

# SIKORSKI

magazine



## MODERN BALLET AND BALLET MUSIC

**70th Birthday of John Neumeier  
and 80th Birthday of Rodion Shchedrin**

*Music Is (Also)  
Mathematics –*  
**the Complex Oeuvre of Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf**

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**BIRTHDAYS AND COMMEMORATION DAYS 2012**



# editorial

Dear Reader,

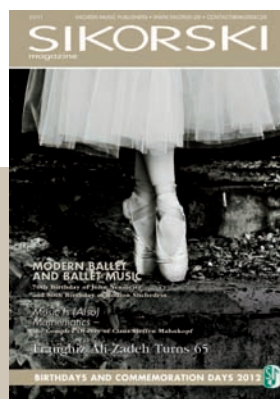
According to the Duden etymological dictionary, composition is nothing but the construction and design of a work of art. Regarded in this way, choreographers are exactly like composers who organise and form tones - more or less composers of sequences of movement. From numerous choreographies of works from our catalogues, we have experienced how close the relationship between genuine composers and composing choreographers is.

The cooperation of the American choreographer and ballet director John Neumeier, who has lived in Hamburg for decades, with composers such as Lera Auerbach, Alfred Schnittke and Arvo Pärt, is outstanding.

The great avant-gardist Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf, who structures and organises his complex scores like a mathematician, thereby discovering the most fascinating sound worlds, will be celebrating a round birthday in 2012. There is a striking accumulation of round birthdays in the Scandinavian countries, moreover, where we are privileged to represent a number of composers.

Discover with us the variety of this music and its creators!

Dagmar Sikorski  
Dr. Axel Sikorski



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## NEWS

### *Ruzicka's "EINSCHREIBUNG" in Memory of Mahler*

The music of Gustav Mahler and its interpretation through the philosopher Theodor W. Adorno are central subjects in the work of the conductor and composer Peter Ruzicka. The contradictions and darkest depths of the soul in Mahler's music were, already for the young Ruzicka, a point of departure for his own aesthetic. "Large late-romantic string gestures in which Mahler's tone shimmers through stand as a sign of utopia for Ruzicka to the present day. Ruzicka has now composed his latest work 'EINSCHREIBUNG' in response to a commission from the NDR Hamburg," the NDR announces the anxiously awaited world premiere of "EINSCHREIBUNG," Six Pieces for Large Orchestra by Peter Ruzicka on 10 February 2011 at the Laeiszhalle in Hamburg. Christoph Eschenbach will direct the NDR Symphony Orchestra in this concert.

# Modern Ballet and Ballet Music

## 70th Birthday of John Neumeier and 80th Birthday of Rodion Shchedrin

THE PREMATURELY DECEASED CHOREOGRAPHER AND DIRECTOR OF THE LEIPZIG BALLET COMPANY, UWE SCHOLZ, ONCE SAID: "THE DIFFICULT THING ABOUT DANCING IS SHOWING WHAT IS BEAUTIFUL ABOUT DANCING SO THAT WHAT IS BEAUTIFUL DOES NOT LOOK DIFFICULT."

Just as difficult as dancing itself – the direct expression of spiritual states through movement and a controlled bodily position – is finding the appropriate music for free or subject-bound choreographies. Beyond full-length ballets such as **Sergei Prokofiev's "Romeo and Juliet"** or "**Cinderella**," or **Aram Khachaturian's "Gayaneh**," many choreographers tend to compile their own works out of many heterogeneous musical sections with which to underpin their choreographies.

One of the greatest choreographers of the present day is unquestionably **John Neumeier**. He will be celebrating his 70th birthday on 24 February 2012, and we can be sure that new choreographies and a number of excerpts from his earlier gigantic production, in many cases bound with composers of our publishing company, will be seen to celebrate this occasion.

John Neumeier has been the ballet director and head choreographer of the Hamburg Ballet since 1973. He was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1942, received his dance training in Copenhagen and later at the Royal Ballet School in London and was engaged by John Cranko for his Stuttgart Ballet in 1963. From 1969 until 1973, Neumeier was ballet director in Frankfurt am Main. In his choreographic works, he is concerned with finding contemporary forms for traditional ballet classics, but also for

dancing great classical works of music such as Gustav Mahler's Third Symphony or Bach's "St. Matthew Passion."

