**PRESENTATION OF THE**

**2018/2019 SEASON**

* **The work of Robert Treviño in his first year as chief conductor and his strong commitment to six new Concert season programmes.**
* **“Variations” as the general idea of a Season, clearly captured in the new image: “variations for listening to with the eyes”.**

**The work of Robert Treviño in his first year as chief conductor**: Is one of the keys of the current moment in the Basque Orchestra. The work carried out this season is receiving full acknowledgement and praise from the Orchestra itself, the audience, critics and the musical environment. Proof of his commitment to the Basque formation is the enormous presence he will maintain throughout the coming season.

**The image of the new season: “variations for listening to with the eyes”.** Once again, the image is innovative, modern and fresh, an original visual symphony, a metaphorical composition intended to awaken the attention of spectators, to seduce them and invite them to listen with their eyes. The eleven graphic compositions illustrating the corresponding programmes of the new season are therefore constructed based on two elements represented with different techniques or resources: ancient illustration or engraving and photography. The yesterday and today, music written in a past time and music performed in a present time. From the combination of both elements a new object is born, a visual harmony which illustrates every title, a visual meaning in turn open to interpretation by the spectators themselves.

**SEASON CONCERTS**

The Basque National Orchestra’s 2018/2019 Season Concerts will begin on **27 September in Pamplona and end on 13 June 2019 in Vitoria.** The Orchestra will give 10 concerts at each of its venues in Bilbao, San Sebastián (where it will give double the number), Vitoria and Pamplona, coming to a total of 50.

1. **ABOUT THE PROGRAMME:**

The coming Season Concerts will continue to enjoy the important presence of its chief conductor, **Robert Treviño** who will open and close the programme as well as conducting six concert programmes. Treviño’s design envisages continuing to work with the vast symphony sound in a coherent manner, packed with meaning and with a long-term vision. Hence, for example, the recurring appearance of Mahler as a distinctive note since his early days with the Orchestra. The audience, always attentive to the Mahlerian repertoire, will on this occasion be able to enjoy the composer’s Symphony no. 9, brought to them by the chief conductor, as well as the fine symphony repertoire of authors such as Elgar, Dvorak and Rachmaninoff, whose presence is explained below.

Thus, if, in this current Season (2017/2018) Treviño proposes a look at concepts such as “resistance, conflict and reconciliation” through Shostakovich and Britten, for the 2018/2019 season he concentrates on the concept of “variations”: variations in constant evolution, eternal, unsure and triumphant variations. And to do it he turns the spotlight on three composers: Elgar, Rachmaninoff and Dvorak. Three great composers of difficult connection yet with shared personal experiences and emotions: uncertainty and separation from their roots. Treviño invites the audience to experience, through their art, the feelings with which all people can identify. It is intended as a message of emotion, perseverance and accomplishment.

**Treviño throughout the Season**: to open in **September** with a programme of aesthetic contrast between Webern and Lazkano, joined by a Sibelius inspired in the variations of nature. Dvorak will come to the season in **November** with a performance of his little-known *Concerto for piano and orchestra* (Stephen Hough), along with Elgar, who will introduce a contrast with his better-known *Enigma Variations*. But Hough has also been invited to create a small work taking its inspiration from the sounds of the Basque Country. Hence the birth of *Ágata*, a short score for txistu flute and orchestra bringing Garikoitz Mendizabal into the mix. The Season will return in **February** with one of the essential concertos in the violin repertoire: Barber’s *Concerto for violin.* James Ehnes will lend the voice to this score before launching into one of the composers chosen for this season, Rachmaninoff, whose *Second Symphony* is for Treviño a masterpiece in terms of resistance, vulnerability, vision, passion and energy. Later, in **May**, the orchestra will tackle Mahler’s *9th Symphony*, the last by composer which already points towards his final moments. And in its fifth programme it will once again unite Dvorak and Elgar. By the former the orchestra will perform the known *Concerto for cello*, with Pablo Ferrández as soloist, and by Elgar, his *Symphony no. 2*. Robert Treviño will close the Season in **June** with Rachmaninoff’s fabulous and very well-known *Concerto for piano no. 3*, performed by the great Alexei Volodin. And the grand finale will take the shape of Tchaikovsky’s *Fifth Symphony*, a triumphant work packed with variations from the first to the last note.

There you have it then, Treviño will stand before us with Elgar, Rachmaninoff and Dvorak, but also with Mahler, Sibelius, Webern, Barber, Lazkano, Hough and Tchaikovsky. And he will be accompanied on the journey, as well as by his Orchestra, by Stephen Hough, James Ehnes, Pablo Ferrández and Alexei Volodin.

