François Mitterrand, President of the French Republic, officially inaugurated the French Army Choir in the gardens of his home at the Elysée Palace. At the time, Patrick Marie Aubert was the baritone section lead and was also responsible for directing the tutti rehearsals.

Promoted to Choir Manager in 1984, he also became a choral singing and conducting teacher at the Clichy-la-Garenne Conservatory in the Hauts-de-Seine area of the outskirts of Paris.

He developed his conducting skills for children's chorus with Claire Marchand, and for polyphonic choirs with Philippe Caillard.

In 1985, following the departure of the French Army Choir's Director, he was appointed its Technical Director and conducted a series of concerts in Germany. He was invited to direct the UNICEF gala concert at the *Théâtre des Champs-Élysées*, a production with a mass choir consisting of the choir of Paris' *grandes écoles* and universities and the musical ensembles of the Republican Guard. The concert was broadcast on *Antenne 2*.

In 1986, he created the male vocal ensemble *Vox Hominis*, which performed concerts both in and outside of Paris. The group also performed at the Musicora exhibition, where they introduced a large audience to an entire programme of music by 20th-century French composers that had never before been performed.

While a member of the Music Confederation of France's Choral Commission and one of its course instructors, he also became one of Irène Joachim's students.

He was a chorister in the 1987 production of Verdi's *Nabucco* at the Paris-Bercy *Palais Omnisports*. In June, he was awarded prizes in Vocal Music and Chamber Music at the Conservatories' Union of Hauts-de-Seine, as well as an Excellence Award in Singing from the Issy-les-Moulineaux Conservatory. Jean Laforge put him in charge of recruiting and preparing the male choir for the recording of Auber's *La Muette de Portici* under the baton of Thomas Fulton (EMI).

In 1988, he studied Gregorian chant with Abbot Jean Bihan from Saint-Pierre de Solesmes. He was also a chorister in Verdi's *Nabucco* at the *Halle aux grains* in Toulouse.

In 1989, he studied under singer Jean-Christophe Benoît.

After successfully passing the recruitment exam for the position of Choir Director at the Nancy and Lorraine Operas, he was unable to accept the position due to his other professional commitments. He sang in the choruses for Bizet's *Carmen* at the Paris-Bercy *Palais Omnisports* and for Donizetti's *Elisir d'amore* at the *Théâtre du Mans*.

That same year, he also sang with the French Army Choir in the bicentennial celebration of the French Revolution, most importantly at the big performance at Valmy, where the Head of State was in attendance.

In 1990, Patrick Marie Aubert became responsible for coordinating and teaching choral music to 1,500 students in schools in the Clichy-la-Garenne region.

In celebration of the 50th anniversary of General de Gaulle's Appeal, he conducted a concert with Queen Elizabeth II in attendance at Royal Albert Hall in London, which had been declared a French territory for the occasion. He was introduced to Her Majesty, who expressed her utmost satisfaction.

In June, he was hired at the Paris Opera to sing the tenor part in J.S. Bach's *Cantata BWV 134*.

In July, after successfully passing the competition, he was named Assistant Director of the French Army Choir; he thus became a Lieutenant in the National Gendarmerie.

In 1991, the Mayor of Clichy chose him as Director of the Léo Delibes Conservatory.

In 1992, he took over as Music Director of Divertimento, an orchestral group funded by the General Council of Seine-et-Marne and the city of Chelles.

In honour of the bicentennial of the national anthem, the military governor of Paris selected him to prepare the 500 choristers who performed "La Marseillaise des 1000" (The Marseillaise of a thousand) at *Place de la Concorde* in Paris.

In 1993, he was tasked with an audit of Clichy's musical and cultural life by the city's Cultural Affairs Office.

That year, he was also Music Director of the "Festival des Nuits de Joux" and conducted performances of Offenbach's *La belle Hélène* in Luxeuil and Pontarlier which were recorded by Franche-Comté's *Radio France*.

In 1994, he participated in a ceremony commemorating the 50th anniversary of the landing at Omaha Beach, a ceremony attended by many heads of state.

He composed a French adaptation of Bohuslav Martinu's *Military Mass* for a recording commissioned by the Ministry of Veterans and War Victims. That year, he also was promoted to the rank of Captain.

He was Guest Conductor at the Berlioz Festival in Côte-Saint-André, where he conducted the Vienna Orchestra in several concerts featuring French music.

In September, he was recruited for the position of Choir Director of the Nantes Opera for the 1994-95 season.

In **1995**, the Mayor of Puteaux appointed him to the municipal Commission of Arts and Culture as a permanent member. He prepared the French Army Choir for the May 8 ceremonies, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, which took place at *Place de l'Etoile* before 24 heads of state and government officials.

At the annual celebrations at the Coëtquidan military schools, he led over 1000 student officers and officer cadets performing "La Marseillaise".

