



Heidenheim celebrates the power of music

The Heidenheim Opera Festival will take place from **May 29 to August 2, 2020**, under the motto "Power". It will feature the operas "Don Carlo" and "I due Foscari", continuing the series of Verdi productions that have already drawn international attention in past seasons. But Ludwig van Beethoven will also receive his due in his anniversary year in performances by the two acclaimed festival ensembles, the Stuttgart Philharmonic and the Cappella Aquileia, under Artistic Director Marcus Bosch.

By definition, power is something that possesses or represents a particular or mysterious strength. With its motto this year, the Heidenheim Opera Festival (OH!) will cleverly cover several levels of meaning at once when the power of music becomes vividly perceptible and, of course, audible in masterpieces by composers including **Verdi, Beethoven (in the celebratory year of 2020), Carl Orff and Leonard Bernstein**, performed in the unique open-air location of Hellenstein Castle with its powerful medieval architecture. This kind of experience has been guaranteed for years not only by the Stuttgart Philharmonic but also by the Cappella Aquileia, founded in 2011 – which, according to the *neue musikzeitung* of July 2019, has "ascended to the top league of German festival orchestras" – and its initiator and artistic director, Marcus Bosch. But "Power" will also be an issue directly engaged with on the operatic stage in Heidenheim as a socio-political and interpersonal phenomenon: in Giuseppe Verdi's "**Don Carlo**" (production: Georg Schmiedleitner, première: Jul. 10), for example, the machinery of power in 16th-century Spain operates against the background of the Eighty Years' War triggered by the Spanish occupation of the Netherlands – and impacts tragically on the intimate love relationship depicted in the work.

And Verdi's "**I due Foscari**" (production: Tibor Torell, première: Jul. 23) is also all about the exercise, abuse, transfer and, finally, deprivation of power, this time in 15th-century Venice, using the example of Francesco Foscari, the 65th doge of the city of lagoons. With the productions of these two works, which contain striking parallels to recent (global) political events, the Heidenheim Opera Festival also provides a subtext to current social discussion. But for Marcus Bosch, the 2020 festival certainly promises to be a celebration of singers as well: "With Leah Gordon, Anja Jeruc, Lionel Lothe and many others, we have engaged fantastic Verdi singers for 'I due Foscari' and 'Don Carlo'."

Another focus at the 2020 Heidenheim Opera Festival will be on **Ludwig van Beethoven**, arguably the most powerful composer of Viennese Classicism, in the 250th year of his birth. At the **Opening Concert** (May 29), the Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz will present his Symphony No. 6 ("Pastoral") and his Violin Concerto, op. 61, with Julian Rachlin as both conductor and soloist. And at the **Gala Concert** (Jul. 26), the complete incidental music to "Egmont", op. 84, will be performed along with several overtures – with the young German soprano Elena Harsányi as Klärchen, the well-known actor Frederic Böhle as narrator and the Czech Philharmonic Choir Brno and the Cappella Aquileia under Marcus Bosch. And the conductor is looking forward greatly to it all. "I, for one, can barely wait for the festival summer." In addition to the focus on Beethoven "with my beloved Cappella Aquileia, the concert with Omar Sousa and the NDR Big Band is also a highlight, especially for our jazz audience."

Young music fans have always been close to the heart of the Heidenheim Opera Festival organizers. This year, the freshly-prepared **kitchen opera "Wurst" ("Sausage")** by Kai Wessler and Sebastian Schwab will be served up to all those aged five and over in the Opera Tent (Opernzelt) in Brenzpark (première: Jul. 1), and the musicians of the Cappella Aquileia also cordially invite visitors to the traditional **Family Concert** (Jul. 14) in the Konzerthaus Heidenheim.

The combination of **culinary pleasures and live music** doubly whets the appetite, which is why this format will again feature at the Heidenheim Opera Festival in 2020 in several guises: during the "Blauer Abend" ("Blue Evening") (Jun. 23) in the Hammerschmiede Königsbronn, when OH! soloists, together with the "aural seducer" Marcus Bosch (Deutschlandfunk Kultur) on the piano and as moderator, will accompany the menu with music, at a Jazz Breakfast (Jun. 28), at the "Schlossbergtafel" with picnic, theatre and live music in the open air (Jul. 12) or during the four-act menu "Zu Gast bei Verdi" ("Visiting Verdi") (Jul. 24) as part of the "Don Carlo" performance in the Schlosskirche.

The captivating power of music is demonstrated by two other events on the programme at this year's festival. Under the title "Chorpracht" ("Choral Splendour") (Jul. 5), the Czech Philharmonic Choir Brno will perform gems of Romantic vocal literature, including Antonín Dvořák's Mass in D Major and Leoš Janáček's "Ave Maria", in the Pauluskirche. And at the (twofold) **"Last Night"** (Jul. 30 + Aug. 1), the programme will feature true audience favourites: the Symphonic Dances from Leonard Bernstein's "West Side Story" along with Carl Orff's "Carmina Burana", with the soloists Anna-Lena Elbert (soprano), Martin Platz (tenor), Zoltan Nagy (baritone), the young singers of the Neue Kammerchor Heidenheim, the Brno festival chorus and the Cappella Aquileia under Marcus Bosch. The latter is to stay on as artistic director of the Heidenheim Opera Festival for at least five more years – so there are great prospects for the region, for all enthusiasts of open-air opera and particularly the Verdi fans among them, but also for the conductor himself, who is also a professor at the Munich Hochschule and conductor-in-residence of the Norddeutsche Philharmonie Rostock: "For me, festivals are the place where musicians and their audience encounter one another in a special atmosphere and with an informality and directness that is often difficult to bring about elsewhere. Artistically speaking, that is unbelievably productive for us all!"

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