

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)

As both composer and conductor, David Philip Hefti is one of the most renowned and most successful Swiss musicians. In the current 2023/24 season David Philip Hefti will be Composer in Residence at the Zermatt Music Festival. The cornerstone of his engagement is the world première of *Des Zaubers Spuren (Traces of Magic)*, an octet composed to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Scharoun Ensemble Berlin. Hefti will also be conducting the Zermatt Festival Orchestra and will supervise the students of the Zermatt Music Festival Academy. In September *Des Zaubers Spuren* will be given its German première at the Scharoun Ensemble's anniversary concert in the Philharmonic Hall in Berlin. Another world premiere will follow in February 2024 with a new piece for solo violin as a compulsory piece at the Second International Violin Competition of the Guadagnini Foundation in Stuttgart, and in May 2024 the Stradivari Quartet will premiere Hefti's String Quartet No. 8 in Prague, Zurich and Basel. With *Reigen (Round Dance) – Mosaik for violin and clarinet*, the collaboration with violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja and clarinetist Reto Bieri is to be continued, and Reinhold Friedrich is planned to perform *Fanfare für Wolfgang – for piccolo trumpet*, a miniature for Wolfgang Rihm.

Several works by David Philip Hefti were given their world premières in the recent 2022/23 season: *Rhapsody – for Baritone and Orchestra*, with texts by Sir Salman Rushdie, was performed by Benjamin Appl, accompanied by the Württemberg Chamber Orchestra Heilbronn under the baton of Case Scaglione. It was followed by *Harmonia – for saxophone quartet*, performed by the Kebyart Ensemble in the Zurich Tonhalle and the Basel Stadtcasino, and the acclaimed première of Hefti's first ballet, *Ans Ende der Zeit (To the End of Time)*, for the ballet of the Graz Opera, with choreography by Beate Vollack. The newspaper *Die Kleine Zeitung* commented as follows: *This music is initially urgent and threatening as it traces the steps of the dying process, then transitions into softly seductive sounds that ultimately become existentially painful.* Walter Küssner and Diyang Mei, both violists in the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, gave the first performance of Hefti's *Vier Anklänge (Four Reminiscences) – for two violas* in a "Matinée for Tabea Zimmermann". To close the season, Hefti's successful collaboration with the Berlin Baroque Soloists continued with a double pack of first performances: the *Five Concertini – for String Orchestra*, and *Four Moments – for flute and string orchestra* (with soloist Philipp Jundt) at the Laufen Chamber Music Concerts.

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 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)

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. His oeuvre encompasses some 90 works, including orchestral, vocal and chamber music. Hefti has enjoyed a working relationship of several years' standing with artists such as Benjamin Appl, Juliane Banse, Mojca Erdmann, Viviane Hagner, Patricia Kopatchinskaja, Christian Poltéra, Lawrence Power, Hartmut Rohde, Baiba Skride, Jan Vogler and Antje Weithaas. 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 Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, the Tokyo Sinfonietta, the Berlin Baroque Soloists, the Scharoun Ensemble Berlin, 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 2013, Hefti was awarded the Composer Prize of the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation, in 2015 the Hindemith Prize of the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival and in 2023 the Composer Award of the International Classical Music Awards ICMA. 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 Competition in Vienna.

Recent releases in David Philip Hefti's extensive discography include the opera *The Snow Queen* (NEOS) and the album *Light and Shade* (NEOS), which reflects his many years of close collaboration with the Amaryllis Quartet. With the CD *Shades of Love: Sounds of K-Drama*, Hefti made his conducting debut with Deutsche Grammophon. The album was produced under his direction together with artists such as James Galway, Daniel Hope, Philipp Jundt, Albrecht Mayer and Richard O'Neill as well as the Zurich Chamber Orchestra and reached number one in the Korean classical music charts.

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