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Austrian festival will be first stop on Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra tour



PITTSBURGH SYMPHONY

Manfred Honeck conducting the Pittsburgh Symphony in Europe in 2011.

By **Mark Kanny**

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With [Heinz Hall](#) rehearsals behind them, music director Manfred Honeck and the [Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra](#) will depart Aug. 26 for a three-week tour of European music festivals.

Honeck and the orchestra, having toured internationally every year of his five-year tenure as music director, are familiar with the exhilaration and stresses of life on the road.

"On tour, after 14 days, you might feel a little bit tired, but on the stage, surprisingly, you don't feel that," Honeck says.

The first concerts are Aug. 29 and 30 at the Grafenegg Festival in Austria, where the soloists will be Anne Sophie Mutter playing Antonin Dvorak's Violin Concerto and Yuja Wang playing Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto.

Honeck and the orchestra, after returning to the Berlin Festival on Aug. 31, will play for the first time at the George Enescu Festival in Bucharest, Romania, on Sept. 3. Other concerts are in Paris, Sept. 6; Dusseldorf and Frankfurt, Germany, Sept. 7 and 8; the Lucerne Festival in Switzerland, Sept. 10 and 11; and the Beethoven Festival in Bonn, Germany, Sept. 12 and 14.

"It's definitely exciting to do a festival tour," Honeck says.

"Touring, especially in the summer, is always a highlight, so different from other concerts. All these concerts, except Dusseldorf and Paris, are at festivals, and each one has its own atmosphere. We know a lot of other guest orchestras are coming to these prestigious festivals."

The main changes from performance to performance on tour

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are adjustments to the different acoustics, Honeck says. Most of the repertoire — which includes Dmitri Shostakovich's Symphony No. 5, Richard Strauss' "Ein Heldenleben" and Maurice Ravel's "Bolero" and "Rapsodie espagnole" — is familiar to musicians and audiences alike.

The second concert in Lucerne will feature percussionist Martin Grubinger playing John Corigliano's "Conjurer" Concerto, which will be new to that audience but received its world premiere at Heinz Hall with Evelyn Glennie as soloist.

"When I founded in Salzburg 30 years ago the Children's Orchestra Camp in the summer, Martin was 9 years old and my timpani player," Honeck says. "Now, after 30 years, he's my soloist."

Apart from Bucharest, Honeck says the musicians already know the adjustments they need to make for each of the performance venues, from a smaller hall such as in Dusseldorf, to a larger hall, such as in Frankfurt.

"There's also always room for development (of the interpretation over the course of the tour), but right from the beginning, this orchestra plays at the highest standards," Honeck says.

"These are enthusiastic musicians. Everyone sits on the edge of their chair. They will not allow us to have a lousy concert. With them, it's the opposite. They've been to these festivals, know the best orchestras in the world are coming, and we're regarded as one of them, so we want to play our best."

Mark Kanny is classical music critic for Trib Total Media. He can be reached at 412-320-7877 or mkanny@tribweb.com.

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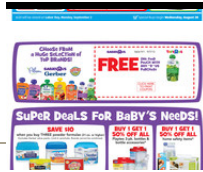
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