

## Thomas Hampson: world premiere, plus performances in Middle East, Europe, USA

1 message

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**Subject:** Thomas Hampson: world premiere, plus performances in Middle East, Europe, USA

### Thomas Hampson Gives World Premiere with Prague Symphony; then to Israel, Salzburg and Santa Fe

**Thomas Hampson** – recently honored by the Metropolitan Opera Guild with the third installment of its prestigious “**Met Mastersinger**” series –started his summer at the **Zurich Opera**, where he brought “sensuality, warmth, and depth” (*Die Welt*) to the title role of Hindemith’s *Mathis der Maler*. Next the baritone joins the **Prague Symphony Orchestra** for the **world premiere** of Sylvia Bodorová’s orchestral song cycle *Lingua Angelorum* (“The Language of Angels”), before performing **Bloch, Mahler, and Noam Sheriff** on multiple dates in **Israel** and at the **Salzburg Festival** with **Zubin Mehta** and the **Israel Philharmonic**; portraying Puccini’s Scarpia in *Tosca* at the **Santa Fe Opera**; and singing **Charles Ives** with the **Mahler Chamber Orchestra** under **Kent Nagano** in Berlin. Hampson also appears in **recital** with pianist **Wolfram Rieger** in Austria, singing lieder by Schumann, Mahler, and Dvorák at the Salzburg Festival and songs by Barber and Schumann in Grafenegg.

“It’s a fun summer ahead for me,” says Hampson. “After finishing the Hindemith opera in Zurich, I’ll be doing a new piece in the Czech Republic, heading to Israel for some very special concerts, returning to the Salzburg Festival for the first time in a few seasons, and then singing Scarpia in *Tosca* at Santa Fe with an exciting young cast. I’m really looking forward to everything that’s coming up.”

It was at the **Zurich Opera** that Paul Hindemith’s opera *Mathis der Maler* (“Matthias the Painter”) first premiered in 1938. Written to the composer’s own libretto, the opera was inspired by his interest in the Protestant Reformation and examines the artist’s position in the world. Hampson, making his role debut headlining the Zurich Opera’s new production, has already generated a spate of positive press. “His barely-aged voice remains a model of flexibility,” exclaimed *BR-Klassik*; “magnificent,” agreed *Der Bund*; while the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* marveled: “Hindemith’s painter elevates his art above the battle with himself and his miserable existence. Hampson portrayed this with an intensity that made the triumph of the risen Christ on the right altar table radiate even more brightly.”

The baritone’s final appearance in the role is July 5.

The previous day, on July 4, Hampson and the **Prague Symphony Orchestra** offer the **world premiere** performance of a new commission from the singer’s close friend, composer **Sylvie Bodorova** (b. 1954). A song cycle for baritone and large orchestra, *Lingua Angelorum* is dedicated to Hampson, who explains: “Sylvie is simply an exceptionally creative composer. I really admire the fantasy and energy with which she writes. I also immediately liked her interest in a true collaboration, which the creation of *Lingua Angelorum* has been. ...No one else could have realized the project in just this way.”

Hampson continues, “*Lingua Angelorum* is a beautiful work, full of different ideas that Sylvie has captured in myriad musical styles of her own language. Each song becomes a small cosmos unto itself.”

The song cycle will be presented for the first time at the Czech Republic’s **Smetana Opera Festival of Litomyšl**, where a Renaissance castle provides a dramatic setting for the concert.

Since making his first appearance with the **Israel Philharmonic** under Luciano Berio in 1989, Hampson has been invited back many times, returning to Israel for performances and recitals and to teach at the nation’s International Vocal Arts Institute. Now the baritone looks forward to reuniting with the orchestra under its Music Director for Life, **Zubin Mehta**, on a pair of programs in **Tel Aviv University** and **Haifa**. For the first, Hampson partners the ensemble as soloist in **Ernest Bloch’s Avodath hakodesh** (“Sacred Service”); according to the *American Record Guide*, the baritone’s recording of the work with Mehta and the Israel Philharmonic is “stirring, magnificently sung,”

and “Hampson at full throttle makes it all the more worth hearing.” Together they offer three performances of the monumental work at Tel Aviv University (July 11 & 12) and the Haifa Auditorium (July 15).

His second program with Mehta and the Israel Philharmonic marks Hampson’s first performance of **Mechaye Hametim** (“Revival of the Dead,” 1985) by composer **Noam Sheriff** (b. 1935), winner of the 2011 Israel Prize. Scored for orchestra, tenor, bass-baritone, men’s choir, and boys’ choir, the work was commissioned as a monument in sound to the victims of the Holocaust and the builders of Israel; the *Daily Telegraph*, which witnessed its British premiere by the Israel Philharmonic and Mehta, describes the work as “composed with palpable sincerity, with a sense of horror and, in its final movement, glorification of the Deity.”

*Mechaye Hametim* shares the program with **Kindertotenlieder**, with which Hampson – one of the great Mahler interpreters of our time – has a long association. His recording of the song cycle with Leonard Bernstein and the Vienna Philharmonic is widely regarded as definitive, and after his rendition with the New York Philharmonic last year, the *New York Times*’s Anthony Tommasini declared him “an insightful and sensitive Mahler singer who knew what he wanted to do with every phrase, word, and emotional nuance of these wrenchingly beautiful songs.” Hampson also undertakes the role of narrator in Schoenberg’s *Kol Nidre*, the prayer of the Jewish Day of Atonement, with which the July 16 concert at the Tel Aviv University opens.