**Continuing with other moments of the programme.** **The symphonies of Sibelius (3rd), Dvorak (8th) and Shostakovich (1st)** will strike up dialogue with musical chameleons such as **Christian Lindberg** (*The Tale of Kundraan*), who will act as the trombonist, director and narrator of his own work; the most popular **Bernstein** (Suite from *On the Waterfront*) by the man who was a composer, director, pianist, educator and politician, among others; and **Pinchas Zukerman** (Beethoven’s *Concerto for Violin*), also a violinist, viola player and orchestra director. There will also be an enormously interesting **choir section dedicated to Beethoven** (*Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage, Elegiac Song and Choral Fantasy*), whose three choral “pearls” will be defended by the **Andra Mari Choir with Alfonso Gómez** on the piano, conducted by Hans Graf. Note that **ballet returns** to the Basque National Orchestra programme **with the staging of *Marie Antoinette***. This is a new production by the choreographer Thierry Malandain, on which work is currently underway for its premiere, and a new duo between his **Malandain Ballet Biarritz** company and our Orchestra, in our Season, to be performed in Biarritz and in Versailles. Finally, **orchestra conductor Mélanie Levy-Thiébaut**, who returns to our Orchestra, will conduct this new project taking the work of Haydn to the music stands. The French conductor will also front a symphony concert in Vitoria featuring different works, among which are the **premier of Xabier Otaolea’s *Izozmendi***, commissioned by AEOS, the Spanish Association of Symphony Orchestras, and the SGAE Foundation.

**With Basque music: our country’s creations, composers and performers.** We will open this section of the programme with one of the most international Basque composers, **Ramon Lazkano,** who returns to the Orchestra music stands with *Hilarriak.* The same applies to **Xabier Otaolea** who will premiere his work *Izozmendi* in Vitoria. In the choral section we will be joined by the **Andra Mari Choir** to perform three choral works by Beethoven: *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage, Elegiac Song and Choral Fantasy*, a work which will also enjoy the participation of the pianist from Vitoria now living in Germany, **Alfonso Gómez**. The txistu-player **Garikoitz Mendizabal** will make an appearance in the premiere of Stephen Hough’s piece *Ágata* (7’).

1. **ABOUT THE CONDUCTORS**

**Robert Treviño will occupy, with six programmes, a large part of the season.** However, the chief conductor will also vacate the podium for **Hans Graf**, former chief director of the Basque Orchestra in the 90s and to **Pinchas Zukerman and Christian Lindberg**, who will alternate the baton with the violin and trombone, respectively, in the concert programme. The conductor **Mélanie Levy-Thiébaut** will close the circle. Mélanie made her Basque Orchestra debut with *New Babylon* (music & film) performing in Tabakalera and the Sala BBK. She is an enormously energetic director, armed with fine technique for tackling a project of incidental music such as this. But also, to conduct the symphony programme in Vitoria ranging from Bach to Otaolea, passing through Stravinsky and Sibelius.

1. **ABOUT THE SOLOISTS, BALLET AND CHOIR.**

This chapter is always an enormous attraction on all programmes. Soloists, ballet company and choir: in some cases, they are already known to our audience, in others they will appear for the first time, but all are of names of great renown. We will have two programmes whose leading figures will appear in the double aspects of soloist and conductor. Here we refer to two grand figures on today’s scene who return to the Basque Orchestra: the violinist **Pinchas Zukerman**, all of a musical phenomenon for four decades, and **Christian Lindberg**, a living legend in the trombone-playing world who will also take on the role of narrator for his work *The Tale of Kundraan.* The piano, always hugely popular with the audience, will come to life with **Stephen Hough**, a distinguished pianist as well as composer and columnist. And later, with the versatile pianist born in Vitoria who now lives in Germany, **Alfonso Gómez**, in an exciting repertoire concentrating on his country’s contemporary music. The Season will end with **Alexei Volodin**, a pianist with an explosive combination of talent, technique and sensitivity. The violin will have its place with the already-mentioned Pinchas Zukerman, and with **James Ehnes**, who debuts with the Orchestra and presents himself as a new combination of virtuosity, serene lyricism and resounding musicality. The soloist chapter will close with **Pablo Ferrández**, who brings a mixture of youth, expressiveness, emotion and seduction. The cellist from Madrid is known by our audience for his participation in the **ICMA** (International Classical Music Awards) gala organised by our Orchestra in San Sebastián on the occasion of its year as European Capital of Culture.

As far as the **Malandain Ballet Biarritz** is concerned, its presence in the Orchestra Season is consolidated with the inclusion of titles such as *Magifique*, *Cinderella* and *Beauty and the Beast*. It will now occupy our stages with a new creation by Thierry Malandain, *Marie Antoinette*.

Outstanding in the choral field is presence of the **Andra Mari Choir** to perform three choral “pearls” by Beethoven: *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage, Elegiac Song* and *Choral Fantasy*, the latter of which will feature the Basque pianist Alfonso Gómez and is considered to be the “embryo” of the Ninth Symphony. The former chief conductor of the Orchestra in the 90s, Hans Graf, willhave the task of taking this choral programme through its steps.

