

THE SHED Press Release

THE **BLOOMBERG** BUILDING
545 West 30th Street
New York, NY 10001

For more information, please contact:

Sommer Hixson

Director of Communications
The Shed
(646) 876-6933
Sommer.hixson@theshed.org

Christina Riley

Publicist
The Shed
(646) 876-6858
christina.riley@theshed.org

Amanda Domizio

Polskin Arts
(212) 583-2798
Amanda.domizio@finnpartners.com

@theshedny
theshed.org



Photo: Michael Vahrenwald. Stylist: Ariel Dearie.

The Shed Presents *Requiem*: New Interpretations of Giuseppe Verdi's Orchestral and Choral Masterpiece

Teodor Currentzis and musicAeterna Make Exclusive North American Debut, November 19 – 24, Accompanied by a Commissioned Film by Jonas Mekas

***Requiem* Film Screenings in Level 4 Gallery, November 1 – 10**

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 21, 2019—To culminate its opening season, The Shed will present deeply inspired interpretations of Giuseppe Verdi's *Messa da Requiem*: a symphonic and choral concert led by a prodigious young maestro and a meditative new masterwork by an avant-garde film legend.

For their highly anticipated North American debut, The Shed is bringing conductor **Teodor Currentzis** and the 106-member orchestra and 80-member chorus **musicAeterna** from Perm, Russia, to New York for their highly anticipated North American debut in an exclusive engagement of four performances in The McCourt, November 19 – 24. Accompanying each concert is a new cinematic artwork by the late filmmaker **Jonas Mekas**, who passed away in January 2019 at the age of 96.

"Teodor Currentzis and his carefully selected musicians and chorus have a rare and precious ability to profoundly awaken the music they make and bring it to life in the presence of others," said **Alex Poots**, Artistic Director and CEO of The Shed.

“For this unique series of performances, the emotional depth of Verdi’s *Requiem*—themes that resonate with the crises of our time—will be counterpointed by Jonas Mekas’s cinematic lament for the natural world.”

As a tribute to New York City’s beloved auteur who inspired innumerable filmmakers, artists, and writers, The Shed also will screen Jonas Mekas’s new work independently in its Level 4 Gallery from November 1 – 10. Edited by Mekas’s longtime collaborator Elle Burchill, the 84-minute film is an interplay of moving images shot by the artist and text from the Roman Catholic missal. This version of the film is set to a recording earlier this year of musicAeterna performing *Messa da Requiem*, with Currentzis conducting.

“As early as 1968, Jonas Mekas had ideas about the potential for transforming film by staging screenings not in theaters or auditoriums, but in other locations, where viewers could decide for themselves how long they would devote to watching any given work. Mekas, who described himself as a seeker of happiness and a man with no home, gave the art form a new home,” said **Hans Ulrich Obrist**, The Shed’s Senior Program Advisor. “While he has traveled and exhibited throughout the world, he was forever inspired by New York City, where The Shed will share one of his last films in celebration of a life of vision and generosity.”

Verdi’s *Messa da Requiem* highlights the composer’s gifts for symphonic and choral writing and the use of melody and rhythm to dramatic effect. Written for four soloists, double choir, and orchestra, the 90-minute piece debuted at the Church of San Marco in Milan in 1874 on the first anniversary of the death of Alessandro Manzoni, to whom Verdi dedicated his funeral mass. More recently, the *Requiem* has been transcribed and performed in different ways, from piano solos to fully staged operas. Notably, prisoners at the Terezín concentration camp in the Czech Republic gave several concert performances of *Messa da Requiem* in 1943 and 1944, and commemorative events still continue as memorials.

With musicAeterna, Teodor Currentzis regularly tours Europe with performances at the Berlin Philharmonic, Philharmonie de Paris, Baden-Baden Festspielhaus, La Scala Milan, and the Madrid Auditorio. The group has a long-standing relationship with Klarafestival (Brussels), Lucerne Festival (Switzerland), Musicfest Bremen (Germany), and Salzburg Festspiele (Austria). So far in 2019, Currentzis and the musicAeterna choir, in collaboration with the Freiburg Baroque orchestra, have premiered Mozart’s *Idomeneo* in Salzburg (their second collaboration with Peter Sellars). With the musicAeterna orchestra and choir in 2019, Currentzis has also presented Verdi’s *Requiem* in Russia and in Europe (Paris, Vienna, Geneva, Aix-en-Provence, Athens, Cologne, and Hamburg); as part of Klarafestival (Brussels) and the Easter Festival (Lucerne); and at the Church of San Marco, where the work originally premiered. Audiences 145 years after the *Requiem*’s premiere were stirred by the performance of one of Verdi’s most prominent works in an authentic setting, interpreted by a composer who is famous for his unique vision of classical music. The event was televised on Mezzo, Medici, and Takt1.

