

The Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin presents its 2020-21 season

Robin Ticciati
Music Director

Kent Nagano
Honorary Conductor

Berlin, 17 April 2020

At today's annual press conference of the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin (DSO), held online as a live stream, Music Director Robin Ticciati, Managing Director Alexander Steinbeis and violist Eve Wickert, a representative of the DSO's players' committee, presented the projects of the 2020-21 season to the public.

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Concerts with Music Director Robin Ticciati

The DSO and Robin Ticciati are embarking on their fourth joint season. This time around, the orchestra and its Music Director will devote particular attention to **Richard Wagner's oeuvre and his relationship to France and Paris** – a juxtaposition that was already becoming apparent in recent years. Ticciati will examine the ambivalent relationship between the composer, the city of music and its protagonists from a broad range of angles in the scope of the **'Wagner Perspectives' Festival from 13 to 21 November**. He will present excerpts from 'Götterdämmerung', 'Rienzi', 'Tannhäuser', 'Tristan und Isolde' and 'Die Walküre', juxtaposing them with works in aesthetic opposition, contemporaneous or following them, or works that set the Wagner champions Baudelaire and Mallarmé to music. A high-profile group of singers will also ensure the high quality, ranging from sopranos **Dorothea Röschmann, Anu Korsi** and **Yeree Suh** to mezzosopranos **Julie Boulianne** and **Karen Cargill**, tenors **Neal Cooper** and **Simon O'Neill**, and **Matthias Goerne, Thomas Lehman** and **John Relyea**, baritones and bass respectively. The four concerts will be accompanied by **introductory talks** with renowned musicologists and literary scholars.

The 'Struggling with the Devil' project in February that Robin Ticciati and the DSO will undertake as part of **'The Golden Twenties' Biennale**, to which the Berliner Philharmoniker are inviting, is set up as an extension and counterpoint to the 'Wagner Perspectives'. Here too, works of music theatre can be heard on the concert stage, but these are the compact, provocative forms of the 1920's – Paul Hindemith's one-act opera 'Sancta Susanna' about a nun whose love for Christ exceeds what is tolerated in the cloister, and Bohuslav Martinů's crazy and absurd jazz opera 'Tears of the Knife'. Across these, the programme traces an arc ranging from the present to the 12th century. A stage concept also links the works dramatically: **Frederic Wake-Walker** will direct; he already staged Händel's 'Messiah' on the Philharmonie stage with the DSO and Ticciati in 2018.

The music of British **Edward Elgar** – from the 'Cockaigne' concert overture to Introduction and Allegro for strings, from the Second Symphony to the 'Enigma Variations' – is another focal area stretching across Robin Ticciati's programmes this season. This is the music of a composer of great significance for Ticciati's own artistic development.

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In the 2020-21 season Robin Ticciati will continue to pursue lines that have engaged him and the DSO in recent years. These include **Hector Berlioz** with his ‘Symphonie fantastique’ and the viola symphony ‘Harold in Italy’, and **Anton Bruckner**, whose symphonic oeuvre represents a significant part of the joint history of the conductor and orchestra. Ticciati debuted in Berlin with the Fourth, and now, after the Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Symphonies, will conduct the Ninth. The past programmatic line of works by **Johannes Brahms** continues with the ‘German Requiem’ and the First Piano Concerto. Contemporary music also continues to play a major role: the Scottish composer **Helen Grime** will be represented with the German premiere of her percussion concerto, her Czech colleague **Ondřej Adámek** with ‘Shiny or Shy’. Both have for several years repeatedly enriched the DSO’s programmes. The experiment of **orchestral improvisation**, which first succeeded last year, will be undertaken again in the new season.

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Commitment to young talent is also a top priority for Robin Ticciati, as the concert performance of Benjamin Britten’s opera ‘The Rape of Lucretia’ impressively demonstrated last January. His collaboration with **members of the Ferenc Fricsay Academy** and the **voice department of the Hanns Eisler Conservatory of Music Berlin** will continue in March with William Walton’s chamber opera ‘The Bear’. In addition, the DSO’s Music Director will conduct a ‘**Symphonic Mob**’ again in September.

Concerts with guest conductors

For the first time since his DSO debut at the ‘RIAS stellt vor’ (RIAS presents) series in 1977, **Sir Simon Rattle**, former Music Director of the Berlin Philharmonic, will be at the podium of the orchestra in November. He will conduct Mahler’s ‘Lied von der Erde’ and – together with Robin Ticciati – Takemitsu’s ‘Gémeaux’ for oboe, trombone, two orchestras and two conductors.

