



Press release

2nd International Music Festival Hamburg 21 April to 22 Mai 2016

From 21 April to 22 May 2016, the Music City Hamburg presents an unparalleled second edition of the Hamburg International Music Festival. The engaging festival programme is a result of long-term planning undertaken by a large group of dedicated contributors – at the centre Thomas Hengelbrock, Principal Conductor of the NDR Symphony Orchestra, the future resident orchestra of the Elbphilharmonie, and Hamburg's General Music Director Kent Nagano.

Festival Motto: Freedom

The 2nd Hamburg International Music Festival celebrates a suitably up-to-date and simultaneously timeless topic: freedom. »All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.« This is the first article in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights released by the United Nations in 1948 – words that seem overwhelmingly elementary in the face of the radical utopia that they describe. As it happens, the vast field of freedom grasps, on the other hand, a domain that specialises in symbolic and allegorical expression: the arts. More specifically, music!

Scenic productions

Five different productions make up »Scenic Productions«, among them as festival opener, a new interpretation of Bach's »St. Matthew Passion« under the musical leadership of Kent Nagano and staged by the legendary director Romeo Castellucci. Following a highly successful run at the latest Salzburg Festival is a production of Henry Purcell's »Dido and Aeneas« with Thomas Hengelbrock and Johanna Wokalek. Jeffrey Tate brings Leonard Bernstein's »Candide« to the Laeiszhalle and the young, fiery violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja puts together a concert performance with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra that throws tradition out of the window in »Bye Bye Beethoven«!

Survival Music

The series »Survival Music« centres around works that have outlived political dictatorship, imprisonment and concentration camps. »Work sets you free« is the slogan that was placed by the Nazis at the entrances of the concentration camps. Among the millions of people murdered there were a number of composers. The festival dedicates this series to these composers, for example, Erwin Schulhoff, Gideon Klein, as well as Olivier Messiaen and Mieczysław Weinberg. The compositions are interpreted by first-class soloists and chamber musicians, such as Carolin Widman, Sharon Kam and Tanja Tetzlaff, the Pavel Haas Quartet and the Bennewitz Quartet.

Johannes Brahms

A further focal point is dedicated to Hamburg's famous musical descendant Johannes Brahms. In the course of the festival, some of his greatest works are performed, among them »A German Requiem«, the Double Concerto and all four symphonies in a deluxe marathon conducted by Thomas Hengelbrock.



Pop Concerts and Performances

During »Nightline«, pop concerts that take place in the late evening turn the Laeiszhalle into a club. Appearing in the festival: dubstep pioneer Jamie Woon and techno musician Pantha du Prince. The Hamburg-based artist Felix Kubin has created a special performance for the Hamburg International Music Festival disengaging our understanding of gravity, space and time. The Italian concert pianist Marino Formenti hosts a weeklong »Open House« in Haus 73 on the Schulterblatt, during which collaborations with musicians from different genres and countries of origin take centre stage. You are invited to come by and join in!

Want more? This year's festival features one of SWR Symphony Orchestra Baden-Baden and Freiburg's final concerts before its forced merge with Stuttgart, taking place under the leadership of the historical performance specialist François-Xavier Roth. Grand seigneur of the piano Maurizio Pollini appears in a rare solo concert in Hamburg. Under the baton of headliner conductor Andris Nelsons, the Boston Symphony Orchestra performs Mahler's monumental ninth symphony in the Grosser Saal of the Laeiszhalle. And baritone Thomas Hampson ponders the freedom of thought in a special liederabend of revolutionary songs, stemming from the American Civil War to the 1848 German revolution.

Festival Epilogue

The Hamburg International Music Festival closes in celebration with Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in honour of the peerless Nikolaus Harnoncourt, who was originally conductor of the concert. On 5 March, Harnoncourt died at the age of 86, peacefully and surrounded by family. The music world mourns the loss of this remarkable artist. The concert takes place as planned - with all other previously announced artists and Diego Fasolis stepping in as new conductor.

View the complete festival program here: www.musikfest-hamburg.de/en. Tickets are available online or at +49 40 357 666 66.

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