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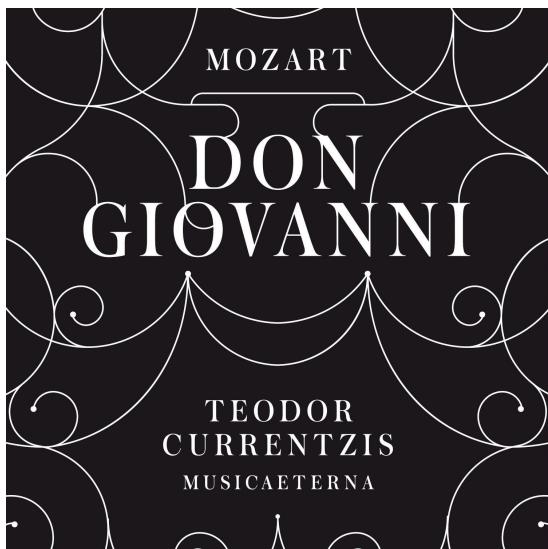
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TEODOR CURRENTZIS and MUSICAETERNA

Release DON GIOVANNI



Available November 4, 2016

The Culmination Of Their Revolutionary Mozart Opera Project

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- Currentzis' da ponte opera cycle – began with *Figaro* and *Cosi fan tutte* in 2014 – to be completed with the worldwide release of *Don Giovanni* on November 4, 2016.
- *Don Giovanni* is the final chapter in a 4-year project that Sony Classical has undertaken with Teodor Currentzis and MusicAeterna, his orchestra and choir, to create new no-compromise studio recordings of Mozart's most important operatic works.
- In their quest for perfection, the musicians recorded the whole of *Don Giovanni* twice. Currentzis discarded the results of the first recording sessions in late 2014 almost in their entirety.
- Living in a unique artistic community based in Perm, Russia, these artists strive to work and record under ideal conditions. Currentzis' stated goal with this project was "to show what can be achieved if you avoid the factory approach of the classical music mainstream".
- The recordings represent an unprecedented commitment by the artists in terms of preparation, session & postproduction time, and the quest for the best possible sound. They also embody a radical new approach to orchestral virtuosity, as well as fidelity to the score, vocal style and performance practice.

(Berlin / New York) The eagerly awaited release of *Don Giovanni* on November 4, 2016, represents the culmination of the critically acclaimed cycle of Mozart's Da Ponte operas from the charismatic conductor Teodor Currentzis and MusicAeterna, the orchestra and choir he founded in Siberia.

Speaking about the masterpiece that he left for last in recording the cycle, Currentzis said:

"With this work he broke the boundaries of the genre and when I try to find the next step forward from Don Giovanni, there is none. I feel that the next step in opera is probably Alban Berg's Wozzeck. Mozart went in a direction that was very difficult to follow. He composed with such virtuosity of time, colour, orchestration, voices and ensembles that he was almost impossible to follow. There were other Dons before Mozart's, the character was legendary. But Mozart's Don Giovanni made the legend go viral, all the way to Rainer Maria Rilke; it inspired a period of great poetry and inspired the Romantics, not as a musical wave but as a literary and philosophical wave....This opera is our great inheritance, which is why all these philosophers and musicologists are still dealing with it."

About his approach to the music:

"One of the alluring qualities of Mozart: he invites you on stage, he wants the audience to live in his world; especially in Don Giovanni, he invites you to be a part of this psychoanalytic game, to be at the centre of the experiment, at the centre of the "transpositions" that take place. In seeking to achieve that, we tried to create a sound that is different from Così fan tutte and Figaro, a sound that would have the coldness of the Salzburg church music tradition – that of the Masses or the Requiem – the sound of Michael Haydn, that goes all the way back to Biber; it's a very specific sound, humming the meek solemnity of the old churches of Salzburg with a mysterious sonority. In other, more physical parts, we switch to a Mediterranean sound, a Baroque sound. Don Giovanni is hard because you need two orchestras: you need a very serious orchestra, a Central European orchestra that plays "Or sai chi l'onore", that plays the overture and then you need the other sound, the Mediterranean sound for the other part of Mozart which loves his surrogate motherland, Italy, and is very open. His amazing nature contains two worlds. We really worked a lot on our sound to reflect this combination."