Neumeier already formed a close connection to **Alfred Schnittke** during the 1980s, and during recent years he also formed a close relationship with the Russian-American composer **Lera Auerbach** during the course of several sensational productions. Most choreographers feel magically attracted to the strong radiance of the music of Schnittke. It creates associations which, among other things, have their origin in the variety of overlapping and combination of stylistic elements. It is known that the Polish modernist composer Witold Lutoslawski, who died in 1994, did not want his music to be used for ballet productions. For him, the scenic events were a distraction from the musical substance; the listening experience was his primary concern. Schnittke was completely different: his music already at times contains images within itself and at least allows for a visualisation of the texture of relationships, if it doesn't expressly require it.

Neumeier's ambitions are clearly related to the musical concerns of Alfred Schnittke. A story, whether the realisation of Shakespeare's often retold Othello or the tale of Cinderella, is never a rigid structure for him, with a framework that must not be broken. The subject is considerably expanded, new relations-

hips are built up, questions are asked which frequently remain open. Choreography and music ultimately allow a kaleidoscope-like structure to arise in which the listener and spectator gain impressions and can take their own positions.

### "A Streetcar Named Desire" based on Alfred Schnittke

The Hamburg Ballet opened its guest season 2010-2011 in autumn 2010 with the Baden-Baden premiere of von "**A Streetcar Named Desire**". John Neumeier's company gave seven guest performances at the Festspielhaus. Alongside the already legendary choreography based on Tennessee Williams' theatre classic, they had a ballet workshop as well as a "Hommage aux Ballets Russes" in their baggage. John Neumeier had already adapted Tennessee Williams' famous drama "A Streetcar named Desire" for a ballet in Stuttgart in 1983; Marcia Haydée and Richard Cragun danced the leading roles. The Hamburg premiere of "Streetcar" then took place in 1987 with Colleen Scott and Ivan Liška. In April and May 2010, the Norwegian National Ballet presented it at the Oslo Opera House. In "Streetcar Named Desire," Neumeier uses the **Symphony No. 1** by **Alfred Schnittke** and the "**Visions fugitives**" Op. 22 by **Sergei Prokofiev**.

## Schnittke's and Neumeier's "Peer Gynt"

After "A Streetcar Named Desire" and "Othello," which was based on Schnittke's **Concerto grosso No. 1**, among other works, it was above all the first full-length ballet music based on Henrik Ibsen's "Peer Gynt" that was to manifest John Neumeier's and Alfred Schnittke's artistic collaboration and attract international attention. Neumeier admitted that he had dreamt of a collaboration like that between Mikhail Fokine and Igor Stravinsky, and he wrote to Schnittke: "Later, when I worked on the ballet 'Peer Gynt' with you, Alfred, this dream came true for me (...)." Neumeier has repeatedly stated how strongly Schnittke's music inspired him to create choreographic scenes. Schnittke, for his part, designated the choreography of Neumeier as "something completely novel, that in its multi-dimensionality has never before existed." And he asked Neumeier to be allowed to dedicate the score of "Peer Gynt" to him – "if it somehow corresponds to the meaning of what you have created." "Peer Gynt" was the first ballet that Neumeier designed in direct collaboration with a living composer. However, this type of shared work was new for Schnittke as well: "it stimulates me," he said before the premiere on 22 January 1989. "I have never before written a piece for ballet that I could develop together with a choreographer – based on inexhaustible material that allows for many contradictory interpretations."

## Lera Auerbach and John Neumeier Create "Préludes CV" and "The Little Mermaid"

At the beginning of the new millennium, John Neumeier's collaboration with **Lera Auerbach** was to become just as close as was the relationship to Alfred Schnittke. In 2003, Neumeier created a full-length ballet to Auerbach's **24 Preludes for Violoncello and Piano** and the **24 Preludes for Violin and Piano**. He completely involved himself in the music while creating the choreography, Neumeier remembers. With his 17 solo roles which he allowed to appear in abstract dance-like formations, his ballet "**Préludes CV**" assumed an exceptional position: "I don't believe that there has been another ballet in history with so many solo parts." The second collaboration with Lera Auerbach was the celebrated work commissioned by the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen on the occasion of the 200th birthday of Hans Christian Andersen. Auerbach composed the full-length ballet music "**The Little Mermaid**"

