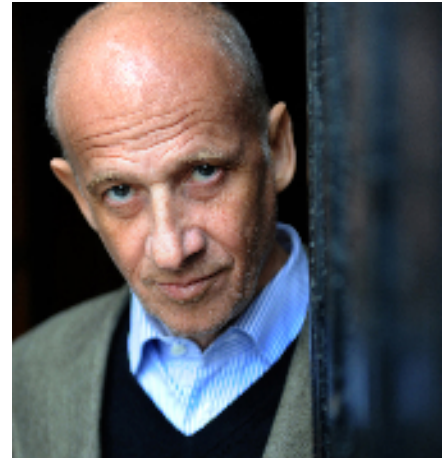


Artistic Director Luc Bondy on the Programme of Wiener Festwochen 2010

Dear audience,

as every year, it will be hard for you to escape the Festwochen clutches. Early summer is bound to come, and Wiener Festwochen with it. Maybe you'd prefer to go for a walk because the weather is so fine, and maybe you'll say that the programme is much too rich and extremely diversified to boot. Indeed, Wiener Festwochen is an extensive and programmatically varied festival that proposes operas, concerts, plays, dance, performances and installations. The theme chosen for this year's Festwochen is "Everything's different?" Bear in mind that it's couched as a question – for questions are back in style. Questions are asked, and things are called into question instead of simply confirming them. A new space for questioning has emerged, an extended vision, the ability to imagine things in a different way. Is it down to the big economic crisis that people no longer want to accept everything at face value?



Everything's different? But do these questions really aim at changing conditions all around, or will the energy inherent in them be scattered by the seemingly factual, tempting the questioners of yesterday to re-identify with today? Everything's different? The potential of this question may refer to a lot – to politics, society, artistic work and one's own life.

Individual artistic work time and again addresses the issue of "otherness"; in a different way, this question also crops up in the international work of festivals.

In our music drama and concert programme, we ask the great Austrian composer Alban Berg: everything's new? Together with other artists, Berg changed the nature of music. As a composer who also wrote his own librettos, it was not by chance that he chose works by Büchner and Wedekind as the source material for his operas *Wozzeck* and *Lulu*. The strongly music-oriented series *Into the City* asks questions about integration through interventions and concerts in different communities.

In recent years, the individual's questions about "the other" were perhaps best reflected and translated into practice by the group Rimini Protokoll. This ensemble has developed an entertaining and yet serious way of confronting audiences with problems that are actual, real-life problems of the performers onstage. In one of this year's Wiener Festwochen productions, they will interview 100 people living in Vienna. In *Factory 2*, Krystian Lupa will look into the most intense exploration of art and drive for change of recent decades. With Joseph Beuys as their travelling companion, the young performers of the Estonian group NO99 will skip through the theatrical avant-garde of the past to inquire into its potential for change. Twelve visual and performing artists will ask questions about change in individual lecture performances. With their very own, specially invented machine, the Viennese group God's Entertainment will recycle useless individuals into good and useful Austrians. In an installation created for Vienna, South

African artist Brett Bailey will ask Europeans about their colonial and postcolonial crimes, and Korean-U.S artist Young Jean Lee will inquire into suppressed racism.

In pre-revolutionary, late 19th-century Russia, Fyodor Dostoyevsky described his era's energies of change as something halfway between fascination and menace and explored their effects and realities. We are happy to have two plays by Elfriede Jelinek, the asker of language-critical questions par excellence, on our programme.

As for myself, it doesn't seem that I will ever be truly done with fine-de-siècle Vienna: it was the period when this city became what it is. To discover a new aspect, I asked Scottish dramatist David Harrower to adapt one of the classic plays of that era, *Liebelei* by Arthur Schnitzler. The shot we hear at the end of the performance is essentially one of the first shots of the First World War. In my co-operation with the Vienna Burgtheater, I will for the first time direct a tragedy of classical antiquity, which yet is hardly that, formally speaking at least, since Euripides was the innovator who first dared to plunge into modern ways of thought and emotion. His *Helena* is concerned with the true Helen and hence with the true causes of the big Trojan war that the Greeks – the superpower of their time – were unable to stop winning.

With works from former Yugoslavia, a generation that spent its youth under the conditions of Socialism will inquire into its new, post-Socialist identity in the context of forum festwochen.

Here's wishing that this year's Wiener Festwochen will entertain you, make you think and feel, and motivate you to ask many questions.

Luc Bondy