

The Mahler Chamber Orchestra gives its Chinese debut under the direction of Tan Dun

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Beijing is the destination of the tour that the Mahler Chamber Orchestra (MCO) will undertake as the core of the LUCERNE FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA (LFO) with Claudio Abbado in connection with the LUCERNE FESTIVAL Summer. A joint tour of LFO and MCO has been a tradition since 2005, and the orchestras have already travelled together to Rome, Vienna, Tokyo, and New York. The musicians will give five concerts at the Grand National Theatre. In its own concert, the MCO will present works of Takemitsu, Mozart, Haydn and Tan Dun under the direction of the Chinese conductor.

In the concerts of the LFO under the direction of Claudio Abbado, the ensemble repeats the opening programme of this summer's LUCERNE FESTIVAL with Mahler's First Symphony and Sergei Prokofieff's Piano concerto no.3 in C major interpreted by Chinese pianist Yuja Wang. In the second program, the orchestra plays Mahler's Symphony no.4, which was received with thunderous applause at the LUCERNE FESTIVAL in August. The programme will be filled out by Mozart's arias *Vorrei spiegarvi, oh Dio* KV 418 and *Nehmt meinen Dank, ihr holden Gönner* KV 383 with soprano soloist Rachel Harnisch.

The programme of the MCO's concert offers an exciting mix of contemporary and Viennese classic repertoire. The programme includes Toru Takemitsu's work *Three Film Scores for Strings*, which is a new arrangement of three existing film compositions by the passionate cineaste and film score composer. The MCO's performance of this work will be its Chinese premiere. The MCO will then perform Tan Dun's own work *Earth Concerto – A Dialogue with Gustav Mahler*. Tan Dun's music is a stirring combination of Western and Eastern style elements, which includes traditional instruments as well as experimental sound possibilities. In the *Earth Concerto*, percussion instruments made of clay and other natural materials are introduced, and the orchestra creates sounds and noises with the help of paper, water, and ceramics.

Mozart and Haydn form the classical side of the concert. Alongside Haydn's *Symphony no.1 in C major*, the MCO will also play Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante for Violin, Viola and Orchestra* with violinist Kolja Blacher and violist Wolfram Christ.

This symphony concert is the first collaboration between the MCO and composer and conductor Tan Dun, who was born in the southern Chinese province of Hunan. As a conductor, Tan Dun has worked with the world's best known orchestras; as a composer, he has won many awards for his works, including the Grawemeyer Award, a Grammy, and even an Oscar for the film music to *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*.

The concerts will take place at the National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA), which was completed in 2007 and is located close to Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City. The centre includes an opera house, a concert hall and a theatre, and bears an impressive façade of titanium and glass which reminds the observer of an opening curtain. The entire complex is surrounded by a lake, and visitors enter through a long underwater tunnel with a glass roof.

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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