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Stiftung Oper in Berlin

Musical direction as of 2026/27

Maxime Pascal and Michele Spotti: Principal Guest Conductor

Titus Engel: Conductor in Residence

22 September 2025

Dear press and media representatives,

During today's press conference, Aviel Cahn, designated general director of the Deutsche Oper Berlin as of summer 2026, alongside Senator for Culture Sarah Wedl-Wilson, presented the plans for the theatre's future musical direction:

In the first years of Aviel Cahn's tenure, the Deutsche Oper will not appoint a new General Music Director (GMD), but rather rely on a team of conductors. As Principal Guest Conductors, the young conductors Maxime Pascal and Michele Spotti will set important artistic standards with the Deutsche Oper Berlin Orchestra. As Conductor in Residence, Titus Engel will complement the musical leadership team in a more dynamic and diverse way.

"I am very pleased that we could attract Maxime Pascal and Michele Spotti, two enormously renowned and vastly different conductors, to commit to our theatre," says Cahn. "Pascal has deep roots in the 20th century repertoire, while Spotti is a younger representative of great Italian Romantic tradition. I have been working with Titus Engel for many years. Few conductors in the German-speaking opera world are as open and as innovative as he is."

"Throughout the past two years, I have frequently exchanged with the orchestra about potential successors for the General Music Director Sir Donald Runnicles, who will be leaving one season earlier than planned, during the summer of 2026," the designated general director continues. "Both sides would like to take more time and get to know different artists on a deeper level. For the first two to three seasons, we are looking forward to this inspiring, exciting, team-based solution that offers a range of creative experiences and leaves in the same time the field open to other conductors."

The Principal Guest Conductors will work with the orchestra to develop their artistic footprint with at least two productions (premiere and/or revival) and a symphonic concert.

The Conductor in Residence, Titus Engel, will conduct world creations, a symphonic concert, and will be involved in developing innovative projects and cooperations in the Tischlerei (smaller stage of the Deutsche Oper) and in a larger local, urban context.

The conductors comment:

Maxime Pascal: “I am deeply honoured and proud to continue building a strong relationship with the orchestra, singers, chorus and teams of Deutsche Oper Berlin in the pursuit of musical excellence. Opera has fascinated me from the very beginning of my career as the total sensory experience of sound and vision. It is therefore a defining milestone in my artistic journey to join this institution, a true jewel of Europe’s musical life.”

Michele Spotti: “Berlin has always been a city of artistic exploration and musical dialogue. I feel honoured by the opportunity to bring the richness of the Italian repertoire, but not only, to the vibrant stage of Deutsche Oper Berlin.”

Titus Engel: “I am really looking forward to realising exciting and innovative opera projects and concerts at the Deutsche Oper and to help build the bridge between the great and venerable institution and the dazzling life of the Berlin scene.”

The Deutsche Oper Berlin Orchestra has been able to grow into a young, modern orchestra through its years of stability with Sir Donald Runnicles. It is looking forward to a highly specialised musical direction team and to a close collaboration with the various outstanding artists, with whom they will foster and develop their respective musical focus areas and skills.

We look forward to welcoming you on this journey and thank you for your interest.

Kirsten Hehmeyer
Press Officer