

SALZBURG FESTIVAL 2012



*Introduction by the Artistic Director
Alexander Pereira*

Dear Salzburg Festival Community!

When I was elected Artistic Director of the Salzburg Festival on May 19, 2009, and when the initial joyfulness inspired by this vote – which was a complete surprise for me – had worn off, the first thing I had to clarify for myself was the question how my ideas could be reconciled with the organisational, financial and – most importantly – artistic reality of the Salzburg Festival.

Thus, as an admirer and critical observer of the Salzburg Festival, I had the feeling that in the area of opera, too many revivals dominated the programme, detracting from the uniqueness and extraordinary quality of a Festival summer.

I am convinced that a Festival should be unique every year. This means performing premieres only in that year. This will heighten the anticipation for each Festival season. Revivals, which I would still not rule out entirely in certain cases, only make sense to me if the same team which produced the premiere also continues for the revival.

Putting a new opera production instead of a revival on stage costs about 650,000 to 800,000 Euros more – those are the costs of financing stage sets, costumes, and fees for the director, set and costume designers. Thus, presenting three new productions instead of revivals will cost an additional 2 to 2.4 million Euros.

Please let me give you a brief insight into the 2011 budget situation. In order to arrive at a balanced result, given subsidies of 13 million Euros and sponsorships and donations of about 9.5 million, our artistic product had to bring in about 1.5 million. This means that ticket revenues from Festival events had to be 1.5 million Euros higher than the artistic expenses. If I project three new productions instead of revivals, in 2012 it is not 1.5 million Euros we must raise as revenues, but 3.5 to 4 million Euros. In addition, there are the annual labour costs, which rise between 0.4 and 0.5 million Euros per year and which the Festival has only been equalised for twice in the past ten years.

In other words: if we do not tackle a reorientation of the Salzburg Festival led by the Directorate and the Supervisory Board, cost increases would force us to cancel one production in order to keep guaranteeing the 1.5 million Euros from artistic revenues, taking the 2011 figures as a basis. If the old concept was continued, the Salzburg Festival would soon no longer be able to offer new productions at all.

During the past two years, we have made intense efforts to find new financial backer, and have also asked the Festival's Main Sponsors to support our new course. The basic idea was as follows: if it were possible to raise about 4 to 5 million Euros more, through sponsors and ticket revenues, we will be able to place the bar where it has to be, in my opinion, for the Salzburg Festival, given its own claim to being the most important festival in the world.

However, the providers of subsidies cannot avoid providing for the raises required by the collective labour agreement, since otherwise, every year a greater sum would have to be raised from sponsorship funds and ticket revenues, if a shrinking of the Festival is to be averted.

In summary, our policy will therefore be to generate new funds which can be used entirely for investments in art.

Of course, a concentration on new productions is extremely attractive to the great conductors – especially in the case of projects involving the Vienna Philharmonic. I plan to place this orchestra at the centre of the Festival, entrusting it with four opera premieres and five different concert programmes each year. Therefore, I am very grateful that the orchestra – when I presented plans for the first three years – immediately agreed to sign a new agreement increasing its presence in Salzburg significantly.

I consider it an essential task of the Salzburg Festival to send major signals in the field of contemporary music, and I would like to present the world premiere of an opera every year from 2013 to 2016. Since we have already commissioned these four operas, and financed them through donations, we have come a good deal closer to realising this wish.

*In the field of concerts, we will continue the extraordinary policy of our predecessors regarding support for contemporary music. This year, the focus is on composers Bernd Alois Zimmermann – represented by his opera *Die Soldaten* and the concerts surrounding this opera –, Heinz Holliger, who is writing two commissioned works for this summer, and Witold Lutosławski, whose works will be performed by the Berlin Philharmonic and the Cleveland Orchestra, among others.*

*I would also like to add a new focus to Salzburg with sacred music. The idea of this Overture spirituelle, to which you are invited five days before the Festival's opening, was inspired by the city itself, so to speak – with its beautiful churches, it is predestined to devote more attention to the liturgical works that were first relegated to the concert halls, instead of the sacred spaces they were written for, and subsequently occupied an increasingly marginal position. Many famous conductor personalities like Sir John Eliot Gardiner, who opens the series at my personal request with Haydn's *Creation*, and Claudio Abbado, whom our programme idea lured back to Salzburg, have supported this initiative. For Nikolaus Harnoncourt's performance of Mozart's *Missa longa*, the old tapestries from the time of this work's writing will be hung in the Cathedral again, reconstructing the acoustics of Mozart's time.*

However, we will not limit ourselves to the Catholic and Protestant tradition, but will invite a different confession and its music to Salzburg every year, illuminating not only the topic of music and religion in public discussions, but also the relations between the confessions. In 2012, the focus will be on the Jewish faith.

For the concert programmes, in which our Concert Manager Matthias Schulz and I have invested much love, it was important to us to create cross-references among the various concert series, and also between the concerts and the operas and plays we present. The focus on particular artists will be a hallmark of programmes during the coming years. Our motto is: Better to produce much with few than little with many.

As previously announced, Cecilia Bartoli will take on the artistic directorship of the Whitsun Festival, and the programme has been greeted with boundless enthusiasm. Thus, I am delighted that Cecilia

Bartoli has agreed to sing five more performances of the opera newly produced for Salzburg every Whitsuntide during the following summer. In 2012, it will be Handel's Giulio Cesare in Egitto.

Next to the opera and concert performances, of course the theatre programme, curated by Director of Drama Sven-Eric Bechtolf, stands as an equal. It was a great wish of mine to experience my years at the Festival with him at my side. He has thrown himself into his new task with the same enthusiasm, and I am sure that this great actor and director will also prove to be an extremely inventive Head of Drama. You will find all details in the Drama Brochure, which I ask you to read with your fullest attention.

A matter dear to my heart is the effort to accentuate the events for our youngest visitors during the coming years, in all our genres. On the one hand, there will be special children's versions of operas (in 2012, it will be Die Zauberflöte); on the other, children will have the opportunity to approach and explore the opera their parents are attending in a playful manner – Opera viva!

I would also like to point out an aspect of the end of the Festival. We would like to make this especially brilliant – to animate you to stay longer, or to return. Thus, we will have opera premieres taking place specifically during the last two weeks of the Festival, as well as an impressive orchestral finale – and on the last Saturday, there will be the annual Festival Ball, enabling you to enjoy a wonderful Festival closing in Salzburg. After a grand gala dinner at the Residenz, we will move to the Felsenreitschule, where there will be a brief concert with great stars followed by the festive opening of the ball by the young gentlemen and ladies wearing the traditional floor-length traditional costumes of Salzburg. Please mark September 1, 2012 as a red-letter date in your calendars. We have even initiated hopeful negotiations with Saint Peter regarding the weather on this day!

Finally, I would like to thank all the artists who are supporting us so vigorously in our first year.

I am glad to tackle this challenge together with my President, Helga Rabl-Stadler. Together with our staff, we promise that we will leave nothing undone to make your stay at the Festival an eventful one.

I ask you, our Festival community, to trust us, to give us a chance and come to the 2012 Festival full of curiosity!

Yours gratefully, Alexander Pereira