The recording sessions started in the Tchaikovsky State Opera and Ballet Theatre, Perm, Russia on September 30, 2014. The work was done in daily sessions of up to 12 hours, which the MusicAeterna orchestra and choir as well as their conductor are used to dedicating to their recording projects.

After finishing thirteen days of sessions, and before editing and mixing could start, Teodor Currentzis started re-examining the material captured. Reluctantly, he decided that it did not attain the highest level that the musicians and the recording team were capable of. Currentzis, a lifelong audiophile, also insisted on rethinking every element of the recording set-up itself, especially executing additional acoustic modifications in the theatre's main auditorium, as well as changing all the details of the microphone set-up, one of the most complex tasks in a full opera studio recording.

The decision was made to re-record the whole work. This happened in a second fifteen-day period between November 23 and December 7, 2015. The final version of this *Don Giovanni* is almost exclusively the result of that second period. Except for a few recitatives, the material from the first sessions in 2014 was destroyed in its entirety.

As stated at the launch of the cycle, Currentzis' approach to the Mozart scores is based on the conviction that it is virtually impossible today to hear them performed precisely and in full. His stated intention is to undo what he considers the effects of 20th-century operatic tradition focused on simplification and vocal volume at all cost. For Currentzis, these recordings represent the culmination of a decade-long research project dedicated to the discrepancies between the composer's will and what our ears have grown accustomed to.

The cast of *Don Giovanni* includes Dimitris Tiliakos (Don Giovanni), Vito Priante (Leporello), Mika Kares (Il Comendatore), Myrtò Papatanasiu (Donna Anna), Kenneth Tarver (Don Ottavio), Karina Gauvin (Donna Elvira), Guido Loconsolo (Masetto) and Christina Gansch (Zerlina).

The 2014 launch of Currentzis' first two opera recordings enjoyed an extraordinary global reception. Both *Le nozze di Figaro* and *Così fan tutte* were hailed by the international press:

- "The field of *Figaro* recordings is crowded, but Currentzis' deserves a special space" – *Financial Times*
- "Truly a benchmark recording" – *El Mundo* on *Figaro*
- "Wonders keep tumbling out" – *The Times* on *Così fan tutte*

- “Mozart has never been more erotic. An opera recording that just revels in pain and lust.” – *Die Zeit* on *Così fan tutte*.

Other recent releases by MusicAeterna and Currentzis include *Rameau – The Sound of Light* (“A landscape bursting with audacious harmony, country-dance vigour and meltingly loving melodies. Sumptuous fare.” – *The Independent*); Stravinsky’s *Le Sacre du printemps* (“Here finally is a recording that shakes the listener, wherever he may be. It’s an amazing, really new recording.” – *Il Corriere della Sera*); and, earlier this year, Tchaikovsky’s Violin Concerto with Patricia Kopatchinskaja (“Brilliant and original” – *BBC Music Magazine*).

Born in Athens in 1972, Teodor Currentzis moved to St. Petersburg in 1994 to study conducting with legendary Russian teacher Ilya Musin, who has, among others, also trained Valery Gergiev and Semyon Bychkov. While music director of the Novosibirsk Opera from 2004, Currentzis founded MusicAeterna. After making headlines with various productions, including the controversial so-called “Chechnya *Aida*” directed by Dmitry Tcherniakov, Currentzis soon gained recognition beyond the Russian scene.

In 2011, when invited to assume the post of Artistic Director at Perm’s opera house, Currentzis brought the orchestra and choir with him. The MusicAeterna orchestra and choir emphatically embrace a non-establishment attitude, constantly questioning themselves and striving for perfection. As important as their musical prowess (many members are laureates of international competitions) is their willingness to undergo exceptional rigours to reach their shared artistic goals.

Don Giovanni will be available internationally on November 4, 2016 on CD in a limited-edition deluxe book; on vinyl LP; and in all popular digital formats including Mastered for iTunes.

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