for Neumeier, which was premiered with great success on 15 April 2005. Concerning her collaboration with John Neumeier on this work, Lera Auerbach once said: "*The peculiar quality of theatre music is that there are extra-musical frames to work with. One needs to find a balance between achieving what you intend to create artistically and yet make it work organically together with all the dramatic requirements of the theatre. If music becomes only a servant of the dance, as happened with many 19th century ballets, then it is a problem. The other difficulty is the length. With the Little Mermaid we have full three acts - and to sustain your best quality within the span of a three-hour production where the overall architecture needs to hold the structure together is definitely a challenge.*"

## "Nijinsky" according to Shostakovich

The production "**Nijinsky**" by John Neumeier received its premiere on 2 July 2000 at the Hamburg State Opera. The choreography is, according to the Hamburg ballet director, not a dance-like sketch of the life of the great dancer and star of the Ballets russes, but a biography of the soul, the feelings and conditions of this artist who became so seriously ill at the end of his life. To underpin his ballet visions, Neumeier makes use of the music of **Dmitri Shostakovich**, among other works. One hears excerpts from the **11th Symphony "The Year 1905," Op. 103** and the **Sonata for Viola and Piano, Op. 147**, the final work of this composer which can be understood as a kind of legacy.

## Mahler Ballets

With his choreography of Gustav Mahler's Third Symphony, John Neumeier created a sensational choreography which allowed spectators to experience the music of the great symphonist in a new perspective. Now, on 26 June 2011, his choreography to the legendary **Symphony No. 10** of **Gustav Mahler** in the version of the adapter **Deryck Cooke** will receive its premiere at the Hamburg State Opera.

## Choreography of Pärt

John Neumeier has also placed a work on the programme of the Hamburger Ballet Days 2010 that he had once choreographed for the Tokyo Ballet: "Seven Haiku of the Moon." This ballet on an Asian subject is musically illustrated by **Arvo Pärt**'s well-known "**Perpetuum mobile**" and the Sarabande from the "**Collage on B-A-C-H**," among other works.



## WORKS CHOREOGRAPHED IN BALLETS OF JOHN NEUMEIER

### Lera Auerbach:

24 Preludes for Violoncello and Piano (in "Préludes CV")

24 Preludes for Violin and Piano (in "Préludes CV")

"The Little Mermaid." Ballet based on H.C. Andersen

"Eugene Onegin." Ballet, premiere June 2012

### Gustav Mahler:

Symphony No. 10 (Mahler/Cooke) 26.06.2011

Premiere: Ballet at the Hamburg State Opera

### Arvo Pärt:

"Perpetuum mobile" ("Seven Haikus of the Moon")

("Seven Haikus of the Moon")

### Sergej Prokofjew:

"Visions fugitives"

(in "A Streetcar Named Desire")

"Romeo and Juliet"

"Cinderella"

### Alfred Schnittke:

"Peer Gynt." Ballet in 3 Acts, a Prologue and an Epilogue by John Neumeier freely adapted from Henrik Ibsen's Dramatic Poem

Concerto grosso No. 1 for 2 Violins and Orchestra (in "Othello")

Symphony No. 1 (in "A Streetcar Named Desire")

### Dmitri Schostakowitsch:

Symphony No. 11 "The Year 1905," Op. 103 (in "Nijinsky")

## Rodion Shchedrin Turns 80

"I have been lucky. Maya is a muse for me. When this muse is also one's own wife, then that always helps. Only Maya Plisetskaya has inspired me to write ballets. I am never bored with my wife. She is paradoxical, sensitive, feminine and educated. You know, people think I am a passionate ballet fan. But that is not true. Up until now,

*I cannot call myself a ballet fanatic. I am instead a Maya fanatic ...*" (quoted from: Rodion Shchedrin: A Modern Russian Composer, Mainz 2008)

**Rodion Shchedrin** was born in Moscow on 16 December 1932. He studied at the Conservatory there from 1950 until 1955 and taught at this institution during the 1960s. Shchedrin, who soon became well known far beyond the boundaries of his homeland, above all representing the Russian music scene in succession to Shostakovich in the West, was for many years the Chairman of the Russian Composers Union prior to the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Today he lives in Moscow and Munich. Already in 1976 he was named a corresponding member of the Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts and has also been a member of the Berlin Academy of the Arts since 1989.

