Teodor Currentzis, a Greek conductor with a Russian passport, has built an international career from his base, the city of Perm in the Ural Mountains, 1,100 kilometres north-east of Moscow. Since 2011 he has been director of the Opera and Ballet Theatre in this city of almost a million inhabitants. He has been chosen as “Composer of the Year” 2016 by the magazine Opernwelt. In July he will make his debut at the Salzburg Festival in Mozart’s *La clemenza di Tito* and will also conduct concerts in both the Felsenreitschule and the Kollegienkirche.
2017 will mark your Salzburg Festival debut.

I think that the Salzburg Festival is the right place to implement new ideas. A major reason for my wanting to come here is the presence of Markus Hinterhäuser. He is a musician I admire very much and he is a man of vision. Part of the role of the Salzburg Festival is to shine a light to show the way ahead into the future. Salzburg should be bursting with new ideas.

*We will have a chance to see you not only in an opera but also in concerts. Works by Mozart will have pride of place.*

Mozart has been my companion for half of my life. I have conducted his works over and over again, done research on him and worked almost forensically to try to unlock the secret that is Mozart. The composers we think we know are actually in reality the ones who always remain a mystery. Everything that matters is there in the scores. We just have to develop an eye to be able to see what is there and learn how to communicate it to the audience. Mozart's scores are still full of surprises. His works are, and will always be, modern.

*Will this be your first La clemenza di Tito?*

Yes, I'll be conducting the opera for the first time. It is by no means a straightforward work. With this opera especially it is very important to be working with the right director and for the two of you to be thinking along the same lines. I wouldn't have agreed to do it with anyone other than Peter Sellars.

*What is it that you prize so highly in Peter Sellars's work? You've known him a long time, haven't you, and have already worked with him before.*

It's easy to feel that everything an opera has to say has already been said. Peter Sellars takes things right back to the core, he finds new aspects of the work that touch people's hearts. He is someone who knows how to narrate the subtext of a work. In my view this is a very important point, for music always has a subtext that speaks to the listener's subconscious. A director who ignores that will always run the risk of over-emphasizing the narrative. Don't get me wrong – I love to experiment! Nevertheless the basis has to be determined first, one has to have understood the fundamentals of an opera before starting to experiment.
You are bringing your Ensemble musicAeterna and the musicAeterna choir to Salzburg. Your musicians stand up to play. Why is that?

I am convinced that many things which we are only just introducing now will soon become standard throughout Europe. Have you ever seen a solo violinist play sitting down? Probably not. The sound is not just produced by the instrument, the whole body is involved. When you play sitting down it is not the same as when you stand, when you can really feel how the sound is produced. Standing up you have twice the amount of energy. Of course it is also more tiring, but then we are slaves, in spirit we are athletes of music!

Are you giving concerts too?

We are working on a programme that will include the Mozart Requiem. There is a recording we made which I feel is one of my best. In Salzburg we will be performing my own special version of the work.

You are famous for going into the smallest details in rehearsal …

When I was preparing the work I put together a presentation. I had each bar on one page in order to show what was going on polyphonically. I wanted everyone involved to be absolutely clear which voice is in the foreground at each point, in order to achieve the right balance. Without that precision the spirituality of the work wouldn’t come across.
What else will you be performing here?

At night in the Kollegienkirche we will play the Concerto for Choir by Alfred Schnittke, based on texts by the Armenian monk Gregor von Narek. I have always dreamt of doing it. It is one of the most fantastic scores for choir written in the twentieth century. Mozart in the Felsenreitschule and Schnittke in the Kollegienkirche, I think it will be an interesting mixture. It is very important to me to show that the history of music is a continuum. A chain where one link reaches into the next. And then we have Gustav Mahler and Alban Berg. A wonderful combination.

Berg and Mahler?

In the Felsenreitschule we will play Mahler’s first symphony and the Berg violin concerto. Berg’s concerto is a piece I have been working on for a long time. The soloist will be Patricia Kopatchinskaja, an exceptional character and an outstanding musician. If someone were to ask me who is Patricia Kopatchinskaja, I would never say “a violinist”, I would always say she is a musician. There are many people who practise for years, they hit the right keys on the piano, but it takes more than that to become a musician. One needs a poetic imagination and an inner strength to be able to transform this code, the notes, into something greater and Patricia is just such a person. She takes you with her on a journey, she has the power to bewitch you.
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart *La clemenza di Tito*

Opera seria in two acts, K. 621 (1791)
Libretto by Caterino Tommaso Mazzolà after the libretto of the same name (1734) by Pietro Metastasio

New production
Sung in Italian with German and English surtitles
Coproduction with De Nationale Opera, Amsterdam, and the Deutsche Oper Berlin

Teodor Currentzis, *Conductor*
Peter Sellars, *Director*
George Tsypin, *Sets*
Robby Duiveman, *Costumes*
James F. Ingalls, *Lighting*

Russell Thomas, *Tito Vespasiano*
Golda Schultz, *Vitellia*
Christina Gansch, *Servilia*
Marianne Crebassa, *Sesto*
Jeanine De Bique, *Annio*
Willard White, *Publio*

musicAeterna Choir
Vitaly Polonsky, *Chorus Master*

27 July, 2017 and 30 July, 4, 13, 17, 19, 21 August, 2017
WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART Requiem in D minor, K. 626

Anna Prohaska, Soprano
Katharina Magiera, Contralto
Mauro Peter, Tenor
Tareq Nazmi, Bass
musicAeterna Choir
Vitaly Polonsky, Chorus Master
musicAeterna
Teodor Currentzis, Conductor
23 July, 2017 – 19:00, Felsenreitschule

ALBAN BERG Violin Concerto – “To the Memory of an Angel”

GUSTAV MAHLER Symphony No. 1 in D

Patricia Kopatchinskaja, Violin
musicAeterna
Teodor Currentzis, Conductor
10 August, 2017 – 19:30, Felsenreitschule

Chamber Concert Hagen Quartett · musicAeterna Choir · Salzburger Bachchor · Currentzis

DMITRY SHOSTAKOVICH String Quartet No. 15 in E-flat minor, Op. 144
SALZBURG FESTIVAL
July 21 – August 30, 2017

ALFRED SCHNITTKE Concerto for Choir after texts by the Armenian monk Gregory of Narek

Hagen Quartet
musicAeterna Choir
Vitaly Polonsky, Chorus Master
Salzburger Bachchor
Alois Glaßner, Chorus Master
Teodor Currentzis, Conductor

23 July, 2017 - 21:30, Kollegienkirche

The series of exhibitions at the Grosses Festspielhaus, in cooperation with the Leica Camera AG, will continue to give audiences a “glimpse behind the scenes” of the Salzburg Festival in 2017 as well. The Leica photographer Horst Stasny will accompany the development process of the opera La clemenza di Tito from the first set rehearsal to the premiere.

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