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PRESS RELEASE



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AZIZ SHOKHAKIMOV

NEW MUSIC AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF THE ORCHESTRE PHILHARMONIQUE DE STRASBOURG



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The Uzbek conductor Aziz Shokhakimov will take up the role of Music and Artistic Director of the Strasbourg Philharmonic Orchestra in September 2021 for an initial contract of three seasons. He will succeed Marko Letonja, the orchestra's current Music Director since 2012.

At the age of 32, Aziz Shokhakimov has already developed his career as a conductor at a very high level. He was propelled to the forefront of the international scene aged 21, when he won the international Gustav Mahler Conducting Competition in Bamberg. He then went on to conduct renowned orchestras including SWR Sinfonieorchester, Elbphilharmonie Orchester, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France and London Philharmonic Orchestra. He has a special relationship with the Salzburg Festival since winning the prestigious *Salzburg Festival Young Conductors Award* in August 2016. Over the coming seasons, he will make his début with the Wiener Symphoniker, Luzern Sinfonieorchester and Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra.

Aziz Shokhakimov is equally well-known for his operatic repertoire and since 2015 has held the position of Kapellmeister at Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf. He was also invited to conduct a new production at the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence.

Aziz Shokhakimov's first encounter with the Strasbourg Philharmonic Orchestra dates back to 2014. The musicians' enthusiasm led him to return regularly, in 2015, 2017 and 2020. Each of his visits confirmed a prodigious talent and an impressive ability to conduct a vast repertoire, combined with great human qualities. It was therefore natural that a shared desire to begin a new chapter arose; a collaboration built over time, based on high musical standards and a deeper relationship with the musicians.

Ahead of becoming its fifteenth Music Director, this season (March 11th and 12th, 2021), Aziz Shokhakimov will conduct the orchestra in a programme of Dutilleux – Mozart – Saint-Saëns.

« It's a great honour to be chosen for the role of Music Director of the Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg. Since my first appearance with the orchestra in 2014, I have had a great chance to get to know the outstanding musicians and I feel immensely lucky that we have a deep connection as well as shared mutual interests and values. I'm very eager to start this exciting and fulfilling journey with the orchestra to explore a wide range of repertoire and different styles of music. »

Aziz Shokhakimov

« With the musicians, we believe that Aziz Shokhakimov will bring the Orchestra into a new era, raising the musical standard even higher. He is the personification of an innovative and ambitious artistic project, which is part of the territory. He will settle in Strasbourg with his family and wants to be fully involved in all the areas that cover the role of Music and Artistic Director. I am delighted to be working with him. »

Marie Linden, Executive Director

« I carry within me the moving and joyful memory of Mahler's *Fifth Symphony* conducted by this young conductor. It was just a few weeks before the pandemic and the confinement that make this memory even stronger. I am delighted to welcome him to the artistic direction of this orchestra, already brought to a very high level by its current conductor Marko Letonja. And I hope that our orchestra will be able to regain contact with the diversity of its audiences in the concert halls. »

Jeanne Barseghian, Mayor of Strasbourg



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