Shchedrin's catalogue of works comprises symphonies, concertos, numerous choral compositions, operas and chamber music. But the composer has become primarily renowned for his ballets, especially "Anna Karenina" based on Leo Tolstoy from the year 1971. Like many other works of this genre, this ballet was composed for his wife Maya Plisetskaya, one of Russia's greatest prima ballerinas. Almost all of his ballets were premiered at the Bolschoi Theatre: "Carmen Suite" (1967), "The Seagull" (1979) and "Lady with Lapdog" (1985). The "Carmen Suite," an ingenious adaptation of the opera by Georges Bizet for strings and percussion, meanwhile belongs to the most frequently performed ballets of the twentieth century. In this work, the composer Rodion Shchedrin above all reveals himself to be a refined practical musician, orchestrator and arranger.

In his compositions, Shchedrin combines elements of folklore and traditional stylistic means reflecting the great Russian classics such as Dmitri Kabalevsky and Dmitri Shostakovich together with modern compositional methods including collage and aleatorics. His beautiful, palatable "Anna-Karenina" music, illustrative almost in the manner of film music, contrasts sharply with polyphonically complex, strict and uncompromising compositions such as the "Music for the City of Köthen."

From Sergei Prokofiev, who also strongly influenced Shchedrin's manner of composing, Shchedrin takes over the tendency towards marked rhythms and a constructive, comprehensible, clear gestural language. The force of tension and definite versatility of his music are nourished by his play with timbres, con-

stantly alternating lyrical and dramatic sections as well as broad melodic lines. Shchedrin's most significant works for the concert stage include Concerto No. 1 "Brash Orchestral Jests," "Music for the City of Köthen" for chamber orchestra, "Mnogiya Leta" for mixed choir, piano and three groups of idiophone percussion instruments as well as "Stichira" for orchestra.

## The Humpbacked Pony

This ballet is based on a tale by Pyotr Yershov. The plot is quite classical for the fairytale genre. Three farmer brothers are assigned with the task of observing their father's wheat field, which is always being devastated. Only the youngest brother succeeds in the taking the culprit into custody. The beautiful mare buys her freedom, however, by giving him two horses with golden manes and a humpbacked pony. Of course the elder brothers claim the beautiful animals for themselves and leave the humpbacked pony for the youngest brother. But this pony stands courageously by his side during the further course of the story, even enabling him to win the heart of the Tsar's daughter.

## Carmen Suite

The subject of the opera is based on a novelette by the French romanticist Prosper Mérimée: the beautiful Carmen attracts the attention of Don José. When a loud argument arises with the other female workers in a cigarette factory, Carmen is also arrested but can get out of it thanks to her arts of seduction. From now on the young Don José has fallen victim to her. When Carmen then falls in love with the bullfighter Escamillo and wants to leave Don José, the jealous man, full of despair, stabs her.

## Anna Karenina

In a passionate novel, Leo Tolstoy tells of the passionate love of the beautiful, married Anna Karenina for the young officer Vronsky. She ultimately sacrifices her existence to him and leaves her husband and son. She returns full of remorse, but is socially scorned. When Vronsky finally turns his attention to the young Princess Sorokina, Anna Karenina throws herself in front of a train.

## The Seagull

Anton Chekhov's drama of the same name is a psychological drama. The symbol for the unconditional will to live and insatiable longing of the main character Nina Sarechnaya is the seagull. The protagonist divides her love between two men. One of them, the author Konstantin

Treplev, ultimately burns his manuscripts and shoots himself. Far away, a seagull makes its way as the symbol of longing and unfulfilled desires.