**OTHER ACTIVITIES BY OUR ORCHESTRA:**

As well as its Season concerts, the essential backbone of its seasonal programme, the Basque National Orchestra activity is rounded off with a very wide-ranging catalogue of concerts distributed into both seasons of its own production and others in connection with important festivals, events and cultural institutions. The total number of Season Concerts (amounting to 50) in this important section means that the Basque Orchestra will be involved in more than a hundred activities throughout the Season. This ability to adapt to each of the musical formats on the different programmes enables the Orchestra to relate with audiences of different styles, interests and ages, with result of being able to reach 150,000 spectators every season.

**THIRD OUTING TO VERSAILLES (Paris)**: ***MARIE ANTOINETTE*:** Following their debut with *Cinderella* in June 2013 and their return in 2015 with *Beauty and the Beast*, the Basque National Orchestra and the Malandain Ballet Biarritz will once again perform as part of the **prestigious season “Opéra Royal: les grands concerts de Versailles**” held in the Chateau de Versailles. The Basque National Orchestra will perform, in what is considered to be Europe’s most beautiful Baroque theatre, *Marie Antoinette***,** the new creation by Thierry Malandain. This latest dance performance is illustrated with music by J. Haydn. There will be four functions between 29-31 March 2019. The new production will travel to Versailles following its premiere in Biarritz (November 2017) and as part of the Orchestra’s Season Concerts (February 2018).

**FESTIVALS, OTHER SEASONS AND RECORDINGS: COLLABORATION AND SYNERGIES WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS**

The Basque National Orchestra will maintain its commitment to the **Bilbao Opera Season (ABAO)** appearing with two titles in the “ABAO Concert”. It will open its Season with Puccini’s “La Bohème”, featuring Aihnoa Arteta in the role of Mimi, and will return in January with “I Lombardi” to reveal a Verdi in pure essence. Another important appearance will see the Basque Orchestra return to the stage of the “**ABAO Concert”** (20 March 2019) for a lyrical gala featuring **Jessica Pratt** and which, the ABAO promises, will “unleash Delirium” (the concert title).

The Orchestra will return to **Bilbao’s Musika-Música Festival,** to the **Classical Music Fortnight** in San Sebastián, and to the French Basque Country for the **Festival Ravel**-**Musique en Cote Basque.** And it will continue to explore new connections between music and film in the framework of the San Sebastian Film Festival, **Zinemaldia,** and of Basque music with **Musikaste.**

**RECORD PRODUCTION: FOUR NEW REFERENCES**

**New recordings: PHILIP GLASS and ANGEL ILLARRAMENDI.**

Under the baton of Robert Treviño and with the violinist Dmitri Makhtin as guest soloist, two concertos for violin by the North American composer Philip Glass will be recorded for the MIRARE label. This is a composer approached for the first time by our Orchestra and with whom Makhtin is highly familiar. The performance of his works has earned him resounding success in festivals such as La Folle Journée in Nantes. On the other hand, the concert given in September (2017) in Zarautz in homage to Ángel Illarramendi will come out on the KARONTE label.

**Release: Saint-Saëns AND Toshio Hosokawa.**

We will soon release two productions recorded in 2017, dedicated to Saint-Saëns and Toshio Hosokawa, both with the NAXOS label.

As part of its strategy, as well as proceeding with projects involving Basque music, the Basque Orchestra also takes itself out into the world with the recording of international authors.

**MUSIC ROOM - The Basque Orchestra, its educational and social work:**

Family Concerts, Concerts for Schoolchildren, Appreciation Workshops, School Concerts, tours of the Orchestra headquarters, and much more with a view to fostering a love of music from early ages and as a resource to support official musical training. The Orchestra’s most socially oriented slant also comes from the MUSIC ROOM with activities for a public with functional diversity and which already has a number of important initiatives to its name, such as the innovative project “Mosaic of Sound”, now the winner of numerous awards. **In this section alone the Basque Orchestra reaches more than 9,000 people every year.**

**MIRAMÓN MATINÉES:** The Basque Orchestra’s chamber cycle is now in its 27th season of performing quality music in a different format. Universal music in a singular universe, the auditorium of the Orchestra’s Miramon headquarters.

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Finally, the Orchestra would like to thank for their important collaboration and support all of the institutions which have a hand in developing its different activities: its 7,000 subscribers and the general public, sponsors and collaborators, cultural agents, the media, etc., all of which make the Basque National Orchestra’s activity possible.

Information on season ticket sales:

New season tickets will be available for purchase from 24 May. Prices for all cities range from €65 to €218, depending on your chosen place. Special rates are available for different collectives. Season tickets can be purchased on the Orchestra website (euskadikoorkestra.eus), or by calling 943 01 32 32.