

The Mahler Chamber Orchestra makes its debut at the Munich Opera Festival with Bernstein's Trouble in Tahiti conducted by Kent Nagano

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The Mahler Chamber Orchestra (MCO) is making its very first appearance at the Munich Opera Festival at the Bayerische Staatsoper this year. All three performances of Leonard Bernstein's *Trouble in Tahiti*, conducted by Kent Nagano and staged by Schorsch Kamerun, sold out in a short time. In addition, the ensemble, as one of the festival's few guest orchestras, is presenting a programme of works by Richard Wagner, Ferruccio Busoni and Johann Strauss under the direction of MCO concertmaster Gregory Ahss.

The Munich Opera Festival is one of the best-known and oldest opera festivals in Europe. From its inception in 1875, it has brought the Munich theatre season to a dazzling finish every year with opera, ballets and concerts. One of this year's new features is the series under construction. As part of the series, a space for discussions, small performances and new aesthetic forms will be opened at Marstallplatz, behind the National Theater – an "eternal construction site" whose continuing development will open up room for visions, dreams and their realisation in art. The concert on 8 July and *Trouble in Tahiti* are productions of this series.

Premiered in 1952, *Trouble in Tahiti* transports the audience to America of the 50s. The opera describes the bleak life of a married couple, with television, child, and fully automatised kitchen in a typical suburban house. Sam's life takes place in the office and on the sports field, where he seeks recognition and affirmation, while Dinah spends most of her time at the psychiatrist and the cinema, so as to distract herself from her miserable existence. Musically, the work unites jazzy passages, aria-like pieces, songs from American popular music, hidden and open references to twelve-tone music and the musical – all in an impertinent and eclectic manner typical of Bernstein.

This parody of suburban life will be staged by Schorsch Kamerun, a versatile artist whose punk band "Die goldenen Zitronen" has reached cult status. Beth Clayton and Rodney Gilfrey will perform the main roles.

The star American conductor Kent Nagano is making his MCO debut in this performance. Since September 2006, Nagano has been General Music Director of the Bayerische Staatsoper as well as Music Director of the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal.

And Viennese waltzes meet the Second Viennese School the day after the premiere of *Trouble in Tahiti*: MCO concertmaster Gregory Ahss will lead the orchestra in Strauss waltzes arranged by Alban Berg, Anton Webern and Arnold Schoenberg. Also on the programme are Ferruccio Busoni's *Berceuse élégiaque*, Wagner's overture to the third act of the *Meistersinger von Nürnberg* and the *Wesendock-Lieder*. The soprano Anaïk Morel will perform the *Wesendock-Lieder*; it will also be her MCO debut.

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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