## Lady with Lapdog

The young Anna and Dmitri meet at a spa. Both are attached but sense a strong attraction towards each other. Their separation is unbearable for both sides. When Dmitri meets Anna anew, it becomes clear to him that she is the only true love in his life. She feels the same way but suffers from the secrecy to which she is forced through their meetings, which now take place ever more frequently. The open end of the story is not exclusively overshadowed by despair and resignation. The lovers live in the certainty that someday a solution will be found and a new life will begin. 🎵



### CURRENT CDs/DVDs WITH BALLETT MUSIC BY RODION SHCHEDRIN

#### CDs

##### Carmen-Suite

- a. Chamber Orchestra Kremlin, cond.: Misha Rachlevsky. – CLAVES 50-2207
- b. Deutsche Streicherphilharmonie, cond.: Michael Sanderling. – GENUIN GEN 87522

#### DVDs

##### Anna Karenina

Bolschoi Theatre, cond.: Yuri Simonov, Choreography by Maya Plisetskaya from the year 1974. – VAI DVD 4286

##### Carmen-Suite

Bolschoi Theatre, cond.: Gennady Roshdestvensky, Choreography by Alberto Alonso from the year 1969. – VAI DVD 4294

##### The Humpbacked Pony

Bolschoi Theatre, cond.: Zoya Tulubyeva, Choreography by Alexander Radunsky from the year 1969. – VAI DVD 4294




# Music Is (Also) Mathematics – the Complex Oeuvre of Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf

*His music is not easy to play, nor can it be easily or directly comprehended. Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf is the great intellectual among the composers of the present day, but not one to hide behind thought structures, let alone refuse to make statements about his works.*

Numerous book publications, including the volume of essays "The Humanity of Music" published by Wolke Verlag, bear witness to Mahnkopf's verbal art of representation, which also helps many people to understand his musical structures. Mahnkopf understands the unity of composing, for example, as follows: "All composers are bound together by a common problem: the necessity to help the organisation of the material and its structuring to find an existence at all, or to add a surcharge to its conventional form. Whoever does not do this is not a composer in the sense we mean in Western history. (...) The work on the genuine problems and the demand to not exactly show oneself as unperturbed in them is, alongside the much stronger objective motivation, a reason for material progress. (...) The unity of composing will be tenacious in the future as well, simply for reasons of an imposed demarcation from arrangement and computer-organised simulation." Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf, from Mannheim, will turn 50 on 22 October 2012. He studied composition with Brian Ferneyhough, Klaus Huber and Emanuel Nunes, piano with James Avery, music theory Peter Förtig and also musicology, philosophy and other subjects with Jürgen Habermas as well as sociology with Ludwig von Friedeberg. In 1993 he received his Ph.D. with a dissertation on Arnold Schönberg. Alongside his compositional activities, he has published over 120 essays, written five books and edited ten others. In these he treats not only subjects from the area of contemporary music but also composer personalities such as Wagner and Cage as well as the musical philosophy of Adorno.

**All of the works of Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf so far published by Sikorski have already been issued or will soon be issued in the series "exempla nova."**

Mahnkopf's "Hommage à Frank Cox" for piano, quarter-tone vibraphone and electric guitar received its world premiere in Leipzig on 11 November 2011 performed by the 'Ensemble asamisimasa' from Oslo. As so often, the composer does not merely have a point of departure, but approaches his subject from different sides. This piece, for example, is about a musician whom the composer praises from his high degree of specialisation as a cellist, his complexity as a composer and his penetration of the given material as an author. Mahnkopf selected three instruments to represent these three levels. The vibraphone is to be understood as a suggestion of a keyboard on which the author types, the piano corresponds to the place where the composer looks for sounds and the electric guitar represents the performance of the practical musician. The three musicians play independently of each other for the most part, although they are temporally coordinated. "Morphologically speaking, my point of departure was the (very simple) sinus wave, the mathematical function of which I continually enriched through additives, so that the formal sections of all three instruments could be formed like a large network of variations." The refinement of the sound texture, the richness of variety of the individual sections and the incredibly radiant power of

his music, as in the harpsichord piece "Pegasos" on Mahnkopf's portrait CD issued by Wergo make listening to his works a genuine experience. One listens excitedly to the hesitation and flow, and to procedures sometimes making a chaotic effect. However, Mahnkopf organises this apparent chaos and notates it in the greatest detail. His work as a composer during recent years is, he says, not characterised by a centre, a midpoint on which everything that happens is centripetally related. "Because there is no centre, there are no centrifugal forces either. Instead, I would much rather speak of a topology. This term designates a partial area of mathematics which treats spatial forms extending beyond geometry. As opposed to geometrical figures, the space that my music defines cannot be fixed through axioms and formulas. It is flexible, semi-morphic, non-linear, indeed non-constant." 