On November 9, he directed all of the music for the commemorative ceremony for the 25th anniversary of the death of General de Gaulle along the *Esplanade des Invalides*.

1996 saw him take the musical reins as Director of the French Army Choir. In a rare occurrence, **Roger Boutry** asked him to conduct the Republican Guard's Symphonic Orchestra for a choral concert at the National Gendarmerie gala.

With Jacques Chirac, President of the Republic, in attendance, Aubert premiered Roger Calmel's "De profundis" (a piece dedicated to him) to mark the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Verdun, then took part in the ceremony to move André Malraux's ashes to the *Panthéon*.

That year he also recorded a CD of French variety songs entitled "Le Chœur de l'armée française chante" (The French Army Choir Sings) which received significant media coverage. With over 50,000 copies sold, this recording still holds the sales record for a military musical ensemble.

The Minister of Culture, Philippe Douste-Blazy, appointed him as a "Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres" (Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters).

Never forgetting General de Gaulle's words, "an army that sings is an army that wins", he directed a series of Christmas concerts for French soldiers stationed in Mostar and Sarajevo, in Bosnia.

In **1997**, he was promoted to the rank of Squadron Chief. As Director of the Official Choir of the French Republic, he conducted a number of large-scale official state events (such as the main Bastille Day ceremony at *Place de la Concorde* and the commemorative ceremony for the Maréchal Leclerc at *Invalides*).

For the **1998** World Cup Soccer Championships in France, Aubert proposed that the national anthems be sung live rather than playing a recording as usual. As a result, on July 12, in the *Stade de France*, he conducted the choir in the French and Brazilian national anthems. Eighty thousand spectators sang along as over a billion television viewers watched around the world. The next day he received the personal congratulations of the French President.

In October, at the Masevaux International Festival, he conducted the world premiere of Vincent Warnier's "Laudate Dominum", a work dedicated to him.

In **1999**, he wanted to return to teaching, so he founded "Les Petits Chanteurs de Stan", a middle school boys' choir in Paris specializing in sacred music.

During a concert for the Minister of Veteran Affairs, he premiered "In memoriam Douaumont", a work by Rémi Gousseau for brass ensemble.

At the *Choralîles* music festival on the island of Reunion, he conducted a group of over 600 choristers performing Beethoven's "Choral Fantasy".

On **May 8, 2000**, Patrick Marie Aubert was named "Chevalier de l'Ordre national du Mérite" (Knight of the National Order of Merit) by the French President.

Anna Marly, composer of "Chant des partisans", sang under his direction in June during a special concert at the Église Saint Louis des Invalides.

As his last concert as Director the French Army Choir, he directed a Bastille Day concert of Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" and Berlioz's "La Marseillaise" with over 800 singers at the Place de la Concorde.

French President Jacques Chirac expressed his "most cordial esteem".

In **2001**, he was tasked with a mission by the Officer of Culture and Heritage of the Gendarmerie. At the request of the Director General of the National Gendarmerie, he wrote an audit report on the status of music in the Republican Guard and the Mobile Gendarmerie.

In the summer, he was hired as Choral Conductor for the Chorégies in Orange, which were devoted entirely to repertoire by Verdi.

On August 25, he was put in charge of coordinating the music for a ceremony commemorating the liberation of Paris, taking place in the main square of City Hall.

He became Director of the Nantes Opera choruses in September.

In **2002**, he created and directed a vocal and instrumental ensemble of musicians in Passy in collaboration with Raphaël Tambyeff and musicians from the *Radio France* choir.

In Nantes, he programmed and directed a concert entitled "Une matinée à Vienne" (A Morning in Vienna) with music by Franz Lehar and Johann Strauss. To commemorate Maurice Duruflé's centennial, he directed a performance of the composer's "Requiem" in December.

2003 was a year of many changes. He left the Nantes Opera in April after directing the performances of *La Forêt bleue* by Louis Aubert.

He conducted his last concert with Divertimento in June.

At the end of July, he retired from the military after 27 years of loyal service.

Nicolas Joel appointed him Choral Director of the *Capitole* in Toulouse on September 1, 2003.

2004 and 2005 were devoted entirely to the *Capitole's* choir. With hard work, the group was able to refine its blend, colour, articulation and precision. Conductors, critics, and the public alike unanimously acclaimed the quality of the choral ensemble.

Patrick Marie Aubert was named "Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres" (Officer of the Order of Arts and Letters) by the Minister of Culture and Communication, Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres.

In addition to working on the choral productions of the season, he also directed the *Capitole's* choir and orchestra in Anton Bruckner's "Mass in E Minor" at the *Théâtre du Capitole*.

In **2006**, he directed Arthur Honegger's "Le Roi David" featuring the *Capitole's* choir and orchestra and Eric Génovèse, an actor with the *Comédie-Française*.

