

The Mahler Chamber Orchestra opens the 2008/09 season with its annual appearance at the LUCERNE FESTIVAL

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At the beginning of August, the Mahler Chamber Orchestra (MCO) travels once again to Lucerne where it will perform at the LUCERNE FESTIVAL SOMMER under the direction of Claudio Abbado, Heinz Holliger, and Daniel Harding. The internationally renowned festival opens on 13 August with a concert of the LUCERNE FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA (LFO). The MCO serves as core and center of the LFO at the request of MCO founder Claudio Abbado. On the following evening, Heinz Holliger conducts the MCO in its usual formation. A further LFO program follows on 22 and 23 August, and on 24 August, the MCO performs a second concert under the direction of its Principal Conductor Daniel Harding.

The SOMMER festival has a new theme each year – in 2008 the festival's motto is „TanzMusik“. In the MCO's concert programs, folk dances and traditional music in various interpretations and settings play a central role. The focus is on composers of the modern and romantic periods, including Bela Bartók, Antonín Dvořák, Maurice Ravel, and Igor Stravinsky, each of whom takes his own individual approach to this material. Contemporary music is also represented with Bernd Alois Zimmermann's Kirmestänze.

Again this year, soloists of the highest calibre will perform with both orchestras: Elīna Garanča and Héléne Grimaud with the LFO, and Thomas Zehetmair and Renaud Capuçon with the MCO. Elīna Garanča's most recent performance with the MCO was in 2006 in the celebrated production of *Così fan tutte* as staged by Patrice Chéreau at the Theater an der Wien. Héléne Grimaud played with the orchestra on the occasion of the opening of the Grand Théâtre in Aix-en-Provence in June 2007, and further concerts with the French pianist are planned for the second half of the 2008/09 season. Thomas Zehetmair, who is internationally known for his work as both soloist and chamber musician, will play Bartók's Rhapsodies no.1 and no.2 under the direction of Heinz Holliger. The second MCO concert features Renaud Capuçon as soloist. The French violinist recorded violin concertos of Schumann and Mendelssohn-Bartholdy with the MCO in 2003; the CD was released in the following year by Virgin Classics and was met with great enthusiasm by audiences and critics.

The LUCERNE FESTIVAL goes on the road again this year - after very successful tours to Japan and the U.S.A. in 2006 and 2007, the LFO and MCO will travel in late September 2008 to the Musikverein in Vienna.

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The Mahler Chamber Orchestra was founded in 1997 on the initiative of Claudio Abbado and a group of musicians from the Gustav Mahler Youth Orchestra. The combined principles of artistic curiosity and the broadest possible spectrum of repertoire, both at the highest possible musical level, guided the ambitious ensemble in its founding and continue to shape its work today.

[You can find this press release here](#)