Current World Premieres  
of Works by  
Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf:

**28.01.2011 Luxembourg**  
„Hommage à Wolfram Schurig“,  
Luxembourg

**13.03.2011 Salzburg**  
« Petit Hommage à Thomas Tallis »  
Stadler Quartet,  
Salzburg Biennale Ensemble

## *Mixed-Form Combining Requiem and Symphony*

**Symphony No. 8** for choir and orchestra by the Polish composer **Krzysztof Meyer** received its world premiere on 11 January performed by the Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra and Choir under the direction of Michail Jurowski in Katowice. The idea of composing a "**Sinfonia da Requiem**" arose through Meyer's desire to dedicate a symphonic work to anti-Semitism and the persecution of the Jews. The general form of the symphony emerged when Meyer became acquainted with the work of the Polish poet Adam Zagajewski. He selected four poems from the many which deal with this subject. The subject of the first poem is the massacre of the Jewish inhabitants of the town of Jedwabny in Poland. Meyer dedicates the second poem, entitled "Unwritten Elegy for Krakow Jews," to the part of town called Kazimierz in Krakow, which was principally inhabited by Jews until the war. In the third poem, the poet Zagajewski reminds us of the existing indifference, this time for the children who were murdered during the war and in the last poem, Zagajewski refers to Persephone of antiquity who "goes under the earth in a summer dress, with the large eyes of a Jewish child"

## *British Premiere of Weinberg's Opera "The Portrait"*



**"Portrait"** received its first performance on 31 July during the course of the Bregenz Festival. In the production by David Pountney, the British premiere of the work will now be performed in English by the Opera North Leeds on 2 February 2011. At the centre of the opera's plot stands a young painter who struggles for his place in art history no less than for his economical existence. Through the acquisition of an old picture, he suddenly achieves boundless wealth from which he allows himself to be dazzled and corrupted, so that he loses sight of his actual calling. As so often with Gogol, from whose literary oeuvre Dmitri Shostakovich also selected the model for his grotesque early opera "The Nose," the obsession determines the fate of the protagonist.

## Not Only for Azerbaijan a Reason to Celebrate: Franghiz Ali-Zadeh Turns 65

*One of the most important composers of the present will celebrate her 65th birthday on 28 May 2012.*

**Franghiz Ali-Zadeh** was born in Baku/Azerbaijan. Trained as a pianist and composer at the conservatory in her home city, she passed examinations in piano in 1970 and in composition in 1972, following these with a period as aspirant with Kara Karayev from 1973 until 1976. In 1989 she received here doctorate with the dissertation on "Orchestration in Works of Azerbaijani Composers." Starting in 1976 she taught music history at the Baku Conservatory geschichte and, as a professor, the subjects of contemporary music and the history of orchestral styles from 1990 onwards. From 1993 until 1996 she served as choral director at the opera house in Mersin (Turkey) and then was a lecturer for two years in piano and music theory at the conservatory there. Ali-Zadeh worked in Baku again during the years 1998 and 1999. Since then she has primarily lived in Germany.

In 1980 Ali-Zadeh received the prize of the Azerbaijani Composers' Union. In 1990 she was awarded the title "Artist of Merit" of the Azerbaijani Soviet Socialist Republic. In November 2000 she received the honorary title "People's Artist of the Republic of Azerbaijan." Since 1989 she has been a member of the Schönberg Society in Los Angeles.

As a pianist, Ali-Zadeh has been strongly committed to the works of contemporary composers of the former Soviet Union. Moreover, it is thanks to her initiative that works of the Second Viennese School and composers such as Olivier Messiaen, John Cage and George Crumb received their first performances in Baku.

In her numerous works, the composer attempts to bridge the gap between the Western avant-garde and the music of her native Azerbaijan as well as other regions of the Near East. A central work cycle of recent years is summarised under the comprehensive designation "**Silk Road.**"

### Current Premieres of Works by Franghiz Ali-Zadeh:

**30.01.2011  
Amsterdam**

World Premiere of an Ensemble Work  
Nieuw Ensemble Amsterdam

**20.-25.05.2011**

**Houston Grand Opera**  
World Premiere of an Opera