

David Philip Hefti

Composer and conductor

Despite his classically avant-garde musical language, Hefti's prime concern is expressiveness – addressing his listener with a candid eloquence. He loves powerful contrasts and does not refrain from writing intense cantilenas. His music is capable of cumulative processes of concentration, and can unleash a vehement drive. (Süddeutsche Zeitung)

David Philip Hefti's oeuvre encompasses some 80 works, including orchestral, vocal and chamber music. He has composed large-scale orchestral works, solo concertos, works for chamber orchestra, string quartets, solo pieces, song cycles and two operas. Hefti has enjoyed a working relationship of several years' standing with artists such as Viviane Hagner, Patricia Kopatchinskaja, Christian Poltéra, Hartmut Rohde, Baiba Skride, Jan Vogler and Antje Weithaas, who all regularly perform his music.

As both conductor and composer, Hefti has worked with numerous orchestras and ensembles including the Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra, the Bavarian State Orchestra, the Symphony Orchestra of Bavarian Radio, the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, the Tokyo Sinfonietta, the Ensemble Modern, the Amaryllis Quartet and the Leipzig String Quartet. His orchestral works have been performed by conductors such as Peter Eötvös, Cornelius Meister, Kent Nagano, Jonathan Nott, Michael Sanderling, Mario Venzago and David Zinman. He has been invited to music festivals including Wien Modern, Beijing Modern, Ultraschall Berlin, the Lucerne Festival, the Gstaad Menuhin Festival, the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, Heidelberger Frühling, the Pablo Casals Festival in Prades, the Dvorak Festival in Prague and the Suntory Festival in Tokyo.

In May 2017, Hefti's first opera, *Anna's Mask*, was given its world première at the St. Gallen Theatre under the baton of Otto Tausk. It is based on the true story of the Swiss singer Anna Sutter, whose life tragically mirrored the fate of her own star role, that of Carmen: her former lover, the conductor Aloys Obrist, murdered her in 1910 in Stuttgart. David Philip Hefti's musical language, which is characterised by transparency, a chamber-music intensity and a concentrated sense of dramaturgy, is also manifested in this, his first opera. *Luminous ecstasy – and this is the point of it – is no betrayal of Hefti's aesthetic stance, which otherwise tends to fragile, pointillist drops of sound solidifying into chordal structures. (Neue Zürcher Zeitung)*

Hefti composed his second music-theatre work, *The Snow Queen* based on the eponymous fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen, to a commission from the Zurich Tonhalle Society for its 150th anniversary. The semi-staged world première of this musical tale for the whole family took place in November 2018 in the Tonhalle Maag in Zurich. The title role was sung by the soprano Mojca Erdmann, with the Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra under the baton of the composer himself. This CD recording was released on the NEOS label and was honoured with the Supersonic Award in 2020. *In The Snow Queen, the cold takes many audible forms. There are wine glasses filled with water – they sound as clear and transparent as frozen crystals. The serial techniques that always accompany the appearance of the icy queen also come across as frosty and cool – these are academic number games that freeze into lifeless formulae. In stark contrast to all this are the micro-intervals and overtones that unite to create iridescent natural harmonies conjuring up an unsophisticated, real warmth. (Neue Zürcher Zeitung)*

In the 2020/21 season, three new solo concertos by David Philip Hefti were given their world premières: In January 2021, Jürg Dähler and the Musikkollegium Winterthur performed Hefti's

Concerto for Viola and Orchestra *Cantabile* under the direction of the composer. In June of the same year, Hefti's Double Concerto for 2 trumpets, *Final(ment)e*, was given its first performance by Immanuel Richter and Huw Morgan, accompanied by the Basel Symphony Orchestra, again under the composer's baton. This is the fourth and last part of Hefti's cycle *Beziehungsweisen (Interplay of relationships)*. *The variety of sound was impressive, and at times its intensity could hardly have been surpassed* (Das Opernmagazin). As part of his commitments as Composer in Residence of the Camerata Bern, Hefti conceived the concert programme *Reigen (Round Dance)*, for which he composed *Six sound islands* for violin, clarinet and string orchestra as an atmospheric bridge between dances by Ligeti, Bartók, Veress, Schoenberg and Schubert. The violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja and the clarinetist Reto Bieri performed this work in June 2021 together with the Camerata Bern.

Besides David Philip Hefti's opera *The Snow Queen* (NEOS), two further CDs of his music have been released: The album *Light and Shade* (NEOS), which documents Hefti's longstanding, close collaboration with the Amaryllis Quartet, brings together the works *On transparent threads* for mezzo-soprano and string quartet, with Maria Riccarda Wesseling; *Concubina nocte – Music for the second nocturnal vigil* (String Quartet No. 5); and *Danse interstellaire – Mourning music for basset clarinet and string quartet*, with Bernhard Röthlisberger. Above and beyond this, David Philip Hefti also gave his conducting debut on the Deutsche Grammophon label. The album *Shades of Love: Korean Drama Soundtracks*, was made under the composer's direction together with top-ranking artists including Daniel Hope, Philipp Jundt, Sebastian Knauer, Albrecht Mayer, Richard O'Neill and the Zurich Chamber Orchestra, and reached No. 1 in the Korean classical music charts.

In the coming 2021/22 season, further world premières are planned: a new arrangement for high voice and string quartet of Gustav Mahler's *Rückert-Lieder*, and Hefti's Sixth String Quartet *Five Scenes for Gustav*, which was composed to function as a prelude for his arrangement of the *Rückert-Lieder*, but which may also be performed independently. These works will be performed by the Amaryllis Quartet and the soprano Juliane Banse on tour in Germany and Switzerland in autumn 2021 and spring 2022, including a concert in the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg. And in September 2021, Jürg Dähler will give the first performance at Schloss Brunegg of Hefti's *Mosaic No. 2* for solo viola, entitled *Antiphony*. Hefti's new work *Round Dance – Mosaic* for violin and clarinet, continues his collaboration with the violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja and the clarinetist Reto Bieri. David Philip Hefti is currently working on a composition for baritone and orchestra to texts by Sir Salman Rushdie, and on a concerto for viola and string orchestra for Lawrence Power.

In 2013, Hefti was awarded the Composer Prize of the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation and in 2015 the Hindemith Prize of the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival. He has also won the International Composition Competition of the Pablo Casals Festival in Prades, the George Enescu International Competition for Composition in Bucharest, and the International Gustav Mahler Composition Prize. Hefti's works are published by Edition Kunzelmann and C. F. Peters and have been recorded for CD by various labels such as Deutsche Grammophon, NEOS and col legno. When his CD *Changements* was released, the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* praised his *excellent mastery of the orchestral apparatus*, both as composer and as conductor.

David Philip Hefti was born in Switzerland in 1975 and studied composition, conducting, clarinet and chamber music at the music academies of Zurich and Karlsruhe, where his teachers included Cristóbal Halffter, Rudolf Kelterborn, Wolfgang Meyer, Wolfgang Rihm and Elmar Schmid. He lives with his family near Basel.

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