He also worked with Norbert Balatsch and the Bayreuth Festival's choir on the *Capitole's* production of Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*.

He was hired again in Orange to coordinate the choirs as Incidental Music Director at the Chorégies for Verdi's *Aida*.

He also introduced Toulouse audiences to a hidden gem of French music: [Le Miroir de Jésus](#), André Caplet's fascinating masterpiece.

In **2007**, he directed the world premiere of Philippe Fénelon's "Ich lasse Dich nicht" during a concert at the *Théâtre du Capitole*, along with works by Igor Stravinsky and Kurt Weill.

In **January 2008**, at the suggestion of Christine Albanel, Minister of Culture and Communication, he was promoted to "Officier de l'Ordre national du Mérite" (Officer of the National Order of Merit) by decree of the French President.

During "Olivier Messiaen Day" in Toulouse to celebrate the composer's centennial year, he conducted the *Capitole's* choir and orchestra and Bertrand Chamayou on piano in "Trois petites liturgies de la présence divine".

At that year's Chorégies in Orange, he was assistant to Michel Plasson and coordinated and prepared the chorus, made up of many different choirs, for *Carmen* and *Faust*.

In **February 2009**, he presented a concert featuring the works of three composers born in the 20th century: Leonard Bernstein, Arvo Pärt and John Rutter.

At the Chorégies in Orange, he was assistant to Georges Prêtre prepared the chorus for *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci*.

On August 1, 2009, he was appointed Chorus Master of the National Paris Opera.

In honour of Robert Schumann's 200th birthday, he directed a concert at the Bastille Amphitheatre which included motets by Mendelssohn as well as Schumann's "Der Rose Pilgerfahrt".

In June 2010, he chaired the jury for the Paris National Conservatory of Music and Dance vocal auditions.

Frédéric Mitterrand, Minister of Culture and Communication, promoted him to the rank of “Commandeur dans l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres” (Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters) in July 2010.

He also sat on the jury for the first Paris Opera Competition.

In 2011, he took part in over one hundred performances in the two Paris Opera houses (Bastille and Garnier). In March, he conducted Arthur Honegger’s “Le Roi David” with the Paris Opera Chorus, its Orchestra and Michael Lonsdale at the Garnier Opera House.

He participated in the world premiere of Bruno Mantovani’s opera *Akhmatova*. He was also regularly invited to give master classes at the Paris Institute of Political Science and conservatories in Paris, among others, and was featured on a [short news report](#) on the television station *France 3*.

In 2012, Patrick Marie Aubert prepared 12 operatic works with the Paris Opera Chorus for over 120 performances at the Bastille and Garnier opera houses.

In March, he was a guest on Marcel Quillévéré’s radio show “Les traverses du temps”, broadcast live on *France Musique*.

He presented André Caplet’s [Le Miroir de Jésus](#) at the Bastille Amphitheatre with Janina Baechle, the Psophos Quartet, Sylvain Le Provost on double bass, Emmanuel Ceysson on harp, and the women of the Paris Opera Chorus. He was featured in the [Who’s Who](#) in France, a biographical dictionary of “the people who count.”

On **January 1, 2013**, by decree of the President of the French Republic, he was named “Chevalier de la Légion d’honneur” (Knight of the French Legion of Honour). To commemorate the bicentenary of both Wagner and Verdi, he gave a [special concert](#) at the Bastille Opera House on March 20 with the Conservatoire Graduates’ Orchestra and the Paris Opera Chorus.

In 2014, he left the Paris Opera after working on 56 productions and preparing nearly 600 performances.

Nicolas Joel, Director of the Paris Opera, declared “I thank Patrick Marie Aubert for the wonderful work he has accomplished. Under his direction, the Paris Opera Chorus made tremendous progress which was recognized unanimously by both audiences and the press. He showed that he deserved, in every respect, the trust I placed in him when I asked him to follow me from Toulouse to Paris, and his work has only confirmed his musical talents and his incredible knowledge of operatic repertoire and French music.”

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Throughout his career, Patrick Marie Aubert has had the privilege of collaborating with many conductors, including Maurizio Arena, Serge Baudo, Maurizio Benini, Roberto Benzi, Jean-Claude Casadesus, Christoph Eschenbach, Claus Peter Flor, Eliahu Inbal, Jiri Kout, Günter Neuhold, Marc Minkowski, Gianandrea Noseda, Jean-Yves Ossonce, Evelino Pidò, Michel Plasson, Georges Prêtre, Roberto Rizzi Brignoli, Yutaka Sado, Pinchas Steinberg, and Jeffrey Tate, among others.

Patrick Marie Aubert is a Knight of the French Legion of Honour, an Officer of the National Order of Merit and a Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters. He has been awarded a silver National Defense Medal and the Medal of Honour of the Music and Choral Societies. He also holds a *Deutsche Sportabzeichen* (German Sports Badge).