

## **P R E S S B R I E F I N G**

### **The “Resurrection Symphony”**

**as arranged by Johannes Deutsch and Ars Electronica Futurelab**

**50 years of wdr – Vision Mahler: Multimedia classic**

**wdr Television live, Sunday, 1 January 2006, 20.15 hrs**

On 1 January 2006 wdr will celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. To launch its anniversary year, the broadcaster is inviting its audience to share an outstanding cultural experience.

The wdr Cologne symphony orchestra, headed by Chief Conductor Semyon Bychkov and renowned Austrian media artist Johannes Deutsch, have transformed Gustav Mahler's Symphony No. 2 in C minor to a multimedia performance as an expression of our times. Whether at home in front of the television or in the Cologne Philharmonic concert hall, spectators will find themselves immersed in a virtual three-dimensional world in which Mahler's famous Resurrection Symphony takes visual shape with the aid of the latest computer technology.

#### **The project and how it came about**

In the early stages of the project, the Resurrection Symphony was analysed and interpreted by Johannes Deutsch. Inspired by Mahler's music, he created a total of 18 objects which form the basis for the visualisation.

The staff in Ars Electronica Futurelab in Linz/Austria were responsible for interpreting his ideas by means of computer technology. The research and development laboratory, which numbers the Austrian State Prize amongst its many accolades, has worked on numerous projects in the twilight zone between art, technology and society since it was founded in 1996.

The software which will be used at the wdr 2006 New Year Concert both in the Philharmonic Hall and on television was for the most part designed and programmed specifically for this performance by the media art laboratory.

### **The virtual world in the Cologne Philharmonic Hall**

The audience at the Cologne Philharmonic Hall enter a three-dimensional virtual world with the aid of 3D glasses. This world is projected on to a 54 m long, 180° screen. Soloists, choir and the musicians in the orchestra are connected live to the virtual art world by means of microphones and special computer systems. During the performance, they can thus have an interactive influence on the visual drama created by Johannes Deutsch. A huge technological support network lies behind all this: the instruments alone are recorded by over 50 microphones. 48 individual channels have a direct effect on visualisation, which in turn requires the use of around 25 high-end computers, 10 of which are responsible for three-dimensional projection in the Philharmonic Hall, whilst another four cover the television transmission channels.

### **The concert on television / Virtual cameras – a world first**

The inevitable question for wdr Television was how TV audiences would be able to share the experience on their TV sets. The appointment of Enrique Sánchez Lansch as producer brought in a man who had already mastered many ambitious music projects, including “Rhythm is it!”, the much lauded documentary film with the Berlin Philharmonic and Sir Simon Rattle. In order to lure the viewer into a completely different aesthetic plane than he usually experiences with television, Johannes Deutsch and Ars Electronica Futurelab worked closely with Enrique Sánchez Lansch and wdr Television Productions to create a special TV concert visualisation. This ensures that the TV pictures have an unaccustomed depth. This effect can be enhanced still further by wearing 3D glasses. Ars Electronica Futurelab has developed a world first in the form of an intelligent virtual camera which reconstructs the digital image world for the television viewer by moving independently through the artistic environment on the basis of dramatic criteria. A computer also supplies projection clips which are adjusted to the 16:9 TV format.

What's special about the wdr television production is that all three image planes – the real image plane in the Philharmonic Hall, virtual camera movements and the clip plane – are assembled as a montage forming meaningful artistic relationships on a real-time basis. This required special television technology,

considerable expertise and meticulous preparation and coordination between all those involved in the initial stages. Ten cameras are used merely for the images from the concert hall. The visualisation producer in the Philharmonic Hall was First Entertainment, working on behalf of wdr and the wdr media group.

## **Broadcasting Dates**

### **wdr Television live**

**Sunday, 1 January 2006**

20.15 hrs

wdr celebrates its 50th birthday

Anniversary Concert Vision.Mahler: Multimedia Classic

The Resurrection Symphony as arranged by Johannes

Deutsch and ARS Electronica Futurelab

Producer Dr. Lothar Mattner

### **Culture radio wdr 3 live from the Cologne Philharmonic Hall**

**Sunday, 1 January 2006**

20.03 hrs

Producer Christoph Held

The digital 5.1. surround sound of wdr 3

is received by Astra digital satellites (ADR).

wdr 3 provides stereo sound using the usual

UKW frequencies in North Rhine-Westphalia.

Frequency information: [www.wdr.de/radio](http://www.wdr.de/radio).

### **Making Of**

**29 December 2005**

21.45 hrs

wdr Television broadcasts a programme showing the "Making Of" the performance.

Author Helge Drawfz

Producer Dr. Lothar Mattner

50 years of wdr Vision Mahler