

CITY OF DREAMS

VIENNA 1900~1935

Esa-Pekka Salonen conductor
Julian Johnson series consultant

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

SALONEN ANNOUNCES FIRST MAJOR PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA PROJECT

Nine month exploration of music and culture of Vienna between 1900 and 1935 will feature orchestral concerts in 18 cities, chamber music, films, study days, a unique interactive online resource and a virtual Viennese café in Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall.

The Philharmonia Orchestra's Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor, Esa-Pekka Salonen, today (Monday) launched his first major project with the orchestra. A unique co-production between the Orchestra and the Vienna Konzerthaus, *City of Dreams: Vienna 1900-1935* will involve partnerships with international galleries, museum collections and archive resources, and with the Royal College of Music. The Orchestra will harness the latest digital technologies to bring to life the world of Mahler, Schoenberg, Zemlinsky and Berg and to present their music in its historical and social context, alongside the art, craft, design, architecture, literature, philosophy and science of the period. The project begins on 25 February 2009.

Over a period of 9 months Esa-Pekka Salonen and the Philharmonia Orchestra will perform concerts in 18 cities worldwide, with chamber concerts, lectures, films, education events and a major series of online resources, bringing together specialists and materials from the most significant international collections. The project's underlying philosophy is to offer audiences the chance to "explore" Vienna in 1900, and to show how the music can be experienced as a soundtrack to the period. Esa-Pekka Salonen commented:

"Vienna in 1900 was a unique cultural melting pot, where musicians, philosophers, poets, painters and scientists met together in the city's many cafes, and created works of art and science that changed the course of history. I have always believed that the music of this period has a very special artistic significance; we are all looking forward to offering our audiences the chance to experience the music of Mahler, Schoenberg and Berg in the context of Klimt's paintings, Josef Hoffmann's tableware and Freud's dreams."

Specialists in the music, art and science of the period have been brought together by Series Consultant Julian Johnson, Professor of Music at Royal Holloway College, University of London and a leading voice in the study of Viennese modernism. Writers and academics including Peter Vergo, Edward Timms, Simon Shaw-Miller, Jonathan Cross and Robert Vilain will be contributing to documentary films, writing newly commissioned articles and lecturing at *Explore Vienna* study days. Partnerships with, amongst others, the Belvedere Museum in Vienna, Tate Liverpool, the Arnold Schoenberg Center, the British Library, the Freud Museum and the Médiathèque Musicale Mahler in Paris will also allow a rich array of imagery, photographs, letters, scores and documents to be available online and in publications. Another major partner in the project is the Royal College of Music, which will be

presenting a series of five eclectic chamber music programmes between February and October. Julian Johnson commented:

“Re-hearing this extraordinarily rich music, against the backdrop of Vienna’s cultural history, draws out how inseparably the romantic and modern are woven together. In all the music of this series, a poignant sense of loss forms the counterpoint to a longing for the new.”

The series opens on 25 February at The Anvil Basingstoke, where the Philharmonia is Orchestra in Partnership. At the centre of the project are six concerts at Southbank Centre’s Royal Festival Hall, starting with Schoenberg’s colossal lovesong, *Gurrelieder* on 28 February and concluding on 8 October with a semi-staged performance of Berg’s operatic masterpiece *Wozzeck*. All six of these performances will be recorded live by BBC Radio 3 for broadcast. A highlight of the series will be two programmes performed at the Vienna Konzerthaus over the weekend of 14/15 March. Partnership with the Vienna Konzerthaus has provided the the project with a unique flavour and a real historic context. Bernhard Kerres, Director of the Vienna Konzerthaus, commented:

“In a unique project we are re-inventing the networks and paths from Vienna at the beginning of the 20th century. The Wiener Konzerthaus, the Philharmonia Orchestra and Esa Pekka Salonen come together to explore the inspiration music had on the European cultural landscape of this time. The Wiener Konzerthaus, established during that time, has a living tradition in inspiring its audiences through the music presented. In this project it will become a catalyst for various institutions contributing to this project.”

City of Dreams will also be animated and made accessible to audiences across the world through the most ambitious online interactive programme ever undertaken by the Orchestra’s award-winning digital projects team. The Philharmonia Orchestra already reaches more than 2 million people worldwide each year through its *Sound Exchange* music education website, as well as through the Orchestra’s Online Download Shop, YouTube, video podcasts and film initiatives. At www.philharmonia.co.uk/vienna, visitors will be offered their own virtual Viennese coffee table, on which they can watch more than a dozen new documentary films on subjects from Schoenberg’s chess set to *Time, Trams and Technology* in early 20th century Vienna. From the same coffee table they can explore an interactive map of the city in 1900, browse an original copy of *Ver Sacrum* magazine; stir their own steaming cup of virtual coffee; while sending virtual notes to their virtual friends - as well as browse for concerts, watch filmed programme notes, read articles and view photographs.

Meanwhile at Southbank Centre’s Royal Festival Hall, from 26 February to 23 March, visitors will be able to eat and drink real Viennese food in a “virtual Café Central Vienna”. Lifesize video projections of the café - where philosophers, artists and thinkers, including Sigmund Freud, would gather to share their ideas in 1900 – will bring together old and new, tradition and modernism. State-of-the-art touchscreens will allow people to browse the Orchestra’s web resources, while on *City of Dreams* concert evenings, the live café-style music of Lehar and Johann Strauss will prepare audience’s ears for the evolving soundworlds of Mahler, Schoenberg or Berg.

David Whelton, Managing Director of the Philharmonia Orchestra commented:

“This project is an outstanding model for everything that the Philharmonia believes in: extraordinary music, the highest quality artistic partnerships, and above all a tremendous thirst for bringing the musical landscape well and truly alive for our audiences, using all our ingenuity and every possible resource available to us.”

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For further information, interviews, biographies and photographs please call
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