

The Mahler Chamber Orchestra opens the season at its Italian residence in Ferrara

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BERLIN, 13 October 2009 – In October 2009, the Mahler Chamber Orchestra (MCO) travels to Ferrara for its annual series of season-opening concerts. This year, the autumn period is made up of three concerts, including a concert performance of Richard Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* with Waltraud Meier in the title role. Chamber music concerts are also planned in cooperation with the concert promoter Ferrara Musica and the Torrione Jazz Club Ferrara.

The opening of the 2009/10 season in Ferrara takes place on 16 October at the Teatro Comunale. Under the direction of Emmanuel Krivine, who works with the MCO for the first time, the orchestra will play Brahms' Double Concerto op.102 as well as Dvorak's Symphony no. 9 "From the New World". Violinist Viviane Hagner and cellist Marie-Elisabeth Hecker will join the MCO as soloists. The concert will be repeated on 17 October in Perugia.

The second programme on 21 October 2009 is dedicated entirely to Classical and early Romantic repertoire. Joseph Haydn and Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, two extraordinary representatives of their musical epochs, are of special interest this year: Joseph Haydn died in May 1809, three months after Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy was born. The MCO plays Haydn's Symphony no. 98 in B-flat major as well as his Cello Concerto no.1 in C major on this concert, followed by Mendelssohn-Bartholdy's Symphony no.5 (Reformation Symphony). The MCO will be conducted by Ton Koopman and soloist is the Italian cellist Mario Brunello.

One of this season's highlights can be heard on 26 October as the MCO and its Principal Conductor Daniel Harding play a concert performance of Act 2 of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* on 26 October. An internationally known cast of Wagnerian singers come together for this project. Waltraud Meier will sing the role of Isolde, John Mac Master is Tristan, Mihoko Fujimura is Brangäne, King Marke will be sung by Franz-Josef Selig and Michael Vier appears in the two roles Melot and Kurwenal. The concert will be repeated in Dortmund on 30 October as part of the MCO's NRW Residence, and also in Frankfurt on 1 November and in Paris on 5 and 7 November.

The orchestra and Daniel Harding have long looked forward to the chance to focus on Wagner's work. In October 2008, the MCO played the overture to *Der fliegende Holländer* and the *Wesendonck-Lieder* with Daniel Harding and Waltraud Meier. The Frankfurter Rundschau commented: "It's a strong statement, but when you sit in the concert hall at the Alte Oper and hear how the multinational Mahler-musicians accompany the singer in Wagner's *Wesendonck-Lieder*, you truly can hardly imagine anything better, anything more carefully heard. The orchestra under the direction of its Principal Conductor Daniel Harding presented excellent, delicate work."

In addition to the orchestral concerts, the MCO can also be heard outside of the concert hall during this project. An ensemble of soloists will perform at the Jazz Club Ferrara on 22 October. This concert will kick off a new concert series called "Ferrara Musica OFF" in which jazz, classical, and contemporary music are presented outside of the conventional concert hall situation. The goal is to give a young and curious audience an easy and informal introduction to new kinds of music. Further concerts in the series "Ferrara Musica OFF" are scheduled for 11 March and 12 April 2010.

The Mahler Chamber Orchestra (MCO), with its unusual structure, internationality and outstanding quality, is an ensemble unique to the present time. Its organisation and method of operation make it a model for the future of the European orchestral landscape. Composed of around 40 musicians from 20 different nations, and independent of external sponsorship, the MCO plays operas and concerts all over the world, in cities as well as at exclusive festivals from the North Pole to the Red Sea. The orchestra was founded in 1997 by the musicians themselves and Claudio Abbado, and the two have been reaching milestones of European musical life together ever since.

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