A number of guest conductors refer in their own programmes to Ticciati’s major programming lines. **Jakub Hruša** and **Tomáš Hanus** will take up the Dvořák theme from the previous season. **Ingo Metzmacher** will expand the Czech spectrum to include Bedřich Smetana’s cycle ‘Má vlast’ (My Homeland). **Sir Roger Norrington** will continue his commendable and enlightening series of Martinů’s symphonies with his Fifth. **Yutaka Sado** and **Alain Altinoglu** will follow the early 20th-century French trail with its keen sense of timbres and refinement. Other long-standing friends will also return to the DSO’s podium: **Leonard Slatkin** will refer subtly to Beethoven, whose jubilee is being celebrated; **James Conlon** will present Mahler’s Seventh. **Ton Koopman** will interpret Händel alongside the composer’s contemporaries; **Simone Young** will address Brahms. The final touch to the season will be set by honorary conductor **Kent Nagano** with a fairy-tale summer programme. Other artists who debuted young with the DSO and return regularly have become friends, including **Stéphane Denève** and **Santtu-Matias Rouvali**. Four young talents will perform at subscription concerts for the first time: **Marie Jacquot**, who so impressed the orchestra in 2018 at the ‘Debut’ series that they asked her back straight away; **Riccardo Minasi**, who will bring along the historically informed performance prac-

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tice perspective, **Klaus Mäkelä** and **Stanislav Kochanovsky**. The Briton **Alpesh Chauhan** and Swiss-Australian **Elena Schwarz** will debut with the DSO at the 'Debut on Deutschlandfunk Kultur' series. The New Year's Eve and New Year's Day concerts with the artists of the Circus Roncalli in the Tempodrom will be conducted by **Fabien Gabel**.

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Vocal and instrumental soloists

The 2020-21 season is a season of great singers. These include sopranos **Julie Fuchs**, **Christiane Karg**, **Anu Komsu**, **Kateřina Kněřiková**, **Sally Matthews**, **Dorothea Röschmann**, **Yeree Suh** and **Rachel Willis-Sørensen**, mezzo-sopranos **Julie Boulianne**, **Karen Cargill**, **Magdalena Kořená**, **Michaela Schuster**, alto **Jana Sýkorová**, tenors **Simon O'Neill**, **Neal Cooper** and **Andrew Staples**, baritones **Matthias Goerne**, **Sir Simon Keenlyside** and **Thomas Lehman**, female baritone **Lucia Lucas**, and bass **John Relyea**. The writer **Fiston Mwanza Mujila** can be experienced as speaker at the 'Ultraschall Berlin' Festival for New Music.

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The long-standing collaboration with our esteemed choral partners in the ROC will continue: the **Rundfunkchor Berlin** will be heard in Johannes Brahms's 'German Requiem', at the 'Symphonic Mob' and in Händel's 'Messiah' in the scope of an rbbKultur children's concert. The ladies of the **RIAS Kammerchor Berlin** will take on the choral roles in the 'Struggling with the Devil' concert project in the scope of the Berlin Philharmonic's Biennale.

Of course, the season will also offer great instrumental soloists. Masters at the piano keyboard who are returning to the DSO include **Pierre-Laurent Aimard**, **Richard Goode**, **Evgeny Kissin**, **Louis Lortie**, the **GrauSchumacher Piano Duo** and **Lars Vogt**; **Seong-Jin Cho**, **Alexander Gavrylyuk**, **Beatrice Rana** and organist **Thomas Ospital** will be the orchestra's guests for the first time. A top-class troupe of violinists will present themselves: **Isabelle Faust**, **Hilary Hahn**, **Alina Ibragimova**, **Vadim Gluzman**, **Sergej Krylov** and **Christian Tetzlaff**. **Nils Mönkemeyer** and **Timothy Ridout** will demonstrate their abilities on the viola, as will **Séverine Ballon**, **Sol Gabetta**, **Alban Gerhardt**, **Tomáš Jarník** and **Kian Soltani** on the cello. The percussionist **Colin Currie** is an exciting guest on his instrument. In addition, members of the DSO can be heard as soloists: the new first concertmaster **Marina Grauman**, concertmaster **Wei Lu**, principal cellist **Mischa Meyer**, principal oboist **Viola Wilmsen** and principal trombonist **András Fejér**. Oboist **Mariano Esteban Barco**, clarinetist **Joë Christophe**, violinist **Timothy Chooi** and cellist **Friedrich Thiele** will make their debuts with the DSO in the scope of the 'Debüt' series.