Hampson, Mehta, and the Israel Philharmonic reprise both programs on consecutive nights at Austria’s **Salzburg Music Festival** (July 24 & 25), marking the singer’s first appearances there since 2007. As he explains, “Having been a regular guest at the Salzburg Festival over the last 20 years, it is a thrill to return to inaugurate Alexander Pereira’s tenure as its new director. Performing music [with the Israel Philharmonic] that has never been heard in Salzburg is an additional honor.”

Hampson’s previous Salzburg successes include debuting Willy Drecker’s legendary *La traviata* production alongside Anna Netrebko and Rolando Villazón; calling their performance “the hit of the 2005 Salzburg Festival,” *Classics Today* pronounced the subsequent live recording “the most moving performance of the opera I’ve ever come across.”

This Salzburg season, besides his orchestral engagements, the baritone gives his first **recital** of the summer on August 4, when he and pianist **Wolfram Rieger** present lieder by Schumann, Dvorák, and Mahler, repertoire in which they are justly celebrated, both on disc and in live performance. In addition, Hampson offers an **Opera Master Class** on August 3 to young singers selected by international audition for the festival’s Young Singers Project.

For his next major engagement of the summer, Hampson crosses the Atlantic to **Santa Fe Opera**, where he will appear for the first time in almost three decades. As he remembers, “The 1983 production of *Don Pasquale* – coming on the heels of the much acclaimed production of *Così fan tutte* in St. Louis – remains a cherished milestone in my early career. Santa Fe has always been a mecca to young singers, and it is exciting how they continue to expand their repertoire and casting to become one of the major summer opera festivals in the United States.”

The vehicle for his return is the villainous **Scarpia** in Puccini’s *Tosca*. His performance in the role at Zurich Opera alongside Jonas Kaufmann in 2009 has since been issued on DVD from Decca, inspiring *Opera Today* to report that “Hampson’s take on Scarpia has freshness and edge,” and *Opera Britannia* to dub him “a suave and slimy Baron Scarpia.” In New Mexico, Hampson joins soprano **Amanda Echalaz** – “set to be the leading Tosca of her generation” (*Independent*, UK) – who makes her American debut in the title role of **Stephen Barlow**’s landmark staging, described by Britain’s *Guardian* as “the most brilliantly original production of *Tosca* to be seen in this country for decades.” With Santa Fe Opera’s chief conductor **Frédéric Chaslin** on the podium, Hampson makes five appearances as Scarpia (Aug 11–24).

To draw the summer to a close, the baritone returns to Europe, joining the **Mahler Chamber Orchestra** and **Kent Nagano** for an account of **Charles Ives’s Songs**, as orchestrated by John Adams, Georg-Friedrich Haas, and Toshio Hosokawa, at the **Musikfest Berlin** on August 31. Ives has long occupied an important place in Hampson’s programming; the singer recorded *An American Journey* with Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony on an RCA disc that had “tremendous impact” (*Gramophone*), before featuring the pioneering experimentalist’s songs in his *American Song* recital tour that the *Philadelphia Inquirer* pronounced “thoroughly exceptional.”

Additional information about Thomas Hampson is available at the web sites listed below, and a list of his upcoming engagements follows.

## **Thomas Hampson: engagements, summer 2012**

### **July 5**

Zurich, Switzerland  
Hindemith: *Mathis der Maler* (title role)  
Zurich Opera

### **July 4**

Litomysl, Czech Republic  
Bodorova: *Lingua Angelorum* (world premiere)  
Prague Symphony Orchestra / Christopher Zimmerman

### **July 11 & 12**

Tel Aviv, Israel  
Bloch: *Sacred Service*  
Israel Philharmonic / Zubin Mehta

### **July 15**

Haifa, Israel  
Bloch: *Sacred Service*  
Israel Philharmonic / Zubin Mehta

### **July 16**

Israel – venue TBD  
Sheriff: *Mechaye Hametim*  
Mahler: *Kindertotenlieder*  
Israel Philharmonic / Zubin Mehta

### **July 24**

Salzburg, Austria  
Salzburg Festival  
Sheriff: *Mechaye Hametim*  
Mahler: *Kindertotenlieder*  
Israel Philharmonic / Zubin Mehta

### **July 25**

Salzburg, Austria  
Salzburg Festival  
Bloch: *Sacred Service*  
Israel Philharmonic / Zubin Mehta

### **Aug 4**

Salzburg, Austria  
Salzburg Festival  
Recital: Lieder by Schumann, Mahler, and Dvorák  
Wolfram Rieger, piano

### **Aug 11, 15, 18, 21, & 24**

Santa Fe, New Mexico  
Puccini: *Tosca* (Scarpia)  
Santa Fe Opera

### **Aug 29**

Grafenegg, Austria  
Grafenegg Music Festival  
Recital: Samuel Barber: Songs; Robert Schumann: *Liederkreis* op. 39  
Wolfram Rieger, piano

### **Aug 31**

Berlin, Germany (Philharmonie)

Berlin Musikfest  
Charles Ives (orch. Adams, Haas, and Hosokawa): Songs  
Chen Reiss, soprano  
Mahler Chamber Orchestra / Kent Nagano

[www.thomashampson.com](http://www.thomashampson.com)

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