



Musikfest Stuttgart 2011 - Welcome!

We've been hard at work these past months putting together this ambitious programme, eagerly awaiting the moment of its completion and official unveiling. That moment has now arrived and we are very pleased to invite you to join us at Musikfest Stuttgart 2011 where a wide variety of exciting concerts and events are sure to inspire you! Our theme is „WASSER“ (Water): the culmination of our trilogy of elemental themes „LICHT“ (Light) in 2009 and „NACHT“ (Night) in 2010 with which Musikfest Stuttgart takes the classical music festival of this capital city to new heights! The entire city celebrates the Festival together at traditional and innovative concert locations, with programmes for every taste from serious to light-hearted entertainment, featuring international stars and top talent from our own backyard, taking care to nourish tradition and still be open to new directions, reaching an audience of all age groups.

Musikfest Stuttgart is unique because of the people it is created to serve: You! The people of this region. We are also unique because of the special attention given to coordinating the performers with our theme. Though lively dialogue with our artists, programmes have been developed especially for our Festival. The world-premier of the water oratorio AQUA, under Helmuth-Rilling-Prizewinner Maria Guinand (commissioned by the Bachakademie) promises to be an amazing event.

Musikfest Stuttgart is very proud of the quality of this year's artists and programmes: worthy of particular note is the work of our Artist in Residence 20011 TAN DUN, whose water-music with performance-art elements is sure to delight the eye as well as the ear. Not to miss: Daniel Schnyder's Festival opening with „African Tales“, Helmuth Rilling with „Elias“ and podium discussions about Bach's use of the water theme, Vladimir Ashkenazy with the European Youth Orchestra, and Julian Rachlin with the Orchestra of La Scala Milan. This is just a glimpse of what we have planned - the festival programme includes artists performing in diverse musical styles. We are very honoured to be presenting singers Nihan Devocioglu and Thomas Quasthoff.

The opening weekend with „Ahab“ and „Elias“ will be very special. Mendelssohn's „Elias“ (Elijah) tells of the curse of drought and the miracle of rain and will be followed by the exciting story of whaler Captain Ahab (from Melville's „Moby Dick“) which the Radio-Sinfonieorchester Stuttgart and speaker Dominique Horwitz will bring to life.

Stuttgart, Festival City! We like the way that sounds! Thankfully, we are not alone - support from the city (Landeshauptstadt Stuttgart) and the state (Land Baden-Württemberg) as well as many businesses and individual patrons has been much appreciated. Please accept our deep gratitude.

Stuttgart, Water City ??? Yes, indeed! In all of Europe, Stuttgart is second only to Budapest in the vastness of its mineral-water and water-bath resources, not to mention the beautiful Neckar River with its many springs and wells. All of these wonderfully watery places play an important role at Musikfest Stuttgart.

Welcome to Stuttgart and to „WASSER“!
Sincerely,

Christian Lorenz
Artistic Director

A Festival of Water

Nature delights us with Light, Water and Night but of these three, only water makes sounds of its own: the crashing sea, the babbling brook, the pit-a-pat of the rain. Such a musical element inspires Musikfest Stuttgart 2011 with a vast array of possibilities. Chinese-American composer Tan Dun, this year's Artist in Residence, works intensely with the sound of water: **Water Passion, Water Concerto** and **Ghost Opera** are works in which Water takes centre stage. Other musicians have also contributed watery pieces: John Cage's 99th birthday will be honoured with a performance of his **Waterwalk for Bathtub, Pressure Cooker, Watering Can and other utensils**. That same evening, Norwegian percussionist Teje Isungset will perform on instruments he constructs entirely out of ice. John Cage, Terje Isungset and Tan Dun work with Water's own special sounds and many other composers will be featured who have used more traditional methods to capture Water's voice on paper.