Performances of *Requiem* by musicAeterna in The McCourt at The Shed are Tuesday, November 19 at 7 pm; Thursday, November 21 at 7:30 pm; Saturday, November 23 at 7:30 pm; and Sunday, November 24, at 3 pm. Additional screenings of the *Requiem* film by Jonas Mekas in The Shed's Level 4 Gallery are daily Friday, November 1 through Sunday, November 10 (except Monday, November 4).

Concert tickets begin at \$30; film screening tickets are \$10. Tickets are available at theshed.org. Tickets to screenings of Mekas's *Requiem* film include admission to *Agnes Denes: Absolutes and Intermediates*, a retrospective at The Shed that spans Denes's 50-year career as a pioneer in conceptual, environmental, and ecological art.

The lead sponsor of *Requiem* is M&T Bank, Founding Bank of The Shed. The creation of new work at The Shed is generously supported by the Lizzie and Jonathan Tisch Commissioning Fund and the Shed Commissioners. Major support for live productions at The Shed is provided by the Charina Endowment Fund. Jonas Mekas's cinematic artwork for *Requiem* is co-commissioned by The Shed and Festspielhaus Baden-Baden.

Biographies:

Described by the *New York Times* as the "rebel maestro of classical music," **Teodor Currentzis** is the founder and artistic director of the ensemble musicAeterna and of the musicAeterna Chamber Choir. The ensemble was in residence at Perm State Opera and Ballet Theatre from 2011 until 2019, when Currentzis stepped down as artistic director to focus on leading musicAeterna to new heights as an independent, privately financed ensemble. As former artistic director of Perm Opera, Currentzis has commissioned several important new works, including Phillipe Hersant's *Tristia* (2016), Dmitrii Kourliandski's opera *Nosferatu* (2014), Alexei Syumak's opera *Cantos* (2016), and a violin concerto by Sergey Nevsky (2015).

Currentzis was appointed the chief conductor of the SWR Symphony Orchestra Stuttgart in 2018, where, in his first year, he conducted Mahler's *Symphony No. 3* and *No. 4*, Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 5* and Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 7* in performances in Stuttgart and on tour at the Vienna Konzerthaus, Hamburg Elbphilharmonie, and Cologne Philharmonie, among others. He finished his first season with SWR with a final performance of Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 7* at the Salzburg Festival. For the 2019 – 20 season he will take the orchestra on tour to Spain, Italy, and France.

Born in Greece, Currentzis has made Russia his home since the beginning of the 1990s, when he began to study conducting at the state conservatory of St. Petersburg under the tutelage of Professor Ilya Musin, whose pupils were

renowned conductors Odysseas Dimitriadis, Valery Gergiev, and Semyon Bychkov, among others.

musicAeterna was founded in 2004 in Novosibirsk, Russia, by Teodor Currentzis and was the resident orchestra and chorus at Perm Opera from 2011 to 2019. In 2017 – 18, under Currentzis’s direction, musicAeterna traveled across Europe to its most prestigious venues, including Vienna Konzerthaus and the Musikverein, Berlin Philharmonie, Hamburg Elbphilharmonie, Paris Philharmonie, Festspielhaus Baden-Baden, and La Scala in Milan. Currentzis also made his debut at Dutch National Opera with musicAeterna and Peter Sellers’s production of *La Clemenza di Tito*. In 2019, musicAeterna made their first visit to Japan, where they presented two programs of works by Tchaikovsky. Teodor Currentzis and musicAeterna are signed exclusively with Sony Classical and their recordings of works by Mozart, Tchaikovsky, Rameau, and Stravinsky have received critical praise.

Jonas Mekas is regarded as the godfather of American avant-garde cinema—a member of the cinematic vanguard who has charged headlong into uncharted territories. His contributions as an artist, filmmaker, film critic, and poet helped shape the face of independent film in the United States and the world at large, and his works have been celebrated across the globe.

In 1954, together with his brother, he started *Film Culture* magazine, which soon became the most important film publication in the US, and, in 1958, he began his legendary “Movie Journal” column in the *Village Voice*. From the 1960s on, he continually made films. In 1962, he founded the Film-Makers’ Cooperative and, in 1964, the Film-Makers’ Cinematheque in New York. The Cinematheque eventually grew into Anthology Film Archives, one of the world’s largest and most important repositories of avant-garde cinema, as well as a screening venue.

About The Shed:

Located on Manhattan’s west side, where the High Line meets Hudson Yards, The Shed commissions original works of art, across all disciplines, for all audiences. From hip hop to classical music, painting and sculpture to literature, film to theater and dance, The Shed brings together leading and emerging artists and thinkers from all disciplines under one roof. The building—a remarkable movable structure designed by Diller Scofidio + Renfro, Lead Architect, and Rockwell Group, Collaborating Architect—physically transforms to support artists’ most ambitious ideas. Committed to nurturing artistic invention and bringing creative experiences to the broadest possible audiences, The Shed, led by Artistic Director and CEO Alex Poots, is a 21st-century space of and for New York City.