Other concert formats

Casual Concerts – the popular open and hosted concert format – have long been a hallmark of the DSO. The three concerts in the Philharmonie will be presented in the 2020-21 season by **Robin Ticciati**, **Ingo Metzmacher** and **James Conlon**. As usual, these evenings wind down in the Casual Concert Lounge with a live act and DJ. The opening and closing

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concerts of the **'Ultraschall Berlin'** Festival for New Music in the Great Broadcast Hall of the rbb will be shaped this time by **Karen Kamensek** and **Lothar Zagrosek**. The **rbbKultur children's concerts** with an open house will be continued on six dates, also in the Great Broadcast Hall.

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With seven concerts in the **Villa Elisabeth** and the **Heimathafen Neukölln**, the **chamber music series**, celebrating its 40th anniversary this year, remains faithful to outstanding venues in terms of both acoustics and atmosphere. The **'Notturmo' concerts**, held in cooperation with the Prussian Cultural Heritage on their premises, will be continued on three evenings. The scholars of the **DSO's Ferenc Fricsay Academy** will present themselves this year not only at a chamber music concert, but, after the great success last season, with an **opera performance** conducted again by Robin Ticciati, staged by Andrea Tortosa Baquero. The solo parts in William Walton's one-act opera 'The Bear' will again be taken on by voice students at the 'Hanns Eisler' Academy of Music Berlin.

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'Symphonic Mob' with Robin Ticciati

Berlin's largest spontaneous orchestra continues to enjoy great popularity: about 1,300 participants gathered in 2018 and 2019 to make music together in the Mall of Berlin. For the seventh time, the DSO will pull together its recipe for success on **19 September 2020** – with the **entire orchestra**, the **Rundfunkchor Berlin**, the **violin virtuoso Christian Tetzlaff** as well as **hundreds of amateur musicians**. Music Director **Robin Ticciati** will again conduct. As in previous years, the 'Symphonic Mob' will be implemented in 2020 at other locations in Germany by local partner orchestras in cooperation with the DSO.

Guest performances

The DSO will again be present in national and international music life in the 2020-21 season beyond its Berlin concerts. In August, before the Berlin season begins, the orchestra and its Music Director will be guests at the **BBC Proms** in the **Royal Albert Hall in London**, together with violinist Christian Tetzlaff. In October there follows a one-week **Germany and Europe tour** with stops in **Brussels, Düsseldorf, Mannheim and Essen**, at the **Elbphilharmonie Hamburg** and at the **Konzerthaus in Vienna**. The DSO and Robin Ticciati will be accompanied on tour by violinist Hilary Hahn. A **Switzerland tour** takes the orchestra and Ticciati with violinist Isabelle Faust in March to **Lugano, Berne, Lucerne and Geneva**. The DSO will also tour with the Berlin programme that concludes the season, one that honorary conductor Kent Nagano will shape together with pianist Seong-Jin Cho in June 2021, performing at the **Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Festival** and during the **Bad Kissingen Summer Festival**.

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Record of success and outlook in figures

The DSO continues to report a positive economic balance for the **concert year 2019**. With **84.4% capacity utilisation** (2016: 86%, 2017: 87%, 2018: 86%) and **ticket sales totalling EUR 2 million** (2016: 1.90 mil.; 2017: 1.95 mil.; 2018: 2.13 mil.) for a total of **62 self-presented Berlin events** (49 symphony and 13 chamber concerts), the DSO clearly shows its outstanding development with its Music Director Robin Ticciati on the basis of these performance indicators.

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In the **2020-21 season**, the DSO will give a total of **73 concerts: 60 in Berlin**, of which 32 are symphony concerts, three Casual Concerts and two concerts in the 'Debut on Deutschlandfunk Kultur' series in the Philharmonie, two New Year's Eve and one New Year's Day concert in the Tempodrom, two concerts in the scope of the 'Ultraschall Berlin' Festival, six rbbKultur children's concerts in the Great Broadcast Hall of the Haus des Rundfunks, as well as ten chamber concerts and two special projects at different venues. In addition, the orchestra will perform **13 guest concerts** in Europe's most important concert halls.

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Subscription sales for the 2020-21 season begin on 17 April 2020, individual ticket sales on 15 July 2020.

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