

MUSIC

During September the prestigious conductor Zubin Mehta opened the *Palau 100* cycle in Barcelona with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra interpreting Anton Bruckner's *Symphony No. 8*. The Barcelona Symphony Orchestra and National of Catalonia put on a performance, during the same month as part of their season of concerts, in the form of a small festival of music dedicated to Mozart. During October Zoltan Kocsis conducted the Hungarian National Philharmonic Orchestra at the Palau de la Música in Valencia which included a performance by the piano soloist Dezso Ranki. In October one of the great violinists of today, Shlomo Mintz, headed the Brabante Philharmonic Orchestra at the Cultural Centre of Terrassa, with performances of Beethoven's *Coriolanus Overture*, the *Polonaises* by Chopin, the *Fantasy on Popular Hungarian Melodies* by Litz (the last two with the Cuban pianist Rosario Andino), and *Symphony No. 15* by Shostakovich. At the beginning of November, and under the baton of Simon Rattle, the Palau de la Música was the venue for interpretations of symphonic fragments from *Romeo and Juliet* and the *Fantastic Symphony* by Berlioz, performed by the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment set up by the conductor himself in Glyndebourne and using period instruments. Also in November the Barcelona Symphony Orchestra and National of Catalonia, under the artistic direction of the American maestro Lawrence Foster, offered a new approach with two symphonic sessions within the context of the *entartete Musik*, the music prohibited by the Nazis. After this, and until the beginning of December, the Brodsky Quartet performed six concerts in the Auditori in Barcelona whose music stands featured only music by the Russian composer Dmitri Shostakovich, in particular 15 string quartets which he wrote between 1938 and 1974 and which are considered to exemplify the ideology of this composer.

As regards opera performances, at the end of July, the twentieth year of the Festival de Música de Torroella in Montgrí was opened with a recital by the baritone Iñaki Fresán centered on *lieder* and songs by Schubert, Faure, Hahn, Toldrá, Mompou, and Montsalvatge. This music festival also included a series of programs of baroque music, orchestral pieces, and chamber music performed up to the end of August. One of the major features of this music festival was the interpretation of the opera *Tassarba*, written by Enric Morera, framed within the interest in the music culture of the Renaissance period. In mid-August the mezzo soprano Teresa Berganza gave a performance that demonstrated the beauty of old Spanish songs in a recital performed at the Festival de Cadaqués along with the guitarist José María Gallardo. This was part of a program that included works by Juan del Enzina, Ferran Sor, Manuel García, Falla, and Lorca.

After the festivals that dominated the summer music scene, the opera theaters once again provided all the pomp and circumstance necessary to open the 2000-2001 lyrical season. At the beginning of October it was the turn of the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona with *D. Q.*, a kind of tale or satire on *Don Quixote*. The performance, under the solid baton of conductor Josep Pons, included music by José Luis Turina, libretto by the novelist Justo

Navarro, and a cybernetic stage production by the theater group Fura dels Baus. The Palau de la Música, Valencia, opened its season with the composer / conductor Pierre Boulez who arrived in the company of his Ensemble Intercontemporain of Paris and the Camerata Academic of Salzburg, and offered a program composed of various classics from the 20th century featuring composers such as: Alban Berg, Arnold Schoenberg, Béla Bartók, and Anton Webern. In mid-October the prestigious conductor Nikolaus Harnoncourt arrived in Valencia at the head of the Concertgebouw Orchestra and the Arnold Schoenberg Choir. Also in Valencia, but later during November, the Festival Puccini closed with concert performances of his first two stage titles: *Le Villi*, and *Edgar*, expertly expertly conducted by Miguel Ángel Gómez Martínez. Meanwhile in Barcelona the counter-tenor, Jochen Kowalski, performed a recital at the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona which included songs by Tchaikovsky, Beethoven, and Schumann. Immediately afterwards it was possible to offer a previously postponed recital by Montserrat Caballé who performed pieces by Rossini, Mercadante, Donizetti, Bizet, Gounod, Massenet, and other composers whose works complement the individual style of this soprano. Finally, by way of celebrating the centenary since the death of Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901), the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona set the ball rolling in grand style with *Un Ballo in Maschera*, conducted by Bertrand de Billy and with a highly controversial stage direction by Calixto Bieito.

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(Translated by Roland Pearson)

The sections on MEDIEVAL AND MODERN HISTORY and VISUAL ARTS will be included in the next issue.