

**Press conference
presenting the programme
of the 2018 Salzburg Easter Festival**

with

Christian Thielemann

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12:00

Hotel Sacher Salzburg, winter garden

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The Festival centrepiece: *Tosca*, one of the great Italian *verismo* operas

After the operatic double bill of *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci* in the year 2015 and *Otello* in 2016, the Salzburg Easter Festival under the artistic direction of Christian Thielemann is once again returning to the Italian repertoire. Giacomo Puccini's *Tosca*, one of the great *verismo* operas of the Italian repertoire, will form the centrepiece of the 2018 Salzburg Easter Festival. And Philipp Stölzl, the successful director and set designer for *Cavalleria/Pagliacci*, will be returning in 2018 to stage Puccini's masterpiece. Heike Vollmer will design the sets together with Philipp Stölzl; the costume designs will be by Thomas Oláh.

Christian Thielemann will be responsible for the musical direction of the new production. The title role will be performed by Anja Harteros – one of 'the' Toscas of today. Cavaradossi will be sung by Aleksandrs Antoņenko, one of the world's leading *spinto* tenors of the younger generation, while the renowned baritone Ludovic Tézier will appear as Scarpia. The other roles will be sung by Andrea Mastroni (Angelotti), Matteo Peirone (Sacristan), Mikeldi Atxalandabaso (Spoletta), Rupert Grössinger (Sciarrone) and Levente Páll (Jailer).

Puccini the progressive? – A podium discussion about *Tosca*

In addition to the introductory talks by Christoph Wagner-Trenkwitz, organized by the Association of Patrons, and the overview of the discography by Jürgen Kesting, a podium discussion will offer an opportunity for a more thorough investigation of Puccini's opera.

Not least on account of the year of its first performance, 1900, Puccini's 'melodramma' *Tosca* seems to signal the advent of a new era, and it poses provocative questions about continuity and fault lines in the history of opera. In dramaturgical terms, the work straddles the genres of 'Künstleroper', love story, political thriller and psychodrama. Recent research has emphasised the innovative characteristics of its construction, its internal forms and its compositional technique, as well as noting how it turns away from the conventions of the genre. Thus there is here a dissolution of the traditional, closed 'bravura' arias, a tendency to the fragmentation of musical procedures, impressionistic moments, chromatic interventions and whole-tone passages.

The podium will feature the following speakers: Philipp Stölzl (director and set designer), Dieter Schickling (Puccini scholar), Christine Lemke-Matwey (cultural journalist, *DIE ZEIT*) and Volker Mertens (literary expert). The podium will be introduced and moderated by Oswald Panagl. This discussion will be held in cooperation with the Focus Area Science & Art of the University of Salzburg and the Mozarteum University of Salzburg.

...and Puccini on the concert programme too

Giacomo Puccini also provides a link to the concert programme. Like the opera, the concerts also feature the Festival's Orchestra in Residence, the Staatskapelle Dresden. Puccini's early orchestral

work *Preludio sinfonico* opens an orchestral concert in which the sisters Katia and Marielle Labèque will be the guests in a performance of Mozart's Double Piano Concerto. The Labèques are regarded as one of the most exciting, versatile piano duos of the present day. This programme will close with Hector Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*. The Staatskapelle Dresden will be conducted by Andrés Orozco-Estrada in his debut at the Salzburg Easter Festival. He is in demand all over the world and is considered to be one of the leading representatives of the younger generation.

Recipient of the 2018 Herbert von Karajan Prize: Sol Gabetta

The second orchestral concert will be conducted by Christian Thielemann. He will open it with Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy's concert overture *Die Hebriden*. The soloist in Robert Schumann's Cello Concerto will be the next recipient of the Herbert von Karajan Prize, founded by Eliette von Karajan: Sol Gabetta. When still in her youth she caused a sensation with performances that demonstrated interpretive and technical mastery in equal measure. Johannes Brahms has long had a firm place in the repertoire of the Staatskapelle; his Second Symphony will here be the main work after the interval.

Elīna Garanča in Mahler's Third Symphony

In 2018 Christian Thielemann will be conducting Gustav Mahler's Third Symphony for the first-ever time. It is also the work featured in the Choral Concert, where his soloist will be the mezzo-soprano Elīna Garanča, who is celebrated in opera houses and concert halls all over the world. The chorus will comprise the ladies of the Vienna Singverein and the Salzburg children's chorus (the 'Salzburger Festspiele und Theater Kinderchor').

Continuation of the chamber opera series, with Maderna's *Satyricon*

In 2017 the Salzburg Easter Festival initiated a new chamber opera series – its second programme offering in the realm of music theatre. After the production of Salvatore Sciarrino's *Lohengrin* in 2017, the Easter Festival shall be presenting Bruno Maderna's *Satyricon* in 2018. Maderna composed this work towards the end of his life, when he was already gravely ill, and it was given its first performance in 1973. It is based on the novel of the same title by Titus Petronius, and is a work of music theatre that is pluralistic in its stylistic approach, quoting from several different epochs of music history. *Satyricon* comprises several different scenes, whose order can be determined by the conductor and director.

This new production will be a co-production with the Semperoper Dresden, and will be directed by Georg Schmedleitner. Harald Thor will design the stage sets, and Tanja Hofmann the costumes. Peter Tilling will conduct the *œnm . österreichisches ensemble für neue musik*, and the soloists will be from the Junges Ensemble and the Ensemble of the Semperoper Dresden.

Sacred music in the Concert for Salzburg

As in the year 2016, the 2018 Concert for Salzburg with the Staatskapelle Dresden will be devoted to sacred music: Johann Sebastian Bach's *St John Passion*, one of the core works of liturgical music for Easter Week. The guest artists for this concert will be the conductor Philippe Herreweghe and the Collegium Vocale Gent, of which he is the founder-director. For decades now, they have been renowned for their ground-breaking interpretations according to the principles of historical performance practice. The solo parts will be sung by Maximilian Schmitt (Evangelist), Krešimir Stražanac (Jesus), Dorothee Miels (soprano), Damien Guillon (alto), Robin Tritschler (tenor) and Peter Kooij (bass).

An Austrian premiere in the Chamber Concerts

The Karajan Prize-winner Sol Gabetta will also perform chamber music at the 2018 Salzburg Easter Festival. Together with musicians from the Staatskapelle Dresden, she will give the Austrian premiere of a work by the composer Sofia Gubaidulina: *Die Pilger* for violin, double bass, piano and two percussionists. Sofia Gubaidulina enjoys a close connection to the Staatskapelle, and was its 'Capell-Compositrice' for two seasons.

***The Kapelle strikes up* – in the Children's Concert**

The Staatskapelle Dresden's well-loved concert format for young people – the Kapelle for Kids – has meanwhile also found a faithful fan base in Salzburg. In the coming season, the concert's programme is called *Die Kapelle spielt auf* (The Kapelle strikes up). Alma the puppet and musicians from the Staatskapelle will show the children how composers have made 'art music' out of dance music and folk music – but an 'art music' that can just as easily inspire its listeners to start singing and dancing.