Italy's Ensemble Zefiro will perform highlights of the Baroque „Waterworks“ including Handel's **Water Music**, Telemann's **Hamburger Ebb und Flut** (Hamburg's Low Tide and High Tide) and Vivaldi's **La Tempesta di Mare** (Stormy Sea). The sea is also the theme of the European Union Youth Orchestra which will perform Elgar's **Sea Pictures**, Britten's **Sea Interludes** and Vaughan Williams' **Sea Symphony** in the Liederhalle. In practically every concert of the Festival, listeners will find water, be it fresh or salty: Ravel's **Jeux d'Eau**, Kats-Chernin's **Colours of the Sea**, Schubert's **Trout Quintet**, Debussy's **La Cathédrale engloutie**, Eisler's **Vierzehn Arten, den Regen zu beschreiben** (Fourteen ways to describe rain), Tüür's **Aqua**, Liszt's **Au Lac de Wallenstadt** and **Au bord d'une source**, Chopin's **Barcarolle**, Mendelssohn's **Meeresstille und glückliche Fahrt**, Wagner's **Rheingold** overture, Widmann's **Insel der Sirenen** (Island of the Sirens) and Schubert's **Winterreise**. The Night of Vocal Music (Lange Vokalnacht) on September 2nd will present madrigals, motets and other vocal pieces focussing on water including Adriano Banchieri's madrigal opera **Barca di Venezia per Padova**.

Venezuelan composer Gonzalo Grau composed his oratorio **AQUA** for Musikfest Stuttgart. This metaphoric piece tells of Water's meanderings. The well-loved ancient of the sea, Odysseus, will be honoured on September 14th. Italian Monteverdi specialists from La Venexiana, will perform his opera **Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria** in a semi-staged setting. A panel of journalists associated with the German Recording Prize will meet before the performance to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of various recordings of this opera. In the morning, the State Gallery will offer a guided tour of John Flaxman's illustrations for Homer's „Odyssey“.

Water is dangerous, water saves us, water cleanses us of guilt: in the Christian tradition, water plays a central role in the Creation story, the great flood, the parting of the Red Sea, Elijah's miracle of rain, the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River and the flow of water that issues from Jesus' pierced side at the time of crucifixion. The healing and redeeming qualities of water are elemental. Our opening weekend will feature the biblical figures Ahab and Elijah. To be sure, our Ahab is the Captain in Melville's epic whaling story „Moby Dick“. Melville, however, uses the name consciously, recalling the biblical Ahab as Elijah's opponent. What better way to begin a Festival of Water than with Mendelssohn's great telling of the prophet who caused a great drought?

Helmuth Rilling will set the tone of the second week in a series of podium discussion concerts in the Stiftskirche on the subject of Johann Sebastian Bach's pieces where water metaphors abound, particularly in the Cantatas and Passions. The gamba performer Hille Perl, together with her ensemble Sirius Viols, will delve into the time before Bach where composers captured the despair of the post-Thirty-Years-War time in such poignant compositions as **An Wasserflüssen Babylon** by Franz Tunder.

It might seem somewhat daring, a water festival in Stuttgart of all places, where the Nesenbach and Eckensee are our most important bodies of water and through which the nearby Neckar stubbornly refuses to flow. Fortunately, Stuttgart has a well guarded secret! The second largest source of mineral water in Europe produces up to 44 million litres daily from nineteen springs - An excellent impulse for Musikfest's series of three concerts within the Stuttgart Baths.

Have you ever spent a summer's morning on the Neckar? Join us when Musikfest offers the Morning Dew (Frühtau) concerts at 7 a.m. onboard our Theatre-Ship which can be found docked at the Cannstatter Mühlgrün. Following the concerts, feel free to enjoy breakfast on the ship's sun deck. Weekdays at midday, musicians will be performing at the most beautiful wells and springs of the city. There are watery spots all over Stuttgart - most of us are unaware of these places, and now for the first time, music will be played there. In the Speicher Rohr, a huge drinking water reservoir of the Bodensee Waterworks, the Neuen Vocalsolisten Stuttgart will perform. In the Turbinenhalle Hasenberg you can hear the Swedish ensemble „the peärls before swine experience“.

Musikfest Stuttgart 2011 will be celebrated in the entire city - on dry land and on the water.

Michael Gassmann
Head Dramaturg