



Minnesota Orchestra's European Tour Opens at Amsterdam's Concertgebouw

By Vivien Schweitzer
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The Minnesota Orchestra and music director Osmo Vänskä kick off their European tour tonight with a performance at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, part of the annual Robeco Zomerconcerten series.

The orchestra will play Mahler's Fifth Symphony and Sibelius's Violin Concerto with Viktoria Mullova as soloist. The program was initially scheduled to include Osvaldo Golijov's Three Songs for Soprano and Orchestra, with Dawn Upshaw (for whom the work was written) as soloist. According to a statement on the orchestra's website, however, Upshaw has been forced to cancel due to illness.

Golijov's cycle has also been pulled from the Minnesota Orchestra's concert tomorrow evening at the BBC Proms. Instead the orchestra will play Mahler's Fifth Symphony, Barber's First Essay for Orchestra and Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 3 with Llyr Williams as soloist.

The orchestra's whirlwind European adventure then continues with a performance at the Edinburgh Festival on August 25 and two concerts at the Helsinki Festival on August 27 and 28. (These will no doubt have special for significance for Vänskä, a native of Finland.) The ensemble will then have a brief break before concluding the tour in Locarno, Switzerland at the Ascona Festival on August 31.

Like many orchestras recently, the Minnesota musicians will have to deal with stringent travel restrictions. Instruments will be packed in large crates that will travel with the orchestra, according to the St. Paul *Pioneer Press*.

Minnesota Orchestra concertmaster Jorja Fleezanis is particularly excited about tonight's concert. She told the paper, "The Concertgebouw is renowned for its acoustics. It's one of those venues that just makes an orchestra sound glorious. There are many definitions of 'glorious,' but this is one that I think is just at that pinnacle of what it is to hear a great orchestra in a visceral, qualitative sense. It's like the cream of the cream."

Interested readers back home will be able read reviews and blogs and see photos of the tour at www.mnorch.org/etour/. The BBC Prom concert, the orchestra's Royal Albert Hall debut, will be broadcast/webcast live on BBC Radio 3 (www.bbc.co.uk/radio3) and on Minnesota Public Radio (www.mpr.org) tomorrow at 7:30 pm UK time/2:30 pm US

Eastern time/1:30 pm US Central (Minnesota) time. The performance will also be videotaped for a September 6 broadcast on Twin Cities Public Television, according to the *Pioneer Press*.

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