

## HAYDN 200

Europe's culture is rich and full of vitality because right from the beginning of its history it has absorbed, accumulated and converted all the spiritual treasures produced by the talent, creativity and artistic inspiration of the people who live here. The Budapest Spring Festival draws on this wealth when it devotes its programme to presenting outstanding personalities, major historical events, noble traditions and avant-garde trends.

Among this year's anniversaries attracting international respect, the music world is devoting special attention to the composer who brought the multicultural background of Europeanness from his trilingual native village.

On the 200th anniversary of the death of **Joseph Haydn** the Spring Festival is paying tribute to the memory of the genius with a programme of concerts and operas presenting a cross-section of his oeuvre. The series begins with a Haydn evening by the world-famous Miklós Perényi and the Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra who will perform two wonderful symphonies (C minor and E minor) and the C major and D major cello concertos. The Ensemble Matheus and its conductor, Jean-Christophe Spinosi make their debut in Budapest with the G minor symphony, the Kodály and Bartók Quartets will each play a string quartet, and Ágnes Szakály, acclaimed master of the cimbalom, will perform her own arrangements and works by contemporary composers created in tribute to Haydn. We offer an especially rich selection of Haydn's sacred works: Zoltán Peskó is to conduct the *Nelson Mass* in the Academy of Music, while in Matthias Church at a concert with the motto "Napoleon ante portas" visitors can hear the *Nicolaimesse* and the *Paukenmesse*, then with the title "Before Palm Sunday" the programme will be *Te Deum* and the *Theresienmesse*, and the *Sieben Worte* will be heard in an unusual form – with Schoenberg's *Five Pieces for Orchestra* between the movements! *The Seasons*, a work that opened a new chapter in the history of music, will be conducted by György Vashegyi at the head of his own ensembles. The staging of two of the master's music dramas promises to be a sensation of the festival: *Philemon and Baucis* composed for a visit to Eszterháza by Maria Theresa, will be recreated in a staging by Balázs Kovalik with Constantia Gourzi of Greece as music director, while Andrea Rost will sing the role of the heroine in *Orfeo ed Euridice*, in a production directed by Sándor Zsótér with Ádám Fischer as conductor. And the Haydn year also has a surprise for museum-goers: "Clock Symphony", a splendid exhibition on the history of clocks will open in the Museum of Applied Arts.

Continuing the series of **anniversaries**, at his 50th birthday concert Vilmos Szabadi will play a violin concerto in E minor composed by Mendelssohn who was born 200 years ago. The Bartók Quartet that looks back on a past of more than half a century plays the Quartet in E flat major, and the 30-year-old Budapest Tomkins Vocal Ensemble will pay tribute to Mendelssohn with a performance of chorales, psalms and motets. And there are some truly stellar names in the star list for this year's Meeting of Worlds, a traditional feature of the festival.

The festival gets off to an impressive start with Camerata Salzburg and violinist Joshua Bell renowned for his enchanting tone; in the Kremerata Baltica's evening Oleg Maisenberg will give a characterful interpretation of Shostakovich's Piano Concerto No. 1; the Mahler Chamber Orchestra and conductor Daniel Harding will be joined by the brilliant Turkish pianist, Fazil Say in a performance of Beethoven's E flat major concerto. Piotr Anderszewski who is to appear with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, and Arkadi Volodos who has been invited by the Budapest Festival Orchestra, are members of the same generation of piano virtuosos. The other star guest at the latter concert will be the conductor Sir Andrew Davis who has an enthusiastic following in Budapest. As does Nigel Kennedy, renowned as both a magician of the bow and a showman, who this time will delight jazz fans with his

concert. Of course, we also have treats for lovers of vocal music: the wonderful Susan Graham makes her debut in the Academy of Music with Mozart arias and countertenor Philippe Jaroussky is to sing French songs rarely heard in Budapest. One of the jewels of the festival will be the concert performance of *Don Giovanni* by the Wiener Staatsoper conducted by Ádám Fischer in the Palace of Arts where Bartók's *Bluebeard* will also be staged in a performance by internationally acclaimed Hungarian opera stars Ildikó Komlósi and László Polgár, in a production created by the young film director Kornél Mundruczó.

After this abundant musical menu come several dishes for theatre-lovers. The **International Theatre Festival** organised jointly with the National Theatre offers an enticing selection of the most exciting productions, companies and personalities of our time, as well as many different colours, moods and bold performance ideas. Róbert Alföldi is staging a Botho Strauss play (*The Park*), Tamás Ascher is holding a reading theatre evening (*Blackrider*), and Zsolt Anger directs the piece written by Parti Nagy for Eszter Csákányi (*The Woman of the Week*). Audiences can see the joint production based on Marx's *Das Kapital* by the Düsseldorfer Schauspielhaus and Rimini Protokoll known for rethinking documentarist theatre, the National Theatre of St Petersburg is bringing the strangely titled Sorokin adaptation, *No Hamlet* (director: Andrei Moguchi), the Maly Theatre of St Petersburg is coming with *King Lear* (director: Lev Dodin), and the Teatr Narodowy of Warsaw with *The Paul Street Boys*.

Following our tradition of highlighting the cultural values of a selected country, this year **our guest of honour is the Czech Republic**. Our invitation has been accepted by the Prague Radio Orchestra and its conductor, Vladimír Válek, and at their gala concert they greet Budapest with masterworks by Czech composers. Visitors to the Museum of Fine Arts can admire the beautiful works of Alfons Mucha, the leading figure of Czech Art Nouveau, while the Ballet Ensemble of the Prague National Theatre offers a varied programme for two evenings in the Festival Theatre. And on the subject of **dance**, let me draw your attention to a very special event: the Bangarra Dance Theatre of Australia is to visit us, bringing to Europe the spirit of the art of the First Australians and the fire of its name. America will be represented here by the Trey McIntyre Project, aiming to win the hearts of the festival public with their successful creations danced to Beatles numbers and a Beethoven concerto.

We are pleased to announce that this year we are able to offer a special cycle to entertain schoolchildren and teenagers, **Through Children's Eyes: Music-Dance-ABC** by the performing artist couple Tamás Vásáry and Henriett Tunyogi, a frenetic performance by Csaba Méhes and the Brass Circus, a concert by the Parafónia Orchestra made up of mentally handicapped children and adults playing special instruments, a programme of music and literature by Szitakötő (Dragonfly), a children's Ball at the Dance House Gathering and a performance of *Philemon and Baucis* narrated by Balázs Kovalik in the Railway Nostalgia Park. For all other age groups we warmly recommend the fantastic Palast Orchester appearing in Hungary for the first time under the direction of Max Raabe; the pride of Africa, the Orchestra Baobab with the cream of Senegalese musicians; and the Budapest Operetta Theatre's revival of Emmerich Kálmán's *Die Bajadere* with Erika Miklósa, the Met's celebrated Queen of Night in the title role.

The symbol of the 29th Budapest Spring Festival is a chair and its slogan: "This is your place!" – please be seated. In the hope of meeting you I extend greetings from myself and my associates

*Zsófia Zimányi*  
*festival director*