

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 70 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, 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. *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 2020, Hefti completed his four-part cycle *Nocturnal vigils*, based on the Roman vigils. After *Prima nocte* with the Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne under Kazuki Yamada and the string quartet *Concubina nocte*, performed by the Merel Quartet at the “Zwischentöne” chamber music festival in 2018, *Media nox* for flute and orchestra was given its première at the Heidelberg Spring Festival in 2019 by Tatjana Ruhland and the German Radio Philharmonic under the baton of Jamie Phillips (it was also recorded for CD). The world première of the fourth and last work of the cycle, the wind quintet *Gallicinium*, will take place in January 2021 at the Zurich Wind Serenades. This cycle by David Philip Hefti explores the sounds of twilight, the night, dreams and sleeplessness, creating sound-surfaces alternately static, animated and iridescent that impel rhythm and melody into the background. The result is a microtonal music. *The variety of tone-colour combinations was especially impressive, reaching into the realm of noise, creating a mysterious tension and conjuring up all kinds of images of living things such as the forest at the break of day, swarms of insects and foggy landscapes.* (Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung, on *Media nox*)

Hefti is currently working on the last work of his four-part orchestral cycle *Beziehungsweisen* (*Interplays of relationships*). The successful world premières of the first two works in the cycle took place in 2014: *Adagio* was performed by the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal under Kent Nagano, while *Con moto* was given by the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra under Jonathan Nott. The third part followed in March 2016: *Arioso*, whose first performance was conducted by Hefti himself at the National Theatre in Mannheim. Hefti's *Concerto for two trumpets and orchestra* will complete the cycle when it is performed in June 2021 by the soloists Immanuel Richter and Huw Morgan, accompanied by the Basel Symphony Orchestra conducted by Ivor Bolton. Each of the four works was conceived as an atmospheric “bridge” to other, monumental works on a concert programme, and they are characterised by quotations from works by Wagner, Liszt, Berlioz, Strauss, Brahms and Mahler and from Hefti's own works. These quotations flow into the structural level of the works, and are thus barely perceptible by the ear alone. Nevertheless, the result is an interplay of relationships that is constantly present in the background. Although these orchestral works refer structurally to their models, they are in themselves separate from their context and may be performed independently. *This Zurich composer is a modern magician in sound who also works with micro-intervals and offers a gripping dramaturgy.* (Der Landbote, writing about *Adagio*). *The sound is flexible, it surprises one and has all the different facets that contemporary music for orchestra needs.* (Mannheimer Morgen on *Arioso*)

Further first performances are planned for 2021. Hefti will himself conduct his viola concerto *Cantabile* in January 2021, with Jürg Dähler accompanied by the Musikkollegium Winterthur; and in April 2021, the wind quartet *Mormorando* will be given its first performance at the Swiss Chamber Concerts. In March 2021, the soprano Juliane Banse will sing Hefti's arrangement of Mahler's *Rückert-Lieder*, and his *6th String Quartet* will be premièred by the Amaryllis Quartet, both in the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg. The four movements of the string quartet will be played alternately with the *Rückert-Lieder*. In the 2020/21 season, David Philip Hefti will also be the Composer in Residence of the Camerata Bern. The artistic highlight of the season will be the world première of his Double Concerto for violin, clarinet and string orchestra in June 2021, with the violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja and the clarinetist Reto Bieri.

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. When his CD *Changevements* 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 is active today as both composer and conductor, and lives with his family near Basel.

www.hefti.net

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