

Titus Engel, Conductor

Biography

The state orchestra performs miracles, the choir does the same as the instrumentalists. What happens here musically is of the utmost magnificence, Titus Engel conducts this highly complex construct with stupendous naturalness. Süddeutsche Zeitung, Egbert Tholl, 12/6/2023

In 2025 Titus Engel was awarded the Swiss Music Prize for his artistic work, having already been named Conductor of the Year by Opernwelt magazine in 2020. With his comprehensive view of repertoire from a wide range of musical eras, he consistently grasps works in their multifaceted relationality. Respected for his expertise in the field of historical performance practice as well as for his precise conducting of classical-romantic and contemporary works, the Berlin-based Zurich native can be seen regularly performing central works of opera literature and in concert halls.

In the 2025/26 season, he will make his debut at the Semperoper Dresden with Hans Abrahamsen's *The Snow Queen* (direction: Immo Karaman). His first engagement at the Zurich Opera House will be the production of Olga Neuwirth's *Monster's Paradise*, which he will already conduct at its world premiere at the Hamburg State Opera (direction: Tobias Kratzer). He will also return to the Grand Théâtre de Genève with Frank Zappa's *200 Motels*. In Rouen, he will lead Beethoven's Symphony No. 7 in collaboration with the Compagnie Sasha Waltz. In his third season as Principal Conductor of the Basel Sinfonietta, Titus Engel continues to shape the orchestra's profile with innovative concert programmes, which in 2025/26 will include works such as Adams' *Harmonielehre* (Swiss premiere), Messiaen's *Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum* and contemporary compositions by Golfam Khayam and Anna S. Thovaldsdottir. Together they will tour to venues including the Cologne and Essen Philharmonie.

Guest conducting engagements include the Philharmonia Orchestra, the Mozarteumorchester Salzburg, the SWR and WDR Sinfonieorchester, the Konzerthausorchester Berlin, the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra, the Mahler Chamber Orchestra, the chamber orchestras in Zurich and Munich, as well as the Ensemble Modern and Klangforum Wien. He conducted Mahler's Symphony No. 7 with the Hanover State Orchestra and worked with the Camerata Salzburg at the Salzburg Festival and the Tiroler Festspiele Erl, where he conducted all of Brahms' symphonies.

Always ready to break new ground in his exploration of staged concepts on the podium, he sees music theatre as a field of experimentation in which social utopias can flourish. His repertoire ranges from Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* (Theater an der Wien) to Romantic classics such as *Der Freischütz*, *Lohengrin* and *La Traviata* (Theater Basel, Tiroler Festspiele Erl) to modern music such as Nielsen's *Maskerade* and Haas' *Bluthaus*. In Stuttgart, Lyon, Frankfurt, Munich, Berlin and Geneva, he has conducted works by Wagner, Bartók, Berg, Strauss, Mozart, Lehár, Nunes and Glass, among others. Gerard Mortier invited him to the Teatro Real Madrid in 2011, where he conducted several productions, including the world premiere of Charles Wuorinen's *Brokeback Mountain*. Together with Lydia Steier, he brought Stockhausen's *Donnerstag* to the stage of the Theater Basel in 2016; the production was named Performance of the Year by Opernwelt magazine. The World Premiere of the Year under his baton in 2017 was Chaya Czernowin's opera *Infinite Now*. Major opera productions in recent years include Henze's *The Raft of Medusa*, performed at Tempelhof Airport (Komische Oper Berlin, directed by Tobias Kratzer) and a monumental production of Messiaen's *Saint François d'Assise* in Stuttgart, which incorporated the urban space and was named 'the most unusual opera experience of 2023' by Opernwelt magazine. Most recently, he conducted Hector Parra's *Justice* (world premiere in 2024 at the Grand Théâtre de Genève) and Michael Wertmüller's *Echo 72. Israel in Munich* (world premiere in 2025 at the Staatsoper Hannover). He has also led numerous world premieres at the Salzburg Festival, Berliner Festspiele, Lucerne Festival, the Ruhrtriennale, and the Wiener Konzerthaus.

Titus Engel regularly dedicates time to education projects to inspire people who would otherwise not be on the classical stage with special experiences for music. Examples of this include Cornelius Cardew's *The Great Learning* (Konzerthaus Berlin, Alte Oper Frankfurt, Tonhalle Zurich), John Cage's *Music Circus* (Alte Oper Frankfurt) and Bernhard Gander's *Melting Pot* (Haydn Orchestra Bolzano, Gürzenich Orchestra Cologne).

Titus Engel has recorded numerous works for radio and CD, most recently Charles Mingus' Suite Epitaph (2024) and the Duke Ellington album A Celebration for the Duke (2025), recorded live with the big band and orchestra of the Deutsche

Oper Berlin. He is also the founder of the Akademie Musiktheater Heute in addition to having edited several books on contemporary opera.

Season 2025/26

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